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*Countess of Guernsey*

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THE  
**DEATH-BED**  
**CONFESSIONS**

OF THE LATE  
**Countess of Guernsey,**

TO  
**LADY ANNE H\*\*\*\*\*;**

DEVELOPING A SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS TRANSACTIONS  
CONNECTED WITH THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS  
PERSONAGES IN THE KINGDOM.



I am the Viper that has been secretly wounding you both.

Vide THE COUNTESS'S NARRATIVE.



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THE  
**DEATH-BED CONFESSIONS**  
OF THE  
**COUNTESS OF GUERNSEY.**



THE interest attached to those mysterious transactions, which involved the life of an illustrious female in the most trying difficulties, which caused her to roam—an exile from the land in which she should have enjoyed regal dignities, and that, ultimately, broke her noble heart, and laid her in a premature grave, has not yet passed away. The more they are developed, the more must their importance increase: and the more that truth is hidden for a time, like persecuted virtue, the more glorious will be its splendour and its triumph, when suffered to emerge from the clouds that enveloped it. The declarations of the death-bed are generally allowed to possess veracity;—it is then that pomp and ambition lose their power; and it is in the solemn moments of approaching fate, that the conscience-stricken mind attempts to make some feeble amends for the loads of injuries it has heaped upon the head of the innocent. Among the number of those individuals, who appear to have voluntarily contributed to embitter the life of the late r——l victim, was, according to her own acknowledgment, the late Countess of GUERNSEY. On her death-bed, this lady drew up a narrative of the share she had borne in the intrigues which were attended with such fatal results; and it will be admitted, on perusal, that none of the publications, which have yet appeared, relative to the causes of the Q——'s sufferings, have thrown so much light on those mysterious transactions as the following “Confessions” of the penitent Countess, who was herself a companion and attendant of the illustrious female she confesses to have betrayed.

The narrative is written with fidelity and minuteness, and strikingly evinces the power of conscience to inflict



an awful retribution for guilt even on the minds of those who revel amidst the luxuries of a court, and are blessed with the most envied gifts of fortune.

The important document which we are about to introduce to the public teems with matter of vital interest to the most exalted personages, elucidating a series of transactions hitherto either veiled in obscurity or represented through the medium of blind and erring prejudice; we shall, therefore, briefly observe, that the substance of them is most decidedly correct, having been communicated by the party to whom alone these facts were disclosed by the dying Countess. It was her last wish that they should be made known to the illustrious lady concerned; and their truth, and the melancholy event of their arriving too late at B——— H——— for the purpose of justice, and, perhaps for the arresting the progress of the r——l victim's fatal malady, are matters quite notorious in that circle, wherein alone they have as yet transpired. It would be well DID THEY ADMIT OF CONTRADICTION; but while the reader is earnestly assured that it is only from a matter of delicacy that parties and authorities are not more explicitly named, we have to regret that we can challenge THE REFUTATION OF A SINGLE FACT contained in the "CONFESSIONS" of the unamiable and unfortunate Countess of Guernsey.

Deeply, however, as it is to be regretted that the development of the crafty and mysterious transactions detailed in these "Confessions" did not take place earlier, yet it must be highly gratifying to every lover of truth and justice, truly consolatory to those who cherish the memory of HER whose noble soul sought refuge from a world of woe in the mansions of Heaven, and the delight of every Briton whose heart beats with love for his Sovereign, that these "Confessions" tend to place *the real character and conduct of two most illustrious personages* in a far more amiable point of view than the fiends of party would desire; for they will not fail to perceive that the basest passions that ever influenced the human breast were in constant action to excite in noble minds unjust suspicion and malignant jealousy; and to mar the happiness of two beings of the most exalted rank and the highest attainments, who were bound by every tie, human and divine, to be the solace and delight of each other.



## TO THE HON. LADY ANNE H\*\*\*\*\*.

IN my retirement from a world, which I have seen enough of to despise, I feel an anxious desire to repair the injury I did to a certain exalted lady, and know no better mode than to disclose my sentiments to your ladyship, who, as the friend of slandered innocence, will, I am sure, find a pleasure in reading the following true, humiliating, statement.

This will be delivered to your hands by Mr. S——, but not till after my death. Pity my errors, and publish them, only so far as may be necessary for the peace of her whom I have so deeply injured! Tell her she is amply avenged, and my tortured soul has often envied her calm enjoyment.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is now useless, dear Lady Anne, to speak of those youthful days when the neglect of every thing serious, and the pursuit of frivolous amusements laid the foundation of a life of misery; but as, when you read this, it will be to you as the voice of my departed spirit, (for, alas! I feel that my tide of life is ebbing,) I will acknowledge, that, bending before the shrine of vanity, flattery was my greatest enemy—the one before which every good resolution yielded;—yet, surely, to love the P—— must have been a pardonable offence! he who was ever so engaging, so handsome, so irresistible; he who, at the time of which I speak, was blooming in the vigour of manhood, extolled by his own sex, admired, I might say adored, by ours;—who would not have felt proud when distinguished by his favoured attention? My heart beat high when he retired from the adulation of the Court, to recruit his spirits in a lively conversation with me, and was pleased to call those his happiest moments! Who would not have dreaded a rival in such a bosom? My Lord *Guernsey* loved him, and was himself pleased with his selection of me as his friend; his R——l Mother insisted on my filling a place in the family circle, and said G—— was dull whenever indisposition, or other unavoidable circumstances, caused my absence." Yet it was in this high society I learned to be artful, and that I became an adept in the science of intrigue. I joined with the young ones in deceiving the K——, who was averse to every expensive pleasure,



and delighted in the quiet and innocent employments of domestic life. I have been informed that, during the first fifteen years after his marriage, he spent the hours he could spare from business in reading to the Q——; improving her in the English language, and all things fitting her station; and, by way of a temporary relaxation, I know that he occasionally employed himself in the exercise of some mechanical work. His M—— never missed an opportunity of conversing with men from whom he had any probability of gaining information respecting the general state of society, with a view to any benefit that might be derived by the country over which he presided from such communication. The evening diversions were music and cards, the latter was admitted to prevent the Q——'s *ennui*. As the children grew up, these innocent recreations were declined by degrees; a musical party was always formed, which usually ceased at ten o'clock, or soon after; it being His M——'s constant practice to rise before six, on which account he quitted the family circle early; the Q—— usually left the room with him, but soon returned. The young people then began to enjoy their ease; for, with the exception of A—— and her youngest brother, who were very attentive to their father, the others were reserved in his presence. Though the old gentleman encouraged their confidence, by his good humour and willingness to enter into their youthful sallies, his kindness received a continual check, so that he became sensible of it; and seeing they considered his presence a restraint on their cheerfulness, he no longer enjoyed the society of his family, but retired earlier. and when with them, was less talkative than formerly.

At that time I was young, and too much engaged in the amusements around me to regret the K——'s absence; I speak of the year 1787. About that period, we lost, for a short time, the ornament of our society—the all-accomplished and graceful P—— of W——: conjectures were vague and various; some said, “the P—— had taken an excursion to the coast, having accompanied a friend on his return to France.” I felt not a little proud that I had been admitted a party to the secret of his being gone to take a peep at Paris; but this the Parisians were not intended to know, his object being just to look at their then beautiful Queen, and to play one game with her at *rouleaux*, under the incognito



of an English nobleman; as, also, to satisfy himself whether the fashionable Mademoiselle de Salle was as pleasing as Fanny; and to try the affections of the fascinating widow F——, who was then in Paris, and about whom his head had wandered ever since he met her at her uncle's. His absence did not exceed fifteen days; his return home was hailed, by his mother and young friends, as a joyful event;—to me, however, it became less so, when I heard that the widow had returned with him. At first, I endeavoured to think it a mere flirtation—an ephemeral passion, for well I knew the susceptibility of his heart! and, as long as I enjoyed his friendship, feared not the flutterers of a day! But rumour soon told a tale which the P—— did not contradict even to me, “That Mrs. F—— met him at Calais, where they were united according to the forms of the Romish church.” Meantime, two houses at B——n were fitted up in an accommodating style, so as to admit an intercourse by a private passage. The lady assumed a great degree of stately *hauteur*, refusing access to many of her former acquaintances, and all within her mansion bore the mark of royalty. No one acknowledged, yet every one treated, Mrs. F—— as consort to the P——, and their domestic happiness was the general topic, which, however I was little inclined to credit, the P—— being equally ardent in his pleasurable pursuits and equally warm in our private interviews! That he lived with the lady on a different footing to the usual style of a mistress, was apparent; and the circumstance being related to his father, the latter was so hurt, that, with other family disturbances, it produced a violent paroxysm of a disorder which was near proving fatal to his life.

Mrs. F—— continued the serious friend of the P——, and was gratified to the extent of her wishes. Pride being her prevailing passion, appearances were, to her, every thing; the soft emotions of the heart she was ever a stranger to. The Q—— noticed her, as did several of the family; the old lady pretended to believe that Mrs. F—— kept steady the affections of her favorite son—but here she tied a bandage over her eyes from a wish not to see.

In the then state of things the K—— began to feel uneasiness regarding the succession: the pleasing expectations in which he indulged at the union of his se-



cond son had vanished, on hearing that F——k was as regular in his visits to Mrs. C——y as before his marriage; the good old gentleman remonstrated with him on the subject. The expostulation was heard, but not heeded.—No wonder, then, that the K—— should feel anxious to see his eldest son settled: to this step also, the first minister was a strenuous adviser, and the P——li——t, being urged at that time to pay the P——'s debts, made it a condition that he should take a wife. This was a measure that made me determine on a plan at which I now shudder.

The story of the Prince's marriage with Mrs. F—— had gained universal credit, and P\*\*\*, a stanch protestant, dreaded the influence possessed by Mrs. F——, it being well understood they lived in great domestic comfort; particularly, as at that time (doubtless to please Mrs. F——) the P—— showed a strong partiality towards the body of Catholics—even so as to raise their hopes to the attainment of emancipation at no distant period. This apprehension being exaggerated by the ministers in their statement to the K——, he resolved to make any sacrifice to prevent it. In the early part of that year, he had repeated interviews with the P—— respecting his marriage with some royal foreigner, the interests of whose family might assimilate with his own in religion and general politics.

Never had I thought the P—— so captivating, as at the moment when he informed me of his determination to comply with the request. "My debts will be paid," said His R—— H——, "and I shall please my father." "Who," I asked, "is to be the happy lady?"—"That is of little consequence," he replied; "I hope she will not be so unreasonable as to expect me to love her! and will I not subject myself to be teased into hatred towards one, who, if she act wisely, will have a just claim to my esteem."

I then begged I might have the honor of attending the lady, as it would give me, I said, the means of sometimes adding to the comfort of both. I certainly did not, at that time, contemplate the dreadful consequences which might happen, but I felt that my motive had much of selfishness in it, as I knew that, by such occupation, I should have it in my power to direct, in some degree, their affections. We talked much of the bride elect: F——k had seen his cousin, during a



visit he had made at her father's court, and reported her manners to be extremely engaging, her disposition lively, and that the uncommon ingenuousness of her heart laid her most secret thoughts open to every observer. Here I interrupted F——k's eulogium, to observe, that "I had always understood the Court of B—— to be the most free and licentious of any on the Continent." "With justice it is so considered," replied the Duke, "but her mother has taken care to keep her daughter uncontaminated by bad example! Her mornings are employed in study; her evenings, in the society and amusements of young persons of her own age; and I cannot help thinking the mind is more occupied when playing at *hunt the slipper* or *forfeits*, than in listening to the scandal of tea-table chat, or attending to cold formalities.

Whenever I had any grand object to attain, it was my constant practice to apply at the fountain-head; so that morning I took my work to the Q——'s apartment for she loved to see us industrious; I was most graciously ordered to be seated. At first I kept to common topics; until, by degrees, I arrived, through a winding path, to the comforts of matrimony; and finding the theme not unpleasant, I said, "English wives are indebted to your M—— for their felicity; your domestic happiness has become fashionable; long may it please God to spare us the example! for much, I fear, the loss of your M—— would not only be severely felt by us whose personal knowledge has taught us to revere and love you with filial affection, but our children would experience the most woeful effects from a change, and morality itself would totter to its foundation."

"My dear Lady Guernsey," said the Q——, "to whom do you allude? you alarm my fears: the correctness of your ideas has gifted you with a foresight I am unacquainted with; I have often profited by your friendly and judicious hints; whisper your present apprehensions—you shall not repent your confidence."

"Pardon me," I hesitatingly exclaimed, as I covered my eyes with my handkerchief, "my anxiety for the happiness of our beloved P—— rendered me rather incautious; a dread lest his amiable disposition should meet one that is uncongenial in this expected union, led me to anticipate the fatal consequences which might result to future generations; and I have unburdened



my thoughts where I ought to have concealed them." "Have you, then, heard any thing particular of the P——ss it is intended my son should espouse?" asked her M——. "Only, that she is an exception to the usual manners of the court in which she has been educated, and in which she is decribed to shine as a paragon of perfection," I replied; "this intelligence coming too from so good a judge as your M——'s second son, ought to have silenced every fear; but my spirits are greatly depressed; I am unusually thoughtful to-day; whoever, like myself, has experienced the happiness enjoyed by my family, in the condescending affability of a Q——, that is the admiration of all Europe for her virtue and the chaste manners of her Court, must, naturally, shrink from the remotest prospect of a change—a change which I hope not to live to see!"

"You, Lady Guernsey, of all the females I have the pleasure to call my friends, are the one I would, by choice, select, as the adviser and directress of the P——ss on her arrival in this country. Can you, do you think, give up your time to this charitable purpose? Caroline's mother never was a favorite with me; she has her brother's failings, without his virtues, and is much too tame for her station." A message from her daughter E——, who was very seriously indisposed, interrupted our *tête-à-tête*; but her M—— did not leave the room without having first obtained my promise, that, if the Earl would consent, I should hold myself in readiness to attend on the expected stranger. I spoke of *maternal duties*, as the only impediment to my ready acquiescence in any measure which might in the least conduce to the happiness of any branch of her family. I guessed this sort of excuse would best prove my fitness for the office, as well as increase the Q——'s desire to engage me. And I felt not a little pleased at my prospect of acquiring, what, to me, was the most desirable thing in the world—to lead the affections of the P——ss of W—— in such a manner as to secure her husband for myself!

In the month of December, Lord M—— secured the treaty, by acting proxy for the P——, and, in the beginning of 1795, a squadron was prepared to conduct the bride-elect to England. I excused myself from accompanying the expedition, thinking it best to stay and receive the Q——'s personal directions concerning



her new daughter—I also wished to give all the consolation in my power to the expectant bridegroom, with whom I had certain plans to arrange.

I met the P——ss and suite at Greenwich. Our first interview took place at the Governor's house. I certainly eyed her very narrowly, and thought her H——ss paid more attention to Commodore P—— than was quite necessary; she spoke English in the German style, like the old Q——, and her manners seemed to me, as far removed from courtly rules as one can well imagine. I could not find fault with her person—Her face contained some pleasing expression, but it had too much of nature in it; and I exclaimed, mentally, “how will the elegant G—— receive this rude unpolished piece of sculpture!”

The thought instantly occurred to me, that I would pretend to mollify, in some degree, the disappointment he was doomed to receive; I therefore begged leave to withdraw soon after breakfast, under pretence of preparing for the P——ss; it being understood I had brought dresses from London, and wanted to point out which would be most proper. I then stole a few minutes to address the Q——, informing her, “the stranger was deficient of those delicate attractions the P—— so highly prized, and begged to assure her M—— I took this method to acquaint the most amiable of men, that he must not rest on outward appearances, but give credit for the inward graces of the mind, which I hoped acquaintance would bring to light, in the female who had the honour to be selected as the partner of the P——, and to succeed (I hoped at a very distant period) the most revered and virtuous Q—— in the world!”

This note I sent off immediately, for I considered the importance of first impressions, and knew the intelligence would be communicated by the mother to her son, and would insure that sort of reception for the stranger which I wished her to receive—and I had the pleasure to find, as I was present at the family introduction, that my plan succeeded. Certainly the K—— looked all satisfaction on that occasion; but a glance, transferred from the countenance of the P——ss to me, directed by the Q——, accompanied with a raising of the shoulders, expressed her M——'s grief on the first interview, and the kind of sympathetic anticipation she felt for her beloved G——.



My heart exulted in the general sneer I read on the faces of the girls. The bridegroom was the last to make his appearance in the family circle; and, spite of my endeavours, I was chagrined to perceive more of tender pity than the disgust which I had expected to see depicted on his features. All eyes were fixed on the P——, when, with more than his usual elegance of manner, he bent towards the stranger, and raised her hand to his lips. I saw her eyes beam upon him, as on her protector, to whom she was going to confide her future destinies;—the look pierced my very soul; the fiend Revenge bounded in my bosom—and I secretly vowed, that no earthly power should rob me of the object I loved to distraction! and of whose heart, until that moment, I never doubted myself to be the mistress. I dared not fix my regards upon him; but assuming a smile quite foreign to my feelings, I tried to attract the Q——'s attention, lest she might also be inclined to compassionate the being, on whom her son lavished his kind-hearted notice: her uncle felt too happy within himself to apprehend uneasiness in any one, so that I had nought to fear from his penetration. Besides the pleasure of seeing his niece, the K—— had various inquiries to make concerning his sister, towards whom he preserved a strong affection. I was impatient for the conclusion of this interview, which broke up to prepare for the R——'s nuptials. I superintended the arrangements of the bride, who really looked pleasing, even in my jaundiced eye. Determined to rob her features of their happy expression, I dismissed the attendants, under pretence of giving her H——ss a respite for recollection, and availed myself of the leisure moments to add rouge to her before highly-coloured cheek; for it was the natural look of ease and health that she possessed, of which I aimed to deprive her. As I made this unbecoming addition, I observed to her, "that Mrs. F—— was fair, and the P—— always wished HER not to be sparing of rouge:" she eagerly asked "Who is Mrs. F——?" I hesitated, looked foolish, and begged her to excuse my inadvertency, in having mentioned one whose name I ought particularly to have avoided; and declared, the interest I felt to render her appearance as lovely as possible, had made me forgetful of other matters; she persisted to inquire, and I to make excuses; urged at length by her intreaties, I knelt



before her, and, with convulsive sobs, that I could well assume, besought her not to name my offence to the P——, who would never forgive my incautious conduct, in speaking of a person who, certainly, *had seemed to share his affections*, but whom there was no longer any cause to suspect; she having consented to remain retired and unnoticed. “Does any engagement bind the P—— to that lady?” asked the P——ss. “Excuse me,” I replied, “that I cannot answer now—on some future day I promise to disclose all.” “On your honour, promise!” said the P——ss. “Solemnly I do!” was my answer; “but your H——ss is disturbed—I cannot forgive myself—let me entreat your H——ss will take something to recruit your spirits.” “A little cyder will suffice,” said the P——ss; “the voyage has made me thirsty.” I rang—an attendant entered; I ordered some cyder, as also some brandy, and mixing some of the latter with some cyder, assured the P——ss it would prove particularly refreshing after her journey. No sooner had her H——ss swallowed the overpowering beverage, than a message was brought that the ceremony waited her appearance, and she hastened to join the family who had assembled in the closet.

Never shall I forgive myself the mortification I had prepared for her—even at that time my heart reproached me, when I saw her bold and unbecoming manner, as she tottered towards her uncle. He, good man! fancied it was girlish agitation, whilst every other person beheld with astonishment, the dauntless expression of her eye; fired with secret anger, and strengthened by the potent draught which the demon of mischief had impelled me to administer—no timid fears caused a retiring glance; on the contrary, her look penetrated every countenance—but I alone could read her thoughts! I saw that her mind was absorbed in elucidating the doubtful secret, and that she was employed in seeking the object of her emotion in every face. Unconscious of her actions, and forgetful even of the approaching ceremony, until reminded, the procession had formed for entering the R——l chapel. The Duke of C—— having led her to her seat, the P—— came next, looking manly, handsome, and graceful. When each person had taken his allotted place, the marriage ceremony commenced; the bridegroom’s agitation was apparent to all; he was so little himself, that he arose too soon, which occasioned



a pause, but the K—— whispered something to his son, who resumed his kneeling posture. Possibly no one could better account for this absence of thought than myself: I saw him look aghast when he first perceived his consort's altered and strange appearance, and pleased myself, as he gave the bridal kiss, to think, how he would revolt from lips that my arts had so recently sullied!

That night, the Marchioness of T——, Lady C——n, Lady C——, and myself, attended the P——ss to her chamber: I saw her anxiety to question me, which their presence prevented; she certainly did not exhibit any pleasing expectation when we took our leave. On passing the P——'s dressing-room, I met the faithful Troop, carrying wine to his master; the man shook his head significantly, as if to say, "He should have done without this to-night;" whilst I, mentally exclaimed, "I envy them not, for well I know, that few approach the nuptial bed with less prospect of happiness!" Sure some evil spirit directed me that day, or I could never have devised so diabolical a plan; but my mind was bent on the ruin of the P——ss, and, after a night of inward agony, I arose with new resolution to effect it.

Knowing the K——'s habit of rising early, I walked before breakfast to B——m House, and, going to the Q——'s apartment, said, that, fearful of not having an opportunity, during the day, I came thus early, to inquire how her M——y had borne the fatigue of yesterday. "My good Lady *Guernsey*," said the Q——, this is kind: for heaven's sake, tell me, what you think of the stranger! Mary declares she never beheld such an awkward looking creature; and we all deplore the fate of our poor G——; his father is the only person who seems blind to the strangeness of her manner!" "I dare not utter my fears," I replied, "but, when she has recovered the fatigue of her voyage, the P——ss will be more herself; she will not then be troubled with *thirst*, as she is at present." "I see," exclaimed the Q——; "really I thought she staggered at the altar.—How dreadfully shocking! what had she taken?" "The P——ss insisted on mixing brandy with her cyder," I replied: "indeed, she poured it out herself, or I should have been more careful." "This is monstrous! G—— must be informed of her vile practice." "Permit me to request your M——y's forbearance in this instance,"



I said, "the like may never occur again." "Promise," resumed the Q——, "if it should, that you will acquaint me." "I shall conceive it my duty so to do:" I answered, and excused my longer stay, under pretext that the P——ss might want me. On my return to C—— House, all was still in the anti-room. The criminal passion I had admitted in my bosom burned within me, and I lamented having accepted a situation, which compelled me to witness the estrangement of the only heart I had ever prized. Agitated with hope and fear, as well as other stronger sensations, I retired to a dressing-room, the door of which stood half open, and threw myself on a sofa, exclaiming, as I did so, "G—— I exist but in your presence; if my love must be sacrificed to this coarse, untutored woman, I will yield my life also; since I could not live a single day chilled by your indifference." At that moment an arm encircled my waist..... Alarmed, lest it might be my Lord *Guernsey*, and that he had heard my complaint, I was near fainting, when the most soothing accents lulled every fear; it was the P—— himself—he closed the door and a conversation followed, the most interesting I had ever held. I gathered, in general terms, that I had nothing to fear from my rival! some half uttered sentences implied disappointment, nay, a sentiment still stronger, disgust! Elated at the half-owned truth, my gratitude became unbounded as my love, and exulting in the confidence I had shared, I quitted the P——, to answer the bell which summoned me to attend his consort. I entered her apartment with a cheerful countenance, and ventured to inquire "if her R—— H——— felt well and happy?" The P——ss answered, with an air of lassitude, "I own to you, my friend, I am not as comfortable as I expected." "Nature is very perverse," I observed, "for I can assure you, every female envies your R—— H———." "I cannot see any reason;" replied the P——ss. "Are you not the future Q—— of England—allied to the best, most accomplished, and elegant of men!" The P——ss, smiling, answered, "I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with the P—— to pronounce him the best—I will give him credit for all the manners and accomplishments which a man can possess; but, with regard to *make*, or *form*, as you call it, I have known many as elegant, or more so; there is Mr. M——, for example, to go no further."



Now, in these observations, as experience has since analyzed them, there was nothing improper; the smile was good-humoured, and void of any lurking ill; yet, did my prejudiced mind give it a diabolical meaning; and, at that moment, I resolved to twist and use each word as might hereafter answer my maddened purpose. Soon as breakfast was over, I attended the bride to W——r; and a second and a third night had the mortification to see the P—— retire to her chamber. No longer able to endure this appearance of harmony, I depended on my influence with the P—— to procure a separation of beds; so on the morning when we were about to return to London, I contrived to meet the P—— in his dressing-room. I had purposely taken off my rouge, and, with an air of langour, which was partly affected and partly real, I approached his R—— H——, to inform him of my intention to remain a short time at W——r. “I gave myself credit,” said I “for a greater portion of fortitude than I possess; I cannot endure to be an eye-witness of your R—— H——’s happiness with one so every way unworthy her exaltation: had the P——ss been as amiable as you are deserving, I hope, and believe, I could have witnessed your H——’s felicity, if not with pleasure—with patient forbearance—but, now, it is painful, in the extreme, to perceive so much worth and goodness lavished on a person who, by nature, is insensible to the blessing.” “I think, with you, she is cold:” replied the P——. “No, no!” I observed, “NOT COLD; where inclination leads, she can be lavish of her love!” “I conjure you, by the friendship that has existed so long between us,” said the P——, “by that passion with which you have inspired me! say all you know—conceal nothing from me.” “Pardon me, your R—— H——, and impute it to my sincere affection, that I have penetrated so deep into the recesses of her heart. I may err in thinking as I do, and, for the future, will be more cautious in unbosoming my thoughts; I will no more dwell on words, but will wait until facts shall warrant my speech.” “*Guernsey*,” said the P——, “I believe you love me—not to think it, would be worse than death, so entirely am I yours! and I tell you, there is nothing in Caroline to excite affection—her actions, and her manner, are unfeminine; her language coarse, and her whole person needs the aid of English habits to render



it even agreeable.....and, much I fear, it will never acquire the style of fascination, which alone has charms for me! Nevertheless, as a stranger, she claims my protection; and I have been considering how I can best fulfil the engagement I have entered into, without enslaving myself; for, though the chain that binds us has not been assumed from choice, I feel, as she has been selected for my partner, and will one day fill the station of Q——n of these realms, that much is due to her from the nation and from myself."

Piqued at the considerate manner in which the P—— had spoken of his consort, in the first moment of irritation, I made this rash reply;—"To please each party, I beg your H——'s permission that I may remain in this retirement; where in the attendance on your excellent mother, I shall run no risk of hearing your name traduced by unfavourable comparisons with any man; painful as your absence will be, it will not be accompanied by the bitter regret of seeing your love abused."

"Have I a rival in C——'s affections?" asked the P——.

"Surely, I have not betrayed the P——ss!" said I fearfully.

"You have done only part of your duty, said the P——," "and I trust you need no stronger motive than *my love* to complete the work, by naming the person who has dared to supersede me in her affections."

My refusal, dear Lady Anne, was vain; so, after a struggle, which the eloquence of love overpowered, I related her words: "That she had *known* several more elegant in form than his R—— H——, particularly Mr. M." and I took care to lay such emphasis on the word *known*, as should leave on his mind the strongest and most unfavourable impression.

"Enough!" said the enraged P——, "I swear to renounce, from this hour, all further intimacy with one so hardened in vice, so depraved by habit."

I became alarmed for the consequences I might draw upon *myself*: I soothed, solicited, and, on my knees, besought his forgiveness: protesting my sorrow for having repeated what my love, perhaps, had exaggerated into criminality. At length, I obtained his promise that, for my sake, he would bury the cause of his conduct within his own breast;—this he pledged his ho-



nour to observe, and I firmly believe he has maintained his word inviolate. With regard to his future behaviour, the P—— was equally determined to confine his attention to outward form, saying, “She shall reside under the same roof, and share my protection and civility, so long as she acts in a manner to deserve them.”

On our return to C—— House, the newly-married pair maintained a sort of cool politeness towards each other. At the hour of rest they retired, as usual, to their dressing-rooms. When the bride had undressed, the P—— led her within the door of her chamber; then saying he felt indisposed, he kissed her hand, and wished her “Good night.” I watched the countenance of each: that of the P—— evinced a delicate kind of sorrow; the P——ss was evidently mortified—her pride dictated acquiescence; she returned the wish without a question or a word of complaint.

The separate beds at C—— House, as soon as the circumstance was known, became a subject of uneasiness to the K——; he expostulated with his son, who entered no farther into the matter, than to assure his father it was mutually agreeable to himself and his consort; and the old gentleman learning, soon after, that his daughter and neice was in that state in which, “all wives wish to be who love their lords,” contented himself with merely advising his son against indulging with other females, concluding that after the *accouchement*, all would return to the right system. In one part of the father’s injunction I perfectly coincided; and, to prevent the P——’s ranging in the sweets of variety, I kept him as much as possible to myself; but here I did not always succeed; his visits to Mrs. F—— were more frequent than I judged necessary; but, as his delicacy made him still consider it right to continue his clandestine attention to her, it appeared a fit occasion for me to communicate the nature of the P——’s engagement in that quarter; which I took an opportunity of doing, under a promise, on the part of the P——ss, never to divulge that the communication was made by me.

The P——ss received the intelligence with an hauteur of spirit for which she was remarkable, and which gave her the appearance, to those not well acquainted with her, of want of feeling; but which rather proceeded from that greatness of soul that for centuries had characterised the B——k race. From that period, Mrs.



F—— was frequently the subject of our discourse, when we were together.

The P—— continued to notice his consort; but even the ceremony of doing so was performed in a careless manner,—more as a duty he owed the public than out of any desire to oblige his wife. An incident, which occurred that autumn, increased his coolness, and confirmed the Q—— her implacable enemy.

It happened, that the Rev. Mr. Randolph had business at Berlin, and waited on the P——ss, to ask if she would honour him with any commands. The P——ss, thinking this an excellent opportunity to send to her father's court, had a personal interview with Mr. Randolph, when she requested him to deliver a packet into the hands of her mother, and particularized other commissions, all which he promised to execute punctually. Mrs. Randolph was then at Bath, in a delicate state of health; as soon as her husband had left her, the disorder took an alarming turn, her life was in imminent danger, and an express was hurried after her husband, which reached him on the coast, just as he was about to embark. It may be easily conceived that Mr. R.'s thoughts were absorbed in his wife's situation. Anxious to behold again the object of his affections, he determined to relinquish his intended journey, and to retrace his steps, with all possible speed, to Bath; but, even at that moment, the packet intrusted to him by the P——ss was a principal object of his care; he enclosed the packet, therefore, and directed it "*To the particular Care of the Lady in Waiting upon the P——ss of W——s;*" I was the lady in waiting; and finding, on taking off the cover, that it contained a parcel for the Duchess of B——k, I informed the Q——; and, anticipating how far her curiosity might lead, when urged by my insinuations, I showed the packet, remarking, at the same time, "it might contain a journal, by its size." Her M—— asked if the P——ss kept a journal? I said, "it was her H——'s custom to write her daily observations."

"Open it!" said the Q——. Never did I obey any command with so much alacrity, and my joy seemed complete, when I perceived several pages of the journal which I had been in the habit of seeing the P——ss write. It began with her entrance on board the royal yacht, and was written in bad French, mixed with



some English phrases, and described with great justness, her conception of the English character; and on the whole, conveyed a vein of satire, truly entertaining. She described the manners of the ladies, who were sent to conduct her, with provoking accuracy; but the introduction to her husband's family was best of all delineated; and some events of the wedding-night were stated with admirable talent, though with great good humour, containing some particulars, told, indeed, with delicacy, but which were only fit for a mother's eye.

The Q——, raising her hands, exclaimed, "I am shocked! what, my friend, can be done for G——." when the family was described, the P——ss had drawn each with such accuracy, that it was impossible to make a mistake. "To begin," said her R—— H——, "with this unparalleled, virtuous family! among whom my good uncle is certainly misplaced, since he is benevolent, considerate, and virtuous, with a heart just like your own, so I shall put him up, *on the shelf*, as the people here say, but not in their acceptation of the term, which implies one unfit for service; but that he is beyond all compare with them. I shall, therefore, pass on to my *snuffy* aunt."—"Monstrous?" exclaimed the Q——, "me vow she is right wicked."

I own I trembled for what might follow; and was almost sorry, when I found her satire attacked only the foibles of her husband's family, and would have passed, with well-intentioned persons, for mere playfulness; but we were not disposed to consider it in that light. Her M——— conceived herself grossly insulted, as though she had been accounted the worst of criminals. E———'s taste for *fun and porter*, witty Mary's *prying curiosity*, and for which her cousin styled her "*peeping Polly*," so roused her anger, that she seemed inclined to expose the whole to the P——; but the acmé of her M———'s rage was reserved for the line in which the P——as, describing the men's dress, on coming to the high collar, observed, "most fashions here originate in the convenience of the GREAT, to hide their *natural defects*." No longer able to bear, what she conceived to be, an intended insult, the Q—— seized the packet, and hastened with it to the K——.

Uncertain to what extent R——'s fury might go, especially as I heard his M——— say, "Fie, fie, Charley: is this your mode of protecting a stranger? what an



example do you set, in opening private communications—read not another word—but let *Guernsey* re-seal the packet, and get her to make the best apology she can,” I thought it prudent to retire, and watch for her M——, as he passed to her own apartment.

“The K——,” said her M——, “with his usual perverse way of reasoning, has made me promise to return these papers, without seeming to know their contents: his silly fondness for his neice keeps him blind to her conduct, but I will find the way to punish her—I shall certainly perform *my duty*, in cautioning my son; and you, *Guernsey*, must contrive a way to enclose the letters as they were before—I then retired, but, before I closed it, I copied all that related to the R——l Family.

From that day, the family intercourse became less and less frequent; they met only when etiquette made it needful; and then the Q—— and her daughters, (with the exception of E——) omitted no opportunity to mortify the P——s’s feelings: the latter affected not to understand their insinuations. In many points the princess was masculine; her health and spirits were good, and being naturally noble, frank, and generous, she felt herself elevated by the approaching prospect; for, although slighted at that moment, she felt that she was about to give birth to the future heir to all their boasted power, and trusted to that epoch, as the means of reconciling her in the affections of her husband, and giving her consequence in the eyes of his family and the nation; and her spirits rose as she approached nearer the moment which was to realize this fond expectation! This elevation of mind prevented her seeing the coolness of her husband’s relatives; whilst they considered her cheerfulness as proceeding from extreme thoughtlessness; thus deceived and deceiving, each regarded the other with a mortal indifference, which was daily growing into hate in the one party, and disgust in the other.

Little apparent alteration took place, until the birth of a daughter brought the family arrangements to a sort of crisis. This much-looked-for event was attended with some unpropitious circumstances:—that it was not a son, was a source of disappointment to the P——, who soon after ordered an additional private staircase to



be erected, leading to the nursery, by which means he avoided the disagreeable dilemma of sometimes meeting the child.

Notwithstanding the calumnious insinuations of the Q——, the P——ss seemed to have acquired a new claim on her husband, and I saw, with jealous malignity, that, in two months after the great event, he increased his attentions towards her. Fearful these appearances might lead to a reconciliation, I deemed it politic to re-peruse the contents of the packet, which had now lain a long time untouched; and, the next time, I met the P—— alone, in half uttered sentences, I conveyed more to the P——'s mind than an exposure of the packet could have done; and took care, during the following days, not to allow his R—— H——— leisure for reflection.

In this manner, and with these arguments, I succeeded in chasing the tender sentiments which had latterly lurked in his bosom for the P——ss. Though still living under the same roof, they seldom met; the habit of cold indifference they had hitherto carried towards each other had now grown into visible dislike.

That the P—— and his R——l partner had laid aside the wish to please each other, was apparent to every one;—that their forced interviews were accompanied with mutually painful sensations, was certain, to those who had the power of observing them. These reflections formed the ground of my excuse for counselling her M——y (who honored me with her full confidence) to encourage her son in the renewal of his connexion with Mrs. F——, and I prepared *his* mind to receive this advice, by frequently speaking to him on the subject, and describing the sensations of that lady, as I pretended they were stated by her friend.

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Here a weight of reproach preys on my spirits for my guilty conduct at that period—doubly guilty! from the false friendships I assumed, as a cloak to my infamous designs; for I now acknowledge, with sorrow, that I brought on an attempt at explanation from the P——ss, who, moved by the most honourable sentiments, frankly declared, that it was better for married persons to separate formally, than to meet only for the purpose of irritating each other. This 'conduct, on her part, was interpreted, by my insinuation, as proceeding from a



sensual affection for those rites, from the enjoyment of which she had been so long debarred; and gave rise to that memorable Letter of the 30th of April, 1796, I need not dwell on the result of that epistle; every one knows it was followed by the dismissal of wife and child. But every one does not know what sacrifices this proceeding cost the parties. The P—— suffered the greatest uneasiness, which I endeavoured to tranquillize, by fabricating scandalous stories about his consort, and assuming increased tenderness towards his person; finding these efforts insufficient, I had recourse to a more powerful auxiliary, and induced the Q—— to use her influence in bringing back Mrs. F——. The P—— grew ill: this did more than the most persuasive arguments: the Lady returned: and, with her presence, the P——'s peace came also.

During the term of nearly ten years, did the P——ss stand the test of severe scrutiny, before her enemies succeeded in any serious cause of accusation. Many were the battles I then fought with my conscience; I often admired her magnanimity in so bravely meeting the repeated injuries which succeeded each other as quickly as the inventive genius of her enemies could create them.—It was the dread I felt, lest her conduct should obtain a reconciliation with her husband, that induced me to lend myself, as the instigator of what afterwards went by the name of “The D——s’ Plot.” To this I was urged by a confession made by the P——, “that, in a tipsy frolic, he had passed a night on the Heath;—had slept in his consort’s chamber, and, made a promise to revisit the Heath.” I began by rousing the fears of his mother, who had immediate recourse to Lord M——, whom her M——y knew to be her son’s confidential friend.—and he engaged to prevent the P——’s promised visit, by devising amusement elsewhere, that drew him to a distance from the Heath.

Meanwhile inquiry was set on foot among the P——ss’s household, which by means of douceurs, proved pretty successful; for, from the epoch of the boy, William A——n’s admission into the family, Lady D—— and myself had made him the groundwork of a plot, which it was our intention to play off at a proper opportunity. In this, I must confess, Lady D—— was the complete dupe, at which I felt no kind of sorrow, as I owed her a grudge on an occasion which I shall here mention.



When Lady D — appeared, for the first time, with a title at the drawing-room, the P —, who never omitted an opportunity to say a civil thing, paid some frivolous compliment on the valour of Sir J —, at Acre, which she imagined was spoken for the purpose of admiring her beauty. Prepossessed with a notion that the P — admired her, she, one day, in passing the P —ss of W —, curtsied with a sort of impertinent sneer, that said, “I am a favourite.” The P —ss who was never backward in penetrating the thoughts of others, knew how to interpret this behaviour. “I see,” said her R — H —, as she was one day conversing with me, “Lady D — has a great inclination to conceive herself of sufficient importance to become my enemy; I will punish her vanity by affecting to notice her friend, Sir S —y, for I have discovered that she is in love with him.”

When she next dined at Lady D —’s, she paid the most marked civility to Sir S —y. The P —ss called him to a chair next her own, allowed him to serve her with fruit, and, on quitting the house, told Sir J — and his Lady, she hoped they would not visit her unaccompanied by their friend; and afterwards Sir S —y waited on the P —ss, at a general invitation.

About this time William A —n became an inmate of the household; prior to his arrival, Lady D — had assumed an extreme affection for the P —ss, though to me, in whom she placed confidence, she acknowledged herself her enemy; and the malignant expression of her countenance, whilst making the strongest protestations of regard, discovered to such a keen observer as her R — H — the deep-rooted hatred with which she was endeavouring to probe the secrets of her heart. The P —ss told me of it, and that Lady D — had introduced the subject of her and Sir J —’s attachment to Sir S —y, for the purpose of hearing in what terms she would speak of the hero. “I equalled her in cunning,” said the P —ss; “I made her believe me to be in love with him, and left her ready to burst with spleen at the idea that he loves me to desperation. Should she dare so far as ever to mention the circumstance, I will expose her malice in telling the whole truth—the scorpion of jealousy shall sting her to the quick for her wicked dissimulation.”



“This would, indeed, be excellent,” I observed, “could your R—— H—— be certain of the sequel; but is it not possible that calumny may succeed in spreading her rumour to your injury, before your R—— H—— has an opportunity to refute her testimony?”

“Entertain no fears on my account,” said the P——ss, “so well am I convinced of Lady D——’s improper attachment for Sir S——y that I have it in my power to make her retract, by a single word, spoken in the hearing of Sir J——.”

On Sir S——y’s return to his friends on the Heath, the whole party met at Sir J——’s table. The attachment between the ladies appeared then to have reached its height, each having an object in view; the P——ss being desirous to mortify her neighbour in the most vulnerable part—her affection for Sir S——y: and Lady D—— was bent on the destruction of the P——ss. In this humour the ladies met, and then the memorable story of the milk wetting her R—— H——’s handkerchief, with the fabrication of her approaching accouchement, were personally related by the P——ss. Of this I do not entertain a doubt, all the particulars having been told me by Lady D——, and afterwards confirmed by the P——ss herself, who, ignorant of the imprudence she was committing, thought only of playing, what she termed, a frolic.—I was the most guilty of all; since in order to punish Lady D——’s hypocrisy, I wrote the anonymous letters to Sir J——, and enclosed the offensive caricatures, in which I copied the P——ss’s writing so exactly, that it would have been difficult for herself to have detected the fact; these letters brought the intrigue to an issue. Lady D——, irritated to excess, repeated all that the P——ss had told her, to Sir J——: the latter repeated it to the Duke of S——; he consulted his brother E——, and it was resolved to enter on a thorough investigation of the whole matter, and make the result known to the P——e. I have reason to think they were deterred, at that time, by learning that the P——ss had played off some trick on Lady D——, which information I have always attributed to Sandar, as I believe she was the only one, except myself, who was in her R—— H——’s secrets.—For me, I never divulged the truth until now, that remorse extorts it from me. For nearly two years this business remained unnoticed, only that E—— advised with the



P——ss respecting a more guarded conduct in future, and that the affair was whispered to each one in the family, with the exception of G—— and his Father; but in two years after that period, when the husband's unexpected visit to the Heath roused the fears of the enemy, that a reconciliation was to be apprehended, an union of interests induced them to join in a sort of family compact, to prevent the frustration of their hopes; and, encouraged by the protestations of Sir J—— and Lady D——, who offered to attest their depositions on oath, they laid the affair open to the K—— and Q——.

Her R—— H——, on hearing that doubts were entertained as to the propriety of her conduct, asked for an immediate change of the persons who formed her household, feeling it was incumbent on her not to allow herself the possibility of tampering with her dependants. Had she behaved with equal prudence on all occasions, how admirably she would have acted! It was a remark of Doctor Johnson, "that persons of strong sense are apt to perform the ordinary actions of life carelessly; whereas they encounter great events with cautious prudence and wisdom." Such was the case of her R—— H——, who stood on the rectitude of her actions and intentions.

They whom the K—— appointed to investigate the business also acted conscientiously, and satisfied their master there was no real cause for banishing his niece from his presence; but when the K——'s intention to appoint an early meeting was made known to his family, her enemies had recourse to their influence with the P——, and succeeded in prevailing with his R—— H—— to solicit a delay.

From that hour the P——'s hatred became fixed; even when his counsel, after minute inquiry of each of her enemies, yet wanted proof, and, therefore, could not advise against the P——ss being received in the family circle, he still remained unmoved,—determined not to sanction her reception, he absented himself from that memorable interview. Meanwhile, the P——ss continued to act as she had done before, except that she showed a great attachment to the foundling William, and an increased contempt for her husband's family,—the natural results of being debarred the company of her daughter, and of being an object of dislike to her deluded husband.



After remaining some years persecuted, harassed, and unhappy, the unfortunate lady wrote one of the best letters she ever penned to the P——, in which she stated some of the many hardships she had endured, and regretted, in feeling and respectful language, the loss of her daughter's society. The minister, whose office it was to read all letters to his R—— Master, observed, when he concluded this, and had laid it aside, "that some mode must be adopted to prevent the P—— from being troubled with these interruptions, from one who ought to be satisfied with the permission to retain her title and dignities." Nothing more was said at that time: in a few days, however, a copy of that letter found its way into the daily papers. An interested friend of the P——ss, who was then treating with ministers for an augmentation of salary, thinking it might answer his purpose, procured the original letter from the secretary's desk, and made this malicious use of it. And *it did answer his purpose*; since, on his taking the paper to his patron, and assuring him he furnished "the intelligence," he obtained the desired appointment, and, from that day has been an agent against the P——ss. Meantime, the P——, who was naturally kind, and possessed a great portion of good sense, had often, when alone, ruminated on the contents of his consort's letter; the more he considered, the more he became convinced of the reasonableness of the arguments it contained; and had actually debated the matter in his mind, by arraigning the merits of the case before him, and had come to the determination of making some personal inquiries, whether things were really as bad as they were represented. This was the subject of his R—— H——'s meditation, when the same officious adviser, who had read the original letter, appeared with the offensive publication in his hand, which put all disposition to justice to flight, and fanned the smothered embers of revenge into a flame, which all the force of pity could not allay.

The man in office met that day his *confreres* at ——, and after dinner, amused them with an account of the purloined letter. Exulting in their triumph over an unresisting victim, they agreed to form a league with the lady's friends and advisers; so, under the appearance of friendship they informed Mr. W——d, that nothing would tend so effectually towards the P——ss regaining



her husband's esteem, as her making a tour to the Continent; as, by that means, she would leave her daughter unbiassed with respect to marriage, and free her from many restraints, resulting from the coolness that now existed between her mother and the members of her father's family, which coolness, they said, would wear off by absence, and that, at her R—— H——'s return, every thing would be on a right footing.

As soon as this proposal was communicated to the P——ss of W——, she entered, very willingly, into the plan, and immediately made her intention known to the ministers, requesting them to inform the P——, who considered this step as a fresh proof of his consort's depravity;—rejoicing, however, that it would for a time, at least, free the country from her presence, he readily consented.

At that period, I was myself smarting under humiliation, being convinced Lady H—— was my successful rival. Glad to avail myself of a temporary change, I seized a hint, thrown out by the P——, “that a person in France would have a good opportunity of watching a certain lady's conduct,” to say, “I would make a visit to some friends on the Continent: from whence I should have it in my power to inform him of what was passing.” Pleased with my offer, the P—— repeated a rhapsody of affection, which my heart inclined me to believe; but, thinking it might not seem well in me, as her party were suspicious of me, that I should leave England at the precise time she did, I employed my confidential agent, Madame B——, and she placed Louisa D—— in the way of the P——ss, as a person qualified to answer the double purpose of obtaining her R—— H——ss's confidence, and betraying it.

I have reason to believe it was the P——ss's intention to have remained only a short time abroad with her relatives in Germany; and that the “long journey,” as it was afterwards called, was undertaken in consequence of her finding the heads of the Continental courts in league with —— against her. “This,” exclaimed her R—— H——ss, when one day conversing on the subject with Louisa, who obtained the situation of her dresser, “this is more than I was prepared to meet; yet, this offensive and cruel conduct is the work of Christian princes, who preach religion to unenlightened nations, and hold up charity to be a godlike virtue!”



In the next letter, Louisa said, she had determined to accompany her R——l mistress. “Knowing the P——ss as you do,” said my correspondent, “your Ladyship will not be surprised to hear, she has made acquaintance with a courier, who disentangled her train in the gallery at B——, with a grace that charmed her romantic taste. . Inquiries respecting the hero were entered into, which ended satisfactorily: seeing I should anticipate her R—— H——’s wishes, I mentioned him, the other day, as a fit esquire for the long journey. ‘With your R—— H——’s permission,’ I said, ‘such a gentleman seems a very necessary part of the suite; and I know a secret, that would remove every cause of scruple, respecting his admission to the honour of your R—— H——’s society, *that his family is more than respectable.*’—“Explain yourself,” interrupted the P——ss. ‘That it was noble,’ I replied, ‘before certain valorous deeds, in favour of Buonaparte, rendered the present descendant famed, ’tis true, for courage; but degraded in the eye of monarchy.’ The bait took—I have perceived my mistress conversing with B—— in her outdoor excursions, and but a few weeks will place him high in her affection.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Here was a chasm in our correspondence until the year 1817, when I had another letter, containing numerous instances of what Louisa termed the P——ss’s mean disposition. How, from the moment of her setting out, she desired the persons of her suite to forget the difference of station, that each should exert himself for the amusement of the others, whilst she should endeavour to study the comfort of all, and share, equally, their pleasure and fatigue: “and, sure enough,” said Louisa, “The P——ss kept her word; we were all as one family, and, except sometimes that we slept on straw, and had not enough of what was good to satisfy our appetites, and that the plague was at our door, we were pretty comfortable; and I must own that the P——ss seemed as happy as any of us.—I thought it prudent before we sailed for Turkey, to give my humble advice, that her R—— H——ss would allow B—— to act as her guard. “I have heard,” said I, “that the Turks are naturally treacherous, and that they always carry arms: should they,” I continued, “be ever induced to use them, (as heathens will do any thing for



money,) your R—— H——'s attendants would not only suffer the most poignant grief, but might, at their return, be subject to injurious suspicions."..... Thus was the P——ss induced to admit B—— to act as her personal protector.

In the next letter from Como, Louisa informed me that things were no better than before the long journey—that the foreign Ambassadors were equally uncivil, and that the House of B——n, in particular, had given unequivocal marks of disrespect—besides, that the ministers at her own home couched their letters in very mysterious terms, and not at all conciliatory. She also mentioned, that her mistress frequently spoke of returning to England.

This letter anticipated my anxious wish; I showed it and talked over its contents with the Q——, Lady H——, and a few particular friends. We all affected to lament that a person, for whose connexions we felt so strongly, should have so far degraded her friends. About that time, Lord M—— and his Lady returned from the Continent, having been so shocked by reports concerning the P——ss of W——, that they said they had left Italy in disgust. They communicated their intelligence to Duke W——, and he *out of brotherly affection*, told it to the P——; the latter, galled to find the honour of his family so grossly impeached, and hoping, he said, to contradict the report, ordered certain persons to investigate the whole affair. Accordingly, Mr. B——, being a shrewd lawyer, competent to discriminate the nature of claims of right between a client in disgrace and a powerful defendant, was thought by the P——'s friends a proper man; but, to aid him in the difficult task, Mr. C—— went also; but to conceal the motive, the latter received a sinecure office of ambassador to a court with which, at that time, the English had no communication, so that he had ample leisure to make inquiry. At the end of a few months, both gentlemen returned, freighted with a cargo of intelligence sufficiently doubtful to create suspicion.

In this dangerous crisis of the business, I received an unexpected visit from the man of law, who considers minutes lost that do not bring their share of profits, precluded the business by saying, "a late death had opened a field of difficulty to our beloved Sovereign. As the adviser of his consort, and from a wish to act



rightly, I presume," said the gentleman, "to consult your Ladyship, on the present proceeding, between his M——y and the Q——. You, Madam, know the K——'s unvaried desire to do justice to his Cousin; and you know, better than any other person, what has been her conduct, from her first arrival in this kingdom.—Many criminating circumstances have been proved by those who had access to the Lady—all short of the fact of adultery, it is true. Your Ladyship is now the only person in existence, to whom the P——ss's private intentions were fully known."

The favour I come to solicit of your Ladyship (a favour in which the country is deeply interested) is, that you would inform us, to the best of your knowledge, whether, on the former trial, there were legal cause for the plea of adultery? I presume not, after the usual form of law, to question you, Madam, respecting time, place, or person; all those matters may be easily supposed; only your Ladyship's opinion, as a highly valued friend, whether the P—— was, at that time, guilty of adultery."

"If my answer is to be productive of any consequence, affecting the Q——'s life, I shall feel most reluctant to give my thoughts utterance." "Your Ladyship need not speak more fully," the lawyer replied, "nor shall I trouble you, Madam, further on this very unpleasant subject. The consequence of your Ladyship's compliance, will merely be, that we shall prevent any further exposure. I must be plain in telling your Ladyship, that a legal trial might be attended with very unpleasant disclosures of family matters, and end in punishing the guilty. The change in the Liturgy must, ere this, have made known the public opinion; it shall be my business to caution the Q—— against returning to this country; the state will provide generously for her comfort."

The lawyer having, as he thought, gained the purport of his errand, soon took his leave; Mr. B—— allowed no time, thought I, for this act of justice, and when I considered what examination of events long past and forgotten, must have followed such a statement from me, and that a sort of conspiracy would thus have been acknowledged to have existed against the Q——, even prior to her landing, of which the R—— family



would appear as the instigators . . . . . these and similar reflections made me feel satisfied with the allusion I had given.

From that day I have sustained an accumulation of mental and bodily afflictions.

The daily papers have been read to me, from which I have learned the whole mass of evidence for and against the Q—, and the system of persecution which has been practised, seems to have all originated with me! Shame attending the confession of my guilty deceptions, has, hitherto, deterred me from bringing forward a statement of the truth. I feel it my duty to say to his gracious M——, supposing your Ladyship will perform my last request of showing this letter to our S——n:—

*“ I am the viper that has been secretly wounding you BOTH for the last five-and-twenty years; I caused you to assume a cruelty of behaviour towards your consort, which was foreign to your nature. It was I who corrupted your heart,—my insatiable vanity, which could not admit a partner in your affection, has \*\*\*\*\* your character in the eyes of all good men; you, whom God designed to be a kind and considerate father of your \*\*\*\*\*, are regarded as a \*\*\*\*\*, delighting to punish the supposed disobedience of your children.”*

To you, dearest Lady Anne, I bequeath the power of making known the truth—and when you do so, remind the Q——, that I shall then have rendered the fatal account where eternal punishment awaits the guilty! Implore her, not to add one curse to my lengthened misery . . . . . and, may the fact, that I shall have ceased to exist when this reaches you, excite in your bosom the spirit of forgiveness towards the memory of one, who in her varied passage through life, thought it a high honor to subscribe herself, your Ladyship's friend,

*The Countess of GUERNSEY.*

THE END.







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