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LIVES OF TWELVE BAD WOMEN

A companion book to this volume.

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Scoundrels by Various
Hands.

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FRANCES HOWARD, COUNTESS OF SOMERSET

+FRANCES HOWARD, COUNTESS OF SOMERSET.+

ELIZABETH BROWNRIFF. + ELIZABETH CANNING. + JENNY DIVER. + MARY BATEMAN. + MARY ANNE CLARKE.

ALICE PERRERS. + ALICE ARDEN. + MOLL CUTPURSE. + ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH. + TERESIA CONSTANTIA PHILLIPS.

Lives
" of
Twelve Bad Women

Illustrations and Reviews of
Feminine Turpitude set
forth by Impartial
Hands. Edited
by Arthur
Vincent



ILLUSTRATED

London
T. FISHER UNWIN

MDCCCXCVII

+BARBARA VILLIERS, DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.+

SECOND EDITION

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V768L

What mighty ills have not been done by woman?
Who was't betrayed the Capitol? A woman!
Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!
Who was the cause of a long ten years' war,
And laid at last old Troy in ashes? Woman!
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman.

OTWAY.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
PREFACE	xi
I. ALICE PERRERS, <i>Favourite of King Edward III.</i> (<i>d.</i> 1400)	3
BY ARTHUR VINCENT.	
II. ALICE ARDEN, <i>Murderess (Ex. 1551)</i>	33
BY ABEL H. COPPINGER.	
III. MOLL CUTPURSE, <i>Thief and Receiver (? 1584-1659)</i>	49
BY CHARLES ANDREWS.	
IV. FRANCES HOWARD, <i>Countess of Somersel (1593-1632)</i>	63
BY GEOFFREY MARTIN.	
V. BARBARA VILLIERS, <i>Duchess of Cleveland (1640-1709)</i>	99
BY ALFRED KALISCH.	
VI. JENNY DIVER, <i>Pickpocket (Ex. 1741)</i>	137
BY CHARLES ANDREWS.	
VII. TERESIA CONSTANTIA PHILLIPS (1709-1765)	165
BY GILBERT BURGESS.	

	PAGE
VIII. ELIZABETH BROWNRIGG, <i>Cruelty personified</i> (? 1720-1767)	189
BY EDGAR STUBBS.	
IX. ELIZABETH CANNING, <i>Impostor</i> (1734-1773)	205
BY W. G. WATERS.	
X. ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH, <i>Duchess of Kingston</i> (1720-1788)	225
BY W. G. WATERS.	
XI. MARY BATEMAN, " <i>The Yorkshire Witch</i> " (1768-1809)	261
BY ARTHUR VINCENT.	
XII. MARY ANNE CLARKE (1776-1852)	289
BY W. G. WATERS.	
INDEX	313

NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS.



THE COUNTESS OF SOMERSET *Frontispiece*

The engraving from which this picture is copied is one of the best works of Simon de Passe, and is in all probability a faithful likeness. The hair curled into the representation of a wig is ultra-fashionable, and, as Grainger remarks, the Countess appears to have exposed more of the bosom than was seen in any former period. There are several portraits of Lady Frances, one being in the gallery at Windsor. The most curious, perhaps, is that prefixed to "Truth Brought to Light by Time" (1651), where she is depicted in company with Somerset, who is dwarfed and rendered insignificant by the enormous dimensions of his wife's hooped dress. In another rare print she is holding a feather fan and is with a Dr. Panurgus, who is doubtless supposed to represent her henchman, Dr. Forman.

ALICE ARDEN *to face p. 33*

There is no portrait, properly speaking, of the wife and murderess of Arden of Faversham, but it was worth while to reproduce Mr. Ebsworth's facsimile of an ancient cut provided by him as a frontispiece to Mr. A. H. Bullen's edition of "Arden of Feversham: A Tragedy" (London: Jarvis & Son, 1887). The violent interruption by Black Will of the unfortunate Arden's game of backgammon with his wife's paramour, Mosby; the determined demeanour of Alice with the dagger in hand, and the bellicose attitude of her assistants are most faithfully depicted.

MARY FRITH *to face p. 49*

Of the two portraits mentioned in the text the one reproduced is that prefixed to her "Life," published in 1662. She is represented in man's attire and wearing a sword, while a lion, an ape, and an eagle bear her company.

BARBARA VILLIERS *to face p. 99*

The portraits of this lady are extremely numerous. She loved to be painted in fancy character, but it seemed scarcely appropriate that in the present volume she should figure as a Madonna, or as St. Catherine, or even as a shepherdess, or the chaste Pallas Athene. One of the many portraits painted by the assiduous Lely has been chosen as being probably a more trustworthy likeness than is to be found in some other pictures.

TERESIA CONSTANTIA PHILLIPS *to face p. 165*

Two portraits of this comely bad woman were engraved by Faber from pictures painted at the expense of her admirers.

ELIZABETH BROWNRIGG *to face p. 189*

Many cuts purporting to be likenesses of Mrs. Brownrigg were issued at the time when she gained her notoriety. The portrait given is a copy of that prefixed to the account of her exploits appearing in "Celebrated Trials" (1825). It corresponds fairly well with contemporary accounts of her personal appearance.

The picture, showing one of Mrs. Brownrigg's methods of inflicting pain on her apprentices, is an enlargement from a print in the same book

to face p. 194

ELIZABETH CANNING *to face p. 205*

At the time when the town was divided into Canningites and anti-Canningites portraits of this imaginative servant-maid were plentiful. She figured in many satirical prints, and the resemblance of the pictures to her features was often as fanciful as her own adventures. A large folio shows her sitting in the house with Mother Wells; in another picture she is standing on her trial, and she was also to be had in company with Mary Squires. The portrait in these pages is reduced from a fine folio mezzotint by McArdeell.

THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON *to face p. 225*

The portrait of Elizabeth Chudleigh is a copy of the engraving after Reynolds in Peter Cunningham's edition of Walpole's letters. The lady was fond of entrusting the reproduction of her face to artists, but it is possible she underpaid them, for there is striking dissimilarity in many of her portraits.

MARY BATEMAN *to face p. 261*

There is no worthy likeness of the "Yorkshire Witch," nothing but a rough cut prefixed to the "Extraordinary Life and Character of Mary Bateman," which is here reproduced in all its native barrenness. In her right hand she is holding the egg bearing the inscription, "Crist is Coming"; on the table is a bottle bearing on the label the words, "M. Bateman's Balm of Gilead," and also a letter addressed to William Perigo.

MARY ANNE CLARKE *to face p. 289*

The portrait of this extortionate lady bears her signature, and is probably therefore one preferred by herself. She liked posing, particularly in a somewhat Oriental fashion, on a sofa, but these pictures do not give as lively a presentation of the facial features as the bust-portrait. In several of her pictures the complexion given is dark even to swarthinness.

PREFACE.



IT is to be admitted that the idea of a volume containing the lives of twelve bad women owed its inception to the publication of the lives of twelve bad men. The one title suggests the other, and it was fitting that the one book should be followed by the second. Relentless circumstance decreed that Mr. Thomas Seccombe, to whose bright intellect, assisted by his exceptional editorial ability, the emergence of the *Bad Men* was due, should not only find it impossible to do the like for the *Bad Women*, but should be reluctantly debarred from collaboration. The completion of the work, so well begun by him, was thus left to one of his assistants in the former book, who has in the present volume pursued, as far as was possible, the lines marked down by him.

To the natural desire to follow so excellent a model is to be ascribed the limitation of the choice of *Bad Women* to former inhabitants of these islands. It is hoped that such limitations will be found to be justified, notwithstanding the common assumption that the most familiar types of evil-doing women are furnished by other countries. Whether thanks are really due to Nature for permitting British woman to make a just boast that at any rate she is not so bad as her foreign sister, or whether it be that the national quality of self-abasement teaches the English to look elsewhere than at home for examples of moral obliquity, are questions that need not now be discussed; yet it may scarcely be denied that such names as those of Lucrezia Borgia, Catharine de Medici, the Empress Catharine, or Joan of Naples, are more likely to be instanced as bad women than

any native specimen. It must be remembered, however, that no claim is made to have enshrined within these pages biographies of the twelve worst women that ever lived, either in the world or in the narrower sphere of Great Britain and Ireland. To have done so would only provoke useless controversy, and there is the further objection that there have existed many women of criminal importance who, though they must have been very bad women indeed, have left little history beyond the bare record of a crime. Queen Elfritha, whose act won martyrdom for King Edward, Lady Macbeth, the Lady Shrewsbury who held her lover's horse while he killed her husband, and many another who has equal rights to inclusion in a company of Bad Women, are commemorated by a single deed of wickedness, while the rest of their lives merely furnishes material for a paragraph. Other women there have been (and the class is not a small one) who so dissembled their badness or goodness that, according to the point of view, they are at once objects of veneration and execration, and the story of their lives is more fitly to be looked for among Twelve Doubtful Women.

Neither description has its place in this volume, of which the purpose is to give unvarnished accounts of twelve Englishwomen of whom enough is known to show that they were consistently bad, whether owing to a vicious temperament, a crooked nature, or a lack of moral perception, resulting in unscrupulousness and crime. Variety in the forms of evil having been decreed by Nature, it has been deemed well to follow her example so far as possible, and the selection of subjects has been made with this end in view. In the cases of Alice Perrers and Barbara Villiers the variety is afforded by the different conditions of different ages, and it is curious to note the parallelism between the characters of these two royal favourites, separated as they were by three centuries of time. Both variety and comprehensiveness demanded that some exponents of what are sometimes called vulgar crimes should be included, and vulgar and brutal as Moll Cutpurse, Jenny Diver, Mrs. Brownrigg, and Mary Bateman undoubtedly were, they were none the less women, and, in their own particular lines, representative women. The murder by Alice

Arden of her husband, though sordid enough in its details, is as what is nowadays called a *crime passionel*, redeemed from the reproach of vulgarity, and the dignity of history has done as much for the revolting sins of the vile Countess of Somerset. In the Duchess of Kingston is seen the type of the un-moral woman, innocent enough, no doubt, in a savage community, but particularly unwholesome if the well-being and progress of civilized society be held worthy objects of human endeavour. A form of crime, which is not vulgar because peculiarly feminine, is that exemplified in the case of Elizabeth Canning, who, although in her own day she almost escaped on a popular prejudice, and would probably have done the same to-day as a hysteric subject, was as wicked a little baggage as ever the devil inspired.

One class only of Bad Women has been designedly excluded, and that is the class to which the name is not uncommonly applied in a special and limited sense. No woman has been admitted simply because she exhibited the infirmity which takes the form of multitudinous and indiscriminate lasciviousness. That such weakness not seldom accompanies vices, which in themselves betoken bluntness of the finer feelings, is for the present purpose an accident. It may be that the line which has to be drawn is a narrow one, and that such characters as Con Phillips and Mary Anne Clarke are very near the border, but there is yet a clear distinction between these two women and a Messalina or Cora Pearl.

The twelve biographies have all been carefully compiled from the best available resources, and, inasmuch as no authorities (save in exceptional instances) are cited, it should be said that no statement of fact, which is not supported by authentic records, has been wilfully admitted.

January 1, 1897.

ALICE PERRERS.

ALICE PERRERS.

(D. 1400.)

“Where women reigne or be in authoritie, there must nedes vanitie be preferred to vertue, ambition and pride to temperancie and modesty and finallie that avarice, the mother of all mischefe must nedes devour equitie and justice.”—*JOHN KNOX.*

IT is no uncommon thing for pedigrees to come to an inconvenient stop in the ascending direction. Many volumes hardly contain the names and suitable accounts of the English families for whom it is claimed that the blood of Edward III. still trickles in their veins; and, no doubt, if all things might be known, another volume could be added containing the names of those who combine the blood of Edward and that of Alice Perrers. But beyond that on the lady's side it would in existing circumstances be difficult to go. Her origin is wrapped in mystery, and the lapse of five centuries has done nothing to throw light on it, although so great a span of time has not passed without giving birth to some ingenious speculation on the question. Archbishop Parker, for instance, thought that she might be identical with Alice Perot, the niece of William of Wykeham, a younger and most respectable lady, whose son was fellow of his college. More than one historian has confidently asserted that she was the child of John de Perrers, of Holt in Norfolk, and his wife, Gunnora Ormesby; but their daughter, named Elizabeth, should have been called Alice to make the theory more readily acceptable. Others again have held that she must have been the daughter or granddaughter of a Sir Richard Perers, who was returned to Parliament from time to time as representative of Hertford-

shire in the first thirty years of the fourteenth century, and who is thought, but probably not very correctly, to have been the same Sir Richard Perers who, some thirty years later, was branded as a common malefactor and spent many years in Stortford prison. This last Sir Richard had a son of the same name, to whom, in the opinion of others, the paternity of Alice should be ascribed, but the son had to fall back on fraudulent devices in his attempts to recover the confiscated acres of his father. His attempts were unsuccessful, though it is impossible to doubt that had it been his good fortune to own Alice Perrers as a daughter or even as a remote relative, he would have gained all he wanted without recourse to forgery and expensive suits.

The chroniclers of the fourteenth century and their immediate successors were in no uncertainty as to the lady's origin, and perhaps it is not disrespectful to the modern genealogists of Perrers to believe that the earlier information may be the more exact. According to her contemporaries Alice Perrers was of base kindred, being the daughter of either a weaver or a tiler of Hunneye ("beside Exeter, as some suppose"). The year of her birth is unknown, and it is therefore not possible to determine whether she possessed the usual number of teeth or only the twenty-eight to which persons born after the year of the Great Plague were restricted.¹ The probabilities are in favour of the usual number, for eighteen years after the Plague she was in high favour at King Edward's Court, and before gaining this eminence she had been a poor servant and had learnt the ways of love from "a certain fool that used with his hands to carry water from the conduit to men's houses for necessary use." The manner of her transition from the fool to the king has not been handed down. She may have found a humble place at Court, from which she succeeded in obtaining notice from the usually discreet eye of the King. After the death of Queen Philippa she was described as having been one of the ladies of her chamber, but there is no evidence that she was recognized as such in the Queen's lifetime. Occupying the position she did with regard to the King, the post could not have been a comfortable one, unless, indeed, the

¹ *Vide* Baker's "History," p. 131.

Queen was more indulgent to the foibles of her lord than many wives consider necessary. It was certainly some few years before Philippa's death that Alice was promoted "to the familiarity of the King more than was convenient," and it was a public scandal that she was preferred in the King's love. It is idle in this case, as it is in most others of love astray, to speculate on the causes that led up to Edward's infatuation. His record of constancy was a good one and his strong attachment to his queen had been notorious. Philippa had been an excellent wife and a prolific mother, and though, to judge from her effigy at Westminster, she was no longer beautiful, her rival had no advantage over her in this respect, being described as neither beautiful nor fair. Popular gossip accounted for Alice's ascendancy by her flattering tongue, and that she knew how to use that organ to excellent effect for her own ends the whole story of her relations with Edward bears witness. Further, it were indiscreet, if not futile, to inquire.

Her place in the affections of the King once gained, Alice Perrers set about turning it to the best account. She found herself in the position of the beggar on horseback and made the best use of her opportunity. Her dominant quality was avarice, and it had its natural complement in the regal extravagance of Edward, who was not only by disposition generous, but may, perhaps, have felt, with the modesty of advancing age, that the mere distinction of his protection was hardly sufficient reward for a lady who adapted herself with such ease to his requirements. The first recorded grant to her is an annual allowance of two tuns of wine per annum made in 1366, and this is probably but a token of numerous personal gifts; but what the acquisitive nature of Alice chiefly loved was landed property. Reversions to the crown were ever falling in, and if a manor thus reverting was lucrative or desirable, it became the property by royal grant of Alice Perrers. In 1367, for instance, the King's aunt having died, her manor of Ardington was granted to Alice, together with other property, which included the open fields in Merton with the enclosure of Mortoscough in the forest of Inglewood, and a piece of land in Northumberland. If it were possible to set forth the names and localities of all the estates thus acquired it would be over-

tedious to do so, for within ten years Alice became the proprietor of manors, lands, and tenements in no fewer than seventeen counties. Hers was no nominal ownership. Gain was her object, and no sooner was a grant of land recorded in her favour than she appointed an agent or bailiff whose duty it was to wring the uttermost penny from the luckless occupiers of the soil. Another profitable source of income was to be derived from the custody of minors, heirs of territorial rights, the profits of whose lands during their minority might be appropriated by the persons nominally made responsible for their maintenance. Several young gentlemen owed guardianship of this sort to the benevolent Alice, and as many others were, by the King's will, compelled to allow her to pocket a tax on their marrying.

Far the greater part of these numerous grants were made after a happy death had removed the Queen in August, 1369, when her rival and successor stepped into undisputed possession of the first place in the Court and in the realm. The King was then fifty-seven years old, an advanced age in the fourteenth century, and though the issue of the struggle waged within him between virility and senility was beyond a doubt, the momentary mastery of either one or the other was equally in favour of Alice. He was happy in bending to her will, and her will was only to receive or to prevent others from receiving. She is represented as being ever by the King, taking "whatever she could catch or snatch from his hands," and hindering him from recompensing poor servants that had long served him. If she was in want of money, a commodity which it was not always convenient even for the King to provide, she was allowed to borrow from the Treasury. This was, in fact, a cheap method of generosity for the King, as, when the loans had accumulated, it was only necessary for Alice to remind him of her position, to bring the accustomed influences to bear, and to receive forthwith by royal warrant a pardon of all her debts. In similar fashion she would borrow jewels from the King and afterwards obtain a pardon of their value which had been entered up against her. It is likely indeed that the jewels she borrowed were sometimes re-sold by her to the King and then borrowed again. She disposed of "jewels and things" one

Christmas to the King to the amount of £397, and was duly paid this sum out of the exchequer. There was, however, one set of jewels which it taxed her persuasive powers to the utmost to obtain. These were those that had belonged to the Queen, on whose death they had been handed over for safe keeping to the hands of Euphemia, wife of Walter de Heselarton, knight. Alice Perrers must have felt that if she occupied the position of the late queen, and something more, she was fairly entitled to such meaner attributes of royalty as jewellery and other personal belongings of value. The King appears to have differed; he may even have felt that a line might be drawn somewhere, or the members of his family have brought such influence as they could command to bear on him, but, whatever the reason, four years passed before a grant making over Philippa's jewels to Alice was formally enrolled. In extenuation of this gift of the King it has been argued by some of his or of her apologists on the strength of the wording of the grant, that not all but only some of the jewels were meant, and it is true that the inelegant Latin may be read thus ambiguously, but the most obvious and straightforward translation indicates the transfer of all the jewels. The point is not worth mention were it not for the strong insistence on it by commentators who, in order to mitigate the offence, have taken the curious means of proving (to their own satisfaction) that the bulk of the gift bestowed was less than had been supposed. The same writers have not unnaturally disdained to notice Alice's smaller depredations, which amounted in sum to a very considerable value. Nothing she could lay her hands upon came amiss to her, and she helped herself from the royal palace to enormous quantities of silver cups and dishes, bed-linen, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, curtains, silks, ribbons, and even remnants of cloth. These things and others of like character were doubtless taken for the embellishment of the home she made for herself as a place of retirement during the King's absence or as occasion might otherwise serve. This home was a moated mansion in the manor of Pallens-wick, a large estate to the north of and extending almost the whole length of what is now King Street, Hammersmith, and here, no doubt, were brought up the little girls by whose birth her union with the King was blessed from

time to time. It was unfortunate for Alice, as events afterwards proved, that nothing could be taken whether from the wardrobe or any other department of the royal household without an entry being made of the fact, and a woman of less assurance might have shrunk from the frequent encounters it was necessary to undergo with the jealous custodians of the royal property. The officers and dependents of the household disliked her cordially, if not openly, but, as Alice Perrers well knew, their hostility was harmless to her so long as her star remained in the ascendant. She could afford to exercise a hateful magnanimity and to scatter smiles and kind words among people who might despise them but who must needs appear grateful. Still, she was mindful of her dignity and was able to assert it when necessary in picturesque manner. Thus in 1375, when her unpopularity was fast becoming a force with which she had to reckon, and the good people of London were murmuring more audibly than decently at her all-embracing sway, Alice determined to give to the ignorant mob an object-lesson which should show to it the personage she was and the unassailable nature of the position she had won. Accordingly, a tournament was organized to be held at Smithfield under the direct patronage of the King. On the appointed day there started from the Tower a gorgeous procession consisting of a great number of ladies of high rank, each one of whom led by the bridle a knight on horseback, and in the centre a triumphal chariot which contained Alice Perrers in the character of the "Lady of the Sun," and the dotting King. Her raiment, which was magnificent and was, of course, supplied from the Wardrobe, included "a cap of tanned leather, broided with gold thread and bound with gold ribbon furred with ermine." The lists remained open for seven days, and on each of them the inhabitants of the city of London were privileged to behold the exultant progress through their midst of the "Lady of the Sun" surrounded by her satellites. The success was so great, or the effect produced was considered so satisfactory, that a similar "hastilude" was planned for the following Whitsuntide, and Alice provided herself—again from the Wardrobe—with "a cloth of gold tissue, lined with red taffeta" together with "a russet gown,

lined with white, furred with ermine." The death of the Black Prince put a stop to the festivities before they were commenced, but it is safe to assume that the garments were not returned.

Alice Perrers, however, had but little mind for diversions such as those described, except so far as they might be necessary or useful for the strengthening of her position and the attainment of her ends. Her business was to acquire riches by means fair or foul, and she was not slow to see that there were ways open to her other than the extraction of excessive remuneration for favours bestowed on the King. It is believed that she was the partner of Lord Latimer and Richard Lyons in the creation of a "corner" in necessary commodities, which was highly lucrative while it lasted. Lyons, who was the active partner, was a merchant of London and farmer of Customs, and was thus in a favourable situation to secure the first chance of purchasing imported merchandize. The simple plan of the confederates was for him to use this chance, and by buying up, with the capital his friends could provide, all importations of some given article, obtain an easy command of the market. The plan worked admirably well, and under Alice's protection Lyons was able to extend the sphere of their operations by selling patents to traders for monopolies. Another field for their activity was found among the numerous creditors of the King who had advanced him money, and having experienced difficulty in obtaining repayment were willing to sell their debts at a considerable discount for cash; the debts were bought up, and it was mere everyday work for Alice to obtain settlements in full from the Treasury. While her accomplices or agents were thus working for the common cause, she herself was busy on her own account. It came to be known that the influence and assistance of the most powerful person in the kingdom were at the service of suitors in the courts of law, and it is the truth that they were so—in return for a consideration. Alice, in fact, indulged in the offence of maintenance or of helping litigants to bring actions on condition of sharing in the winnings in the event of a successful issue. The weaker the cause, the higher was the price to be paid for its support; and the higher the price, the

greater was the chance of a favourable judgment. For, if in the early days of the system, before it was perfected, the judges had ventured to disregard the evidence of witnesses suborned by Alice, she soon found a way of teaching them manners if not justice. When a case in which she was interested came on for hearing she appeared in Westminster Hall and took her seat on the bench. From that point of vantage she was able to instruct the judge as to what was true and what was not, and as to the finding it was proper to give on the evidence as interpreted by her. The judges knew the character with which they had to deal, and were too wise to do otherwise than bow to what was for them, as for others, the royal will. Their brothers in the ecclesiastical courts were in a like case; they too had to bear the presence on their bench and the assistance in their councils of the self-appointed coadjutor, and knew no alternative but to concur with her if the defendant, though guilty of the worst crime known to the Consistory, was only rich enough to pay her fees. One instance only is on record of a miscarriage of Alice's designs in a court of justice, and in that she was vanquished by brute force. It happened that a great part of England's naval forces were congregated in London by order of John of Gaunt, and a unit of these forces was an unfortunate seaman, against whom, for some reason beyond the scope of conjecture, Alice Perrers bore a grudge. She was able to induce a certain squire, whose name has not come down to us, to kill this sailor; and there the matter should have ended, but the man's shipmates thought fit to regard it seriously, and to secure the capture and imprisonment of the murderer. He was brought up for trial in due course, and it was seen that the court was disposed to treat the matter lightly. Moreover, it was rumoured that, whatever the verdict in the case, Alice Perrers had thoughtfully armed herself with the royal warrant for the squire's pardon. The shipmates of the murdered man did not wait for the verdict: they rushed into court, seized the prisoner, and, taking him outside, "killed him like a swine, with a knife." Alice was beaten, and the sailors went scot free; but the man she wished to be punished was dead, and if the instrument of her wrath had shared a like

fate, he had at any rate served her purpose, and she had done what she could to save him. But though a body of ignorant men might thus venture to thwart her wishes, persons of any position who had anything to gain or lose could only pray that their path might never cross hers, since, if it did, they must submit with resignation to be trampled upon. An amusing illustration of the awe she inspired is found in the story of the manor of Oxhey. This manor was left by a pious lady, named Johanna Whitewell, to the powerful and grasping monastery of St. Albans, the representatives of which promptly entered into possession. But the land was claimed by one Thomas Fitz-John, who alleged that the manor was not Johanna's to bequeath, inasmuch as it belonged to him, and he therefore turned out the people put in by the Abbot of St. Albans, and formally claimed ownership. The tenants, however, were one and all in favour of the monastery, and joined with the monks in dislodging Fitz-John, who, finding the odds too strong for him, gave up outward struggle and prepared a mine for the fathers. He went to London, obtained an interview with Alice Perrers, and on terms which were probably not altogether in his favour conveyed the property to her. Then he returned with a small force of friends, dispossessed the abbot's men again, and announced the transfer of the property to Alice, whose seneschal, Robert of Warwick, then and there named a place and time at which the unwilling tenants were to assemble to attorn to their new mistress. The abböt conferred with his council on the steps to be next taken, and it being agreed that the greatness and power of Alice were such that it was useless to pursue justice against her, they reluctantly decided to desist from pressing their rights, and to leave her in peaceful possession. Her motive here was, as always, cupidity; and it is not to be imagined that she was actuated in any way by hostility to the Church. On the contrary, she posed as a pious woman, and was ready to advance money to religious bodies, as she did on one occasion to the Abbey of Westminster, provided the interest was high enough. Moreover, the Church owes no small debt to her for the assistance she gave to its distinguished servant, William of Wykeham.

When that good man was in great disfavour, and had been specially exempted from the general pardon granted in the King's jubilee year, which meant that his temporalities, of which he had been deprived, were not to be restored to him, Alice greatly damaged her own prospects by befriending the bishop, and thus opposing the will of his enemy, the Duke of Lancaster. The bishop hankered after those lost temporalities, and seeing no other means of getting them back, invoked the aid of Alice. What was the price he paid is not known, but it must have been considerable, for, in order to earn her money, she stirred up the bedridden King, who was at the time within three days of his death, and obtained from him the revocation of Wykeham's sentence.

This last example of Alice's power of combining charity and business is, however, in anticipation of the course of events. The Duke of Lancaster, when he took over the reins of government, had had perforce to come to a working arrangement with his father's favourite. With the one other exception of Isabella de Courcy, his eldest daughter, who on her return from France took up her residence with her father and Alice Perrers, and accompanied them to Havering, Eltham, Sheen, or whatever palace the pair might choose to occupy, Edward's other children viewed with extreme disapproval his relations with Alice. The Black Prince remained in his retirement at Berkhamstead, and although, no doubt, his continued illness was the principal cause of his leading so private a life, it is possible that he was partly influenced thereto by the hatred of his wife for the lady who guided the nation's destinies. The princess Joan, whose own polyandrous tastes had been largely and honourably satisfied, could afford to resent with stern indignation the aggrandisement by unchastity of a sister-woman. Alice Perrers, no doubt, preferred her contempt to more active hostility, and was content to have the more leisure for increasing her store. Public affairs, however, demanded a great deal of her attention and her time. During the absence of the King's sons she was to all intents prime minister, and inasmuch as outside the sphere of her own immediate interests she had no particular gift of wisdom, it is little subject for wonder that the adminis-

tration fell into contempt. The people of England, so long as they had no leader, endured her for their love of their king, but they are not to be blamed if they fixed on her the responsibility for the contempt in which their country was fast falling in the opinion of the world. They had almost the right to believe that that splendid fleet, four hundred ships strong, which had set sail under Edward's own command for the relief of Thouars, and returned to England without so much as nearing the opposite shore, was blown back not so much by contrary winds as by the hot breath of its leader's desire unto the witch to whose guidance he had entrusted his own and the nation's destinies. John of Gaunt can have had no more admiration for the lady's methods than the rest of the world; but when, at length, the truce with France left him free to turn his attention to domestic politics, he was quick to see that an active opposition to her could only be an obstacle to the attainment of his own ends. His nature was hardly more generous than her own, but he presented her with a hanap of beryl garnished with silver, which had been a gift to him, and so had cost him nothing; and she in turn, with equal freehandedness, obtained the grant of some manors, which for some reason she did not want for herself, to Catherine Swynford. Under their dual control things went well enough for them. They humoured the King, and did as they pleased; and since the schemes of the lady, at any rate, did not extend beyond herself and her immediate belongings, they left no permanent stain on the country's annals. Alice continued to amass wealth and to oppress the tenants who were unlucky enough to owe fealty to her. She knew probably better than any one else that the King's day on earth were practically numbered, and no sagacity was needed to predict that her own reign would come to an end at the same time as his. It was not the fault of her enemies, who were many, and who were liberally scattered over the country, that it did not come first. At the very time when Alice's position seemed more firmly established than ever, these enemies, who were led by the Black Prince's party, the opponents of the existing administration, were working most strenuously to undermine it. The result of their efforts was

seen when the Parliament, the assembling of which was necessitated by the lack of supplies, met at Westminster in April, 1376. The government of two had, apparently, given no consideration to the choice of representatives. They counted on a passive meeting of country gentlemen who would formally grant what money was asked for, and return peacefully to their homes. How they reckoned without their host was seen directly the Commons were gathered together. They were almost to a man supporters of the Black Prince and the claims of his son to the succession, as against the presumed ambition of the Duke of Lancaster to fill the throne on his father's death. They elected Sir Peter Delamare to be their Speaker, in the literal sense of the word, and that virtuous man began the good work by declaiming against the existing system, or want of system, of government, and all the misdeeds of those who directed the affairs of the nation. John of Gaunt was dumbfounded by the unexpected turn of the Parliamentary wheel. He could not at first believe that the honest fools were serious in applauding Sir Peter's contumacious speech, and at the close of the first day's proceedings his impulse was to appear before the Commons in the morning "so glorious that they would no more dare to provoke him to wrath." Counsel taken with less fiery friends convinced him that the opposition was too resolute to be silenced by the mere apparition of a prince, however glorious; and so on second thoughts "he laid aside all vigour and stoutness of stomach and next day appeared very favourable and mild." The Commons made the most of the free hand given them by the withdrawal of any active opposition. So soon as necessary business was concluded, what must have been a pre-concerted attack on the King's favourites was commenced. The first victims were Alice Perrers' friends and coadjutors, Richard Lyons and Lord Latimer. Lyons had scented danger and tried to escape it by sending to the Black Prince a barrel of gold in a barge, "as if it had been a barrel of sturgeon." The gift was sent back, and was re-addressed to the King, who was lying ill at Eltham. Alice was with him, and it is needless to say the gold was kept, but it made no difference to the immediate fate of Lyons, who was condemned to imprison-

ment during the King's will. Lord Latimer and others were likewise sentenced, and then came the turn of Alice Perrers.

There were present the representatives of the seventeen counties in which her property lay, and every one of them had listened to the groans of those who were forced to submit to her extortion. Each good knight was primed with some story of her enormities and turned an eager ear to the tale his neighbour had to tell. Most of these probably presented no point of attack, but the readiness displayed to seize upon the smallest chance of crushing her shows the temper of the country. One knight, for instance, had it on good authority that Alice had lured the King to unlawful love by the wicked enchantments of a Dominican friar who professed to be a physician but was really a magician. This friar, it was said, had made pictures of the king and Alice, by the skilful employment of which Alice could obtain whatever she wanted, and he had also made "rings of memory and forgetfulness." Here was something on which the "Good" Parliament could act. Its worthy leader commissioned his brother, Sir John Delamare, and Sir John Brentwood, to assume disguises and to proceed to Pallens-wick, and, if possible, secure the sorcerer. The crafty knights set off on their mission, and on arriving at Alice's house inquired if there was any one there who could cure diseases. The friar fell innocently into the trap, was seized by the knights and haled before Parliament. A whole day was spent in cross-examining the Dominican, but without effect, and at last the disappointed Commons yielded to the merciful suggestion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that justice would be satisfied if the man were handed over to the care of his Order.

Others of the knights unearthed a scandal touching Alice and a certain William de Windsor. They found out "by diligent search" that she was "greatly in love" with Windsor, and the astute idea was conceived of working on the jealousy of the King. It is more than likely, almost certain in fact, that there was some sort of foundation for this new charge which the sagacity of Alice's enemies enabled them to bring against her. William de Windsor was a needy knight of ancient family who for many years had served his king and

country with more or less distinction. He had been warden of the western marches, had fought against the French at Poitou, and was retained by Lionel, Duke of Clarence, at two shillings a day, to assist him in the government of Ireland. When that prince threw up his task and declared he would never go to the country again of his own free will, Windsor remained as lieutenant. From time to time he visited London, and on one of these occasions he would appear to have established some sort of intimacy with Alice Perrers. There is presumptive evidence that the advances came from the side of the lady, who, having no agency in Ireland, and yet believing that money might be exacted there as elsewhere if the right means were employed, conjectured that the position and poverty of Windsor would combine to make him the right instrument for her purposes. Her suggestions were well received, and for some years the history of his proceedings in Ireland is merely a record of his extortions and the complaints aroused thereby. While the King was yet vigorous he interfered with the game as much as was possible; he sent to Windsor to forbid him to levy the sums for which he had extorted grants from the commonalty of Dublin; he publicly rebuked him for his exactions and exercised his authority to prevent him from proceeding against the towns which resisted his demands; and more than once he sanctioned the appointment of a public inquisition on his rapacious habits. Nevertheless, when Alice Perrers had once grasped the reins of power she caused Windsor to be appointed Governor of Ireland, despite his tremendous unpopularity, and her hand is to be seen in the contract under which, in consideration of £11,218 6s. 8d., he undertook to find two hundred men and forty archers for a year. Perhaps it is not unfair to trace the same guiding spirit in the refusal of Windsor to pay the men's wages; that she, at any rate, was in some way concerned in the bargain seems clear from the fact that she herself openly drew sums of money from the exchequer on account of payments due to Windsor over this transaction.

How much more the knights of the Good Parliament found out about the relations existing between Alice Perrers and

the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland is not known, but some of them went and informed the King that they had proved her to be another man's wife, which was certainly untrue, and that he therefore had been living in adultery. The King denied all knowledge of his sins, and equally disclaimed having been a party to the unlawful acquisition of gain by his mistress, but he was forced to consent to her removal from his presence and to swear on the cross of the Archbishop of Canterbury that he would never see her again. Well has it been said "that it was barbarous to dictate in this unfeeling manner to a monarch who had once been the arbiter of Europe and to tear from the aged prince, now in his sixty-fifth year, a companion and confidant whom habit had rendered necessary to him; . . . a generous mind would have found some expedient less harsh than of forbidding to the venerable king her society and conversation." But the virtuous knights were in no mood for generosity; they exacted the like solemn oath from Alice, and the Archbishop and the other bishops present in Parliament all swore to excommunicate her if she should break her word. Nor had the worthy Commons yet done with her. They made a formal complaint that women had pursued business and quarrels in the King's courts by way of maintenance and for pay, and they constrained the King to pass an ordinance forbidding women to do so henceforth, and "in especial Alice Perrers, on pain of so much as the said Alice may forfeit and of being banished the realm." Alice had no choice but to retire in disgrace into private life, while her persecutors continued to harry the King and stretch his pliancy to the utmost, but her star, though eclipsed for the moment, was not yet on the wane. Fate willed it that the Black Prince, who was believed to be one of the chief instigators of the proceedings against her, and of the eloquence displayed by Sir Peter Delamare on the grievances of the nation in general, should die while the Good Parliament was still putting things to rights. The practical effect of this unhappy event was to undo the Parliament's chief labours, for when its string of petitions to the King was exhausted, and the last concession to its wishes had been made by the enfeebled invalid, the Parliament was

necessarily dissolved. It then became apparent that there was no authority able or willing to enforce the excellent measures that had been so lately passed. The persons who had been driven to bow their necks before the storm ventured to raise their heads, looked round them, and seeing all was calm, emerged into the open. John of Gaunt resumed the administration of affairs. Lord Latimer, and others who had been condemned, reappeared at Court, and Alice Perrers, making light of perjury, returned to the King. There was no one to say her nay ; there might and did arise great murmurings of the people at this ineffectiveness of the popular Parliament, but even the Archbishop and his suffragans "were made like dumb dogs not able to bark," and were restrained by fear from excommunicating her. The King welcomed back his companion ; he had got on ill without her, and though it may not be necessary to believe with one chronicler that the disease he suffered from was inordinate lust of the flesh, yet it is certain that in her absence both his health and spirits were at their lowest ebb. Alice was able so successfully to foster the spark of life that yet remained in the weak old man that he was able to rise from his bed and, leaving his retirement, to eat in public at Westminster his Christmas dinner with his grandson and successor.

It now only remained for Alice Perrers and her friends to make an example of some one of those who had despitefully used them. Obviously the efficient cause of their troubles was the talkative Sir Peter Delamare, and inasmuch as his long tongue, when let loose at Westminster, had not stopped short of expostulation at the failings of the Duke of Lancaster, he, too, was of their mind in wishing for a handsome revenge. Without any formalities of trial or justice the excellent harbinger of free speech in England was sent off to gaol in Newark, or Nottingham—perhaps to both in turn—there to remain without prospect of release till fortune or the course of nature should again place his friends in power. Alice Perrers was in favour of taking him into a wood and cutting off his head without ado, and as there was none of those in power who had any objection, this summary clapper would no doubt have been put in Sir Peter's eloquence had

not Sir Henry Percy intervened and begged off the first Speaker's life from John of Gaunt. Alice Perrers yielded the point; for all she knew to the contrary the abode of dead demagogues was a pleasanter place than Newark gaol, and the imprisonment would last as long as she remained where she did. Matters more practical claimed her attention. Richard Lyons, one of the chief instruments of her rapacity, had been really imprisoned as a result of his condemnation by the Good Parliament, and some of his goods and lands which had been forfeited were now in the possession of two of the King's sons. The man wanted not only his freedom but his property, and Alice, to whose credit it must be stated that she always stood by her useful friends, applied herself to the satisfaction of his wishes. His release was an easy matter, but in view of the opposition to be encountered and the necessity of keeping on as good terms as possible with the princes, the restitution of property presented some difficulties. They were overcome, however, by Alice, who persuaded the King to send a special messenger to his sons with instructions to restore at once under pain of his displeasure what they had so lately gained. If she had any reward herself beyond the pleasing consciousness of seeing justice done it may possibly be traced in connection with the remission to Lyons of an alleged debt of £300 which he owed to the Treasury, and the gift to him of 1,000 marks. Another of her friends who required her good offices was Sir William de Windsor. He had come to London while Parliament was sitting—perhaps on the news that the representatives of the people with characteristic impetuosity had already caused to be purchased by the hands of John Buck a coffer to contain the rolls and memoranda of accusations against him. He had been received by the King, and for quarrelling in the King's presence in the house of the Brethren of St. Mary of Mount Carmel, had been imprisoned, only to be released at once and sent back to his duties in Ireland. His enemies at Court were many, and included John of Gaunt, who had once before caused Sir Nicholas Dagworth, a noted enemy of Windsor, to be sent to Ireland to investigate his conduct, and who was now very unwilling that the Lord-Lieutenant should continue

in office. He did not oppose his return, but immediately sent Dagworth after him with the same mission as before. Alice Perrers was exasperated at his interference in a matter which seemed to concern herself only, and on her own responsibility had a warrant prepared for Dagworth's immediate recall. The King, of course, signed it, despite the order of the Council authorizing Dagworth's errand, and the messenger came back. It was now the turn of John of Gaunt, who liked being thwarted no better than Alice, to assert his power as Regent before his friends on the Council, and he accordingly sought a private interview with the King at Havering. After much argument he obtained a promise that Dagworth and Windsor should both be summoned to the royal presence with the object of proving Dagworth's impartiality. As he left the King's room he found Alice at the door, and in reply to her entreaties that Dagworth should not go back sternly replied that the King's will must be done. But although Alice might ask a favour of Lancaster as a matter of compliment she relied on more effectual means for securing the accomplishment of her will. The hours of the night belonged to her, and how to turn them to her advantage was her secret. When Lancaster came in the morning to bid good-bye to his father as he lay in bed, the King swore that, ordinance of Council or not, Dagworth should not go to Ireland, and, after all, the son retired worsted by the lady.

Meanwhile Alice Perrers had not forgotten that she owed something to herself, and must take steps to clear her own character. Inasmuch as it was in Parliament that indignity had been put upon her, she determined that it was the duty of Parliament to see her righted, and she lost no time in doing her utmost to provide an opportunity. In some six months' time the stingy grants made by the Good Parliament were exhausted, and it became necessary to obtain further supplies. No such mistake as had been made before in the selection of knights of the shire was allowed on this occasion, and when the faithful Commons assembled at Westminster in January, 1377, there were present scarcely more than a dozen of those who had shown such prowess the year before. The others were to a man supporters of the Government, as

were also the Lords, with whom they met in conference. Proceedings were opened by the Chancellor, the Bishop of St. David's—who, being an ecclesiastic, was ineligible for his office—with a sermon from the text, "Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing that ye yourselves are wise," the application of which was, as he went on to explain, that he was a fool and the Members of Parliament were wise. Naturally the Commons were flattered, and they were further cheered by the Bishop's assurance that the King was almost restored to health. They proceeded gaily with business, voted supplies, invented a new tax, refused to listen to prayers on behalf of the languishing Sir Peter Delamare, and, after showing their independence by presenting a few popular petitions to the King, dispersed to their homes. Alice had had a Bill prepared which set forth that she had been shut out of common liberty *par meinz vrai suggestion et sans due procès*, and demanded that the judgment against her should be annulled. For some reason—probably because it was thought well to dissolve Parliament as soon as possible after the voting of supplies—the Bill was never presented. The general pardon granted in honour of the King's Jubilee to all persons except the unfortunate Wykeham, who was reserved as a sacrifice to Alice's greed, included Alice herself, and made her legally free, but the ordinance of the Good Parliament remained on record against her.

The King's restoration to health was, of course, a figment of faith on the part of the Bishop of St. David's. In January, before the meeting of Parliament, he had been removed from Havering to Sheen, and there he now lay very ill and greatly suffering. Sometimes he found energy, or the task was performed for him, to order costly raiment to be sent to him in his chamber to be presented to Alice Perrers. But Alice was, as always, bent on also acquiring less perishable property than clothing, and knew that in all human probability but little time was left her for increasing her store. For once she was unselfish enough to think of others than herself, and did not forget to obtain handsome settlements for her daughters Joan. There is no good reason to doubt that these two girls of one name were the children of

Edward as well as of Alice, but there is some doubt as to the parentage of Isabella, a third illegitimate daughter ascribed to Edward. There is nothing to connect Isabella with Alice Perrers, who in her will only mentions the two Joans, but Isabella had left the country, having married a Spanish nobleman who proudly quartered the English leopards, and may have predeceased her mother. Alice Perrers, having fulfilled her maternal obligations, was at liberty to make further provision for herself. She prudently refrained from interference in the troubles of John of Gaunt, who, while she remained at Sheen, was suffering hard things from the Londoners, and steadfastly ministered to the King and to her own requirements. She forgot nothing, and one of the last of Edward's grants to her was, like the first of which we have record, two tuns of Gascon wine a year for life. If others thought to benefit themselves by wresting a gift from the feeble invalid before he died disappointment followed the attempt; for throughout the day Alice sat immovable at the head of the King's bed, as throughout the night she lay in it, and there was no suitor for the royal bounty so foolish as not to recognize the futility of asking for the humblest thing in the presence of the dreadful nurse. If the historians of the time may be trusted to have faithfully recorded even conversation, the nurse continually persuaded her patient that recovery was sure, and encouraged him to talk of hunting and hawking, and of any other trifle rather than of what pertained to his salvation. She herself was under no delusion. When she struck her bargain with Wykeham and obtained for him the restitution of his temporalities, she must have reckoned that the great offence thus given to John of Gaunt would cost her little, since both she and he would very soon have it out of their power to damage either one another or any one else; and her reasoning, although falsified by the turn of events, was justifiable. The end was indeed near at hand. It was only three days later when Alice, recognizing that it was at last useless to hope for even one more gift from Edward III., prepared to part with him. She drew the rings from the fingers of the helpless, dying man and stole unobtrusively away.

To slink into the retirement of private life, thus acknowledging that her day was gone by, was clearly the wisest and safest policy that Alice Perrers could now pursue. She had taken at the flood the tide which led to fortune, and so long as the tide at its turn left her high and dry in peaceful possession of her ill-won gains she could count herself happy. For practical purposes the potentiality of evil-doing in the familiar way was removed from her, and although the party which the King's death placed in power was very far from friendly to her, it might well be the wiser course for them to let bygones be bygones rather than to revive past grievances. But if Alice built up for herself any such hopes of oblivion she neglected to take into account the jealous and revengeful hostility which during all the years of her self-aggrandizement had been gathering force among both high and low. There were against her not only the actual victims of her robbery and oppression, but the larger multitude of disappointed persons who fancied that had it not been for her they might have enriched themselves, including also the officers and dependents of the Court, who had carefully marked and written up against her every one of her depredations. The storm broke on her peaceful retirement at Pallens-wick with surprising quickness. Almost immediately after the accession of Richard II. a Commission, which was evidently aimed against her, was appointed to take an inventory of the Crown jewels and to administer an oath to such persons as were suspected of having them in their possession. Though the report of this Commission has not come down, it is hardly possible that Alice Perrers can have escaped conviction, and this result no doubt led to the next step against her, which took the form of a writ addressed to the Sheriffs of London (November 20, 1377), inviting "all persons having any suit or claim to make against Alice for any extortions, oppressions, injuries, grievances, or excesses by her committed against the King and his people to prefer their petitions to Parliament before the ensuing Saturday, when, by the permission of God, justice should be done them." As soon as Parliament met she was summoned before the Lords to answer certain charges. There would

appear to have been some difficulty as to the choice of the charge by which her case could be most effectually dealt with, and it was finally determined to utilize the ordinance passed against her by the Good Parliament. The ordinance was therefore recited to her by Sir Richard le Scrope, the seneschal of the King's household, who went on to say that it seemed to the Lords that she had brought herself within the terms of the decree in various ways, and especially in procuring the pardon of Lyons and preventing Dagworth's mission to Ireland. Alice replied that she was not guilty, as she was ready to prove by the testimony of John de Ypres, the Seneschal of Edward III., William Street, the Comptroller, Alan Buxhull, Nicholas Carew, the Keeper of the Privy Seals, and others about the King. She was instructed to return on the following Wednesday, and a committee, consisting of the Duke of Lancaster, one of his brothers, and three other earls, was nominated to hear the witnesses. On the day appointed Alice did not appear; she had failed to find any member of the royal household who would give evidence in her favour, and nearly every one of those she had promised to call appeared against her. The principal witness was the chief of her judges, the Duke of Lancaster, who gave a long account of Alice's interference in the Dagworth matter, and whose evidence was supported by Roger Beauchamp, ex-Chamberlain, and Sir Peter de la Vache. Other witnesses swore to Alice having been sitting by the King's bed when Lyons was summoned to the royal presence, and to all the directions for his pardon and the restoration of his property having been given by her. John Beverley said that he had never heard either matter mentioned by the King or by Alice, for she always took care to say nothing in his presence, but he believed in his conscience that she was the prime mover, and he thought her guilty. The trial was not, in fact, a very fair one, but it served. The judges, having found her guilty, decreed that the ordinance against her should have the force of statute, and that she should be banished, and all her possessions forfeited to the King, as well as all lands of which she took the profits or made bargain to her own profit by reason of the fraud and

deceit that was to be presumed. It was further resolved that the ordinance was made for restraining and punishing Alice Perrers only, and was not to extend to others nor be taken as an example, her case being especially odious. The Commons, under the guidance of Alice's old enemy, Sir Peter Delamare, who had been released from gaol to lead their deliberations, actively supported the Lords. They petitioned the King, demanding that judgment might be executed upon Alice according to her deserts and without favour or affection, and that, in consideration of the great damage she had done the kingdom, her forfeited estates might be applied to the relief of the people whom she had in so many ways injured.

The petition granted, the distribution of Alice's large possessions proceeded apace. It is to be feared the poor were somewhat overlooked, but John of Gaunt condescended to take for himself the new hostel lately made by her on the banks of the Thames (by Cannon Street), and all the new houses which she built in the Ropery between the alleys called Weston Lane and Wolfy Lane, in the City of London; and two of the best of her manors fell to the lot of his son-in-law, Sir John de Holand. Special officers were appointed to trace and seize the multifarious objects which Alice had collected, and long lists of her goods were issued to the sheriffs, with orders to deliver the articles named to the keeper of the Wardrobe, or other official whose duty it might be to account for them. Some of these lists are still extant, and although not furnishing interesting reading matter, are very curious as illustrating the watchful care taken in recording and cataloguing every theft, small and great, committed by the prosperous Alice Perrers. One haul alone, comprising part of her jewellery, included 21,868 pearls, besides 30 ounces of small ones, and another took in such trifles as a pair of gloves and an odd yard of ribbon.

The lady herself, while the sack of her property went on, withdrew from observation, if not into exile, and took with her, it is said, £20,000. She was not yet at the end of her resources, and was determined not to let her possessions, gathered through so many years, pass from her for ever

without an effort to recover them. She laid her plans, and began by marrying Sir William de Windsor, a step at once necessary and artful. Being under sentence of banishment, she could not herself petition Parliament, but her husband could, and when Parliament met at Gloucester the following year Windsor, who was himself a member of it, applied for a reversal of judgment against Alice, on the ground of certain errors in the record. These alleged errors were that she had had to answer on insufficient notice, that the case ought to have been tried in the King's Bench, that she was not present when the issue was tried, and, above all, that she was put to answer as a single woman, whereas she was and, had been for a long time, the wife of William de Windsor. This last statement was, of course, untrue and, if true, could have been pleaded at the time; but it was craftily and safely made, for the first Parliament which impeached her had decided for its own ends that she was then, two years ago, already married to Windsor. On the other hand, she herself was charged with continuing within the realm after having been banished, and the two trials dragged on until finally, more than a year later (December, 1379) the sentence of banishment was revoked, and she was pardoned for her contempt of court. It still remained to Alice to recover her landed property, and here fortune seemed to favour her. Windsor's services were required for the expedition made into France early in the following year, and men also were wanted. Windsor had neither goods nor money, but at the instigation and expense of his new-made wife he undertook to find a hundred men-at-arms for half a year, in consideration of a grant to him of her forfeited estates. The terms were accepted, to the immense joy of Alice, but the terms of the grant, though she knew it not, were very carefully drawn so as to exclude her from any claim to the ownership after her husband's death. The grant was, in fact, expressly made to Windsor and his heirs in such a manner as to disinherit Alice and her heirs, and there can be but little doubt of Windsor being a party to the trick thus played upon his covetous wife. He had, however, apparently fulfilled the duties he had been married to perform, and went off to France, where he stayed

as Governor of Cherbourg. His bride, who had no further need of his services, gleefully set about the recovery of her lost possessions, but met with small success. The new owners of her estates were disinclined to part with them, and she could, of course, hope for no support from the tenants, who abhorred her name. Moreover, the times had grown troublous, rebellion was afoot through the land, and it was easier to proclaim legal rights than to enforce them. Even the Abbot of St. Albans, who had formerly yielded possession of his manor of Oxhey to the powerful mistress of the King, and who on her conviction had re-entered, was now indisposed to recognize her title. With something of her old imperious arrogance at resistance, Alice collected a strong body of men, who frightened the monks off the land, wasted their growing crops and destroyed their mill; but even the Abbot recognized the changed circumstances, and commenced an action at law. The defence of the action was not left to Alice, for it was scarcely begun when William de Windsor died. In his will, which was nuncupative, no mention was made of his wife, his possessions being left in trust for the payment of his debts, and then to his heirs-at-law, who were his three sisters. Alice, who believed that all her former property devolved on her in virtue of the grant of it to Windsor, prepared to resume possession in her own right, but wherever she turned she found herself forestalled by John de Windsor, the nephew and executor of William. William had died heavily in debt, and his creditors took advantage of his widow's steadfast belief in her rights to obtain from her recognizances for the accounts owing to them, while John, who was really responsible, took the cheaper course of obtaining a pardon for all his uncle's debts. Thus Sir John de Holand, who already held two of Alice's fairest estates, and who stepped into the governorship of Cherbourg on Windsor's death, obtained her bond for £6,000 and enforced it. Others did likewise, and never was woman more harassed than was Alice Perrers in her futile endeavours to regain possession of the properties she had spent her best years in acquiring, and which ever now eluded her grasp. Yet, growing old as she was, she never abated her activity, and at least succeeded in

afflicting considerable annoyance on the usurpers of her rights. In 1389 she took proceedings against Wykeham to recover a quantity of jewels of great value, which she asserted she had pawned with him after her indictment. Fortunately for the good bishop, he himself was one of the judges who tried the case, and accepted his affirmation that he had never seen or heard of any such jewels, so once again Alice met with discomfiture. But her arch-enemy was John de Windsor, whose every step she dogged with unwearied energy, but to little or no purpose. She gained a momentary triumph when, in 1393, she procured his committal to Newgate on a charge of detaining her goods to the value of £3,000 and her daughter's goods to £4,000, but he was immediately admitted to bail. She had by this time found out the terms of the grant to Windsor, and petitioned the King to restore her lands and tenements on the ground that such was the intention of the grant, but that by the fraudulent device of some who were no friends of hers the property had been settled on the heirs of Windsor, the proof of her contention being found in the fact that it was she who sustained all the charges of Windsor's hundred men-at-arms. This petition, like so many others which the pertinacious and exasperated woman constantly made to the King and to Parliament, was referred and remained unheeded. Her last recorded appearance was at Shrewsbury, whither, though close on, or perhaps past, seventy years of age, she followed the Parliament to tell once more her story and to pray relief. The session lasted only three days, but the importunate widow made herself heard, and actually had a promise of redress. But the redress never came. The Parliament made the King omnipotent for a time, but his own troubles exacted all his attention, and very soon the weary Alice Perrers saw another young king on the throne. The struggle of her declining years was therefore to begin anew, and with less hope than ever of success. She lost heart at the cheerless prospect, and in the summer of 1400 became seriously ill while living at Upminster, where she was allowed to occupy an estate which she called her own. In August she recognized that she could no longer hope for what she considered

justice on earth, and made her last will. For the dispositions of this document, which is still extant, she nerved herself to a generosity which in her was almost reckless. After directing that her body should be buried in Upminster Church, she bequeathed to that church one of her best oxen for a mortuary and ten marks for ornaments; forty shillings for wax to burn about her body, forty shillings for repairing the highways near the town, ten marks to be distributed among the poor of the parish on the day of her burial, to the chaplain six marks, and to John Pelham, the sacrist, three shillings and fourpence. Legacies to a number of servants followed, and then came the disposition of the manors, which the obstinate testatrix claimed in death as in life. To the younger Joan she specially left her manor of Gaynes in Upminster, and proceeded in Latin words to this effect: "To Joan and Joan my daughters all my other manors and advowsons which John Windsor or others have by his consent usurped, the which I desire my heirs and executors to recover and see them parted between my daughters, for that I say on the pain of my soul he had no right there nor never had; but if Joan the elder claims the manor of Compton Murdak, she is to have none of the rents and reversions in London, because I wish that manor to be sold for my soul." The executors of the will were Joan the younger and the favourite daughter, who was married to Sir Richard Northland, and John Kent, merchant. The elder Joan was the wife of Robert Skerne, and a monument in Kingston Church commemorated the virtues of the pair.

Little enough time was left to Alice Perrers for further consideration as to the means of securing salvation for her guilty soul, for five days later she died. Her daughters did not inherit her taste for pursuing a shadow, and appear to have resigned the intangible benefits conferred on them by their dying mother. Even the younger Joan, as well as her co-executor, declined administration of the will, and left the pleasing task to a priest, whose troubles, if he attempted to execute the trust, are unrecorded. The retribution which overtook Alice Perrers in the later years of her life suggests an agreeable theme for the moralist; but morals are best left

to be drawn by readers, according to individual taste. It is possible that there are even now persons depraved enough to think that it were worth a man's or woman's while to suffer in old age if only he or she, while in the prime of life, could wield the sway and garner the wealth that Alice Perrers did, and of what profit are morals to such? Yet it is likely that if the woman's whole career could be uncovered further than can now be done with the scanty and scattered materials which remain, there is no one, however depraved, who would not shrink from envy.

ARTHUR VINCENT.

ALICE ARDEN.



THE MURDER OF ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

ALICE ARDEN.

(EX. 1551.)

“ We can
Measure the height of any star, point out
All the dimensions of the earth, examine
The sea’s large womb, and sound its subtle depth ;
But art will ne’er be able to find out
A demonstration of a woman’s heart.”

JAMES SHIRLEY.

THE chronicler Ralph Holinshed, narrating the historical events of Edward VI.’s reign, turns aside to tell the story of the murder of Thomas Arden, of Feversham (or Faversham). “ It may seem,” he apologizes, “ to bee but a private matter, and therefore as it were impertinent to thys Hystorie ” ; but on account of its “ horribleness ” he determined to “ sette it foorth somewhat at large. ” He employed all diligence in gathering information from authentic sources ; and modern research has added little to his graphic narrative. The crime was made the subject of a powerful anonymous drama (which may have undergone revision at Shakespeare’s hand) published in 1592,¹ and also supplied material for a dismal ballad.

Thomas Arden (or Ardern) is traditionally stated to have

¹ *The Lamentable and True Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent, Who was most wickedlye murdered, by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the loue she bare to one Mosbie, tyred two desperat ruffins Blackwill and Shakbag, to kill him. Wherin is stewed the great mallice and discimulation of a wicked woman, the vnsatiabte desire of filthie lust and the shamefull end of all murderers. Imprinted at London for Edward White, dwelling at the tyttle North dore of Pautes Church at the signe of the Gun. 1592. 4to. Other editions were published in 1599 and 1633.*

been born near Wye in Kent.¹ He became chief comptroller of his Majesty's Customs at Faversham, was a jurat in 1544 and in 1548 served as mayor of the town. His wife Alice was a step-daughter of Sir Edward North, father of the translator of Plutarch. Arden is described by Holinshed as a tall, comely man ; and Alice Arden was a tall, well-favoured young gentlewoman. As malignant fate would have it, Alice became enamoured of a certain low-bred fellow, one Richard Mosby, a tailor by trade, and a servant in the North family. An ill-featured, odious rascal, of a swarthy complexion, was this Mosby ; the last man in the world likely to find favour in the eyes of a young, handsome, high-born woman. One account² says that Alice had been familiar with Mosby before her marriage, and that her friends married her to Arden with a view to putting a stop to the intimacy. Holinshed does not hint at any prenuptial irregularities. He states, however, that Arden was well aware of the guilty relations that existed between Mosby and Alice after her marriage, and that he was "contented to winke at her filthie disorder" because he was loth to offend her and lose the benefits that he hoped to derive from her kinsmen's powerful influence. The dramatist represents Arden's conduct in a less odious light. At one moment suspecting his wife to be disloyal, at another convinced of her innocence—now harassed by fears, then elate with confidence—Arden, in the dramatist's conception of him, was weak-minded but not wholly contemptible ; uxorious, a poltroon (though it would have needed a strong hand indeed to curb Alice Arden's imperious temper), but never a wittol.

Her infatuation for Mosby drove Alice Arden to plan the murder of her husband. In Faversham lived a painter named Clark, who was reputed to be skilled in the mixing of poisons, and to him Alice repaired. The painter, who was in

¹ The statement occurs among some MS. notes found many years ago in a lumber-room at the Dolphin Inn, Faversham. The writer, a Mr. Burton, says that he gathered his information "from the auncientest people." We are told in these notes that Arden was fifty-six years old when he came to Faversham (his wife being twenty-eight) ; but he was probably younger.

² The MS. notes of Mr. Burton.

love with Mosby's sister Susan, promised—on condition that Mosby should further his suit—to make away Arden by poison. At that time the art of poisoning had been carried to a high pitch of refinement. The painter suggested that he should paint a portrait of Alice and temper poison with the oil, so that her husband might perish by the fumes when he gazed upon the picture. But the Italianate subtlety of this suggestion did not commend itself to Alice and her paramour. They urged that some simpler method would be preferable; accordingly Clark prepared some noxious powder, and instructed Alice to put it in a porringer and pour milk upon it. She forgot the instructions and, instead of pouring the milk on to the powder, put the milk in first and the powder afterwards. Arden, having occasion to ride to Canterbury, rose early and called for his breakfast (which usually consisted of butter and milk), whereupon Alice set before him the poisoned porringer. After taking a spoonful or two he found the taste unpleasant, and he also complained of the colour of the milk, saying, "Mistress Alice, what milk have you given me here?" Alice, equal to the critical occasion, seized the bowl and upset the contents, pettishly exclaiming, "I ween nothing can please you." Without further question Arden rode off to Canterbury, and on the journey "fell into extreme purging upwards and downwards."

A certain Green, of Faversham, servant to Sir Anthony Ager, was now consulted by Alice. This man cherished a grievance against Arden, conceiving that Arden had unjustly wrested from him a piece of ground at the back of the Abbey of Faversham. Fierce words had passed between them, and they had even come to blows. With many oaths Green had vowed to take vengeance on Arden; and Alice applied herself to fan the flame, offering Green ten pounds wherewith to hire assassins, and promising to repossess him of the Abbey grounds when the murder had been accomplished. Green, having occasion to go to London, asked his neighbour Bradshaw, a goldsmith, who had no knowledge of the conspiracy directed against Arden, to accompany him as far as Gravesend. At Rainham Down they saw three or four serving-men coming from the direction of Leeds, and at the same moment

Bradshaw espied two desperate ruffians, one known as Black Will and the other as Shakebag, advancing up the hill from Rochester. Bradshaw congratulated his companion on the presence of the serving-men; for he was well acquainted with the infamous character of Black Will (who was armed with a sword and buckler), having served as a soldier with him some years previously at Boulogne under Sir Richard Cavendish. Many robberies and many heinous murders had been committed in those early days by Black Will, and he was still ready for cut-throat work. Here was the very man for Green's purpose. The serving-men invited Black Will and Shakebag to accompany them to Gravesend, and held out the bait of a supper. Green and Bradshaw joined the company. Bradshaw was anxious to avoid conversation with Black Will, but the ruffian claimed his acquaintance and reminded him of the days when they were fellows-in-arms. Green took occasion to talk with Black Will on the journey, and promised to regale him with sack and sugar after supper. When Black Will presented himself in the evening at the hostelry where Green and Bradshaw were staying, Green drew him aside and explained the nature of the business on which he proposed to employ him, and named the reward. Needless to say that Black Will undertook the commission with alacrity. After concluding the arrangement Green wrote to Mistress Arden a letter in which occurred the words "we have gote a man to our purpose, we may thanke my brother Bradshaw." On the following morning Bradshaw started back for Faversham, and—ignorant of its compromising contents—duly delivered Green's letter into the hands of Mistress Arden; and Green, accompanied by Black Will and Shakebag, proceeded by boat with the tide to London. At this time Arden was on a visit to London, and would certainly be found in or about St. Paul's Churchyard (then the ordinary resort for business or pleasure). Green and Black Will lay in wait for him, and in due course he appeared, followed by his serving-man Michael. Black Will, with his natural ferocity, was for killing them both; but Green explained that Michael (who was the painter's rival for the hand of Susan Mosby) had promised to be an accomplice in the murder. For some

time Black Will hung about St. Paul's Churchyard in the hope of finding an opportunity of stabbing Arden, but it happened that Arden was joined by several friends, who accompanied him to dinner at the ordinary. Meanwhile Green talked with Michael, and it was agreed that Michael should leave unbolted the doors of the house where his master was staying, so that Black Will might murder Arden in the night. At night, when his master had retired, Michael, as he lay abed expecting the advent of Black Will, became unnerved. From the moment he had set eyes on the desperado he "ever after" (says Holinshed) "stood in doubt of Black Will least he should kill him." Green's promise of protection had reassured him in the day-time, but now, in the watches of the night, fear assailed ¹ him, and, creeping

¹ The dramatist, in the following agonized soliloquy, has powerfully depicted Michael's overwhelming terror :—

“Conflicting thoughts incamped in my breast
 Awake me with the echo of their strokes,
 And I, a judge to censure either side,
 Can give to neither wishèd victory.
 My master's kindness pleads to me for life
 With just demand, and I must grant it him :
 My mistress she hath forced me with an oath
 For Susan's sake, the which I may not break,
 For that is nearer than a master's love :
 That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,
 And Shakebag stern in bloody stratagem,
 Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent,
 Have sworn my death if I infringe my vow,
 A dreadful thing to be considered of.
 Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair
 Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,
 And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,
 Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths,
 Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,
 Art mangled by their ireful instruments.
 Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,
 And pitiless Black Will cries, ' Stab the slave !
 The peasant will detect the tragedy !'
 The wrinkles in his foul death-threat'ning face
 Gape open wide, like graves to swallow men.
 My death to him is but a merriment
 And he will murder me to make him sport.
 He comes, he comes ! oh, Master Franklin, help !
 Call up the neighbours or we are but dead !”

(Franklin was a friend staying in the house with Arden.)

from his bed, he bolted the doors. Black Will, foiled of his purpose, sought Green the next morning and swore that he would make it his first business to kill Michael for having played him false. Green went to Michael and inquired how came the doors to be locked, whereupon Michael declared that his master, clean contrary to his wont, had risen in the night to shut the doors, and had soundly rated him in the morning for leaving them open. The explanation pacified Black Will.

It was now agreed that Black Will should lie in wait on Rainham Down for Arden, who would drop down with the tide to Gravesend, and then ride to Faversham. At Rochester the timorous Michael, still dreading that he would be killed along with his master, "pricked his horse of purpose and made him to halt." Arden rode on, and Michael was to follow when the blacksmith had removed the horseshoe and searched the foot. As he approached the spot where Black Will was concealed, it chanced that Arden was overtaken by several gentlemen of his acquaintance, and so once more Black Will was baffled.¹

¹ In the play Arden is accompanied by his friend Franklin. As they approach the place of ambush, Franklin—who is narrating a story of an inconstant wife—suddenly finds himself unable to continue :—

" Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more :
This fighting at my heart makes short my wind."

On the previous night Arden had been troubled with an ominous dream :—

" This night I dreamed that, being in a park,
A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer,
And I upon a little rising hill
Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach.
Even there, methought, a gentle slumber took me,
And summoned all my parts to sweet repose ;
But in the pleasure of this golden rest
An ill-thew'd foster [forester] had removed the toil
And rounded me with that beguiling home
Which late, methought, was pitch'd to cast the deer.
With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,
And at the noise another herdman came
With falchion drawn and bent it at my breast,
Crying aloud, ' Thou art the game we seek !'

After his return home Arden sent Michael with a letter to Sir Thomas Cheiney (Master of the Cinque Ports) in the Isle of Sheppey. The letter that Sir Thomas wrote in reply was taken by Alice from Michael, who at his mistress's direction told Arden that he had lost Sir Thomas's letter, and did not know its import, adding that he thought it best for his master to go the next morning to Sheppey. Meanwhile Green had contrived to harbour Black Will and Shakebag in a storehouse belonging to Sir Anthony Ager at Preston, where Alice visited them and supplied them with food and drink. Early the following morning Arden and Michael started for Sheppey, and Black Will made for a certain "broom-close" which Arden must needs pass on his way between Faversham and the Ferry. As they drew near the appointed spot Michael pretended that he had dropped his purse, and was sent back by his master to find it. Arden passed in safety, for Black Will had lost his way.¹ In the hope of securing their victim on the homeward journey, the ruffians again lay in wait at nightfall, but again failed to achieve their object.

St. Valentine's Fair being now at hand, the impatient Alice

With this I waked and trembled every joint :
 Like one obscurèd in a little bush,
 That sees a lion foraging about,
 And when the dreadful forest king is gone
 He pries about with timorous suspect
 Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,
 And will not think his person dangerless,
 But quakes and shivers though the cause be gone.
 So trust me, Franklin, when I did awake
 I stood in doubt whether I waked or no,
 Such great impression took this fond surprise.
 God grant this vision beddem me any good."

¹ According to the dramatist it was a very misty morning. Black Will and Shakebag are shown floundering about in the ditches. "Oh, Will, where art thou?" says Shakebag. "Here, Shakebag," replies Black Will, "almost in hell's mouth, where I cannot see my way for smoke." Presently Shakebag falls into a ditch and calls to Black Will—"Help, Will, help! I am almost drowned." The ferryman then comes up and inquires, "Who's that that calls for help?" to which Black Will replies, "'Twas none here, 'twas thou thyself." From the ferryman they learn that Arden has crossed to Sheppey.

and her paramour were determined to dispatch the business at that time. Mosby, who had occasional visitings of conscience, declared that he would not see a gentleman treacherously murdered ; that he would pick a quarrel with Arden during the fair and kill him in hand-to-hand fight. But Mosby's project failed, for Arden, though frequently provoked, always refused to cross swords with a tailor.¹ On the day of the fair Green was sent by Alice to fetch Black Will to a tenement (belonging to Arden and close to his house), rented by Mosby's sister. Thither repaired Alice, accompanied by Michael and one of her maids. Mosby and Shakebag were also of the company. The final arrangements for the murder were then concluded. At first Mosby declined to take part, and, leaving the house in a fury, went up the Abbey Street to the "Fleur de Lys," a hostelry (kept by one Adam Fowl), where he frequently lodged. But a messenger from Alice overtook him before he reached the "Fleur de Lys," "desiring him of all love to come backe again to help to accomplish the matter he knew of." So he turned back and rejoined the company, whereupon Alice fell on her knees before him and implored him to go through with the matter. There would be, she assured him, no danger ; for nobody cared for her husband, and any inquiries that might be made would be quickly hushed up. At length he consented. Alice Arden went home and sent out on various errands such of the servants as were not privy to the plot. Then Black Will was brought into Arden's house and concealed in a closet at the end of the parlour.² Mosby took his stand at the door of the house clothed in a silk "nightgown," with a girdle at the

¹ In the play, when Mosby on one occasion challenges Arden, the latter coolly draws the challenger's sword from its scabbard and remarks :—

" So, sirrha ; you may not wear a sword ;
The statute makes against artificers ;
I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,
Your Spanish needle and your pressing iron,
For this shall go with me."

² Arden's house is still standing ; and on the parlour window were formerly to be seen the arms of the Norths.

waist. Between six and seven in the evening Arden, who had been at a neighbour's house settling some accounts, came home, and finding Mosby at the door inquired if it were yet supper-time. "I think not," said Mosby, "it is not yet ready." "Then let us go and play a game at the tables" (backgammon), said Arden; and so they went into the parlour. As they passed through the hall where Alice was walking, Arden greeted her with the words, "How now, Mistres Arden?" but she took little notice of him. Meanwhile the wicket door of the entry was made fast. Mosby now seated himself on a bench facing the closet where Black Will was concealed. Michael stood at Arden's back, holding a candle to shadow Black Will that his movements might not be perceived. As they played at the tables Mosby exclaimed, "Now I may take you, sir, if I will!"—the signal for Black Will to issue from his hiding-place. While Arden was inquiring, "Take me, which way?" Black Will stepped from the closet and, coming behind the doomed man, drew a towel round his neck with intent to strangle him. Mosby had at his girdle a pressing-iron of fourteen pounds' weight; with this he struck Arden on the head, and the hapless victim fell with a groan to the floor. Concluding that he was now dead, they bore him to the counting-house; but as they were about to lay him down he groaned again, whereupon Black Will dispatched him by giving him a great gash in the face. The ruffian then proceeded to take the money from his purse and the rings from his fingers. Having received the promised reward of ten pounds from Alice, he procured a horse from Green and rode hastily away. When he had gone Alice came into the counting-house and stabbed her dead husband seven or eight times in the breast. Then they cleared up the parlour, wiped away the blood-stains with a towel, and rearranged the tumbled rushes, which in those days served as a carpet. The bloody knife used by Alice and the towel were cast into a tub which stood by the well-side.

Alice now sent for two guests who had been previously invited to supper—Prune and Coles, grocers from London. When they arrived she expressed some anxiety on account of the absence of her husband. However, they sat down to

supper, Mosby's sister joined them, and they made a merry party. After supper Alice's daughter [†] played on the virginals and the time was beguiled with dancing. Alice continued to express her concern at her husband's absence, and proposed a game at the tables. The Londoners excused themselves on the score of the lateness of the hour, and went off to their lodgings. After their departure Alice sent away the servants, some to seek for their master, and others on various errands. Alice remained in the house with her daughter, Michael, and Mosby's sister. Then came the question of the disposal of the body. They carried it out to lay it in a field adjoining the churchyard, near the garden wall. The snow had begun to fall, and they found, when they reached the garden gate, that they had forgotten the key. After some delay the key was found, and the body was deposited about ten paces from the gate. It escaped notice that some of the rushes from the floor were sticking to the slippers. Alice and the others returned to the house through the garden. It was now late in the evening, and the servants who had been sent abroad had returned. Alice dispatched messengers right and left among the townspeople, but no tidings of the missing man could be found. As the suspense grew greater her outcries became more vehement. Several of the leading townsmen, including the mayor, now joined in the search. In former years the fair had been held partly in the town and partly in the Abbey grounds, but this year Arden—for his own private gain and to the great disgust of many of the poorer inhabitants—had caused it to be held wholly in the Abbey grounds, of which he had become the owner. The Abbey grounds were searched and at length the mayor reached the spot where the body lay. Prune, the grocer, was the first to catch sight of it, and it was not long before the tell-tale rushes were observed to be clinging to the slippers. Next were seen, leading to the garden gate, the footmarks in the snow. An examination of the footmarks quickly showed that the body had been brought from the house through the garden to the spot where it was found.

[†] Holinshed does not hint that the daughter had been an accomplice to the crime, and does not mention her age. She is not one of the characters in the play.

Then the mayor and the others entered the house and questioned Alice. At first she took a defiant attitude, "I would you should know that I am no such woman." The servants were then examined, and search was made in and around the house. Blood-spots and a piece of hair were discovered close to the house. Presently the knife with which Alice had stabbed her husband, and the towel with which she had wiped the stains from the floor, were drawn from the tub. In the face of this evidence there was nothing for it but to confess. At the sight of the blood-stained towel Alice exclaimed, "Oh, the bloud of God help, for this bloud have I shed!"¹ Alice and

¹ In the play Alice continues, in spite of the damning evidence of the knife and the towel, to assert her innocence :—

Franklin. Know you this handtowel and this knife ?

Susan. [*Aside.*] Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence
Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.

Michael. [*Aside.*] I was so afraid I knew not what I did :
I thought I had thrown them both into the well.

Alice. It is the pig's blood we had to supper.
But wherefore stay you ? find out the murderers.

Mayor. I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.

Alice. I one of them ? What mean such questions ?

Franklin. I fear me he was murdered in this house
And carried to the fields, for from that place
Backwards and forwards may you see
The print of many feet within the snow.
And look about this chamber where we are,
And you shall find part of his guiltless blood ;
For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,
Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

Mayor. Look in the place where he was wont to sit.
See, see ! his blood ! it is too manifest. |

Alice. It is a cup of wine which Michael shed.

Michael. Ay, truly.

Franklin. It is his blood which, strumpet, thou hast shed.
But if I live, thou and thy complices
Which have conspired and wrought his death shall rue it.

Alice. Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell
I loved him more than all the world beside.
But bring me to him, let me see his body."

It was formerly a popular belief that the wounds in the body of a murdered person would begin to bleed afresh in the murderer's presence.

the servants were at once arrested, and the mayor then proceeded to the "Fleur de Lys," where Mosby was found in bed. In the bedroom were discovered his blood-stained hose and blood-stained purse. Confronted with these tokens of his guilt he at once confessed and was committed to gaol.

From the Faversham Ward Mote Book it appears that Arden was murdered on the evening of Sunday, February 15, 1550-1. The sessions were shortly afterwards held at Faversham, and the prisoners were arraigned and condemned. Green, Black Will, the painter (who had prepared the poison), and Shakebag had escaped. Questioned at the trial as to whether there had been any other accomplices, Alice named the innocent Bradshaw, whose only part in the business had been that he delivered to her Green's letter containing the words, "We have got a man to our purpose, we may thanke my brother Bradshaw." In spite of his protestations of innocence poor Bradshaw was condemned ("as a procurer of Black Will to kill Master Arden") and suffered with the others. Michael was hanged in chains at Faversham; one of the maid-servants was burnt there, bitterly upbraiding her mistress to the end; Mosby and his sister Susan were hanged at Smithfield; and Alice was burnt at Canterbury on the 14th of March. In the Archives of the City of Canterbury is recorded—"For the charges of brenning Mistres Arden and execution of George Bradshaw . . . xliiii." Some years afterwards Green, venturing to return to the neighbourhood of Faversham, was seized, condemned, and hanged in chains between Ospring and Boughton. Before his execution he declared that Bradshaw had been guiltless of complicity in the plot. Black Will contrived to escape from England, but it is satisfactory to be able to record that he was burned "on a scaffold" in Flushing. Adam Fowl, mine host of the "Fleur de Lys," who had carried messages between Mosby and Alice, was put to some inconvenience. He was taken to

When Alice was brought to the spot where her murdered husband lay the blood began to flow and she owned her guilt :—

"The more I sound his name the more he bleeds ;
This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth
Speaks as it falls and asks me why I did it."

London with his legs bound under the horse's belly, and was committed to the Marshalsea prison ; but his innocence was established. Holinshed says that the fate of Shakebag was unknown ; but the dramatist states that he took sanctuary and, "being sent for out," was murdered in Southwark as he was making his way to Greenwich. The only accomplice who succeeded in making good his escape was the painter. Arden's *manes* were amply appeased.

One point is specially mentioned by Holinshed and the dramatist. The spot where Arden's body was found belonged to a strip of ground which (it was commonly reported) he had filched from a widow named Cook, who had become the wife of one Richard Read, a mariner. Whether he had become possessed of this ground rightfully or wrongfully, his action had excited the bitterest resentment of the mariner and Mistress Read. They cursed him to his face, "wishing many a vengeance to light upon him, and that all the world might wonder at him." For two years or more after the murder the perfect print of Arden's body was plainly visible, for no grass grew where any part of the body had touched the ground. From near and far folk came to see the marvel, and all comers distinctly discerned the hand of Providence.

It is to be feared that Arden was of an avaricious temper. Disregarding wholesome superstition he trafficked in church land and fared ill. But it must be added that he bequeathed to the corporation of Faversham houses and land to the value of forty shillings or thereabouts per annum for the benefit of the poor and for an annual sermon to be preached in commemoration of the town's benefactors. His daughter's second husband contested the legacy and had it partly annulled. During Commonwealth times the money was lent to needy persons and was not repaid. Until 1836 the vicar was paid for the annual sermon, and for some time after that date (when by the New Municipal Act payment from the borough fund could no longer be sanctioned) continued to deliver the sermon gratuitously ; but the custom has long been obsolete. Of the property left to the town by Arden one piece still remains—the small plot of ground (at the back of the town hall) where once stood the pillory, and where now stands the market pump.

The tragedy of "Arden of Feversham" was reprinted in 1770 by a Faversham antiquary, Edward Jacob, who adduced some not very cogent reasons for assigning it to Shakespeare. There are modern editions in Tyrrell's "Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare" and Dr. Delius' "Pseudo-Shakespere'sche Dramen" (1855). Mr. A. H. Bullen edited the play in 1887, and it has been more recently included in the series of "Pseudo-Shakespearian Plays" edited by Dr. Karl Warnke and Dr. Ludwig Proescholdt. The authorship remains a mystery. If we are to look for Shakespearean touches anywhere, it must be in the fine scene of the quarrel and reconciliation between Alice and Mosby (act iii. scene 5).

Lillo's "Arden of Faversham," posthumously published in 1768, is a poor recast of the old play; yet on one occasion it so powerfully affected the audience that the performance had to be suspended.

ABEL H. COPPINGER.

MARY FRITH.



See here the Presidesse oth pilfring Trade
Mercuryes second; Venus's onely Mayd
Doublet and breeches in a Uniform dresse
The Female Humurrist a Kickshaw messe
Heres no attraction that your fancy greets
But if her **FEATURES** please not read her **FEATS**..

MARY FRITH,

(? 1584-1659.)

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS MOLL CUTPURSE.

“ Hence, lewd impudent !

I know not what to term thee, man or woman,
For nature, shaming to acknowledge thee
For either, hath produc'd thee to the world
Without a sex : some say thou art a woman,
Others a man, but I think rather, neither ;
Or man and horse, as the old Centaurs were feign'd.”

AMENDS FOR LADIES. 1618.

MISTRESS MARY FRITH, in her habit as she lived, might possibly have experienced some difficulty in establishing her claim to admission into any company of women, good, bad, or indifferent ; for Field's lines, quoted above, merely echoed common report, which made her that which the printers of the seventeenth century so often delighted to present to their readers as “an hermaphrodite.” At her death, however, she was, in the language of one of her early biographers, “found to be otherwise,” and part at least of her title to her present distinction was thus by anticipation admitted.

The birth of Mary Frith was heralded by no eclipses, tides, whales, or great fires, a circumstance wherein her contemporaries, who looked upon these portents as only proper to such occasions, had every reason to consider themselves unfairly treated, and one which is certainly to be regretted by the accurate biographer, thus deprived of very necessary assistance in fixing the date of this important event. Claims to the honour have been advanced on behalf of two years, 1584 and 1589, supported in both cases by evidence

which is, to say the least of it, inconclusive. Seeing, however, that Mistress Mary had in the first decade of the seventeenth century already become a personage of considerable notoriety, it seems better, with every allowance for her precocity, to make choice of the earlier date.

Her father, a shoemaker, "a fair and square-conditioned man, that loved a good fellow next to himself," practised his trade and all the virtues near the Barbican, at the upper end of Aldersgate Street, and here it was that he was blessed in the birth of his egregious daughter. The little Mary was not slow to give evidence of the fact that there dwelt in her a spirit for which the restricted sphere of feminine activity would prove all too narrow. "A very Tomrig or Rump-scuttle she was, and delighted and sported in boys' play and pastime." She minded not the pleasures of plain sewing, and to her "a sampler was as grievous as a winding-sheet." She was constant in her attendance at cudgel-fights and other scenes of disorder, and, last and most serious token of divergence from established feminine standards, she wore her clothes "as handsomely as a dog would a doublet."

Such graceless behaviour could not fail to give rise to the gravest apprehensions in the minds of her parents, who were constrained to console themselves with proverbial reflections, and the hope that "an unhappy girl might make a good woman." Faith in proverbs in their case received no shock, for they both died in Moll's youth, and were thus spared the sight of their own blasted hopes and their daughter's glory.

After the death of her parents Moll seems to have fallen under the care of her father's relatives, one of whom was a minister, who, to his glory be it recorded, refused to take tithes, choosing rather to trust to the spontaneous generosity of his parishioners: "a jolly fat fellow he was, and would take off his cup merrily." It was to him probably Moll owed it that she was taught to read and write. Letters, however, wrought no change in her, and she remained to the end of her life a witness to the failure of elementary education. She continued her association with the youth of the opposite sex; she would leap with them and hop with them, and when they fell out with her she was equally ready to fight with

them. As she grew up the ordinary occupations of her sex still failed to attract her; household duties she abhorred, and she could not endure "the magpye chat of the wenches." These same wenches, or at least the more modest among them probably regarded her conversation with equal dislike, for she affected dissolute language to such an extent that it grew upon her, and in her old age amounted to downright swearing, though, her biographer hastens to add, "in her it was not so much malicious as customary."

She was perhaps unfortunate in not being able to take full advantage of the "spacious times" of Queen Elizabeth, though on the whole it seems doubtful if she would have found in any reign but that of her present Majesty a welcome for the developments of her great and independent mind. For Moll was a pioneer, and excited among her contemporaries, by the adoption of masculine garments, an interest nowadays hardly intelligible. The use of such apparel, in spite of protests hereafter to be mentioned, she retained until the end of her life. In addition to this token of a spirit beyond the reach of prejudice, Moll also prided herself upon being the first among English women to smoke tobacco, a practice from which she continued to derive comfort, in spite of the fact that "an unlucky knave in a grocer's shop" upon one occasion played on her what was then doubtless regarded as a highly humorous practical joke, by presenting her with a pipe in which gunpowder was concealed by a superficial covering of tobacco.

Mary had, instead of the lamb of later nursery lyrics, a mastiff, which attended upon her walks abroad, and, if there was in her any vein of cynicism, she must have reflected with bitterness upon the hour when she added a cobbler to the company. "Wildbrat was faithful," but the cobbler was a cheat. Details of his treachery are wanting, and we know not if it was in the matter of the estate of Frith deceased that he was unfaithful, or if he proved a dishonest partner in the business which Mary, at a very early stage in her career, started on her own account. We have no evidence to enable us to state with any approach to exactness the date at which Mary Frith began to earn her better known designation of

Moll Cutpurse, and, indeed, such evidences, in the case of a person of her disposition and pursuits, is hardly to be expected. Manners of the best are in peril among questionable surroundings, and Moll probably found that it was no very steep descent which led from association with the patrons of cudgel-fights to the practice of picking and stealing. It is likely, however, that her relatives, with far different intentions, were mainly instrumental in throwing her upon her own, or perhaps to speak more correctly, upon other people's resources. Having but little faith in proverbs, and misliking the apparent tendency of her inclinations, they determined upon taking what they conceived to be a very decided step in her interest. There was nothing novel in the conclusion at which they arrived: it simply amounted to this—Mary would do better with larger opportunities and a wider sphere, and if she were to leave the country it could hardly prove other than advantageous both to the country and herself.

It is quite evident that the object of all this solicitude was not herself invited to join the family council in deliberating upon her future, for it was only by means of trickery that she was induced to go on board a vessel lying at Gravesend bound for New England, and nothing but the application of ardent spirits induced her to remain there, until her well-meaning but faithless friends had secured their retreat. It was only when, seated upon a sea-chest amid the bustle of departure, she was asked by the boatswain what she did in that galley, that she realized her position. Curses and tears were followed by entreaties, and finally Moll succeeded in softening the heart of the captain and was set ashore. Misinterpreting the benevolent intentions of her kinsfolk, it is scarcely to be wondered at that she hesitated to trust herself again to their supervision, but preferred to seek shelter among those persons in whose minds the idea of departure from their native land was always associated with a somewhat narrow escape from a violent death. Before, however, she was made free of the community there were questions to be answered and an examination to be passed. Moll found no difficulty in dealing with both branches of the ordeal. Her replies were

eminently satisfactory, and the examination, which was confined to her hands, only served to reveal her exceptional qualifications for the career she designed to embrace. Not only did she bear no mark of the Sessions' branding-iron, but she was the possessor of a particularly long middle finger, as much a joy to your thief as a clumsy fat finger is an object of scorn and detestation. These preliminaries having been disposed of, Moll was admitted with the customary forms and ceremonies, and in a short time, by steps of which no record is left, she succeeded in obtaining over her companions that ascendancy which, wherever it is exercised, is the most unmistakable evidence of superior powers.

Pockets or purses in the early days of the seventeenth century were frequently attached to the girdle, and thus hung exposed, and it was her singular dexterity in removing these that earned for Moll her distinguishing appellation.

Though it is scarcely possible that "the picture of Mistress Moll" mentioned in "Twelfth Night" (act i. sc. 3) can have been the counterfeit presentment of our Mary, it is evident that fame came to her quickly, for on August 7, 1610, there was entered in the register of the Stationers' Company "A booke called, *The madde pranckes of mery Moll of the Banckside, with her walkes in mans apparrell, and to what purpose*, written by John Day." This work, if it was ever published, has unfortunately disappeared, and Middleton's "Roaring Girl," which was printed in the following year, whatever its merits as a play, is of little value as a medium of authentic information. The stage Moll is avowedly idealized. "Worse things," says the author, "I must needs confesse the world has taxt her then has been written of her, but it is the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds 'em." Accordingly, she is represented as a piece of virtue, with strength, constancy, and knowledge of arms more than sufficient for her protection upon all occasions of difficulty and danger.

"A bold virago stout and tall
As Joan of France or English Mall."

It is true she keeps "a book of horners," otherwise pick-

pockets, and is so much in their counsels as to be able to charge one of them to make good forthwith a purse which a knight of her acquaintance had lost "at the last new play i' the Swan," but she is evidently to be understood as nothing worse than the manager of a highly respectable Lost Property Office.

No more convincing proof can be adduced of Moll's ascendancy over her companions than the fact that, though so skilful in the practise of purse-cutting, she was allowed to abandon the constant exercise of this perilous employment, and to become receiver-general of the fruits of their enterprises, and the unquestioned arbiter in all their disputes.

Her transactions in stolen property were on a most extensive scale, rivalling even those of the great Jonathan Wild himself, and more than one writer has borne testimony to her intimate acquaintance with the movements of the "pilfering trade" and to the value of her services. "Spreacious!" cries the citizen in Brome's "Court Beggar," "How now! my fob has been fubd to-day of six pieces and a dozen shillings at least. My watch is gone out of my pocket too o' th' right side. I'll go to honest Moll about it presently." It is said of one of the characters in "The Feigned Astrologer" that—

"now Moll Cutpurse, that oracle of felonie,
Is dead, there's not a pocket pickt
But hee's acquainted with it."

And Thomas Shipman in his "Carolina," published in 1683, declares—

"'tis well known
Moll Cutpurse sought to help folks to their own."

Unlike most persons of her profession, Moll rather courted observation, and lived and died in a house in Fleet Street, "within two doors of the Globe Tavern, over against the Conduit." It is true that at her entry the landlord regarded his tenant with eyes of disfavour, but his objections appear to have arisen rather from doubts as to her solvency than from any scruples as to her moral character; at any rate, gold

prevailed, and Moll remained. It is probable that she looked to this very audacity and her known eccentricities to disarm suspicion, and she must have felt secure indeed to have ventured to expose stolen goods in one of the windows of her house. This confidence was like to have brought ruin upon her, for there happened to pass by the said window a gentleman who, observing therein a watch of which he had been recently robbed, was so ignorant or neglectful of the rules of the game that he incontinently invoked the aid of a constable, and carried her and his watch before a magistrate. Moll was duly committed for trial, but when the constable, eager to detail the result of the information he had received, was about to go into the witness-box, he discovered that the watch was missing from his pocket. The jury had no alternative but to acquit, and Moll was therefore free to leave the court with her friends, some of whom, it is hardly necessary to state, had accompanied the constable thither.

Besides being compelled to make this involuntary appearance before the representatives of the civil power, Moll was also called upon to give her attendance in the Court of Arches, to answer a charge of wearing "undecent and manly apparel," and her defence, if she made any, being judged to be inadequate, she was sentenced to do penance in a white sheet at Paul's Cross. A career such as that of Moll Cutpurse is so obviously liable to suffer from the effects of exaggeration and misrepresentation, that one gladly seizes the opportunity to quote the testimony of an eye-witness of any of its incidents. John Chamberlain, writing on February 11, 161 $\frac{1}{2}$, to Dudley Carleton, says: "The last Sunday Moll Cutpurse, a notorious baggage that used to go in man's apparel, and challenged the field of diverse gallants, was brought to the same place (Paul's Cross), where she wept bitterly, and seemed very penitent, but it is since doubted she was maudlin drunk, being discovered to have tippel'd of three quarts of sack before she came to her penance. She had the daintiest preacher or ghostly father that ever I saw in the pulpit, one Radcliffe, of Brazen-Nose College in Oxford, a likelier man to have led the revels in some inn of court than to be where he was. But the best is, he did extreme badly, and so wearied the audience

that the best part went away, and the rest tarried rather to hear Moll Cutpurse than him." Seeing that Moll's friends and companions in the regular exercise of their occupation made use of one of their number, who was known as the "bulk," for the special purpose of picking quarrels and so causing crowds to assemble, they did not fail to take full advantage of the opportunity which the misfortune of their mistress had created for them. Many, therefore, who had come out to see the penance of Moll Cutpurse went home themselves to repent, and some who, figuratively speaking, were bent on shearing, returned, almost literally, shorn; for, having relieved them of such valuables as they had about them, the thieves proceeded to cut off portions of their garments as well.

Moll probably thought that this discipline had purchased her a licence to clothe herself henceforth as she pleased, for she continued to wear her manly apparel, and her consistency in this respect earned for her the approbation of John Taylor, the Water Poet, who, in "The Water-cormorant, his Complaint against a Brood of Land-cormorants," after inveighing against the monstrous and fantastic fashions of his day, says—

"Mary Frith doth teach them modesty,
For she doth keepe one fashion constantly,
And therefore she deserves a matron's praise,
In these inconstant, moon-like, changing days."

It is quite evident that the Court of Arches had no terrors for Moll, for she actually made a bet of twenty pounds with one Banks, a vintner in Cheapside, to ride astride in breeches and doublet from Charing Cross to Shoreditch. Her progress in this guise, heralded by trumpet and banner, not unnaturally excited remark ("a plaguy orange wench" at Bishopsgate made herself particularly obnoxious), and, but for a timely diversion created by a wedding party, was like to have been seriously interfered with by the crowd, some of whom cried out, "Come down, thou shame of women, or we will pull thee down!"

On the whole, Moll seems to have had but few declared enemies, and to have thought she deserved none, for she

regarded with feelings of the bitterest resentment the act of a constable who presumed to arrest her very late one night as she was returning home by way of Ludgate Hill. She was lodged in the Counter, where she soon made friends with such of the company as did not happen to be already her familiars, and the next morning was haled before the Lord Mayor, charged with the offence of "unseasonable and suspicious walking." She pleaded the occasions of a lady, one of her friends, whose condition required her presence at her bedside, and, nothing further being alleged against her, she was released upon payment of a small fine. The constable, who was otherwise a cobbler, one William Wall by name, was one of Moll's neighbours, and this uncalled for and unneighbourly action of his so rankled in her breast that she put herself to some considerable trouble in order to be revenged upon him. Having discovered that the constable had some relatives at Ludlow, she procured the arrival at his house of a supposed messenger, all dust-stained from the journey, with news of the death of his uncle and his own succession to the estate. The ridiculous airs assumed by the cobbler and his wife upon the receipt of this intelligence, and their ignominious return after a fruitless but costly visit to Ludlow, afforded Moll infinite satisfaction, and her cup was full when she was able to congratulate her victim and ask how he enjoyed the air of his lands.

In addition to having, as it were, under her thumb the mob of the "horners," "bulks," "whipsters," and "rubs" of the metropolis, Moll had also an extensive circle of acquaintance among the aristocracy of the profession, "the Hacks and Blades of the road." Richard Hannam, "the Great Robber of England," the celebrated Captain Hind, and Crowder, who exercised his calling in the habit of a bishop, with four or five servants attending upon him, were all frequent visitors at Moll's house, and were accustomed to deposit their effects with her during their periods of absence upon the country roads.

It is probable that Moll owed much both of her reputation and the immunity she enjoyed to the unhappy divisions of her time. She had given conspicuous proof of her loyalty by providing wine for the Fleet Street Conduit upon the occa-

sion of the King's return from the Scotch war, and as he passed had rushed from the crowd and grasped his hand, crying, "Welcome home, Charles!" After the Civil War broke out she prided herself upon being the only person in her street who was a declared opponent to the Parliament. She contributed parboiled ox-livers and brickbats to feed the Trained Bands, and, not unnaturally, considered she was doing praiseworthy and loyal service in robbing the King's enemies, from whom she succeeded in obtaining considerable sums by means of forged warrants addressed to their collectors and receivers.

She and the famous Captain Hind were the moving spirits in the successful attack made upon a waggon containing pay for the Commonwealth soldiery, in the neighbourhood of Shotover, and she herself was active in the onslaught upon Fairfax on Hounslow Heath, when two of his horses were killed, and he himself was wounded and robbed of two hundred and fifty Jacobuses. For her part in this last exploit Moll was arrested at Turnham Green, and conveyed to Newgate. She had a friend there in the person of Ralph Briscoe, one of the officials, and, though there is mention of the payment of a sum of two thousand pounds, the matter of her release is involved in obscurity.

To the practice of stealing and receiving Moll added the art of fortune-telling, in which she was an adept, and when this comparatively honest trade had been brought into disrepute through the stoning of Dr. Lamb, she threw her energies into the abominable occupation of a procuress. She exercised her vile office on behalf of both sexes, and in this walk of life became acquainted with the most disreputable of her contemporaries, among whom were "Aniseed-water Robin," who wore skirt and petticoats; "Mulled Sack," the chimney-sweeper; Cottington, the cheat; and Damaris Page, "the Abbess of the Holland Leaguers on the Bankside." She herself had a strange reputation for chastity, involved, in all probability, with the doubts that were openly expressed as to her sex. This reputation was not, however, unchallenged, as appears from one of Thomas Freeman's Epigrams (published in 1614), which is headed, "Of Moll Cutpurse disguised going."

They say Mol's honest, and it may bee so,
 But yet it is a shrewd presumption no ;
 To touch but pitch, 'tis knowne it will defile,
 Moll weares the breech, what may she be the while?
 Sure shee that doth the shadow so much grace,
 What will shee when the substance comes in place?"

There are extant two portraits of Moll Cutpurse, one upon the title-page of Middleton's "Roaring Girl," and the other prefixed to the "Life" published in 1662.

In the former she appears as a fine figure of a woman, in man's apparel, and one can gather from the text of the play that her proportions were considerable. Goshawke, one of the persons of the drama, protests concerning her that he never knew "so much flesh and so much nimbleness together," and another addresses her as "sweet plumpe Mol." In the later portrait the handiwork of Time, or an artist less disposed to flatter, is plainly to be seen, and one can appreciate the invitation beneath it, "But if her Features please not, read her Feats." By the various means which have been mentioned Moll succeeded in making or taking a considerable amount of money, and though in her later years she was afflicted with dropsy, she lived in her house in Fleet Street, surrounded by dogs, parrots, and looking-glasses, in comparative comfort. Death overtook her on July 26, 1659, and she was buried in St. Bridget's churchyard. Her property she left to a kinsman of the same name, the master of a ship, dwelling at Redriffe, with a special provision that twenty pounds were to be set aside that Fleet Street Conduit might once more run with wine at her expense when the King came home again.

Over her grave was set a fair marble stone, on which was cut the following epitaph, "*compos'd by the ingenious Mr. Milton,*" but destroyed in the great conflagration of London. The words in italics are the words of Captain Smith, belief in them we make no article of faith.

"Here lies under this same marble
 Dust for Time's last sive to garble ;
 Dust to perplex a Sadducee,
 Whether I rise a He or She,
 Or two in one a single pair,

Nature's sport and now her care ;
For how she'l cloath it at last day
(Unlesse she sigh it all away),
Or where she'l place it none can tell,
Some middle place 'twixt Heaven and Hell ;
And well 'tis Purgatory's found,
Else she must hide her under ground.
These Reliques do deserve the doom,
That cheat of Mahomet's fine Tomb :
For no communion she had,
Nor sorted with the Good or Bad,
That when the world shall be calcin'd,
And the mixt masse of humane kind
Shall separate by that melting fire,
She'l stand alone and none come nigh her.
Reader, here she lies till then,
When (to say all) you'l see her agen.

CHARLES ANDREWS.

LADY FRANCES HOWARD.

LADY FRANCES HOWARD.

(1593—1632.)

“ Blood, though it sleep a time, yet never dies :
The gods on murderers fix revengeful eyes.”

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

THE annals of the Howard family in the sixteenth century are largely written in letters of blood. Violent lives and violent deaths redden almost every page. Not that glorious episodes are lacking. One Howard met his death in the van of Richard III.'s army at Bosworth Field ; a second was the victor of Flodden ; a third led the defeat of the Spanish Armada. But glory only reached the Howards in the train of destroying war. In time of peace their riotous passions found vent in crime. As a rule punishment followed the misdeed swiftly, but the warning fell on heedless ears. In 1542 Queen Catherine Howard expiated her unchastity on the scaffold. Within half a decade the career of her cousin, Surrey the poet, was brought to a close by the same tragical agency, because his arrogance of spirit was believed to threaten the throne. Thirty-five years later treason involved the poet's son in his father's fate. Other chiefs of the house, escaping the headman's block, spent the best years of their life in the dungeons of the Tower of London. Women of the family, who were led into comparatively venial sin, became in their own despite heroines of tragedy. Douglas Howard, who yielded too easily to the blandishments of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favourite, is reported to have narrowly escaped Amy Robsart's fortune, when her lover tired of her charms.

The humble suitor, who was rejected for a prouder alliance by Lady Frances Howard, an elder cousin of the lady commemorated here, sent his faithless mistress verses penned with his own blood, and then took his exit from the world by running himself upon his sword.

Such were some of the traditions which distinguished the family history of our heroine. It is not, therefore, surprising that she inherited little respect for conventional morality and the sanctity of human life, or that her nerve did not falter when murder was needed to remove obstacles that stood between her and the goal of her passions.

Her father, Thomas Howard, was son of that Duke of Norfolk who was executed in 1572, and was grandson of the poet Surrey who was executed in 1547. He held high office under James I., becoming, in the first instance, Lord Chamberlain and Earl of Suffolk, and afterwards Lord High Treasurer of England. Unlike his father and grandfather, he was convicted of no worse crime than embezzlement of public monies to the tune of £50,000. Her mother, who exerted a baneful ascendancy over her husband and her children, openly conducted the sale of State offices.¹ She eagerly accepted a pension from the arch-enemy of her country—the King of Spain. And it was a common saying that Audley End, built by Lord Suffolk on the estate in Essex that he inherited from his mother, had its foundation in Spanish gold. Bacon compared Lady Suffolk to an Exchange woman who kept her shop while her creature, Sir J. Bingley, cried, "What d'ye lack?" Until the small-pox shed its blight upon her she was reckoned no ordinary beauty, and her portraits show that, despite her avaricious propensity, she was vain of her charms and liberal in her display of them. She was even suspected of being the mistress of Sir Robert Cecil.

The Earl and Countess of Suffolk had seven sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Theophilus (afterwards second Earl of Suffolk), was the hero of a notable quarrel with

¹ She was daughter and coheirress of Sir Henry Knevet, Kt., of Charlton, Wilts, and her first husband was Richard, eldest son of Robert, Lord Rich.

the famous Lord Herbert of Cherbury, when both were serving as volunteers at the siege of Juliers, and Lord Herbert has contrived that this eldest brother of Lady Frances should descend to posterity as an unamiable coward. Clarendon reports contemptuously of the character of the next brother Thomas. Sir Robert, the fifth son, owed his fame to his adultery with the great Duke of Buckingham's sister-in-law, Lady Purbeck, which exposed him and his mistress to many years' persecution in the Star Chamber. The youngest son, Edward (Lord Howard of Escrick), joined the Parliament in its struggle with Charles I., but ruined his reputation by taking bribes when an officer of the Commonwealth, and he enjoys the further ignominy of having begotten a son (the second Lord Howard of Escrick), who turned king's evidence with fatal effect at the trials of Lord William Russell and Algernon Sidney.

The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, had scarcely a more reputable record. She married William Knollys, Earl of Banbury, but the paternity of her two sons was called in question, and the right of her sons and their descendants to succeed to the earldom of Banbury occupied the attention of the House of Lords and the Law Courts for a century and a half. Frances was the second daughter. The third, Catherine, who married the heir of the first Earl of Salisbury, was an ancestress of the present Marquess. The anonymous author of a scandalous drama (that has never been published) on the subject of Lady Frances's early life, represents her engaging with her sister Catherine in a lascivious dialogue on the morning after Lady Frances's first marriage.¹ Otherwise the breath of scandal left Catherine—alone of the sisters—unscathed.

Frances was apparently born at her father's house at Audley End, near Saffron Walden, in 1593. Her eldest sister was her senior by nine years, her youngest sister was her junior apparently by as many months. The girl's early years were spent either in Essex or in the London mansion of the family at Charing Cross.

Captain Field, a retainer in her father's household pro-

¹ The play is in Brit. Mus., MS. Addit. 25348.

tested (in the hearing of Sir Simonds D'Ewes) that, having known her from her infancy, he had always observed her to be of a better nature and sweeter disposition than any of her sisters and brothers ; but our knowledge of her sisters' and brothers' characters reduces this compliment to narrow dimensions. Forgetful of her wealth in vicious ancestors, Captain Field proceeds to ascribe her subsequent depravity to the malignant influence in childhood of one only of her kinsmen, her father's uncle, the Earl of Northampton. The facts of heredity will not permit her corrupt temperament to be deduced from early association with any single relative. But Lord Northampton was peculiarly adapted to encourage her predisposition to evil courses ; his sinister figure casts a clear-cut shadow over the chief scenes in her career.

The younger son of Surrey the poet, Lord Northampton, was his grand-niece's senior by five-and-fifty years. During Queen Elizabeth's reign he had often suffered imprisonment on account of his complicity in plots against the throne ; but he bore his crosses with cynical complacency. Intrigue was his ruling passion ; and he intrigued with so much craft that the historian cannot unravel all the threads of his mysterious plottings. He was reputed to be at heart a papist, but he bore a hand in bringing to the scaffold many Catholic priests. Greedy of power and money, he won by cunning flattery place and power at James I.'s court, but at the same time he accepted a pension from Spain. He exerted a baleful fascination over many a younger man and woman. The great Francis Bacon's mother bitterly deplored the spell that he cast upon her sons. There lay, indeed, on the surface of his nature some agreeable traits, which could rarely fail to dazzle acquaintances, whether old or young. He delighted in lavish hospitality, and his many-sided culture made him, when he chose, despite a pre-occupied manner, an amiable host. He had inherited something of his father's literary sentiment ; he read widely, published an exposure of judicial astrology, and wrote for a sister a treatise of philosophy. He loved, too, magnificence in architecture. He built the great mansion in which he lived at Charing Cross (known in later years as Northumberland

House), and he revised with his own hand the design of his nephew's palace at Audley End. Without close domestic ties—he never married, and he outlived most of his kinsmen of his own generation—he seems to have developed in later years as benevolent an interest, as his crooked nature would allow, in his nephew's children. Behind the quick wit and good looks of the child Frances, he soon detected the embryo of an evil character, in some regards, not dissimilar from his own. His ill-omened insight was not at fault, and the bonds of sympathy between the curiously matched couple proved indissoluble. No good lesson could the girl learn from so unpromising a tutor.

Frances, and her younger sister Catherine, inherited much of their mother's beauty ; and when Frances was no more than thirteen and Catherine no more than twelve, their parents bargained their hands away in marriage. Child-marriages were then in vogue, and many of the girls' kindred had become parents before they were twenty. The husbands of the two girls were chosen by the worldly wise parents from families in high place and in high favour with the Crown. Catherine was betrothed to a lad of eighteen, William, Viscount Cranborne, the son and heir of James I.'s astute chief minister, Sir Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury. For Frances a suitor was found in Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex, a boy of fourteen, on whom the King, regretful of his father's fate, had lately showered attentions.

It is not clear why the King or Salisbury was willing for Essex to ally himself at so early an age with the Lord Chamberlain's daughter ; but the craft of Lady Suffolk was capable of securing most objects that she deemed conducive to the family interest. Afterwards, when trouble came of the experiment, James took care to disclaim responsibility and hotly denounced the practice of "marrying young couples before they be acquainted with one another."

Robert Devereux (born in 1591), was son of that ill-starred Earl of Essex, whose execution in February 1601 stirred popular feeling so poignantly. After being educated at Eton, he had been entered in January 1602 as a Gentleman Commoner at Merton College, Oxford, where he occupied an

apartment in the lodgings of the distinguished Warden Henry, afterwards Sir Henry, Savile. His father had sought to promote the accession of James VI., of Scotland, to the English throne when Queen Elizabeth should die ; and on the 24th of March, 1603, the boy was present in Cheapside when James I. was proclaimed king. Immediately afterwards, young Essex was sent to Essex House, where his mother¹ was then residing. And in accordance with an arrangement of the King and Sir Robert Cecil, a bill reversing the attainder of the late Earl of Essex at once passed through Parliament. In the same month (April), the King gave orders that Essex should be brought up with his son Prince Henry ; and the boys became fellow-students and close companions. On one occasion they quarrelled over a game of tennis, and the Prince called Essex "Son of a traitor," whereupon the Earl gave him a sharp blow on the head with his racket. The King, hearing of the matter, called them to his presence, found what provocation had been given, and observed to his son "that he who did strike him then, would be sure with more violent blows to strike his enemy² in times to come." At Oxford the Earl read diligently "books that afforded most study, not most delight"; and his recreations were riding the great horse, running at the ring, and the exercise of arms. When the King was entertained by the University in the autumn of 1605, Essex was included among the noblemen who received the degree of M.A. It is sufficiently surprising (to a modern reader) to learn that Essex was made M.A. at the age of fourteen ; but more surprising is the news which ran through London at the same date : "The Earl of Essex and the young Lord Cranborne shall marry two of my Lord Chamberlain's daughters at Court very shortly : they only stay for the King's coming, who is looked for in the next week."

¹ Daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham ; she was married three times, first, to Sir Philip Sidney, next to the Earl of Essex, and finally to the Earl of Clanricarde.

² The prediction might have been verified if Prince Henry's life had been spared. He died at eighteen, and Essex lived to become a famous Parliamentary general.

The marriage between Essex and Lady Frances Howard was celebrated on Sunday, January 5, 1605-6. The bridegroom is said to have carried himself with a grave and graceful demeanour befitting his father's age. The *Masque*¹ ("Hymenæi"), performed at Court on the same evening by noblemen and ladies of rank, was written by Ben Jonson and mounted by Inigo Jones. It was a brilliant spectacle; "the men were clad in crimson, the women in white; they had every one a white plume of the richest heron's feathers, and were so rich in jewels upon their heads as who most glorious. I think they hired or borrowed all the principal jewels and sets of pearls both in Court and city. The Spanish ambassador, seemed but poor to the meanest of them." On the following night the Barriers were performed, sixteen knights appearing on each side; the one band led by the Duke of Lenox, the other by the Earl of Sussex.

When the festivities were over the bride returned to her father's house. It had been arranged that Essex should spend a year or two on the Continent before he joined his wife; but it was not till the spring of 1608 that he started on his travels. At Paris he was entertained by Henri IV., whom he accompanied on a hunting expedition to Fontainebleau.

The date of Essex's return may be fixed not later than the autumn of 1611. He was now twenty years of age, and his wife was a beauty of eighteen, "*jam matura viro, jam plenis nubilis annis.*" After the long delay he was naturally anxious to experience the joys of married life; but, though the pair occupied one bed and one chamber for three years, his hopes of happiness remained unfulfilled. The fact was that the Countess, grown in beauty but not in virtue, had bestowed her affections on another—Robert Carr, the King's favourite (successively Viscount Rochester and Earl of Somerset). Sir Simonds D'Ewes declares that she had previously intrigued with Henry Prince of Wales, but Cornwallis—who was treasurer of the Prince's household—stoutly champions his master's

¹ It was published in 1606 with the names of the masquers and a note that the music was by Ferrabosco and the dances by Thomas Giles. When it was republished in the folio of 1616 Ben Jonson suppressed the names of Essex, Lady Frances, and the masquers.

chastity. Arthur Wilson, secretary in after years to Essex, relates that on one occasion when she had dropped her glove a courtier handed it to the Prince, who rejected it with the remark, "He would not have it; it is stretched by another." To her evil genius and great-uncle Northampton, who was anxious to ingratiate himself with the King's favourite, is attributed the discredit of having brought about and fostered the guilty intimacy between Rochester and the young Countess. If Weldon's information was correct, a Mr. Coppinger—who had run through a fair fortune and was now forced to lead the life of a serving-man—was employed by Northampton to act the part of Sir Pandarus.

In the early days of their life together the Earl had treated his Countess with all courtesy and kindness. He imputed her coldness to maiden bashfulness; and when this bashfulness (as he regarded it) became insipid, he took counsel with her father, who "made use of his paternal power to reduce his daughter to the obedience of a wife." But "paternal power" in a case of this kind has its limits. It did not help matters that the young Earl was seized with a virulent attack of small-pox.

The Countess contrived to keep as much as possible at a distance from her husband, but at length (under compulsion from her father) she joined him at Chartley in Staffordshire. Here she conducted herself in strange fashion. She kept her chamber all day, and would never stir out till the dead of night. To this style of living she adhered for some months, showing not the slightest respect or affection for her husband. "Cow," "Beast," and "Coward," were the terms in which she would address him.

It was an age of witchcraft and magic. The Countess had been in frequent communication with the notorious wizard, Dr. Simon Forman, and an infamous wise-woman, Mrs. Anne Turner, widow of a doctor of physic. She had two objects in view: one, to hinder her husband from enjoying her society; the other, to inflame Rochester's passion. Forman compounded drugs to debilitate Essex and to sharpen Rochester's inclination; for the same purpose he framed waxen figures and brazen images. From Chartley she wrote to these

abominable agents, lamenting the slow progress that was being made, and urging them to redouble their efforts. Two letters, both undated (which were produced at Mrs. Turner's trial) have been preserved. To Mrs. Turner she wrote as follows:—

“ Burn this Letter.

“ SWEET TURNER,—I am out of all hope of any good in this world. . . . My lord is very well as ever he was, so you may see in what a miserable case I am. You may send the party word of all ; he sent me word all should be well, but I shall not be so happy as the lord to love me. As you have taken pains all this while for me, so now do all you can, for never so unhappy as now ; for I am not able to endure the miseries that are coming on me. But I cannot be happy so long as this man liveth : therefore pray for me, for I have need, but I should be better if I had your company to ease my mind. Let him know this ill news : if I can get this done you shall have as much money as you can demand ; this is fair play.—Your sister, FRANCES ESSEX.”

The other letter was addressed to Dr. Simon Forman, and must have been written before the 24th of May, 1612, on which day the Lord Treasurer (Cecil) died :—

“ SWEET FATHER,—I must still crave your love, although I hope I have it, and shall deserve it better hereafter : remember the galls, for I fear, though I have yet no cause but to be confident in you, yet I desire to have it remain as it is. You will see it continue still if it be possible, and, if you can, you must send me some good news ; alas ! I have need of it. Keep the Lord still to me, for that I desire. Be careful you name me not to anybody, for we have so many spies that you must use all your wits, and all little enough ; for the world is against me, and the heavens favour me not. I hope you will do me good, and if I be ungrateful let all mischief come unto me. My Lord is lusty and merry and drinks with his men, and all the content he gives me is to use me as doggedly as ever before ; I think I shall never be happy in this world, because he hinders my good, and ever will, I think ; so remember, I beg, for God's sake, get me free from this place.—Your affectionate daughter, FRANCES ESSEX.

“ Give Turner warning of all things but not the Lord ; I would not have anything come out, for fear of my Lord Treasurer, for so he may tell my father and mother, and fill their ears full of toys.”

The letters just quoted have been frequently printed, but the following particulars, from the State Papers, of the Countess's connection with Mary Woods, a reputed witch, of

Stratton-Strawlers, near Norwich, have not been noticed. Under date 26th of February, 1613, we find the examinations of Richard Grimstone, pursuivant, who deposed that he was sent by the Countess to apprehend Mary Woods for detaining a diamond ring and some money, which the Countess—having occasion to go in haste to the Court—had delivered to her safe keeping. One Davison of Norwich testified that Mary Woods deluded silly women by professing skill in palmistry, and, if they attempted to prosecute her, that she threatened to accuse them of trying to poison their husbands. Woods in her defence stated that she had received a goblet and a diamond from Mrs. Clare, and a ring from Lady Essex, with a promise of a thousand pounds if she would procure a poison—for making away the Earl of Essex—that should not act within less space than three or four days. She had promised to gratify the Countess, but afterwards repented, and left London without procuring the poison. The pursuivant, Grimstone, stated that Woods had threatened that, if she were taken before a justice, she would accuse Lady Essex of having suborned her to murder the Earl. On the 15th of May, Isabel, wife of William Peel, was examined on the practices of Mary Woods to procure money from her and others on pretence of getting them husbands or children : she stated that she knew of no attempt of Lady Essex to poison her husband. Woods was again examined on the 14th of June, when she testified that she had given Lady Essex a powder to wear round her neck because she wished to have a child ! What became of Woods is not known. It would seem that the Countess's friends contrived to hush up the inquiry.

At the time when she was being accused by Mary Woods of practising to poison the Earl, Lady Essex was engaged in preparing a petition for divorce. On the 16th of May, 1613 a Commission was appointed under the Great Seal to examine into the question of the nullity of the marriage. George Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury,¹ consented—with

¹ The Archbishop's very interesting narrative of the proceedings of the Commissioners is preserved in Harl. MS. 6854. It is printed in vol. ii. of Howell's "State Trials."

great reluctance—to sit on the Commission, and with him were joined the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Ely, the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Sir Julius Cæsar (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Sir Thomas Parry (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Sir Daniel Dun, Sir John Benett, Dr. Francis James, and Dr. Thomas Edwards.

Lady Essex claimed that the marriage should be nullified on the ground that her husband was impotent. The Earl at his examination created a favourable impression from the fact that he abstained from using bitter language about his wife. He stated that when he returned to England he loved her, but added, "I cannot so now, neither ever shall I." He denied emphatically that he was impotent.

King James took the liveliest interest in the Commissioners' proceedings, and used all his influence to induce them to annul the marriage. He chafed at the delays that occurred, and attempted to confute by argument the conscientious objections of Archbishop Abbott. Before starting on progress from Windsor, his Majesty called the Commissioners together and found that the Bishop of Ely, the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, Sir Thomas Parry, Sir Julius Cæsar, and Sir Daniel Dun were prepared to pronounce in favour of a nullity, but that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, Sir John Benett, and Dr. Edwards were stiffly opposed to the majority: whereupon he strengthened the Commission by the addition of new members. For a time it was doubtful whether the Countess would succeed in her suit. On the 29th of August the Rev. Thomas Lorkin wrote to Sir Thomas Puckering that "unless the Commission be changed, the nullities which His Majesty desireth will never be pronounced." Archbishop Abbott, falling on his knees before the King at Windsor, implored to be exempted from attending the Commission, declaring that he would esteem such exemption a greater favour than all the preferments that he had received at the King's hands. On the Wednesday before Lorkin wrote to Puckering, the Commissioners had again assembled, but to little purpose. Rochester stayed in town to hear the result of the proceedings, and then rode in haste to his Majesty. Finally, in September after many

delays, a nullity was pronounced, and the majority consisted of the Bishops of (1) Winchester, (2) Ely, (3) Lichfield and Coventry, and (4) Rochester, (5) Sir Julius Cæsar, (6) Sir Thomas Parry, (7) Sir Daniel Dun; in the minority were (1) the Archbishop of Canterbury, (2) the Bishop of London, (3) Sir John Benett, (4) Dr. Francis James, (5) Dr. Thomas Edwards. On the morning when the sentence of nullity was pronounced the King had sent a special injunction that the Commissioners were simply to give their assents or dissents, and that no arguments were to be used. The marriage was annulled "*propter latens et incurabile impedimentum*"; both parties were at liberty to marry again, and the Earl was to refund the dowry that he had received with his wife.¹

No sooner was the decree of nullity pronounced than preparations were made for the lady's marriage with Lord Rochester. On the 4th of November Rochester was created Earl of Somerset, and it was reported that he would be made Marquis of Orkney, "that his mistress may be a better woman if it may be than she was before" (Chamberlain to Carleton, 22nd of November, 1613). At first the marriage was announced to take place the last week of November at Audley End, and great preparation was made to receive the King. The Queen had looked askance on the divorce proceedings, and it was anticipated that she would not attend the marriage; but in the end she consented to be present, and it was arranged that the ceremony should be postponed till Christmas and should then be solemnized at Whitehall.

On St. Stephen's Day, the 26th of December, 1613, the Lady Frances Howard (assuming her maiden name) was married to the Earl of Somerset. The King had given her away on the occasion of her marriage with Essex, and now her father took the King's place. The services of the Dean of the Chapel, Dr. James Montague, who had officiated at the

¹ Some thirteen years later Essex married a second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Paulet, of Eddington, Wiltshire. She misconducted herself with one Uvedale, two years after the marriage, and Essex procured a divorce from her. Such a termination of the Earl's second matrimonial venture may lend some support to the argument advanced by his first wife in favour of the dissolution of his first marriage.

former marriage, were again enlisted ; and a fulsome marriage-sermon was preached by the Dean of Westminster, Dr. George Montaigne. With unblushing effrontery the bride went to the altar "in her hair"—with her hair hanging loosely down her back, to indicate to beholders that she was a virgin. Many of the most noted poets of the day lauded the unblessed nuptials. Campion wrote the masque that was performed on the marriage-night ; Ben Jonson's "A Challenge at Tilt" was pronounced on the 27th of December, and was followed (two days later) by his "Irish Masque" ; George Chapman published an inept poem "Andromeda Liberata" (which is said to have procured him a cudgelling from some of Essex's friends) ; and Donne composed a frigidly conceited Epithalamium, over which his most cordial admirers will not care to linger.

There was a great display of wedding presents, "more in value and number than ever, I think, were given to any subject in this land," as Chamberlain wrote to Mistress Alice Carleton, on the 30th of December, 1613. Valuable plate was sent by the City, the Merchant Adventurers, the East India Company, and the Farmers of the Customs ; six goodly candlesticks, costing above five hundred marks, came from Sir Thomas Lake ; Sir Robert Carr and Sir Robert Mansfield clashed—both sending silver fire-shovels, tongs, and irons, &c. ; Sir Fulke Greville gave a gold cup ; Sir Charles Wilmot a gold warming-pan ; the Countess of Shrewsbury's present was a gold basin and ewer, two gold pots, and "some vessel, all of gold" ; and the Earl of Salisbury gave a suit of hangings for which his father had paid £1,500, and another that had cost £800. Particularly noticeable was the present of the Lord Admiral, the lady's aged kinsman—a rich gold basin and ewer (set with stones) that had been given to him by the King of Spain ; but, when brought to the touch, it was proved not to be of pure metal. The Spanish Ambassador sent a jewel valued at £500, "if it hold good." It appears that the presents were submitted to the goldsmiths, who examined them critically and appraised them cautiously.

The festivities were prolonged. At the King's wish the Lord Mayor entertained the royal favourite and his bride, with their friends and followers, at the Mansion House, the

guests (men on horseback and women in carriages) proceeding in goodly show by torchlight. The bride had a new coach for which she could not find four suitable horses. She begged the loan of the famous team belonging to Sir Ralph Winwood, who made answer that "it was not for such a lady to use anything borrowed; and therefore, the next morning, presented them to the great lord." At first Somerset declared that he could not accept so valuable a gift, but finally allowed his scruples to be overcome. The solemnities concluded on Twelfth Night with the performance of "The Masque of Flowers," provided at the sole expense of Sir Francis Bacon and presented before the Court in the Banqueting House at Whitehall by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

To turn from these festivities. At five o'clock on the morning of the 15th of September, 1613—ten days before the decree of the nullity of the marriage between Essex and Lady Frances Howard—died, miserably in the Tower of London, a gentleman of rare accomplishments, Sir Thomas Overbury; and between three and four in the afternoon of that day, his body, a festering mass of sores, was buried in the choir of the church within the Tower. Sir Thomas Overbury, son of Sir Nicholas Overbury, of Bourton-on-the-Hill, in Gloucestershire, had been Somerset's old and intimate friend. When he was just past his twentieth year (he was born in 1581) young Overbury went "upon a voyage of pleasure" to Edinburgh, where he met Sir William Cornwallis who had been his fellow-student at Queen's College, Oxford. By Cornwallis he was introduced to Robert Carr, who was then page to the Earl of Dunbar. Carr and Overbury struck up a friendship and travelled south together. When Carr became powerful his friend shared in his prosperity. On the 19th of June, 1608, Overbury was knighted at Greenwich, and in the following year—on his return from a tour in France and the Low Countries—was thought, by well-informed persons, to have a good chance of being appointed to an embassy. But he made many enemies by his overbearing temper. At one time he incurred the Queen's displeasure, and was temporarily banished from Court. On the 13th of November, 1611, Chamberlain wrote to Carleton

that "Sir Thomas Overbury, by much suit, is referred to the Court, and there is hope in time to the Queen's favour." Subsequently the King took a deep dislike to him. The gossip ran that Carr ruled the King and that Overbury ruled Carr. Anxious to falsify this report the King proposed to send Overbury abroad on diplomatic business. Overbury refused to go, and was thereupon committed for contempt to the Tower. Sir Henry Wotton, an astute observer, in a letter to Sir Edmund Bacon (April 22, 1613) relates the manner of Overbury's committal, and ends with a sinister forecast :—

"Yesterday, about six o'clock at evening, Sir Thomas Overbury was from the council-chamber conveyed by a clerk of the council and two of the guard of the Tower, and there, by warrant, consigned to the lieutenant as close prisoner : which, both by the suddenness, like a stroke of thunder, and more by the quality and relation of the person, breeding in the beholders (whereof by chance I was one) very much amazement, and being likely in some proportion to breed the like in the hearers, I will adventure, for the satisfying of your thoughts about it, to set down the fore-running and leading causes of this accident, as far in so short a time I have been able to wade in so deep a water.

"It is conceived that the king hath a good while been much distasted with the said gentleman, even in his own nature, for too stiff a carriage of his fortune ; besides that scandalous offence of the Queen at Greenwich, which was never but a palliated cure. Upon which considerations His Majesty resolving to sever him from my Lord of Rochester, and to do it not disgracefully nor violently, but in some honourable fashion, commanded not long since the Archbishop by way of familiar discourse to propound unto him the embassage of France, or of the Archduke's Court, whereof the one was shortly to be changed, and the other at the present vacant. In which proposition it seemeth, though shadowed under the Archbishop's good will, that the King was also contented some little light should be given him of His Majesty's inclination unto it, grounded upon his merit. At this the fish did not bite ; whereupon the King took a rounder way, commanding my Lord Chancellor and the Earl of Pembroke to propound jointly the same unto him, which the Archbishop had before named, as immediately from the King ; and to sanction it the more, he had, as I hear, an offer made him of assurance, before his going, of the place of treasurer of the chamber, which he expecteth after the death of the Lord Stanhope, whom belike the King would have drawn to some reasonable composition. Notwithstanding all these motives and impulses, Sir Thomas Overbury refused to be sent abroad, with such terms as were by the Council interpreted pregnant of contempt in a case where the King had opened his will ; which refusal of his I should for my part esteem an eternal disgrace to our occupation, if withal I did not consider how hard it is to

pull one from the bosom of a favourite. Thus you see the point upon which one hath been committed, standing in the second degree of power in the Court, and conceiving (as himself told me but two hours before) never better than at the present of his own fortunes and ends.

“Now in this whole matter there is one main and principal doubt, which doth trouble all understandings; that is, whether this were done *without the participation of my Lord Rochester*; a point necessarily inviting two different consequences. For if it were done without his knowledge, we must expect of himself either a decadence or a ruin; if not, we must then expect a reparation by some other great public satisfaction whereof the world may take as much notice. These clouds a few days will clear. In the meanwhile I dare pronounce of Sir Thomas Overbury that *he shall return no more to this stage*, unless Courts be governed every year by a new philosophy, for our old principles will not bear it.”

Wotton was right in his last conjecture: Overbury did *return no more to this stage*.

Ample evidence exists to prove that Overbury was induced by Rochester to adopt a contumacious attitude towards the King. Convinced that the favourite's influence would be exerted on his behalf, he confidently expected that he would be speedily released from the Tower and receive valuable preferment. But he was mistaken. At least two persons were bent on his destruction—Essex's divorced wife and her great-uncle the Earl of Northampton—and with devilish cruelty they accomplished their object, not (it is to be feared) without the connivance of Rochester.

Lady Essex hated Overbury because he used every effort to thwart her projected marriage with Rochester. Overbury approved of the arrangement that Lady Essex should be Rochester's mistress; in fact he penned love-letters to her in his friend's name. But the prospect of Rochester uniting himself by marriage with the house of Howard filled him with aversion. He thought that his influence with Rochester would be strong enough to break off the proposed match; for he was Rochester's trusted adviser and bosom friend, acquainted not only with the innermost secrets¹ of state policy, but with the personal

¹ “I will undertake the time was,” said Bacon in his indictment of Somerset, “when Overbury knew more of the secrets of state than the Council-table did.”

and private history of the King and his favourite. With the view, it is said,¹ of dissuading his friend from the marriage he wrote his poem "A Wife," for which his unhappy fate procured a popularity that would otherwise have been inexplicable. Overbury expatiates in the poem on the excellences that a man should seek in his choice of a wife; and these excellences, beauty apart, were not to be found in the lady who was petitioning for a divorce from the Earl of Essex, and was intriguing with Rochester. Piety and discreet behaviour are qualities on which the poet specially insists; and we know that in the matter of religious exercises the Countess was remiss, for her maid Frances Brittain declared "the Countess never came to prayers." If Overbury had contented himself with writing "A Wife" Lady Essex would have had little ground of complaint; for, at least in the form preserved to us, the poem merely describes the qualities that an ideal wife should possess, and contains no reflections on her ladyship. But his opposition took a much more active shape. On one occasion Rochester returned late to his chamber in the privy gallery at Whitehall and there found Overbury. "How now," said Rochester, "are you up yet?" "Nay," answered Overbury, "what do you here at this time of night? Will you never leave the company of that base woman? And seeing you do so neglect my advice, I desire that to-morrow morning we may part; and that you will let me have that portion you know is due to me; and then I will leave you free to yourself to stand on your own legs." Rochester retorted that "his legs were strong enough to bear himself"; and so they parted in

¹ Sir Nicholas Overbury (Sir Thomas's father), in the notes which he dictated in 1637 to his grandson Nicholas Oldisworth, stated that "Sir Thomas wrote his poem called 'A Wife' to induce Viscount Rochester to make a better choice than of the divorced Countess" (Add. MS. 15476). Ben Jonson, in his conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden, declared that Overbury had been in love with the Countess of Rutland, and "caused Ben to read his 'Wife' to her, which he, with an excellent grace did, and praised the author. That the morn thereafter he discorded with Overbury, who would have him to intend a suit that was unlawful. The lines my Lady kept in remembrance, '*He comes too near that comes to be denied.*'" About 1610 Jonson wrote an epigram in praise of Overbury. He told Drummond that "Overbury was first his friend and then his mortal enemy."

anger. This conversation was overheard by Henry Peyton, Overbury's servant, who adds that they were never perfectly reconciled again.

Overbury being committed to the Tower, Northampton and the Countess commenced their villainous operations without delay. Northampton, anxious to be in favour with Rochester, "and knowing," as Bacon put it, "Overbury's malice to himself and to his house, thought that man must be removed and cut off, so as certainly it was resolved and decreed that Overbury must die." Sir William Waad was Lieutenant of the Tower when Overbury was committed. Northampton found a pretext for removing him from his office (on the ground that he had shown too great indulgence to certain prisoners, particularly Lady Arabella Stuart¹), and on the 6th of May substituted in his place Sir Gervase Helwys (or Elwes), who had been recommended by Sir Thomas Monson;² at the same time making Richard Weston, a *protégé* of Monson, under-keeper in the place of Carey.

Rochester destroyed many of the letters³ that passed between himself and Northampton, but in the face of the four following letters of Northampton to Rochester, it is difficult to believe that the younger man was ignorant of the plot against Overbury's life:—

1. "In this business concerning Overbury there must be a main drift and a real charge: You may imagine the meaning."

2. "I yesterday spent two hours in prompting the Lieutenant with as great caution as I could, and find him to be very perfect in his part. And I long exceedingly to hear his report of this adventure."

3. "You need not use many instruments, so long as I am in towr with the Lieutenant."

4. "I cannot deliver with what caution and discretion the Lieutenant hath undertaken Overbury. But for his conclusion I do and ever will love him the better; which was this, That either Overbury shall recover

¹ It was also given out that Waad had embezzled jewellery belonging to this unfortunate lady.

² Helwys paid £1,700 to Monson for procuring him the Lieutenantcy of the Tower.

³ One of the letter-writers of the time, Mr. John Castle, declared "it would turn chaste blood into water to hear the unchaste and unclean phrases that were contained" in Northampton's letters to Rochester.

and do good offices betwixt my Lord of Suffolk and you, which if he do not you shall have reason to count him a knave ; or else that he shall not recover at all, which he thinks the most sure and happy change of all, for he finds sometimes from Overbury many flashes of a strong affection to some enemies of his."

Particularly noticeable is the third letter : " You need not use many instruments, so long as I am in town, with the Lieutenant." Northampton was clearly under the impression that Rochester's agents were in communication with Helwys. It was from the Countess that these agents received their instructions, but one cannot dismiss the suspicion that Rochester must have been aware of the nature of those instructions. On the 9th of May the under-keeper Weston mixed rosaker in some broth prepared for Overbury ; on the 1st of July he tried the effect of white arsenic on the prisoner ; and later he mixed corrosive sublimate in tarts and jellies. Overbury had a marvellously strong constitution which he had fortified against poison by the use of antidotes. Dr. Francis Anthony on two occasions sold *aurum potable* to a servant of Overbury, while he lay in the Tower, as an antidote against poison. The Countess continually sent poisoned tarts and jellies to the Tower for the prisoner's use. On one occasion she wrote to Helwys : " I was bid to bid you say that these tarts came not from me ; and again I was bid to tell you to take heed of the tarts because there be *letters* in them, and therefore neither give your wife nor children of them, but of the wine you may, for there are no *letters* in it ; Sir T. Monson will come from the Court this day, and then we shall have other news." Growing impatient of the delay, she sent for Weston, who declared that he had administered to the prisoner as much poison as would kill twenty men. Among other agents she employed the notorious Mrs. Turner, who not only tempered poisons herself but engaged the services of one James Franklin, an apothecary, " then dwelling at the backside of the Exchange," who procured seven different sorts of poison—aquafortis, white arsenic, mercury, powder of diamonds, lapis costivus, great spiders, and cantharides—which were all at various times given to the unhappy victim.

Before his spirit was utterly broken by his sufferings

Overbury addressed letters of threatening remonstrance to Rochester.

“Have we not protested friendship of souls? [he exclaimed] and yet will you sacrifice me for a woman, and will you break this oath? . . . You visit your woman, curl your hair, and perfume your clothes while I languish in prison. . . . But know this: I have all this long vacation written your story, how I found you at the first, how I have lost all the great ones for your sake, what secrets I have partaken, and at the last, when you had won your woman by my letters and working, you juggled with me and thus betrayed me; how at Huntingdon and Newmarket you vowed I should not live at Court nor with my friends; how treacherously you sent for me thrice that day wherein I was caught in this trap: this I have sealed under seven seals, whereof my friends shall know; and if you persist to deal thus inhumanely with me, I will leave you to die with shame.”

Harleian MS. 7002 preserves passages from letters wherein Overbury recorded details of his sufferings. It appears that on certain occasions he was attended by the King's physician, Dr. Mayerne. One passage runs: “I was let blood Wednesday ten o'clock; to this Friday morning my heat slackens not, my water remains as high, my thirstiness the same; the same loathing of meat, having eat not a bit since Thursday was se'night [seven-night] to this hour; the same scouring and vomiting. Yesternight about eight o'clock, after Mr. Mayerns [Dr. Mayerne] was gone, I fainted.” Three surgeons, Cragg [or Craig], Nasmyth, and Abraham Allen also attended him.

Sir Nicholas Overbury petitioned the King to allow him access to his sick son, and the King replied that his own physician should be sent. Then Sir Nicholas addressed himself to Rochester, who assured him that his son would be quickly released, and begged him not to prefer any more petitions to the King. Rochester also wrote to Sir Thomas's mother, urging that her stay in town would be of no advantage to the prisoner, and that he would be a free man by the time she reached home. Sir John Lidcote, Overbury's brother-in-law, obtained permission (by a warrant from Northampton) to see the prisoner in the Tower, and found him in bed, very feeble, with his head dry and his speech hollow. At parting, Overbury asked him softly “whether Somerset juggled with him

or not?" To which Lidcote replied that he thought not. Later, "Coming to press my Lord of Somerset," says Lidcote, "about Sir T. Overbury, I perceived he dealt not plainly with him. And once speaking with my Lord about him, he gave a counterfeit sigh (as this deponent conceived) for at that instant he smiled in my face."

After many weeks of cruel suffering, Overbury died on the 15th of September from the immediate effects of a clyster administered (at the prescription of Dr. Mayerne) on the previous day by Paul de Lobel, an apothecary dwelling in Lime Street. Whether the clyster had been poisoned or Overbury died of sheer exhaustion is doubtful. He died hard: Weston is said to have smothered him when the end was near.

On receipt of the news of Overbury's death Northampton wrote to Helwys:—

"Noble Lieutenant, If the knave's body be foul, bury it presently; I'll stand between you and harm: but if it will abide the view, send for Lidcote, and let him see it to satisfy the damned crew.¹ When you come to me, bring me this letter again yourself or else burn it.—NORTHAMPTON."

At twelve o'clock he dispatched a second letter, unsigned:—

"Worthy Mr. Lieutenant, Let me entreat you to call Lidcote and three or four friends, if so many come to view the body, if they have not already done it; and so soon as it is viewed, without staying the coming of a messenger from the Court, in any case see him interred in the body of the Chapel within the Tower instantly. If they have viewed, then bury it by and by; for it is time, considering the humours of that damned crew, that only desire means to move pity and raise scandals. Let no man's instance cause you to make stay in any case, and bring me these letters when I next see you. Fail not a jot herein, as you love your friends; nor after Lidcote and his friends have viewed, stay one minute, but let the priest be ready, and if Lidcote be not there send for him speedily, pretending that the body will not tarry.—Yours ever. In post-haste at twelve."

Later in the day he sent yet a third letter, after conferring with Rochester:—

¹ *I.e.*, Overbury's relatives and friends.

“Worthy Mr. Lieutenant, My Lord of Rochester, desiring to do the last honour to his deceased friend, requires me to desire you to deliver the body of Sir T. Overbury to *any friend of his* that desires it, to do him honour at his funeral. Herein my Lord declares the constancy of his affection to the dead, and the meaning that he had in my knowledge to have given his strongest strain, at this time of the King’s being at Theobald’s, for his delivery.¹ I fear no impediment to this honourable desire of my Lord’s but the unsweetness of the body, because it was reputed that he had some issues, and in that case the keeping of him above must needs give more offence than it can do honour. My fear is also that the body is already buried upon that cause whereof I write; which being so, it is too late to set out solemnity. This with my kindest commendations I end, and rest your affectionate and assured friend, H. NORTHAMPTON.

“P.S.—You see my Lord’s earnest desire, with my concurring care, that all respect be had to him that may be for the credit of his memory. But yet I wish withal that you do very discreetly inform yourself whether this grace hath been afforded formerly to close prisoners, or whether you may grant my request in this case, who speak out of the sense of my Lord’s affection, though I be a Councillor, without offence or prejudice. For I would be loth to draw either you or myself into censure now I have well thought of the matter, though it be a work of charity.”

Helwys hastily summoned a coroner’s jury, six of the jurors being gaolers, and the interment took place between three and four in the afternoon. Northampton, with brutal exultation, described to Rochester the sorry state of the corpse at the inquest. Not content with poisoning Overbury’s body, Northampton vilified his memory—giving out that he had died of *lues venerea*.

The murder accomplished, all went well for a time with Somerset and Lady Essex. She had procured her divorce, and the pair had been made man and wife amid the plaudits of the Court. New honours soon fell on the bride’s father and husband. Her grand-uncle, Northampton, who had been First Commissioner of the Treasury since the post of Treasurer was put in commission, in 1612, on Salisbury’s death, himself died in June, 1614. Thereupon the great office of Treasurer was revived and bestowed on Lord Suffolk, Northampton’s nephew and Lady Somerset’s father. At the same

¹ It would be charitable to judge that Rochester had repented of his callous conduct, and really had the intention of procuring Overbury’s release.

time Suffolk yielded his office of Lord Chamberlain to his new son-in-law. The King's affection for Somerset seemed as strong as ever. When creating him Chamberlain, James declared that "forasmuch as it was a place of great nearness to his person, he had therefore made choice of him thereto, whom of all men living he most cherished, my Lord of Somerset. To whom addressing himself with the most amiable condescension that might be used, he said these words: 'Lo, here, friend Somerset'; offering therewith the staff, which the other, prostrating himself upon his knees, received with some few but effectual words of acknowledgment" (Rev. Thomas Lorkin to Sir Thomas Puckering, Bart., July 21, 1614). In March, 1615, Lady Somerset went with her family to Cambridge, where her father had been installed Chancellor in succession to his uncle. Lord Suffolk resided in extravagant state at St. John's College, Cambridge, awaiting a visit from the King to the University. In all the academic festivities that followed James's arrival, Lady Suffolk and her daughters took a prominent share, and it was noticed that few other ladies joined the royal party.

But the triumph of the guilty bride and bridegroom was short-lived. A new favourite was soon to appear in the person of George Villiers (ultimately Duke of Buckingham) whom the Queen and Archbishop brought in as a rival to the powerful Earl of Somerset. The King, in spite of his recent avowals of regard, was becoming tired of Somerset. On the 24th of November the observant John Chamberlain hinted to Carleton that the world was not going quite so well with Somerset as formerly; and on the 1st of December he wrote that, in spite of the scarcity of money, the King had given £1,500 towards the expenses of a masque which was being prepared for the gracing of young Villiers. There is extant in the Lambeth Library a long and violent letter, undated and unsigned, but doubtless written early in 1615, in which the King inveighs bitterly against Somerset's overbearing conduct and hints not obscurely at reprisals. One sentence runs: "Do not all courtesies and places come through your office as Chamberlain, and rewards through your father-in-law as Treasurer?"

"If ever I find," continues the King, "that you think to retain me by one sparkle of fear, all the violence of my love will in that instant be changed into as violent a hatred." And again: "You have, in many of your mad fits, done what you can to persuade me that you mean not so much to hold me by love as by awe, and that you have me so far in your reverence as that I dare not offend you or resist your appetites." There is much more in the same strain.

It was clearly a matter of life and death for Somerset to oppose Villiers's rapid advancement. But all his efforts were vain. If Somerset had retained the King's favour, Overbury's murder would never have been avenged. When it became clear that Villiers' star was in the ascendant, a way was easily found for humiliating the arrogant favourite who had lorded it over the obsequious Court.

The manner of the discovery of Overbury's murder has been variously related. According to Wilson, "the apothecary's boy that gave Sir T. Overbury the clyster, falling sick at Flushing, revealed the whole matter which Sir R. Winwood, by his correspondents, had a full relation of." The same account is given by Weldon, with the addition that the boy was named Reeve, and that "Thoumbal, the foreign agent" (*i.e.*, William Trumbull, agent to Archduke Albert), unwilling to commit such dangerous matter to paper, obtained special licence to return to England and communicate his information to Secretary Winwood. At the Countess of Somerset's indictment, the Attorney-General (Bacon) stated that the late Lord Shrewsbury commended Sir Gervase Helwys, the Lieutenant of the Tower, for his good qualities to a certain Councillor; that the Councillor, while expressing himself sensible of the favour, added that he would be glad to see Helwys cleared of the suspicions attached to Overbury's death: which speech was related by Shrewsbury to Helwys, who thereupon proceeded to confess that to his knowledge some attempts had been made on Overbury's life, but that those attempts had been checked. The Councillor lost no time in acquainting the King with the matter, and his Majesty presently ordered that Helwys should set down

all he knew of the affair in writing. D'Ewes and Bishop Goodman give a similar account, adding that the Councillor was Sir Ralph Winwood. It is well known that Winwood cherished a personal grievance. When Somerset declared that he had conferred the Secretaryship of State on Winwood, and bitterly accused him of ingratitude for taking part in the Overbury inquiry, Winwood replied that for his Secretaryship he thanked not Somerset, but the £7,000 which he had paid Somerset for the office.

In September, 1615, the investigation into the causes of Overbury's death began; Lord Chief Justice Coke showing the utmost zeal in his conduct of the inquiry, and the King closely scanning the depositions of witnesses (ready to restrain Coke's activity if it were pushed too far). The first witness examined was Sir William Waad, Lieutenant of the Tower when Overbury was committed. Then came the examination of Helwys; Weston; Mrs. Turner; Sir Thomas Monson, who had recommended Helwys and Weston for their posts; Robert Bright, the coroner at the inquest; Paul de Lobell, the apothecary; Overbury's servants, Lawrence Davies and Giles Rawlins; Eleanor Dunne, who laid out the body; Simon Merston (one of the King's musicians), who took tarts and jellies for Overbury to Weston from the Countess; and others. Not wishing to proceed single-handed with so difficult and dangerous an inquiry, Coke soon begged the King to appoint a Commission. Accordingly the Lord Chancellor (Ellesmere), the Duke of Lenox, and Lord Zouch, were joined with Coke. As a result of the preliminary investigation, the Earl[†] and Countess were required by the Commissioners on

[†] Shortly before the order was given, the King had parted with Somerset at Royston, with exaggerated protestations of affection, hanging about his neck and slobbering his cheeks, saying, "For God's sake, when shall I see thee again? On my soul I shall neither eat nor sleep until you come again." But Somerset was no sooner in his coach than the King exclaimed, in the hearing of four servants, "I shall never see his face more." So writes Weldon, who professes that he was himself present when the King parted from Somerset. See also Roger Coke's "Detection of the Court and State of England," 1696. The author was grandson of the Lord Chief Justice by his fourth son, and his account of the issue of the warrant for the Earl's arrest (with particulars relating to the arrest), was drawn from one of the Chief Justice's sons.

the 17th of October to keep their chambers; and on the following day the Earl, for attempting to communicate with Mrs. Turner, and for seizing certain papers in the possession of Weston's son, was taken, under the custody of Sir Oliver St. John, to the Dean of Westminster's house, whence after some delay (pending the receipt of instructions from the King) he was removed to the Tower. The Countess, who was heavy with child, was committed to the custody of Sir William and Lady Smithe in the Blackfriars.

The subsidiary actors in the tragedy were first dealt with. On the 19th of October Richard Weston was arraigned at the Guildhall for the murder of Overbury, and obstinately refused to plead. The terrible penalty for standing mute—the *peine forte et dure*—was explained to him, but his resolve was unshaken, and he was remanded till the following Monday. Important evidence, to show the violence of the Countess's enmity against Overbury, was given to the Commissioners on the 21st of October, by Sir David Wood. He testified that the lady had offered him £1,000 if he would assassinate Overbury (before his committal to the Tower); that he had replied he would be hangman to nobody nor go to Tyburn at a woman's word, but if Rochester would guarantee his safety he would be the readier for her sake to come to blows with Overbury (who had thwarted him in a suit): whereupon the Countess said that she could make no promise about Rochester, but that Overbury might easily be killed some night on his way home from Sir Charles Wilmot's. Meanwhile strong pressure was brought against Weston to induce him to plead, with the result that when he came up again on the 23rd of October, at the Guildhall, he submitted himself to trial, made a rambling and confused defence, was found Guilty by the jury, and after a brief delay (the authorities having meanwhile got from him all the information that they wanted) was hanged at Tyburn.

On the 7th of November, Mrs. Turner was tried at the King's Bench for comforting, aiding, and assisting Weston in the poisoning of Overbury. In the course of the trial curiosity was roused by the production of a MS. list, compiled by the late Dr. Simon Forman, showing "what ladies were in love

with what lords." According to the gossip of the time, the Lord Chief Justice, when the list (which he would not permit to be read in Court) was handed up to him, found his own wife's name on the first page. Magical charms, inscribed by Forman on parchment, were also produced. In summing up Coke informed the prisoner that she had the seven deadly sins—that she was a whore, a bawd, a sorceress, a witch, a papist, a felon, and a murderess. The jury found her Guilty, and, when asked what she had to say for herself, she only desired favour, and could hardly speak for weeping. After her conviction she was attended by the Rev. Dr. Whiting, to whom she expressed herself profoundly penitent for her wickedness, and exclaimed against the Court, "where was nothing but malice, pride, whoredom, swearing, and rejoicing in the fall of others." The tradition goes that by Coke's orders she was hanged in yellow starched ruffs (she having brought in the fashion of yellow starch), and that the hangman wore yellow ruffs for the occasion. At the scaffold she requested to be allowed to pray for the Countess, "as she wished to do so while she had breath." She met her death with exemplary patience.

Sir Gervase Helwys' trial, for aiding and abetting Weston, followed on the 16th of November. He defended himself with spirit, admitting that he was an accessory after the fact, but claiming that, since the inquiry began, he had materially helped the authorities to discover the facts. When he had finished pleading, Coke flourished in his face the confession of Franklin made at five o'clock on that very morning. That Helwys was privy to the murder there can be no reasonable doubt; but Coke's conduct of the trial was severely criticized even by his contemporaries. By royal favour Helwys was hanged on Tower Hill (November 20th), being spared the ignominy of execution at Tyburn.

Franklin, the apothecary, came up for trial on the 27th of November. His confession was read, he was found Guilty, sentenced to death, and duly hanged at Tyburn. Before his trial he had been frequently examined, and after his conviction the Rev. Dr. Whiting took him in hand. The wretched creature alleged that Lord Suffolk was implicated

in the murder, and that "more were to be poisoned and murdered than are yet known." He hinted at plots against the Queen, and the Palsgrave, and declared "I can make one discovery that should deserve my life."

On the 4th of December, Sir Thomas Monson, (patron of Dr. Thomas Campion, the poet and musician), was arraigned. He had recommended Helwys and Weston for their posts in the Tower, and had been in frequent communication with the Countess of Somerset. At Monson's trial Coke dropped some insinuations that Overbury's murder was not unconnected with Prince Henry's death, "intimating, though not plainly," in Wilson's words, "that Overbury's untimely remove had something in it of retaliation, as if he had been guilty of the same crime against Prince Henry." Monson was committed to the Tower, and was liberated on bail in October, 1616, finally receiving his pardon in February, 1616-17. The King was greatly incensed with Coke for his indiscreet observations at Monson's trial.

Meanwhile a close watch was kept upon the arch-contriver of the murder, the Countess of Somerset. It was feared that she meditated suicide. On the 17th of November her keeper, Sir William Smithe, reported that, laying her hand on her belly, she had exclaimed, "If I were rid of this burden it is my death that is looked for, and my death they shall have." She was brought to bed on the 9th of December, of a daughter, and on the 27th of March, 1616, she was parted from her infant and committed to the Tower, where her husband had been imprisoned for more than five months. She passionately entreated the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir George More, that she might not be placed in the room where Overbury had died; so he gave up his own chamber for two or three nights until the lodging lately occupied by Sir Walter Raleigh could be made ready. Her trial was first fixed for the 15th of April, and Somerset was to be tried on the following day. But from time to time the trials were deferred, much to the annoyance of peers who had been summoned from the country to attend at Westminster Hall; to the annoyance, too, of people who had paid heavy prices in advance for seats

in court, and, unable to wait in town when the term was over, had been called into the country before the trials began. A lawyer paid ten pounds for a seat for himself and his wife; and fifty pounds was the price paid for a small corner that would barely contain a dozen persons. In the second week of May the Countess was prostrated by violent sickness, some suspecting that she had taken poison; but finally, on the 24th of May, she was brought up for trial before the Peers at Westminster Hall. She wore a dress of black tammel, a cypress chaperon, a ruff and cuffs of cobweb lawn. She trembled and shed tears during the reading of the indictment; and concealed her face with her fan when Weston's name was mentioned. Her sober demeanour at her trial won pity from the beholders, though Chamberlain thought that her manner was more curious and confident than was fitting for the occasion. The Attorney-General, Sir Francis Bacon, bearing well in mind the King's instructions, treated her with more consideration than was usually shown to prisoners; he neither aggravated her offence nor indulged in invective. The proceedings were quickly at an end, for the Countess pleaded Guilty. When she was asked what defence she could offer why sentence of death should not be passed upon her, she answered that she could much aggravate but nothing extenuate her fault; she desired mercy, and that the Lords would intercede for her to the King. The Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, acting for the time as Lord High Steward, in pronouncing sentence assured her that he did not doubt the Lords would commend her to the King's grace. Among the spectators in Court, but not obtrusively conspicuous, was her former husband, the Earl of Essex.

Somerset's trial followed next day. Bacon had employed every mean and cunning device to induce him to confess. The King had written with his own hand several letters to the Lieutenant of the Tower, and had sent a trusted agent to confer with the prisoner. But Somerset stood firm in his denial of guilt. It was feared that in open court he would speak words derogatory to the King's dignity, and elaborate precautions were taken with a view to silencing him—instantly and forcibly—if he should attempt to give the

rein to his tongue. The King waited at Greenwich : his uneasiness increased as the day of the trial approached, and during the trial he was in an agony of suspense. At ten o'clock the proceedings began, but long before that hour the Hall was thronged. Chamberlain arrived at six o'clock in the morning, and for ten shillings procured a reasonable place. He had never seen so many great personages gathered together before. Bacon's speech for the prosecution was most skilful and elaborate, but grossly unfair : he relied on tainted evidence, he suppressed facts that might have told in the prisoner's favour, and exaggerated whatever might tend to his discredit. The Earl's able and dignified defence did not avail him before the Peers, but was not without its effect on public opinion. All day long the trial continued, and when night fell the proceedings were conducted by torchlight, and the heat grew intolerable. At ten o'clock the prisoner was sentenced to death.

Outside the court there was a general wish that the King should spare his life (Pallavicino to Carleton, May 29, 1616). Weldon says that, though many believed him to be guilty of Overbury's death, "the most thought him guilty only of a breach of friendship (and that in a high point) by suffering his imprisonment, which was the highway to his murder ; and this conjecture, I take to be of the soundest opinion." Sir George More, Lieutenant of the Tower, held the same view, which has also found favour with modern authorities. But Northampton's letters are a stumbling-block.

Public feeling, which favoured the Earl, ran high against the Countess. On one occasion, in July, 1616, the populace, in a wild belief that the Countess and her mother were inside, attacked a coach in which the Queen was riding privately with some friends. But in well-informed circles it was soon known that both Somerset and his lady would be pardoned. On the 20th of July Chamberlain saw and actually held in his hand the Countess's pardon before it went to the Seal. The grounds on which it was granted were four—the public services of her father and family ; her penitence, and her confession made before and after her arraignment ; the promise of the Lord Steward and the Peers to intercede for her ;

the fact that she was not principal but accessory, and had been influenced by base persons. In December it was rumoured that the Earl would receive not only his pardon (he steadfastly refused to acknowledge that he was guilty) but an allowance of £4,000 per annum and permission to keep his jewellery. Meanwhile the prisoners were comfortably lodged and had the freedom of the Tower, spending much of their time with the Earl of Northumberland, who had been committed at the time of the Gunpowder Plot, and was now a privileged prisoner of long standing. Lord Hay, afterwards Viscount Doncaster, renowned for his lavish extravagance, was a frequent visitor. He was paying his addresses to Northumberland's daughter, Lady Lucy Percy. Northumberland strongly objected to the suit, and Lady Somerset encouraged it; a difference of opinion which led Northumberland to indulge in violent language against Lady Somerset.

Finally, in January, 1621-2, Somerset and his Countess were released from the Tower on the understanding that they were to reside at Grays in Oxfordshire, a seat of William Knollys, Lord Wallingford, afterwards Earl of Banbury. The latter was husband of Lady Somerset's elder sister Elizabeth, whose two sons were presumably the offspring of Lord Vaux.¹ On several occasions Somerset petitioned James I. and Charles I. on the subject of his allowance, claiming that more generous treatment should be accorded to him; but his complaints were not regarded, and in Charles I.'s reign pressing requests were made to him that he should give up some valuable jewellery which (it was alleged) belonged to the Crown. Chiswick House became the permanent home of Somerset and the Countess. Of their later life little is known. Wilson declares that they lived to hate the sight of one another, and that they finally ceased to hold any conversation. The Countess died on the 23rd of August, 1632, aged about thirty-nine. Wilson gives a description, too loathsome for reproduction, of her illness and death (which resulted from uterine disorder). Somerset

¹ The doubt as to their paternity occasioned the Banbury Peerage Case, finally settled against her in 1813.

was buried on the 17th of July, 1645, in the Church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

Their only child Anne, married in 1637, William, Lord Russell, afterwards Duke of Bedford. The latter's father, Francis Earl of Bedford (one of the Peers who had condemned Somerset), was at first violently opposed to the match. To raise a dowry of £12,000 Somerset was compelled to sell his jewellery and mortgage Chiswick House. Anne had been carefully brought up in ignorance of her parents' history. The story goes that one day in the library at Chiswick, she chanced to pick up a pamphlet on the Overbury inquiry, and was so affected by the reading of it that she fell on the floor in a swoon. William, Lord Russell, the patriot, was her son, and he owed his tragic death to the evidence of his treacherous ally, his cousin, Lord Howard of Escrick. The latter was nephew of Lady Frances. The son of the "patriot martyr" became the second Duke of Bedford in succession to his grandfather: one of Lord Russell's two daughters (Rachel) married the second Duke of Devonshire, and the other (Catherine) married the second Duke of Rutland. Thus, at the present day, the three dukes, of Bedford, Devonshire, and Rutland respectively, trace their descent in direct line from the infamous Frances Howard.

Lady Frances escaped a violent death, but disgrace, seclusion, and disease deprived the last seventeen years of her career of all that makes life valuable. The sordid story has no lack of tragic elements. She set forth on her worldly pilgrimage endowed with beauty, rank, and wealth in rare unison and abundance. To education she owed nothing, and her inherited temperament left her powerless as a girl to control her unlawful passions, and reckless by what modes she gratified them. As she grew to womanhood, her grand-uncle's counsel taught her, too, to long for the sweets of worldly power and predominance. The King's favourite offered her a lover's homage. She barely needed a counsellor to suggest to her that marriage with so potent a suitor would bring her, besides an assured continuance of private happiness, a personal ascendancy over those who helped to rule the realm. To reach her twofold goal, she did

not flinch from divorcing her first husband by means that a modest woman would have hesitated to adopt, or from murdering her lover's friend, when he threatened to obstruct her path. But retribution came swiftly. No sooner was her design to all appearance successfully accomplished, than she stood before the world a convicted murderess and adulteress—the guiding spirit of a vulgar crew of heartless criminals. In earlier days her graces had been the frequent theme of courtly song, but as she sank into the grave there only echoed in her ears the harsh-tongued curses of a nation on whose fair fame her sins had cast a slur.

GEOFFREY MARTIN.

THE ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS OF LADY FRANCES HOWARD.

JOHN HOWARD, first DUKE OF NORFOLK
(1430?-1485), slain at Bosworth.

Thomas Howard, second Duke of Norfolk
(1443-1524), victor of Flodden.

Thomas Howard, third Duke of Norfolk (1473-1554),
sentenced to death by Henry VIII., and long
imprisoned in the Tower of London
= Elizabeth, daughter of Edward
Stafford, Duke of Buckingham,
executed in 1521.

William Howard,
first Lord Howard
of Effingham (1510?-
1573).

Queen Catherine Howard,
executed in 1542.

Henry Howard, Earl of
Surrey (1517?-1547),
the poet, executed.

Thomas Howard,
first Viscount
Bindon, *d.* 1582.

Thomas Howard,
fourth Duke of
Norfolk (1530-1572),
executed.

Frances = (1) Henry Prinel,
a London vintner (*b.* 1577),
(2) Edward Seymour, Earl
of Hertford (third wife),
(3) Duke of Richmond.

Charles Howard, second
Lord Howard of
Effingham and Earl of
Nottingham (1536-
1624), Admiral in
command against
the Armada.

Frances, *d.*
1598, second
wife of
Edward
Seymour, Earl
of Hertford.

Douglas = John
Sheffield, first
Baron Sheffield,
and reputed to be
second wife of
Robert Dudley,
Earl of Leicester.

Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel (1557-1595), died
in the Tower; ancestor of the later Dukes of Norfolk
(that title being restored in 1660).

THOMAS HOWARD, first EARL OF SUFFOLK (1561-1626), Lord Chamberlain
and Lord Treasurer = (secondly) Catherine, daughter of
Sir Henry Knevet, of Charlton, Wilts.

Theophilus,
second Earl
of Suffolk,
(1584-1640).

Thomas, Lord
Howard of
Charlton.

Henry.

Sir Robert.

Sir William.

Sir Edward,
first Lord
Howard of
Escrick.

Elizabeth = (1) William
Knollys, Earl of Banbury;
(2) Lord Vaux of
Harrowden.

Frances = (1) ROBERT
DEVEREUX, third
EARL OF ESSEX;
= (2) ROBERT CARR,
EARL OF SOMERSET.

Catherine = William Cecil,
second Earl of Salisbury,
ancestor of the present
Marquis.

Sir Robert Howard,
dramatist.

Sir Edward Howard,
dramatist.

Thomas, second
Lord Thomas Howard
of Escrick,
d. 1678.

William, third Lord
Howard of Escrick
(1620?-1694),
informer against
Lord William Russell.

Nicholas, claimant to
the earldom of
Banbury.

FRANCES = (1) ROBERT
DEVEREUX, third
EARL OF ESSEX;
= (2) ROBERT CARR,
EARL OF SOMERSET.

ANNE = WILLIAM RUSSELL, fifth EARL and
first DUKE OF BEDFORD.

Wriothesley, second Duke of Bedford.
Ancestor of the Duke of Bedford.

Rachel = William Cavendish, second Duke of Devonshire.
Ancestor of the present Duke of Devonshire.

Catherine = John Manners, second Duke of Rutland.
Ancestor of the present Duke of Rutland.

LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL, executed in 1683.

DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.



BARBARA VILLIERS.

BARBARA VILLIERS,
DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.

(1640—1709.)

“You have that perfection of beauty (without thinking it so) which others of your sex but think they have ; that generosity in your actions which others of your quality have only in their promises ; that spirit, wit, and judgment and all other qualifications which fit heroes to command and would make any but your Grace proud.”

WYCHERLEY TO THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.

BARBARA VILLIERS was born at the end of the year 1640, but her history begins on the 29th of May, 1660. On that day King Charles II., restored to his throne, rode in solemn state through the streets of London to his palace and began his reign with an act of criminal self-indulgence, which was but too fitting a prelude to all that was to follow. One may forgive him for his short and colourless replies to the addresses of the citizens and the legislators, or even for yawning at the eloquence of Sir Harbottle Grimstone, which was in quantity portentous and notably soporific in quality. A king on such a day might wish to be left to his own busy and exalted thoughts, and plead eagerness for rest and meditation as an excuse for such lack of royal courtesy. Nor should we grudge him the sweet and sedate repose to which the Court historian alleges that he retired. But one need not be very prudish to condemn without reserve a monarch who at such a moment had no thoughts save of an immoral assignation. Charles, as he rode and listened to the acclamations of his loyal and jubilant subjects, was scheming only how he could most speedily slink away to the caresses of Barbara Palmer. And no sooner was he free than he went

to where she awaited him. Antiquarians are not at one as to where they met that night, but the question need not detain us. It is more to the point to say that till then the lady had not granted to her royal lover the last favour ; and that the learned annotator to Burnet's History was wrong in his remarks on her condition at the time.

Barbara Palmer was then in her twentieth year. She was tall, and her figure was the admiration of all beholders. Her hair was dark, nearly black, and the flash of her blue eyes showed how imperious a spirit lurked beneath. Even then she had nothing to learn in the arts of corruption from the vilest of her sex ; but her address and bearing were worthy of her unblemished descent.

“The King might add,” says a contemporary, “to her titles, but very little to her blood.” Her father, William Villiers, Viscount Grandison, had been a man of such rare and conspicuous virtues, that the vices of his daughter are a sore problem to believers in the doctrines of heredity. The eloquent praise lavished on him by the great Clarendon is a more lasting and a worthier memorial to his goodness than the monument which his child—in a fit of tardy remorse, perhaps—caused to be placed over his remains in Christ Church. She might have done him greater honour by paying his debts ; but she preferred the cheaper way. He had died at Oxford, when Barbara was three years old, from wounds received in the service of the King at Bristol ; and we learn from the high-flown inscription (of which the Latinity is inferior to the sentiment) that he lost his life by an act of dauntless courage ; for *primus, admotis scalis, vallum superavit*. His daughter could admire but not emulate his other good qualities ; but in courage, to do her justice, she was his equal, though she was bold only in evildoing.

Soon after the death of Viscount Grandison his widow married again, her second husband being Charles Villiers, Earl of Anglesea, a cousin of the first. Barbara, it seems, was now left in the country to be educated, or not educated, after the fashion of girls of that age. One can only judge from the results, which show that her training was thoroughly bad. She came to London, a girl of sixteen, to live in the

house of her stepfather, and in a trice we find her deep in an intrigue with a notorious rake. "*Incestos amores de tenero meditatatur ungui.*" Her amour with the Earl of Chesterfield, who was some five years her senior, showed her to be at least his equal in corruption. Letters have been preserved in which she makes assignations at mercers' shops in the City and elsewhere, with all the assurance of long practice, and talks with a lack of reserve rare, even in those unrestrained days, for one so young. This earl had "a very agreeable countenance, a fine head of hair, an indifferent figure, and a worse air; he was not, however, deficient in wit"; and of his jealousy—which later became a proverb at Court—there are in his correspondence not a few traces. The *liaison* was not interrupted by the lady's marriage, which took place on April 14, 1659, in the church of St. Gregory by St. Paul's. The man who, in spite of paternal opposition, married Barbara Villiers was Roger Palmer, second son of Sir James Palmer, of Hayes in Middlesex, who was preparing himself for public life at the Inner Temple. He was, it seems, a gentleman of no inconsiderable parts, and of imperturbable amiability—amiability which exceeded his discretion; but he found himself thrust into a position where no man could have borne himself with distinction, and perhaps in more favourable circumstances he might have shown some strength of character.

The married life of the Palmers may be passed over lightly, for it was an unimportant epoch in this history. It was troubled at its outset by the lady's vagaries and by her illness from small-pox, which, however, had but little effect on her beauty. She continued her correspondence with the Earl of Chesterfield, and "*Mounser*," as she preferred to call her husband, was jealous. But he was relieved from this cause of anxiety by the Earl himself, who, having killed his man in a duel, had to fly the country. Although Madam Palmer's affections followed him, and she expressed willingness to go all over the world with him, he soon contracted other ties, and left her to lament his loss. In her intercourse with the Earl Barbara Palmer had been meek and submissive: she was the slave and he the master. He protested and she

languished. The tone of her letters to him is a surprise to those who know her only as the termagant duchess. But her mildness availed her little, and, as has been said, the Earl soon cooled in his affections, and before long he was married. She relished the experience so little that henceforward she was determined to try far different methods with her lovers. It was plain to her that it was the better way in such cases to assume the command, and to trust to vehemence rather than to gentleness ; and these things she did, to her own great worldly advantage and to the undoing of her country.

So far all is but prologue. Till the coming of the King her life was but that of many another young woman of the time, nor was there much to show how far she would in time outdo them all in sinning. Her conduct of her only intrigue had given but little promise of the unerring skill, which she was to show in the evil art of ruling the other sex. Like all great artists, she had begun by copying conventional models. But now the first period of her life is closed : her apprenticeship is over, and her individuality fully developed. Henceforth her work can be divided into no more periods : her "manner" is fully formed, and has reached the highest possible perfection. She was probably herself unconscious of the evolution of her principles ; for she had none of that tendency to self-analysis which in all crafts is the mark of lesser mastery.

How and when she first met King Charles is not known. The better opinion, however, is that Mrs. Jameson is wrong in saying that it was in Holland ; Madame Palmer may have accompanied her husband abroad, it is true, or she may have been abroad before her marriage ; but of one thing there is no doubt. The King on the day of his return to London sought relaxation from the cares of State in her company, and her first child, a daughter, was born in February, 1661, and acknowledged by the King, who had her called Ann Fitzroy.

At first, apparently, her husband was in ignorance ; but not for long. He was at that time representing Windsor in Parliament, and lived in King Street, Westminster, "in the house which had been Whally's," and there the King was a frequent visitor, and most of the Court came with him.

Frequently there were "great doings of musique" there; and once we learn how Mr. Pepys, working in the next house, heard and admired. But the scandal grew hourly greater. Shortly after the birth of the first child his Gracious Majesty determined to bestow an unmistakeable sign of his royal favour on the mother. Mr. Roger Palmer was created Earl of Castlemaine and Baron Limerick in Ireland. The patent of nobility was seen by Mr. Pepys at the office of the Privy Seal; and he remarks that "the honour is tied up to the males got of the body of his wife the Lady Barbara, the reason whereof," he slyly adds, "everybody knows." And letters are extant which show how anxious the King was about this patent, and how he repeatedly urged Mr. Secretary Morrice to complete it. It is easy to expend cheap wit on the subject of the new Earl, but it is more charitable to remember that he could not have refused the royal favour without risking his head; moreover, he may have had a real affection for his wife, and hoped to wean her from her evil ways.

This brings us to the beginning of the year 1662, which was a very eventful one for the newly made Countess. Her influence over the King was growing day by day, and day by day her power over the affairs of the nation was waxing. His Majesty supped with her nearly every night, and hardly ever appeared in public without her. She was beginning to be remarked for that splendour and extravagance in ornament and dress which later became notorious. In the meanwhile events were preparing which, it might seem, would threaten her ascendancy. But her skill or her good fortune, or the zealous advocacy of her partisans, who thought her rule would best serve their own ends—or perhaps all three causes, and the first in the smallest degree—turned them to her lasting advantage.

On the 14th of May Catherine of Braganza reached Portsmouth, and on the following day the joy-bells of London were rung and bonfires were lighted by the loyal subjects, who felt, it seems, no particular pleasure in their hearts, but hoped that "My Lady Castlemaine's nose might be put out of joint." On that night, however, the King and his mistress were supping together as usual at her house, as though nothing had occurred to interfere with their daily routine.

That house was almost the only one in the street before which no fire was burning—a circumstance which was, not unnaturally, “much observed.” But, in spite of everything, the two lovers could find no better pastime than to send for a pair of scales and be weighed.

The King and Queen went to Hampton Court on the 29th of May, the King's birthday, and for a time Lady Castlemaine seemed to be “a most disconsolate creature.” But she was laughing to herself over the surprise which was in store for the Court and the town. She knew full well that the King would not sacrifice his whims to any consideration of policy or decorum, and waited calmly for the explosion which we may assume—though there is no positive proof—that she had carefully prepared. Moreover, she had just then other things to occupy her mind, for in the next month she was delivered of a son. Her husband, who had become a convert to Rome, caused the child to be baptized by a priest. When the mother heard of it she gave way to the first recorded of those outbursts of rage which later became her habitual weapons of offence and defence. But there was as much policy as nature in her wrath. The shrewd Pepys is not slow to conjecture that it was “a design.” For though she flounced out of the house without further ado, she had forethought enough to have all her goods carefully packed; and she went to Richmond, to a brother's house, presumably in order “that the King might come at her the better.” This was on the 15th of July, and from that day she lived no more with the Earl of Castlemaine. A few days later the child was christened again by a minister, the King, the Earl of Oxford, and the Duchess of Suffolk standing sponsors, and it was baptized “with a proviso that it had not already been christened.” The curious may see in the registers of St. Margaret's, Westminster, an entry relating to “Charles Palmer, Lord Limbricke, s. to y^e right honor^{ble} Roger, Earl of Castlemaine, by Barbara.” This child was described as a beautiful boy, and was subsequently known as Charles Fitzroy, ultimately becoming Duke of Southampton and Cleveland.

That there was premeditation in the lady's apparently sudden flight is made almost certain by the fact that on the

day of her departure the Earl of Castlemaine executed a bond in £10,000, in consideration whereof certain persons therein named indemnify him against the contracts, bargains, and so forth of Barbara his wife to the extent stated. How far he yielded to pressure from above, or how far he voluntarily retired from the scene we do not know. At any rate, there is nothing to show that Barbara regretted him, or bestowed another thought on him. We shall meet with him but once again, and then "this transient and embarrassed phantom" passes out of our ken.

Though the Countess of Castlemaine had for the moment retired from sight, her name was soon again to be in all men's mouths. Even those who had hoped least from the presence of a Queen were amazed and shocked to hear that the King was not only trying to force on her the odious company of his concubine, but was even urging his bride to make her rival a Lady of the Bedchamber. The Queen, finding her own entreaties fruitless, pleaded a promise made to her mother, and stubbornly refused even to see the detested Countess. But Charles was equally obstinate. He allowed his wife no rest. The matter of Lady Castlemaine's appointment occupied his mind to the exclusion of all else, and the Court was torn by factions. The Queen's supporters had but little power against the dissolute advisers of the King, who persuaded him that his honour was engaged to Lady Castlemaine. "Here was," they urged, "a young and beautiful lady, of a noble extraction, whose father had lost his life in the service of the crown; she had provoked the jealousy and rage of her husband to that degree that he had separated himself from her; and now the disconsolate lady had no place of retreat left from the infamy of the world but his Majesty's tenderness and protection." These councillors, with the Earl of Bristol at their head, naturally continued to pay assiduous court to Lady Castlemaine; for they knew to which side victory would incline.

On the other side Lord Clarendon, to the best of his power, supported the injured Queen, and pressed on the King considerations of policy, religion, and decency; but he argued in vain. At last, tired of discussion, Charles determined

to act, and did so with a shameless brutality which his flatterers, no doubt, eulogized as the true heroism of a kingly nature. One evening he entered the Queen's presence-chamber, leading by his hand a lady whom he wished to present to her. At first the Queen made as if she would receive her graciously; but soon she was aware that she saw before her the dreaded Countess. When she realized to how gross an outrage she had been subjected she swooned, and bled profusely from the nose, and the Court broke up in confusion. But even so Charles was not satisfied. He pressed into his service the Queen's staunchest supporter. He wrote a letter to Lord Clarendon, commanding him to use his influence with the Queen on the Countess's behalf—a letter showing such cynical depravity that one can only let it speak for itself. It runs:—

“I wish I may be unhappy in this world and the world to come, if I fail in the least degree of what I have resolved, which is of making my Lady Castlemaine of my wife's bed-chamber; and whosoever I find use any endeavours to hinder this resolution of mine, except it be only to myself, I will be his enemy to the last moment of my life. You know how true a friend I have been to you. If you will oblige me eternally, make this business as easy to me as you can, what opinion soever you are of; for I am resolved to go through this matter, let what will come on it, which again I swear before Almighty God: therefore if you desire to have the continuance of my friendship, meddle no more with this business, except it be to beat down all false and scandalous reports and to facilitate what I am sure my honour is so much concerned in; and whosoever I find to be my Lady Castlemaine's enemy in the matter, I do promise upon my word to be his enemy as long as I live.”

Clarendon, though protesting against the cruelty of the King, obeyed, and strove to persuade the Queen. He has left a long account of his Machiavellian arguments, which do more credit to his head than his heart. At first the Queen declared she would rather sail for Lisbon at once than submit, and loudly reproached the King; whereupon the Chancellor prayed to be relieved of his ignoble duties. Then

for a time the King left his consort severely alone, and his coldness effected what his insistence had failed to compass. The Queen was wearied into submission, and lost thereby the respect of all the world, getting in return not even the King's thanks. And so ended the first of the Bedchamber questions which have at various epochs and in widely different ways agitated the English Court.

All this time the King was paying marked court in public, no less than in private, to his favourite, who had played a passive part, as far as we know, in these disputes. But there can be no doubt that she was the moving spirit of the shameful intrigue. Probably Lady Castlemaine cared little enough for the post in itself; neither did she set much store by the safeguarding of appearances which it might effect. In that respect she was of hardened recklessness. But what she—and others on her behalf—had determined she should have was a pretext for being always near the King. They knew that she could mould him to her will, and that with her aid they might plunder the nation and ruin their enemies, as Clarendon who was now the chief of them, was soon to know to his cost. Her main object was to secure a share of the spoil for herself, and a very large one.

In August the King and Queen came with much pageantry from Hampton Court to Whitehall, in a state barge allegorically adorned, and escorted by an endless throng of boats. Among the brilliant crowd which awaited the coming of the sovereigns were the newly ennobled Earl and Countess of Castlemaine. But they were not together, and the quidnuncs observed how that when they met they exchanged civil salutes, and that the Earl caressed the baby; which of the two children of the Countess it was, Mr. Pepys, who is the authority for the incident, does not say. After this function the Earl went to France, announcing that he would enter a monastery, but he did not in fact do so, and returned some years later to England. He had the distinction of being accused by Oates; and in the next reign attained to some honours, being made a member of the Privy Council in 1687. One of the best known passages in Macaulay deals with his abortive mission to Rome, and its ludicrous close by

reason of His Holiness' opportune fits of sneezing. Under the influence of the historian's scathing satire most men have been content to dismiss the poor Earl as a slight, undeserving creature worthy merely of contempt. But, perhaps, after all, such a verdict is unduly harsh. Roger Palmer's career had opened not ignobly; he had done some service to the cause of the exiled Stuarts, and had been entrusted with difficult and dangerous missions, in the conduct of which he earned some applause. The causes which blighted his fortunes were not of his own making. That he ever emerged at all after the first storm of ridicule had overwhelmed him shows that he was not wholly weak. Nothing can be argued from his failure at Rome, for failure was inevitable. Such preferment as he gained in later life cannot in any way have been due to his wife, whose sun had then set. That he several times saw the inside of the Tower, and was deemed of sufficient importance to be excepted from the Act of Indemnity, shows at least that he was no mere cypher; and the use he made of his enforced leisure was at any rate not unworthy. He wrote voluminously, if not remarkably. He died in Ireland in 1705, and left a will which benefited Anne, the eldest daughter of his wife; though in making his bequests to her he shrank from expressing a definite view on the vexed question of her paternity.

The results of the Queen's concessions to the King and Lady Castlemaine were soon scandalously evident. In the course of the following month the Countess had begun her duties as Lady of the Bedchamber, and was seen by Mr. Pepys attending her Majesty in her chapel of St. James's. She drove in the same coach with the King and the Queen, and she gave balls, at which the King did not scruple to appear. Whenever Lady Castlemaine was in the palace the Queen sat neglected and alone, while the favourite had all the King's attention. She would linger by herself in corners waiting for his Majesty, and never waited in vain. The courtiers, knowing what was expected, respectfully passed by, and looked the other way. But soon even such facilities failed to satisfy the King and the Countess. The one thing needful was that she should be under the royal roof, and

apartments were found for her next to those of the King himself.

The rewards for which she had been working were now within her grasp. Concealment was no longer necessary, or even useful. The world soon knew that the country was governed by Lady Castlemaine and her chosen friends. They were all worthy of her, though in rapacity she outdid them all. They were not statesmen in any worthy sense, but they ruled the State. She was one degree further removed from statesmanship than they. They presumably had at least some ambition, though they had resorted to it but as a pastime. She, though her power was even greater than that of the Buckingham, the Bennet, and the Ashley—of which, indeed, it was in a sense the foundation—could not justly be called even a politician. For policy she had none, unless it be a policy to be ravenous of public money. Her influence was incalculable, but exercised indirectly. She made history almost in spite of herself. She made and unmade secretaries of state, flung Lord Chancellors from power, and elevated drunken reprobates to the Bench; but she did not work for this party in the State or that. Her party was herself, and herself was her purse. She did not thrust down Clarendon because she inclined rather to Sir Orlando Bridgman's views of the privilege of Parliament, nor did she "bring in" Sir Henry Bennet or Ashley because she applauded their views on toleration. Her only aim was to place in power those who could thwart her least in her traffic in public preferment. From this time forward not an office, spiritual or temporal, was filled up without her cognizance; and her approval was a marketable commodity. To sell it in the dearest market was her only care. She had £10,000 a year "rent" from the Lieutenant of Ireland; and in one year there was granted to her the reversion of all the places in the Custom House. It is an academic question whether she chose aspirants according to the length of their purses, or—what is more likely—had them chosen for her by her "Junto," whose object, in their turn, was to find the most pliable instruments for their schemes of corruption. Be this as it may, through

Lady Castlemaine's sinister methods the whole administration was tainted root and branch. The most powerful hinderer of these mercantile transactions (for they were nothing else) was Lord Clarendon. He once bitterly remarked that "that woman would soon sell every place." The words were reported to her, whereupon she caused him to be told that his lordship might rest easy, for *his* place was already contracted for, and the bargain was near completion. She could never forgive him his opposition to her schemes, and in her case it is idle to look for other than purely personal reasons of spite and rancour to account for the part she took in securing his fall.

Politics, as such, had no interest for her. Indeed, one hardly looks to a lady of twenty-two or twenty-three for guidance in statecraft. But her mental equipment was too meagre for the task of playing Egeria even on that stage. Only one remark on public affairs is credited to her by the scrupulously minute chroniclers of the day. She said once that the King could not govern save by an army, which showed true feminine logic. The syllogism is simple. She hectored the King and gained all her ends; therefore if the King dragooned the nation he would be no less successful. Had she ever spoken much on such questions we should have heard of it, but money-making and pleasure occupied her energies to the exclusion of all else. The irresistible influence she wielded, which has misled observers into concluding that she ruled by design, was in her eyes no more than an incidental consequence of her business. In justice she must be acquitted of deep-laid plots for the ruin of the nation. In that respect her rival and successor, the Duchess of Portsmouth, carries off the palm. She really was, and consciously, the embodiment of a policy as odious as she herself was bewitching. There is much shrewd sense in the words of a satire of the time, in which the French lady is made to say to Lady Castlemaine—

"In Balls and Masques you revel'd out your nights,
But, Madam, I did relish State delights :

Statesmen did know that you were but a fool,
But they from me took Measures how to Rule."

And that was probably why Charles at heart always preferred the English lady. The satirist probably speaks more truly than historians of her relations with the Junto, who made her their catspaw, knowing that her persuasions were more powerful with the King than their own, and allowed her, as a reward, to filch what she would from the coffers of the nation.

The sale of public offices was, in its results, the most important of her sources of income. But she thought more of the grants and patents which she extorted from the King, generally by means of real or simulated fits of passion. This, besides being more lucrative, had the advantage of being more private. That was something, even though in those days there were no Estimates and no Opposition to keep a watchful eye on them. It was not difficult to make grants of revenues or profits to A or B on the understanding, of course, that A and B should immediately afterwards declare themselves to hold the moneys in trust for Lady Castlemaine. It is impossible to say precisely how much she extracted from the public purse in this way. But one or two transactions of the kind, exemplifying her methods of finance, have been recorded, and we hear that in one year she obtained from the farmers of the Customs £10,000 *more* than before—and what she had before is not known—besides £10,000 from the country excise of ale and beer.

There was also an unconsidered trifle of £5,000 a year from the Post Offices, the history of which is worth telling in some detail. It shows, on her part, or on the part of her advisers, a real talent for business and a rare pertinacity. In the fifteenth year of his reign Charles II. granted to the Duke of York the revenues of the Post Office, reserving to himself a power to charge such revenues with a sum not exceeding £5,382 10s. Four years later the Crown granted £4,700 out of this sum to Viscount Grandison and Sir Edward Villars, who a few days later declared themselves trustees for the Duchess of Cleveland. In the following year the Duchess found that she could not obtain payment, because the grant was not an annual one. But lawyers soon showed how that obstacle could be removed. Nothing was

simpler than to get an Act passed reciting that the grant in question *was* intended to be annual, "though not so expressed in the Act," and enacting that it should be annual henceforth, whereby the inquisitive were estopped from discussing the truth of the recital. The Duchess thereupon settled the sums upon herself for life, and after her death in equal portions on her two sons. In the reign of William III. the moneys were still being paid ; but one year payment ceased, and after much correspondence—in which the King himself took part—the matter came before the House of Commons, and in the British Museum one may still read the "Case of Her Grace the Duchess of Cleaveland, the Dukes of Grafton and Northumberland, touching an Annuity of 4700*l.* per annum payable out of the Post Office, offered to the Consideration of the Honourable House of Commons in relation to a Clause in a Bill intituled a Bill for laying several duties on low Wines." And finally, in August, 1697, a warrant was issued for the payment of the amount claimed in weekly instalments.

But it must not be thought that the Countess confined her attentions to personalty ; in realty too she made some notable ventures. But this was more difficult, for sometimes Lord Clarendon inconveniently refused his indispensable signature. Her resourceful nature soon discovered, however, that there were in Ireland abundance of land and a Chancellor who had no scruples about signing anything. Moreover, she had at one time the reversion of all the King's leases, but even these things did not satisfy her. She obtained, in addition, presents of jewellery from the King to a fabulous amount. Once she got from him all the gifts the Peers had given at the New Year, and soon afterwards she appeared at Court, far outshining both the Queen and the Duchess of York. One day at a play her jewels were valued at £40,000, and between £40,000 then and now there was a vast difference. Another amiable habit of hers, which cost the nation not a little, was that of going to shops in the City and buying what she had a fancy to, saying to the maid, "Make a note of this and that for money to the Privy Purse." It sounds a simple enough method, but it could not be com-

passed without much thought and trouble. To make it possible there must be a keeper of the Privy Purse wholly devoted to her. And she found a willing tool in the person of one Baptist, or Bab May, who performed his duties conscientiously and held his tongue. His function was a double one—to pay everything asked by Lady Castlemaine, and to tighten the purse-strings to all the world besides. And so it came to pass that while she was squandering thousands, the wages of the King's household were unpaid for years, there was no bread in the royal kitchen, the King's linen could neither be repaired nor renewed, and there was no paper for the Privy Council. The unhappy man who supplied it had disbursed all he possessed, and could get neither credit from the merchants nor cash from Mr. May. This estimable official need not detain us long; but it may be mentioned that when he went down with great pomp, and the Duke of York's recommendation, to Winchelsea to be elected its representative, he was sent back by the citizens, who protested they would have no Court pimps as their burgesses. And yet Mr. Evelyn professed to find him a worthy man. Even in the lower branches of the King's household Lady Castlemaine had friends and dependents. The notorious Chiffinch, the body-servant of the King, was in her pay, and was able to render her some services of no small importance. And there must have been others of whom we do not hear, besides Babiani and Goodman, of whom we know enough.

The reign of "the misses and buffoons" made itself felt through the length and breadth of the land, and no corner of public or private life escaped its blighting influence. How near it came to men's business and homes a story told by Pepys vividly brings home to us. One day he was walking in the precincts of the palace with a friend, and saw the King coming from Lady Castlemaine's apartments, which, he thought, was a "very poor" thing for his Majesty to do. And having incautiously said so, he spent the day in fear lest the lady should come to hear of it and bear him a grudge. But he comforts himself with thinking that his friend was a mighty discreet gentleman. His fears were not excessive; for once Lady Castlemaine was told that Lady

Gerard, one of her colleagues of the Bedchamber, had spoken slightly of her; and straightway the lady was relieved of her functions, though her husband was at the time high in favour with the King. Another instance of her all-pervading rule is worth recording. A play gave offence to royal personages, and the King had it prohibited. But it pleased my lady, and it was restored to the bills. Nothing escaped her, and at one of the most critical moments of her history England was governed "with fool's play."

The whole system rested on the personal influence of a few men and one woman over the King, who was weak, pleasure-loving, and incapable. The men are among the best known in English history, and among those who least deserve remembrance. They pleased the King by their wit—or the unbridled coarseness which passed for wit—and their readiness to humour him. They met nightly at Lady Castlemaine's lodgings, where she presided over what was at once a Cabinet Council and a Supreme Court of Appeal, though it had all the outward seeming of a pot-house orgie. The King never failed to seek his diversion in this brilliant circle, and a jest of Buckingham, or a hint that the Chancellor did as he pleased with his Majesty, would decide the gravest issues. Clarendon's weightiest advice would be forgotten, and the most solemn promises to Parliament would be broken at the bidding of Lady Castlemaine, whose outbursts of rage secured compliance when ridicule had failed in its effect.

Her power over the King was absolute. Why it should have been so is something of a puzzle. True, she was held marvellously beautiful; but, to judge by his other favourites—the Querouailles, the Nell Gwynnes, and the rest—the King preferred a childlike and simple prettiness; and Lady Castlemaine had the air of a Bellona. The King liked peace and quiet; and in her society alarms and excursions never ceased. What he dreaded most was ridicule; and she made him the laughing-stock of the Court and the town. He loved to be flattered; but she would never stoop to compliments. He delighted in wit—of a kind—and her conversation was noted for nothing but lewdness and profanity. To be strictly just, however, we must recall that Pepys once quotes a saying of

hers which might have been thought witty, but which is not for reproduction; and once again he tells us that he delighted in her sallies. It was on the occasion when he found her and many other noble ladies seated on the floor, and making epigrams on the model of "I loved my love with an A." But that was, at any rate, not a severe test; and, moreover, he had dined well and in the company of the maids of honour, "whom it did him good to look upon," and he had drunk wine, "more than he had done for seven years," and it was "both excellent and of great variety." How could he on that day be an exacting critic?

It cannot have been Lady Castlemaine's wisdom that chained the King to her side—for in that, too, she was lacking. Only one wise saying has been laid to her credit. She once called the King a fool. This, as a general proposition, was profoundly true; but at that particular moment he was doing one of the few wise things he ever achieved—he was struggling to free himself from Buckingham. Lastly, apart from her beauty she had no charm. On that point every record is unanimous. Or, if she had, she hid it from all the world save the King. One cannot suppose that there was any real affection on either side; and the process of exhaustion leads us to the conclusion that she overbore his weakness by the sheer strength of her evil character, and held him in a grasp from which he could not escape. He made some attempts to be free, but they were singularly futile, and each time he came back more enslaved than ever. She was not his mistress, "for she scorned him," but his "tyrant to command him." She "hector'd him out of his wits." She made him ask her forgiveness on his knees. She summoned him from the Council-board whenever the whim seized her, and he dared not disobey. He laughed at the Duke of York for being a "Tom Otter," which, in the fashionable speech of the day, meant a henpecked husband; but Mr. Killigrew told him it was better to be "Tom Otter" to a wife than to a mistress; so low had he fallen, and so notorious was his bondage.

Other kings have been ruled by termagants, but, strangely enough, they have generally been the strongest and the

sternest. The terrible Charles V. cowered before a washer-woman; but he was used to deference, and more, from his Court. Her courage must have appealed to him, and to him it must have been refreshing to hear a few home truths. But Lady Castlemaine's amenities, though very highly flavoured, can have had little novelty for Charles, who habitually tolerated from his boon companions such familiarities as few ordinary gentlemen would have stomached. The men who helped her to rule must now and again have trembled for themselves and her. Her audacity must have seemed to them more than perilous; for, after all, the King had the power of life and death over all of them. But she knew best, and though his passion cooled with time, her influence over him never wholly waned whenever she could gain access to him; nor was her hold over the nation's purse ever relaxed as long as Charles II. was king.

At about the time of her removal to Whitehall there came to England young "Mr. Crofts," afterwards the Duke of Monmouth, the King's illegitimate son. His charm of person and of manner won all hearts, especially his father's, and that of his father's mistress. She ostentatiously took him under her wing, and she used her irresistible influence in his behalf. One might conclude that this was the only kindly act of her life. But, in truth, she thought only that any honours and benefits he might reap might be quoted as precedents when her own children grew older. She knew well enough that the King's generosity for such unlawful objects could always be relied upon. The Duke of Monmouth was soon married, and scandal did not fail to hint that the King had hastened on the match "to preserve his innocence, or at least his fame, uncontaminated." The situation is one on which only a lady novelist of the newest decadence would dwell with any complacency. Having mentioned it for the sake of historical completeness we pass on to another episode, hardly less unsavoury, but which cannot be omitted. In the next year the Court was disturbed and delighted by the arrival from abroad of Miss Frances Stuart, a very young beauty, who, being remotely related to the King, was soon appointed a maid of honour. She soon became a friend of Lady Castle-

maine, who had her to share her bed. And every morning and nearly every night the King would visit them. The fact is worth notice, for Miss Stuart had the reputation of a stern, unbending prude, and there are still people who think that the one fault of the Stuart Court was the over-refinement of decay. Lady Castlemaine soon had reason to repent of her friendship; for "with her sweet eye, little Roman nose, and excellent *taille*," Miss Stuart attracted the attention of every lover of beauty, not excluding the King. Though she was particularly brainless, yet she had wit enough to encourage the King up to a certain point and then keep him at arm's length, till he was quite distracted. After a time even Lady Castlemaine was neglected, and honoured her rival with cordial detestation. It was the most serious rivalry she ever had to encounter as far as the King's affections were concerned; but Miss Stuart did not meddle in intrigue; and though she too desired to make her fortune, her demands were comparatively modest, and she obtained scarcely half as many hundred of pounds as Lady Castlemaine extorted thousands. When the Queen's life was despaired of during the illness which attacked her at the end of the year of which we are speaking, Miss Stuart was universally thought of as her successor, though his Majesty never missed supping with Lady Castlemaine. And Lady Castlemaine had not studied the King's weaknesses so long and so carefully in vain. She knew of a safe way to regain at any rate her influence. As for the King's affections, she cared very little where they were bestowed. One day he said some "slighting words to her," and in half an hour she was on her way to Richmond with her clothes and jewels and plate, which must have been ready packed as once before, for hers was not the modest store which one box will contain. She swore that she had shaken the dust of the Court from her shoes for ever. But in a day or so his Majesty found life stale without her, and insipid without the constant excitement which her tempers provided. So he went to Richmond to hunt. But all the world knew what game he was stalking, and laughed; and in a few hours Lady Castlemaine and her baggage came back to Whitehall. She was in greater favour than ever, only a few days after

Mr. Pepys had triumphantly said that "her nose was out of joint."

This little incident happened in July; about two months later was born her second son, who later became Duke of Grafton. He was the last of her children whose paternity was undisputed; for after this Lady Castlemaine, a New Woman before her time, determined to be even with the King in the matter of fickleness. And she even bettered his example.

The King's perplexities all this time were grotesque. His infatuation for Miss Stuart grew day by day, and yet he could not dispense with Lady Castlemaine even if she had relaxed her grasp on him and his pocket. He did once offer to dismiss her if Miss Stuart would listen to his suit; but she was still obdurate. A ludicrous story is that of the "calash," which the Comte de Grammont had presented to the King, and which both the ladies wanted to be seen in on the same day. How they both raged, and how the younger lady gained the day by agreeing to certain concessions, may be read in Grammont's Memoirs, which also tell how the poor object Queen thought the whole episode rather amusing. The struggle for supremacy between the two ladies extended to their servants; and when Lady Castlemaine's nurses and Miss Stuart's tirewomen had angry words the Countess would send for his Majesty from the Council-board to compose their quarrels. He devoted infinite pains to his duties as peacemaker, while the business of the nation was left to take care of itself. And this was probably what the lady wanted. Miss Stuart continued to be a source of annoyance to Lady Castlemaine for some time, and it was not till she married the Duke of Richmond that her star waned. In bringing about this marriage Lady Castlemaine took an active part, and one of the most characteristic incidents of the courtship was due to her suspicious espionage. From the estimable Chiffinch and Babiani, who were in her pay, she learnt one night that as soon as the King had left Miss Stuart the Duke of Richmond had joined her. Straightway she led the King to Miss Stuart's apartment, and proved to him the truth of her story. How the King interrupted their protestations has been told

by Grammont in a passage which again proves how little the Court of Charles deserves its fame for external elegance, and with how little austerity a lady could in those days earn a reputation for virtue. Miss Stuart was full of fears for the future, for the King's wrath had been terrible. She sought and found a mediator in the person of the Queen, whose complaisance once again proved inexhaustible. Miss Stuart soon afterwards eloped "from the Bear at the Bridge-foot" with the Duke, who had fled after the untoward discovery: and after that we hear little of her, though Mr. Pepys takes care to tell us that the King did not desist from her pursuit for some time. And this was "the noblest romance and example of a brave lady the time had to show."

Thus once again by a desperate stroke Lady Castlemaine had won a victory which consolidated her power and that of her "wicked crew," when it seemed to have tottered to its fall. But the marriage of Miss Stuart had another and more serious effect. It led directly to the fall of Clarendon. Lady Castlemaine was able to persuade the King that the marriage was his doing, in spite of his solemn denial. This his Majesty could not forgive, and thus Miss Stuart unknowingly worked for the fulfilling of Lady Castlemaine's most cherished hopes. The "congregation of the witty men for the evening conversation" triumphed over all the influence of the Duke of York and the soberer parts of the nation. Lady Castlemaine surpassed herself. Even the memory of the fallen Chancellor's friendship for her father could not restrain her from indecent exhibitions of delight. She came out in her night-clothes to jeer at him from her balcony. But what she said is not recorded—to the lasting regret of all good students of Ciceronian rhetoric.

These moving events took place at a time when the country was overwhelmed with misfortunes of all kinds. But the Dutch War, the Plague, and the Great Fire, were of no importance to the King's chief advisers, save that they had the more matter for their epigrams "unlimited by the Rules of Modesty and Truth." Even the King's genuine distress at the ravages of the fire they turned into ridicule. They knew how to divert to their advantage the unusually large grants which the

Crown obtained from the patriotic Commons, and they trembled lest too large a share of them should find its way into the rightful channels. Perhaps they feared that the end had come, and nerved themselves to more desperate efforts at extortion. How the grants made to the King disappeared is history, but whither they went we can but conjecture. He became more and more passive in the hands of his Cabal. Lady Castlemaine's infidelities became more and more notorious, and occupied more and more of his attention. But he bought for her Berkshire House, in St. James's, for £5,000, and that he paid heavily for furnishing it we may be sure. She had left Whitehall after one of her outbursts. When the King doubted who was the father of the child about to be born, she made "a slighting puh with her mouth," and retired to the house of Sir D. Harvey, one of her kinsmen. The King had to beg for peace and forgiveness, but she would not grant them save on the hardest terms. She again threatened to publish his letters; she promised, if he hinted at further suspicions, to bring all the children to Whitehall, and to dash out their brains in face of the whole Court. She abused him roundly for his inconstancy, and on his knees he promised amendment. A few days later she was more in power than ever. Mr. Pepys saw her in the garden of the palace walking with the King. He was surprised, for he believed they had parted for ever, and grieved that he should be so besotted "when one would think his mind should be full of some other cares, having but this morning broken up such a Parliament with so much discontent and so many wants upon him, and but yesterday heard such a sermon against adultery." The last phrase is particularly to the point. Henceforth Lady Castlemaine seems not to have returned to Whitehall, and at the passing of the Test Act she lost her place as Lady of the Bed-chamber, for she had in the meantime become a Roman Catholic.

The King's suspicions of her faithfulness were only too well founded. Lady Castlemaine's lovers outnumbered his mistresses, though he was said to have devoted himself to seventeen before his accession. A full list of the lady's peccadilloes would be longer than the famous catalogue of Don Giovanni;

moreover, it would be very monotonous, and to give it in strictly chronological order would be laborious. Nor would it be light reading. To pick out the most striking figures from the catalogue is all that can be done; nor can we do more than hint at the other claims to distinction—if any—which they boasted.

First of all came Henry Jermyn, with his large head, his small legs, and his ridiculous affectations. He was the cause of the last outburst of the Countess's wrath, which was her only weapon of defence; for the King was more than once within an ace of surprising Lady Castlemaine and Mr. Jermyn, as he had surprised Miss Stuart and the Duke of Richmond. But "invincible" though Jermyn was called, his conquest in this instance was but short-lived.

He had many successors. One was Jacob Hall, a rope-dancer of world-wide fame, who was "a compound of Hercules and Adonis," but otherwise a worthless fellow. By her affection for him Lady Castlemaine showed that at any rate she was above mere caste prejudice, and contemporary scandal hinted at still more plebeian flames. On Mr. Hall she bestowed a pension, out of monies destined for the National Defence. Another artist honoured by her preference was Mr. Cardell Goodman, once a "page of the back stairs" to Charles II., and probably one of the lady's paid spies. Later on he was an actor, and, abandoning the more convenient abbreviation, blossomed out into Cardonell Goodman, for a sesquipedalian name had its market-value even then. He was married, but his wife was neglected, and while he was thriving on a large income derived from the Duchess of Cleveland—for this was in the later days—he enjoyed the society of a third lady in a house not many doors from the Duchess's mansion, which shows that she did not exact from others virtues greater than her own. Mr. Goodman was not troubled with false modesty about his intrigue; in the presence of royalty he would step on to the stage before the beginning of a play, and ask in a loud voice "whether his Duchess had come?"

Then there was the famous Wycherley. The lady was in her coach one day in one of the parks (it is immaterial which;

but Mr. Steinman, in his elaborate memoir, discusses the point) and she passed by him. She leaned out and called out to him. What she said has been duly chronicled, but cannot be repeated. The gist of it was that she cast imputations on his mother, and then shouted with laughter. The point of the pleasantry is not at first obvious. But on the previous night a play of Mr. Wycherley's had been produced in which he made some one say that in the pedigree of all true wits there was a flaw. The insult was therefore really a delicate piece of flattery. The acquaintance so strangely begun soon ripened into tenderer feelings, which lasted till Mr. Wycherley married and reformed. The actor Hart must also be added to the list of her pensioners. These were not her only dealings with the fine arts. She once patronized an unsuccessful play of Dryden's, who thereupon compared her to Cato. This is a far-fetched comparison enough; but there was a painter who went still further afield, and presented her as a Madonna nursing a child.

The great Duke of Marlborough owed his fortune in his youth to Lady Castlemaine; and her protection of him when he came up, young and insignificant, from Devonshire is probably the only service she rendered her country. But it was not rendered from patriotic motives. The date of this intrigue is probably about 1671. In the following year was born Barbara Fitzroy, the Duchess' youngest child, whom the King acknowledged in public. By means of her peculiar powers of persuasion the Duchess could force the King to do so much; but even she could not compel him to admit his responsibility in private. For even he knew that the girl should have borne the name of Churchill if her father's name could be hers. The young Devonshire gentleman cost the Duchess enormous sums. Not only did she buy him his first step in the army, but she gave him the wherewithal to purchase an annuity. Mrs. Manley, in the *New Atlantis*, estimates the gifts he received at 143,000 crowns, and the same lady tells in full detail the story, which Pope has made familiar to every schoolboy, of the game of basset at which the Duke of Marlborough refused to lend the Duchess twenty pounds—not half a crown. He was keeping the bank, and the

Duchess had lost; but in answer to her civil request he answered bluntly that the bank never lent money, although at that moment he had over a thousand pounds lying before him on the table. Every one present, we learn, was unpleasantly surprised and bitterly blamed him; and, surely, the common amenities of the gaming-table should have prompted compliance, even if there had been no special reasons for generosity. The sum was the veriest trifle, for the Duchess had once lost £25,000 at a sitting and staked £1,500 on one cast. We must not conclude that all Lady Castlemaine's fancies were such costly luxuries as these. We read of her exacting from the mad Sir Edward Hungerford—who founded the market called after him, and died in a garret at the age of 115—a sum of £10,000 for a few hours' hospitality. And that is more in keeping with her character.

The list of Barbara's lovers, though far from complete, need not be extended. As it stands it is long enough to show that the King was not unjustified in the doubts he expressed. His weakness in his dealings with the lady is amazing throughout, but most wonderful in this particular. He had every reason for trying to free himself from her clutches; his wisest counsellors were pressing him to dismiss Lady Castlemaine. Parliament—whose goodwill was peculiarly necessary just then—was muttering discontent at the rapacity of the "misses," and he was happier in the society of his other favourites. Yet for another seven years he lacked the strength to take the decisive step. And she made good use of the intervening time. Her colossal fortune received its chief additions now. It was largest at the time when seemingly the fountain of honour and emolument was least accessible, a fact on which most of her biographers lay insufficient stress. It is generally suggested that she was richest when her personal influence was at its height; but the truth is rather the reverse. Thus the enormous sums she obtained from the Customs, which we have particularized, came to her in 1671, and the scandalous robbery of the Post Office was perpetrated for her benefit as late as 1675. One is again driven to infer that she exercised an influence over the King founded on something more enduring than appeals to his

passion; and that while his wayward affections were fixed elsewhere, he was still dominated by her.

In spite of all changes she remained all-powerful at Court. At about this time Buckingham suddenly and mysteriously became her deadly enemy. But his defection shook her position not a whit—not more than his brief disgrace had done formerly. The cause of the feud was unknown even to the all-inquiring Pepys, and no one seems to have discovered it since. Whether it was *spretæ injuria formæ* on her part, or an analogous feeling on his side, or a mere question of policy, or one of money, at any rate he swore to undo her, forgetting that but for her he might never have got out of the Tower. He formed a complex scheme for causing her to be supplanted by Mademoiselle de Querouaille, and so governing England through a lady less likely to have a will of her own. He was bringing her over for the purpose, but, as his habit was, he left his task half-finished. After many months of successful diplomacy he suddenly grew weary, and the honour and glory of introducing the beautiful French lady rested in the end with Sir Henry Bennet, who was not a foe of Lady Castlemaine.

The people, oddly enough, did not detest the Countess, as might have been expected. On the contrary, she enjoyed a sort of popularity with the noisier classes at any rate, and was usually cheered. But Grub Street showed her scant mercy, in which it was ungrateful, for indirectly she must have been the livelihood of hundreds of poor scribblers, who found in her a wholly congenial topic for their not over dainty pens. A remarkable performance of the sort common at that time has fortunately been preserved. It attracted some attention at the moment, and is mentioned both by Pepys and Evelyn. This "libertine libel" purported to be a petition presented by the impoverished women of the town to Lady Castlemaine, whom they honoured as the head of their profession. They complained of the pulling down of the streets they lived in, of the attacks of apprentices, and of men who maltreated them, and lived on their earnings. And they warned Lady Castlemaine that even she might one day suffer thus. It is a curious production, and if one had not

the most positive evidence that the broadsheet was published in 1668, one would say it was the work of one who knew Lady Castlemaine's later misfortunes. The writer goes on to give "The gracious answer of the most Illustrious *Lady of Pleasure*, the Countess of Castlemaine, to the Poor *Whore's* Petition." In the preamble she is made to say, "For on Shrove Tuesday last Splendidly did we appear upon the theatre at White Hall, being to amazement wonderfully decked with Jewels and Diamonds which the (abhorred and to be undone) Subjects of this Kingdom have payed for." Then she promises her aid to the sisterhood, "either out of our annual Rents which we have begged, or out of the next Moneys which shall come to our Hands by our own Practice, or as soon as our standing Revenue shall be established: for," she is made to add, "should we part with a hundred thousand Pounds worth of our jewels, since so much English Money hath crossed the Narrow Seas, we fear that our Goldsmiths will not be able to raise it upon them." And in conclusion the petitioners are advised never to do anything without receiving instant payment. To insist on that, she protests, had been her one rule of life, and thus, and thus alone, had she achieved greatness. Mr. Pepys says the satire is not witty, but "devilish severe." For once we venture to disagree. It certainly has more humour than most of its kind, and it is regrettable that for obvious reasons none of the passages which support this view can well be quoted.

Luckily for Lady Castlemaine Grub Street had but little weight in public affairs; unluckily for the nation, even Westminster Hall was powerless to oust her. So she went on hectoring and robbing the King, and grossly deceiving him as before. Her tempers became worse and worse, till finally he was driven to despair. A treaty of peace was negotiated by the Comte de Grammont, in virtue of which she of the one part promised to moderate her language in speaking of the King's other favourites, and was to dismiss Jermyn and the rest, while, of the other part, the King still further enriched and ennobled her. In August, 1670, "in consideration of her noble descent, her father's death in the service of the Crown, and by reason of her own personal

virtues," she was created Baroness of Nonsuch, Countess of Southampton, and Duchess of Cleveland, and the estates of Nonsuch, which were near Cheam, in Surrey, were granted to her—besides other things. One might have thought that at last she would be satisfied; but she still wanted more, and was at no loss to get it, though she was no longer the King's mistress, for again be it said that she was most prosperous after the King was believed to have cast her off for good.

The year 1672 saw the marriage of her son, the Duke of Grafton, to the daughter of her old *protégé* and colleague in iniquity, Sir Henry Bennet, now Lord Arlington, who, perhaps, saw in this match a chance of retrieving his lost position. He was now living in sulky retirement, for by a strange irony of fate, he who had been carried into power on the shoulders of the wits, had himself been laughed out of Court. When witlings made jest of his solemn face the King smiled on him no more. Mr. Evelyn attended the ceremony, or rather ceremonies, for there were two, the second taking place in 1679, and grieved much that so sweet a child should be thrown away on a loutish boy. That they were both mere children did not shock him overmuch, for child-marriages were then common enough. Incidentally one learns from Evelyn, and one is hardly surprised, that the Duchess of Cleveland brought up her children badly. They had, he says, no rule except the caprices of the King. And assuredly their mother's whims were even less likely to guide them right.

But though the Duchess neglected their moral welfare, she furthered their material interests well enough. Two years afterwards in 1674, her two girls were married. Charlotte, who was ten years old, became Countess of Litchfield, and Anne, who was four years older, became Countess of Sussex. The younger child inherited all the noble qualities of her grandfather, while the older copied the baser example of her mother. The two weddings took place on August 11th, and we learn that the King was at the wedding banquet, with the Duchess on his right. The two girls had the most luxurious trousseaux, and the mercers' bills incurred for fitting them out, which are still preserved, are enough to move the

envy of the most richly dowered of brides of latter days. The bills amount to £2,943 1s. 4d., and were of course not paid by the Duchess nor by the King. The public purse was drawn on to that extent, for the Secret Service Fund defrayed the expense. Nor was this all: his Majesty—or his Majesty's faithful subjects—gave to the older of the two £20,000 as a dowry, and to the younger £18,000.

Shortly afterwards the Duchess retired to France. We do not know whether this last exploit of hers aroused such indignation that she was forced to disappear, or whether it was previously settled. The only wonder is that she had not been driven forth sooner, for her disappearance had been talked of for nearly ten years. During her sojourn abroad but little is heard of her. It is recorded that she presented £1,000 to the sisterhood with whom she placed her daughter Barbara, a piece of munificence hardly to be expected. Four years later occurred a strange correspondence between her and Ralph Mountague, the ambassador in Paris, which throws a strange light on her real position. There was a great intrigue afoot concerning the Secretaryship of State, in pursuance of which an astrologer was to be suborned to work on the King's superstitious fears, by prophesying all manner of evil, unless a certain man was appointed. But the plotters feared that supernatural influences alone could not prevail, and, casting about for human help, were anxious to have the Duchess on their side. Obviously those who knew the King best still thought that her influence was unimpaired. Perhaps she might have lent her aid—who knows? but unfortunately for the scheme Mountague had for a short time been one of the Duchess's favourites, and had transferred his attentions to her daughter, the Countess of Sussex. The Duchess had no great objections, apparently, to her own maternal example being so faithfully followed, but when such things were done at her expense her just indignation got the better of her. On May 16, 1678, she wrote a lengthy and extremely tedious letter to the King, appealing to his "genoriste" to avenge her, and calling high heaven to witness how she has been wronged by her child. And here incidentally we hear of another dear friend she had, one M. de Châtillon.

She seems, moreover, astonished at her own moderation in this matter, and hurt by Mountague's imputations of levity. The end of it all was that the Earl of Sussex, persuaded of the solid advantages of a royal father-in-law (even though there was doubt about the relationship) took back his wife; and indirectly the dissolution of the so-called "Pension" Parliament followed. But to say that the Duchess still interfered in politics is misleading, for her letters show that her concern with the matter is purely personal. As to parliaments, their continuance or dissolution affected her not a jot.

When she returned home is not quite certain: probably in the same year. At any rate in 1681 she was again in England, gradually getting poorer, because she spent more, rather than because she filched less. She again came to Court, where she cut a great figure, and some of her amorous adventures, belong to this period. Evelyn tells us that she was one of the group who played cards with the King on the Sunday night before his fatal seizure, but no other contemporary mentions her presence on that particular night. Be that as it may, however, Evelyn's mistake has given Lord Macaulay occasion for one of his most celebrated word-pictures, which it would be a pity to spoil for the sake of so small a fact; since after all, one mistress more or less would make no difference to the scandal.

After the King's death the Duchess naturally had to retire more and more into the background. She lived like a private gentlewoman of means, apparently not with a large circle of friends, but with a succession, more or less unbroken, of lovers. She was very much disliked and hated even by her own family, if we may trust the spiteful writer of the *New Atlantis*, who condemns her as "Querulous, Fierce, Loquacious, excessively fond or infamously rude;" and adds that every one who knew her would have laughed to see her in her coffin. And it was small wonder that she was soured. She was forty-five, and, as Paula Tanqueray says, one need wish one's worst enemy nothing worse than to be forty-five. Her finances were not brilliant compared with her past wealth, and her gambling debts were huge. Her son, the Duke of

Northumberland, contracted a mean marriage, and her youngest daughter, Barbara, contracted no marriage at all. But she was like her mother in nature as well as name, and she had a son whose parentage was open to dispute. With that distinction she retired into a convent, and the child lived with his undesirable grandmother.

Little now remains to be told of the Duchess of Cleveland save the grotesque tragi-comedy of her marriage with Beau Fielding, who was the veriest incarnation of empty swagger that ever cumbered the earth. He combined the pleasing qualities of a meaner Don Juan with an unparalleled impudence and a total lack of refinement and principle. He was born in 1656 at Solihull, near Birmingham, and educated at Queen's College, Oxford, and was related to the Earls of Denbigh. The most diverting but least accurate history of his life says, however, that he was born at Reigate. The title-page of the book just mentioned gives an excellent idea of the kind of man he was, and it is sufficiently quaint to be worth transcribing in full. It runs thus: "An Historical Account of the Life, Birth, Parentage, and Conversation, of that celebrated Beau Handsome *Fealding*, being a full Character of all his Transactions in the service both of *Mars* and *Venus*, from his first being took notice of in *London* till his divorce from the Dutchess of *C—d*, by reason of his being first married to *Mary Wadsworth*, a Jilt of the Town, before, for which he was Tryd and Convicted at the *Old Baly*: Also you have here an Account of several sharp Actions committed by him since his separation to support him till the time of his Death, with an Elegy and Epitaph, and other matters too tedious to be related. *London*, printed for *T. Palmer* in *Cornhill*, 1707." The occurrence here of the name Palmer should be interesting to students of coincidence.

Following our untrustworthy guide, we learn that Fielding's fine person earned him the nickname of "Beau" from Charles II., who bestowed also more solid gratifications on him, making him, among other things, J.P. of Westminster. One cannot help wondering whether, in spite of the difference of age, he had much acquaintance with the Duchess of Cleveland in the days of King Charles; for we hear that "finding a greater

profit accrue to him than by being a J.P., he gave himself wholly up to Love and Wine." He went over to Rome and protected a Catholic chapel from a mob. For this and other services he was made major-general, and our authority says that in that post "he behaved himself with so much Conduct that I never heard of any battle that ever he was engaged in except in the Wars of Venus." Here our facetious guide does him some injustice, however, for he did see some service. Some of his scandalous exploits have lived. He was once kicked off the stage by the actors for his insufferable impertinences. He was at least twice pilloried by Swift, once as "Orlando" in the *Tatler*, and again as one of the "meanest figures in history." This was when, after a duel, he went on to the stage and showed his wound, to obtain the pity of the ladies. But they only laughed, at which Sir Walter Scott, judging by the standards of a milder-mannered age, expressed both grief and astonishment. For the wound was real enough. Once walking in the Park he asked his servant whether his dress were properly adjusted, and whether the ladies were looking at him; and when the man answered yes to both, he said, "Then let them die for love and be d——." He was twice married, and squandered two fortunes, and when he determined to lay siege to the Duchess, who was sixteen years his senior, his fortunes were at a desperately low ebb. How low we learn from the same source as before. "He hired a coach for his wedding but kept two Footmen, who as they might be known to what Fop they belonged to, were Cloathed in Yellow, and as Foppishly wore black Sashes, which he bought at a cheap Rate, as being only old mourning Hat Bands, bought of such as cry about the Streets 'Old Suits of Cloaths.'" And this was the wedding finery of the Duchess whose daughters' trousseaux had cost the country thousands.

This notable marriage took place in 1706, the united ages of the happy couple amounting to one hundred and sixteen, the bride being sixty-six years old, and the bridegroom a mere stripling of fifty. No wonder that the match was the talk of the town, and the subject of satires more forcible than delicate. Why the Duchess capitulated is hard to say, except

that she had found her master in those very qualities or defects by means of which she had ruled the King. Why he married was soon obvious. He desired her fortune, and not finding her quite so generous as he had expected, he proceeded to use such violence that she fell desperately ill, and had to have recourse to the law. He beat her and said he would think as little of killing her as of killing a dog. She was in fear of her life, and so terrified of her husband that she was at first "shy of laying anything to his charge." (Barbara Villiers shy!) She would not speak till he was removed from the court. The trial took place at the Old Bailey, and Lord Chief Justice Holt committed him to Newgate. But he was released on bail.

Relief, however, soon came from an unexpected quarter. Two women of the town—Mary Wadsworth and Mrs. Villars—sought out the Duchess's son, the Duke of Northumberland and the Duke of Grafton, her grandson, and told them a story which was soon unfolded in Westminster Hall. It was one of the strangest and meanest ever heard even in that place. On Wednesday, October 23, 1706, information was laid on behalf of the Duchess against Robert Fielding for committing bigamy, on the ground that Mary Wadsworth, his wife, was alive when he purported to marry the Duchess of Cleveland. On December the 4th the case came on before a full bench. A verbatim report of the hearing is extant, and should be read by all who find pleasure in curiously minute pictures of the seamy side of things in the past.

From the opening speech of the counsel and the evidence it appeared that a Mrs. Villars promised Fielding that he should meet Mrs. Delean, a rich City widow, and that he did meet a lady whom he took to be the widow in question, and he courted her. He entertained her at supper (at which he hired a girl to sing to her "Ianthe the Lovely," a song which he protested he had taken from the original Greek), and very soon a ceremony was performed, some weeks before the Cleveland marriage, by a priest fetched from the Portuguese Embassy. Mr. Fielding gave his bride a ring on which was inscribed the motto, "*Tibi Soli*," and he bought presents for her including "a suit of Knots for a Woman's night cloaths or

Night Head Dress," which was a fact not so trivial as it might seem. He also wrote her letters in which he addressed her as his Countess. If these letters could be reproduced, they would show better than anything else his total vileness. But they are not even quotable. Every one except the Duchess knew him for what he was. His letters to Mrs. Delean were burnt by her servants because of his evil reputation.

The truth was that the cunning Mr. Fielding, who had tried to cheat the Duchess, had been himself the most foolish of dupes. The lady was a lady of easy virtue, one Mary Wadsworth. He used much "beauish and impertinent language," and pretended he had known it all along. He tried to say it was a mock marriage, and that she had a husband living—a contention he strove to support by means of a forged register—and finally, he asked, if he had thought her a Lady of Quality, would a man of Fashion have insulted her with such mean gifts? It came out, however, in evidence that he had used threats to Mrs. Villars (the name is another curious coincidence), which she fully described. It is duly set out that he, the said Robert Fielding, did "lock five locks upon the said *Charlotte Henrietta Villars*, and did beat and abuse her in a most barbarous and cruel manner, and did hold up to her Head an Instrument or Weapon being a Hatchet on one side and a Hammer on the other, and did say to the said *Charlotte Henrietta Villars* that he, the said *Robert*, would slit her Skull and Nose if she should dare" to say to the Duchess anything of his marriage. But the said *Charlotte Henrietta Villars* was so terrified that she did go and tell everything to the Dukes of Grafton and Northumberland, with the result that Fielding was finally convicted of felony, though he was not burnt in the hand, having previously obtained a dispensation from Queen Anne. After the trial the Duchess found herself for once an object of popular sympathy. "And then the Dutchess of Cleaveland leaving the Court, she was led through *Westminster Hall* by the Duke of Northumberland, having a tipstaff to clear the way for her to her Coach, and respected all through the Hall by the Gentlemen, whilst *F—g* was ignominiously houted out of Palace Yard." And so he passed out into obscurity, to die five years

later in a garret which he shared with Mary Wadsworth, to whom he was reconciled. He left a will bequeathing to his relations a shilling apiece—surely one of the first historical instances of such a testamentary disposition. Drunken bully and unscrupulous adventurer that he was, he had his place in the scheme of things. It was fated that the Duchess of Cleveland should be made to suffer in her turn for all the havoc she had caused ; though surely Providence never chose a meaner instrument for a good end.

There remained one more court to be invoked by the Duchess after Fielding's conviction before she could be free. A decree of divorce was asked for and granted by the Ecclesiastical Court without difficulty on May 23, 1707, and the official who read it out, contrary to his custom, stood up, out of deference to her and her sons, and the other distinguished persons present.

The story is now nearly ended. After the last catastrophe she lived wholly retired in her house at Chiswick, and on October 9, 1709, she died of dropsy. She was buried there, and the Duke of Grafton, her grandson, was her residuary legatee ; but there was not much left of the colossal fortune to the amassing of which she had sacrificed everything a good woman holds dear.

Barbara Villiers deserves to be placed very near the worst of the bad women of history. That her last misfortunes may move us to pity should not affect our judgment. In no relation of life was she other than wholly bad. She was a bad wife, a bad mother, and a worse mistress. She was inordinately avaricious and madly extravagant. She gambled and she swore, and she had neither wit nor sense, and never did an unselfish thing. She had the temper of a fiend and the manners of a fishwife. Gratitude and tenderness were alike unknown to her, and remorse she could hardly have felt, even had she been conscious of her own badness. She did no murder, it is true, but every other sin in the Decalogue she committed, and more besides. The only comfortable reflection is, that if she had been less foolish she might have done more harm to the State ; but in all conscience she did enough. With such a King and such a Queen, a mistress

of the King was bound to rule the country, and she would have been more than human had she not seized the reins. That is her only defence, and it touches barely one count in the long indictment. As to the rest, judgment must go against her by default.

ALFRED KALISCH.

JENNY DIVER.

“JENNY DIVER.”

(EX. 1741.)

“What! and my pretty Jenny Diver too! As prim and demure as ever! There is not any Prude, though ever so high bred, hath a more sanctified look with a more mischievous heart. Ah! thou art a dear artful hypocrite.”—*Macheath* in *THE BEGGAR'S OPERA*.

FASHION has much to answer for, and when she ordained that pockets should no longer be worn independently of the rest of one's garments, in a situation in which they were particularly liable to be removed bodily by the process of “cutting,” she became in some sort godmother of the lady whose name was intended to suggest her remarkable skill and success in diving after their contents.

Other godmothers of Jenny Diver, the name or names which they bestowed upon her, and even that to which she was born, are difficult of identification, and her origin is involved in a mist of obscurity, which she herself, when requested thereto, begged most pointedly to be excused from dispelling. National pride, it is true, prevailed with her so far that she repudiated an Irish origin and claimed to be of English parentage, but she declined to be more particular in her information. This reticence may, of course, have been the outcome of a laudable unwillingness to stain the escutcheon of an honourable line, though, on the other hand, there is some reason to suppose that Jenny, cunning as she was in some matters, had not attained to that degree of wisdom which would have enabled her to know her own father. Jones, Murphy, Wills, Webb, and Young were among the respectable patronymics by which at various

times she was called, and to two, at least, of them it can with confidence be asserted that she answered. On the whole, however, it seems fairer to dismiss all these and to fall back upon the appellation to which, by general consent, her remarkable abilities had given her a title.

Jenny Diver's mother is said to have been one Harriot Jones, a lady's-maid, who, having fallen a victim to the wiles of a noble lord, nameless in the story, and having been abandoned by her seducer and cast out by her relatives, brought forth her daughter under the auspices of the notorious Mother Wisebourne. We have no information as to the date of this event, but an estimate of Jenny's age in the year 1741 makes it appear probable that it happened near the beginning of the century. The unfortunate mother having died when her child was but five years old, the little waif by some means or other drifted to the north of Ireland, where she fell under the care of an old woman whose only name to her was "nurse."

When she was ten years of age she was sent to school, where, Mr. Guthrie, the indefatigable Ordinary of Newgate tells us, she had a good education, and "was instructed in the principles of religion and the knowledge of other things which was required in order to fit her for doing business." The good gentleman omits to mention for what particular description of business Jenny's schooling was intended to qualify her, but to the exercise of the profession she adopted, which can hardly have been in the contemplation of her pastors and masters, she applied her advantages of education with quite remarkable success.

To mental training was added instruction in the art of plain work, "at which she was dextrous, being reckon'd an extraordinary workwoman with her needle." How must malignant Fate have chuckled over the sampler, knowing full well where trust in this same nimbleness of finger would lead her in the end!

Life in the north of Ireland, under the supervision of an antiquated duenna, had but few attractions to offer to a young lady of spirit, already conscious of the magnetic influence of London. When, therefore, she had attained to

proficiency in plain sewing and her fifteenth year, Jenny took the determination to see the world, with some vague notion, apparently, of maintaining herself by her needle. She made inquiry for any vessel bound for England, and having discovered one due to sail in three days, she succeeded in coming to an agreement with the captain for her passage.

The first step in this case cost nothing, but money from some quarter or other had to be provided to pay her charges of the journey and until she was able to find a market for her skill, and there were, besides, her clothes to be conveyed on board without the observation of her "nurse."

In this difficulty she bethought her of a youth, servant to a gentleman of fortune in the neighbourhood, who had for the space of a month "paid his addresses to her in the quality of a suitor." Representing the old woman, her "nurse," as an insurmountable obstacle to their union, she persuaded him that the only way to secure their happiness was to join her in flight to England. Her lover was only too delighted with the proposal, and having been informed of the agreement she had already made with the captain, met her in due course on board the vessel on the morning of her departure, having previously taken the precaution to rob his master of the sum of eighty guineas and a gold watch. Thus provided they set sail and, after a somewhat stormy voyage, duly arrived at Liverpool, where they determined to stay for a few days, in order that Jenny, who had suffered from sea-sickness, might recruit herself before they took the road to London. For they were minded, after despatching their baggage by waggon, to make the journey by easy stages on foot.

Being anxious to avoid observation, they secured a lodging in a private house, but upon the morning of the day fixed for their departure they were unfortunately tempted to visit an inn for the purpose of fortifying themselves for the initial stage of their journey to the capital. No sooner had they set foot within the house than Jenny's lover caught sight of one whose face was only too familiar to him, and for whose presence there his guilty conscience felt no difficulty in accounting. Fain would the youth have retreated, but it was too late, and he was straightway seized and hurried before

the mayor. A crowd beset him and his captor, and Jenny, escaping notice in the confusion of the arrest, was enabled to follow unmolested at a distance. Once before the magistrate she heard him confess his crime, and saw him dragged off to prison to await his unwilling return to Ireland. As he had made no mention of his companion, Jenny was free to go whither she pleased, and her choice fell upon another public-house, where she sat down and wrote a letter to her lover, "expressing a great concern for this misfortune."

Fortunately for her, he had but shortly before his arrest given her ten guineas to put in her own little purse, and to the concern which she expressed in her letter she added a promise to return this sum when it was in her power. His clothes, too, which had been packed for London, she undertook to forward to him upon her arrival, and when she had done thus much she made the best of her way to town, "never," as she afterwards confessed, "being the least dismayed at this accident." It must be said, however, to her credit that Jenny redeemed both her promises to the unfortunate culprit, who, having been tried and sentenced to death, was afterwards transported, and thus, as far as one knows, passed entirely out of her life.

Up to this time she had not, as she declared by the mouth of the good Ordinary, "imbibed any principle to wrong or defraud anybody," but it must be confessed that the manner in which she treated this "accident" betokened, to say the least of it, uncommon fortitude in so young and innocent a creature, and a mind in which virtue and its opposites would probably be divided by no very arbitrary line.

Arrived in London, Jenny soon fell in with a lady, a native of the country she had just left, Anne Murphy, or Morphew, by name, and by her good offices was installed in a lodging near Long Acre to await the visits of such persons as had plain sewing to be done.

The picture presented by "The Song of the Shirt" differs probably only in detail from one which might have been painted of a similar subject in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and it is not surprising that Jenny soon found she had grievously over-estimated the earnings of her

needle. We are not told what calling Mrs. Murphy purported to follow, but the sequel makes it seem probable that we are doing her no injustice in supposing that for some time previous to the date of her acquaintance with Jenny she had, under the pretence, possibly, of plain sewing, picked pockets. For when, one day, Jenny was expressing her disappointment at the manner in which business came in, the Irish lady, taking her aside, "thus expostulates the case with her":—

"Jenny," says she, "trading being dead, suppose we was to take a new method of life, which, at present, you are a stranger to, but what I am acquainted with?"

And when Jenny was urgent to know what this new method of life might be, "Why," replied she, "if you will go along with me this evening you shall be instructed in this new art; but I must first swear you to secrecy, for fear, if you should not like it, you should discover."

Jenny promptly gave her word, and when night came was duly made acquainted with two gentlemen who were at that time the only persons associated with Mrs. Murphy in her "new method of life." From this hour she may be said to have commenced pickpocket, though, to be strictly accurate, she played at first the less hazardous part of receiver; she, in the language of her friends, *stood Miss Slang all upon the safe*—that is to say, whenever a watch, snuffbox, or other article had been secured by any one of the party, it was rapidly passed from the hand of the thief to hers, in the confident hope that her youthful and unsophisticated appearance would at once disarm suspicion.

Mrs. Murphy and her friends were in the habit of lying in wait outside the theatres in order that they might make profit of the crowd and confusion at the conclusion of the performance, and upon the occasion of Jenny's first association with them, they succeeded in obtaining two diamond girdle-buckles and a gold watch. These, being disposed of, realized seventy pounds, ten only of which, by reason of her inexperience and the smaller risk she ran, fell to her share.

Great as were Jenny's natural abilities, no opportunity was lost of improving them by education, for one of the gentle-

men with whom she had recently become acquainted made it his business, and doubtless his pleasure too, to attend at her lodging every day for the purpose of giving her instruction in the practice of pocket-picking, and also in the extremely curious language which the initiated of that day employed as their medium of communication. This association as master and pupil led very shortly to one more intimate, which ought to have been that of husband and wife, grounded, as is quaintly said, upon the *respect* which the parties had conceived for each other.

Although Jenny promised "a sincere and faithful narrative" of her "facts," and that too at a time when, if ever, she might have been expected to utter the language of truth, she altered her purpose and contented herself (but not her biographer) with an account in which there are few traces of the steps by which she rose to eminence in the practice of her profession. She and her companions were diligent and successful, and she was enabled to indulge to her heart's content the passion for handsome clothing which distinguished her down to the day of her death. Her education and natural advantages stood her in good stead in playing the *rôle* of a fine lady, and no feelings of jealousy prevented her companions from supporting her in the guise of servants in any enterprise that promised to result to the common advantage. It was in this character that Jenny performed a feat which compelled the admiration of her companions and convinced them of her right to an equal share in the proceeds of their adventures.

There was in the Old Jewry a meeting-house, then the field of the oratory of some popular preacher, which, in common with other crowded resorts, the thieves made a practice of visiting. Here upon one occasion, among the multitude waiting at the entrance for admission, Jenny espied a gentleman whose dress and appearance marked him out as a promising subject. The crush was great, and the beau soon found himself, not without the exertions of Jenny's friends, wedged tightly in the doorway. In such a situation gallantry would suffer him to do no less than take in his own the hand which a handsome and fashionably dressed lady in

the crowd held out to him for assistance. "Politeness costs nothing," says the copybook, but when the lady's hand was withdrawn there went with it a valuable diamond ring which she had succeeded in slipping from his finger. Hastily passing the spoil to one of her accomplices and protesting, "It is in vain to get in, I will come another time when there is less crowd," Jenny made her way out, and, when the gentleman in the doorway, discovering his loss, cried out to stop her, had doubtless placed the distance of several streets between them.

As she did not scruple to take advantage of the susceptibilities of the male sex, so likewise was she ever ready to abuse the peculiar sympathies of her own. Her favourite device for this purpose was to simulate, by the assistance of a pillow or two beneath her coats, a condition which could hardly fail to gain her consideration, and at the same time provide opportunity for the exercise of her skill. Upon one occasion, when the King had been to visit the House of Lords, she contrived to fall to the ground in the narrow passage leading through Spring Gardens to St. James's Park, where she lay groaning with all the appearance of a sufferer from the pains of incipient labour. The stream of people issuing from the Park was stopped, and hands were promptly stretched out to assist her. Begging them, however, to let her lie, she made haste to empty the pockets of the sympathizers who were bending over her, while her companions all the time were equally busy upon the outskirts of the crowd. Two diamond girdle-buckles, a gold watch, a gold snuffbox, and purses containing upwards of thirty guineas were secured upon this occasion, and when the owners of such of this property as could be identified inserted advertisements in the newspapers offering a reward for its recovery with an assurance that no questions would be asked, Mrs. Murphy was willing and anxious to be the means of restoring it.

In this, as may easily be guessed, she was influenced not so much by a feeling of sympathy with the sufferers as by a comparison of the amount of the promised reward with any sum that was likely to be realized by a secret sale of the articles.

But when the prudent Jenny objected to Mrs. Murphy that she might be "smoked" and followed, and all thus be "blown," it was resolved to hand the property over to Mr. Roger Johnson to be by him conveyed to Holland for disposal. This gentleman, their usual "fence" or receiver, was engaged in the smuggling line, and succeeded in dying before he had received from an outraged country any acknowledgment of his various misdeeds.

Again, when she was apparently once more upon the eve of her delivery Jenny, attended, as usual by a footman, was walking in Burr Street, Wapping, when she was suddenly overtaken by the most excruciating agonies. Choosing a house of substantial appearance, the pretended footman knocks at the door and begs for his mistress an immediate audience of the lady within. No sooner are they ushered in than the situation is explained, and the good housewife rushes for her smelling-bottle. Jenny takes advantage of her temporary absence to secrete a rich suit of clothes in a place specially constructed in her hoop, and upon her return with the salts contrives during the intervals of her anguish to abstract the contents of her pocket. The footman has meanwhile been busy among the spoons, salt-cellars, and pepper-boxes in the kitchen, and being presently informed of the partial recovery of his mistress, goes in search of a coach, the driver of which is loudly directed to the house of a respectable merchant in Tower Street, and Jenny takes her leave with profuse thanks and an earnest entreaty to her hostess to visit her and her husband at the address which has just been mentioned. The coachman, having driven a short distance, is stopped, paid, and dismissed, and Jenny and her companion make the best of their way home to count up the probable proceeds of their adventure.

This pretended pregnancy was occasionally supplemented by the addition of false hands and arms, the work of "an ingenious artist." When these were employed, one of the gang would go on in advance, to the meeting-house for instance, the scene of the capture of the diamond ring, for the purpose of marking down any persons next to whom it seemed desirable to secure

a seat for Jenny, while another, in the guise of a footman, attended the chair in which she was conveyed. Arrived at the place, she would contrive to take the seat which the scout indicated, and sitting with her false hands folded in her lap, would busy herself during the service in emptying the pockets of such persons as she could reach, being careful in each instance to convey the property as soon as possible to one of her confederates in an adjoining pew. If, when the property was missed, suspicion for one moment rested upon her, there was sure to be some sympathizer of her own sex ready to answer for the pregnant lady, whose hands, she vowed and protested, had never once been raised from her lap. Untiring in her efforts, Jenny would soon divest herself of her disguise, and return in maiden slimness to continue her depredations upon the congregation issuing from the evening service. In the use of artificial arms and hands for the purpose of covering the movements of her own, Jenny had been anticipated by one Thomas Dun, a noted pickpocket in his day, but neither he nor any one else ever approached the dexterity with which she could dive into a pocket and remove its contents. The name of Jenny Diver was bestowed upon her by her associates in compliment to her skill, but whether they fetched the name from "The Beggar's Opera," or she herself was the prototype from whom Gay drew, one cannot now determine.

Though one cannot trace the steps by which she rose, it seems certain that within two years from her first association with Mrs. Murphy and her friends, Jenny had established her ascendancy over a considerable gang, into which she introduced some sort of organization. No one, upon her proposition, was henceforth to be admitted to their number except after a month's trial, and then only with the consent of all; no private enterprizes were to be undertaken; should any member be arrested, the others were to stand by him and be prepared with the necessary perjured evidence to secure his acquittal; and lastly, certain sums were from time to time to be set aside to be employed in contributing to the comfort of any one on whose behalf the said evidence should unfortunately have been tendered in vain.

In spite of the increase in the numbers of the gang Jenny herself appears to have carried on her operations with the assistance of her original associates, and particularly of the gentleman whom she had chosen as the partner of her bed and board. There is some reason to believe that the latter was not unwilling that her fidelity to him should be put to the proof, if only the trial promised to bring some addition to the common exchequer. Her reputation for chastity has, not unnaturally, been assailed, but as far as one knows his confidence was justified, and what is said of the Jenny Diver of "The Beggar's Opera" may not be true, in all that it implies, of the Jenny Diver of real life.

"If any woman," said Mrs. Coaxer in the opera, "hath more Art than another, to be sure 'tis Jenny Diver. Though her fellow be never so agreeable, she can pick his pocket as coolly as if money were her only pleasure. Now that is a command of the passions uncommon in a woman."

But whether her deviations into the paths of dalliance were few or frequent, it is quite evident that something more than a passing fancy was wanted to divert her from the pursuit of the main chance.

Having one evening, according to her custom, attended the theatre in her character of a lady of elegant fashion, she was, upon leaving, accosted by a young gentleman of fortune from Yorkshire (not, presumably, from Sheffield) who begged that he might be allowed the honour of attending her to her home. Promptly foreseeing the opportunities to which this adventure might give rise, she at first declined the attention, alleging as a reason the probable suspicion of her husband, to whom she had but recently been married, but, seeming to yield upon pressure, she afterwards suffered the amorous gallant to call a coach and to set her down near her lodging, at that time in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. The young gentleman, well satisfied with the impression he had made, took his leave after obtaining permission to call upon her in a few days, when, as he was assured, her husband would be out of town.

The companions, disappointed at first at the meagre results of her raid upon the playhouse, represented by one gold snuff-

box, were delighted at the prospect which this promised visit opened, and when the young gentleman arrived, richly attired for the occasion, preparations fully adequate had been already made to receive him. Two members of the gang appeared as servants in livery, while Mrs. Murphy, in the character of a waiting-maid, was ready to conduct him to the bower of expected bliss. It is not perhaps surprising that in such a moment he failed to notice that his lady had removed a diamond ring from his finger in the act of welcoming him, for he had already divested himself of his clothes, when Mrs. Murphy rapped at the door and announced to her mistress in agitated tones the unexpected return of her husband.

Desiring the gentleman to conceal himself under the bed-clothes, Jenny hastily snatched up his garments, together with a gold-headed cane, a sword with a gold hilt, and a valuable watch, in order, as she said, that if her husband should chance to come into the room his suspicions might not be aroused, promising, at the same time, to do her best to induce him to lie apart from her that night, and to return as speedily as possible to the arms of her lover. Having once secured her retreat, she proceeded to lock the door and withdraw the key, and then with her pretended retainers and all their effects took her departure from the house with no intention of returning. The unlucky youth beneath the bed-clothes, having passed a night of agitated and anxious expectation, in the morning had no alternative but to ring the bell for the people of the house, who, arriving and having forced the door, did not scruple to take advantage of his melancholy situation, and absolutely refused to allow him to send for other garments and to take his departure, until he had discharged the score that Jenny and her companions had left unpaid behind them.

Thus far Jenny had pursued her course with absolute impunity, but retribution at length overtook her, for being through some mischance, detected in picking a gentleman's pocket, she was tried, convicted, and sentenced to transportation. It is extremely to be regretted that the details of this incident are lacking, but their absence is easily to be accounted for by her own natural reticence on the subject

and the difficulty of identifying a lady of so many *aliases* among the scores who were almost daily the recipients of a similar sentence. Of the fact of the sentence, which must have been pronounced at some time prior to the year 1733, there can be no manner of doubt, but whether Jøenny actually left the country is open to question. There was no lack of money among her friends, and it seems probable that by some means, difficult in these days of an inquisitive public press to understand, she contrived either to altogether avoid the inconveniences of exile, or at least to obtain the commutation of her sentence of transportation into one which merely enforced a temporary absence from London.

This view of the case would go far to explain her presence with her associates at Bristol, where, among other feats, they succeeded in robbing a foolish countryman of a bag containing a hundred pounds, mainly by reason of the respectful awe with which Jenny's grand airs and elegant appearance inspired him.

Returning to London as soon, it may be presumed, as it was considered safe for her to do so, she continued her old courses, only, for a time, changing the scene of her operations from the neighbourhood of the theatres to the City. Upon London Bridge she succeeded in obtaining thirty guineas, a gold snuffbox, and a silver case containing instruments from a lady, whose attention was distracted by one of the gang, who held her hands, under the pretence of assisting her to pass some vehicles that were in the roadway at the time. The very next day she picked a gentleman's pocket in Change Alley of two hundred pounds in bank-notes, a feat worthy of record by reason of the fact that the gang profited by it to the extent of one hundred and thirty pounds in cash, which Johnson gave for the notes.

It was now the turn of Jenny's matrimonial partner to fall within the meshes of the law, and though we have no details of the crime in which he was detected, he is known to have lain for some considerable time in Newgate, where she was his daily visitor.

The year 1738 opened inauspiciously, for in the spring Jenny, then residing in Pea-hen Court, Bishopsgate Street,

was sued out of her house by the City authorities as a nuisance, it being particularly alleged against her that she kept and harboured disorderly company therein. This interference caused her removal to Wapping, a prelude to the considerably longer journey that immediately awaited her.

On April 4th was celebrated at St. Paul's the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy; a crowd attended upon this occasion for the purpose of hearing the music, while, for purposes of their own, Jenny and some of her associates attended upon the crowd. After the service was over a certain Mrs. Mary Rowley, who had been present with her friend, Miss Mary Reed, bethought her that she would best avoid the multitude by going through Canon Alley into Paternoster Row. She was disappointed in her expectation, for in the Alley she found her progress impeded, and while she was being pushed, distinctly felt her hoop lifted and a hand inserted into her pocket. She cried out at once, "What! are you picking pockets here!" But in spite of that, all might yet have been well if it had not unfortunately happened that one Mr. Addy had been for some time previously diverting himself by watching the crowd from his window, and had been a witness of this incident which had happened immediately beneath it. Calling out, "Madam, your pocket is picked!" he hastily descended into the street, and assuring Mrs. Rowley that he knew the culprit, undertook, if she would prosecute, to arrest her. This she at once consented to do, and Mr. Addy proceeded to lay hands upon Jenny, who, answering upon this occasion to the name of Jane Webb, was forthwith taken before the Lord Mayor and committed for trial upon a charge of privately stealing. She was conveyed, in spite of an ineffectual attempt to stab the person who rode in the coach with her, to Newgate, and on the following Tuesday, the 11th, was brought up to take her trial at the Old Bailey.

Mrs. Rowley, identifying the prisoner as the person whose hand she had felt in her pocket, gave her version of what has been above related, and Miss Reed, who had, as she said, taken the precaution to empty her pockets before she came out, described a similar attempt upon herself by the same individual. The evidence of these witnesses was sufficiently

awkward, but Mr. Addy, the gentleman who was above and saw all, effectually clenched the matter. He, he declared, knew the prisoner well; she had been in and about the Alley for the space of two or three hours that morning, and, with the assistance of "her two fellows," had been "hurrying and picking pockets as fast as she could." Asked very pertinently by Jenny why, if this was so, he had not called out before, he gave the somewhat inadequate reason that the other acts of which he spoke had been done at a distance, whereas the offence upon Mrs. Rowley had been committed under his nose. He further undertook to be positive that the prisoner had taken money—eight shillings and sixpence, by the way, was the exact sum that Mrs. Rowley declared she missed out of eleven shillings and sixpence that she had had—from the pocket of the prosecutrix and conveyed it to her own, and though he might well have been cross-examined with effect upon this point, there would in any case have remained matter, sufficiently serious, for the prisoner to deal with.

Jenny, unable to profit as the habitual criminal of to-day is, by anything she had heard in court of the devices of a professional "mouthpiece," was no advocate. She was in a shop, she said, when "that man" came up and accused her; she had offered to be searched, and had told the people she had seven-and-sixpence and a guinea in her pocket, and if she had any more it was the lady's. In the latter part of this statement she was confirmed by the prosecutrix, who added, however, that "My Lord" (meaning thereby the Lord Mayor) "imagined she had her Receivers about her, and that it would be to no purpose to search."

With reference to her allegation that she was in a shop at the time she was seized, she was flatly contradicted by Mr. Addy, who declared that, so far from this being the case, she was actually upon the point of picking Dr. Best's lady's pocket when he called out to her. He added the damaging information that he had known her for a pickpocket these five years, and could, he protested, if he had thought it necessary, have brought a dozen people to prove it, so well known was she. He had seen her pick at least twenty pockets that morning, and since her arrest her friends (her

“janizaries,” he called them) had been to him and offered him fifty pounds to keep out of the way in order that the matter might be dropped before the Grand Jury.

After this there came a curious procession of witnesses—Mary Cherry, Ann Carter, Frances Fletcher, Mary Robes, John Taylor, and Thomas Welch—all of whom gave the prisoner the character of an honest woman. It is scarcely possible that these can have been other than members of the gang, present in pursuance of the arrangement which Jenny herself had recommended, and it is extremely curious that no questions are recorded to have been asked of them by the Court, either as to their own callings or their means of knowledge of the prisoner. Their testimony was of no avail, and the jury, who could hardly have done otherwise, immediately pronounced the prisoner guilty. There being no prison-warders with notebooks at hand, no record of any previous conviction was produced against her, and she, together with thirty-seven other persons, was sentenced to transportation.

The newspapers of the day supply ample evidence of the general opinion as to Jenny's skill and success, and also of the efforts, the nature of which is only hinted at, that were made by the gang and others to save her from the consequences of her sentence. The *London Evening Post* for April 11–13th, after announcing her capture, goes on to say, “She is one of the expertest hands in Town at Picking Pockets; she used to attend well-dressed at the Opera House, Play Houses, &c., and it's reckoned made as much annually by her practice as if she had the fingering of the Publick Money.”

This testimony is repeated in the issue for April 15–18th of the same paper, where we read: “Among those that received sentence of transportation was the famous Jane Webb, *alias* Jenny Diver, reckoned the best hand in Town: she belonged to a very great Gang of pickpockets, and formerly went by the name of Murphey.”

The *Weekly Miscellany* of April 21st, says: “Among the persons convicted last week at the Old Bailey for transportation, was the famous Jane Webb, *alias* Jenny Diver, for

picking the pocket of a gentlewoman at the Rehearsal of the musick of the Clergymen's Sons at St. Paul's. This Webb is reckoned one of the tip-top hands at picking of pockets, and is well known at Newgate by the name of Mrs. Murphey. She belongs to a large gang of pickpockets that attend the Play Houses, &c., who declare if it cost Two Hundred Pounds she shant go abroad."

This loyalty on the part of her friends is again referred to in the *London Evening Post* for May 18-20th: "Great interest is making to get the famous Jenny Diver off her second sentence of transportation. The Gang spare no pains or cost, well knowing that in six months' time she'll pick pockets enough to pay all charges. Such an excellent hand as she, is a sure thousand at the ensuing installation at Windsor." And it is plain from the issue of the same paper for June 8-10th that the efforts that were made on Jenny's behalf were not confined to her immediate friends. "It's surprizing," says the writer, "what interest has been made to get this notorious woman off from her second sentence of transportation even by Persons of figure."

Meanwhile Jenny had been lying in Newgate, handsomely entertained at the expense of the gang, and occupied in the investment of her savings, which she entrusted to agents for the purchase of stolen property, for which she seemed likely to be able very shortly to find a safe, if distant, market. The efforts of the gang, though seconded by "persons of figure," proved all unavailing, and upon June 7, 1738, Jenny Diver was one among a melancholy company of convicts that was put on board a lighter at Blackfriars Stairs, to be transferred later to the *Forward* galley, then lying at Gravesend, bound for Maryland and Virginia. When it became apparent that there was no longer any hope of a commutation of her sentence, a waggon-load of boxes and trunks containing her effects, among which "a fine side-saddle trimmed with silver" is specially mentioned, was dispatched from London to be embarked with her.

She was landed at the first port in Virginia at which the vessel touched, and having been put in possession of funds by the disposal of part of the property she carried with her,

was soon in a position to arrange for her immediate return to England, where she arrived in less than a year from the date of her departure.

The details of the short remaining period of the life of Jenny Diver are naturally scanty. For some time after her return she was in hiding in Fountain Court in the Strand, but though she was prevented from following what one had almost called her legitimate occupation, she never seems to have lacked money. Indeed, it was an offer that was made to her of five pounds for the use of twenty guineas for a week that opened her eyes to yet another "new method of life" with which she varied her criminal career. Shortly, this was the diminution of the coin of the realm by means of acids, but no sooner had she by cajolery obtained the secret of the composition of the necessary liquor and started the business, than she was advertised in the newspapers as "wanted." Terrified at the prospect of capture as a returned convict, she packed up her property and dispatched it to Chatham, and having followed, disguised in male attire, succeeded in arranging with a sea-captain to pick her up at Ramsgate and convey her to France.

She was immediately followed in her flight by David Roberts, the man from whom she had obtained the secret, his brother-in-law, and one Carter, Roberts's partner, all of whom joined her at Ramsgate. The suspicions of the captain were by some means or other aroused, and during the passage of the Channel a general quarrel arose. The brother-in-law was for returning, and pressed the point with such vigour that Jenny was at length moved to knock him backwards into the sea, from which he was with difficulty rescued, and the voyage continued. Once on shore, Mr. Roberts, either to spite all the rest, or possibly only to save himself, promptly proceeded to give information at the Custom House, but Jenny, getting wind of his intention, managed to escape to Dunkirk and to return by way of Flanders to England.

She is next heard of as the keeper of a house in Marigold Court, wherein were billiard- and hazard-tables, but how or when Fate drove her thence into the streets is absolutely unknown. Those were brave days for adventurous spirits

whose freedom of action was untrammelled by any paltry considerations as to the distinction between *meum* and *tuum*. "There never were known," says a writer in the *London Daily Post* of January 21, 1741, "such a number of thieves about Town as at present, not a night passing without something or other being stolen out of the shops in Cheapside and other places in the City." Mercury was in the ascendant, and Jenny found the attractions of the old life and its associations too powerful to be resisted. But though she is declared, upon the authority of Mr. James Guthrie, the Ordinary of Newgate, to have been "a constant practitioner" from the date of her return, after

"taking a trip
In a Government ship,"

there is no record of any transaction in which she is alleged to have had a hand, until one reaches the last fatal episode, the details of which are extant in the form of testimony that was given upon oath.

On the evening of Saturday, January 17, 1741, between the hours of six and seven, Jenny, in a company with a lady, whose name was Elizabeth Davis or Catherine Huggins, or perhaps neither, and a miserable scoundrel for whom there is no name at all, was taking her walks abroad in the neighbourhood of the Mansion House. Both the ladies wore red cloaks, and Jenny, no doubt with a view to the subsequent alteration of her appearance, was bare-headed, but had a hat concealed about her. To them enter one Judith Gardner, with thirteen shillings and a halfpenny in her pocket. As she was coming down Sherbourne Lane, Sherbourne Lane was dirty, and for the convenience of passengers planks had been laid down hard by the Mansion House corner. Just as she was about to place her foot upon the first of these planks, her right hand was seized by the nameless scoundrel, who said to her, "I will help you over, child, for if you should slip into the water you would be worse off." Mrs. Gardner, mistrusting this officious politeness, replied that "If she wanted any assistance she could give the man a halfpenny," intending him to understand by these somewhat ambiguous words that his ser-

vices were not required. He, however, anticipating, no doubt, a handsomer reward for his unwelcome attentions, maintained his hold upon her hand, raising it to such a height above her head and grasping it so tightly, that he numbed her fingers so that she had no use of them. No sooner was her arm thus removed from her side than she was confronted by Jenny, whose clenched fist she found, and secured with her left hand, in the bottom of her pocket, crying out at the same time, "Hussy, you have got my money!" Finding herself held, Jenny, with great promptitude, struck her intended victim "a great blow on the side of the face," and thus compelling her to relinquish her hold, withdrew her hand with two half-crowns and seven shillings in it.

The valiant footpad, her companion, at the first note of alarm took to his heels and ran, straight into the arms of Mr. Samuel How, a respectable coalheaver, who chanced to be passing at the time with his sister and her child, and promptly caught him by the collar. If his accomplices had but imitated his example in thinking only of their own safety the life of Jenny Diver would probably have been longer, and its end perhaps less tragic. As it was, they flew upon Samuel "with both their hands in his face," and loudly protesting that the brute he was holding was "a good house-keeper, who lived the other side of Moorfields," and that they knew him well, did all in their power to rescue him. It is scarcely surprising that, under the circumstances, the coalheaver failed to maintain his hold, and the cowardly ruffian breaking away made off and left the women to their fate.

The relationship in which they, or either of them, stood to him is unknown, but their short struggle on his behalf cost both their liberty, and one of them her life. The coalheaver, his sister, the injured Judith, and one Mr. Day, a neighbouring greengrocer, who had been drawn from his back-room by the disturbance, succeeded between them in securing the culprits, who were marched, with a mob at their heels, down Bear-binder Lane in search of an officer, and then, when after an hour's waiting one was found, to Devonshire Square and other places in order that they might as speedily as possible make their appearance before a magistrate. Magistrates were

apparently as difficult to catch as constables, and finally, as the Sessions were then being held, the whole party adjourned to the Old Bailey, where the Lord Mayor, though it was then eight o'clock, found no difficulty in immediately committing the prisoners for trial.

Upon the Monday following a true bill was found by the Grand Jury, and on Tuesday, January 20, 1741, Jenny Diver, now answering to the name of Mary Young, and Elizabeth Davis, *alias* Catherine, the wife of Henry Huggins, were placed upon their trial for assaulting Judith Gardner on the King's Highway, and putting her in fear, and taking from her twelve shillings in money, the money of the said Judith, in the Parish of St. Mary Woolchurch.

Mrs. Gardner, Mr. How, his sister, and Mr. Day deposed to the facts above related, and were subjected to cross-examination by each of the prisoners in turn. The object of their questions was to show that the prosecutrix had cried out upon a *man* as the thief, that they were seized at some distance from the place where the offence was alleged to have been committed, and that no money had been seen in the hands of either of them.

Mrs. Davis brought out nothing to her advantage, while Jenny, demonstrating how dangerous a weapon cross-examination may become in the hands of the unskilful, succeeded only in eliciting the additional facts that the prosecutrix, though forced to quit her hold upon her hand, had caught and held her by the cloak till she was secured, and that at the butcher's shop in Bearbinder Lane she (Jenny) had offered her a guinea and a gold ring "to put up with this" and let her go. Neither of them fared any better in attempting to raise a technical point in their defence, for when she was asked, "Was you in fear?" Mrs. Gardner immediately replied, "Yes, to be sure! She was afraid she should get a mischief by them; she was in danger of her life." Witnesses was called on behalf of each of the prisoners, and John Howard, John Michena, Ann Jones, Elizabeth Broadwater, Lydia Walker, and Amelia Harwood came up one after another, some of them to speak to facts, and some, with amazing effrontery, to testify to the industry and

respectability of the unfortunate women in the dock. They did not, as the witnesses at Jenny's trial in 1738 apparently did, leave the box without some exhibition of curiosity on the part of the Court and Jury, and Mr. John Howard, who was the first of them to take the oath, met with a reception which he probably did not anticipate.

This gentleman kept a hatter's shop in Lothbury, and his evidence was, that having been upon the evening in question to a wine vault in Bearbinder Lane to fetch a hat to dress, he heard a great noise and cries of "Stop *him!* stop *him!* he has picked my pocket," and at the same time saw two women, "*one nearer, the other farther off,*" who, when "they" (meaning probably the crowd) "said, 'This is one of the women,'" were both arrested. "I was surprized," said Mr. Howard, "for these women, to my thinking, were going soberly along." He also favoured the jury with the information that his cough afterwards came on and prevented him from following the crowd as closely as he could have wished, but even this realistic touch failed to make any impression, and one of the twelve gentlemen in the box forthwith proceeded to take him to task. Questioned about the wine vault in Bearbinder Lane to which he had been to fetch the hat, he was quite unable to give any satisfactory account of it: he could not say to whom it belonged, nor whether it was a wholesale or retail cellar, neither did he know the name of the person who had sent for him. "That gentlewoman," pointing to Jenny, "he believed he had seen in the crowd, but could not say any one held her, while as for Mrs. Davis, he had seen her before. "I know her no farther than her passing by my shop two or three times, but if I was to meet her in the street again I don't know her."

The jury's obvious distrust of this witness can hardly have been lessened by Mrs. Gardner's interpolated remark that she had not seen him upon the spot, and Mr. Day's declaration that he knew him well, and could not, if he had been there, have failed to see him.

John Michena supported the defence to some extent: he was passing at the time, and heard a woman crying out, "Lord, have mercy on me, the rogue has picked my pocket!"

and nothing said about women. He saw some women, indeed, but nobody was laid hold of. But then he forestalled cross-examination by adding, "I did not stop, but went directly home."

Ann Jones, who took in clear-starching and plain work, knew Mrs. Davis very well: Mrs. Davis was a mantua-maker, and lived near her, "by Bethlem wall, through Great Moor-gate." On Saturday she had called on her, and begged her company as far as "The Black Boy" in Deadman's Place. This was between three and four in the afternoon. Mrs. Jones omitted to say how the interval was passed, but declared that as they were returning by Stocks Market there was fighting and noise, and she lost Mrs. Davis in the crowd. She heard a woman say she had lost her money, and "speak something of a man, but nothing of a woman."

Elizabeth Broadwater knew nothing of this affair, but only that Mrs. Davis had lodged with her for about nine months, behaved very well, and paid for everything. The gentlemen of the jury, however, were so little disposed to give weight to this evidence as to the character of the prisoner, that they did not hesitate to make the most serious imputations upon the lady's own, and she left the box loudly protesting that they were unfounded, and that she "lived with her father and her father lived with her."

Lydia Walker rented a house in "the walk which leads from Holywell Mount to Hoxton." She took in quilting, and had known Mrs. Young "better than a year." She rented a room in her house at two shillings a week, and took in plain work. She had been present when she had received money (presumably for the said plain work), and "never saw nothing but what was modest and well-behaved."

The evidence of Amelia Harwood is worthy to be given at length. "I have known Mrs. Young," she said, "about three-quarters of a year. Mrs. Walker desired me to help her to some plain work, and a very good workwoman she is; she has worked for a great many good housekeepers that I know, and they liked her extraordinarily well. I met her in Whitechapel and desired her to go with me to 'The Rose' at Holborn Bridge, so just as we came by the china shop, the

corner of the market, there was a crowd : it was about six o'clock, and Mrs. Young said, 'Somebody is beating his wife,' and she would go to see what was the matter. We went up a passage, and the woman laid hold of her and said, 'You are one of the women that helped to rob me!' Presently another woman was taken, and I was afraid they would lay hold of me."

Asked by the Court where it was that the woman laid hold of Young, Mrs. Harwood answered, "I was in so much surprize that I could not take notice."

Then, after Ann Jones, recalled, had sworn that there was no one but Mrs. Davis in her company, and that they had not met Jenny all the way, the judge proceeded to sum up—there is unfortunately no note of what he said—and the jury having found the prisoners guilty, they were both sentenced to death.

Both of them, as well as two other wretched women in a like condemnation, pleaded the customary reason for the postponement of their execution, but one only of the four succeeded in establishing her plea, and Jenny failed to impose upon a jury of matrons the trick which had, in former years, so often stood her in good stead.

For the brief remaining period of Jenny's life we have to rely mainly upon the Ordinary's account. "She behaved well," he says, "and was very devout to all outward appearance, often crying at prayers, and singing of psalms. She would (if possible) persuade the world she was not the woman she was represented to be; but had always lived a sober life (if you believe her)." One is inclined to suspect that the reverend gentleman had his doubts as to the sincerity of the repentance she professed, and her fine clothes and the handsome manner in which she was supported while lying in Newgate very probably seemed to him too glaringly inconsistent with her melancholy situation.

She admitted the justice of her conviction, but declared that Elizabeth Davis was in no way concerned with her, and, perhaps in consequence, the latter's sentence was commuted to one of transportation.

By way of preface to the promised narrative of her "facts,"

Jenny left behind her a solemn exhortation to her companions to desist from their evil courses, but as she is made to say, "My last days have been employed upon this work, wherein the reverend gentleman who attends me in this dismal place lends me his assistance," it would be rash to attach any importance to it as a genuine expression of her feelings towards her late associates.

There is no evidence that any efforts were made, by way of petition or otherwise, to save her life: probably it was felt that her record was now too notorious to permit of any hope of success. On March 12th the report of the malefactors condemned at the last three Sessions was made to His Majesty in Council by Sir John Strange, the Recorder, and from that moment her fate was fixed.

The day before that on which she was appointed to die her little child, then about three years of age, was brought to the prison by the woman in whose charge it was, in order that she might take her leave of it, and the concern she expressed is said to have moved even the turnkey to tears.

On the morning of Wednesday, March 18, 1741, there started from Newgate, on its way to Tyburn, a melancholy procession of seven carts and a mourning-coach. Twenty unfortunates, in all, were going to their deaths, and as a disturbance and an attempt to rescue Jenny were seriously apprehended, the occasion was marked by the attendance of a considerable force of soldiers.

The seven carts, each guarded by two of the light horse with their swords drawn, and a file of musketry with fixed bayonets, were followed by the mourning-coach, in which sate the unhappy Jenny, dressed in deep mourning and veiled, and the Rev. Mr. Broughton, who was assisting the Ordinary in the discharge of his duties. Eight more of the light horse and about forty infantry closed up the rear.

The procession made its way through a vast multitude of people, many of whom, in spite of the presence of the soldiers, jeered, hooted, and threw brickbats and other missiles at the unhappy prisoners.

If any design to rescue Jenny Diver had in reality been formed, the conspirators, overawed by the display of force,

must have lost heart at the last moment, for at the place of execution there was no appearance of any wish to interfere with the process of law.

The number of prisoners being so large, two carts were provided for them at the gallows, and the Ordinary and Mr. Broughton divided their attentions between their occupants.

The account of the closing scene which the former has left is one over which the amateur of creeds may smile. "They" (*i.e.*, the condemned) "seem'd very devout," says the reverend gentleman, "and joined heartily in the prayers and singing of psalms: though we were interrupted on both sides by different persuasions; on the one side was a Papist praying loudly to the Saints, whom I was obliged to rebuke, by telling him he acted contrary to the laws of our land and might be complained on, upon which he became silent; on the other side was a Methodist, who by his behaviour seemed rather crazy than devout, whom we also silenced and went on with our prayers." In conclusion, a penitential psalm was sung, the carts were drawn away, and the curtain fell upon the last scene in the life of Jenny Diver.

Her body was by her express wish buried in the churchyard of St. Pancras.

It were an idle inquiry to attempt to estimate the exact quality of Jenny Diver's wickedness. For us it is difficult to avoid altogether losing sight of her crimes in the contemplation of what appears the utter enormity of her punishment. On the other hand, she never took aught from us or from our friends, and one has, perhaps, after all, only to miss one's purse to be provoked to say of any other sin—

"At worst 'tis but a venial Evil,
But to pick pockets, that's the Devil."

CHARLES ANDREWS.

TERESIA CONSTANTIA PHILLIPS



Highmore Pinx.

J. Fisher

Teresa Constantia Phillip

TERESIA CONSTANTIA PHILLIPS.

(1709-1765.)

“It may be necessary to whisper a word or two to the critics who have, perhaps, begun to express no less astonishment than Mr. Booth, that a lady, in whom we had remarked a most extraordinary power of displaying softness, should, the very next moment after the words were out of her mouth, express sentiments becoming the lips of a Delilah, Jezebel, Medea, Semiramis, Parysatis, Tanaquil, Livilla, Messalina, Agrippina, Brunichilde, Elfrida, Lady Macbeth, Joan of Naples, Christina of Sweden, Katharine Hays, Sarah Malcolm, Con Philips, or any other heroine of the tender sex, which history, sacred or profane, ancient or modern, false or true, has recorded.”—“*THE HISTORY OF AMELIA.*”

THE career of this unprincipled woman, who was certainly one of the most engaging specimens of the professional litigant ever mentioned in history, excited general public interest during the middle of the last century. And although we derive most of our knowledge of her adventures from a series of pamphlets which were published under her personal supervision, there are several other books and papers of the period which, while they prove certain portions of her statement to be inaccurate, corroborate the main issues of her story. The publication by which Teresia endeavoured to gain public compassion for her woes and worries is stated by Bentham to have been edited by Whitehead who was the poet-laureate at that time. Owing to the difficulty she had in obtaining a publisher Teresia issued the work from her own house in Craig's Court, Charing Cross, and, in order to prevent imposition, each copy was signed by her own hand. The title-page of the first of the three volumes, which were published in 1748, is as follows: “An Apology for the Conduct of Mrs. Teresia Constantia Phillips,

more particularly that part of it which relates to her Marriage with an eminent Dutch Merchant: the whole authenticated by faithful copies of his letters, and of the Settlement which he made upon her to induce her to suffer (without any *real* opposition on her part) a sentence to be pronounced against their Marriage, together with such other Original Papers, filed in the Cause as are necessary to illustrate that remarkable story." A six-line quotation from Rowe's "Fair Penitent" is also appended, for the purpose of pointing a moral. Teresia dearly loved sentiment. Before we come to the "Apology" itself there are two dedications—one to the Earl of Scarborough and the other to her husband, the aforementioned eminent Dutch Merchant; and there are addresses to the "candid and impartial reader," in one of which "Mrs. Phillips begs leave to inform the Publick that as the House she lives in was yesterday surrounded with 13 Constables, in order to seize upon and convey her to Newgate," she hopes that any gentleman who may call for a copy of her work will ask her servant to hand it to him through the window.

Teresia was born on the 2nd of January, 1709. She was the daughter of a gentleman of good family, who, at the time he married her mother, was captain of grenadiers in Lord Longford's regiment. For some reason he lost his appointment, and in 1717 came to London with his wife and five children. They appear to have been in very poor circumstances, and the children were adopted by various people; Teresia went to her godmother, the first (Dowager) Duchess of Bolton, who sent her to Mrs. Filer's boarding-school. On the death of her mother, in 1721, Teresia, who was then thirteen, was called home to find that her father had speedily married her mother's former maid. Needless to say, the wicked stepmother acted in accordance with all the best traditions, and the child was driven forth to earn her living as best she could. She applied herself to needlework "with an assiduity and prudence far surpassing her years." At this period she made the acquaintance of a widow of a certain General Douglas, and she often went to spend her Sundays at this lady's house in Killigrew Court, Scotland Yard. In the same house lived the eldest son of the third Earl of Chester-

field, who soon became enamoured of her, and directed his servant to find out where she lived. She was then lodging in Hedge Lane with an old servant of the family, to whose house the young nobleman traced her. Assuming the pseudonym of Thomas Grimes, he commenced to woo her by ardent epistles, which were subscribed, "your most passionate adorer, T. G." These letters were either delivered by the valet or by "Mr. Grimes" himself, who waylaid Teresia upon Mrs. Douglas's stairs, and forced the letters down her back or breast, for she was then dressed "in what the ladies call a strait-bodied Coat." "Mr. Grimes" implored a *tête-à-tête*, but the virtuous Teresia would have none of it, which, considering the tenderness of her years, is hardly surprising. This staircase flirtation was discovered by Mrs. Douglas, who informed the girl's father. He was much alarmed, and, under the promise that she should suffer no ill-usage at her step-mother's hands, was able to entice her home again. But the affectionate promises and advances of her lover had made an effect upon the girl, who in an unfortunate moment confided in an old hoop-petticoat maker who worked for her step-mother. This harridan was a notorious procuress; she took advantage of Teresia's inexperience to lure her to a lodging in the house of a bookseller in the Strand, where she was occasionally visited by "Mr. Grimes," who, however, could not walk abroad without the risk of being arrested for debt. Teresia herself had to remain in doors lest her father might discover her place of hiding. However, the psychological moment arrived in due course. The king returned from one of his visits to Hanover; his faithful subjects deemed it an occasion for public rejoicing, and a display of fireworks was promised for the evening. Teresia was invited to witness the *fêtes* from "Mr. Grimes's" window, and she accordingly repaired thither, "tho' not without inconceivable reluctance and horror." The reluctance and horror seem to have subsequently subsided, for after the illuminations and fireworks were over Teresia was persuaded to sit down and spend the evening with conversation and refreshments. After much pressing she consented to take a glass or two of wine, whereupon the base betrayer substituted Barbadoes

water—a potent cordial flavoured with orange or lemon-peel. Needless to say, the inevitable happened, and she became “Mr. Grimes’s” mistress; but after two months his passion waned visibly, and Teresia discovered to her alarm that he had, in fact, made a new conquest, this time of the pretty daughter of a chair-man. Unlike Colonel Phillips, who carefully avoided seeing his daughter, or even thinking of her, the new girl’s friends raised “such a clamour, that our lover was glad to make it up with them upon their own terms, which was to make a settlement upon her; and, by her independence, she possibly became more dear to him.” Teresia was naturally somewhat distressed by the fact that she had been deposed in favour of a chair-man’s daughter in her lover’s affection. She had a meeting with him, told her grief, upbraided him, and wept copiously, with the result that he sent her a weekly allowance till his departure in a public capacity to Portugal, when supplies stopped.

The old woman who had brought about the tragedy provided her with clothes and other necessaries for a while, but took care to make her give notes of hand for five times the value. In this way Teresia found herself at the end of three months over £500 in debt, and was threatened with arrest. The resourceful old woman, however, had a scheme for avoiding this. Teresia must have recourse to a Mr. Morell, of Durham Yard, in the Strand—who appears to have been a dealer in sham husbands—and from him she would procure, for ten guineas, a man who would go through the ceremonies of marriage with her, “and by that means screen her from her debts.” A man called Delafield (whose “Mother keeps a Pastry-Cook’s Shop in *Maiden Lane*,” we are told with circumstantial exactitude) was introduced to her, as he had been introduced for similar purposes to other young ladies in similar circumstances. As a matter of fact he was already legally married, and his wife was alive, but he had gone through the ceremony many times. Apparently the law of bigamy, or rather polygamy, was then rather lax in operation. On the appointed day Teresia was taken in a hackney coach to the Rev. Mr. Cook, Rector of St. Bennet’s, in Doctors’ Commons. The bridegroom was two hours late in arriving,

and finally appeared supported by two friends, on account of his uproariously drunk condition. After the ceremony the company adjourned to the Half Moon Tavern in the Strand, where the bridegroom, in a state of unconsciousness, was put to bed. Teresia then slipped for a few moments under the coverlet, so that the witnesses could certify that the marriage was really a marriage.

After this curious experiment in matrimony Teresia retired to Rouen, where she remained about three or four months, though as to why she went to France, or what she did there, the apologist is discreetly silent. On her return from the Continent she took lodgings in Great Pulteney Street with a friend of her father's. It was here that she made the acquaintance of Muilman, a Dutch merchant. He was extremely assiduous in visiting her, and evidently deeply in love. Teresia, however, did not expect him to marry her; at the best she only hoped to be his mistress. However, she was agreeably disappointed. He insisted that it was his intention to make her his wife, and thus retrieve her character from any unhappy slip into which she might have fallen during her former life. But Teresia would not let her future happiness stand in the way of her scruples; with much sentiment she insisted upon explaining that she was a woman with a past. Paula Tanqueray could not have been franker, and the guileless Muilman even consented to square the sham husband—this latter must have been a delectable personage—and her other creditors were pacified, if not paid off, with a gift of £150. That Teresia was somewhat extravagant is evident from the fact that she was once committed to prison, under King's Bench ruling, owing to an unpaid wine bill for £400. To be nearer her *fiancé* she removed to Fleet Street, where he used to come and see her every day. In the meantime Mr. Muilman took a house in Old Street Square, which was furnished, the apologist tells us, as though he were writing a theatre programme, "as elegantly as possible by Mr. *Watson* Upholsterer, in *Woodstreet*, but now of *King Street Guildhall*, at the Upholsterers Warehouse." To prevent any possible legal difficulty Muilman and Teresia's father got opinions of counsel on the validity of

her fictitious marriage; but all the authorities consulted agreed in holding that there had been no marriage, and that she was quite free to wed whom she pleased.

Curiously enough, they were married by the parson who had performed the mock wedding, and "Mr. Cook recollected our young lady so well, as to make her his compliments." The newly married couple soon discovered the house in Old Street Square to be too small for the entertainment of their many visitors, and a house was accordingly taken in Red Lion Street, Clerkenwell. "Here their marriage was made public: everybody came to visit our young bride, and were (*sic*) extremely taken with her beauty, politeness, and sweet behaviour." However, a serpent came to break up this Eden in the person of a certain Mr. Bulwark, a Dutch merchant. This man, thinking it desirable, in his own interests, to sap Muilman's credit and private character, resolved to go over to Holland and make Muilman's friends and correspondents there "believe that he had contracted a base marriage with an extravagant abandon'd young creature, who would infallibly ruin him in a year's time; and to back these, and the like assertions, he was preparing to go over to Holland with the utmost privacy." However, this wicked scheme came to the Muilmans' ears, and they at once set out for Holland to anticipate the expected calumnies.

Bulwark, who had not heard of their departure, was surprised to find, on arriving at the house of Muilman *père* in Amsterdam, a pleasant little gathering of relations and friends who were making Teresia their centre of admiration. He did not deem it expedient to expose Mrs. Muilman at once, seeing that she was such a *persona grata* in the family, but by insidious suggestions he persuaded the elder Muilman that it was advisable for him to go to England on a visit to his son in order that he might investigate his daughter-in-law's past. Teresia appeared delighted at the promise of the intended visit, and after affectionate farewells she and her husband embarked for England. Soon after their return the visitors arrived, and Teresia soon found that both her husband and his father treated her with growing coldness. The old gentleman, especially, developed a talent for indecent expressions,

which he applied to her upon every possible occasion. The climax came one day at a little dinner party, when the amiable old gentleman took the opportunity of the presence of strangers to bring about an open estrangement between himself and his daughter. In a moment of sudden passion he blurted out a direct impeachment of Teresia's honour, whereat the guests were visibly agitated, and, feeling themselves in the way, silently departed. After this incident the breach between husband and wife rapidly broadened; at times Muilman relented and treated Teresia with some show of affection, but more frequently he upbraided her—forcibly, with his fists. To find the reason for all this she took advantage of her husband's absence one day to ransack his *escritoire*, in which she found letters from his family saying that if he did not immediately part from Teresia they would disown and disinherit him. She now saw through Muilman's design of provoking her through harsh treatment to throw herself for consolation into the arms of somebody else, and was accordingly on her guard. One morning she was surprised by the visit of a stranger, who (doubtless "to gain some private ends," like Goldsmith's mad dog) informed her that her husband was going to attempt to seize her clothes, money, and jewellery that very afternoon. Thus warned, Teresia prepared for approaching events by sending all her valuables to a banker's. At dinner-time Muilman arrived with three or four ruffians, who sat down to table as invited guests. The meal was eaten to an accompaniment of coarse witticisms and innuendoes, which proved to Teresia that her surmise of their intentions was correct. Directly after dinner all disguise was thrown off and the game began. Muilman demanded the keys of her drawers, and at the suggestion of one of the attendant ruffians searched her person. They then proceeded upstairs, but of course found, to their disappointment, that everything was gone. Teresia was cross-examined as to the whereabouts of the property, and threatened with pains and penalties—including Newgate—if she would not disclose her secret; but she put on so bold a front that Muilman and his friends ultimately withdrew to concert some new scheme. She immediately took legal

advice on her position, and discovered for the first time that her husband had persuaded Delafield to commence divorce proceedings against her in Doctors' Commons, on the plea that she was living in adultery with Muilman. Obviously her best plan was to put in as her answer to the libel a statement of what she alleged to be the facts, and to bring an indictment against Delafield for bigamy. The latter, however, absconded, and the proceedings were consequently dropped. By the advice of her counsel Teresia continued to live in Muilman's house, and the latter did his best to persuade her to acknowledge the nullity of the marriage, and remain with him as his mistress until he should be, in monetary matters, independent of his father. She was, however, inflexible to his entreaties, and he resorted to other means. One day she found a coach at the door. Therein, with her sister and another lady, she was bundled and conveyed to a house in Red Lion Street, which she was informed she would occupy for the present. She was quite satisfied to live apart from her husband, but he, despite the fact that it was his own arrangement, was not. He constantly called, entreating to be received as her husband. When she refused to see him he would leave and return with his private band of ruffians and beat her in the most barbarous manner. He at last told her that he was resolved to give her no more money until she should assent to his terms, and that he had had a peremptory call to Holland from his family. To this she replied that he might go to Holland if he liked, or anywhere else; and that as regarded money she had friends who would supply her requirements. To the latter part of her remarks he sneered incredulously; but in the most delightfully dramatic way one of her friends happened to call; and Muilman at her invitation slipped into the cupboard, where he had the satisfaction of hearing the friend (a Mr. Donavile) offer her £1,000, with the promise of further supplies when required.

This incident appeared to touch him, and he parted from her amiably. But the next day he went to the other extreme—with a red-hot poker. Legal negotiations still proceeded, but no agreement was reached, and Muilman resumed more

violent measures. At two o'clock one morning she was awakened by loud knocking at the front door. Going to the window she found her husband outside with a select body of his "ruffian counsellors and assistants." Pretending not to recognize them, she asked who was there. Muilman, with much embroidery of offensive language, demanded admittance. Teresia replied that if they did not leave her in peace she would fire a brace of pistols at them. The result was that the rogues began to hammer the door with their sticks and throw stones at the windows. One may remark, in passing, that the lives of Teresia's neighbours must have been liberally flavoured with the pleasures of excitement. Finding that her threat had no effect, Teresia exploded some powder in a tinder-box, whereupon they, believing she had put her menace into execution, heroically betook themselves to their heels. However, this gallant defence was turned against her, for Muilman went next morning to Lord Chief Justice Pratt and declared that he went in danger of his life, for that his wife had fired a pistol at him with a design to murder him, and he so narrowly escaped that he felt the bullet upon his hat. Teresia was summoned to the court, and the Lord Chief Justice, having courteously heard her unfold her story, expressed his belief in it. But, he asked, how could Teresia explain her husband's statement that he had felt the bullet upon his head? She replied that that was the probable part of her husband's story, for, if she *had* fired at him, his head was thick enough to be completely bullet-proof.

To escape further annoyances of this sort Teresia took lodgings in the Strand, but at the end of three days the erratic and erotic Muilman visited her, called her his dearest wife, and swore he would not part with her for all the treasures of Peru. In her perplexity she set out for Portsmouth to consult her father. That gallant officer's advice was that she should stick to her guns, and not give way to Muilman in the least. On her return the latter was furious, and shortly after, while she was on her way to a playhouse in Westminster in a sedan-chair, she was attacked by her husband and his myrmidons. They dragged her into a tavern, in a back room

of which they robbed her of her jewellery, and stripped off all her clothes; then they put her back into the chair and sent her to her lodgings, "almost perished with cold; for the dress it must be confess'd, was a little too airy for the month of December, and in a very hard frost with snow."

Her loss was somewhat serious, for she was now without her jewels, upon which, in emergency, she could have raised £1,000 or £1,500, and since her husband refused her any supplies—though he still visited her at night—she found herself in rather a tight place. Worn out with Muilman's importunities, and by the advice of her lawyer, she at length acceded to a compromise. The terms were in brief as follows: Muilman and she were lawful man and wife; they had agreed to live apart; Muilman was to pay for her use and benefit £200 a year. On the other hand, Teresia was to make no opposition to Muilman's obtaining a sentence of nullity of their marriage. The whole obligation was under a penalty of £4,000. Muilman, who, for some legal formality, had to write out the whole affair personally, substituted £400 for the £4,000, but the fraud was discovered and he had to do it all over again. It was agreed that she should set out for France so that she need not be called as a witness in the coming divorce case, her defence in which was to be merely formal. Delafield, who appears to have been lying *perdu* for some time, now made his appearance again, and successfully blackmailed Muilman for a thousand pounds. During Teresia's stay in Paris (where for six months she was ill with fever) her husband wrote her letters replete with affection; he gave her injunctions to live economically and virtuously, and signed himself her affectionate husband till death.

But when, on February 27, 1724, the court pronounced the nullity of the marriage, his tone changed, and in a formal note he advised her not to appeal against the court's decision. To this letter she disdained to reply. She remained at Paris till May, during which time she received neither letter nor remittance from Muilman. In the beginning of May she returned to London, and paid a surprise visit *chez* Muilman: "He thought it his best way to dissemble his real sentiments as much as possible, and, pretending to receive her with great

marks of tenderness, he begged she would walk in, and repose herself; which she did." But she was not to be cajoled by his blandishments, and commenced to expostulate with him at the top of her voice, to our poor Muilman's great disgust. To quiet her, or at least to let her vent her loud indignation out of his own house, he took her off to supper in a Strand tavern, where the storm still raged. "Nothing however could pretend greater affection and fondness: he begg'd her, upon his knees, to let him go home to her lodgings; swearing if she refused he would kill himself." Finding that his entreaties were fruitless, he finally ceased to visit her. Teresia then renewed an acquaintance with a certain "Mr. B." who had known her when she was at school at Mrs. Filer's, and a courtship that had then consisted of an exchange of sentiments and lollipops took a more serious form. Mr. B. was a young man of some wealth; he had a fortune of about £16,000, and excellent expectations, and was consequently eminently adapted, from Teresia's point of view, to become the object of her affections. The intimacy was soon close enough to warrant them going off together to Paris in the autumn of 1725, and living there till the following spring, when they came back to London. An account is given of the lawless passion of the Comte Charleroi for her, and of his fruitless attempts to procure her as his mistress. It was, indeed, his persecutions which made them return to England.

They now resided successively in London, Tournay, and Hampshire. "Thus they continued 'till the beginning of the year 1728, everybody believing her to be actually the wife of Mr. B.; for as such she was visited, and received at Court, and in all other publick assemblies." But it came to Teresia's ears that Muilman intended to marry the daughter of a Sir John Darnell. To this man she wrote informing him that neither Muilman nor herself could legally marry any one, and that Mr. B. was not her husband. Receiving no reply, she wrote a letter to Muilman in which she upbraided him for his designs on Miss Darnell. However, the marriage took place, and it is related that Muilman's two wives met at Court, to his great confusion. About the end of 1728 disagreements

began between Teresia and Mr. B., the reason apparently being that he was infatuate enough to play the violin. His skill upon that instrument appears to have been inferior to his passion for it, and Teresia, unable to bear his dulcet strains any longer, retired into a convent in Flanders. There is something delightfully humoursome in the idea, but she had sufficient fortitude to remain immured for fifteen months. On her return to England she finally parted from her musical friend, whom, however, she had completely ruined. "I do not deny," said she, plaintively, "that I am extravagant."

She had not been many days parted from him when a certain Sir H. P., who had pursued her for some years, renewed his addresses. He promised her £500 a year, and on these terms she became his. He also heaped jewels, clothes, lace, opera-boxes, and all manner of luxuries at her feet, and took a handsome house for her. However, she did not receive from him, "at one time, so large a sum as one hundred pounds;" and "having now discovered the imposition he had put upon her, she resolved to leave him"—to the wild despair of Sir H., who on one occasion went so far, that one day after dinner (which is perhaps an explanation) he attempted to run his hanger between his ribs. She still persisted in her intention of leaving him, whereupon he stabbed himself with a table-knife, and Teresia deemed it advisable to retire to her convent. The event brought down upon her head the wrath of the "starved garretteers of Grub Street," who accused her of attempting murder. Sir H. wrote to her frequently, and, when he had recovered, implored her to come back to him. She at last consented reluctantly to do so, and, after a most edifying discourse from the Superior of the convent, she set out for England. Sir H. P. met her at Dunkirk, though he was still very weak, and in no way fit to travel. At Calais, where they were detained for ten days, she was greatly hampered by his jealousy, which "was now arriv'd to such a heighth of extravagance, he would not suffer her to go to a window, for fear any body should see her;" and was compelled to decline to see the Duke of Hamilton and other people of quality, who wished to pay their respects to her. He also paid the captain of a vessel

forty guineas for a passage to Greenwich, on condition that no other passengers should be taken.

Soon after they returned to London Sir H. made another attempt on his life, his reason being a refusal on Teresia's part to accompany him on a visit to his country seat. Teresia naturally grew weary of his transports, so she left him and placed herself under the protection of a certain Lord F.

In the summer of 1732 she and Lord F. took up their abode in a country house in Hertfordshire, and "here she may be said, for some time to have led a life of repose" in household duties, which included the making of pickles, preserves, and distilled liquors. In 1733 her marriage case with Muilman was reopened, owing to Delafield's coming forward to swear on her behalf. Delafield, however, disappeared (a circumstantial account of his murder by an agent of Muilman's is given), and Teresia carried on her suit without him, refusing an offer of £5,000 to withdraw.

In the meantime she had a visit from a gentlewoman, a relative of some Lady H., who asked her if she would consent to a marriage between Lord F. and the daughter of Lady H., and gave assurance that handsome provision would be made for her. Teresia magnanimously gave her consent, and the marriage took place. Upon which event a contemporary commentator naïvely remarks: "If anything could incline one to believe that marriages are made in Heaven, my Lord F.'s may be brought as an instance to support the probability of such an opinion." Teresia then made the acquaintance of a surgeon who had been called in to bleed her, which he did in more senses than one, seeing that she repeatedly lent him sums of money which he never returned. Him she nick-named "Esquire," and for a time they shared various vicissitudes.

During a trip Teresia made to New England she made the acquaintance of a certain Colonel Vassal, who subsequently followed her over to London with a desire to see life, and with a pocket full of money. He was like to lose both, for he visited Teresia, who immediately took him under her charge and introduced him to her friend "Esquire" and two other rogues. These gentlemen took him to Tunbridge Wells,

and robbed him of all the money he had about him—some £500. Sadder, but apparently no wiser, he returned to London with his Tunbridge Wells companions, and at a supper party lost sixty-four guineas, which he was unable to pay. Teresia, knowing him to be a man of honour, advanced him the sum, and the gallant colonel gave her notes in exchange and departed for his native country. On his arrival he died, so Teresia never recovered her money, but the episode had its uses, inasmuch as it gave her a glimpse of “Esquire’s” true character. She left him, and commenced fresh proceedings against Muilman, suing him for maintenance in the Court of Chancery. However, the law would do nothing for her, and the judge suggested that she should draw up a compromise with Muilman, to which Teresia replied with some spirit that such a compromise would be a difficult thing to effect, seeing that she would insist upon Muilman’s being hanged as the first preliminary article!

At this juncture a Mr. Worthy appears upon the scene. He came of an honourable and wealthy family who possessed large estates in Jamaica. He had returned to that island from Oxford, but some years later found the West Indian climate too warm for his health, and came over to England, where he made the acquaintance of Teresia. His father having recently married a widow with some children, Worthy deputed a friend, Mr. George Maskwell, to watch over his interests in his absence. But he had not been long in England before he learned for certain that the supposed friend had played him false, traduced him to his father, and caused the latter to disinherit him. It was evidently essential that he should at once set out for Jamaica, even though this implied a separation from Teresia, whom he loved and by whom he was loved. The latter, however, “debating with herself whether it was possible for her to live without him, found nothing could reconcile her to the thoughts of life upon that condition”; and resolved to follow him in the next boat, which was to sail in three months’ time. She unfolded her scheme to Worthy, who warmly approved of it. In the beginning of January Worthy

set sail, but on the fourth of March Teresia was amazed to have a letter from him dated from Portsmouth. Ever since January, it appeared, he had been detained in the Channel by contrary winds—a pleasing commentary upon the delights of travel in the last century. In a few hours Teresia was in a six-horse chaise on her way to Portsmouth, much to the joy of Worthy, who was able to spend an hour or two with her before his ship set sail. In June she herself took her departure from the Thames for Jamaica. The captain of the ship in which she sailed was a most respectable man, with a pleasing habit of reading Tillotson's sermons to his crew on Sunday mornings. The first vision she had of Jamaica was spoiled by a sight naturally distressing to a lady of her approved modesty, namely, a boat from the shore manned by seven niggers, "in no other than the very dress in which Nature first presented them to the light." Teresia having expressed to the captain a hope that the boatmen would put on their clothes before she ventured into the boat, "The Captain tho' otherwise a man of a grave character, was very merry with her upon the occasion; but at last told her, she must of necessity accustom herself to such sights; for the heat of the country was so excessive, that it was impossible for the working negroes to endure any sort of clothing; assuring her, that, before she had been there one month, she would scarce perceive whether they were naked or clothed."

Needless to say that Worthy was delighted to see her once more. Only the next morning he engaged in a duel with a gentleman who refused to allow him to mention his mistress in the same breath with his own. Worthy, however, was the victor, and Teresia afterwards avowed that the three ensuing years were the only part of her life that she would desire to live over again. Only three months after her arrival she fell ill of a fever, which lasted six months, during which time the inestimable Worthy watched assiduously at her bedside; not even frequently recurring earthquakes could drive him from it. As soon as she recovered the positions were reversed, and she nursed Worthy, who was ill for eleven months. Then she fell ill again, and the doctors told her that if she

valued her life she must quit Jamaica for a colder climate. In these circumstances she set out for England, leaving behind Worthy, whose business affairs compelled him to remain in Jamaica. Setting out was a matter of some difficulty, for the first time the ship set sail she ran upon a reef of rocks before three hours had passed ; the second time she took fire and had to go back to harbour for repairs ; and the third time she was ordered back to Port Royal with other English ships by the captain of the man-of-war that convoyed them. Even when the ship really did start there was trouble, for the captain took it into his head to fall violently in love with Teresia, although he had a wife and several children in London. To prevent her from seeking protection with the captain of the war-ship, he deliberately left the convoy without calling at Hieres Bay for water. "So that the first news she heard in the morning was that they had entirely lost their convoy, were gone past Hieres Bay, had no water on board, and were to sail home a single ship, in the midst of a war, with the seas full of privateers, and what was most intolerable, in the ship with an ill-bred, passionate, ignorant brute ; who pleased with the thoughts of having her in his power, promised himself all the success his heart could wish." It is scarcely strange that the following seventeen weeks were spent in great discomfort, if we may believe Teresia. Provisions were scarce and hardly eatable for vermin ; water was somewhat scarcer ; the captain was constantly troubling her, and the crew became mutinous. Teresia, in these dire straits, must have longed for the virtuous captain who brought her to Jamaica, even in spite of his weakness for delivering Tillotson's sermons ! The officers at length shut the captain in his cabin, and navigated the vessel without him, reaching Dover, April 13, 1741. Teresia resolved to avenge the captain's persecutions by publishing a book giving an account of the voyage, but the captain, getting wind of her intentions, sent two or three gentlemen to intercede on his behalf. They persuaded her to desist, by pointing out the ruin that would ensue for the captain's wife and family, and out of consideration for them she complied.

Teresia remained in London for less than three months ; on

the last day of June she sailed for Boston, with the intention of settling in New England with Worthy. On arriving at Boston in October she found that he had gone to New York; this gave her some uneasiness, for stories of his amours in Jamaica since her departure had been wafted to her by kind friends. However, his visit to New York was explained. The governor of the colony, "a low-bred, haughty, ignorant fellow . . . a piece of mockery upon Government," had cast his eye upon Worthy, coveted him as a son-in-law, and, hearing of Teresia's approaching advent, sent him off on a fool's errand, knowing that his return journey would be retarded by snow, and that thus he would be unable to see his mistress on her arrival. Upon reaching Boston Teresia gave her name as Mrs. Worthy, upon which the governor sent her a letter, informing her that if she took that name he would prosecute her. Teresia, doubting his power to do so (she must have acquired some knowledge of law by this time), replied that she would continue under the name of Worthy as long as she pleased, and also informed him that, as a matter of fact, she was Worthy's wife. During her stay in Boston she was treated very kindly, but the wicked governor poisoned the minds of the virtuous Bostonians against her, and as much social annoyance resulted, Teresia took ship for England, where she arrived in a very low state of health. As soon as she had partially recovered she recommenced her interminable law-suit against Muilman. To cut a long story short, she was finally awarded damages of £500 and no more; and in addition she was sued by her attorney for fees and disbursements. She paid him off, but other creditors were buzzing about, and to escape them she departed with her sister to Boulogne, and remained there for eight months. Worn out with her incessant legal worries, she then came to London privately, took obscure lodgings in Hoxton, and wrote a letter to Muilman, imploring him to give her a small allowance, so that she might go into a convent for the rest of her days. This he declined to do unless she should instantly go to Jamaica and remain there for the remainder of her life. "But to this generosity, it may be supposed, he was piously prompted by the fair chances he had to get more speedily rid

of her; *viz.*, either by her being taken by the French or Spaniards, then warmly at war with us; or, if the sea, with its variety of accidents, should fail to destroy her, the same climate, that had formerly brought her life so low in the socket, would now lend it an extinguisher."

She refused the kind offer, and a day or two after bought some laudanum with a view to putting an end to herself. The bottle, however, fell from her pocket and was broken; and, regarding this as an intervention of Providence, she changed her mind. A few days afterwards came another offer from Muilman: if she would go to some remote part of Scotland or Ireland he would allow her £18 a year. While she was meditating on this proposal she was arrested for debt, and made a prisoner in the King's Bench. During the time of her incarceration Muilman occasionally sent her small sums of money, and told her she might draw £7 10s. quarterly by way of allowance. When her legal troubles with her solicitor were settled she devoted herself to the preparation of her "Apology," the publication of which was followed shortly after by a counter-attack upon Teresia. It was called "A Defence of the Character of a Noble Lord from the Scandalous Aspersions contained in a Malicious Apology. In a Letter to the Supposed Authoress." The anonymous writer reproaches Teresia with having raked up an old scandal so many years afterwards, and adds, with some logic, that as the main object of her book was to set herself right in the eyes of the world with regard to her dealings with Muilman, there was no necessity to relate the details of her previous love affairs. The writer, while admitting that the Earl of Chesterfield had had intimate relations with Teresia, declares that he was not her seducer, and gives, with circumstantial detail, an account of an intrigue she had with a journeyman tailor while at school. Lord Chesterfield's statement certainly gives one the impression of being the more veracious of the two narratives. The interest aroused by Teresia's "Apology" brought forth a volume entitled "A Counter Apology or genuine Confession, being a Caution to the Fair Sex in General." It is, however, an obvious fabrication, and merely contains a disjointed string of highly spiced

incidents. In 1750 a letter, "Humbly Addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. By Mrs. Teresia Constantia Muilman," was published. In this work Teresia remarks that when she waits upon his lordship with her "usual Sprightliness and Gaiety, pleased with the Chit-Chat of an hour," he goes back twenty-five years for her entertainment, and never talks to her of the graver issues of life, though she is willing to do so. She moralizes upon the relations of the sexes, and in some measures anticipates the sex-novel of to-day. She reasserts that Lord Chesterfield was the cause of her ruin, and mentions that she has read "The Whole Duty of Man," of which she assumes Lord Chesterfield to be the author, although "having the honour to be pretty well acquainted with your lordship, I am surprized when I read it, and unless I had it from your own mouth that you were the author of that pious book, could never have believed your lucubrations could have turned upon a system of religion and self-denial, so full of austerity and mortification." She hopes she will be excused for thus mentioning Chesterfield's authorship, seeing that she was not enjoined to any secrecy. She mentions it because she wanted a striking instance of the untrustworthiness of appearances. It bewilders her to turn over the pages of the "Whole Duty" and reflect that Chesterfield wrote them.

This letter was followed by a pamphlet—"Remarks on Mrs. Muilman's Letter to the Right Honourable The Earl of Chesterfield. In a Letter to Mrs. Muilman. By a Lady." The pamphlet is written with considerable skill, and proved to be an unanswerable impeachment of Teresia's morality, for she made no attempt to reply to it, and we lose sight of her for two or three years. There is an account of her subsequent adventures, according to which she went once more to Jamaica, and in 1754 or 1755 married, at Kingston, an Irishman called "M.," with whom it is believed she lived happily. M., however, by the advice of his friends, made a will by which nothing was left to her. Soon afterwards he got into a bad state of health, and by the advice of his physician went to the mountains for change of air. In bidding him good-bye Teresia, after some remarks on the uncertainty of human life, questioned him about the will,

and expressed a hope that he had amply provided for her in it, in response to which M. assured her that he had done so. "By this time the chaise was brought to the door, when she, who the moment before seemed almost drowned in tears, on taking the last farewell of him, now suddenly assumed a very different manner and appearance, and, as he was going down the steps, pulled him back by his collar, at the same time showing him the will, which he had unluckily left in another coat pocket, and which by that accident had fallen into her hands." As one might expect, there followed a lively piece of recrimination; Teresia was not the woman to submit to what she considered injustice, and she compelled M. to assign all his possessions to her by deed of gift before he set out for the mountains, where he died soon afterwards.

In 1757 or 1758 Teresia was appointed Mistress of the Revels in the island, and it became her duty to superintend theatrical and other amusements. This entitled her to a couple of benefits in the year, by which she made about two hundred guineas. M. had not been dead two years before she made another plunge into matrimony, this time with a Scotsman called "S. C.," who died in a few years intestate. His property and effects, to the value of about £2,000, fell to Teresia of course, and "upon the strength of this she set up her chariot, and lived at great expense."

The next, and final, husband was Monsieur Lantemac, a French officer, a son of Vaudreuil; "but as a continual dissipation of the money produced by the sale of the last cargo very much lessened her stock, and as it was not recruited by any new consignments, she looked on Monsieur as an incumbrance, for he did nothing but dress, eat, and drink; she therefore ordered him to decamp." Which command was meekly obeyed.

In a letter dated from Kingston, February 24, 1765, some particulars are given of Teresia's death. "Not one of either sex attended her corpse to the grave; when dying, she often said, 'Alas! what is beauty? I who was once the pride of England am become an ugly object'; she had a looking-glass placed at the foot of the bed to view her face to the last; she wished to die on a Saturday night, that her corpse might

not be arrested as it was going to the grave the next day. In this particular her wish was fulfilled, and being sensible to her last moments, she expressed great pleasure in the thought, having reason to suspect that an apothecary would not have suffered her body to go to the grave in peace."

Poor Teresia dying before a looking-glass must have been a pitiable spectacle; but, despite her love of sentiment, and her desire to appear more sinned against than sinning in the eyes of the world, there can be no possible doubt that her career was that of a cold-blooded and vindictive blackmailer. Walpole coupled her name with that of the Czarina, and the quotation from "Amelia" prefixed to this memoir shows in what company Fielding deemed her worthy of inclusion. In truth no other ground for excuse and forgiveness can be found for her than that of *quia multum amavit*.

GILBERT BURGESS.

ELIZABETH BROWNRIGG



ELIZABETH BROWNRIGG.

ELIZABETH BROWNRIGG.

(? 1720—1767.)

“Engag’d with Satan, to his will resign’d,
She learn’d his great command, ‘to act unkind.’”

ANON.

INDIGNATION may drive a Juvenal or William Watson into verse, but it may also exercise a contrary effect in sealing up, for a time, the springs of inquisitiveness which are the stock-in-trade of the honest biographer. At the time when London, if not England, rang with execrations on the name of Elizabeth Brownrigg, no one seems to have been at any particular pains to collect authentic materials about her origin and early history. The horror of the present may have forbade the unveiling of possible further horrors of the past, but such pious forbearance, if it existed, is to be regretted, inasmuch as it is almost impossible not to believe that the characteristics which gained for Brownrigg enormous notoriety were foreshadowed in youth. But whether Elizabeth in the days of her childhood delighted in torturing flies, in extracting hairs from the tails of cats, or in maltreating her younger brothers and sisters, if she had any, there is now no knowing. History, so far as she is concerned, has concentrated itself on the climax of her career, and has taken no count of either her birth or parentage. Even the name of her own family is uncertain, being variously given as Harkly and Hartley, and the date of her birth can only be approximately stated as about 1720. Her lines were cast in a place which necessitated her making a living for herself, and she became a domestic servant in the household

of a merchant residing in Goodman's Fields. Here she formed the acquaintance of James Brownrigg, an apprentice to a house-painter and plasterer of the neighbourhood, who, when his term of servitude was over, set up for himself and married Elizabeth. The pair first chose Greenwich as a place of residence, but five years later returned to London, where they ultimately settled in Fleur de Lys Court, Fetter Lane. Trade prospered with the husband, and the wife performed at least some of her duties to admiration, for she became the mother of sixteen children. Less success attended her efforts in bringing them up, and when the difficulty of finding even house-room for so large a family is considered, it is hardly surprising that thirteen of her offspring died in their early years. Her fertility exhausted or in abeyance, Mrs. Brownrigg directed her energies to increasing the earnings of the painter; and, in accordance with a principle which would qualify the most frequent criminals for the bench, selected the career of a midwife. She is said to have attained considerable proficiency in her profession, and was rewarded by being officially appointed to usher into life such human beings as were destined to be born in the workhouse of the parish of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West. The performance of her duties was marked by skill and humanity, and her success in assisting others to do what she had done so well herself fully justified her in extending the sphere of her good works by the reception at her home of private patients. These patients were well cared for, and although it was afterwards freely alleged that none of the little creatures which in these circumstances first breathed the air of Fleur de Lys Court ever emerged any further into the world, none of the mothers made accusations of the kind against the accommodating accoucheuse.

By the year 1765 business was so thriving with Mrs. Brownrigg that she deemed it necessary to have assistance in the house, and determined to keep a servant. Her connexion with the workhouse had taught her that young girls were bound as apprentices from that establishment, and the knowledge that it was the practice of the overseers to give £5 to the mistress of each one led her to decide that an apprentice of this kind would be the most economical sort of servant she

could obtain. Mary Mitchell, a child of fourteen years, was thereupon introduced into the Brownriggs' house "upon liking" as it was called, the meaning being that if, after a month's experience, both maid and mistress were satisfied the indentures were signed and the apprenticeship began. In this case the month passed pleasantly, and the workhouse girl was so pleased with the treatment she received, and with the good fare that was served to her at the same table as the family, that she was perfectly content to be bound. That ceremony over, her position at once changed and she became a drudge who was treated as surely never was drudge before. Instead of eating with the Brownriggs and their three sons, she learned to be thankful if scraps were thrown at her, or if she could find an opportunity to steal a crust of bread ; on the pretence of laziness or of work inefficiently done she was flogged almost daily by her mistress ; and no rest was she allowed to know except when she was ordered to her mat for sleep at night-time. Mrs. Brownrigg was so delighted with her experiment, or her taste for tyranny was so sharply whetted, that shortly after the engagement of Mitchell she obtained another child, named Mary Jones, on similar terms from the Foundling Hospital. Mary Mitchell must have welcomed a companion in misfortune, and would have been less than human had she not viewed with equanimity the diversion to another of a share of her ill-treatment. Mary Jones, in fact, speedily became the favourite victim of her mistress's cruelty, and being unable to satisfy the woman's demands for work was forced to submit to continual punishment. Ordinary whipping no longer appeased Mrs. Brownrigg's lust for inflicting pain ; it enraged her if the object of her passion could for a moment elude her grasp. Exercising a fiendish ingenuity, she devised an arrangement of two chairs on which Mary Jones, after having by command taken off her clothing, was stretched out and tied down. Then at her leisure Mrs. Brownrigg flogged the girl till exhaustion overtook her. It might be supposed that the poor girl, after a little experience of such torture, would fear no death, but it came to the knowledge of her mistress that she had a horror of drowning, and Mrs. Brownrigg lost no occasion of acting on the information. She would steal

behind the child while she was engaged in scrubbing a floor, seize her by the heels, and, lifting her up, plunge her forcibly, head downwards, into the pail of water. Mary Jones's shrieks and terror at the constant repetition of this drowning game caused great amusement, and even Mr. Brownrigg and his eldest son John, who were wont to disregard the apprentices' sufferings, sometimes joined in the sport. Mrs. Brownrigg improved on it. On the pretence of some fault, real or imaginary, committed by Mary Jones, Mary Mitchell would be ordered to bring a large tub and fill it with cold water, and in this the naked victim was totally immersed until the diminution of her struggles for air and life warned Mrs. Brownrigg that it was well to desist. A short breathing space would be given, and then the bathing recommenced. It was fortunate for the unhappy little slave that she was able to preserve not only the will to live but the determination to carry out the dictates of that will by the only possible means. Her desire to escape had been anticipated by her tormentor, and sleeping accommodation had been allotted her under a dresser which formed part of the furniture of the Brownriggs' bedroom. This apartment was on the ground floor, and communicated with a front room which led directly on to the street, and one morning Mary Jones, awaking early, noticed that the key of the street-door was in the lock instead of under one of the pillows of the slumbering pair. Clutching at the chance of release, she crept from her kennel and opened the door and sprang into the kindlier air of Fetter Lane. After protracted wanderings in the streets she gained the Foundling Hospital. It was only two months since she had left it, and she now returned nearly blind of one eye and covered with wounds and bruises, her shoulders being deeply scarred by the rim of the pail in which she had so often dived against her will. The surgeon of the hospital describing the girl's injuries as alarming and dangerous, the governors instructed their solicitor to write to Brownrigg threatening a prosecution unless some reparation were made. The Brownriggs took no notice, and for some reason which, whatever it was, now seems insufficient, the matter was eventually allowed to drop on Brownrigg consenting to cancel the indentures of Jones's apprenticeship.

Meanwhile, Mary Mitchell was still serving her time and acquiring the art of being handmaid to a gentle midwife. She learned, too, what cruelty may mean when practised by an evil woman without fear of restraint or of consequences. On her alone did Mrs. Brownrigg, for some six months, exercise all the ingenuity in invention of torture with which she found herself endowed. But tiring at last of the limited scope offered by the one miserable object of her ferocity, she undertook to train as a servant a girl from the workhouse of Whitefriars parish. The name of this girl, the third of Mrs. Brownrigg's Marys, was Mary Clifford, and she in the same way as the others came first "upon liking." The contrast presented by this cheerful maiden, well fed and made much of during the month's probation, would appear to have been more than even Mary Mitchell could bear. An opportunity presenting itself, she escaped from the house, but fortune did not favour her. She had scarcely started when she met young Brownrigg returning to his home, and was haled back to be handed over to punishment by her captor's mother. Mary Clifford, however, was duly bound apprentice, and thenceforth Mitchell had no cause for jealousy. The character of the newcomer was probably weak and, possibly, her disposition had an irritating effect on Mrs. Brownrigg's now sensitive temperament; but even if the facts were so they fall far short of explaining or accounting for the savage and ever-increasing brutality with which the girl was treated by the woman. From the first day of her servitude Mary Clifford was no longer allowed to sleep in a bed nor even on the boards of the rooms or passages; she was consigned to the coal-hole, which was partly cleared for the purpose, and there, with an old mat to lie on and no other covering than her own clothes, she passed the hours of the night. There, too, either both or one of the girls, when no other occupation was found for them, often passed the day grinding colours for the use of painter Brownrigg, and it was generally the case that they did so altogether unclothed. The Brownriggs were supposed to supply their apprentices with wearing apparel as well as the other necessaries of life, and on the pretext of a rent having been made or a repair being needed, every garment

was stripped from the children's bodies and altogether withheld from them for many days together. A boy apprentice of Brownrigg's later bore witness in a court of justice to his having been sent on one occasion to tie up Mary Clifford for the night when she was totally naked, and on another when she wore only an old waistcoat which he himself had given her. Even on days when clothing was allowed, it had frequently to be taken off in order that the bare flesh might receive the more than daily floggings which Mrs. Brownrigg delighted only to inflict. Food, too, was denied, and the desire to satisfy hunger furnished additional reason for castigation. At an early stage of her stay in Fleur-de-Lys Court the more than half-starved Mary Clifford forced open an empty cupboard in search of bread, and broke down some boards which protected the cistern in the hope of procuring water. Mrs. Brownrigg's ordinary punishments were to her mind quite inadequate for so rebellious a burglary and theft combined, but she rose to the event. On the morning following the detection of her crimes Mary Clifford was ordered to strip to the skin, a command which she was used to, and which betokened nothing extraordinary. The next step, however, was new. A heavy chain was fastened tightly round her neck and the other end of it was fixed to the door of the back-yard; the door was then swung violently backwards and forwards till the prisoner was nearly strangled and a pause became necessary. The interval was occupied by the executioner with the administration of blows from the heavy end of a whip, laid on with such vigour and such tenacity that the victim's blood formed a pool upon the ground. For a whole day did Mrs. Brownrigg find heart to continue the torture, till at last the evening came, and Mary Clifford, with her hands tied behind her back and the heavy chain about her neck, was allowed to creep away to the coal-hole.

For occasions of less importance Mrs. Brownrigg devised a means of inflicting scourging at her ease, which is represented with more or less fidelity in the accompanying print. Across the ceiling of the kitchen ran a waterpipe, and to this Mrs. Brownrigg, having first tied together the hands of the girl whose turn it was for punishment, hauled her up with the



ONE OF MRS. BROWNRIGG'S METHODS OF TORTURING
HER APPRENTICES.

surplus cord till her feet were off the ground, and she was thus left free to chastize till overcome by weariness. With frequent use the pipe finally gave way, and then the resourceful woman instructed her husband to screw into a beam a large iron hook, to which in future the cord was attached and the girls were strung up. Their only respite was when the Brownriggs, as their practice was, left their city home to spend Saturday afternoon and Sunday at a house they owned in Islington. The unlovely pair journeyed thither on the back of one horse, and for the better security of his wife, who sat behind him, Brownrigg had had made a broad leathern strap for his waist, to which she could hold on. This strap became a favourite instrument of flagellation with Mrs. Brownrigg, who was wont to complain of the dearth of suitable implements of torture in her establishment. In the week the broad strap drew blood from the backs and shoulders of the two apprentices; on Saturday it encircled the master's waist and supported their timid mistress on her jaunt. Good care was taken on these occasions that no opportunity of doing wrong or mischief was given to the sorrowful creatures left behind. Before the start was made they were ordered into the cupboard beneath the stairs, a crust of bread was given to them, but no drop of water or anything to drink; and there they stayed, more often than not without a garment or rag between them, till the long hours brought round the evening of the following day.

The demon that possessed Mrs. Brownrigg gave her no rest, and ever inspired her to fresh acts of senseless barbarity. One of her common practices with Mary Clifford was to seize her by the head and, forcing down with her thumbs the upper part of the cheeks, to wait deliberately till the blood rushed from the eyes. She seems, in fact, to have reached such a pass that she was unable to bring herself to believe in the pain she endeavoured to cause unless her eyes too were gratified by the sight of fresh-drawn blood. Possibly the most hideous instance of the utter unrestraint which was typical of her cruelty is to be seen in her action at a time when interference was invoked. Mary Clifford one day

found an opportunity of bewailing her vile lot to a French lady, who was one of the temporary inmates of the house that Mrs. Brownrigg continued to receive. The lady remonstrated with her nurse, and ventured to point out that her conduct towards her apprentices was scarcely kind, a proposition which Mrs. Brownrigg was inclined to admit; but no sooner did she escape from the lecture than she rushed to find the tale-bearer, and deeply cut her tongue in two places with a pair of scissors. As a general rule the lady-lodgers were kept unaware of the existence of the apprentices, while the other members of the household, the male Brownriggs, were totally devoid of compassion, and, if they did not instigate, were at least indifferent to the scenes of martyrdom they must have constantly witnessed. The eldest son, indeed, was in some sort a not unworthy disciple of his mother. It is on record that he once ordered Mary Clifford to put up a bedstead, a labour which the girl found beyond her strength, and that he thereupon beat her till she fainted. Another time, when Mrs. Brownrigg had left off beating the same girl from sheer fatigue, the son took up the task, and with youthful zest continued to wield the lash so long as nature allowed his victim to be capable of sensibility. The outer world knew nothing of what went on in the house in Fleur de Lys Court, and no possible chance of communicating with it was afforded to the young prisoners. The neighbours were requested by the jailer to inform any inquisitive persons who might inquire of them about the girls that Mrs. Brownrigg kept no apprentices, and that it was a mistake to suppose she had ever done so. This was the information given to Mary Clifford's step-mother, who had asked at the right door for her relative, and had been told that no such person was known, and who, when she pressed her inquiries, had been threatened by Mr. Brownrigg with the Lord Mayor. She was retiring discomfited when a woman occupying the next house to the Brownriggs, and named Deacon, came out, and, learning her errand, assured her that apprentices were kept by her neighbours, and, from the frequent groans and moans overheard, she suspected they were not too well treated. She promised that she would continue her efforts to find out if the fact was so,

and if successful would communicate with Mrs. Clifford, who went away baffled, and little knowing what her intrusion would cost her step-daughter. Mrs. Brownrigg was in no doubt as to the proper object on which to visit her displeasure at this untimely and uncalled-for attempt at interference. On the following morning, the 13th of July, she summoned Mary Clifford to the kitchen, forced her to strip, an operation of some difficulty, as her clothing stuck to her former wounds, and strung her up by her tied hands to the hook in the beam. She flogged her till her body streamed with blood, and then untying her, ordered her to wash in a tub of water brought by Mary Mitchell; and while the washing went on she continued to rain down blows with the butt end of her whip. For several times on the self-same day was this punishment carried out in every detail before the condition of the scape-goat satisfied Mrs. Brownrigg that she could not venture on more. Fortunately release, though it came too late to be of much good, was not now far off. A few days later Brownrigg became the unwilling purchaser of a hog at an auction sale at Hampstead, and, having no other accommodation available, lodged it in the back-yard of his house. This yard was covered in with a roof, which effectually screened it from the observation of neighbours, but the near proximity of its new inmate to the house made it desirable to remove part of a skylight from the roof. Thus was the long awaited opportunity given to the Deacon family next door of taking note of what might be seen. A servant-maid was set on watch, and presently saw in the yard a shapeless mass, which turned out to be the bare, raw, half-mortified body of Mary Clifford. It seemed impossible to attract her attention, and when, endeavours to do so were made by some men, who descended on to the leads for the purpose, no response other than inarticulate sounds was given. The Deacons sent word to Mrs. Clifford, who obtained the assistance of the parish overseers, and went with them to the house to demand an interview with the girl. On the first appearance of the officers Mrs. Brownrigg slipped out of the house, where she never more returned, but her husband was prepared to brave the matter out. He produced Mary Mitchell, who was in a sorry plight

enough and was instantly carried off to the workhouse, and on being told that this was not the girl they were seeking, he swore by God there was no other in the house; there was another apprentice called "Nan," he said, but she was at Stansted nursing his youngest son. He tried intimidation of every sort, and on the officers, notwithstanding, sending for a constable to search the house, he sent for his lawyer, who then and there drew up a formal document demanding the authority under which the overseers professed to act. The constable, meanwhile, with willing helpers, searched the house high and low, but could find no trace of Clifford. Brownrigg, triumphant, promised to prosecute the whole of the invading party, but he was informed that as the girl could not be found he would be arrested on a charge of having made away with her, and a coach was called to carry him off to gaol. He then began to recognize the danger of his situation, and undertook to produce the girl in half an hour if the coach was sent away, Necessity compelled him to keep his word, and from a small cupboard underneath the sideboard in the dining-room he reluctantly extracted the ulcerated body of Mary Clifford. She, too, was taken to the workhouse, where her condition excited consternation in the surgeons who examined her; besides the indescribable injuries of her body and limbs, her head was found to be covered with frightful gashes, while the head and throat were so swollen as to form one continuous line, and the mouth extended in such a manner that she could neither close her lips nor speak. Brownrigg was taken to the Wood Street Compter, and the next day was brought up at the Guildhall before Mr. Alderman Crosby. Both girls were brought into court, Mitchell delirious, and Clifford, though in possession of her senses, unable to do more than signify "yes" or "no." Brownrigg was fully committed for trial; a warrant for the arrest of his wife and son was issued; and their victims were sent to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where four days later, on the 9th of August, 1767, Mary Clifford died, less than eighteen months after her first introduction to Mrs. Brownrigg.

Mrs. Brownrigg had gone into hiding, whither she was followed by her son with money and clothing. For some

days they lodged in a by-street in East Smithfield, living on bread and water, and hardly venturing out. The son stole forth and booked places in the Dover stage, but when the time for departure came courage failed them, and they preferred to lose the money they had paid than to run the risk of capture. Finally, after purchasing disguises, they made their way to Wandsworth, where they took a bedroom in the house of one Dunbar, a chandler. Meanwhile the hue and cry was being loudly raised, and was redoubled when, after the inquest on Clifford's body, the charge against them was wilful murder. Advertisements for them appeared in all the papers of the day, and considerable rewards were offered for their capture. Mrs. Brownrigg was described as "a middle-sized woman of a swarthy complexion, near 50 years of age, remarkably smooth of speech"; her dress when she disappeared being "a black silk crape or bombazine gown, a black silk whalebone bonnet, and a purple petticoat flounced." For five days the culprits remained in their one room, till the chandler, who was a reader of newspapers, connected his lodgers with the persons wanted for the murder of Mary Clifford, and lost no time in communicating with the authorities in London. The wretched couple were arrested forthwith, and taken to the Poultry Compter. The following day Mrs. Brownrigg should have appeared at the Mansion House for magisterial examination, but the news of her capture had spread abroad, and a crowd so great and so excited thronged the length of street which separated the prison and the court, that it was deemed impossible to secure her a way through it, and she was therefore committed to Newgate to take her trial on the coroner's warrant. It was some time before this change of the prisoner's quarters could be effected, as not only did the unfriendly mob await throughout the day, but she herself was thought to be in no fit condition to be moved, since, owing to her refusal to take food, and a habit she rapidly developed of falling, or affecting to fall, into fits, she became quite ill. An opportunity, however, of transferring her peacefully occurred one night, and thereafter for nearly a month she awaited her trial in Newgate. She refused the ministrations of the chaplain, and continued

to simulate ill-health, but hers was not a case in which such devices could soften the heart of the tenderest gaoler. Intercourse with her husband and son was naturally refused to her, but they were both in safe keeping, and on Saturday, the 14th of September, 1767, appeared with her in the dock at the Old Bailey, all three being indicted, "for that being moved by the instigation of the Devil they did on different dates from the 1st of May, 1766, to the 4th of August 1767, so assault Mary Clifford that she did pine and languish till she died." The trial lasted eleven hours, and consisted chiefly of the evidence of Mary Mitchell, now resuscitated and able to detail at length the many scenes of sickening cruelty which she had witnessed, and in which she had taken part. Practically there was no defence; Elizabeth Brownrigg was found guilty of murder, and sentenced to death, while her companions, though acquitted, were re-arrested on a charge of misdemeanour.

During the one whole day of life that remained to her Mrs. Brownrigg became penitent, listened with patience to the chaplain, and acknowledged the righteousness of the judgment passed on her. On the Monday morning she was placed in the cart and conducted to Tyburn through a crowd which, it was thought, was never equalled for size at any execution. The crowd behaved badly, and deeply pained the Rev. Joseph Moore, ordinary of Newgate, who rode in a coach behind the convict's cart, and who recorded some of his impressions in the following words: "On my way to Tyburn my ears were dinned with the horrid imprecations of the people. One said to me he hoped I should pray for her damnation and not for her salvation. Others exclaimed that they hoped she would go to hell and were sure the Devil would fetch her. This unchristian behaviour greatly shocked me, and I could not help exclaiming, Are these the people called Christians? This the reformed nation we so much boast of?" Yet even after a hundred and thirty years it is to the noisy crowd rather than the good clergyman that sympathy goes out. Mrs. Brownrigg seems to have been more moved by the execrations of the impious mob than by the prayers of the chaplain, and in order to appease them and leave the world

in peace, she bade him announce that she freely admitted her guilt. The executioner duly performed his duty, and Mrs. Brownrigg's body was carried to Surgeons' Hall for dissection. Her skeleton was preserved entire, and lodged in a niche facing the front door of the anatomy theatre.

James and John Brownrigg were tried for the second time on the 30th of October, and it is unpleasant to record that the snivelling and cowardly lies told by the father, who, apart from his paternity of sixteen children, was unworthy of the name of man, were so far successful that both prisoners escaped with a fine of a shilling and six months' imprisonment.

The plain facts which led up to the great and lasting notoriety gained by Elizabeth Brownrigg are as disagreeable to set forth as they must be to read, but they are deserving of commemoration, inasmuch as Mrs. Brownrigg's name has become typical of feminine cruelty, and it is well that she should be justified of her reputation. As a matter of fact she by no means stands alone, and is not therefore to be regarded as one of Nature's sports incapable of repetition, and claiming the title of woman only, as it were, by accident. Her contemporaries, the Metyards, mother and daughter, for instance, were at least equally bad, and other examples of similar inhumanity are hardly more than rare. Mrs. Brownrigg, however, is the more noteworthy, as having owned a distinctly good record for kindness to her suffering sisters, and though, no doubt, it would be difficult to establish it now, there is no evidence beyond inference from her subsequent actions to bring against it. It may be that from being the constant witness of what is said to be the supremest pain she learned insensibility, or she may have thought it wise to tutor the young bodies of her apprentices so that they might better bear with fortitude the anguish her experience had taught her it might be their lot to undergo when they left her care for a husband's. But whatever excuse, by inquiring into her motives, be sought for her, it were hard to deny that Mrs. Brownrigg was misguided, and no injustice is done her if she remain for ever a type of a woman detestable for savage cruelty.

EDGAR STUBBS.

ELIZABETH CANNING.



ELIZABETH CANNING.

ELIZABETH CANNING.

(1734-1773.)

“ I will be found most cunning in my patience :
But (dost thou hear ?) most bloody.”

Othello

IN dealing with the characters of persons who have made names for themselves in the annals of crime it is by no means a safe process to apportion to them bad eminence in direct ratio to the gravity or abundance of their offences. An estimate of human turpitude ought to be made, not so much by surveying the depravity of the individual instance under notice as by gauging the amount of suffering and wrong wrought by the crooked dealing and villainy of some particular delinquent, and by anticipating how great will be the moral deterioration which, as the result of such example, will almost certainly infect present and future generations. A murderer or a forger may live a long life of the vilest hypocrisy with the conscience stifled and every imagination of the heart corrupted ; a mass of the foulest vice within, but without a reputable and God-fearing citizen. However great may be the intrinsic vileness of a nature like this, growing viler and more vile through a long term of years as the criminal diligently and stealthily weaves the meshes of the net in which the victims are finally to be entangled, the moral mischief produced by the spectacle of such a career may be, and generally is, far less profound than that generated by the after-history of the mean pilfering of a cowardly sneak, or of the cunning lies and inventions of an anæmic, hysterical serving-wench. Nay, if the crime of the first named be far-

reaching enough in its effects—and those who dabble in building society speculations will understand that they can reach very far—if it should lead to genuine suffering and distress, the offence may serve as an example, and tend to foster a growth of genuine hatred for criminal and crime as well. With regard to those belonging to the second category, on the other hand, there will too often spring up a reaction in favour of the accused as soon as the law shall have given its doom. By the working of some strange and misdirected force within the public mind, sympathy for the sufferings of these wretches is too often generated rather than condemnation of their crimes. An interest is created in their very words and actions by the ministration of those mischievous busybodies who never fail to swarm around such cases like flies round a decaying carcase. The air is filled with gossip; and pamphlets, pro and con, fall from the press thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. The pulpit itself barely escapes the contagion. The world of those who care for such things is split into two parties, each one firmly convinced of the truth of its own view, and not to be turned therefrom though an angel from heaven should trumpet forth contradiction. Worst of all is it that the din of this controversy falls as suggestive seed upon those degenerate natures which are most prone to absorb and sympathize, and never fails to produce a plentiful crop of imitations.

The case of Elizabeth Canning, and the madness which seized the public mind and divided the town for months into the two opposing parties of “Canningites” and “Gipsyites,” furnishes as striking an example as could be produced of the after-consequences of the offences wrought by malefactors of the class last named. It is true that Elizabeth Canning’s crime brought her within the grasp of the law; but, taken by itself, it would not be classed as one of extraordinary turpitude. Society, by the factitious importance which it gave to her career and personality, and by its mawkish sentimentality for her quasi martyrdom, became *particeps criminis*, and must at any rate bear some of the blame for any mischief which may have arisen from her evil example.

Elizabeth Canning was born on 17 September, 1734, and

lived unnoticed and unknown till the year 1753, when there sprang up, anent her worthless personality, one of those storms of popular excitement which from time to time rage around the rights and the wrongs of some question lately deliberated upon and settled by the recognized tribunals of the land. Her father had been a sawyer, but he had been dead some years before 1753, and the widow seems to have carried on his business.

Elizabeth is said to have been educated at a charity school, and to have borne a good character in the several situations as a domestic servant which she filled up to the time of her notorious escapade. At any rate, malice could find naught against her previous conduct during all the excitement which followed. One sympathetic recorder declares that "while with Mr. Wintlebury, who keeps a reputable ale-house in Aldermanbury, with whom she continued a servant near two years, she was remarkable for decency, sobriety, and diligence, and the reason assigned for her leaving him is because, as she advanced towards maturity, she could not avoid some freedoms from the multitude of company who resorted to her master's house that were offensive to her modesty." On leaving Mr. Wintlebury she took service with Mr. Edward Lyon, a carpenter in the same neighbourhood, and when she had been living in her new place about ten weeks she went out for that holiday jaunt which was destined to be fraught with such fateful consequences for herself and for others as well.

To give the story as nearly as possible in the words which she used afterwards at the time of the trial, the astonishing narrative of her adventure opens in the following way: On the 1st of January, 1753, Elizabeth Canning went, by leave of her master and mistress, to spend the day with an uncle of hers, one Thomas Colley, who lived at Saltpetre Bank, a street near Wellclose Square, and now called Dock Street. At his house she took dinner and supper; and about nine o'clock in the evening she started to return to Mr. Lyon's, her employer's, her aunt and uncle escorting her along Houndsditch almost as far as the "Blue Ball." There they left her, somewhere about a quarter past nine o'clock, to find

her way home. Elizabeth did not return that night to Mr. Lyon's house, and the next day and the next passed without any tidings of her. By this time considerable excitement and alarm had arisen over her disappearance; her mother was informed what had happened; a large reward was offered for her discovery, and various means were adopted for getting news of her; the gaols, the hospitals, and other places were searched, but every effort was in vain. On January 6th there appeared in the *Daily Advertiser* the following notice:—

“Whereas Elizabeth Cannon, went from her friends between Houndsditch and Bishopsgate on Monday last the 1st instant between nine and ten o'clock: Whoever can give any account where she is, shall have two guineas reward: to be paid by Mrs. Cannon, a sawyer in Aldermanbury postern, which will be a great satisfaction to her Mother. She is fresh coloured, pitted with the Small pox, has a high forehead, light Eye brows, about five Foot high, eighteen years of Age, well set, had on a Masquerade purple Stuff Gown, a black petticoat, a white chip Hat, bound round with Green, a white Apron and Handkerchief, blue Stockings, and leather Shoes.

“*Note.*—It is supposed she was forcibly taken away by some evilly disposed Person, as she was heard to shriek out in a Hackney Coach in Bishopsgate-Street. If the Coachman remember anything of the Affair by giving an Account as above he shall be handsomely rewarded for his Trouble.”

As this advertisement provoked no reply, the disconsolate mother is reported to have caused public prayers to be offered up in the churches, meeting-houses, “and even at Mr. Westley's,” that her daughter's return might be speedy, and that she might not be led into temptation, but delivered from all evil. Lastly, “for what will not maternal tenderness inspire, a fortune-teller was consulted, who gave the afflicted parent the comforting assurance that she would soon see her Daughter again, though she was then under the keeping of an old Black Woman.”

Nothing, however, was heard of the missing girl notwithstanding all these appeals to the powers visible and invisible; but on the evening of January 29th, just after Mrs. Canning had summoned her little family to prayers,

Elizabeth walked into the room where they were assembled. The mother forthwith fell down in a fit, deeming what she beheld was a ghost. Elizabeth did not, on this occasion, follow suit, though from her mother's subsequent statement such a thing might well have come to pass. To make a slight digression, it may be remarked here that when she appeared in the witness-box Mrs. Canning—and this fact ought to be kept constantly in mind as the case unfolds itself—declared that her daughter had always been subject to fits, through the falling of some plaster upon her head. Whenever any one might speak sharply to her, or at any sudden shock, she was prone to fall into a fit, and would continue insensible for seven or eight hours, being at such times as unconscious as a new-born babe to aught going on about her. To resume the story, Mrs. Canning, having recollected her wits, realized the fact that her errant child had come back, and perceived, moreover, that she was in piteous case. She was clad in nothing else than a dirty bed-gown and an old cap; and, no longer the plump, rosy, fresh-coloured lass she was when last her mother had seen her, she was now little else but a meagre, pale, half-starved skeleton, bleeding from a wound in the ear, and bearing about her all the marks of ill-treatment. The news of Elizabeth's return was speedily noised abroad, and several sympathetic neighbours ran to Mrs. Canning's house to hear the story of the girl's mysterious absence. Mr. John Wintlebury, the girl's former employer, Mr. Lyon, with whom she was at present living, Joseph Adamson, Robert Scarrat, and Edward Rossiter were the first to hear the tale of her adventure.

The tale she had to tell ran as follows. When she parted from her aunt and uncle near Aldgate, on the evening of New Year's Day, she passed by Bedlam Wall, near Moorfields. There she met two lusty men, who forthwith seized her and first rifled her pockets, and next took off her gown and apron and hat. Under such outrage she screamed aloud, whereupon the man who had taken off her gown gagged her by thrusting a handkerchief into her mouth. Although the hour was comparatively an early one, there was no one about whom she could summon to her rescue—or at any rate she saw no one—

and then one of the ruffians, after tying her hands behind her, gave her a blow on the head, and said, "Damn you, you bitch, we'll do for you by and by!" She declared she heard these words spoken, though in the same sentence she added that the blow stunned her and threw her into a fit. When she came to herself she was on a large road close by some water, still in the hold of her captors, who dragged her along by her petticoats to a house which stood hard by. Into this she was taken, and when she entered she saw there three women, one old and two young. The old woman took her by the hand and asked her if she would "go their way," adding that, if she would, she should have fine clothes to wear. She made answer that she would not, though she admitted she did not understand the purport of the harridan's speech. On receiving this reply the old woman took a carving-knife out of a drawer and cut the lace of her stays, and took them away from her. Her petticoat was left to her; but, after slapping her face and reviling her, the old woman hustled her out of the room up some steps into a chamber above—a sort of hay loft—and shut the door. But before the old woman withdrew she assured her prisoner with divers threats that, if she should hear her stir or move or utter a word, she would certainly come back and cut her throat out of hand.

All this happened long before daybreak, but when at last it was light Elizabeth could see what manner of place her prison was. There was in it a fireplace and grate, but nothing in the way of furniture. However, for provision there was upon the floor a black pitcher, not quite full of water, and some twenty-four pieces of bread, amounting in all to about the volume of a quartern loaf. In addition to this she had for sustenance a penny mince-pie, which she had bought that day to carry home to her mother. In this gruesome prison she remained shut up for nearly twenty-eight days, without seeing a single human being, though on the day before her escape she fancied that she saw the eye of some one peeping through a crack in the door. She heard the noise of people moving about below and blowing the fire, and once she tried the door at the foot of the stairs and

found it fast. Her bread and water held out till the afternoon of the twenty-eighth day, and when these were finished she seems to have set about to find a way of escape. First of all she clothed herself in an old sort of bedgown and a handkerchief that lay in the grate in the hay loft. She then broke down a board which was nailed up to a window and thus made her way out. She had to jump down eight feet, but this did not hurt her, as the ground was soft clay. She scratched her ear indeed in getting out, but this she concealed by tying the handkerchief like a cap over her head. She found herself in a narrow lane, but she soon made her way to the London road and returned as quickly as she could to her mother's house.

After listening to this extraordinary story it was only natural that the neighbours should want to know the situation of this prison-house. Mr. Wintlebury was the first to question her, and to him she replied that she knew even when she was in confinement that she was somewhere upon the Hertfordshire road. On being interrogated as to how she knew this, she answered that she had peeped out of the window of the loft and had seen a coach go by driven by a man whom she recognized as the coachman who had often driven her late mistress, Mrs. Wintlebury, when she had gone into the country. She knew the coach quite well, because she used to carry goods and parcels to it and fetch them back again. In describing her experiences of the first night of her imprisonment she is reported to have said that while she was in the house where she was taken she heard mentioned the name of Mother Wells, or Mother Wills, but from the evidence afterwards given by Scarrat at her trial it would appear that her first mention of this old woman's name might well have been suggested by a remark of the witness himself, seeing that he admitted in his evidence that he had cried out, as soon as he had heard her story, "I would lay a guinea she has been at Mother Wells'." In like manner the description she gave of the house and of its approaches bears strong signs of having been suggested to her by Mr. Scarrat's leading questions.

The house of Mother Wells at Enfield Wash, about which

much must needs be said as the story unfolds itself, evidently bore in these days a sinister and widespread reputation. In the *Connoisseur* for July 25, 1753, an entry in the diary of a worthy citizen records a drive in a one-horse chair "to see Mother Wells at Enfield Wash." She let lodgings to tramps and gipsies, and probably combined with this business that of a brothel-keeper.

In the ears of her auditors Elizabeth Canning's story seemed to point to this house as the place where she had been detained, wherefore it was decided by the assembled neighbours that the girl should make an affidavit, giving a full description of all the circumstances of her detention, so as to bring the offenders to justice. A subscription was raised to defray the costs, and on January 31st Elizabeth made oath before Mr. Alderman Chitty, sitting at Guildhall, concerning the outrage in Moorfields and the ill-treatment at Enfield Wash. The warrant was forthwith granted, and Elizabeth, surrounded by a posse of friends, was driven, on February 1st, in a post-chaise down to Enfield Wash to Mother Wells's house. No sooner did she enter than she declared at once without hesitation that a gipsy woman, a certain Mary Squires, whom she saw there, was the person who had cut off her stays, and that two others there present, named Lucy Squires and Virtue Hall, were the young women who had stood by while this outrage was being committed. A day or two after this expedition the whole party were taken before Mr. Tyshemaker, of Edmon-ton, a justice of the peace, but he dismissed the charge against all except Mary Squires, the gipsy woman, and Mother Wells. The first he sent to prison as having been sworn to by the girl as the robber of her stays, and the last he committed as the keeper of a disorderly house.

But the girl's friends were not disposed to allow the affair to rest at this stage. On February 7th an information was sworn by Elizabeth Canning before Mr. Henry Fielding, who was then the Middlesex magistrate, recapitulating all the details given above. In the interval which had elapsed since her kidnapping her memory seems to have been enriched, or her imagination stimulated, for now she told Mr. Fielding

that the two men who had carried her off "had brown bob wigs on and drab coloured great-coats."

On receiving this information Mr. Fielding at once issued a warrant against all who might be found in the house of Wells, charging them to appear before him forthwith and give security for their good behaviour. Upon this warrant Virtue Hall, whom Elizabeth had seen when taken by her friends down to Enfield, and another woman named Judith Natus, were arrested and brought before the magistrate. Virtue Hall seems to have quailed at once at the terrors of the law, and to have let the justice see that she was ready to tell all, and perhaps more, than she knew. It took some time, however, to get her to patch up a story coherent enough to satisfy even the modest demands of a sworn information, but after some amount of cajolery and no small threatening as well, she swore to an information the gist of which was that early on the morning in question Elizabeth Canning, without either gown, hat, or apron, had been brought to Mother Wells's house. In the details which followed her story corresponded closely with that of Elizabeth, but at the end of the information she declared that, after the day when Elizabeth and her friends had gone as accusers, and the party from Mother Wells's house as accused, to the house of Mr. Justice Tyshemaker, and Squires and Wells had been committed to prison, Judith Natus and her husband (whose name was Fortune), who had been lodging for some days in Mrs. Wells's house, and had hitherto slept on a bed of hay in the kitchen, were moved upstairs into the room where Elizabeth had declared she had been imprisoned. By way of explanation Hall added that she understood this change had been made in order that they might be able to feign that they had "lain in this same workshop for all the time they had lodged in Susannah Wells's house." One of the men who had brought Elizabeth to the house was John Squires, the son of Mary Squires the gipsy woman, the other was a stranger to her.

Mr. Fielding next examined Judith Natus, but she denied having ever seen Elizabeth Canning at Mrs. Wells's house, and stated positively that she and her husband had indeed

lain in the same room where Elizabeth had pretended to be confined all the time they were at Enfield Wash. This statement Virtue Hall contradicted orally, whereupon certain persons present demanded that Judith Natus should be committed for perjury forthwith—a fact which shows that the public at large had already begun to feel strongly on the subject and had chosen their side—but this was a step which even Justice Fielding declined to take. One bit of judicial procedure sanctioned by him in this case may be noted as an example of the extraordinary laxity of the prevailing usage. Certain noble lords and persons of quality had expressed a wish to be present at the examination of the gipsy woman, whereupon Fielding ordered Mr. Salt, the solicitor, to bring up Elizabeth Canning and Virtue Hall, so that they might once more swear their informations in the presence of Squires, the gipsy woman, and Mother Wells, at the same time appointing a day for this ceremony and sending due notice of the business to the “noble lords.”

Not the least extraordinary part of this extraordinary business is the conduct of Fielding. At the beginning of the pamphlet which he soon after brought out he lets the public into his confidence, and tells them how he, a police magistrate, received a fee and instructions from Mr. Salt, the prosecuting solicitor; how he postponed all examination into this charge of felony on the ground that he had been greatly fatigued of late by other long investigations, and wanted a day or two in the country; how he alternately cajoled and bullied Virtue Hall, a prisoner brought before him on his own warrant, till he got the wretched wench to make the confession he desired to hear—a confession which she retracted as soon as the least pressure was put upon her from the other side; and how he allowed this same prisoner to have an interview with the prosecuting solicitor, and to be sworn to an information prepared beforehand by this same solicitor.

On 21st February Mary Squires and Susannah Wells were brought to trial at the Old Bailey sessions—Squires for robbing Elizabeth Canning, and Wells for harbouring and concealing Squires. The evidence for the prosecution was nothing more than a recapitulation of the foregoing narrative.

Mother Wells made no defence at all (it seemed her husband had been hanged), and Mary Squires did no more than call several witnesses from Dorsetshire—John Gibbons, William Clarke, and Thomas Greville—all of whom swore that they had seen the prisoner, Mary Squires, and her son in the neighbourhood of Abbotsbury during the first part of January, 1753. Gibbons, indeed, swore that she had stopped at his inn at Abbotsbury from the first to the ninth of the month, and all the others were precise in their statements. But another witness, one John Miser, for the Crown, swore that he had met Squires at Waltham Cross and Theobalds on the day when she was apprehended, and had seen her on several other occasions immediately before this date telling fortunes in the neighbourhood. This evidence seems to have destroyed the value of that of the Dorsetshire men in the estimation of the jury, and they found a verdict of guilty against both prisoners. Squires was sentenced to death, and Wells to be imprisoned for six months and to be burned in the hand. The last-named cruel punishment was carried out at once, to the great delight of the assembled crowd. As in the preliminary proceedings before Mr. Fielding, an attempt was made to indict the Dorsetshire witnesses for perjury, but this the bench would not countenance.

In the meantime the controversy as to which of the stories was the true one was waxing warm and engaging the attention of the busy quidnuncs, who have always leisure for such matters. Fielding seems to have forgotten altogether what was due to his position as an administrator of the law, and espoused the cause of Elizabeth Canning in a very unbecoming manner, while the many-sided Doctor John Hill took the part of the condemned women. In the *Inspector* for March 9th there appeared a statement that Virtue Hall had recanted all the evidence she had given at the trial, and over and beyond this had declared that Elizabeth Canning had never been at the house at Enfield Wash until she was conveyed thither by her friends on February 1st. Certain details in the description of the place wherein she swore she was incarcerated, given by Elizabeth at the late trial, were pointed out and demonstrated to be inaccurate. She had

sworn that she had found the old bedgown she wore when she made her escape lying in the grate in the garret, but when the garret came to be examined no grate of any sort was found therein. Meantime the execution of the sentence upon the two women had been arrested. The story of Virtue Hall's retractation turned out to be true, and over and beyond recanting the same she declared that she would never have sworn to her information had it not been for the threats and intimidation of Justice Fielding and Salt, the solicitor for the prosecution. Sir Crisp Gascoigne, the Lord Mayor, had sat on the bench at the trial. He had all along been very suspicious as to Elizabeth's story, and was now highly dissatisfied with the verdict. The affidavit of Virtue Hall's recantation was placed in his hands, and on March 15th he brought the two women together at the Gate-house, when Hall reiterated her statement in Elizabeth Canning's presence. The Lord Mayor had likewise caused written inquiries to be sent down into Dorsetshire, and had received from the vicar and parish officers of Abbotsbury replies which fully confirmed the evidence given by the Dorsetshire men at the trial. So strong was the feeling of the party which Fielding's indiscreet championship had called up, that on May 4th a bill of indictment for perjury was presented by the grand jury at the Old Bailey against Elizabeth Canning. As a counter-check to this her friends proposed a similar bill against Clarke, Gibbons, and Greville for perjury committed during the late trial; but both of these bills were thrown out. The following session, on June 9th, the bills were again presented and found true. The friends of Elizabeth seem to have been somewhat alarmed at the turn of affairs at this juncture, for they kept her concealed until a writ of outlawry was issued. At the September sessions the Abbotsbury witnesses were brought to trial, and as no evidence was presented against them they were acquitted. Before Sir Crisp Gascoigne laid down his office of Lord Mayor, Canning's friends waited upon him with a request to have the case tried in the Court of King's Bench, but this course not being found practicable, the trial came on at the Old Bailey on 29th May, 1754.

In the meantime the popular excitement over the varying developments of the case had risen to fever heat. Fielding tried to justify his recent action by the publication of his pamphlet "A Clear State of the case of Elizabeth Canning"; but that he was not altogether happy in his effort is proved by the fact that he failed to win the approval of the writer of "The Genuine and impartial Memoirs," a thick and thin defence of the girl, in respect to his method of handling the affair. Hill's attack followed Fielding's book after a few days, and proved the Doctor to be a more skilful controversialist than the novelist. These were but the heralds of the storm; a fresh pamphlet came out every week, and the caricaturist was well to the fore to make use of such a promising subject. At the most fashionable coffee-houses subscriptions were made on behalf of the martyr maid-of-all-work. The members of White's went so far as to send for her to come and receive in person the £30 they collected for her. As is usual in seasons of such violent excitement, abominable charges were made against the chief actors on either side, and the basest motives were assigned to them as the reason of their activity. Sir Crisp Gascoigne suffered perhaps the most. He was attacked in the streets, his coach windows were broken, and his life was threatened. There was spread abroad a story that one of the gipsy woman's sons had been for many years in the pay of Sir Crisp Gascoigne, who had been moved to act in the interest of Mary Squires from the fact that young Squires, if he were not kept quiet, might tell a story of some scandalous offence of which his employer had been guilty. It may be remarked that nearly all the caricatures published were of a character to hold up to ridicule the party opposed to Elizabeth Canning, scarcely any being published against her. The air was filled with the wildest fables. One day it was reported that Virtue Hall had recanted her recantation, and the next that a boy at Enfield had declared he knew some one who had seen the girl actually clambering out of the window of Mother Wells's hay loft. Falsehoods like these found ready believers; but nothing fresh of any importance came to light.

On the morning of the trial the accused was taken in a

coach to the Old Bailey, attended by the acclamations of the sympathetic multitude. The charge of perjury was in respect to her evidence in which she swore she had been robbed of her stays by Mary Squires, and the object of the prosecution was to account for the doings of this woman during the whole of the time which the accused declared she had spent in duress at Enfield Wash; and, if a multitude of witnesses is to be taken as a valuable factor, it must be admitted that the case against Elizabeth was a powerful one. Thirty-eight witnesses were called to prove that Mary Squires had been in Dorsetshire, and to indicate exactly the route which she and her son had taken in their journey from South Parret to Tottenham. On the other hand, a large number of witnesses swore that they had seen Mary Squires (who seemed to be easy of recognition by reason of her exceeding ugliness) on divers occasions at Enfield or in the neighbourhood during the period of her alleged absence in Dorsetshire. Fortune and Judith Natus swore positively that they had slept in the hay loft the whole of the time of Elizabeth's pretended imprisonment, and one Ezra Whiffin deposed that on the 8th of January he had gone into the hay loft to look at an inn sign which Mrs. Wells had for sale, and had seen Judith Natus in bed, swearing at the same time there was no other woman in the room. Divers witnesses afterwards gave testimony as to the respectability of Whiffin. He seems to have been a thoroughly worthy man, and his evidence probably had great weight with the jury. The trial dragged on for eight days, and by the time it had come to an end the jury were completely befogged, for after consulting for two hours they came into court with the verdict that the defendant had been guilty of perjury, but not wilful or corrupt. The court having informed them that this was no verdict at all, they again retired, and, after another consultation, found her guilty of the offence, but recommended her to the mercy of the court. The verdict itself is no bad illustration of the extraordinary confusion which must have reigned in the minds of all those who had sat through eight days of contradictory evidence. First the twelve good men and true find she is guilty of perjury, "but not wilful and corrupt," the next hour

they find that her perjury was wilful and corrupt. Then certain of them made an affidavit that they believed her story in the main, but found her guilty because they thought there was some discrepancy as to the day on which she had exhausted her pitcher of water.

On May 30th she was brought up for judgment and was sentenced to be kept one month in prison, and then transported to North America for seven years. Alderman Sir John Barnard moved that the sentence should simply be the one month's imprisonment; but, though this proposition met with some considerable support, it was overruled. At the same time the shorthand reporter who had taken minutes of the trial was severely reprimanded by the Recorder on account of the partisan aspect (in favour of the accused) which he had given to the published reports of the evidence, —another instance of the tendency to sympathize with the criminal which seldom fails to manifest itself whenever some special case may have aroused an abnormal amount of excitement in the public mind. But no proceedings for contempt of court seem to have been taken.

Henceforth Elizabeth Canning disappears from the public gaze. In 1761 the *Annual Register* contains an entry which states that "Elizabeth Canning is arrived in England and received a legacy of £500 left her three years ago by an old lady of Newington Green"; and the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vol. xliii. p. 413) contains the record of her death at Weathersfield in Connecticut on July 22, 1773.

Elizabeth Canning's story, printed in hundreds of pamphlets and broadsheets, and bandied from mouth to mouth in the Mall and in St. Giles's, in my lady's boudoir, and in cellar and garret lodgings, soon produced a number of imitators. One of those on record is the case of a young girl between nine and ten years of age who had been taken from poverty by a benevolent lady and placed at a good school. One day, just about the time of the trial, this girl disappeared from school. Search was made for her everywhere, but no trace was found of her until at last a message was brought to the schoolmistress asking her to go to Shacklewell. There she found a gentleman who told her the

following story. He had met this girl in the fields near Shacklewell, almost naked, when she asked him to tell her the way to Ponder's End. Seeing a child in this strange plight he asked her where she came from and why she was in such distress. She replied that she had been decoyed away from school by a man, who had carried her into the fields and then stripped her, that she was afraid to return to her schoolmistress, and wanted to go to her friends at Ponder's End. The piteous state of the child, and the apparent truth of her story combined with her innocent manner, induced the gentleman to take her with him to the house of a friend whom he was about to visit. Something occurred the next day to arouse the suspicions of the schoolmistress. She made further inquiries, and at last the girl confessed that she had stripped herself of her clothes and thrown them into a pond.

But Elizabeth Canning was not the first to play at this game. It is by no means improbable that her action may have been suggested and stimulated by listening to some adventure of a nature akin to the one associated with her name. She must almost certainly have heard of the case of Richard Hathaway, a boy who was urged on by that morbid and malignant desire for notoriety, however infamous—one of Nordau's most evident stigmata of degeneracy—which, when once it seizes upon the imagination of the person possessed, renders him quite callous and indifferent to the evil which may follow his actions. Hathaway feigned to have been persecuted by an old woman, and to have been bewitched by her. He declared that he had vomited pins on account of the spells cast upon him, and that he had fasted for days at a time. Like Elizabeth Canning, he found many people who were intelligent and of good repute to believe in him; and, like her, he had to be exhibited as an impostor by the means of a legal trial. It has perhaps been assumed overmuch by those who have concerned themselves with Elizabeth Canning and her doings that her innocence or guilt is an open question, and that her case is to be numbered amongst the insoluble mysteries; and one of the most acute of these investigators, Mr. Paget, the

author of "Paradoxes and Puzzles," shows an undoubted bias in her favour. Those who would demonstrate her innocence must find their task from the very outset well nigh hopeless. To begin with the notice in the *Daily Advertiser*, what can be the meaning of the expression, "She was heard to shriek out in a hackney coach in Bishopsgate Street" but that her mother from the very first had taken firmly into her mind the notion that the girl had been forcibly abducted? Who heard the shriek, or who identified the shrieker? The girl might or might not have concocted her nonsensical story what time she returned, a wan, livid scarecrow, into the family party in Aldermanbury. In any case here was a *milieu* in which any rudimentary germs of invention as yet dormant in her brain would almost certainly be fertilized and grow rapidly. The main features of her narrative, the subsistence on nothing more than a few scraps of bread and a pitcher of water for four weeks, to say nothing of the "minced pie" which her filial piety had reserved for her mother, show that the inclination to tell a lying story was there, and her subsequent action—the persistence with which she adhered to the same, what though the mutilation and death of two women, who were at least innocent of this offence, would ensue on account of her false oath—prove the dogged, stubborn malignity of her nature. Fielding himself, partisan committed as he was, writes in his pamphlet that if the *alibi* advanced on the gipsy's behalf should prove true, Canning would be guilty of the blackest, the most premeditated, and the most audacious perjury levelled at the lives of several innocent persons.

Elizabeth Canning was about eighteen years of age at the time of the trial, and, to judge from the way in which she gave her evidence, by no means wanting in intelligence. There are several circumstances in connection with her interview with Justice Fielding—at the time when Virtue Hall swore to the deposition which she subsequently repudiated—which favour the view that she was very cunning and very far-sighted as well. The terms of Virtue Hall's deposition resemble those of Elizabeth's story so minutely that they suggest at once collusion and perhaps combined preparation.

The partisans of Elizabeth always put forward the argument in her favour that Hall's subsequent evidence was valueless. No doubt it was, and by parity of reasoning her original deposition was just as valuable as her recantation and her evidence, and no more. But, beyond this, the demonstration of Hall's worthlessness makes legitimate and permissible the plea that a woman of her character and antecedents would naturally be quite ready to plot with a kindred spirit like Elizabeth Canning, in order to save herself from the thunderbolts of the law as wielded by Justice Fielding, no matter what cruelty and injustice might be the consequences of her act.

Elizabeth Canning's character was without doubt a far stronger one than Virtue Hall's. There was no sign of vacillation or yielding in her when once she had chosen her part. What may have been the immediate cause of the momentous freak she played must ever remain a mystery, a mystery as impenetrable as her whereabouts during the month of January, 1753. It is easy to believe that the freak itself was not such as a respectable girl would have undertaken. One inquirer is inclined to the belief that she spent her time with a lover, who forsook her when he had had enough of her; another that she had gone into temporary seclusion, rendered necessary by the result of some amorous intrigue. Whatever may have been the cause, her absence required explanation, and she was shrewd enough to coin a tale which, albeit improbable in parts, was difficult to disprove entirely, and was put forward in the manner most likely to win public sympathy. And in the early stages of the affair fortune certainly favoured her marvellously. Mr. Scarrat's opportune suggestions and Henry Fielding's advocacy made her way comparatively easy. Moreover, she never faltered in her courage or recanted her story, but rather made it more complete and emphatic with every telling, heedless that Mother Wells might be burned in the hand and Mrs. Squires hanged by the neck for crimes in which they had had no part.

W. G. WATERS.

DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.



ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH.

ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH.

DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.

(1720-1788.)

“ You see, my lords, what goodly fruit she seems :
Yet like those apples travellers report
To grow where Sodom and Gomorrah stood
I will but touch her and you straight shall see
She'll fall to soot and ashes.”

VITTORIA COROMBONA.

ONE result of the old-fashioned method of teaching history is that students who have been thereto subjected in their youth, when they look back upon that long and wearisome road which stretches from the coming of William the Bastard to the present year of grace are apt to find that this highway is interrupted here and there with deep dykes which profess to shut off one period from another, and to group the *ingens acervus* of facts into handy sections which may be more easily comprehended. The student was furthermore led to believe that, after passing one of these boundaries, he would have done for ever with all that had gone before, and would emerge in a new world of politics, society, and ideas.

For some reason or other the transition from Stuart to Hanoverian times always seems to mean the leaping of a dyke wider than usual. The graceful and cultured life of the Court of the first Charles, which some of us idealize, may be largely legendary, and the result of feminine sympathy for the woes which the elegantly attired Cavaliers suffered at the

hands of the ugly Puritans ; the wit and laughter, the rosy days and yet more rosy nights of the Restoration, may have been mere vulgar debauchery, trimmed up for our inspection by the romancer's art, and mellowed by the passage of the years ; but in any case they cannot surely have aught in common with the gross, dull sottish profligacy which infected society during the rule of the first and the second of our Hanoverian deliverers, or with the domestic virtues which adorned the life of the third. The fear of Popery and wooden shoes was for ever dissipated, and other things had gone as well : to wit, the fine, if somewhat dangerous, spirit of Cavalier loyalty, and the stately tradition and sentiment of High Church rule of life, hallowed and handed on by gentlemen like Falkland and Endymion Porter, and by divines like Herbert, Andrews, and Ken. With the coming of George I. the country gentlemen withdrew to their seats to hunt by day and drink by night, to sulk over politics and talk treason with the parson, and to help produce for the next generation the Lumpkins and Westerns and Trullibers portrayed by the pioneers of English fiction.

But a very superficial search will show that the gulf fixed between Stuart and Hanoverian times was after all a very narrow one. The characteristics of society were varied somewhat, but only on the surface. Vice had added largely to its grossness and—if such a process be possible—seemed thereby to have increased its evil as well. At any rate, the leaven of unrighteousness must have been working strongly in a society which could put forth such a growth as Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh.

Elizabeth Chudleigh was born in 1720, of a good Devonshire family, the Chudleighs of Ashton. Her father was Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, lieutenant-governor of Chelsea Hospital, and her mother a member of the same family, coming from the branch settled at Chalmington, in Dorset. Colonel Chudleigh died in 1726, leaving his wife and child in very poor circumstances. For several years they lived in obscurity, when one day, in 1740, a lucky accident—a chance meeting during a country walk according to rumour—gained them the advantage of Mr. Pulteney's friendship. He was mightily

taken with the beauty and brightness of the young girl, and the story goes that he gave her much good advice, both personally and by letters, as to the cultivation of her mind by study, and as to the value of intellectual possessions; but those who live after the event, and can review the damsel's career, will be of the opinion that the appointment as maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, which Pulteney was able to procure for her in 1743, was vastly more to Miss Elizabeth's taste than counsel as to the choice of books. There is no evidence that the widow's circumstances had in any way improved, nor as to who the person was who generously supplied the funds needed to furnish a suitable outfit for the new maid of honour; but, whether she were well equipped or no, it is certain that the smart society of the day awoke one morning to discover that a new star of beauty of the first magnitude had risen in the firmament. The craze for fashionable beauty is not altogether a new one, as Miss Chudleigh's case and the more famous one of the Gunnings later on serves to prove. The town could talk of nothing else but the marvellous beauty of the fair Elizabeth. The gilded youth flocked round her like flies round a honey-pot, and, before long, rumours were spread abroad that divers of the young bloods of the highest rank were bent on winning and wearing her. The Dukes of Hamilton and Ancaster and Lord Hillsborough were the suitors she favoured most, and it was scarcely probable that the first-named of them, the possessor of a princely title and immense wealth, would woo in vain. The Duke and the maid of honour certainly exchanged vows, but no long time was allowed them for their pleasant dalliance, seeing that the lover was already committed to a plan for making the Grand Tour. He was at that time only nineteen years of age and presumably still under tutelage of some sort or other, and there can be little doubt that his guardians did all in their power to keep him from contracting what must have seemed to all the world a most undesirable match for one of such exalted station. At any rate, they carried him off out of the country, but though seas were dividing he was constant enough, at least for a time, to ply Miss Chudleigh with his love-letters. She had gone to spend

the summer with her aunt, Mrs. Hanmer, in Hampshire, and this lady, from some motive which it is not easy to fathom, intercepted the letters, so that Elizabeth was left without a word from her wandering lover. Balked of winning one beauty, he had his will with another later on. Walpole writes: "About six weeks ago Duke Hamilton, hot, debauched, extravagant, and equally damaged in his fortune and his person, fell in love with the youngest [of the Gunning's] at the masquerade, and determined to marry her in the spring." To judge from these words, it would appear that the Duke as a *parti* had his drawbacks, but it is scarcely possible that such peccadilloes as those chronicled above would have roused Mrs. Hanmer's determined opposition to the match. But, if she did her best to rob her niece of such a lover as the match-making aunt in all ages has been most keen to entrap, she set to work to repair the mischief and to supply the void in Miss Chudleigh's heart by recommending to the utmost in her power the Honourable Augustus John Hervey, grandson of the first Earl of Bristol, and son of the famous John Lord Hervey, at this time a lieutenant on board H.M.S. *Cornwall*. Perhaps the good aunt may have feared that the Duke, in spite of his love-letters, would prove a difficult bird to lure into the net after the wider experiences of his travels—it must be remembered he was only nineteen when he sailed away—and that an officer in the navy with the chance of succeeding to an earldom was, after all, the game the better worth hunting.

Whatever Mrs. Hanmer's plans may have been, it is certain that she did not find much difficulty in bringing her niece round to her way of thinking. Mrs. Hanmer took Elizabeth with her on a visit to her cousin, Mr. John Merrill, of Lainston, a village near Winchester. The family party went for a jaunt to Winchester races, and there was arranged the meeting—pregnant with such dire consequences—between Elizabeth Chudleigh and Augustus John Hervey. The young lieutenant fell a victim at once to the charms of the fashionable beauty, and after a vigorous wooing she, piqued perhaps by the Duke of Hamilton's apparent neglect, consented to marry him. Miss Chudleigh at this time was only twenty-four years of

age ; but, to judge from the incidents of her life at Court, she could scarcely have been rated as an inexperienced girl. Hervey was four years her junior, but he had been about the world, and, if his subsequent carriage be taken into account, he cannot be set down as a man given to act on hasty impulse, or as one overburdened with scruples. For this reason it is somewhat difficult to account for such precipitate action, and for the taking of a step of such astounding folly and heedlessness. It is perhaps safe to assume that they were, for the moment, deeply enamoured of one another, and that for once they gave free course to the passionate impulses of nature without counting the cost. Having determined at all hazard to possess one another, they hit upon a course which had a certain amount of reason to justify it. Lieutenant Hervey, presumably a poor man, dreaded the anger of his father and the possible ruin of his career. Elizabeth, having nothing in the world except her place in the household of the Princess of Wales, hesitated to resign this in exchange for the poor establishment Hervey could offer her as his wife. Things standing thus, they resolved to make a private marriage, which should be kept secret, a freak much more common in those days of happy-go-lucky registration than at the present time ; so, on August 4, 1744, they were married late in the evening at Lainston by Mr. Amis, the rector of the place. The church stood at the bottom of Mr. Merrill's garden. The only witnesses of the ceremony were Mrs. Hanmer and her maid, Mr. Merrill and a friend of his, a certain Mr. Mounteny, who held in his hat the candle which gave light to Parson Amis as he read the service. The party returned to Mr. Merrill's house after the marriage, and Hervey and his wife cohabited there for several days. Then the bridegroom sailed away in the *Cornwall*, and the bride went back to live with her mother in Conduit Street.

In 1746 Hervey came back from sea, and at once went to live with his wife, using secrecy enough to allow her to continue the discharge of her duties as maid of honour without detection or scandal ; and in the summer of 1747 the first child of the marriage was born. In the following November was it baptized in the old church at Chelsea as the son of the

Honourable Augustus Hervey. A few weeks later it died, and from the date of its birth there is no evidence that the parents ever again lived together. Walpole, in his "Last Journals," makes mention of a second child of Elizabeth's by Hervey, but he is almost certainly wrong. He was writing some years after the event, and makes several mistakes in his account of the matter in question.

During the husband's absence, and during the time immediately following his return from sea-going, any feeling of affection which may have hitherto existed between the pair rapidly cooled, or even gave place to positive dislike. When she returned to town from that momentous visit to Hampshire Elizabeth's beauty was just as much as ever the cynosure of the Court. The young woman who would contract a secret marriage with a light heart would naturally drift into the wildest and most dissolute set about the Court; indeed, she contrived before long to outrage the delicacy (save the mark!) even of the Court of George II. In 1749 a subscription masquerade was given, of which Mrs. Montagu writes in the following terms: "Miss Chudleigh's dress, or rather undress, was remarkable: she was Iphigenia for the sacrifice, but so naked that the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim. The maids of honour (not of maids the strictest) were so offended that they would not speak to her." And Walpole, in describing the same entertainment, writes that "Miss Chudleigh appeared as Iphigenia, but so naked that she might have been taken for Andromeda." Elizabeth was by this time in the humour to care little for the scolding of modest maids of honour or the censures of the learned Mrs. Montagu. It is evident that this freak of hers went far to increase her reputation as a *femme galante*—it may perhaps have been undertaken with such an end in view—and won for her appreciation in the most exalted quarters. Peradventure there may have been at this moment a vacancy in the royal heart and harem; at any rate, a fortnight later another masquerade was given, "by the King's command," for Miss Chudleigh, the maid of honour, with whom, as the scandalmongers would have it, the old King fancied himself to be in love—so much in love

that at one of the booths he gave her a fairing for her watch, which cost him five and thirty guineas—actually disbursed out of his privy purse, and not charged to the Civil List.

At another masquerade given shortly afterwards King George II. was graciously pleased to be present, bent, no doubt, on conquest ; but the Fates were unpropitious, for the fair Elizabeth was detained at home with an attack of gout—a suggestion that, young as she was, she had already begun to give way to the crapulous humours lurking in her blood. The royal lover went away in high dudgeon when he discovered that for him the masquerade was shorn of all attraction ; but certain events of the following year seem to show either that he could not be angry with such a charming face, or that the owner of the face had made some amends for disappointing him of her presence. Walpole, in writing of a Drawing-room held in 1750, says : “The King strode up to Miss Chudleigh and told her he was glad to have an opportunity of obeying her commands ; that he appointed her mother housekeeper at Windsor, and hoped she would not think a kiss too great a reward—against all precedent he kissed her in the circle. Her life, which is now of thirty years’ standing, has been a little historic. Why should not experience and a charming face on one side and seventy years on his produce a title ?”

Elizabeth may now be regarded as fully introduced to the inner circles of a Court as profligate and corrupt as any which had ever disgraced the worst days of the Stuarts. The facts of her marriage with Hervey may not have been the talk of the town, but there are some words on record which suggest the notion that it was known to some few and suspected by more. Walpole, in the passage lately quoted, speaks of her life as having been “historic”—a term which would seem to apply more fittingly to her secret marriage than to any other recorded adventure of hers. In the “Last Journals” he writes, in allusion to the first years of the marriage : “As the wedded pair were both poor, extravagant, and gallant, they were soon weary of their chain, though on confessing their case to the Princess and her son, the bride was retained as a maid of honour.”

But whether Elizabeth was to be regarded as matron or maid made no difference to the crowd of gay admirers who flocked round her. Nearly all the evidence available goes to show that the exceeding beauty of her face was the charm which served her best. No one has a good word to say for her figure. Walpole calls her ill-made, clumsy, and ungraceful; and in an account of her trial Hannah More writes: "She is large and ill-shaped; there was nothing white but her face, and, had it not been for that she would have looked like a bale of bombazeen." Neither is there anything to show that she was gifted to any extent with wit or fascination of manner. Her beauty made her a chartered libertine, and she won her way in the world by its power, and by her audacity in overleaping the bounds of convention and outraging the decency—such as it was—of the fashionable world. She had certainly plenty of spirit and courage, and in the great crisis of her life she exhibited all the adroitness and promptitude of a great commander. It is true she met defeat, but she left her adversaries little to boast of in the barren victory they achieved.

Hervey in the meantime—what though he made no claim to a husband's privileges—is said to have been grievously tormented with jealousy on account of the attentions bestowed upon his wife by King and courtier alike; but there is little evidence of any such feeling to be gathered from his actions and from his treatment of his wife at this time. In the January of 1747, before the birth of the child, he was made post-captain, and appointed to the *Principessa*; and from this time till the peace of 1763 he was almost continually employed on active service, either in the West Indies or in the Mediterranean. No doubt, tidings of his wife's swift descent down the slide of debauchery, and of the various details of her outrageous conduct, were furnished to him in letters from home; for Miss Chudleigh and her doings seem to have been the favourite subject of gossip; but he let her go her way while he went on battering or being battered by French and Spaniards in the Antilles or the Balearic Islands. But to any remonstrances of his Elizabeth might well have answered with a *Tu l'as voulu*. He had left her a wife and no wife,

placed in a dangerous position in a dissolute Court—a young woman of strong passions and gifted with a beauty which seemed to act like a spell upon young and old alike. If ever a word is to be spoken in extenuation of Elizabeth Chudleigh's career of crime and profligacy it must be advanced with reference to the treatment she received from her husband at this particular time. Through the Fifties the pages of Walpole bristle with poisonous suggestions applying to the "virgin Chudleigh"; and in the *Connoisseur*, published in 1755, there is a reference to a certain maid of honour who was suffering from a tumour of the sort which is cured by the lapse of time; and another one alluding to the undress costume worn by "Iphigenia" at the masquerade. In 1754, during a state performance at the Opera, one of the royal guards fell down in an apoplexy, whereupon Miss Chudleigh, who was in attendance upon the Princess of Wales, "went into the most theatrical fit of kicking and shrieking that ever was seen. Several other women who were preparing their fits were so distanced that she had the whole house to herself." In 1746 her mother died, and this circumstance was made the occasion of a not very brilliant epigram from George Selwyn:—

"What filial piety! what mournful grace,
For a lost parent sits on Chudleigh's face!
Fair virgin, weep no more, your anguish smother,
You in this town can never want a mother."

In 1759 Hervey's elder brother, who had succeeded in 1751 to the earldom of Bristol on the death of his grandfather, fell into ill health, whereupon Elizabeth, remembering that her husband stood next in order of succession to the title and estates, thought right to review her position as the *crypto* Mrs. Augustus John Hervey. The time might be near at hand when it would be expedient for her to claim admission among the peeresses, and whenever this time should come there must be no doubt as to the validity of any claim she might advance. On February 12th, 1759, she went to Winchester, and managed to procure an interview with Mr. Amis, the Lainston clergyman, although he, poor man, was sick to death. Her business with him was to compel him to insert

in the parish register a record of her marriage with Hervey five years before, a detail which seems to have been omitted at the time when the ceremony was performed, no doubt with the view of better preserving the secrecy of the marriage. Parson Amis, ill as he was, had to do the lady's bidding, and before she left she had seen the record of her marriage duly entered upon the register and the book sealed up, a promise being given that, at Mr. Amis's death, it should be handed over to Mr. Merrill, the kinsman with whom Elizabeth had been staying when the marriage took place.

There is not much light thrown upon the motives for her actions during the time immediately following this expedition by any contemporary record. It is certain that the illness of the Earl of Bristol was not a mortal one, however alarming may have been the accounts which came to the ears of his sister-in-law, for he lingered on till 1775. The fact that her husband's elevation to the peerage might, after all, be indefinitely postponed, no doubt, acted as a sedative to her praiseworthy desire to cover her promiscuous love-making with the conventional mantle of a husband's name. Hervey as a peer might be tolerable as a mate; but, failing this, she preferred her freedom. She decided, however, that the time had now come when it behoved her to specialize her favours, and to bestow a quasi-official position upon one of her admirers. The one she chose was Evelyn Pierpoint, Duke of Kingston. This noble swain was some nine years the lady's senior; better endowed, if the testimony of his friends is to be believed, with personal attractions than with wit. His kinswoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, writing about him in 1751, expresses her surprise that he is still unmarried and her belief that there must be certain people about him who had an interest in keeping him single, ending with a hint that she would like to know the name of his "present inclination." Again she writes: "The Duke of Kingston has hitherto had so ill an education, 'tis hard to make any judgment of him; he has his spirit, but I fear will never have his father's sense. As young noblemen go, 'tis possible he may make his figure amongst them." The Duke raised a regiment of horse in 1745, and marched northwards, and did good

service at Culloden ; but, like many another valiant captain, he fell an easy prey to the spells of feminine beauty. At this time Elizabeth was thirty-nine, with a varied and instructive experience of men and cities, and gifted with parts vastly superior to the Duke's, so there is little wonder that he succumbed.

In 1759 she became, without any attempt at disguise, his mistress. When the news of this *liaison* was first published abroad it caused no great stir in the world, possibly because something of the kind had long been anticipated. In these days it seems almost impossible to believe that such an escapade would not have brought to an end Elizabeth's career as a maid of honour, but it did not ; nor does it seem to have deprived her of the friendship and countenance of the fashionable world, or of the Princess of Wales and her family. In the private life of such a circle as this it is easy to imagine Elizabeth as a *persona grata*. That this circle should tolerate the presence of such a woman, and allow her to hold a quasi-official position of honour and trust, is a proof that the satires launched against Leicester House and its denizens were not undeserved. That Elizabeth contrived to please the humours of the Princess of Wales implies no great expenditure of wit. The tastes and sympathies of the two ran on parallel lines ; but that Miss Chudleigh was able to persuade society *en bloc* to tolerate her as a maid of honour seems to show that she possessed in no mean degree the faculty of playing fast and loose with the seventh commandment without incurring the penalties meted out to sinners of low degree.

In March, 1760, she gave a concert in honour of Prince Edward's birthday, and provided a sumptuous supper, at which all the town attended. She had already begun to make free with the Duke's money. She was established in a town house, furnished lavishly and with execrable taste, crowded with the gewgaws and the bric-à-brac monstrosities which were at that time all the rage ; and scandal went so far as to say that every favour she bestowed had to be registered by the gift of a bit of Dresden china. The Duke also gave her a villa at Finchley, and afterwards Percy Lodge, near Colnbrook. The taste for bricks and mortar seems to have seized her, for in 1766 she began

to build a grand house in Paradise Row, Knightsbridge. This mansion, however, was not finished till after her second marriage, and then, out of gratitude to the Duke for his generosity, she was graciously pleased to bestow upon it the name of Kingston House. The Duke, a weak, vain man, thought no doubt that he had made a great *coup* in winning "the virgin Chudleigh" for his special use, and all through the period of his infatuation he kept her in grand style. To give a notion of the state in which she lived, and of the attitude of polite society, one cannot do better than set down Walpole's description of the ball given by her in honour of the birthday of the Prince of Wales in 1760. "You had heard before you left London of Miss Chudleigh's intended loyalty on the Prince's birthday. Poor thing! I fear she has thrown away above a quarter's salary. It was magnificent and well understood—no crowd—and though a sultry night, one was not a moment incommode. The court was illuminated on the whole summit of the wall with a battlement of lamps; smaller ones on every step, and a figure of lanterns on the outside of the house. The virgin mistress began the ball with the Duke of York, but nobody did dance much. Miss Chudleigh desired the gamblers would go up into the garrets; 'Nay, they are not garrets; it is only the roof of the house hollowed, for upper servants—but I have no upper servants.' Everybody ran up; there is a low gallery with book cases, and four chambers practised under the pent of the roof, each hung with the finest Indian pictures of different colours and with Chinese chairs of the same colours. Vases of flowers in each for nosegays, and in one retired nook a most critical couch. The lord of the festival was there, and seemed neither ashamed nor vain of the expense of his pleasures. At supper she offered him Tokay, and told him she believed he would find it good. The supper was in two rooms and very fine, and on all the side-boards, and even on the chairs, were pyramids and triangles of strawberries and cherries. You would have thought she was kept by Ver-tumnus."

On 25th October of this same year George II. died suddenly, and the Prince of Wales, whose birthday had been thus honourably and tastefully celebrated, ascended the throne.

The household and domestic virtues of George III. have become almost proverbial. Virtuous kings are not over plentiful in the highways of history, and this king's peculiarities are all the more striking when it is recollected that he was the son of his mother, and brought up in a circle graced by Miss Chudleigh's presence as a maid of honour, and poisoned by the example of manner and discourse given by her, and by others in a minor degree. It is little short of a marvel that he should have come to maturity with so modest a record of infractions of the decalogue, and it may be held in a measure complimentary to Miss Chudleigh's personality to hint—what though the authority for the story is somewhat unstable—that the most serious of all the Prince's peccadilloes was brought about by her connivance.

At the corner of St. James's market, of which a few faint traces yet remain in a court off Jermyn Street, dwelt one Light-foot, a Quaker, who had a fair daughter named Hannah. In his journeyings from Leicester House to St. James's Palace the Prince often enjoyed the sight of her figure, which was "full and voluptuous," and in a brief space of time fell a victim to her charms. In a case of this sort a go-between was of course necessary; this duty Miss Chudleigh is said to have undertaken, and through her kindly intervention the lovers managed to foregather at the house of one Perryn at Knightsbridge. At last a rumour of the affair came to the ears of the Princess of Wales, who thereupon set to work straightway to find some one to marry Hannah. It appeared that the girl was accustomed to frequent the shop of Mr. Barton, in Ludgate Hill, for the purchase of tea and groceries, and in the course of these transactions she got on speaking terms with a young man named Axford, Mr. Barton's shopman. Miss Chudleigh, who was quite as ready to act as the broker of a cloaking marriage as she had been to play the procuress at the beginning of the affair, sent a messenger to Axford with the offer of a handsome sum of money as dowry if he would make Hannah his wife—presumably under conditions. The story went that soon after the marriage the bride disappeared from the husband's home and never returned, having been spirited away by Miss Chudleigh in a carriage and four.

But the Muse of history averts her eyes from the early "folly" of the patriot king and, as far as matters domestic are concerned, knows him only as the virtuous husband of the virtuous Charlotte of Mecklenburg. Scandal had long been busy with the doings of the Princess of Wales, and in an *entourage* like that of Leicester House a certain toleration of impropriety might be looked for; but it comes as a terrible shock to the believers in the respectability of the Court of George III. to read how in 1763 a grand ball was given by the Duke of Kingston's mistress in honour of the Queen's birthday, at which the Queen's family and the whole Court seem to have been present. The Queen herself was not there, the Court being in mourning, but all the guests put off their black and appeared in gay attire. There were fireworks in Hyde Park with appropriate devices in honour of all the princes and princesses. Some of these bore mottoes in Latin, and one of them, "Non parem habet," being translated, "I have no peer," there went round a laugh at the expense of the giver of the feast and of the liquidator of the bill. That the illumination might be seen with better effect the company were assembled in an apartment totally dark, where they remained for two hours. Afterwards a quip went about the town that if this *fête* should give rise to more birthdays no one need be astonished.

At this time the Duke of Kingston certainly bore himself as a traditional grand seigneur; he entertained a mistress on a scale few men have attempted either before or since. The villa at Finchley was found somewhat too near town for requisite seclusion, and this led to the acquisition of Percy Lodge. There he would spend a day or two at a time with his charmer in retirement, the pair of lovers spending most of their time angling in the neighbouring Colne. Elizabeth seems to have been a genuine lover of the sport, for she would stand all day long with her feet in the water, taking care, however, to guard against all consequent trouble by a liberal use of madeira, her favourite cordial; and here perhaps is to be found the explanation of that attack of gout which kept her away from the King's masquerade in her early days. When the villa at Colnbrook was given up, the Duke still hired for

her a stretch of water close to Rickmansworth, whither they would go and taste the rural joys of killing the trout in the Chess, and lunching off chicken stewed in a silver dish—no doubt *arrosé* with madeira—until the time came when Elizabeth had to return to town to take her turn of waiting upon the Princess of Wales.

We get another curious glimpse of manners in the account which is given of a whim of the Duke's for the creation of a rural pleasaunce. He bought a country house called Clinton Lodge, standing upon the open heath near Farnham. To this he added a ballroom in which thirty couples could dance, and several parlours and bedrooms, and made a good coach-road over the heath to Farnham. When Christmas came he invited Miss Chudleigh and a party of friends to come and make merry; a company of musicians was engaged, and a series of balls, which went on every night, Sundays excepted, for a month, was begun on Christmas Eve. There was little else to do, as the snow lay deep that winter, and every night the Duke would lead out each lady to dance at least once, and, having discharged his duty, he bade them come to supper. The hours kept at least were respectable, for all were in bed by eleven.

Miss Chudleigh's ambition seems to have been satisfied for a time—at any rate, there is a cessation of scandalous tales at her expense, which is evidence that she was chaster as Kingston's mistress than as Hervey's wife. One or two lapses on the Duke's part are chronicled; he took a pretty milliner from Cranborn Alley down to Thoresby, whereupon Miss Chudleigh, at the Princess's birthday party, beat her sides so vehemently that she made herself feel really ill. She afterwards declared she had pleurisy, a distemper which would require her withdrawal to the baths of Carlsbad. Whether or not indisposition had anything to do with her inclination for foreign travel, she went abroad for a prolonged stay in 1765. She had always made a point of maintaining good relations with the members of the diplomatic body, and lately she had especially cultivated the goodwill of the Saxon envoy, and had engaged his interest so far that he procured for her an invitation to go and visit the Electress at Dresden. For her

journey thither she caused to be built a very elaborate and complicated travelling carriage with cunning arrangements of seats, and ample room for a store of madeira. She set out in the spring of 1765 with a troop of servants and crossed from Harwich. Her first stopping-place was Berlin, and during her visit she succeeded in shocking the proprieties of the not very squeamish Court of the great Frederic by an escapade striking enough to deserve mention in a letter written by the King to the Electress of Saxony. On 22nd July, 1765, he writes, giving an account of the wedding festivities of his nephew: "D'ailleurs les noces se sont faites comme je crois qu'elles se font partout, et sans qu'événement singulier ait distingué celle-ci des autres, à moins que je ne vous entretienne de l'apparition d'une dame anglaise, nommée Madame Chudleigh qui, après avoir vidé une couple de bouteilles, a dansé en chancelant et a été sur le point de tomber sur le parquet. Cette aventure a beaucoup amusé le public peu accoutumé à voir des dames voyager seules et encore moins préférer les fumées du vin aux grâces et à la belle humeur qui leur sied si bien."

The visit to Berlin was prolonged several weeks. It is probable that Miss Chudleigh succeeded in gaining a certain recognition from the King, for in after-times she was accustomed to bring out scraps of notes which she affirmed had come from him. That Frederic was not mortally offended by the drunken exhibition made by his visitor at the wedding ball may be inferred from the fact that in his poetical works is to be found a poem, "A Mademoiselle Schidley qui avait envoyé au roi une charrue Anglaise." All the mythological celebrities whose personalities appeared sympathetic and appropriate to the occasion were invoked in the royal stanzas; and after particularizing Circe, Nebuchadnezzar, Jupiter, Europa, Danaë, and Pasiphaë, he concludes:—

"Quelle qu' enfin soit la figure
Où vous voudrez me transformer
Je la prendrais, je vous le jure,
Si vous promettiez de m'aimer."

When her stay at Berlin came to an end Elizabeth went on to pay her visit to the Electress at Dresden. This princess

was no more shocked than Frederic II. at the tipping propensities of her guest, for a strong liking, if not a friendship, sprang up between the two ladies. Miss Chudleigh must have spent some months on the Continent. On her return she fell naturally into her old ways. She made a trio with Lady Harrington and Miss Ash, two ladies with reputations little better than her own, and there are stories of heavy gambling at Tunbridge Wells, and vulgar practical jokes played upon vulgar city madams. Another admirer appeared in the shape of Lord Howe, who had lately returned from the wars, but nothing came of this intimacy.

It is probable that since Hervey had given up the sea his wife had heard and seen more of him, from time to time, than was agreeable to her. It was inevitable that they should meet occasionally, and at last her husband approached her with a somewhat strange proposal. At the birth of her child, in 1747, she had been attended by Cæsar Hawkins, a surgeon of repute. She seems to have kept on friendly terms with him, and, soon after her return from Dresden, this gentleman was employed by Hervey to go to her as a messenger and lay before her certain propositions as to the dissolution of their strange union. But news had already reached her ears that Hervey had been courting a Miss Moysey of Bath, and, with a sentiment of opposition not unnatural in such a case, she swore that nothing should induce her to consent. Hervey is said to have offered her a large sum as the price of her complaisance, only to be met with a reminder from the lady that if he wanted to get a divorce he must first prove his marriage, and, should he do this, he would be responsible for her debts, which amounted to sixteen thousand pounds.

We now come to a point at which the conduct of Miss Chudleigh is somewhat hard to explain by the light of recorded facts. Rumours began to fly about the town that she herself was about to take some steps before the courts to free her from all suspicion of being a married woman, and to stop the wagging of Captain Hervey's tongue, which had, as she affirmed, been busying itself overmuch of late with her and her affairs. The embassy which Hawkins had recently undertaken on Hervey's behalf did not produce any breach

between the doctor and the lady ; it seemed, on the contrary, to have led to an increase of friendship, for after the first interview Miss Chudleigh became a pretty constant visitor at Mr. Hawkins's house ; and on one occasion she let drop a hint that she had actually begun a suit for jactitation at Doctors' Commons, with the view of voiding that marriage which a few months ago she had declared she was determined to maintain at all hazard. The most reasonable explanation of this change of humour seems to be that in the interim the Duke of Kingston had given her an assurance that he would make her his wife, if it could be shown that no obstacle lay in the way of this step. Whether or not the Duke may have had any inkling of that evening ceremony in Lainston Church, there can be no doubt that the same clung pertinaciously in Elizabeth's memory. Before long Mr. Hawkins was taken more fully into her confidence. One evening, when she was at his house, she desired a private interview, and in the course of it told him she was very unhappy. She had been that day to Doctors' Commons and the people there had tendered to her an oath, bidding her swear that she had never been married ; but, not being as yet quite worked up to the point of perjury, she left the place unsworn. A few days later she paid Mr. Hawkins another visit, when she informed him that the whole business was settled, that she had got her sentence, that the marriage was in a fair way to be pronounced non-existent (on 11th February, 1769, the Consistory Court gave judgment to this effect), and that she was as good as a free woman. On hearing this Mr. Hawkins demanded to know how the difficulty as to the oath had been circumvented, and to this she replied that the matter of the marriage was so much blended with such a number of falsities, that she could easily reconcile it to her conscience, particularly as the ceremony was so scrambling and shabby a business that she might as safely swear she was not married as that she was. Hervey had met her action for jactitation with a very half-hearted defence, and the cross-action to defend his rights was scarcely supported at all. Considering that the trial formed the nine days' gossip of the time, it is not wonderful that this behaviour of the defendant should have produced a

concomitant bit of scandal to the effect that he had been heavily bribed to let the law go as the lady willed. Fourteen thousand pounds was the sum named. Hervey no doubt divined easily enough the reason why his wife was so keenly set on freeing herself from their marriage tie; it does not seem likely that he was won over to second her efforts to become a free woman by any hope of winning Miss Moysey, for the father of that lady had forbidden the match, and in the absence of this motive the story of the bribe becomes by no means incredible. Other members of his family, notably his younger brother, the Bishop of Derry, who stood next in succession to the title, did not view the prospect of the marriage being declared a real one and the possibility of a string of children with approval. But any effort which might have been made to minimize the effect of the finding of the Court of Doctors' Commons was vain, and Hervey was duly put to silence. Miss Chudleigh, after the finding that there had been no marriage, was in no humour to wait any longer for the ripe fruit of her ambition, and on the 8th of March she became Duchess of Kingston.

Thus the grand *coup* for which she had worked in such tortuous ways was at last accomplished. She had reached the summit of her hopes. When she was presented at Court the King and the Queen wore her favours; Lord Bristol also wore them, though he declared to a friend that the new Duchess had told him more than once that she was in truth his brother's wife.

Marriages like hers are proverbially dangerous, and this one proved no exception to the rule. The last years of the Duke's life could not have been happy. His wife's temper was always hasty and capricious, and now, even in her hour of triumph, the *amari aliquid* which sprang up made of her a shrew and a termagant. For her the sharpest thorn in the cushion was the discovery that the fashionable world of London, which had been ready enough to flock to her balls and assemblies while she was the *chère amie* of the Duke, gave her the cold shoulder as soon as her position was "regularized"; and down at Thoresby, in Notts, the leading county people left her severely alone, so that she had to be

content with the smaller fry of squires and parsons. In disposition the Duke and his wife differed widely. He, according to all accounts, was a shy, retiring man, while she with the lapse of years had let her love of ostentation—always a strong one—grow into sheer vulgarity. In spite of her lavish expenditure she was disposed to be penurious over trifles, and there is a story that once on leaving Bath she haggled over paying the chairmen a fortnight's wage for twelve days' work. When the travelling carriage was ready to start she got in, and finding some of the Duke's belongings bestowed upon the seats, she threw them out into the street to make room for her own. He, poor man, must have found her scolding humours hard to bear, seeing that his health was now beginning to feel the effects of a stormy youth. Early in 1773, a stroke of paralysis made him a helpless invalid, and on the 15th of September he died at Bath, and all his honours became extinct.

Before the Duke's death rumour was busy as to the contents of his will, announcing the exact income the Duchess was to enjoy as a widow, and, beyond this, hinting that she had already offered Thoresby for sale. The will proved to be for her a very generous one, as far as money was concerned, for it gave her all the personal estate unconditionally, and the income of the real estate for life, subject to the condition of her remaining a widow. It is said this condition was a galling one to her, and that in the Duke's lifetime she had made more than one attempt to get the will altered, and had once gone so far as to prepare a draft more to her taste, and to summon Mr. Field, the Duke's lawyer, to draw up a fresh will. But when Mr. Field was brought into the Duke's presence he saw that his client was in no state to attend to testamentary matters, and, much to the disgust of the Duchess, he refused to mix himself up in the affair. Wherefore she had to make the best of the existing document, and, as soon as the funeral was over, she set out on her travels.

She seems to have gone direct to Rome and to have met with a friendly reception from the reigning Pope Clement XIV., who carried the well-known liberality of his opinions far enough to assign her a lodging in the palace of one of the

cardinals. She had left behind a handsome pleasure yacht in England, and now her love of theatrical display prompted her to have the vessel brought out from England and navigated up the Tiber. The yacht arrived safely in Rome, and was for a time the wonder and admiration of the city. Now that she was the favoured guest of the cultivated and liberal-minded Pope and in the enjoyment of a splendid income, the Duchess of Kingston might well seem to be on the crest of the wave of Fortune, but while all this junketting was going on in Rome, events in England were shaping themselves for a catastrophe.

On September 15, 1773, the Duke of Kingston had died, but previously to this date, to wit, on August 22nd, Hervey had petitioned the King in Council for a commission of review with regard to the suit for jactitation lately brought against him, and praying for a fresh trial. This petition was referred to the Lord Chancellor, and after a lengthy course through the Consistorial Court of London, the Archbishop's Court at Canterbury, and the Court of Delegates, it was heard before a commission of lords spiritual and temporal at Serjeants' Inn and the marriage found to be a good one upon the evidence then and there brought forward. This decision was made public at the end of 1774.

The publication of the Duke's will had been a cruel blow to his blood relations, notably to two nephews, sons of his sister, Lady Frances Meadows. He had long been on bad terms with Evelyn, the elder of these, who now found himself entirely disinherited, but to Charles, the younger, was left the enjoyment of the real estate after the death of the Duchess. With so vast a sum at stake, and with the air full of rumours about secret marriages which might or might not be valid, and about heavy bribes paid with respect to the same, it was no wonder that the disappointed nephews began to think of going to law. There may or may not have been any understanding with Hervey as to the petition for review just mentioned, which ultimately led to the finding that the marriage was a good one. Be that as it may, it is certain that the nature of the decision and the time of its publication fell in perfectly with the project of the nephews. They might

impugn the will, or they might—now that the marriage at Lainston had been pronounced valid—indict the Honourable Mrs. Augustus John Hervey for bigamy. They determined to take the last-named course.

In what they did they were probably influenced by the appearance on the scene of a certain Ann Cradock. She had been a maid in the service of Mrs. Hanmer at the time of the episode of 1744, and had been actually present at Lainston Church when the marriage was performed. Shortly after the Duchess became a widow this woman, representing herself to be in reduced circumstances, called upon Mr. Field and asked for relief. This request Mr. Field refused to grant—a somewhat rash thing to do if he knew as much as a family lawyer ought to have known—and treated her story with incredulity and contempt, whereupon Ann Cradock, bethinking her that she might take her wares to a better market, went to Evelyn Meadows. He naturally was much more inclined to give credit to her story than was Mr. Field. The finding of the Ecclesiastical Court was made known about the same time, whereupon Mr. Meadows at once moved for a Bill of Indictment against Elizabeth, the wife of Augustus John Hervey, for bigamy.

Intelligence of this step was of course conveyed to Mr. Field, who straightway wrote to the Duchess in Rome full particulars as to the situation of her affairs, and counselled her immediate return, for her failure to appear to answer the indictment would involve outlawry. She realized her position at once and made preparations for her return, but according to one account her adversaries had taken measures to prevent this, and thus to render her liable to the consequences of non-appearance. She had deposited securities with Mr. Jenkins, the English banker in Rome, to be held against advances of cash for her current needs, and the same post which brought Mr. Field's letter to her brought one from the other side to Mr. Jenkins, written to induce him to refuse any advance she might require for the purposes of her journey. The arguments used to reconcile Mr. Jenkins to this notion of his duties as a banker seem to have been convincing, for when she called at the bank for cash Mr. Jenkins was not to be

seen. She called again, with the same result; and then, suspecting some underhand dealing, she resolved to take decisive action. The next time she waited on Mr. Jenkins she informed the lackey that as his master was not at home she would wait till he returned; and Mr. Jenkins, seeing that the lady must be faced sooner or later, came forward. Still there was a difficulty about the advance; but the Duchess had brought a pair of pistols with her, and convinced by the production of these and the threat to use them against his person, Mr. Jenkins at last opened his money-bags, and the Duchess set out homewards.

Her journey was interrupted by an attack of illness, and she did not reach England before the end of 1774. She was not without friends, and Lord Mansfield showed her some kindness. The Dukes of Newcastle, Ancaster, and Portland, and Lord Barrington, all took her part and upheld the belief, suggested no doubt by her own lips, that her persecutors were moved to action by vindictive greed and not for the righting of a wrong. The lawyers were set to work at once; but before the great case came on the Duchess was fated to play a part in a prologue of a somewhat humorous nature, a part in which she scarcely carried off the honours.

Foote was at this time in the heyday of his success. For some years past he had assumed the office of castigator of abuses on the stage. The canting religion of fashionable preachers, the frauds practised by villainous marriage brokers, and corruption, by the gift of sinecure places, were the vices of the age which he had attacked with the greatest acrimony and success, and the presentations of Mrs. Fleecem and Doctor Simony were scarcely veiled caricatures of the notorious Mrs. Rudd and Doctor Dodd. The year before, Foote had almost decided to give up his theatre, but now the march of events seemed to offer him a tempting opportunity of pointing a moral by presenting to the playgoing public some faint reflection of Miss Chudleigh's career. Whatever credit may be given to Foote's sincerity of purpose in his crusade against vice and folly, it is certain that his common practice was to shoot his darts against the individual sinner rather than against sin in the abstract, and the thinner the

disguise of his victim the more the public laughed, and the fuller grew his treasury. Sometimes—and notably in Dr. Johnson's case—he caught a Tartar, and then he would always be ready to consider whether the call of duty need be obeyed this time or not. He now set to work to write a play, "A trip to Calais," a broadly humorous comedy in which the character of the Duchess as Lady Kitty Crocodile was most admirably drawn, as even her partisans admitted. But before the play was ready for presentation she heard there was mischief brewing and consulted the Duke of Newcastle as to what she should do. With regard to the first stages of this affair it is hard to come to a judgment as to the propriety of Foote's conduct; most people will say that he was guilty of an offence against good taste in caricaturing in public the failings of a woman whose case was yet *sub judice*; and, though the charges of blackmailing made against him by the Duchess and her employés cannot be proved, yet the whispers about money proffered and refused are apt to raise a confusion as to where the boundaries of bribery end and those of blackmailing begin. It is certain that the Duchess on the mere rumour of Foote's intention brought all her influence to bear upon Lord Hertford, the Lord Chamberlain, to induce him to refuse his licence for the play.

In due course Foote waited upon the Lord Chamberlain, who suggested a compromise, and Foote offered to strike out anything in the character of Lady Kitty Crocodile which the Duchess might find offensive; but nothing would satisfy her but the entire excision of the character. To this Foote would not agree, and the licence for the play was refused. The Lord Chamberlain afterwards commissioned Lord Mountstuart to see Foote, and the result of this interview was that Mountstuart, with Foote's consent took the MS. to the Duchess for perusal, and soon after Foote, at her request, went to her at Kingston House. Then it was that she offered him a bribe to suppress the play—sixteen hundred pounds; but Foote was obdurate. Gibbon, in one of his letters, writes: "The Duchess has stopped Foote's piece. She sent for him to Kingston House, and threatened, bribed, argued, and wept for about two hours. He assured her that if the Chamberlain

was obstinate he would publish it with a dedication to her Grace."

Foote's enemies declared that he wanted the even two thousand, and his friends that he put aside the bribe with scorn—strong in his determination to uphold true morality by scourging vice. What is certain is that he assured the Duchess that, either in a play or in a book, the town should hear of Lady Kitty Crocodile.

The Duchess was alarmed, and now for the first time enlisted the services of the notorious Parson Jackson, an Irish adventurer of the worst type. He called upon Foote and, whether he threatened an onslaught or promised a bribe, he failed to move his adversary. Then he began to attack Foote in the gutter news-sheets, and here he had better success, for Foote's sharp tongue had made for him hosts of enemies. The Duke of Newcastle also went to him with proposals for accommodation, whereupon Foote wrote a letter to the Duchess. He assured her that neither her threats nor her bribes would influence him, but he offered to stop all publication, provided the attacks upon him in the newspapers were discontinued. This led to an exchange of letters between the principals. The Duchess wrote as follows:—

"SIR,—I was at dinner when I received your ill-judged letter. As there is little consideration required, I shall sacrifice a moment to answer it. A member of your Privy Council can never hope to be of a lady's Cabinet.

"I know too well what is due to my own dignity to enter into a compromise with an extortionable assassin of private reputation. If I before abhorred you for your slander, I now despise you for your concessions; it is a proof of the illiberality of your satire, when you can publish or suppress it as best suits the needy convenience of your purse. You first had the cowardly baseness to draw the sword, and if I sheathe it until I make you crouch like the subservient vassal as you are, then is there not spirit in an injured woman, nor meanness in a slanderous buffoon. To a man my sex alone would have screened me from attack, but I am writing to the descendant of a merry Andrew, and prostitute the term of manhood by applying it to Mr. Foote.

"Clothed in my innocence as in a coat of mail, I am proof against a host of foes; and conscious of never having intentionally offended a single individual, I doubt not but a brave and generous people will protect me from the malevolence of a theatrical assassin. You shall have cause to remember that, though I would have given liberally for

the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence. There is something however in your pity at which my nature revolts. To make me an offer of pity at once betrays your ignorance and your vanity. I will keep the pity you send until the morning before you are turned off, when I will return it by a Cupid, with a box of lip salve, and a choir of choristers shall chant a stave to your requiem.—E. KINGSTON.

“ P.S. You would have received this sooner but the servant has been a long time writing it.”

This was a dangerous letter to write to such a practised master of the fence of wit as Foote, as the event showed. He replied in the following terms :—

“ TO THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.—Madam, though I have neither time nor inclination to answer the illiberal attacks of your agents, yet a public correspondence with your Grace is too great an honour for me to decline. I can't help thinking but it would have been prudent in your Grace to have answered my letter before dinner, or at least postponed it to the cool hour of the morning ; you would then have found that I had voluntarily granted that request which you had endeavoured, by so many different ways, to obtain. Lord Mount-stuart, for whose amiable qualities I have the highest respect, and whose name your agents first unnecessarily produced to the public, must recollect, when I had the honour to meet him at Kingston House by your Grace's appointment, that instead of begging relief from your charity, I rejected your splendid offers to suppress the 'Trip to Calais' with the contempt they deserved. Indeed, Madam, the humanity of my royal and benevolent Master, and the public protection, have placed me much above the reach of your bounty.

“ But why, Madam, put on your coat of mail against me ? I have no hostile intentions. Folly, not vice, is the game I pursue. In these scenes which you so unaccountably apply to yourself, you must observe, that there is not the slightest hint at the little incidents of your life, which have incited the curiosity of the Grand Inquest for the county of Middlesex. I am happy, Madam, however, to hear that your robe of innocence is in such perfect repair : I was afraid it might have been a little the worse for the wearing : May it hold out to keep you warm the next winter.

“ The progenitors your Grace has done me the honour to give me, are, I presume, merely metaphorical persons, and to be considered as the authors of my muse, and not of my manhood ; a merry Andrew and a prostitute are no bad poetical parents,¹ especially for a writer of plays ; the first to give the humour and mirth, the last to furnish the graces and powers of attraction. Prostitutes and players too must live by

¹ Foote had either misread the Duchess' letter or could not resist making an unfair point. No reflection had been made on his mother.

pleasing the public; not but your Grace may have heard of ladies who, by private practice, have accumulated amazing great fortunes. If you mean that I really owe my birth to that pleasant connection, your Grace is grossly deceived. My father was, in truth, a very useful Magistrate and respectable country gentleman, as the whole county of Cornwall will tell you. My mother, the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, Bart., who represented the county of Hereford: her fortune was large, and her morals irreproachable, till your Grace condescended to stain them; she was upwards of fourscore years old when she died, and, what will surprise your Grace, was never married but once in her life. I am obliged to your Grace for your intended present on the day, as you politely express it, when I am to be turned off. But where will your Grace get the Cupid to bring me the lip salve? That family, I am afraid, has long quitted your service.

“Pray, Madam, is not Jackson the name of your female confidential secretary? and is not she generally clothed in black petticoats made out of your weeds?—

“‘So mourned the dame of Ephesus her love.’

“I fancy your Grace took the hint when you last resided at Rome: you heard there, I suppose, of a certain Joan who was once elected a Pope, and in humble imitation have converted a pious Parson into a chambermaid. The scheme is new in this country, and has doubtless its particular pleasures. That you may never want the benefit of the clergy in every emergence, is the sincere wish of your Grace’s most devoted and obliged humble servant,—SAMUEL FOOTE.”

After writing this letter, which won the applause of all the wits and turned the laugh against the Duchess most effectually, Foote seems to have harboured the design of distributing a lampoon in the form of a handbill; but his friends dissuaded him, and suggested that he would be doing better service by putting Parson Jackson in the pillory; so he recast the “Trip to Calais,” called it “The Capuchin,” and gave a portrait of Jackson in the character of Dr. Viper. The lash seems to have raised a weal even on his tough hide, and to have stung the Duchess as well; for the worthy pair now took action of a different sort in order to ruin Foote. For some weeks past Jackson had used the pages of the libellous press to publish certain reports injurious to Foote’s good name; the Duchess herself wrote a letter in the *Evening Post* which, as Walpole remarked, “not the lowest of her class who tramp in pattens would have set her mark to”; and now it was openly stated

that there would be brought against him the most odious charge a man can be called upon to meet.

On May 20, 1776, Foote opened his theatre. Every seat in the house was taken, and the temper of the audience was, on the whole, friendly to him, though a few of Jackson's partisans made an uproar in the gallery. But Foote came forward when the curtain rose, and declared that he had taken steps to have his libellers brought to justice, whereupon the whole house was filled with applause. Jackson was not abashed at this threat. He suborned a discharged servant of Foote's, and, having bribed him to support the charge, a bill was found against Foote; and after the issue of this a malicious attempt was made to prevent him from finding bail and to have him put in prison, a step which was frustrated. While the trial was hanging over him he enjoyed the countenance and support of Burke and Reynolds, Townsend and Dunning, and many of the highest nobility; and when the trial came on the jury acquitted him without leaving the box. But Foote's spirit was broken by the strain and vexation. He gave up his theatre, and died in October, 1777.

In these proceedings against Foote, Jackson took ostensibly the leading part; but all the world knew that he was only a puppet, and that the Duchess of Kingston pulled the strings. It was her malice which breathed the poisonous whispers, and formulated the definite charge; her money which fed the libellous journals, and paid the lawyers' fees; and amongst her other sins it must be laid to her charge that she hounded to his death that brilliant man to whom the fashion of the day not inappropriately gave the name of the English Aristophanes.

But before the termination of her quarrel with Foote, the trial of the Duchess of Kingston for bigamy had begun and ended. After a few preliminary skirmishes as to jurisdiction, the accused was brought before the Peers, sitting as a court in Westminster Hall, under the presidency of Lord Chancellor Bathurst, on April 15, 1776. The town, of course, talked of nothing else. There were rumours that her foes had given her a hint that a payment of ten thousand pounds would stop the trial, and how she treated this hint with scorn; how she

tried to spirit away the principal witness against her, and how her leading counsel, Serjeant Davy, offered to lose his right hand as a man and his reputation as a lawyer if she were not acquitted. She was conducted into court by the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Mount-stuart, and Mr. James Laroche, and, having pleaded not guilty, elected to be tried by God and her peers. Hannah More was one of the five thousand spectators present, and records her impressions. "The fair victim had four virgins in white behind the bar. She imitated her great predecessor, Mrs. Rudd, and affected to write very often, though I plainly perceived she only wrote as they do their love epistles on the stage, without forming a letter. The Duchess has but small remains of that beauty of which kings and princes were once so enamoured. There was a great deal of ceremony, a great deal of splendour, and a great deal of nonsense; they adjourned upon the most foolish pretences imaginable, and did nothing with such an air of business as was truly ridiculous. I forgot to tell you the Duchess was taken ill, but performed it badly."

The arguments of counsel lasted two whole days, and then the prosecution called as a witness Ann Cradock, who, as Mrs. Hanmer's maid, had been present at the marriage at Lainston, of which she gave a full description, adding some picturesque details as to the subsequent doings of the married pair. An attempt, only partially successful, was made to show that she had been promised a handsome present in case the Duchess should be convicted, and then Mrs. Amis, the parson's relict, described the emendation of the Lainston register, and how she had heard her husband say he had married Miss Chudleigh to Mr. Hervey; how the accused had told her in 1759 her whole story, and declared that the business of the register would mean the gain of a great fortune to her. Cæsar Hawkins deposed that he had heard both parties admit they were married, and gave, besides, a full account of the birth of the child.

There was practically no defence. A Mrs. Pritchard swore she had heard Ann Cradock boast of the reward she was to get on the conviction of the accused. Lord Barrington raised many quibbles over the claims of honour and friend-

ship before he would say anything, but his ultimate declaration, that he had heard both Hervey and the accused say they were married, could not have helped her much. Mr. Laroche said that before the decision in the jactitation suit the Duke of Kingston had hesitated to marry, but the finding of the Consistorial Court took away all his doubts, especially as Dr. Collier had said, "You may safely marry Miss Chudleigh, my lord, for you neither offend against the laws of God or man." The accused made a long and elaborate reply, which had manifestly been written for her. She began with a definition of Logic, and with a suggestion as to how her judges ought to employ their reasoning faculties in the matter before them. She eulogized the Chudleigh family, which, according to her testimony, had produced none but brave men and virtuous women. The mainstay of her defence was the finding of the Consistorial Court, which left no doubt in her mind of her ability to marry; and, having elaborated this point with some skill, she attacked the motives of her adversaries, who, she affirmed, were moved, not by considerations of right and justice, but by greed and malevolence. After the solicitor-general had replied, she was found guilty of the charge without a dissenting voice, the Duke of Newcastle supplementing his vote by the words "but not intentionally." Hannah More wrote to her friend: "I have the great satisfaction of telling you that Elizabeth, calling herself Duchess-Dowager of Kingston, was this very afternoon undignified and unduchessed and very narrowly escaped being burned in the hand. If you have been half as much interested against this unprincipled, wilful, licentious woman as I have you will be rejoiced at it as I am. Lord Camden breakfasted with us. He is very angry that she was not burned in the hand. He says, as he was once a professed lover of hers he thought it would have looked ill-natured and ungallant for him to propose it, but that he should have acceded to it most heartily, though he believes he should have recommended a cold iron." Immediately after the trial Evelyn Meadows moved for a writ of *ne exeat* against her, and took steps to get possession of her personal estate; but Elizabeth, though beaten, was

not disheartened. She hurried to Dover with all speed, and crossed in an open boat to Calais before the writ could be served on her.

At this time she had probably some notion of making Calais her *pied-à-terre*, for she bought a house there ; and, while it was being altered to suit her fancy, she went to Rome to collect those of her possessions, which she had left behind at her hurried departure. On her return to Calais she learned from her friends in England that there was no chance that the Duke of Kingston's will would be upset, whereupon she ordered her yacht to be got ready for sea, and set sail for St. Petersburg to pay a visit to the Empress Catherine—a step she had long contemplated. To secure the imperial favour she sent off a shipload of pictures and works of art, abstracted from the galleries at Thoresby, as an offering to the Czarina ; and, as though she were bent on giving proof of the mingled strains of meanness and profusion in her character, she refused, while squandering these treasures, to pay the meagre salary of the priest engaged to say Mass to her French sailors, and also that of Mr. Foster, the chaplain, who had the care of her own spiritual affairs. By way of further propitiation she sent from the Duke's collection two pictures to Count Chernicheff ; but, learning afterwards that they had been certified by Carlo Maratti to be the work of Raphael and Claude and of considerable value, she tried to get them back in exchange for two others. In her will she left these works to Evelyn Meadows, affirming that they had only been lodged with Count Chernicheff for safe custody, but whether her whilom foe ever reclaimed his own out of the Count's hands history does not say.

The friendly reception she got at St. Petersburg may have been due to the shipload of works of art, or to the mutual attraction of sympathetic natures. Elizabeth's peccadilloes, flagrant as they were, were scarcely of a sort to give a shock to the widow of the ill-starred Peter. The yacht was repaired in the government dockyard, and a mansion was assigned to the intrepid voyager. Flattered by the attention lavished upon her, she bought an estate near the capital in the hope that by becoming a landed proprietor she might be enrolled

in the Russian nobility and be decorated by the Czarina ; but she learned too late that as a foreigner she was ineligible for such honours. By way of utilizing her new possession she set up a spirit distillery, an enterprise over which she lost a vast sum, and which probably gave her a distaste for her newly adopted country. After a year or two she grew weary of it and returned to Calais, but her house there seemed now too modest for one who had been the favoured guest of the Empress. She made a second journey to Russia, by land this time, and on her way she encountered one of the strangest adventures of her extraordinary career.

During her visit to the Court of Dresden she had met Prince Radzivil, a nobleman of vast wealth, and she succeeded in adding him to the number of her admirers. From the time of their meeting a correspondence went on between them, the letters of the Prince being supplemented by numerous and costly presents. As soon as she had determined to journey again to St. Petersburg, she wrote to her faithful admirer, saying she would be pleased to visit him at his country-seat *en route* ; and the Prince, when he heard of her wish, appointed to meet her at Berge, near Riga. The Duchess was welcomed with all the state due to royalty, and the next day the Prince entertained her in a fashion which recalls the splendour of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, with a superadded dash of Monte Cristo. Banqueting halls and theatres were built expressly for the occasion, and even extempore villages and happy peasantry to match were provided *à la Potemkin*. In the village were divers shops set out with costly jewellery, the greater part of which the Prince bought and gave to his guest. As soon as the feasting was over a torch was applied to the buildings, and the whole display was converted into a bonfire in honour of the Duchess. For fourteen days she was Prince Radzivil's guest, and every day was treated to some fresh entertainment, always followed by a sumptuous feast. At last, amid salvoes of artillery, she took her departure and continued her journey.

On her return from St. Petersburg she was seized with the desire to make a figure in Paris, so she purchased a house on Montmartre for her residence, but various delays arose

in completing the purchase, and she became involved in a troublesome law-suit. Ultimately the court decided against her, and in the violent access of rage, which overcame her on the receipt of the news, she broke a blood-vessel. She rallied somewhat the next day, but her constitution, undermined by gluttony and excess of all kinds, had lost its recuperative power, and on August 26, 1788, after swallowing a last generous draught of madeira, she died.

Her will was a long rambling document wherein she made separate disposition of almost every trinket she possessed, corresponding in no way to Horace Walpole's conjecture that her three co-heiresses would be the Empress of Russia, Lady Salisbury, and the whore of Babylon. The amount of jewels and plate and other valuable objects, she had accumulated, was enormous, and as these were nearly all presents they bear testimony to the force of the subtle and special charm she exercised over men. To speculate what this charm may have been—apart from mere beauty of face—is a vain task for those who have been born too late to come under its influence.

Fortune unhappily endows many people with inclinations like Elizabeth Chudleigh's, but she is kind enough to refrain from placing them frequently in positions where they can compass evil and wrongdoing commensurate with that wrought by her. People as bad as herself have often left behind them some legacy in the shape of caustic, cynical aphorism which gives interest or even a quasi justification for their misdeeds, but no witty speech of hers has ever been chronicled. All her ideals were base and sordid, and in labouring for their fulfilment she was swayed by no other motive than the mere gratification of her whim. No generous action of hers stands on record; her tastes and habits were gross and even brutal, and she never let any consideration of decency and cleanly living interfere with them. She would be lavish to those who had no need of her bounty, if she foresaw that her spending would procure her something she wanted, and at the same time she would not scruple to cheat a poor devil who had served her in some menial office if she felt she might reckon on impunity. If

at any time she flung her money about without the hope of some return, direct or indirect, it would be over some rascal or charlatan who had been clever enough to overwhelm her greedy suspicion by adroit flattery. She lived in a bad, cold-hearted, mercenary society; but of all her contemporaries there does not seem to have been one so base and unprincipled, and at the same time so utterly destitute of every right impulse and sentiment as herself. It is true the possession of all the generous qualities in which she was most conspicuously lacking would have availed little to win the approbation of the Castlewoods and Chesters of her day. Perhaps the hypothetical and elusive fascination before hinted at may have resided in her perfect sympathy with the people with whom she lived, her key of vicious carriage being pitched just high enough above the normal to provoke the envy of the women and the admiration of the men, and pitched, moreover, with a degree of impudence consummate enough to defy imitation.

W. G. WATERS.

MARY BATEMAN.

1



MARY BATEMAN
The Yorkshire Witch.

MARY BATEMAN,

“THE YORKSHIRE WITCH.”

(1768–1809.)

“Cupidine humani ingenii libentius obscura creduntur.”—*TACITUS*.

IF things were what they seem to be there is no doubt but that the most picturesque and romantic form of feminine badness would be found in witchcraft. But it is useless now to assume that witches were ever what they seemed. It is the fault of an unbelieving age that they have been robbed of their credentials, just as it was the fault of a too credulous age that many a foolish woman was robbed of life for being believed to possess powers which were not accessible to her neighbours. If stupidity be no crime, the chief sin of the poor wretches who were made to pose as witches was vanity; many of them gloried in the ascription and boasted of their commerce with the Evil One. Often they had no choice but to fit on the mantle which was thrown on them, and they certainly wore it bravely. One can but pity a Mother Sawyer relating the minute particulars of her intercourse with Satan to her soul's minister, and pity, too, is perhaps the most charitable feeling available for a Reverend Henry Goodcole gravely extracting and recording her experiences. Yet, if Parson Goodcole sinned against the light, he did so in good company, and it were mere presumption to pity such men as Jewell, Bacon, and Selden. But the support of such great names is scarcely to be had in the nineteenth century even for witchcraft. If feminine vanity

still exists it must choose other shapes for its display. Nowadays no woman may admit that her neighbour possesses any gift denied to herself, and the spirit of equality abroad has thus left no place for the witch, while it has even treated with very scant politeness the enlightened exponents of theosophy. But if we are forced to reject the reality of so-called witches, there still remains the class of woman who, being clever enough or modern enough to rise superior to the easy belief of their fellow-creatures in the supernatural, trade on such innocence by pretending deliberately and for personal gain to be able to influence fate. Fear of the law has exercised a wholesome restraint on this modern witchcraft, but there have been not a few instances where unscrupulousness, coupled with greed, has pushed its owner into crime. No more notable example exists than that of Mary Bateman, "the Yorkshire witch," and no witch, real or pretended, ever so well deserved to end life on the gallows. The name of witch is indeed dishonoured by its association with Mary Bateman, who might far more fitly have come down to fame as thief, abortionist, or murderess.

Her early history is as obscure as is natural to and befitting the daughter of a small farmer, born at Aisenby, near Thirsk, in Yorkshire, in 1768. Her family name was Harker, and at the age of twelve she became a domestic servant, and so continued for some years, though under many mistresses, as none was found willing to keep in service the assiduous thief that Mary Harker speedily became. From one of her employers she picked up the rudiments of the dress-making art, and, when tired at length of service, set up as an exponent of it. It was not long before there came by a customer for her hand, who was promptly supplied with what he wanted, and Mary became Mrs. Bateman. She was then twenty-four years old, and of most respectable, if not prepossessing, appearance, but she had not yet learned to respect other people's property. Her unfortunate husband, a simple artificer, was not long in finding out that a wife so clever as his might prove expensive. The honeymoon was scarcely over when it became necessary for the pair to leave the room in which they lived on account of Mary's depredations from a fellow-

lodger. Such moves became frequent until the pair were able to set up a house of their own in Leeds, and there even peace was of short duration. It was not Mary's custom to make her husband a partner of her crimes; she preferred to work on her own account, and, if possible, to spare him the shame of sharing her ill-success. The wifely pains she was at to secure this end Bateman may well have wished saved for some other object. For example, he was at work one day, when his wife arrived on the scene bearing all the signs of woe and a letter from some of his relations at Thirsk saying his father was at death's door and wished to see him before the end should come. The worthy Bateman, with means borrowed from his employer, hurried to Thirsk, and straightway met his father, who held the office of town-crier, crying an auction in the street in the very best of health. It appeared that no letter had been sent to Leeds, and, indignant at waste of filial piety, Bateman returned to his home to find it bare of everything except his wife. She explained to him that she had got into trouble, and to buy herself off had sold the furniture and all their possessions. To save the inconvenience of explaining matters before the court and of meeting with possible remonstrance she had thought well to remove her husband.

It was necessary to set about replacing the household gods, and a means to that end presented itself through a fire at a large manufactory, which caused death and injury to a number of the persons employed there. Universal sympathy was felt in the town for the sufferers, and there appeared none more forward to succour the afflicted than Mary Bateman. She was busy calling on the well-to-do folk, to whom she would tell a harrowing story of some poor child that had been killed and could not be laid decently to its rest for want of linen to lay it out, or of another that was not indeed dead, but had no comfortable bedding in its miserable home on which to repose its mangled limbs—would they of their pity and charity lend to her, not give, a pair of linen sheets? Few could refuse such an appeal, and when by a further happy thought she extended the sphere of her operations and represented herself as a nurse at the General

Infirmary, who was collecting linen, clothing, and alms for the victims of the accident, the result of her efforts fully repaid her pains. The sheets and other gifts were taken as received to the pawnbroker, and the proceeds were applied, of course, solely to her own personal benefit. Suspicion, however, was aroused, but before inquiries could be brought to a fruitful issue John Bateman had enlisted in the new supplemental militia and decamped, followed by his faithful wife. How John's comrades fared at the hands of his wife must be left to the imagination, but neither of the pair seems to have cared greatly for the new calling, and after three years they returned to Leeds, where they took up their abode in a different quarter of the town from that which they before inhabited, and John resumed his work as a wheelright.

Mary Bateman found time hang heavy on her hands in peaceful Leeds, and by way of occupation gave herself out as a fortune-teller. She soon gained a considerable connexion among servant-girls and other young women, who, as a chronicler has put it, were "anxious to repair to the altar of Hymen." Her method of working her charms was mysterious, and calculated to create an impression of their effectiveness. She herself, she was wont to tell those who consulted her, could do nothing, and was a mere handmaid of the unseen; she could not read the stars nor cast nativities, but there was a certain Mrs. Moore who was deeply skilled in these studies, and who had selected Mary to act as go-between for her and those who would consult the oracle. Mrs. Moore, of course, was an invention of Mary's cunning, a useful *tertium quid* on whom the responsibility of failure of the charming might be laid, and who might very well refuse to give an answer, notwithstanding Mary's entreaties, to questions difficult of solution, should such be propounded by the love-sick and superstitious. The fortunes foretold by "Mrs. Moore" were generally disastrous, but the unhappy people for whom fate had thus reserved ill-luck were always consoled on learning, immediately after the bad news had been communicated, that there was a means known to Mrs. Moore of so directing the courses of the stars as to avert the evil day. In order thus to influence the heavens it was necessary for the person con-

cerned to wear a charm, which was to be had on payment of a sum of money, together with certain other articles which were required only for purposes of mystification, such as bits of leather and pieces of blotting-paper. It is on record that numbers of poor girls were robbed in this way not only of all their savings but of nearly all their clothing and other poor possessions, and at this heavy cost established the reputation of Mary Bateman as a "witch." Even those who were unwilling to part with their money were accommodated. One young woman, who was the victim of an "evil wish" on the part of an impolite old beggar-woman, sought the assistance of Bateman, who straightway said it was a serious case. Her principal directed that a pocket-handkerchief must be sent to her, together with five guineas in gold and wearing apparel to the same value, and when the ungrateful object of the beggar's curse showed a disinclination to part with so much at once, she was instructed that it was only necessary to enclose the money and clothes in bags, which she might keep herself, but that they must not be opened till a distant date, when the effects of the wish would be dissipated. In this case the day of reckoning drew nigh inconveniently soon for Bateman, and when the girl was anticipating the near recovery of her property she received a present of a fruit-tart, which purported to come from her sweetheart. The pie proved to be so nauseous that the recipient, suspecting a trick, innocently took it to Mary Bateman and asked for her opinion. Mary said she knew nothing of such things, and was quite incompetent to give advice, but she could, on payment of a fee, send it to Mrs. Moore, who would doubtless divine the secret if there was any. After a due interval the verdict was received to the effect that the tart was full of poison, and Mary had nothing but congratulations for the girl on her fortunate escape. It was evident, however, that the "evil wish" was still at work, and the opening of the magical bags must be deferred. It is to be feared that the composition of this tart was Mary's first essay in the art of murder, her design being to forestall the awkward moment of the opening of the bags, which were afterwards, when Bateman was in safe keeping, found to contain copper coins

and unclean rags. As a general rule in the frequent cases in which articles of value were thus deposited in bags, to be opened after an interval of eighteen months or two years, there was no necessity for such dangerous steps as that taken in the instance just cited; it was easy enough for Mary to name a date approximately the same for all those for whom this particular form of charming was being exercised, and, when the day drew near, the Bateman family, under the auspices of the mother, changed its quarters. Even a century ago Leeds was a populous town, and as the sphere of Mary's operations was among the poor and humble it was not difficult for her to escape her responsibilities by removing to a different district where her face would not be known and where a fresh *clientèle* would be awaiting her. In such circumstances as these the Batemans changed their residence some six or seven times. When Mary's dupes discovered how they had been fooled they would seldom have either time, money, or inclination to publish their folly by taking proceedings against the witch, though some there were who were bold enough to track her out and demand restitution. On these rare occasions Mary Bateman bravely faced the trouble by offering a sum down, which was naturally never refused, inasmuch as it was obviously more advantageous for the accuser to recover a part of his or her belongings than to institute proceedings, which, although they might result in the punishment of Bateman, would be of no practical benefit to the individual imposed upon.

It is not possible to set out a full list of the deceptions practised by Bateman on the more credulous of those who had the misfortune to be her neighbours from time to time, since the great majority of these can never have attained any more than a very local publicity; and even were it possible such a list would scarcely be found entertaining or interesting, as it is clear from those instances of her guile which came to light and have been handed down, that there was a monotonous sameness in the manner of her sorcery. Even as it stands the number is respectable, but two or three of the most noteworthy examples of her method will perhaps be sufficient to justify the claim that has been set up for

Mary Bateman as one pre-eminent for an evil mind and evil deeds. Even the most hardened and cold-blooded criminals have usually in them some spark of human tenderness for at least some one fellow-creature who can enjoy immunity from the shafts directed by wickedness against the rest of the world, but in Mary Bateman's heart there appears to have existed no such soft spot. The shabby trick she played upon her husband shortly after their marriage has been related; she was equally unsparing of her own flesh and blood. One of her brothers had been in the navy but deserted, and in company with his wife sought refuge with the Batemans at Leeds. A warm welcome was extended to them; but visitors were inconvenient to Mary, and she planned how she might get rid of them. Their stay had not been long when the sister-in-law received a letter from her home in Newcastle saying that her father was sick unto death and wished to give his daughter a dying blessing (it will be remembered that Mary had played the same game with her husband). The dutiful daughter hurried off, and Mary took advantage of her absence to persuade her brother that he had an unfaithful wife, who would do nothing but run him into debt. She finally induced him to write her a letter forbidding her return to him, and declaring his intention of not receiving her if she came back. The unfortunate young woman, who had been fooled once, refused to believe in this second letter, and made her way to her husband, whom she succeeded in convincing of her innocence despite the endeavours of Mary. The reunited couple then made the discovery that their boxes containing all their earthly possessions had been rifled of their contents, which, as they soon found out, had been sold. Brother Harker naturally remonstrated, and his sister, taking his behaviour in ill-part, promptly went to a magistrate and laid an information against him as a deserter. The brother and his wife had to flee with all possible haste, and sister Mary was at last freed from them, but she had as yet received no compensation for the worry they had caused her. She therefore wrote a piteous letter to her mother, telling her how the brother had been arrested as deserter, but that it was just possible to get him off if ten

pounds could be raised and paid to a substitute, who was ready to take his place for that sum. The poor old woman sent the money, and Mary was paid for her trouble.

Not the least extraordinary feature of the impositions practised by Bateman was the continuous influence she was able to bring to bear on her victims. It may almost be said that she possessed a gift of recognizing the kind of persons whom she could dominate, and when once she had marked down her prey it was rare for it to escape until she had bled it to the last drop. Several families rued the day they admitted her to their councils, and owed their ruin to their blind faith in her "witchcraft." With the exception of one case which remains to be set forth later, none, perhaps, is more exemplary than that of the Steads, a Yorkshire family, the members of which have in more recent days been noted for an easy belief in the supernatural. Barzillai Stead was a tradesman who had failed in business, and who was weak enough to seek the counsel of Mary Bateman. She persuaded him that he was in constant danger of arrest for debt and induced him to enlist in the army, a step which put him in possession of a small sum of money as bounty. Mary secured more than half the bounty and then turned her attention to Mrs. Stead. This good woman she informed that Stead was joining the army in order to desert her, and that he intended to take with him to his regiment a neighbour who was expecting to become the mother of his child. Mrs. Stead's jealousy was aroused, and she listened eagerly to a plan for "screwing down" her rival and preventing the elopement. It was necessary to invoke the aid of the omnipotent "Mrs. Moore," and in due course a message was received that three half-crowns were to be handed to Mary Bateman and two pieces of coal placed on the threshold of the house, where the woman was supposed to live, on the eve of the departure. The coals were then to be removed and burnt in the fire, and the fire would communicate itself to the woman's clothes and consume them so that when the time to leave home arrived she could not but, for decency's sake, stay where she was. The money was paid over and the ceremony with the coal carried out according to directions; and when the morning came Stead marched

off unattended. Henceforth—for a time—his delighted wife was a staunch believer in Mary Bateman, who now applied herself to the business of getting hold of what property the family possessed while the husband was away. The fact that Mrs. Stead was about this time expecting shortly to give birth to a child proved an excellent instrument in Bateman's hands for working on her fears; it seemed that a parlous fate was in store for the unborn infant, and much furniture and clothing had to be sold in order to propitiate the stars, so much so that the mother began to wonder where she should look for the necessaries of life during the time she would be helpless. Her guardian angel bade her be of good courage and assured her that it was in her power "to screw down" the local Benevolent Society so that it would be forced to administer relief. The attention of the Society actually was called to the poor woman's distress, and a guinea was given to her, but out of this sum Bateman, who was now nurse, secured eighteen shillings for herself. If Mrs. Stead's convalescence was retarded by want of food and proper care, the like effect must in any case have been produced by the news brought one day by Mary Bateman that her father-in-law had formed the design of murdering her. Happily there was a means of circumventing him: if a guinea and a screw were handed to Bateman for transmission to Mrs. Moore the scheme would fail. By woful sacrifices the money was got together, and, it is only right to say, value was given in exchange, for Mr. Stead, senior, made no attempt to kill his son's wife. That unhappy woman's fears on this score were hardly allayed when she was confronted by a new terror. She had still a few sticks of furniture left, and Mary Bateman, having appraised their value, informed her of a horrible misfortune impending over her daughter. This was a child of eight years, but it was written in the heavens that at the age of fourteen she would have an illegitimate child, and, furthermore, would die either by her own hand or that of her seducer. It was, however, provided in the scheme of things that, if seventeen shillings were placed in the hands of Mrs. Moore, that good spirit would reduce the coin to a "charm" which, if worn on the girl's arm till the critical time was past,

would protect her from the astral influences. There was nothing to be done but sell the furniture and with the proceeds avert the sinister fate of the maiden, whose arm was duly encircled by a metal band. The mother, although abundantly provided with "charms" for her own preservation, was now deserted by Mary Bateman, and found herself in so wretched a plight that she attempted suicide. Friends, however, intervened in time to prevent her death and to learn the circumstances that had led up to its being contemplated. With great reluctance was the story told, and still greater difficulty was experienced when it was suggested that the "charms" should be submitted to examination; for Mrs. Stead had been firmly convinced that as the "charms" left her her life would ebb away. She was persuaded at last, and it was found that "charms" were sewn into all parts of her clothes; they consisted of pieces of papers tied into a knot and enclosing bits of rag and fragments of leather and had cost no inconsiderable sum. Nothing happened on their removal, and the disenchanted Mrs. Stead was emboldened to go with her friends to Bateman to demand restitution. It was useless for Mary to resort to her usual excuses as to the premature discovery of the "charms" and the forestalling of the planets; she produced four guineas and made a faithful promise, which was never kept, to restore in time all the property she had stolen.

If Mrs. Stead's folly seems particularly egregious it must be remembered that her faith in Mary Bateman's charms was supported by the success attending them. The disasters predicted never happened, and there was not wanting evidence that the "charms" could work actively as well as preventively. Thus it happened that while Mrs. Stead was under Bateman's sway she was visited by a relation who had been badly treated by a runaway lover. Mary, of course, was made acquainted with the young woman's condition, and promptly undertook to bring the recalcitrant father to the altar if a guinea were sent to Mrs. Moore. The man did not come and Mrs. Moore required another guinea to make her strength equal to his. Still he came not, and the girl being without further resources went into domestic service. Her employer was an unmarried

man, and Bateman promised that he should be made to take the place of the absent lover. She foresaw that he would probably prefer to be the father of his wife's children and undertook to remove the existing obstacle. The crime of abortion was lightly added by Bateman to her other sins though, as it chanced, without necessity, for within a very short time afterwards Mrs. Moore's spells began to take effect and the author of the girl's trouble appeared penitent on the scene and married her. Could Mrs. Stead view such doings with any feelings but awe and respect?

It was only natural that, after the awakening of Mrs. Stead, the Batemans should migrate to a different part of the town, and Black Dog Yard was the appropriately named locality selected. While residing there she committed, according to one chronicler, "many atrocious acts which proved her to be destitute of all feeling and humanity." It seems likely that at first she gave a rest to her witchcraft and devoted her ingenuity to finding out some other means of underhand robbery. By accident or design she scraped an acquaintance with two old maids named Kitchin, who were Quakers, and kept a small drapery shop. The acquaintance ripened under the bond of religion, for Mary knew well how to simulate sanctity, and she became a constant visitor at the house, ever ready to assist and advise. It was not long before one Miss Kitchin fell seriously ill, and not only did Mary mind the shop, but it was she who went to inform the doctor and hurried back with the medicines he gave her. Nevertheless, the medicines had not been administered for a week before the patient died in agony, and two or three days afterwards her sister and mother, who had come to tend them in their sickness, followed them to the grave. A doctor who was called in at the end was content to assert that the deaths were due to cholera, and to go his way, though in light of subsequent events there can be no human doubt that the three unfortunate women were poisoned by Mary Bateman. She gave out to the neighbours that the fatal disease had been the plague, and the house was avoided by all; there was none but Mary, the chosen friend of the family, who would approach it. Afterwards, when fear had subsided, the house was broken

open by some of the creditors of the Kitchins, only to find that the shop and living-rooms had been ransacked of all their portable contents.

It is probable that the pious influences of the Kitchins combined with the rising notoriety of the famous Joanna Southcott to turn Bateman's thoughts towards the exploitation of the religious portion of the community in which she lived. To be in the fashion she sometimes professed herself an adherent of Joanna, in whose claims to inspiration she, of course, had no faith; she simply believed that the prophetess was playing a similar game to that she played herself, and was wilfully practising deception on persons willing to be deceived. To her mind there was no reason why she should not be able to emulate Joanna in her own sphere, but there were difficulties in the way. She was to outward seeming a respectable married woman and could scarcely declare herself, as Joanna did, the mother of the promised Shiloh, for were she to assume the necessary appearance even the most credulous proselyte would be likely to believe more readily that another Bateman rather than a Shiloh was to be expected in the world. She possessed, however, ingenuity enough to think out a miracle of her own, and conceived, not a Shiloh, but an idea, the full extent of which must be left to the imagination, as it was never entirely developed. The first steps towards its execution were promising enough. Adjoining the house in Black Dog Yard was a fowl run, and a rumour shortly spread through the neighbourhood that a hen belonging to Mrs. Bateman had laid an egg bearing inscribed on it the words "CRIST IS COMING." Curiosity-seekers came to inquire and were rewarded with a sight of the prophetic egg, which was there sure enough, with the inscription clear as though written with a pen. It was, in fact, suggested that it was a pen and not a hen which was responsible for the letters. Mrs. Bateman scouted the insinuation and declared that there were other similar eggs where that came from and requested her visitors to call again when another egg was due. Before their arrival on the second visit the beastly woman, having written the same words on another egg, forcibly inserted it in the body of the wretched hen, which duly ejected it in the

presence of the spectators. The performance was again repeated, and doubt in the minds of some at least was at an end. The excitement aroused by the portent was immense, and crowds came to see the wonderful egg, cheerfully paying the penny apiece demanded by the holy showwoman as compensation for the inconvenience to which she was put. If scepticism was expressed, as it sometimes was, the religious fervour of the faithful was equal to knocking about with severity the unbeliever, and for a time the desired halo of sanctity hovered round the hen's owner. Circumstances must have interposed to prevent Bateman from carrying out her scheme in its entirety and compelled her to drop her career as the founder of a sect. That she planned to form a religion seems well established, but no more is heard of it, and the hen, which was sold for a good sum to an earnest disciple, disgusted its new proprietor by ceasing to lay eggs at all.

In her next residence Mary Bateman returned to her "charming." An old laundress, Judith Cryer by name, had experienced some trouble with her grandson, a boy of eleven, on whom were centred all her hope and pride. She was recommended to consult Bateman by a girl called Winifred Bond who was wholly under the influence of the "witch," and who later admitted in court that she felt herself obliged to do anything and go anywhere that Mary suggested to her. Bateman advised that an application should be made to Miss Blythe, a friend of hers, who resided at Scarborough, and was skilled in forecasting the future. Miss Blythe, it may be mentioned, was the successor of Mrs. Moore, and had no bodily existence. A few days later a letter came, adorned with a representation of a gallows, and stating that nothing could save Judith's boy from hanging as soon as he was fourteen, unless four guineas could be had for such use as should be directed.

The sum, which represented the proceeds of many weeks' washing, was eventually raised, and after a tedious delay instructions came that three of the guineas were to be placed in a leather bag, which was to be sewn up in the old woman's bed and to remain there undisturbed for three years. Mary herself sewed in the bag and left events to ripen, going off

with the money and the satisfaction of having had her family's washing done gratuitously for three months—to balance the cost of postage to and from Scarborough. A very similar device was that employed at the expense of the Snowden family. Mrs. Snowden was troubled by a vivid dread that one of her children would die by drowning, and it is, perhaps, not uncharitable to suppose that her fear was the result of suggestion by Bateman, who volunteered to consult with her friend, Miss Blythe, as to the possibility of preventing the expected calamity. Miss Blythe was then at Thirsk, and her letter directed that the silver watch of James Snowden, the father, should be sewn up in his bed. This was done, and another letter arrived saying that further investigations showed that twelve guineas were required to avert the disaster. The money was to join the watch, but was to be restored when it had done its work and saved the boy. The belief of the Snowdens in Mary was now so thorough that, when a further letter was received foretelling the ruin of their daughter unless they left Leeds (and got out of Bateman's way), they meekly obeyed orders and removed to Bradford, leaving the greater part of their possessions locked up in their house under the friendly care of Mrs. Bateman.

While amusing and enriching herself with the diversions just related Bateman had been very busy with another client. This was the case which received the greatest amount of public attention, inasmuch as it was the direct cause of her undoing, and it is desirable to relate the circumstances at length as affording the completest illustration of her cunning and resource. Her victims were introduced to her by Sarah Stead, a member of the family whose experience of witchcraft has been already set forth. Sarah had an aunt, Rebecca, married to William Perigo, and residing at Bramley, a suburb of Leeds. Mrs. Perigo was a woman of middle age, who had been blessed with unusually good health until the spring of 1806, when she began to find that whenever she lay down she was troubled with a "flacking" in her breast. She lost no time in consulting a country doctor, who had no difficulty in diagnosing the case, and informed her that she was the victim of an "evil wish" that had been laid upon her. The

doctor, though he knew the disease, was not acquainted with a remedy, and the suggestion of one was left to Sarah Stead, who, on visiting her aunt and hearing of the trouble, mentioned that she knew by repute a woman who could cure such complaints. By request, Sarah then sought out Mary Bateman and, after explaining the situation, was told that although Mary could not effect a cure herself she knew a lady who possessed the necessary powers, and would communicate with her at once. An answer might be looked for in a fortnight, and meanwhile Mrs. Perigo was to send a flannel petticoat or "any warm garment worn next the skin" so that it might be forwarded to the lady and assist her in working the necessary charm. Rebecca's anxious husband himself took the petticoat to Bateman, and was informed that it was going by the morning post to Scarborough to Miss Blythe, who on a day she named would send the necessary instructions for the cure. On his next visit the expected letter had arrived. It directed that Bateman should go to the Perigos' house and sew up in each of the corners of the connubial bed a guinea note, four of which had been enclosed in the letter, and was to receive in exchange four notes of equal value, to be returned to the writer. A postscript added that the flannel petticoat charm had not been strong enough, the reason being that the subject had talked to her neighbours about it, and unless there was an honourable understanding that nothing should be said about the procedure Miss Blythe would abandon the case. It was agreed that the Perigos should meet Miss Blythe's intermediary at a given place on the 4th of August, in order that the instructions given might be carried out. No meeting took place, but when the credulous pair, tired of waiting at the tryst, returned to their house, they there found Mary Bateman, who, as was afterwards supposed, had got them out of the way so that she might peacefully make an inventory of their possessions. The misunderstanding having been explained away, Mary handed to Perigo four guinea notes, which were genuine enough, and, after receiving four from him in exchange, proceeded to sew those she had brought with her in four silk bags. The mattress was then opened and the bags

placed—two by the husband and two by the wife—in the four corners. If Rebecca Perigo benefited by this operation her cure was not yet complete, and a letter which came shortly afterwards unfolded a further prescription. William Perigo was to procure two pieces of iron made in the shape of a horseshoe, but whatever happened they were not to be so made in his native place, Bramley, and these were to be nailed over the front door of his house, not with a hammer, but with a pair of pincers, which were to be forwarded to Scarborough and remain there for eighteen months. The directions were faithfully observed, and the next letter from the “witch” was anxiously awaited. Expectation was not disappointed, for Miss Blythe’s letters continued to arrive with great regularity and frequency.

Their tenour would have been monotonous to most people, for they always enjoined the purchase of some article of household utility or consumption and the transfer of it, together with a sum of money, to Mary Bateman, who would give in exchange an equivalent sum remitted by Miss Blythe. The trustful Perigo never failed to take the money, and would receive from Bateman what he believed to be the like sum enclosed in a bag, which, with a lack of curiosity scarcely human, he took home unopened and hid away in the bedding. It is true that strict injunctions were given that the opening of the bags would probably lead to the destruction of himself and his family, and that his faith was buoyed up by the promise that he should re-enter into possession of his money eighteen months after the 4th of August, the day on which he and his wife first began to sleep on their hidden treasure. The goods required of him must always be bought personally by himself, and were wanted for a particular purpose—if a set of china was demanded, it was because the “witch” could not drink from her own teacup; if a bed, because she could not sleep on her own, owing to the planets being so very unfavourable for Mrs. Perigo, and so on. It is almost incredible that Bateman’s well-worn and transparent devices should have met with so much success, but she had wisdom enough to know that people who could believe in an evil wish would be still more ready and willing to believe in a

cure, and would be better satisfied as to its genuineness if the means thereto were expensive and not too commonplace. William Perigo was ready to sacrifice everything on behalf of his wife, and it was fortunate for him that his circumstances were fairly easy, for Miss Blythe's demands on his resources were not inconsiderable in amount. In a space of five months Perigo furnished £70 in money, and goods in such variety that a list of them is worth setting down as indicative of the practical nature of a witch's requirements. They included:—

A cheese.	A dress skirt.
One goose.	A cotton gown.
A goose-pie.	Two pillow-slips.
A tea-caddy.	A new waistcoat.
Several shirts.	Sixty pounds of butter.
A counterpane.	Seven strokes of meal.
A piece of woollen cloth.	Six strokes of malt.
A silk handkerchief.	Tea and sugar.
A silk shawl.	Three hundred eggs.
A pair of worsted stockings.	A pair of shoes.
A pair of silk stockings.	Three yards of linen cloth.
Ten stones of malt.	A piece of beef.
Three bottles of spirits.	Two table-cloths.
Two barrels.	Two napkins.

The letters conveying the instructions, so carefully carried out, were generally delivered by the hand of Winifred Bond, and had always to be burnt, usually by or in the presence of Mary Bateman, and some silly little variation in the manner of burning—such, for instance, as “This must be burnt in a candle,” or “Your wife must burn this in straw or it will not do”—was sufficient to impress with the desired effect of solemnity the intelligence of the recipients. It was not to be expected that even William Perigo would go on indefinitely providing money, food, clothing, and furniture unless he could manage to convince himself of the necessity for so doing. Mary Bateman was, of course, quite alive to this fact. Moreover, the days were passing by and, although still at a distance, the time was coming nearer when she had undertaken to make restitution of the articles sent to Miss Blythe and to release the money hidden in the bed. Mary had no

intention of awaiting the evil day ; her plan was to avert it by removing the Perigos, as she had removed the Kitchins, before detection came. By this means, although it amounted to killing one of the geese which laid the golden eggs, she would avoid, not only repayment, but any disagreeable consequences, as her victims had steadfastly observed their pledge of secrecy.

Accordingly, in the month of April, 1807, a letter, purporting to come from Miss Blythe, was received by Perigo, in which he was informed that in the following month either he or his wife, and probably both of them, would be overtaken by an illness, but they would escape the "chambers of the grave," and "though they seemed to be dead, yet would they live." Instructions followed as to the course they were to pursue in order to hoodwink fate. Rebecca Perigo was to take half a pound of honey to Mary Bateman and leave it with her to be fetched by her husband, when Bateman would in his presence put in it some "stuff" sent for the purpose, and would also give him some "stuff" to be put into a pudding to be eaten on six consecutive days. The further cheering news was communicated that Miss Blythe meant to remit £20 on the 20th of May to help Perigo to pay some debts he had incurred. Perigo, when he went to fetch back the honey, ventured so far into scepticism as to remark to Mary Bateman that it was a "queerish" thing that Miss Blythe should be able to predict illness. He was rewarded with the information that the lady in Scarborough, whom he had never seen, knew everything concerning him and was his guardian angel. Fortified by this revelation, he took the honey and six powders and returned home to await a further letter as to the exact use which was to be made of them. On the 5th of May the letter came, and directed that on the 11th they were to make and eat a pudding mixed with one of the powders, each one of which was marked with the day on which it was to be used ; on each of the five days following a similar pudding must be eaten and not a fragment left over ; every day they must both see the powder mixed with the other ingredients or "it would not do" ; if at any time they felt ill they must on no account send for a doctor, as that

“ would not do,” but must take a spoonful of the honey ; and they were to keep their door fast shut, or they would be overtaken by an enemy. The missive concluded as follows : “ Now think on and take my directions, or else it will kill us all. About the 25th of May I will come to Leeds and send for your wife to Mary Bateman’s ; your wife will take me by the hand and say, ‘ Thank God that I ever found you out.’ It has pleased God to send me into the world that I might destroy the works of darkness ; I call them the works of darkness because they are dark to you—now mind that whatever I say you do.”

The prescribed programme was faithfully followed, the pudding being duly made with the powder on five successive days, and nothing remarkable happening in consequence. Doubtless the crafty Mary wished to inspire confidence and to lead up successfully to the consumption of the last powder, which, as was noticed by the Perigos, was much larger than the others. The sixth pudding was made in turn, but when it came to eating it the faith of William Perigo was not proof against its nasty taste. He swallowed a spoonful, but he declared he could manage no more, while even his wife was obliged to give in after three or four mouthfuls. She immediately became, in fact, extremely ill, and recognizing the malady predicted by Miss Blythe, they both had recourse to the contents of the honey pot. Naturally they grew worse, and for a whole week the foolish couple suffered hideous agony. Rebecca Perigo refused absolutely to allow her husband to seek the aid of a doctor, as they had been warned against doing so, and were to expect to seem very near death. William slowly recovered, but at the end of the week, touched by the terrible sufferings of his wife, who grew worse rather than better, he at last made up his mind to summon a surgeon from Leeds. It was, however, too late, for before he could come Rebecca Perigo died, and word was sent to the doctor that his visit would be useless. With her last breath the poor trusting woman exacted a promise from her husband that he would not be “ rash ” with Mrs. Bateman, but would wait the appointed time. Perigo, who was alarmed at the serious turn events had taken, thought well to consult a doctor on

his own account, and on describing the symptoms of his illness learned that he must have received poison into his system. How it was that no inquiry was made as to the eminently unnatural death of Rebecca Perigo is not now clear, and what is even more surprising is that the widower seems to have had no notion of connecting the murderess with her crime. That enterprising woman's anxiety at the half failure of her plot must have been considerably relieved when, after a decent interval, Perigo came to visit her and imparted the sad news that his wife was dead. Bateman suggested as the cause of the calamity that all the honey had not been consumed, and offered as a token of her own good faith to finish what remained. Mary's skill in legerdemain would no doubt have been equal to this feat, but Perigo was too much of a gentleman to accept the proposal, and his suspicions, if they existed, were further allayed by a letter received from Miss Blythe hinting that his wife's death was due to his own fault in sending for a doctor—a mistake which had all but killed the writer at Scarborough, Mary Bateman at Leeds, and Perigo himself, not to mention others; as it was, nothing worse would happen than the resurrection of his wife, who would stroke his face with her right hand in such a manner that he would lose the use of one side of his body. Perigo's fears for his personal safety outbalanced his judgment, and he once more entered into a voluminous correspondence with the Scarborough sorceress. The old story was retold, and Miss Blythe's letters invariably asked for gifts. In one she applied for the use of one of the dead woman's gowns, and Perigo apparently chose one that was the worse for wear, for the next letter expressed the writer's sorrow that he should have sent such a shabby one, and demanded, "owing to the planets," one of the best gowns and, in addition, a petticoat and a family Bible. It would appear that Mary Bateman, fearing that Perigo was no longer so sound as she could wish on his superstitious side, conceived the idea of attacking his heart and making him believe that he was an object of amorous interest to the witch. Such at least is the inference from the two letters sent to him by Bateman, the whole of the original text of which is still extant. One of

these may be reproduced as an example of Mary's literary style and of her method of winning confidence. It runs as follows :—

" 12 August, 1808.

" My dear Friend,—I send you these few lines to let you know that I shall get to Wittwell in Boland on Friday next, so I could wish make yourself happy, thou love of mine, till thou see me tap thy shoulder, for it would not do for thee to know the moment, for it would put thee in such fear, and do not let Mary read this letter of freedoms, for I have not wrote to her of a long time, and for her husband is not likely to get no better, and he says it is long of you and won't hardly let her stir, you may tell her to make her self easy on me not sending to her, it is for a reason, now mind and bury this near the other. I have sent this by a drover, which he promised me to put into the post. I gave him a shilling, he is going to shear in the low country, and I told him I would see him near Leeds as he came back, now mind what I say and be looking for me, and do not seem fluttered when I hit you the tap. God bless you. Amen and Amen."

The other letter, dated a fortnight later, is in a similar strain, and written, apparently, in answer to one showing considerable doubt and mistrust; she promises to come to him in the following week "with Goy [joy] never to part with £1,000 for you." Notwithstanding this promise, Miss Blythe again failed to appear at the time appointed, and the lonely man, as his reason returned to him, wrote angry letters expressive of his failing faith in both the "witch" and her agent in Leeds. In truth the 4th of February, 1808, had long gone by; neither his money nor any of the articles he had been ordered to purchase had come back to him, and in a moment of that honest doubt, in which there is more faith than in half the creeds, he determined to examine the contents of his mattress. If he wished to find that he had been fooled he must have been satisfied, for in the bags in which there should have been guineas he found only farthings, and where there should have been bank-notes was blank paper: the four silken bags which held the first instalment of the buried treasure were altogether missing. Perigo went sadly to remonstrate with Mary Bateman. She expressed no surprise, and said he must have opened the bed too soon. "I think it is too late," was the sorrowful answer; and the weakling, now become a man, declared he would visit Bateman

again on the following day in company with two or three friends, with a view to a settlement. He was persuaded instead to meet the murderess by the canal bank, and no sooner did he appear than he found Bateman seated and vomiting. She immediately began to upbraid him with having attempted to poison her and her husband with the contents of a bottle he had given her the day before ; but this last card, played for the benefit of the bystanders, was of no avail ; for, in accordance with an arrangement made by Perigo, a constable came up and arrested her on a charge of fraud. On her person was discovered a large bottle of liquid, which she had indubitably intended to administer to Perigo if the chance had offered itself. Her husband, who was not ill in bed, as she had declared him to be, was also arrested, but was released after a brief detention. When the news of the arrest, which had taken place on 20th of October, 1808, spread abroad there was consternation among Mary's old supporters, and a general examination of her "charms" took place. Poor old Judith Cryer unripped her bedding to find that the bag she had seen enclosed in it with three guineas inside was now empty ; the Snowdens, who had taken their precious mattress with them to Bradford, and had promised not to open it until they had taken a "dose" to be provided for them by Mary, were moved to break faith by an account of her capture in the *Leeds Mercury*, and they found where there should have been a silver watch and twelve guineas some pieces of coal ; and many others who had trusted in witchcraft met with similar experiences.

Mary Bateman was kept for a long time in prison while the case against her was being prepared. After William Perigo had unfolded the whole of his foolish story, it was apparent that she was probably guilty of a crime greater than mere fraud, and an investigation as close as possible was made into all the circumstances of the case. She was examined several times at great length before the Leeds magistrates, and always denied any knowledge of Rebecca Perigo's death, and also the authorship of the letters from Miss Blythe, the writing of which, she declared, disclosed the hand of a certain Hannah Potts. Beyond the statement of William Perigo

there was barely any evidence to connect Bateman with the death of Rebecca, which had taken place some fourteen months earlier ; but fortunately the jar of honey, part of the contents of which the unhappy woman had eaten, had been preserved, and on analysis it was found that there was a considerable admixture of corrosive sublimate. Moreover, the bottle found on the prisoner at the time of her arrest was found to contain not only rum, with which she proposed to tempt Perigo to drink, but arsenic as well. It was not till January, 1809, that she was finally committed to York Castle on suspicion of the wilful murder of Rebecca Perigo. In the interval spent in prison before her trial Mary Bateman continued undismayed and unabashed. She even found an opportunity of practising her craft. A fellow-prisoner exclaimed in her hearing how she wished she could only see her lover ; Mary informed her privately that if she could manage to secure a certain sum of money it could be made into a charm, and if this charm were sown in the girl's stays the backward lover would have no choice but to appear. Thanks to the easy prison rules of those days, the money was got, and placed inside a "charm" in the stays ; but still the lover came not, and at last the unbelieving wench opened the charm, and found there was no money inside. The governor was informed of what had happened, and compelled Mary to disgorge such money as she had not spent, but most of it had gone.

The case excited vast interest, both on account of the large number of Bateman's dupes, few of whom had the sense to be reticent about their foolishness, and on account of the notoriety she had acquired among a certain number of people as a true prophetess. Her supporters, however, were silenced by the hostile majority, and when the trial came on at the Lent Assizes, on the 19th of March, 1809, before Sir Simon le Blanc and a jury, she was undefended. The prosecution was strong in the services of an able advocate, who set forth his case, which had been most exhaustively got up, in a manner which could hardly fail to convince the jury of the prisoner's guilt ; but the penalties of the law had to be observed, and the wearisome evidence gone through at full

length, so that it was not until nine o'clock at night that the trial, which had commenced at ten o'clock in the morning, was brought to a close. Throughout the day the court was crowded to suffocation point, and one of the witnesses, an elderly chemist named Clough, who had to testify to an attempt made by Bateman to purchase four-pennyworth of arsenic at his shop, died from the effect of standing throughout the day. The jury wasted no time in returning their verdict of "guilty," and Sir Simon le Blanc, having informed the prisoner, after the customary fashion, that for crimes like hers the gates of mercy were closed, sentenced her to be hanged ; her body to be afterwards given to the surgeons for dissection. Mary Bateman appeared unconcerned, but made one desperate effort to re-open the closed gates. She pleaded that for the past twenty-two weeks she had been expecting to be made again a mother. The sheriff was immediately instructed to empanel a jury of matrons, and this order was followed by an attempted exodus on the part of the many married women in court. The necessary twelve, however, were caught, and were not long in coming to the conclusion that the prisoner was in error as to her condition. She was, in fact, nursing a child ten months old, and was allowed to keep it with her in the cell to which she returned. She appeared indifferent to her fate ; assumed an air of mystery, and defied all the exhortations of her chaplain to confess her guilt. On the contrary, she protested her innocence ; she swore to it at the sacrament, which was administered to her on the following Monday morning before she was led out to the New Drop to die, and once again she stoutly asserted it as she stood on the gallows with the rope adjusted round her neck. The rope performed its office notwithstanding, and the body of Mary Bateman was sent to the General Infirmary at Leeds for dissection. Leeds had been baulked of the excitement attending the witch's trial and execution ; but it showed its lively interest when her remains arrived. So great was the throng which awaited their coming, that those in charge of the coffin had the happy thought of relieving the popular curiosity and turning an honest penny for themselves, by a public display of the object of so great concern. Accordingly an exhi-

bition of Mary Bateman's body was hastily arranged, the sum of threepence a head being charged for admission, and thirty pounds was thus realized. The show necessarily could not last long, but so great was its success that no sooner was the body dissected, in accordance with the sentence, than it was announced that the skin and some of the organs might be purchased. The rush to secure these relics was so satisfactory to the promoters of the sale that, even though they divided the skin into minute portions, they disposed easily of it at good prices. No longer than four years ago—in 1892—a dealer in curios at Ilkley was showing in his shop-window a morsel of rough leather, which was described as the tongue of Mary Bateman—price 7s. 6d. It may still be there, and it is not likely that the value has gone up in the interval; but it is certain that the member, the easy use of which was the prime cause of Mary's evil-doing and disastrous end, commanded at the time of its excision a much higher figure.

The narrative of Bateman's career as a "witch" hardly touches on her domestic life. She was said to be a good housewife and a good mother; but there is every reason to believe that her husband, although he was the object of much misspent pity, connived at her fraudulent proceedings. He could not have persuaded himself that the many objects of household luxury provided by his wife were produced by the sixteen shillings a week he earned as a wheelwright. Mary was undoubtedly the stronger character, and honest John found it more prudent to keep his own counsel. His wife, while she was not found out, was a person of some importance, and perhaps reflected glory on him. She is not to be imagined as a rough, untidy termagant who cowed her victims. She was soft-mannered and gentle of speech; her appearance was neat and sanctimonious, nor was she ever at a loss for a pious word wherewith to console the afflicted persons whom she cozened. It has been mentioned that there were those who believed in her in spite of all, who believed that she could do no wrong and was an injured woman; they were not few in number, and it was by the exhibition of piety that the hypocrite had won over their simple Yorkshire faith. It is related that, some twenty

years after her well-deserved death, an inquirer interested in her history was seeking information on the subject in the neighbourhood of Leeds. He had the fortune to meet with an old woman who had known Bateman well, and the lapse of years had not dimmed her faith. "Ah, sir," she said; "she will come agen : she mun come agen, sir, afore all will be right.

ARTHUR VINCENT.

MARY ANNE CLARKE.



Mary Anne Clarke

MARY ANNE CLARKE.

(1776-1852.)

“Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo.”—*HORACE.*

IN presenting in writing the character of such a personage as Mary Anne Clarke it is especially necessary to let her figure reveal itself in due relation to its legendary surroundings—to those social and political episodes which are naturally suggested by her name, and which have made her notorious. No one ever treats of Titus Oates or Brinvilliers apart from Popish plots and poison cups. Mary Anne Clarke was *imprimis* a courtesan—perhaps not of the worst type—but assuredly her life and adventures, *qua* courtesan, would not be worth writing, even though the work should be on the lines of rehabilitation, and should attempt to exhibit her as a woman thrust over the borders of respectability by the flagitious character and conduct of her husband, and by the wrongs she suffered at his hands; and as a mother studious only of the welfare of her children on those occasions when she picked up gold and silver with both hands without inquiring too narrowly as to the rights and wrongs of the business. Mary Anne Clarke, as the errant wife of the shadowy son of the rich bricklayer of Angel Court, Snow Hill, and as the quasi reputable old lady of the “thirties,” sitting in her comfortable Parisian apartment and chattering scandal to English travellers with a taste for the same, is merely *nominis umbra*. History and the world recognize her only with respect to her meteoric career in Gloucester Place, the military scandals, and her relations with the royal personage who discharged the duties of commander-in-chief of the British army, Duke of York, and Prince-bishop of Osnaburgh.

To give even a cursory sketch of her early life necessitates a liberal use of the *chronique scandaleuse* of the time, a literature at least writ in a manner ridiculous enough to be amusing. There she may be found described by her friends and by her foes as well, and there is, in addition, the diverting picture of herself to be gathered from her evidence given at the bar of the House of Commons, and from her brochure, "The Rival Princes." But everywhere here the ground is unstable underfoot, and traces of the scandalmonger and of the unreasoning partisan are met at every turn. The judgment shrinks from the task of reconciling these hopelessly divergent views and striking a balance until it is allowed to deal with the record of the famous motion which Colonel Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle brought forward in the House of Commons on the 27th of January, 1809, as to the conduct of the Duke of York.

London and Oxford both advance claims to the honour of ranking as the birthplace of Mrs. Clarke. One version says that her parents—Thompson by name—were living in Oxford at the date of her birth in 1776; that her father died shortly after; and that her mother, having migrated to London, married one Farquhar, a compositor. The other account makes no mention of Oxford, and describes her as the daughter of a Mrs. Thompson who lived in Bowling Pin Alley, near White's Alley, Chancery Lane. It is, at any rate, almost certain that Mrs. Thompson became Farquhar's wife. The story goes on to tell that she obtained, through his influence, work as a proof-reader in his employer's service, and that in the course of time a young man named Day, the son of the overseer of the printing office, fell in love with her daughter Mary Anne, and even went so far as to send the damsel to be educated at a good school at Ham, in Essex, with the view of making her his wife. Whether or not this episode be true, it is certain that she was well taught, either at Ham or elsewhere, for all through the period when she monopolized the public attention she created the impression of being a well-educated and intelligent woman. Be this as it may, it is clear that the experiment of Mr. Day in moulding a wife, like that of his more famous namesake, came to an untoward end. A quarrel arose

between him and his young charge, and after this rupture history knows his name no more.

Almost before Mary Anne had emerged from girlhood scandal began to be busy with her name. There is a story of an early intrigue with a pawnbroker in Golden Lane, who so far forgot his professional caution under the spell of her beauty that he advanced upon the property she desired to pledge far more than it was worth. Before she was sixteen she met and fascinated a prentice lad who was serving his time with Mr. Burnell, a mason living in Black Raven Passage, Cursitor Street. The name of this youth was Clarke, and his father was a well-to-do builder of Angel Court, Snow Hill. (Later on she affirmed that he was the nephew of Mr. Clarke, an alderman in the City of London.) In her sixteenth year she married Clarke at St. Pancras Church, and the youthful pair began housekeeping first in Charles Square, Hoxton, and then in Golden Lane, St. Luke's, Clarke's father having started his son in business as a mason.

From all accounts Clarke seems to have been a drunken, dissolute fellow. The young wife had to suffer in consequence of the debauched life he led, and soon pecuniary troubles came in aggravated form. Clarke was made a bankrupt, at the suit of Alderman Staines, in 1797, and they left St. Luke's and went to live at Craven Place, Kensington. Mary Anne is said to have renewed her business relations with the Golden Lane pawnbroker; but, whether this be true or not, it is certain that she was by this time weary of domestic life with such a husband as Clarke, for she shortly afterwards ran away from him. There is little record as to what became of him, beyond that which tells how he was wont to spend the guinea a week allowed him by his father in tipping at public-houses. It is said that Mary Anne, after her flight, tried to find a home with some quiet family in the country where she might be able to give her children healthy nurture, but she could not, apparently, find any quiet family to her taste. Keeping in view her subsequent career it may now, perhaps, be assumed that she would not put much heart into a quest of this sort, and that, even had the quiet family been discovered, it would not have held her long within its tranquil bounds. As it was,

fate had other things in store for her, for while she was engaged in her search she chanced to meet a certain gentleman who was both a "barrister and a baronet." This personage offered her a shelter, albeit the same was associated with the taint of "guilty splendour." The quiet family project was forthwith abandoned, and she lived with her new friend for some months in a Wiltshire town; but, in spite of the material comfort with which her new protector surrounded her, she did not find her new life altogether to her taste. Wiltshire towns are nothing if not respectable—and perhaps a little dull—and respectability and its concomitant repose, although she had been yearning so ardently for the same a few months ago, began to weary her. Furthermore, according to the elegant language of the "Authentic Memoirs," "it is probable that the uncouth jargon of the law took place of the soft whispers of love, and her paramour was oftener poring over parchment than feasting on the damask cheek of his fair protégée." The "barrister and baronet" seems to have been guilty of a graver lache than that just named. In the early days of his love he had whispered tenderly of settlements, but these necessary and desirable documents he now declined to execute, whereupon his "fair protégée" took her departure somewhat abruptly, and left him to amuse himself over his parchments as best he could.

Two more baronets, Sir Charles Milner and Sir James Brudenell, were her next victims. The first was merely a passing fancy, and her relations with the second were very brief, as the gallant took alarm, and not unreasonably, when she presented to him a bill for lace to the amount of two hundred pounds.

The next *liaison* proved scarcely a more fortunate one for her. One evening at Vauxhall she met a gallant youth. Both were elegantly dressed, and a reciprocal admiration took possession of them. They ratified their union in the customary way; but, alas, in the morning, one at least of the lovers was disillusioned. Each had taken the other for a person of wealth and consequence, and now it transpired that they were both serving under the banner of adventure. They did not part in anger on account of this discovery; perhaps they were

taken with a genuine fondness for each other ; perhaps they perceived that by serving together, each supplementing the other's deficiencies when necessary, they might find the world an easier prey. At any rate, they lived together several weeks in a cottage somewhere in Bayswater, but the event showed that the life they had chosen, however delectable, was not one which their existing resources could support. This gentleman, to speak plainly, was a card and billiard sharper, and seems to have fallen in with a run of bad luck just at this time, while the lady's earnings amounted probably to no more than she needed for her own use. On this account they parted, the alliance of the gambler and the prostitute having proved—as, happily for good manners, is no uncommon event—a disastrous one.

It must have been soon after this parting that Mary Anne met with a lover more to her taste in the person of Mr. Dowler, one of those young gentlemen who seem to be created and educated expressly to minister to the needs of ladies like herself. His father was rich—a Common Councilman and a wine merchant—and he himself one of the most dashing bloods on the Stock Exchange. Either his business must have been a successful one, or the Common Councilman must have been a liberal parent, for our Mr. Dowler was furnished with cash in sufficient abundance to secure Mrs. Clarke's goodwill for a considerable time, and indeed to appear as the *Deus ex machina* at various crises of her life. It was at Brighton that she first flashed upon the world in all the splendour that she conceived was due to her wit and beauty, liberally tricked out by the silly spendthrift, who thought himself honoured in being allowed to satisfy her harpy appetite for luxury and gewgaws ; but even at this early stage of their *liaison* the inherent falsity of the harlot showed itself in her ; for she invited her late paramour to join her at Brighton, in order that he might secretly share the golden harvest of Mr. Dowler's guineas. By this time her beauty and extravagance had won her notoriety of a certain sort amongst the "dashing Cyprians" of the Brighton of the Regency. She took her dip in the sea, too, or, as the chronicle expresses it, "she distinguished herself as an

excellent swimmer, and occasionally used to float upon the liquid element, to the astonishment and admiration of the spectators.”

After treating Mrs. Clarke to a spell of life exactly to her taste, and allowing her to spend what she would, Mr. Dowler began to find his resources unequal to the strain. There is no proof that his inamorata ever regarded him with any warmer feeling than she would have had for any man who would give her all the gold in his purse; but he, judging from his later action, certainly showed towards her a devotion which would have been better bestowed upon a better woman. His inability to satisfy her extravagance and profligate humours was the signal for her to say farewell. Perhaps she had an eye upon the money-bags of the Common Councilman, and reflected that fathers cannot live for ever, when she elected to let the separation be a friendly one.

There is a tradition, maintained by one set of annalists and stoutly denied by the other, that Mrs. Clarke, soon after she left her husband, appeared on the Haymarket stage in the character of Portia, and that by this advertisement of her charms she succeeded in captivating Lord Barrymore and a certain army agent described as “Mr. O.” On her return to London from Brighton she sought out the last-named gentleman, who was still sufficiently infatuated with her to establish her at his charges in a handsome house in Tavistock Place, and she began to realize the delights of life in London with a pocket full of money.

In this present instance it may be set down to her credit that she did not monopolize the entire stream of “Mr. O.’s” bounty, for she took her mother and sister to live with her. The army agent seems to have been of a somewhat complaisant disposition, for Lord Barrymore frequently visited her at Tavistock Place without any concealment, and it was under this same roof that the meeting took place—pregnant with such momentous issues—between herself and the Duke of York.

She was now about twenty-eight years of age. All contemporary accounts given of her agree in ascribing to her wit and talent far above the average, and Captain Gronow,

in writing of her later life in Paris, speaks of her as a lady of charming manner and a brilliant talker. Her great failing was a want of care in the government of her tongue, which spared friend no more than foe. Still her sharp sallies seem to have won for her a certain popularity, for in those days of retirement certain members of the English aristocracy—Lord Londonderry amongst them—used to frequent her salon during their visits to Paris. Gronow no doubt went with the rest, and in any case his remarks about her latter life may be held as more trustworthy than his account of her marriage and of her first meeting with the Duke of York. In referring to this he says, without an atom of proof or even probability, that her husband was a captain in a marching regiment; and, sweeping away all other versions of her story, affirms that at the age of sixteen she made the acquaintance of the Duke while taking her daily walk on Blackheath, an acquaintance which soon ripened into something more than friendship. After a short time had passed the young lady accompanied her lover to the theatre one evening, where they occupied a private box. She was somewhat surprised at the honour and ceremony done to her, and at seeing all the glasses in the house levelled at her, but this she set down as homage paid to her beauty. It was not until a subsequent visit, when she was addressed as her Royal Highness, that she realized what honour had been done her, and that the attendants had mistaken her for the Duchess of York.

This account leaves little room for the luckless husband—who, indeed, as far as this history is concerned, may be deemed a negligible quantity—or for Mr. Dowler, whose personality and relations with Mrs. Clarke rest on data not to be questioned. Seeing that the Duke of York came upon the scene so soon after her establishment in Tavistock Place, it seems highly probable that he may have first seen her during her recent stay in Brighton. The fashionable life of the time was circumscribed by the Old Steyne and a few adjacent streets, and the radiant beauty and magnificence of Mr. Dowler's mistress would scarcely escape the roving eye of the commander-in-chief, or of any other *habitué* of the Pavilion. It is also within the bounds of possibility that

Mr. O., in the capacity of army agent, may have had dealings with the Duke, and may have let drop a hint as to the charms of his mistress. For a time he was content to play the part of jackal to the royal lion, keeping judiciously out of the way whenever circumstances demanded his absence. In 1803 Mrs. Clarke was living in Park Lane in a house of her own, and keeping her own horses and carriages. She was certainly on friendly terms with the Duke, but she denied afterwards that she was under his protection till the following year, when she became without disguise his mistress, and mistress likewise of a fine house in Gloucester Place, Portman Square. At this point the record of her doings recalls almost more than any other portion of our national annals the waste and profligacy of the Romans of the decadence. She was served by twenty servants, two of them butlers, and three men cooks. The last named were paid a guinea a day wages, and that their place was not a sinecure is evidenced by the story that sometimes when the dinner was not to Mrs. Clarke's taste, she would order it to be taken away and a fresh one prepared. More than a thousand a year went in wages and liveries, and the furniture was all of the most sumptuous that could be procured. Her service of plate was formerly the property of the Duc de Berri, the pier-glasses in her reception room cost five hundred pounds, and she drank out of wineglasses bought at two guineas a-piece. She had two coaches and ten horses in her stables, and in addition to her town house a villa at Weybridge was provided for her use. There are no details as to the scale of this establishment, save a remark that the permanent staff of servants consisted of a groom, a gardener, and two maids; and that the oilcloth for the flooring of the hall alone cost fifty pounds, a fact which shows that the place was furnished in no niggard fashion.

While Mrs. Clarke was living in Tavistock Place her sister married a Mr. Favory, but the match proved a miserable one, and now she made her sister, who had left her husband, a sharer in her good fortune. Miss Taylor also, whose acquaintance she had made when she was living at Bayswater, was for some time her companion. Miss Taylor's

footing in the house must have been that of a favoured and confidential friend, for Mrs. Clarke subsequently stated that the Duke of York was very fond of Miss Taylor, and did not care what he said in her presence. Another inmate of the house was Samuel Carter, a favourite footman, the illegitimate son of Captain Sandon, who had first made Mrs. Clarke known to her faithful friend, Mr. Dowler.

The early days of her splendour were not untroubled by the sordid premonitions of more serious money troubles to come. She had not left behind her all her cares in Tavistock Place. Mr. John Few, of Bernard Street, had supplied her with certain articles of furniture, believing her to be a widow. Payment for such common things as tradesmen's goods was a thing of which Mrs. Clarke took slight heed, so that Mr. Few found it necessary to sue her for the debt, and had the satisfaction of losing the price of his goods, and, in addition, of having an execution put in his house for legal charges, Mrs. Clarke having pleaded coverture and proved herself a married woman.

There seems to have been a fiction that the Duke should advance his *chère amie* one thousand pounds a month for current expenses ; it is needless to say that he very soon fell into arrears, and, indeed, after the first quarter's housekeeping the house was rarely free of tradespeople clamouring for their money. But, even supposing that he had been promptitude itself, Mrs. Clarke would still have found herself speedily in money difficulties ; for she told the Duke, before long time had passed, that what he gave her barely sufficed to pay for servants' wages and liveries. It is not surprising that a lady with tastes so extravagant as these should go in search of some supplementary fountain of bounty as soon as the pinch came, and tradesmen began to clamour for their money. Although Mr. Dowler no longer occupied a prominent place about her court in the eye of the world, it is clear, from what subsequently came to light, that he was always within call, and presumably now and then a sharer in the royal provender. Before the establishment in Gloucester Place had been started very long there arose difficulties about the supply of even the first necessaries of life, whereupon the

open-handed Mr. Dowler came forward with seasonable loans, and the tables were abundantly furnished for a time. Once the sheriffs of Middlesex were unmannerly enough to lay hands on one of the lady's carriages, but Dowler was again to the fore, and begged her to accept the trifling gift of a *vis-à-vis* to replace the vehicles which had been seized. It transpired afterwards that Mr. Dowler, albeit he was a devout lover, was gifted with all the appreciation of a good thing which even to this day characterizes the members of the Stock Exchange. Gold, no doubt, was to be picked up in Change Alley, but the army commissariat seemed to him to offer a safer and more promising field of operations; so one day, after making her a trifling present of a thousand pounds, he suggested to Mrs. Clarke that there was now vacant just the post he fancied, and that a word spoken by her to her influential friend would certainly procure it for him. It is scarcely necessary to add that the word was duly spoken. In this case, however, the Duke seems to have inquired why Mrs. Clarke wanted the post for this particular gentleman, whereupon she told him quite frankly that it was because Mr. Dowler would pay her more liberally for it than anybody else. The Duke was satisfied and convinced by this reasoning, and a few days afterwards told her that he had spoken to Mr. Long, a Treasury official, about Mr. Dowler, and that the thing was practically arranged. It is certain that Dowler entered the commissariat in 1804, but it is well to add that Mr. Long afterwards denied that the Duke had ever said a word to him about the appointment. It is probable that the ease with which this transaction was brought about convinced Mrs. Clarke that life would run more easily were she to ask the Duke for his good word—of which he seems to have been very generous—rather than for his money, for which, poor man, he had so many other uses. Thus, after the first stroke was played, the game went on apace. In an age when the vast majority of the members of the legislature entered Parliament by gross bribery, purposing to recoup their expenditure, and perhaps a little in addition thereto, by selling their voices to this or that party leader, it is not surprising that certain of those who

wanted commissions in the army, either for themselves or their clients, should have recourse to Mrs. Clarke as soon as the report got abroad that the wares they were anxious to buy were retailed by her at a less expensive rate and more expeditiously delivered than by the constituted authorities. Mrs. Clarke's prices were ultimately settled as given below.

	Mrs. Clarke's prices.				Regulation prices.
A Majority	£900	...	...	£2,600
A Captaincy	700	...	...	1,500
A Lieutenancy	400	...	...	550
An Ensigncy	200	...	...	400

The Duke of York seems to have conducted much of his official correspondence in Gloucester Place, and to have employed Mrs. Clarke as amanuensis. During the Parliamentary inquiry in 1809 there was called as a witness a Mr. Town, who formerly gave Mrs. Clarke lessons in painting on velvet. In the course of his evidence he deposed that she had on one occasion given him an example of her skill in imitating handwriting, and had shown him the signature of the Duke of York and her own imitation of the same done with such skill that he could not tell one from the other.

It was not long before the control of her favours fell principally into the hands of two men, a Mr. Donovan, and Captain Huxley Sandon, of the Royal Waggon Train. After going to live in Gloucester Place she engaged the services of a man named Corri to teach her singing, and Corri, acting probably under his pupil's directions, waited one day on Mr. Cockayne, a solicitor, who had amongst his clients Captain Sandon and many other military men, and suggested that Captain Sandon, if he desired advancement, might do worse than seek it in Gloucester Place. It may be inferred, from a passage in a letter written by Mrs. Clarke to the captain, that she had become acquainted with him—perhaps professionally—before she had made her *début* at Brighton. After her return to London, and while she was yet living in Bloomsbury, she wrote to him asking for the address of Colonel French, a friend of his. Her own words are: "I did not want anything

of French, but to ask him a question." From what followed it may be assumed that this question was a momentous one.

Colonel French, it seems, was anxious to conduct the levy of a regiment for service in 1804, and Mrs. Clarke, knowing that large sums of money in the shape of bounties would be flying about, saw it would be a fine stroke of business to put her hand on the door of this treasure-house. At the meeting between her and Colonel French it was agreed that she should get a certain sum, five hundred pounds down, and a guinea out of the bounty of each recruit, and also have the nomination of certain of the officers. The bounty was originally fixed at thirteen guineas a man, but as the recruits did not come forward fast enough for her liking, Mrs. Clarke persuaded the Duke to increase it to nineteen. What portion of this increase went into her pocket is not stated. The Duke heard from her own lips what were the terms she had made for herself in this disgraceful business. At her suggestion Colonel French waited on the Duke at the Horse Guards. The matter was settled ; and, as the levy of the peasants who were to win England's battles went on, the money began to pour merrily into the exhausted coffers in Gloucester Place. In Colonel French's case the Duke seems to have taken a leaf out of his mistress's book, and made an essay in corruption on his own account. Colonel French advanced a claim of three thousand pounds against the Government for preliminary expenses incurred with respect to this same levy, and he now offered to advance the Duke five thousand pounds by way of a loan if he would use his influence to get these arrears refunded. There is no evidence that the Duke ever touched Colonel French's money, but the bargain was certainly made, and the Duke did his best to get the country to pay Colonel French's real or fictitious claim ; but in this he was unsuccessful. The whole business seems to have caused him considerable annoyance, for one day, when on a visit to his mistress, he said, "French worries me continually about the levy business, and is always wanting something more in his own favour. How does he behave to you, darling?" On learning from Mrs. Clarke that Colonel French's conduct was nothing to boast of, he rejoined, "Master French must mind what he is about, or

I shall cut off him and his levy too." The faithful Dowler, whose duties as commissary had not yet taken him abroad, was all this time a constant visitor at Gloucester Place, and he warned his whilom flame that she was treading on dangerous ground by meddling with such affairs as the levy. The flagrant venality and baseness of the whole business seem to have affronted the feelings even of a cur like this. Donovan and Huxley Sandon used to bring to Mrs. Clarke long lists of officers on the look-out for promotion, and willing to pay for the same, and these Venus would pin up on the head of the bed so that Mars might not fail to see them when the time came for attending to the serious affairs of life. This was more than Mr. Dowler could stand. His rebukes provoked an angry reply from the lady, who declared that the Duke was so short of money that it was only by dealings such as these that the establishment could be kept going. The upshot of this remonstrance was a temporary estrangement between the worthy pair.

It would be idle and unnecessary to recapitulate one tenth part of the details relating to this sordid and nefarious traffic in places of honour and responsibility, but a few of the more noteworthy instances may be cited. Captain Tonym was an officer of promise and the son of a general, but for some reason or other his promotion was not so rapid as he wished. Chance or design brought him into the hands of Captain Sandon, and in consideration of a *douceur* of five hundred pounds paid to Mrs. Clarke he got his majority. If Captain Tonym had bought his step at regulation price eleven hundred pounds would have gone to the half-pay fund for securing the promotion of deserving officers to vacant commissions, a fund under the immediate control of the Duke of York ; but Mrs. Clarke robbed the fund of this amount for the sake of putting five hundred pounds in her pocket. To what extent the half-pay fund suffered on account of similar depredations of this rapacious and profligate woman the world will never know. Another case was that of the appointment of Major Shaw to the post of deputy barrack-master at Cape Town. The Duke of York disliked this man, but as soon as his mistress gave him her views of Major Shaw's merits he put aside his resent-

ment and gave him the post. Now this favour cost Major Shaw a thousand pounds, of which five hundred was paid before the appointment, but, once a barrack-master, Major Shaw seemed disinclined to pay the balance. Mrs. Clarke applied for it again and again without effect. At last, inflamed by malice and anger, and perhaps sore at being outwitted, she laid her grievance before the commander-in-chief, who, by way of bringing Major Shaw to a sense of his duty, at once placed the culprit on half-pay. By this transaction Mrs. Clarke let it be seen that, besides guarding the gates of promotion, she held in her hand a scourge which would fall pretty smartly on the shoulders of any officer who, after admission, did not show himself amenable to reason.

There is on record one case of promotion in the army at Mrs. Clarke's instance for which no money payment seems to have been made. Mention has already been made of a male servant in her employ, Samuel Carter by name. This youth seems to have been fired by martial ardour, and also to have convinced his mistress of his valour and deserts. In any case a commission was given to him. What Samuel Carter possessed to offer in exchange for so great a boon history does not tell. It may be assumed that his benefactress found it of sufficient value, for at the age of nineteen he was gazetted ensign, and in a very short time was given an appointment on the staff.

As time went on the needs of the household in Gloucester Place grew at such a rapid rate that army promotion as a field for robbery and corruption became too narrow for Mrs. Clarke's operations. By some means or other the word was passed that those who were anxious to rise in the Church militant might do worse than enlist the support of Mrs. Clarke. The first to try to climb into the fold up this dirty ladder was a certain Doctor O'Meara, who was desirous of a mitre and a seat in the House of Lords. One night, at the end of 1805, the Doctor having watched the Duke out of the house, called in Gloucester Place and laid his petition before the throne of virtue. Doctor O'Meara proposed to open the campaign by preaching before the King, who was at this time at Weymouth, and as the Duke was going there the next day he begged her to

write for him a letter of introduction. The boon was granted (the amount of consideration given therefor is not on record), and the Duke did his best for the Doctor, who, according to the bond, preached before King George. Although the Sovereign was very attentive and stood for nearly the whole of the sermon, although the Queen and the princesses and the whole audience were melted into tears, Doctor O'Meara's attempt was a failure, no promotion came to him; the reason of this miscarriage being, perhaps, to be discerned in a remark of the King's that he did not like the "O" before his name. But as the sequel will show this was not the first and last essay made by Mrs. Clarke in the matter of ecclesiastical patronage.

For some years past the Duke of York had employed a Mr. Adam to manage his affairs as agent. Some time in 1805 it came to Mr. Adam's knowledge that Clarke was threatening an action for *Crim. Con.* against the Duke. The "Authentic Memoirs" note a rumour which points in the same direction; "It is reported, however, but with what truth we know not, that he (Mr. Clarke) once visited Gloucester Place when Mrs. Clarke was in the zenith of her splendour, and on being refused admission began to demolish the windows and commit other acts of violence to the no small alarm of the illustrious visitor, who, then melting in Love's ecstasies, was cradled in those arms which in other days had so often encircled the unfortunate wanderer."

Mr. Adam proceeded to make further investigations, the result of which proved, as he afterwards said, that Mrs. Clarke's conduct had a tendency to prejudice his Royal Highness's interests, not in a military or public point of view, but his interest and his name with regard to money transactions. This speech is somewhat oracular, and the subsequent proceedings do not tend to elucidate it. That the Duke could have been ignorant of the dozens of corrupt bargains she had made is incredible to those who can refer to the minutes of evidence in Wardle's inquiry, and the fresh delinquencies which came to light in the course of Mr Adam's investigation are not such as would have surprised him or have outraged his sense of propriety. There was, indeed, the story of Mr. Few's action against her, a gross case of swindling on her

part, but not worse than the many felonious raids made by her upon the half-pay fund. Mr. Adam discovered that she had been married at St. Pancras while she was under age—surely a venial offence—and that she had told falsehoods in saying her mother's name was Mackenzie and her father's Farquhar, and that her family came from the neighbourhood of Berkhamstead, and that her husband was a nephew of Mr. Alderman Clarke. What wonder in all this? Women like Mrs. Clarke lie as naturally as sparks fly upward. The natural inference is that Mr. Adam was set to work to find a pretext for a separation, a valid one if possible, but in any case a pretext.

In the conduct of this business the Duke kept himself well in the background, a fact which suggests that Mrs. Clarke's temper was hasty and that he knew it. Several months elapsed before he was able to make up his mind, but at last he authorized Adam to make a personal communication to her that he had determined to break with her. At the same time the Duke offered to give her an annuity of four hundred a year, which would be paid to her as long as she bore herself in such a manner as he approved. He refused to enter into any bond or obligation, the payment of the annuity resting entirely upon his word, in order that he might withdraw the same in case her behaviour should seem to warrant such a step.

Mrs. Clarke rejected Mr. Adam's first proposition without hesitation, but, according to a statement made by Colonel M'Mahon during the inquiry, she soon afterwards agreed to accept it and withdrew into Devonshire. But the Duke as usual soon fell into arrears, so she wrote demanding five hundred pounds (the sum then owing) and that a deed should be executed making her income for the future a permanent one. She also accused the Duke of want of humanity, honour, and good feeling. There was some delay in answering this, whereupon she wrote again saying that she had collected all the Duke's letters to her and made divers memoranda of her own, all of which she proposed to publish unless her terms should be granted. She wrote anonymously to the Prince of Wales (which led to her interview

with Colonel M'Mahon), and that illustrious personage is understood to have said that he thought his brother's conduct very shabby.

In Colonel M'Mahon's account of his interview with Mrs. Clarke he was clearly under the impression that she was using all her craft to make mischief between the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York ; but her own contention was that her only reason for writing in a threatening strain was to secure the punctual payment of the pittance doled out to her. Soon after she left Gloucester Place she went to lodge with a baker at Hampstead, Nicholl by name, and here she at once resumed relations with Mr. Dowler, who was just come back from Buenos Ayres. She had represented herself as a widow when she engaged the rooms, but Mr. Nicholl does not seem to have been shocked when a new husband turned up. The news of the rupture between her and the Duke was eagerly discussed by the busybodies of the town, and certain people, when they heard of it and recalled the whispers which had been going about concerning the traffic in promotion carried on in Gloucester Place, bethought them of the proverb, "When rogues fall out honest men may come by their own." In spite of the fact that the Duke of York had improved the discipline and efficiency of the army, there had grown up a feeling that military affairs were in a very bad way. Colonel Wardle and Sir Francis Burdett began to cast about in search of some instrument which might do effective service in the attack they had determined to make upon the commander-in-chief. It is not wonderful that they should have turned at once to Mrs. Clarke. Where could they hope to find an agent more fitted for their purpose than this woman, smarting under the indignity of rejection (a new sultana, a Mrs. Carey, had already been selected) and reduced from the lavish profusion of Gloucester Place to sordid lodgings over a baker's shop. Their first agent in the business was Sir Richard Phillips, the Radical bookseller and disciple of Paine and one of the leading popular politicians of the metropolis. Phillips was evidently sensible of the importance of the service Mrs. Clarke might render, so he sent a certain M'Callum to open negotiations, but the lady was also aware

of the value of the goods she had to sell, and was at first very chary in granting an interview to any one. At last she consented to meet M'Callum, and shortly afterwards Wardle himself, who, after adverting to the great wrongs she herself had suffered at the Duke's hands, went on to denounce the corruption rampant in the army generally, and drew particular attention to the robbery which went on in the supply of clothing. Although Colonel Wardle let it be seen that patriotism and zeal for the public weal were the main texts of his discourse, he—like an astute tactitian—did not fail to impress upon Mrs. Clarke the fact that direct advantages of a substantial sort, and indirect ones in the shape of the favour of the Duke of Kent, who was at this time at feud with the commander-in-chief, would befall her as the reward of her co-operation. Arguments of this sort were not likely to be spoken in vain to the ears of such a woman; still she dallied with the proposal at first, and refused to say anything about the affairs of the Duke of York without first consulting her friends, though she went so far as to speak with great bitterness of the treatment she had received from him. Wardle impressed upon her that part of his scheme was the ruin of the Duke and the elevation of the Duke of Kent in his place. M'Callum, indeed, was at that time engaged upon a pamphlet which championed the rights of the latter prince. A provisional bargain was at last made. Colonel Wardle and a Mr. Glennie induced Mrs. Clarke to make an excursion with them into Kent, where they would meet Major Dodds, the Duke of Kent's secretary, who was going to inspect the Martello towers and the military canal. The party dined afterwards at Hythe, and over the wine the terms which were to secure her assistance in the forthcoming attack were settled. She was to have all her debts paid, five thousand pounds down, an annuity of four hundred a year, and a furnished house. In her own version of the story she says that they went so far as to promise her an allowance liberal enough to let her keep a coach and four. The Duke of Kent was to be security for the fulfilment of these conditions, but there is no evidence that he was ever connected with the business. Indeed, as far as the Duke of Kent was concerned,

they might as well have promised thousands or even millions, for it is certain that he, insolvent as he was, could never have paid a farthing. After this expedition Major Dodds frequently visited Mrs. Clarke, and let it be seen plainly that the chief aim of the movers in the affair was the ruin of the Duke of York, and what followed proves that Mrs. Clarke was at this juncture quite ready to back them up. There is no doubt that at the end of 1808 she was on friendly and familiar terms with Colonel Wardle, in spite of the abuse she heaped upon him later on, after the dispute which arose about the purchase of the furniture. A house in Westbourne Place was taken, and, as an earnest of the wages which were to be paid to her, Colonel Wardle went with her to the shop of a furniture dealer named Wright in Rathbone Place and let her select goods to the amount of five hundred pounds. He likewise gave her fifty pounds shortly before the motion was made in the Commons as to the conduct of the Duke of York.

Before dealing with the part she played in the proceedings before the Commons, there is an episode of the year 1808 which deserves notice. In October her friend Donovan wrote to her asking her to use all her influence to secure the vacant deanery of Salisbury for a clergyman called Glasse, and in the same letter says, "The money will be deposited on Wednesday next for the Landing waiter's place." In another letter he advocates the claims of the Rev. T. Baseley, M.A., to the deanery of Salisbury, a divine "recommended by many persons of fashion, Bishops of Norwich and Salisbury, &c., about whom the ladies are so very anxious." It may seem somewhat strange that Donovan, who certainly knew that she had broken with the Duke of York, should still regard her as one holding the keys of patronage, but his evidence at the inquiry explains his action. Mrs. Clarke, he declared, had told him she had influence enough with the Duke of Portland to secure any church preferment she might ask for. In creating this false impression she was planning, no doubt, to lay hands at least on the advance fee to be paid in consideration of her services. What truth there was in her pretension the sequel will show.

This wretched Baseley actually called upon the Duke of Portland, and not finding him at home left a letter offering a bribe of three thousand pounds for the vacant deanery. The Duke, naturally indignant, gave orders that Baseley should be denied admission to his house, and wrote an account of the man's shameless impudence to the Bishop of London.

Colonel Wardle, having collected all the materials necessary for the support of his charges against the Duke of York, brought forward his motion in January, 1809. These charges were mostly founded on the transactions between Mrs. Clarke and certain aspirants for promotion, episodes which have already been dealt with. The inquiry lasted for nearly seven weeks, and Mrs. Clarke was constantly called to give evidence. People talked of nothing else. The death of Sir John Moore, the victorious progress of Napoleon, the Berlin decrees, all were thrust into the background. No doubt the nation was in death-grips with the most terrible adversary it had ever been called to meet, but the dandies and fine ladies had no time to think of these things, while the House of Commons was privileged to sit week after week feeding upon the most savoury morsels of scandal and listening to the impertinent banter of the most notorious courtesan of the day. Never had she a better chance for the display of her quick wit than in her answers. She never remembered her debts to gentlemen. All she knew about her husband was that he was a man; well, yes, she believed he was living at Kettering in Northamptonshire. "Under whose protection are you now?" asked an imprudent member, whereupon, with an air of insulted dignity, she turned to the Chair and said, "I believe, sir, I am now under your protection." Now and then she was caught tripping, but never upon any matter of prime importance. She said she had not seen Colonel Wardle on a certain day, when it was proved that they had been seen together more than once; again, that she had not passed a particular night with Mr. Dowler, when the contrary was proved. Indeed, she was not likely to err in this respect, seeing that she was bent on showing a picture as black as possible with the view of inculcating the Duke of York, so all she had to do was

to describe things as they had happened. Whether she would or not, she could not conceal her animus against him ; and, as long as the trial lasted, she was made much of by Cobbett and Burdett and the other supporters of Wardle, and held a sort of levee every day at Ellis's coffee-house.

The Duke was acquitted of "personal corruption" by a majority of eighty-two ; but, taking heed of what had been disclosed in the course of the trial, he had good sense enough to resign his post as head of the army. Another step that he took—and one which shows how greatly his nerves were shaken—was to dismiss the lady who had been selected to fill Mrs. Clarke's place. The inquiry over, the alliance between Mrs. Clarke and her associates soon came to an end. Neither the five thousand pounds, nor the annuity, nor the payment of her debts was forthcoming. On applying to Wardle she received an answer saying that this promise was given on conditions which she had failed to observe. He even refused to pay for the furnishing of the house in Westbourne Place, but Wright, the upholsterer, sued him for the debt, and recovered it with certain small deductions. The trial is chiefly remarkable for the fact that Mrs. Clarke in giving evidence swore that she had been promised a furnished house as part of the price of her service, while, when she was before the House of Commons, she declared she was actuated neither by malice nor by the hope of remuneration.

No sooner had she quarrelled with Colonel Wardle than she began to soften towards the Duke of York, and to heap unmeasured abuse upon the politicians with whom she had lately been associated. She declared that Wardle was moved to attempt the Duke of York's overthrow by the hope that he might be made Secretary of War in the event of the Duke of Kent becoming commander-in-chief, and that Cobbett's hatred of the Duke arose from the fact that once, when she had arranged a meeting between the two at dinner in Gloucester Place, the Duke declined to meet the Radical politician. Though she had seen Wardle worsted in the law-suit brought against him by Wright, she was not likely to sit down satisfied with such modest laurels as these. She held winning cards in her hands in the form of the Duke of York's letters

and her own comments thereupon. The publication of these meant money and, what was quite as welcome to her as money, vengeance and notoriety. She suggested first that Sir Richard Phillips should take the business in hand, but he declined the venture, and at the same time advised her with much good sense that if she could get the Duke to pay her debts and confirm her annuity it would be wise to throw her MS. on the fire. She seems to have made an attempt to carry out Sir Richard's advice, but the negotiation miscarried. Then he introduced her to a Mr. Gillet, and before long eighteen thousand copies of the work were printed.

But in a business of this sort, when it is well known that some one will be glad to hear a whisper, the whisperer is seldom lacking. Some one whispered to royal ears that there was mischief afoot, and before long Sir Herbert Taylor appeared upon the scene, and before he had finished his task and burnt the eighteen thousand volumes, Mrs. Clarke had had handed over to her ten thousand pounds, and had secured for herself an annuity of four hundred a year and two hundred for each of her two daughters. A promise was likewise given that her son should be provided for. There is a tradition that one copy of the book escaped the furnace, and was last heard of as a deposit in Messrs. Drummond's bank. There is only one more episode in Mrs. Clarke's career in England which need be chronicled. In 1814 she wrote to Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald a letter which was held to be of a libellous nature, and she was in consequence sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. After the peace of 1815 she withdrew at once to Paris, where she lived a quiet and reputable life, devoting her undoubted talents to the education of her children, who, if rumour is to be trusted, amply repaid her in after years for the care she bestowed upon them. She died at Boulogne, on the 21st of June, 1852.

An apologist of Mrs. Clarke might assert that she was by nature no worse than thousands of others whose names have never been raised to such bad eminence, and that accident, by placing her in a position which gave her such vast power for ill-doing, is chiefly responsible. A very superficial glance at the characters and careers of historic criminals will show

that a like justification would be applicable to the cases of them all. That Mrs. Clarke was profligate, untruthful, and dishonest by disposition no one can deny. Fate enabled her to gratify her desires, and she helped herself with both hands. If the common every-day promptings of conscience ever warned her she heeded them not ; yet she seems to have set no light store upon her intellectual acquirements. There is one very characteristic phrase in her pamphlet, "The Rival Princes," which is worth quotation. She has been talking glibly of Sallust, and goes on to say, "It may appear somewhat strange to the reader that I should have quoted an author not generally read by my sex ; but that kind of reading generally resorted to by ladies never engaged my attention. I scarcely know a novel but by name, while historical and political writers have long been the chief authors of my contemplation. This may be accounted for from my having mixed much with persons of the first rank and talents in the political world, from whose conversation I acquired a taste for books not common to a lady's library, and from whom I derived considerable intellectual advantages."

Possibly the demands upon her powers made by intellectual activity may have hindered her ascent to the higher moral plane upon which we could scarcely expect to find her placed by the circumstances of her birth and early associations. At any rate, she affirms that she saw no harm in her dealings in military promotion. She was besought by so many people and in such pressing wise that she thought she was only doing a kind action by assenting. The Duke, moreover, was always ready to oblige her, so it seemed a waste of the gifts of Providence not to ask. "The Duke said, 'If you were clever you would never need to ask me for money.'" This remark made by her during the inquiry may be considered—at its due value—in estimating the value of the finding of the House of Commons as to the freedom of the Duke of York from "personal corruption." Again, when she went over from the Duke's side to Colonel Wardle's she declared that she was acting solely in the interests of her children. In the case of such a woman the analysis of motive becomes *labor ineptiarum*. The consideration of her career and public

appearances at least allows the contemporary generation to congratulate itself without pharisaism that we have moved on far enough in good manners since the beginning of the century to forbid the recurrence of scandals like those which were revealed in 1809.

W. G. WATERS.

INDEX.

- ABBESS OF THE HOLLAND LEAGUERS,
 on the Bankside, Damaris Page, 58
 Abbot, George, Archbishop of Canter-
 bury, 72, 73
 ,, of St. Albans, 11
 Acquisitive nature of Alice Perrers, 5
 Adam, Mr., 303
 Adamson, Joseph, 209
 Addy, Mr., 149, 150
Advertiser, The, 221
 Ager, Sir Anthony, 35
 Aisenby, birthplace of Mary Bateman,
 262
 Allen, Mr. Abraham, 82
 Amis, Mr., rector of Lainston, 229,
 233, 234
 Amis, Mrs., 253
 Ancaster, Duke of, 227, 247
Andromeda Liberata, George Chap-
 man's, 75
 Anglesea, Charles Villiers, Earl of, 100
 Aniseed-Water Robin, 58
Annual Register, 219
 Antilles Islands, 232
Apology of Teresia Phillips, 182
 Archives of Canterbury, 44
 Archbishop's Court, 245
 ARDEN, ALICE, 33-46
Arden of Feversham, a tragedy, 46
 Arden, Thomas, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38,
 39, 40, 41, 42, 45
 Ardington, manor of, granted to Alice
 Perrers, 5
 Arlington, Sir Henry Benet, Lord, 26
 Arrest of Mrs. Bateman, 282
 Ash, Miss, 241
 Aston, 226
 Audley End, 64, 74

Aurum potable, 81
 Axford, a shopman, married to Hannah
 Lightfoot, 237

 "B.," MR., 175, 176
 Babiiani, accomplice of the Duchess of
 Cleveland, 113
 Babylon, Whore of, 257
 Bacon, Sir Edmund, 77
 ,, Sir Francis, 76; *see* note, 78
 Balearic Islands, 232
 "Bale of bombazeen," Eliz. Chudleigh
 described as a, 232
 Ball given by Eliz. Chudleigh, 236
 Banbury, Earl of, *see* Knollys, Wm.
 Banbury Peerage Case, *see* note, 93
 Baptist May, keeper of the Privy
 Purse, 113
 Barbadoes, 167
 Barbara's lovers, Abbreviated list of,
 121-3
 Barnard, Sir John, 219
 Barrington, Lord, 247, 253
 Barrymore, Lord, 294
 Barton, Mr., grocer, 237
 Bateman, John, 264
 BATEMAN, MARY, 261-286
 Bath, 244
 Bathurst, Henry, Lord Chancellor, 252
 Baseley, Rev. T., "M.A.," 307
 "Bawd," Mrs. Turner, described as a,
 89
 "Bear at the Bridgefoot," Frances
 Stuart, her elopement from the,
 119
 Bearbinder Lane, 155, 156, 157
 "Beau," nickname of Robert Fielding,
 131

- Beauchamp, Roger, 24
 Beauty of Eliz. Chudleigh described, 232
 Bedchamber, Lady of the, 105, 108, 120
 Bedford, Duchy of, 94
 Bedlam Wall, 209
Beggar's Opera, 145, 146
 Bennet, Sir Henry, 109, 124, 126
 Berge, near Riga, 256
 Berkhamstead, 12
 Berkshire House, 120
 Berlin, 240
 Best, Dr., 150
 Bethlem Wall, 158
 Bigamy, Duchess of Kingston convicted of, 24
 Bingley, Sir J., 64
 Bishopsgate, 208
 "Black Boy," The, 158
 Black Dog Yard, 271
 Blackfriars Stair, 152
 Black, John, 19
 Black Raven Passage, 291
 Black Will, a ruffian, 33, 36, 37-39, 40, 41, 44
 Blanc, Sir Simon le, 283
 Blood-vessel, Duchess of Kingston's death through breaking a, 257
 "Blue Ball," The, 207
 Blythe, Miss, 273-277
 Bolton, Duchess of, 166
 "Bombazeen," Eliz. Chudleigh described as a bale of, 232
 Bond, Winifred, 273, 277
 Boston, 181
 Bostonians, the virtuous, 181
 Boughton, 44
 Boulogne, 36
 Bowling-Pin Alley, 290
 Bradshaw, George, 44
 Braganza, Catherine of (queen of Charles II.), 103
 Brentwood, Sir John, 15
 Brethren of St. Mary of Mount Carmel, 19
 Bridgman, Sir Orlando, 109
 Bright, Robert, 87
 Brinvilliers, 289
 Briscoe, Ralph, 58
 Bristol, 100, 148
 ,, Earl of, 105, 234
 ,, Lord, 243
 Brittain, Frances, 79
 Broadwater, Elizabeth, 156, 158
 Broughton, Rev. Mr., 160, 161
 BROWNRIFF, ELIZABETH, 189-201
 ,, James, 190
 ,, John, 201
 Brudnell, Sir James, 292
 Buckingham, Earl of, 114, 115, 124
 "Bulks" and "horners" of the metropolis, 56, 57
 Bullen, Mr. A. H., 46
 Bulwark, Mr., Dutch merchant, 170
 Burdett, Sir Francis, 305
 Burke, Edmund, supports Foote, 252
 Burnell, Mr., 291
 Burr Street, 144
 Buxhill, Alan, 24
 "C. S.," husband of Teresia Phillips, 184
 Cæsar, Sir Julius, 73
 Calais, 176, 255
 Calash, a bone of contention, 118
 Camden, Lord, 254
 Champion, Dr. Thomas, 75, 90
 CANNING, ELIZABETH, 205-222
 ,, Mrs., 208
 Cannon Alley, 149
 Cannon, Eliz., *see* Canning
 Cannon Street, Alice Perrers' hostel near, 25
 Canterbury, Archbishop of, *see* Abbot, George
 Canterbury, Archbishop of, 15, 17
Capuchin, The, 251
 Carew, Nicholas, 24
 Carey, Mrs., 305
 Carleton, Dudley, 55, 85
 ,, Mistress Alice, 74, 75, 76
 Carlsbad, baths of, 239
Carolina, Thos. Shipman's, 54
 Carr, Annie, afterwards Lady Russell, 94
 ,, Robert, 69-95
 ,, Sir Robert, 75
 Carter, partner of David Roberts, 153
 ,, Ann, 151
 ,, Samuel, 297, 302
 Case of Duchess of Cleveland, &c.,

- touching an annuity of £4,700 payable out of Post Office, 112
- Castlemaine, Barbara Palmer, Countess of, 103-126
- „ Roger Palmer, Earl of, 103, 105, 107, 108
- Cavendish, Sir Richard, 36
- Cecil, Sir Robert, 64, 67, 68, 71
- Challenge at Tilt*, 75
- Chalmington, 226
- Chamberlain, John, his description of Mary Frith's penance, 55
- „ John, 74, 75, 76, 85, 91, 92
- Chancery Court, 178
- Change Alley, 148
- Chapman, George, 75
- Charing Cross to Shoreditch, Mary Frith's ride from, 56
- Charleroi, Comte, 175
- Charles II., 99-134
- Chartley, 70
- Chastity, Mary Frith's reputation for, 50
- Chatham, 153
- Châtillon, M. de, 127
- Cheapside, 154
- Cheiney, Sir Thomas, 39
- Chelsea Hospital, Thomas Chudleigh governor of, 226
- Cherbourg, Governor of, 27
- Chernicheff, Count, 255
- Cherry, Mary, 151
- Chesterfield, Earl of, 100, 101, 167, 182, 183
- Chiffinch, body servant of Charles II., 117, 118
- Chinese Chairs, 236
- Chiswick, 94
- Chitty, Alderman, 212
- Chudleigh, Colonel Thomas, 226
- CHUDLEIGH, ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF KINGSTON, 226-258
- Churchill, Barbara, 122
- Cinque Ports, Sir Thomas Cheiney, master of the, 39
- Clanricarde, Earl of, *see* note, 68
- Clare, Mrs., 72
- Clarence, Lionel, Duke of, *see* Lionel, 16
- Clarendon, Lord, 104-106, 109, 110, 119
- Clark, a painter, 34, 35
- Clarke, Mr. Alderman, 304
- „ Mr., 291
- CLARKE, MARY ANNE, 289-312
- „ William, 215
- Claude, the painter, 255
- Clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning*, 217
- CLEVELAND, BARBARA VILLIERS, DUCHESS OF, 99-134
- Clifford, Mary, victim of Mrs. Brownrigg, 193, 200
- Clifford, Mrs., 197
- Clinton Lodge, 239
- Clyster administered to Overbury, 83
- Coaxer, Mrs., 146
- Coke, Lord Chief Justice, 87-89
- Coles, grocer, 41
- Colley, Thos., 207
- Colnbrook, 235, 238
- Colne, 238
- Compton Murdak, 29
- Conduit, 54
- „ Street, 229
- Confinement, Mrs. Stead's, 269
- Consistory Court, 242, 245, 254
- Cook, widow, 45
- „ Rev. Mr., 168, 170
- Coppinger, Mr., 70
- Corner in commodities arranged between Alice Perrers, Lord Latimer, and Richard Lyons, 9
- Cornwall*, H.M.S., A. T. Hervey, lieutenant on, 228, 229
- Cornwallis, Sir William, 76
- Corri, Domenico, singing-master of Mrs. Clarke, 299
- Cottington, the cheat, 58
- Counter, The, 57
- Courcy, Isabella de, 12
- Court Beggar*, Brome's, 54
- Court of Arches, 55
- „ of Delegates, 245
- „ of Dresden, 256
- Covent Garden, 146
- Cradock, Ann, 246, 532
- Cragg, Mr., 82
- Craig's Court, 165
- Cranborn Alley, 239

- Cranborne, Viscount, 67, 68
 "Crist is coming," egg inscribed thus
 laid by Mrs. Bateman's hen, 272
 Crocodile, Lady Kitty, Duchess of
 Kingston, as, 248, 249
 "Crofts," Mr., Duke of Monmouth, 116
 Crosby, Alderman, 198
 Crowder, "Bishop," 57
 Cryer, Judith, 273, 282
 Cuffs of Cobweb-lawn, 91
 Culloden, 235
- DAGWORTH, SIR NICHOLAS, 19, 20, 24
 Darnell, John, 175
 ,, Miss, 175
 Davies, Lawrence, 87
 Davis, Elizabeth, 154, 156-159
 Davy, Serjeant, 253
 Day, John, his description of Mary
 Frith, 53
 ,, Mr., 155, 157
 Deacon, Mr., neighbour of Mrs. Brown-
 rigg, 196-199
 Deadman's Place, 158
 Death of Duke of Kingston, 244
 Death of George II., 236
 Delafield, husband of Teresia Phillips,
 168-172, 174, 177
 Delamare, Sir John, 15
 ,, Sir Peter, 14, 17, 18, 21, 25
 Delean, Mrs., 131-133
 Delicacy of the Court of George II., 230
 Delius, Dr., 46
 Denbigh, Earls of, 129
 Derry, Bishop of, 243
 Devereux, Robert, Earl of Essex, 67, 72,
 73, 91
 ,, ,, his second marriage,
see note, 74
- Devonshire, Duke of, 94
 Devonshire Square, 155
 DIVER, JENNY, 137-161
 Divorce between Augustus John Hervey
 and Duchess of Kingston applied
 for, 241
 Doctors' Commons, 242, 243
 Dodd, Dr., 247
 ,, Major, 306
 Dominican friar, 15
 Donavile, Mr. 172
 Donne, John, the poet, 75
- Donovan, Mr., 299
Doubtful Plays of Shakespere, 46
 Douglas, General, 166
 ,, Mrs., 167
 Dover, 180, 255
 Dowler, Mr., 293, 295, 301
 ,, Mr. supports Mrs. Clarke at
 Brighton, 294
 Doyenne of the women of the town,
 Lady Castlemaine, 124
 Dresser allotted as a bedroom to Mary
 Jones, 192
 Drummond's Bank, 310
 Dun, Thomas, 145
 ,, Sir Daniel, 72, 73
 Dunbar, Earl of, 76
 ,, a chandler, lodges Mrs. Brown-
 rigg, 199
 Dunkirk, 153, 176
 Dunne, Eleanor, 87
 Dunning supports Foote, 252
 Durham Yard, 168
 Dutch War, The, 119
- EDWARD III., 3-23
 Edwards, Dr. Thomas, 73
 Electress, The, of Saxony, 239
 Ellesmere, Lord Chancellor, 91
 Ellis's Coffee-house, 309
 Eltham, 12, 14
 Ely, Bishop of, 73
 Empress Catharine, 255, 256
 Enfield Wash, 211
 English Aristophanes, Samuel Foote
 described as the, 252
 "Entrails of victim inspected by high
 priest," with reference to Elizabeth
 Chudleigh, 230
 Epitaph of Moll Cutpurse, 59
 Eserick, Lord Howard, of, 65, 94
 "Esquire," nickname of Lord F., 177,
 178
 Essex, Earl of, *see* Devereux
 Evelyn, Mr. John, 113, 124, 126, 128
Evening Post, 251
 Ewes, Sir Simon D., 66, 69, 87
 "F.," LORD, 177
Fair Penitent, 166
 Falkland, gentleman, 226
 Farmers of Customs, 75
 Farnham, 239

- Faversham, 33, 34, 38, 39, 41, 45
 ,, Thomas Arden of, 33, *see*
 Arden, Thomas
- Favory, Mr., 296
- Feigned Astrologer, The*, 54
- Fence or receiver, Roger Johnson, 144
- Feversham, Thomas Arden of, *see*
 Arden, Thomas
- Few, John, 297, 303
- Field, Mr., 244, 246
 ,, Capt., 65, 66
 ,, of the Cloth of Gold, 256
- Fielding, Henry, 185, 212, 221, 222
 ,, Robert, 131, 132, 133
 ,, Beau, 129
- Figure of Elizabeth Chudleigh de-
 scribed, 239
- Filer, Mrs., 166
- Finchley, 235, 238
- Fireworks in Hyde Park, 238
- Fishing, Duchess of Kingston's love of,
 238
- Fitz-John, Thomas, 11
- Fitzgerald, Vesey, receives a libellous
 letter from Mrs. Clarke, 310
- Fitzroy, Charles, 104
 ,, Ann, 102
 ,, Barbara, 122
- Flanders, 153, 176
- Fleecem, Mr., 247
- Fleet Street, 169
- Fletcher, Frances, 151
- "Fleur de Lys" Inn 44
- Fleur de Lys Court, 190
- Flushing, 44
- "Fool," Charles II., so called by Lady
 Castlemaine, 115
- Foote, Samuel, 247, 248, 250, 252
- Foote's Theatre, 252
- Forman, Doctor Simon, 70, 71, 88
- Forward*, a galley, 152
- Foster, Mr., 255
- Fountain Court, 153
- "Four virgins in white" attend trial of
 Duchess of Kingston, 253
- Fowl, Adam, 40, 44
- Franklin, friend of Thomas Arden, 37,
 38, 39
- Franklin, James, 81
- Freeman, Thomas, his epigrams, 58
- French, Colonel, 299, 300
- FRITH, MARY, "Moll Cutpurse," 49-
 60
- GAMBLING at Tunbridge Wells by the
 Duchess of Kingston, 241
- Gardner, Judith, 154
- Garrets in the house of Eliz. Chudleigh,
 236
- Gascoigne, Sir Crisp, 216, 217
- Gaunt, John of, 10, 13, 14, 18, 20, 22,
 25
- Gaynes, Manor of, 29
- Gentleman's Magazine, The*, 219
- Genuine and Impartial Memoirs*, 217
- George I., 226
- George II., 230-245
- George III., Dr. O'Meara preaches
 before him, 303
- Gibbon, the historian, 248
- Gibbons, John, 215, 216
- Giles, Thomas, 69
- Gillet, Mr., 310
- Giovanni, Don, 120
- Glennie, Mr., 306
- Globe Tavern, 54
- "Goldsmith's mad dog," 171
- Goodcole, Henry, 261
- Goodere, Sir Edward, 251
- Goodman, accomplice of Duchess of
 Cleveland, 113
 ,, Cardonell, 121
- Gout, Duchess of Kingston attacked
 by, 231
- Grafton, Duke of, 118, 126, 131, 133
- Grammont's *Memoirs*, 113
 ,, Comte de, 118, 119
- Grand ball given by Duchess of
 Kingston, 238
- Grand Tour of the Duke of Hamilton,
 127
- Grandison, Viscount William Villiers,
 100
- Gravesend, 35, 38
- Great Fire, 119
- Great Moorgate, 158
- Great Pulteney Street, 169
- Great robber of England, 57
- Green (a servant), 35-39, 40, 41, 44
- Greenwich, 45
- Greville, Thomas, 215
- Grimes, Thomas, 167

- Grimstone, Richard, 72
 ,, Sir Harbottle, 99
 Gronow, Captain, 294-5
 Grub Street, 124-125, 176
 Gunning, The Misses, 227
 Guthrie, James, 138; ordinary of Newgate, 154
Gutter news-sheets, 249
 "H," LADY, 177
 Hacks and blades of the road, 57
 Hair worn virgin-fashion by the unblushing Frances Howard, 75
 Half Moon Tavern, 169
 Hall, Jacob, 121
 ,, Virtue, 212-222
 Hamilton, Duke of, 176, 227-228
 Hammersmith, 7
 Hampton Court, 104, 107
 Hanmer, Mrs., aunt of Duchess of Kingston, 228, 246, 253
 Hannam, Richard, the great robber of England, 57
 Hanover, 167
 Harker, maiden name of Mary Bate-
 man, 262
 Harrington, Lady, 241
 Harvey, Sir D., 120
 Harwich, 240
 Harwood, Amelia, 156, 159
 Hathaway, Richard, 220
 Havering, 12, 21
 Hawkins, Cæsar, 241, 242, 253
 Hay, Lord, 93
 Hayes, 101
 Hedge Lane, 167
 Helwys, Sir Gervase, 80-84, 86
 ,, his examination, 87
 ,, his execution, 89
 Henry, Prince, 68
 Herbert, a divine, 226
 "Hermophrodite, An," 49
 Hertford, Lord, 248
 Hervey, Hon. Augustus John, husband
 of Eliz. Chudleigh, 228, 233-254
 Heselarton, Walter de, 7
 ,, Dame Euphemia, de, 7
 Hieres Bay, 180
 Hill, Dr. John, 215
 Hillsborough, Lord, 227
 Hind, Captain, 57, 58
 Holande, Sir John de, 25, 27
 Holborn Bridge, 158
 Holinshed, Ralph, 33, 34, 42 *note*, 45
 Holland, 170, 172
 Holt, Perrers of, 3
 ,, Lord Chief Justice, 131
 Holywell, Mount, 158
 Horners, Book of, 53
 Houndsditch, 208
 How, Samuel, 155-156
 HOWARD, LADY FRANCES, 63-95
 ,, Queen Catherine, 63, 67
 ,, Douglas, 63
 ,, Thomas, 64
 ,, family, sketch of, 63-65
 ,, John, 156, 157
 Howe, Lord, 241
 Hounslow Heath, 58
 Hoxton, 158
 Huggins, Catherine, 154, 156
 ,, Henry, 156
 Hungerford, Sir Edward, 123
 Hunneye, near Exeter, 4
Hymenci, Jonson's Masque, 69
 IANTHE "THE LOVELY," 131
 Indian pictures, 236
 Inglewood, 5
Inspector, The, 215
 Iphigenia, Duchess of Kingston as, 230
 Ireland, Lieutenant, 109
 Irish Masque, 75
 Isabella, Princess, 22
 JACKSON, PARSON, 249, 251, 252
 Jacob, Edward, 46
 Jamaica, 178-183
 James I., 63-95
 James, Dr. Francis, 73
 Jameson, Mrs. 102
 "Janizaries," 151
 Jenkins, Mrs., 246
 ,, Mr. (a banker), 247
 Jermyn Street, 237
 ,, Henry, 121, 125
 Jewell, Bishop, 261
 Joan, Princess, 12, 21, 22, 29
 Johnson, Roger, 144
 Jones, Mary, victim of Mrs. Browarigg,
 191-192

- Jones, Inigo, 69
 ,, patronymic of Jenny Diver, 137
 ,, Anne, 156, 158, 159
 ,, Harriet, alleged mother of Jenny Diver, 138
 Jonson, Ben, 69, 75, *see note*, 79
 Juan, Don, 129
- KEN, THOMAS, BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS, 226
 Kent, John, merchant, 29
 ,, Duke of, 306
 Kettering, 30
 Killigrew, Mr., 115
 ,, Court, 166
 Kingston, 183, 184
 KINGSTON, DUCHESS OF (ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH), 226-258
 Kingston, Evelyn Pierpoint, Duke of, 234, 254
 Kitchen, Miss, 271
 Knevet, Sir Henry, *see note*, 64
 Knightsbridge, 237
 Knollys, William, Lord Wallingford and Earl of Banbury, 65, 93
- "LADY OF THE SUN," Alice Perrers in the character of, 8
 Lainston, 228, 233; the church, 242, 246; register, 253
 Lake, Sir Thomas, 75
 Lamb, Dr., 58
 Lancaster, Duke of, 12, 14, 20, 24
 Lantemac, M., last husband of Teresia Phillips, 184
 Laroche, James, 253, 254
Last Journals of Walpole, 231
 Latimer, Lord, 9, 14, 15, 18
 Latin mottoes in fireworks at Hyde Park, 238
 Leeds, 35
Leeds Mercury, 282
 Leicester House, 235, 237, 258
 Lennox, Duke of, 69, 87
 Letter from Bateman to Perigo, 281
 ,, from Northampton to Helwys, 83-84
 ,, from Overbury to Somerset, 82
 ,, from Lady Frances Howard to Mrs. Turner, 71
- Letter from Lady Frances Howard to Dr. Forman, 71
 ,, from Foote to Duchess of Kingston, 230
 ,, from Duchess of Kingston to Foote, 249
 ,, written to the king by the Electress of Saxony, 240
 Lichfield, Bishop of, 73
 Lidcote, Sir John, 82
Life, newspaper, 59
 Lightfoot, a quaker, 237
 ,, Hannah, 237
 Lillo, his play, "Arden of Faversham," 46
 Limerick, Roger Palmer, Baron of, 103
 ,, Charles Palmer, Baron of, 104
 Lionel, Duke of Clarence, 16
 Lisbon, 106
 List of a witch's requirements, 277
 Litchfield, Anne, Countess of, 126
 Litigant, professional, an engaging specimen of, 165
 Liverpool, 139
 Lobel, Paul de, 83, 87
 London, Bishop of, 73
 ,, Bridge, 148
 ,, *Daily Post*, 154
 ,, *Evening Post*, 152, 157
 ,, Sheriffs of, 23
 Londonderry, Lord, 295
 Long, Mr., 298
 ,, Acre, 140
 Longford, Lord, 166
 Lords, House of, 143
 Lorkin, Rev. Thomas, 85, 73
 Ludgate Hill, 237
Lues venerea, Overbury alleged to have died of, 34
 Lyon, Mr. Edward, 207, 209
 Lyons, Richard, 9, 14, 24
- "M.," husband of Teresia Phillips, 183
 MacCallum negotiates with Mrs. Clarke, 305
 Macaulay, Lord, 128
 Madeira, favourite cordial of the Duchess of Kingston, 238
 Magpye-chat of the wenches, abhorred by Moll Cutpurse, 51

- Maid of honour to Princess of Wales,
 Elizabeth Chudleigh, 227-240
 Manley, Mrs., 122
 Mansfield, Sir Robert, 75
 ,, Lord, 247
 Marigold Court, 153
 Marlborough, Duke of, 122
 Marriatti, Carlo, 255
 Marshalsea Prison, 45
 Maskwell, George, 178
 Masque of flowers, 76
 Masquerade at the Court of George II.,
 230, 231
 May, Bab, or Baptist, keeper of Privy
 purse, 113
 Mayerne, Dr., 82, 83
 Meadows, Chas., 245
 ,, Evelyn, 245, 246, 254, 255
 ,, Lady Frances, 245
 Mecklenburg, Charlotte of, 238
 Merchant adventurers, 75
 Merrill, John, 228, 234
 Merston, Simon, 87
 Merton, 5
 Methodist, a crazy, assists at execution
 of Jenny Diver, 161
 Michael, serving - man of Thomas
 Arden, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40,
 42, 44
 ,, John, 156, 157
 Milliner, a pretty, taken to Thoresby
 by Duke of Kingston, 239
 Milner, Sir Charles, 292
 Milton, the ingenious Mr., 59
 Miser, John, 215
 Mistresses of Charles II. outnumbered
 by the lovers of Lady Castlemaine,
 120
 Mitchell, Mary, apprentice of Mrs.
 Brownrigg, 191-200
 M'Mahon, Colonel, 305
 Moll, Cutpurse, *see* Frith, Mary
 ,, "sweet plumpe," 59
 Monmouth, "Mr. Crofts," Duke of, 116
 Montaigne, Dr. George, Dean of
 Westminster, 75
 Montague, Dr. James, 74
 ,, Mrs., 230
 ,, Lady Mary Wortley, 234
 ,, Ralph, 127, 128
 Monte Cristo, 256
 Montmartre, 256
 Monson, Sir Thomas, 80, 81, 87, 90
 Moore, Mrs., 264-271
 ,, Rev. Joseph, 200
 ,, Sir John, 308
 Moorfields, 155
 More, Hannah, 232, 253, 254
 ,, Sir George, 90-92
 Morrell, Mr., 168
 Morrice, Secretary, 103
 Morphew, Anne, *see* Murphy, Anne
 Mortoscough, 5
 Mosby or Mosbie, Richard, 34, 35, 40,
 41, 44, 46
 ,, Susan, 36, 39, 40, 44
 Mote Book, Faversham, 44
 "Mounser," nickname of Roger
 Palmer, 101
 Mountstuart, Lord, 250, 253
 Moysey, Miss, 241, 243
 Muilman (Dutch merchant), 169-182
 ,, Mrs., 183
 "Mulled Sacks," 58
 Murphy, Anne, 140-145, 147, 152
 ,, patronymic of Jenny Diver, 157
 NASMYTH, Mr., 82
 Natus, Fortune, 213
 ,, Judith, 213
New Atlantis, 122, 128
 Newark, 18
 ,, Gaol, 19
 Newcastle, Duke of, 247, 248, 249, 253,
 254
 Newgate, 28, 148, 149, 152, 161, 171,
 199, 200
 ,, James Guthrie, Ordinary of,
 138, 139, 154, 159, 161
 New Drop, Execution of Mary Bate-
 man at the, 284
 New England, 177
 New York, 181
 Nicholl, Mr., lodges Mrs. Clarke, 305
 Nonsuch, Baroness of, Barbara Villiers,
 126
 North, Sir Edward, 34
 Northampton, Earl of, 66, 70, 78, 80,
 83, 84
 Northland, Sir Richard, 29
 Northumberland, Duke of, 129, 131
 Nottingham, 18

- "O., MR., an army agent, 295
 Oates, Titus, 107
 Old Bailey, 151, 156
 Oldesworth, Nicholas, 79
 Old Jewry, 142
 Old Steyne, 295
 Old Street Square, 169, 170
 O'Meara, Dr., 302, 303
 "Orlando," Beau Fielding pilloried
 as in *Tatler*, 130
 Ormesby, Gunnora, 3
 Osnaburg, Prince of, 289
 Ospring, 44
 Outrageous conduct of Elizabeth Chud-
 leigh, 232
 Overbury, Sir Nicholas, 76, 79, 82
 ,, Sir Thomas, his murder,
 76-91
 Oxford, 100
 ,, Earl of, 104
 Oxhey Manor, 11, 27

 "P., SIR H., 176, 177
 Page, Damaris, 58
 Paget, Mrs., 220
 Pallavicino, Letter to Carleton, 92
 Pallenswick, manor of, 7, 15, 23
 Palmer, Barbara, 99, 100
 ,, Charles, Lord Limerick, 104
 ,, Roger, 101, 103, 108
 ,, T., 129
 ,, Sir James, 101
 Palsgrave, The, 90
 Paradise Row, Knightsbridge, 236
Paradoxes and Puzzles, Paget's, 221
 Paris, 175, 256
 Parker, Archbishop, 3
 Parret, South, 218
 Parry, Sir Thos., 73
 Paternoster Row, 149
 Paul's Cross, 55
 Paulet, Sir William, 74
 Pea-hen Court, Bishopsgate, haunt of
 Jenny Diver, 148
 Peel, Isabel, 72
 Pelham, John, 29
 Pembroke, Earl of, 77
 Pepys, Mr., 102-104, 107, 113, 114,
 118, 120, 124
 Percy, Lady Lucy, 93
 ,, Lodge, 235

 Percy, Sir Henry, 19
 Perers, Sir Richard, 3, 4
 Perigo, Rebecca, 274-277
 ,, William, 274-27
 Perot, Alice, 3
 PERRERS, ALICE, 3-30
 ,, John de, 3
 Perryn, Mr., 237
 Peru, 173
 Philippa, Queen, 4
 Phillips, Colonel, 168
 ,, Sir Richard, 305, 310
 PHILLIPS, TERESIA CONSTANTIA,
 165-185
 Pierpoint, Evelyn, Duke of Kingston,
 234-245
 Plague, The, 119
 "Pleasure," Countess of Castlemaine,
 "Lady of," 125
 Plutarch, translator of, 34
 Poison, Seven kinds of, 81
 Poitou, 16
 Polyandrous tastes of Princess Joan,
 12
 Ponder's End, 220
 Pope Clement, 244
 Porter, Endymion, 226
 Portland, Duke of, 247, 307
 Port Royal, 180
 Portsmouth, 173, 179
 ,, Duchess of, 110
 Potemkin, 256
 Portugal, 168
 Post Office, Revenues of, 111
 Potts, Hannah, 282
 Poultry Compter, Brownrigg taken to.
 199
 Powder worn round the neck as a fer-
 tilizer, 72
 Powlet, Elizabeth, Earl of Essex
 marries, 74 n
 Pratt, Lord Chief Justice, 173
 Pressing-iron, 41
 Prices, Mrs. Clarke's, for Commissions,
 299
Princepessa, H.M.S., 232
 Pritchard, Mrs, 252
 Procureess on behalf of both sexes--
 Mary Frith, 58
 Proescholdt, Dr. Ludwig, 46
 Prune, grocer, 41-42

- Pseudo-Shakespeare'sche Dramen*, 46
 Puckering, Sir Thomas, 73
 Pulteney, Mr., 226
 Puritans, 226
- QUEROUAILLES, The, 114, 124
- RADCLYFFE OF BRAZEN-NOSE COLLEGE, 55
 Radzivil, Prince, 256
 Rainham Down, 35, 38
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, 90
 Ramsgate, 153
 Rawlins, Giles, 87
 Read, Richard, 45
 Red Lion Street, 170, 172
 Redriffe, 59
 Reed, Mary, 149
 Revels, Mistress of, Teresa appointed, 184
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, supports Foote, 252
 Rich, Lord Robert, 64
 Richard II., 23-28
 Richmond, 104, 117
 ,, Duke of, 118, 121
 Rickmansworth, 239
 Riga, 256
Rival Princes, The, Mrs. Clarke's brochure, 290
Roaring Girl, Middleton's, 53, 59
 Robert of Warwick, 11
 Roberts, David, 153
 Robes, Mary, 151
 Robsart, Amy, 63
 Rochester, 36, 38
 ,, Viscount, *see* Carr, Robert
 Rome, 107, 120, 247, 244, 255
 Rose, The, tavern, 158
 Rossiter, Edward, 209
 Rowley, Mary, 149, 150
 "Rubs" and "whipsters" of the town, 57
 Rudd, Mrs., 247, 253
 Rumpscuttle, Mary Frith described as a, 50
 Ruffs, yellow starched, Mrs. Turner hanged in, 89
 Russell, William, Lord, 94
 ,, his children, 94
 Russia, Duchess of Kingston stays in, 256
- SAINT ALBANS, ABBOT OF, 11, 27
 ,, Bennet's Church, 168
 ,, Bridget's, 59
 ,, David's, Bishop of, 21
 ,, Gregory, Church of, 101
 ,, James's Market, 237
 ,, ,, Palacc, 237
 ,, ,, Park, 143
 ,, John, Sir Oliver, 88
 ,, Margaret's Church, 104
 ,, Mary Woolchurch, 156
 ,, Pancras Church, 161
 ,, Paul's Cathedral, 149, 152
 ,, Paul's, Covent Garden, Somerset buried there, 94
 ,, Petersburg, 255, 256
 Saffron Walden, 65
 Sale of portions of Mary Bateman's remains, 285
 Salisbury, Earl of, *see* Cecil
 ,, Lady, 257
 Salt, Mr., solicitor, 214
 Saltpetre Bank, 207
 Sandon, Captain Huxley, 297, 299
 Savile, Sir Henry, 68
 Sawyer, Mother, 261
 Saxony, Electress of, 240
 Scarborough, Earl of, 166
 Scarrat, Robert, 209, 211, 222
 Schidley, Mdlle., 240
 Scolding humours of the Duchess of Kingston, 244
 Scott, Sir Walter, 130
 Scrope, Sir Richard le, 24
 Secret Marriage of the Duchess of Kingston, 229
 Secret Service Fund, 127
 Selden, John, 261
 Seneschal of Edward III., 24
 Seven deadly sins, Mrs. Turner credited with, 89
 Shakebag, ruffian, 33, 36, 39, 44, 45
 Shaw, Captain, 201
 Sheen, 12, 21, 22
 Sheppey, 39
 Sherbourn Lane, 154
 Shipman, Thomas, 54
 Shrewsbury, Lord, 86
 ,, 28
 Sidney, Sir Philip, note, p. 68
 Simony, Dr., 247

- Slang, Miss, 141
 Smithe, Sir William, 88, 90
 ,, Lady, 88, 90
 Snowden, Mrs., 274
 Solihull, 129
 Somerset, Earl of, *see* Carr, Robert
 Southampton, Duke of, 104
 Southcott, Joanna, 272
 Southwark, 45
 Spring Gardens, 143
 Squeamish Court of the Great Frederic, 240
 Squires, Lucy, 212-222
 ,, Mary, 212-222
 ,, John, 212
 Staines, Alderman, 291
 Stead, Barzillai, 268-269
 Stocks Market, 158
 Strange, Sir John, 160
 Stratton Strawlers, near Norwich, 72
 Street, William, 24
 Stuart, Lady Arabella, 80
 ,, Frances, 116-121
 Suffolk, Lord, 89
 ,, Duchess of, 104
 Sussex, Anne, Countess of, 126, 127
 ,, Earl of, 69, 128
 Swynford, Catherine, 13
- TAMMEL, Dress of black, worn by Lady Somerset at trial, 91
 Tanqueray, Paula, 128, 169
 Taylor, John, 56, 151, 296
 ,, Sir Herbert, 310
 "Theatrical fit of kicking and shrieking," Eliz. Chudleigh attacked by a, 233
 Thirsk, in Yorkshire, 262, 263
 Thompson, one of the supposed names of Mrs. Clarke, 290
 Thoresby, Ralph, 243, 244, 255
 Thouars, relief of, 13
 Tiber, River, 245
 Tillotson, Sermons on, 179, 180
 "Tippling," Duchess of Kingston's propensities, 24
 "Tom Otter," James II. so called by his brother, 115
 "Tomrig," Mary Frith described as a, 50
 Tonnyn, Captain, 301
- Tournay, 175
 Townsend, Charles, supports Foote, 252
 Tower Street, 144
 Travelling carriage made for the Duchess of Kingston, 240
 Trial of Duchess of Kingston for bigamy, 252
 Trial of Earl and Countess of Somerset, 87
Trip to Calais, 230, 248
 Trullibers, The, 226
 Trumbull, William, 86
 Tunbridge Wells, 177, 178, 241
 Turner, Mrs. Anne, 81, 87
 Turnham Green, Mary Frith arrested at, 58
 Tyburn, 160
 ,, Execution of Mrs. Brownrigg at, 200
 Tyshemaker, Mr., 212, 213
Twelfth Night, 53
- UPMINSTER, 28, 29
 Uvedale, Lady Essex misconducts herself with, 74
 Uterine disorder, loathsome, of Countess of Somerset's, 93
- VACHE, SIR PETER DE LA, 24
 Vassal, Colonel, 177
 Vandreuil, father of Lantemac, 184
 Vaux, Lord, 93
 Villars, Mrs., 131
 VILLIERS, BARBARA, DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND, 99-134
 ,, Charles, Earl of Anglesea, 100
 ,, George, 85, 86
 ,, William, 100
 Viper, Dr., Parson Jackson in the character of, 251
 "Virgin," Elizabeth Chudleigh described as a, 233, 236
 Virginia, 152
- WAAD, SIR WILLIAM, 80, 87
 Wadsworth, Mary, 129, 131, 132
 Wales, Prince of, Mrs. Clarke tries to make mischief with Duke of York and, 305
 Walker, Lydia, 156, 158

- Wallingford, Lord, *see* Knollys, Wm.
 Wall, William, 57
 Walpole Horace, 228, 230, 231, 236,
 257
 Walsingham, Sir Francis, *see* note, 68
 Waltham Cross, 215
 Wapping, 149
 Wardle, Colonel Gwyllym Lloyd, 290,
 305, 307-309, 311
 Warnke, Dr. Karl, 46
 Wars of Venus, "Beau" Fielding
 engaged in the, 130
 Warwick, Robert of, 11
 Washerwoman, Charles V, cowered
 before a, 116
 Water Cormorant, The, a complaint
 against a brood of Land Cormo-
 rants, 56
 Watson, Mr., 169
 Webb, patronymic of Jenny Diver, 137
 ,, Jane, Jenny Diver as, 149, 151
 Wedding presents of Lady Frances
 Howard, 75
Weekly Miscellany, 151
 Welch, Thomas, 151
 Wellclose Square, 207
 Wells, Mother Susannah, 211, 222
 Westerns, The, 226
 West Indies, 232
 Westminster, Abbey of, 11
 ,, Hall, 252
 Weston Lane, 25
 Weston, Richard, 80-83, 87, 88
 Whally's house, 102
 Whiffin, Ezra, 218
 "Whipsters," 57
 White, Edward, 33
 Whitechapel, 159
 Whitehall, 107, 120
 Whitehead, an Editor, 165
 White's (Club), 217
 Whitewell, Johanna, 11
 Whiting, Dr., 89
Whole Duty of Man (by Dr. Richard
 Allestree), 183
 Whore, Mrs. Turner, a, 89
Wife The, a poem, 79
 Wildbrat, a dog, 51
 Wild, Jonathan, 54
 Willis, patronymic of Jenny Diver, 137
 Will of the Duke of Kingston, The, 245
 Wilmot, Sir Charles, 88
 Wilson, Arthur, 70, 86
 Winchelsea, 113
 Winchester, 228, 233
 Windsor, John de, 27
 ,, Sir William de, 15, 16, 19, 26,
 27
 Wintlebury, Mr. John, 207, 209, 211
 Winwood, Sir Ralph, 76, 86, 87
 Wisebourne, Mother, 138
 Wise-woman, Mrs. Annie Turner, a, 70
 Wolfy Lane, 25
 Woods, Mary, 71, 72
 Wood, Sir Daniel, 88
 Worthy, Mr., 178, 179, 181
 Wotton, Sir Henry, 77
 Wright, furniture dealer, 307
 Wycherley, the dramatist, 121-122
 Wye, 34
 Wykeham, William of, 3, 11, 12, 21,
 22, 28
 YACHT, brought to Rome by Duchess
 of Kingston, 245
 York, Duchess of, 112
 ,, Duke of, 111, 113, 119, 236, 289,
 295, 300, 305
 ,, ,, infatuation for Mrs.
 Clarke, 296
 ,, ,, plotted against by Mrs.
 Clarke, 307
 ,, ,, his examination, 308
 ,, ,, resigns his post, 309
 Yorkshire Witch, The, 261-286
 Young, Mary, patronymic of Jenny
 Diver, 137
 Ypres, John de, 24
 ZOUCHE, LORD, 87

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