

PAINTER'S SEVENTH EDITION—ENLARGED.

No. 7  
The late Lady Flora Hastings.

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STATEMENTS

OF

CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
MAR 31 1927  
LAW LIBRARY  
THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS,  
MARCHIONESS OF TAVISTOCK,  
LADY PORTMAN,  
LORD PORTMAN, AND  
SIR JAMES CLARK.

INCLUDING

THE WHOLE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE, ETC. BETWEEN THE MARQUIS OF  
HASTINGS, VISCOUNT MELBOURNE, MARQUIS AND MARCHIONESS  
TAVISTOCK, LORD AND LADY PORTMAN, DOWAGER MAR-  
CHIONESS OF HASTINGS, LADY FLORA HASTINGS,  
EXTRACTS FROM LADY FLORA'S DIARY,  
DOCUMENTS, &c.

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THE

# MARQUIS OF HASTINGS' STATEMENT.

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Burlington Hotel, Sept. 13, 1839.

If I am asked, why I have placed these facts before the public, my answer is, because it is my duty—because I have felt that it was the only way in which I could defeat the many prejudiced statements, gross misrepresentations, and unblushing falsehoods of interested persons—because I have felt that every part of this lamentable history *ought* to be published, that by so doing every falsehood might be met, and a true and indisputable statement of facts be handed down to posterity. I have been told on high authority, that if I bring this subject before the House of Lords, it will be immediately silenced as an attack upon the Throne! Insurmountable technical difficulties prevent my exposing in a Court of Justice the vile conduct of those who have slandered my sister; and but one course, therefore, remains open to me, and that is, to publish the accompanying Correspondence. It has been asked, why such delay has taken place? A few words will answer this.

The repeated solicitations of my sister, personally to myself, and by letter to my mother, urged me, during the time it was deemed necessary she should continue at the Palace, to remain silent, as, to use her own expressions, every new act of ours was visited upon her dear mistress's, and her own, unfortunate head. I shall not attempt to heighten the picture of this frightful tragedy. But it cannot be supposed that any regard for the feelings of those (be their rank and station what they may) who have sacrificed every feeling of my family—who have trodden under foot every Christian principle—who have outraged all delicacy, justice, and honour—can weigh with me. That the power of the Court may for a time protect the guilty—that it may prevent that measure of justice which the common law of the land holds out to the lowest subject—that it may foster and permit to bask in its sunshine the basest of slanderers—has, alas! been but too fully proved. But I have yet to learn that in this free country it can stifle the voice of truth. I have, therefore, determined to make the public masters of the whole business, by publishing the entire correspondence which has taken place on this melancholy occasion; and I now cast for ever from me a subject which has been productive of such pain and anxiety, fully confident of finding alive in the breasts of the British nation that justice and sympathy which has been denied me in a higher quarter.

On the morning of the 20th of February I received, at Donington Park, a



letter from my sister, the late Lady Flora Hastings, dated the 19th of February, informing me that her honour had been most basely assailed, but entering into no particulars.

On the receipt of this I hastened instantly to London, and, on repairing to my sister, was horror-struck by learning from her own lips, for the first time, a partial outline of the disgusting truths which are now, alas! but too well known to the public to need any further repetition from me. She said at once, that she felt it a duty she owed to herself, her mistress, and her family, to submit to the inhuman trials she underwent, in the presence of (to use her own words) her accuser, Lady Portman, Sir James Clark, and her own maid (whose deposition is now certified upon oath). Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, long known to her family, was also chosen by my poor sister to attend her.

I may here very properly place the statement of my sister, Lady Flora Hastings, merely remarking that I learned from her own lips that the examination to which she was subjected was conducted with more than ordinary disregard to delicacy and to her feelings :—

#### STATEMENT IN THE HAND-WRITING OF THE LADY FLORA HASTINGS, MARCH, 1839.

*Submitted in the form of a Case to Sir WILLIAM FOLLETT and Mr. TALBOT.*

“I came into waiting on the 10th of January. The ladies then in waiting were Lady Charlemont, Mrs. Campbell, Miss Spring Rice, and Miss Paget. Baroness Lehzen and Miss Davys are in constant waiting. The same day, having been suffering from bilious illness since the beginning of December, I consulted Sir James Clark, her Royal Highness’s physician, and placed myself under his treatment.

“At the expiration of that fortnight Lady Harriet Clive took Mrs. Campbell’s place, and Lady Barham Lady Charlemont’s. And, a few days before the meeting of Parliament, Lady Tavistock came to the Palace to attend Her Majesty on that occasion, and to the theatres. She remained about a week or ten days. Before she quitted, Lady Portman, Lady Caroline Barrington, and Miss Murray came into waiting.

“On the 16th of February Sir James Clark came to me, and asked me whether I were privately married, giving, as his reason, that my figure had excited the remarks of the ‘ladies of the Palace.’ On my emphatic denial, he became excited, urged me ‘to confess,’ as ‘the only thing to save me!’ stated his own conviction to agree with that of the ‘ladies,’ that it had occurred to him at the first, that ‘no one could look at me and doubt it,’ and remarks even yet more coarse.

“I observed to him, that the swelling from which I had been suffering was very much reduced, and offered him the proof of my dresses. He replied, ‘Well, I don’t think so. You seem to me to grow larger every day, and so the ladies think.’ He proceeded to say it was the only supposition which could explain my appearance and state of health, ‘or else you must have some very bad illness.’ I said that was possible, I had thought badly of my state of health, but that his supposition was untrue and perfectly groundless. He ended by assuring me ‘that nothing but a medical examination could satisfy the ladies of the Palace, so deeply were their suspicions rooted,’ and that he must inform Lady Portman, who had been his ‘confidante,’ of my denial. He returned with a reiteration of what he had already said, and, *I think, but I will not be positive*, added that it was the more imperative as the rumour had reached Her Majesty. I said, feeling perfectly innocent, I should not shrink from any examination, however rigorous, but that I considered it a most indelicate and disagreeable



procedure, and that I would not be hurried into it. I said, also, that before anything was determined it would be requisite for me to know the Duchess of Kent's pleasure; and inquired if her Royal Highness had authorised these communications to me? To my surprise I learnt that her Royal Highness was still uninformed that the slightest suspicion rested on me.

"It having been notified to me that it was Her Majesty's pleasure that I should not appear until my character was cleared by the means suggested, and having obtained the permission of her Royal Highness to submit to it, as the most instantaneous mode of refuting the calumny, I sent on Sunday, the 17th, for Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke and Sir James Clark, and the examination took place in the presence of *my accuser, Lady Portman*, and my own maid.

"In the evening Lady Portman came to me to express her regret for having been the most violent against me. 'She acknowledged that she had several times spoken a great deal to the Queen on the subject, especially when she found it was Her Majesty's own idea.' She said she was very sorry, but she would have done the same respecting any one of whom she had the same suspicion. I said my surprise is, that, knowing my family as she did, she could have entertained those suspicions."

#### COUNSEL'S OPINION.

(The opinion of Sir William Follett and Mr. Talbot was given to the effect that the facts of the case did not afford any ground for legal proceedings on the part of Lady Flora Hastings or her family.)

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Feeling that with me alone rested the responsibility of protecting my sister's character, and restoring her to that place in society from which the artful villany of her enemies had driven her, I immediately hastened to Lord Winchilsea, a man whose high sense of honour fully entitles him to the confidence I felt it necessary to repose in him. He agreed with me that the most proper course to take would be to demand from Lord Melbourne himself an explanation of the business. On seeing his Lordship he declared his ignorance of the subject, beyond his having been made acquainted with reports by Lady Tavistock, and his having desired the ladies of the Court to be quiet, he himself not placing any belief in it. I also received from him an assurance, on his word of honour, that no one was connected with the business BUT the ladies of the Court. I then declared my determination to seek an audience of Her Majesty, to express my horror and disgust of the whole of this transaction, and to ask who were the originators of the plot. He urged the business being kept as quiet as possible, for the sake of all parties, the youth of the Queen, and the delicacy of the affair. He further urged my seeing the Duke of Wellington; and I then proceeded to Apsley House, but was not fortunate enough to find his Grace.

It may be proper for me to state here that on this and the next day several letters passed between parties high in authority. Some of them I was permitted to read; but, they having been strictly of a private nature, I do not feel at liberty to notice them further.

I then wrote a letter to Lord Melbourne, which, with the correspondence that ensued, I here insert.

#### THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

"Burlington Hotel, Feb. 26, 1839.

"My Lord,—Having in vain waited two days, in the hope of having the audience of Her Majesty which I requested (if not as a matter of right as a Peer,



at least as one of feeling), my patience being exhausted, and being anxious to return to the bosom of my afflicted and insulted family, I am forced to resort to the only means now left in my power, of recording my abhorrence and detestation of the treatment which my sister has lately sustained, by addressing myself to you as the *organ* through whom all things are *now* carried on at Court. I will begin by stating that I retract *nothing* of what I said in your presence, and that there may be no mistake, *now* or *hereafter*, should this matter become known (in which case I will publish every thing, having it in writing); and I am certain the more it is known the better my poor sister's conduct will appear, and the more revolting the conduct of those who have taken part against her.

"I REPEAT, that the whole business has been *base* and *cruel*, and reflects *dishonour* and *discredit* on all concerned in it, from the highest to the lowest; and I cannot find words sufficiently strong to convey the sense of my disgust and *contempt* for the conduct of all who have figured in this business; and though by your assertion, on your word of honour as a gentleman, that the whole thing rests with the ladies of the Court, yet I cannot bring myself to think that it has been the deliberate act of *Her Majesty*, judging more particularly from the conduct of the Queen since she has discovered the foulness and falseness of the accusation; but I ascribe it to that *baneful influence* which surrounds the Throne, and poisons and deadens all the best feelings and dictates of human nature. And now, my Lord, it may be right for me to state (not only as a duty to my family and myself, but in case misconstruction might hereafter be put upon the line of conduct I have adopted) what I *have* done on this occasion. The very moment I heard of it I posted day and night to London, and, believing that you had been the chief mover in the business, I waited upon Lord Winchilsea, and asked him (if such were the case) to call you out. By his advice I called upon you myself, and received from you, on your word of honour as a gentleman, a denial of any participation in it, beyond having been sent for by the ladies of the Court. I next sought the advice of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Winchilsea being out of town; and his Grace advised, for the sake of avoiding the painfulness of publicity, that the matter should rest where it now is.

"The Queen has expressed her *sorrow*; and here, I suppose, is to END as cruel a case as ever disgraced the Court of a British Sovereign. But the matter will *not* rest in my breast; and should it appear that I have not now learnt all particulars, or that more have taken part in this infamous transaction than I am at present aware of, I am ready at any moment to take it up again, and, as far as lies in my power, will punish all concerned in it. Having said thus much, I now close this painful and disgusting business, and retire from the *polluted* atmosphere of a Court in which I hope my poor sister will no longer remain than to allow Her Majesty to mark her sorrow for what has passed, and her sense of the deep injury that has been afflicted upon a guiltless and unprotected woman. I shall remain in London till to-morrow morning, in case you have any further communication to make to me; and have the honour to be, my Lord, your obedient servant,

"HASTINGS."

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VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"South-street, Feb. 26, 1839.

"My Lord—I found your Lordship's letter here on my return home this evening, and I am much concerned to learn from it that you have been waiting for a communication from me. I can assure your Lordship that I had no idea that this was the case. I conceived myself to have explained to your Lordship that if, after your conversation with the Duke of Wellington, you still persevered in asking an audience, I would submit your request to her Majesty, and, consequently, rather waited for an intimation upon the subject from your Lordship. If your Lordship is still desirous for an audience, I shall be ready to take her Majesty's pleasure without delay. I shall be here until one, and shall be happy to see your Lordship if you wish for any personal communication.—I have the honour to remain, my Lord, your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant,

(Signed)

"MELBOURNE."



## THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

" Burlington Hotel, Feb. 27, 1839.

" My Lord—I am very sorry there has been any misconception about my wish to have an audience of the Queen; but this is easily disposed of by your having the kindness to take her Majesty's pleasure on the subject. As to the question raised by your Lordship, whether this was a matter of a public or private nature, I can only say, though the subject may be a private one, yet it is also of a public kind, inasmuch as it concerns her Majesty's public character.—I have the honour to be my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant,

" To Viscount Melbourne," &amp;c.

(Signed)

" HASTINGS."

## VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

" South-street, Feb. 28, 1839.

" My Lord—I beg leave to acquaint your Lordship that her Majesty will receive your Lordship at Buckingham Palace this day at one o'clock; and I have the honour to remain, my Lord, your Lordship's faithful servant,

" The Marquis of Hastings.

" MELBOURNE."

On the 28th of February, having received her Majesty's command to attend her at Buckingham Palace, at one o'clock, I repaired thither, and had an audience of her Majesty (the particulars of which have been already published in my sister's letter). It might be improper for me more particularly to state what occurred on that occasion, beyond the assurance of her Majesty that my sister should be treated with honour and kindness. All information or satisfaction on the subject of my inquiries as to *who* had been the ORIGINATORS of the plot having been denied me at the Palace, further than the exculpation of Lord Melbourne, I was driven to find it out as I best could by myself; a thing most difficult, from the length of time that had elapsed, the number of persons supposed to be implicated, and the late period of the business at which I was called upon to act (some days after the outrage had taken place). It therefore *only* remained for me to *detect* the perpetrators of the cruelty: I could *prevent nothing*.

Having seen my sister reinstated in her proper place at the Royal table, and finding that I could be of no further use to her, I returned home, and addressed the following letters to Lords Tavistock and Portman, which I herewith publish, with their answers:—

## THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK.

" Donington Park, March 1, 1839.

" Dear Lord Tavistock—From the length of time I have known you, from the respect and regard which I have ever entertained towards you as a man of the highest honour and integrity, I have determined to write to you on the most painful subject that it has ever been my lot to be called to act upon; the more painful to me, because not only are those nearest and dearest to me chiefly concerned in it, but there are those who I have considered as friends and whose conduct now stands in such a light that I can *no longer* consider them as such, till the whole of the infamous business in which their names have been mixed up is explained, and the strong impressions which now rest upon my mind proved to be groundless. I need tell you no more than that I allude to the gross lie which has been circulated about my unfortunate sister Flora, who is in the Duchess of Kent's household. Though unwell at the time I lost not a moment



in going to London, and after ten days spent in the most painful investigation of the business, having received from Lord Melbourne, on his word of honour, his assurance that none but the ladies of the Court were connected with this business, and that it originated with them alone, and that *THEY* sent to him; and having pressed him to mention *WHO* sent to him, he mentioned the name of Lady Tavistock (I believe Lady Tavistock was then in waiting); and it is to know from *HER* with *WHOM* this accusation first originated that I write to you, and that I may know what part each person has taken in the business. I think I know more about it than some persons imagine, but I will not act upon my suspicions only. That Lady Portman has taken a very active part in it there can be no doubt, from the manner in which she sought my poor sister's forgiveness, after having inflicted the deepest injury she could upon her! I have also received from the Queen's own lips (having with difficulty got an audience of her Majesty) an assurance not only of her sorrow for *what has* taken place, but of her determination to mark her sense of the falsity of the accusation and the injury inflicted upon my poor sister, by showing her every mark of attention; and I have the happiness to feel that I have done much (I believe I may say everything in my power) to alleviate her sorrow on this trying occasion; and I owe much to the kindness and judgment both of Lord Winchelsea and the Duke of Wellington in the manner in which I have proceeded. Though my conscience acquits me of not having done *ALL I CAN* in the business, yet I know that my poor sister will have the painful ordeal to go through of *EVERY* version which the public may give of this story, and that I myself must submit to the same, and *AM* at *THIS* moment submitting to the same *UNFAIR* judgment *till I publish* every thing connected with the business from the time I first became acquainted with it (which determination I told Lord Melbourne, by letter, I had come to); and have only refrained from so doing in the hope that my poor sister may be spared the pain of the publicity of this matter. May I then ask, *WAS NOT Baroness Lehzen the first person who originated this foul slander, and mentioned it to Lady Tavistock; and if she be not the individual, who was?*—I remain, dear Lord Tavistock, yours very truly, (Signed) "HASTINGS."

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THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"Oakley, March 6, 1839.

"My dear Hastings—Your letter has annoyed me very much, but I feel thankful to you for the frank and friendly spirit which dictated it. I knew nothing of the painful circumstances you relate until after they had occurred. I am unwilling even now to name the subject of your letter to Lady Tavistock, as I am sure it will distress her greatly; nor do I like to write upon it except to say that she was influenced by the best motives in communicating the information she had received to Lord Melbourne.

"I am persuaded you would feel this as strongly as I do, if you could have an opportunity of conversing with her and of learning from herself the part she took in it; but how this is to be brought about, at the distance we are from each other, I know not. I much wish, however, that you would contrive to see her. Believe me, dear Hastings, most truly yours, "TAVISTOCK."

"I shall not tell Lady Tavistock that I have heard from you till I receive your answer to this."

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THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"Oakley, March 7, 1839.

"My dear Hastings—Since I wrote to you yesterday I have had some conversation with Lady Tavistock on this unfortunate subject, without saying that I had heard from you. I find that the case, so far as she was concerned, lies in a nutshell; therefore, I may as well state it to you at once.

"When she went to Buckingham Palace, just before the meeting of Parlia-



ment, to attend the Queen to the theatres and the House of Lords, she was informed of the opinion that had unhappily been entertained with respect to your sister's state of health, and was requested to name it to Lord Melbourne, as the proper person to advise upon it. Her first impulse was to mention it herself to Lady Flora, as the more direct and friendly course, conscious that the opinion in question was altogether erroneous, or that she must have been married clandestinely. This feeling was overruled, however, by considerations which I need not detail to you. She accordingly told Lord Melbourne just what I have repeated to you, stating to him also her first intention of speaking to Lady Flora.

"I did not ask Lady Tavistock, nor did she tell me (for she is one of the most discreet of ladies), from whom she had received her information, nor do I think she would feel justified in doing so under any circumstances.

"Of course she must take the responsibility of having named the subject to Lord Melbourne, and to Lord Melbourne *only*. She considered it the best course to be adopted, and there she left it. Soon after this she left London with me; and has since been informed, much to her joy and relief, from her successor in waiting (Lady *Portman*), that there is no foundation whatever for the suspicions that had been excited. On every account, on Lady Flora's, and yours especially, she has been much distressed, but is conscious of having acted for the best in the painful position in which she was placed. Having now, my dear Hastings, stated to you, without reserve, all Lady Tavistock has told me that is essential to her part of the case, I hope you will not press me to do more for I must tell you fairly that I do not think she will give up her authority—even to me. I allude to the opinion of the medical attendant, which you are aware was borne out by appearances. It has been an unfortunate business, but I am persuaded that the best intentions prevailed among a few that were concerned in it.

"Your feelings have been naturally roused and your suspicions excited; but, after the danger you have lately witnessed of forming opinions rashly, I hope you will do nothing publicly, except upon the fullest consideration and with the best advice.

"Pray pardon this piece of gratuitous counsel, given in the sincerity of friendship and regard; and believe me, dear Hastings, ever truly yours,

—  
"TAVISTOCK."

#### THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK.

"Dear Lord Tavistock—Your two letters I have duly received, but they are so unsatisfactory I hardly know how to answer them. They are couched in the most friendly terms, yet what would be the most friendly thing to me (the information I seek) is denied me. You say my letter is frank. I expected to have been met in the same spirit. Put yourself for one minute in the painful position in which every member of my family now stands, and ask yourself if you should like to be first insulted, infamy cast upon your name for ever, and then, when you seek redress, by asking who is the originator of the base and false calumny raised against you, you were to be told 'It is well known who that person is,' but you must sit down quietly, bear all this, ask no more questions and be subject to the false judgment and lies of every scoundrel in England?

"Look, I only ask you, at the paragraphs in every day's paper, and tell me how *you* would succumb to such treatment?

"My letter WAS friendly, but ONLY so because I thought *you* knew nothing of this vile business; and it was to give Lady Tavistock a fair opportunity to clear herself from the *disgrace* that now attaches to all concerned in this, and whose different modes of proceeding in it are all now mixed up together, and judged alike by the world. When I publish my letter to Lord Melbourne (in which I do not mince matters), those concerned will, if they have any regard for their characters, have to explain to the world, *not to me only*, what part they have taken in this business, or all be classed *together* in THAT contempt and



disgrace in the EYES of the WORLD which, I must say, they MOST richly merit.

"I only wait Lord Portman's reply before I publish *all*; and in so doing, though I may make enemies by telling the truth, I shall not repent it when I think that those (some of them old friends) who have helped in this business would *quietly* see me and mine consigned to infamy for ever rather than do me an act of common justice.

"HASTINGS."

"I must also add that I will hold no personal communication with any whose names are now mixed up with this business. The questions I wished answered are simply these:—

"By whom was Lady Tavistock requested to name this business to Lord Melbourne?

"By whom was Lady T. informed of the opinion entertained with respect to my sister's state of health?"

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THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"Wakefield Lodge, March 14, 1839.

"My dear Hastings—I have this moment received your letter of the 11th, and am sorry to learn by it that mine has not been satisfactory to you.

"I told you all I know from Lady Tavistock, and have nothing to add to *that* statement.

"She had a painful duty imposed upon her, she discharged it in a most cautious and delicate manner, and feels that she has nothing to reproach herself with.

"I repeat that I am unable to answer this question you *have* put to me, and I do not think I should be justified in requiring Lady Tavistock to do so. If you do not consider this '*frank*' I am sorry for it.

"I have a sincere regard for you, and should be sorry to forfeit your good opinion; but I do not see that I could with honour act otherwise.—Yours, truly,

"TAVISTOCK."

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THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Oakley, March 15, 1839.

"Dear Hastings—As you are unwilling to see Lady Tavistock, I requested her to state in writing the part she took in this unhappy business, of which I knew nothing until it had passed over. She has not withheld anything essential from you, except the names of those with whom she was in communication. I am afraid you will still think that exception very unsatisfactory, but I cannot help it.

"I have asked the opinion of one friend of the highest honour and character, who thinks with me that I ought not to require more of Lady Tavistock.

"I may tell you, however, that my own impression, and I am pretty sure it is a correct one, is, that she was made acquainted with the prevailing suspicions as matter of duty by some lady or ladies of the Court who happened to be in waiting at the time, and that she had no conversation on the subject with Baroness Lehzen before she found it necessary to speak to Lord Melbourne.

Yours, truly,

"TAVISTOCK."

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THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Oakley, March 17, 1839.

"Dear Hastings—To guard against mistakes, I beg you to understand that what I wrote to you the other day about the probable source of Lady Tavistock's information was merely my own notion of what was likely to have occurred, and not any admission on the part of Lady Tavistock; for I am still ignorant of what happened with respect to that. *But as you named Baroness Lehzen, and appeared to fix your suspicions upon her, I thought it right to give you my own impressions upon that point.* Of course I can answer for nothing beyond Lady Tavistock's own statement. She alone has incurred



the responsibility of having named the matter to Lord Melbourne, and has no desire that any other should share it with her.—Yours truly,

“TAVISTOCK.”

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

“Oakley, March 28, 1839.

“My dear Hastings—I am sorry to perceive, from Mr. Fitzgerald’s letter to the *Examiner*, that he represents Lady Tavistock to the public as one of those said to have been ‘most active against Lady Flora.’ Be assured it is not in her nature to take an active part *against* any one. Towards one of your family, especially, it would be utterly repugnant to her feelings.

“Some day or other, when justice is done to all, she will be found merely to have discharged an obvious, but painful, duty in a kind spirit to all parties, and in a manner so cautious and discreet that she communicated the subject to no one except the Minister—not even to me. But I know, from experience, how often our best motives and actions are misinterpreted, especially when judged under the influence of excited feelings. However, I still indulge a hope that, when you have full time for calm reflection, you will think more favourably, not only of her conduct in this business, but also of mine; for I am persuaded you are too high-minded a man to think ill of another for refusing to sacrifice what he considers personal honour and character for any consideration whatever. It is possible I may have erred (for we are all liable to that) in my application of these qualities to the present case; but *after* having it confirmed by the friend to whose opinion I appealed, and on whose judgment and honour I relied, you will have seen that I had no choice. You would not for a moment question the high character of that friend, if I were to name him to you.

Yours truly,

“TAVISTOCK.”

THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK.

“Stoke Rochford, Colsterworth, April, 1839.

“Dear Lord Tavistock—I thank you for the frank and friendly tone that pervades your letter which was forwarded to me from Donington yesterday. I am not responsible for any expressions in Mr. Hamilton Fitzgerald’s letter, which I did not see till it appeared in the *Examiner*, though I *knew* he intended to publish something, from a kind feeling of the cruel position in which I, as well as the rest of my family, have been placed by the incorrect statements which have appeared in many of the public prints.

“I will make no comment upon his letter, neither do I think that his publication can in any way prejudice anything which I may feel it my duty to lay before the public, no reparation having been yet made to my family for this gross insult.

“You have yourself explained the measure of Lady Tavistock’s participation in this painful transaction, and I am bound to say that on that statement I implicitly rely; but in doing so I relinquish not my own opinion as to the course which even in that measure her Ladyship deemed it her duty to pursue. I will only add at present that I remain yours truly,

“HASTINGS.”

## STATEMENT OF THE MARCHIONESS OF TAVISTOCK.

“When I went to Buckingham palace, at the end of January, to attend upon the Queen, I found strong suspicions of an unpleasant nature existing there with respect to Lady Flora Hastings’s state of health. It was considered necessary, for the honour of Her Majesty and the character of the Household, that these suspicions should not be permitted to continue and spread, without some step being taken to put a stop to them. Observing the opinion in question was borne out by appearances, and conceiving that Lady Flora might have



been privately married, I felt much desire to speak to her at once upon the subject; but circumstances occurred which prevented my carrying this wish into effect, and rendered it my painful duty to inform the Prime Minister of the opinion that had been unfortunately entertained. I hope I did so in the most delicate and cautious manner, for this I consider myself responsible.

“Oakley, March 15, 1839.”

“ANNA MARIA TAVISTOCK.

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THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO LORD PORTMAN.

“My Lord—I have been prevented from sooner writing to you by the expectation of receiving an answer from Lord Tavistock on the subject of the late disgraceful attack on the character of my sister, Lady Flora Hastings. My purport in now writing to your Lordship is to know whether Lady Portman’s suspicions were suggested to her, or occurred to herself; and what communication, if any, passed between her Ladyship and the *Baroness Lehzen*. I wrote first to Lord Tavistock, Lady Tavistock’s name having been first mentioned to me by Lord Melbourne.—I have the honour to be, my Lord, your obedient servant,

“HASTINGS.”

“March 7, 1839.”

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LORD PORTMAN TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

“Bryanston, March 12, 1839.

“My Lord—I have this day received your letter of the 7th of March. I have the honour of reminding your Lordship that Lady Portman remained in London for the purpose of personally affording you any explanation of facts that you might require, and did not leave the Palace until you had declined to see her. Under these circumstances I must decline to give you any answer to any isolated questions that you may ask; but I shall be most happy to receive you here at any time, or to receive you at 6, Belgrave-square, on our return to London in April, that Lady Portman may personally inform you most fully of such facts as are within her knowledge, and connected with the discharge of her duty on the late painful occasion.—I have the honour to be your Lordship’s very obedient,

“PORTMAN.”

“The Marquis of Hastings.”

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THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO LORD PORTMAN.

“Donington Park, March 14, 1832.

“My Lord—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th March, and I think you cannot wonder at my not being over-anxious to speak to Lady Portman after the line of conduct she had pursued. At least she must herself have been conscious of having in some measure acted very unfairly to my sister, or she would not have sought the forgiveness of one whose character had been stamped with infamy and disgrace by one of the basest calumnies that ever disgraced the British Court. What particular part Lady Portman took in the business still remains to me a mystery. If her sorrow for what has passed be sincere, she has now the only opportunity she ever will have of making atonement for the deepest injury which could be inflicted on a guiltless woman, by giving up the name of the originator of this monstrous and villanous transaction. Put yourself for one moment in the painful position of one of my family, and I only ask you to look at the garbled statements and the lies which daily fill the papers, and answer me, as a man of honour and a gentleman (and, though a stranger to you, I have every right to think I am addressing both the one and the other), whether I have not a perfect right to inquire into Lady Portman’s conduct on this occasion; or am I to remain suffering the taunts and false statements of the world till April, perhaps then only to be told by Lady Portman that she is sorry for what is passed, and no more?

“The same feeling which prevented me from meeting Lady Portman in



London acts still more strongly now in forbidding me to put my foot under your roof; and Lady Portman must remember that I stated to Sir James Clark at the time, my reason for not meeting her ladyship, at seven o'clock in the morning, at Buckingham Palace. I did not ask the interview, but her ladyship was pressingly anxious to explain her conduct; and I now say she has still the opportunity, and ought to do so; and I demand it, as an act of common justice to my sister—not as one of courtesy. I ask no more isolated questions! I ask for the whole truth, and nothing else, in explanation of that line of conduct which her Ladyship thought it her *duty* to pursue; and, if I do not get it in this shape, I must resort to the only means then left in my power.—I have the honour to be, my Lord, your obedient servant, “HASTINGS.”

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LORD PORTMAN TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

“Bryanston, March 15, 1839.

“My Lord—I have this day had the honour of receiving your letter of the 14th, and am very sorry to find that you have chosen to express yourself in so unfair a manner towards Lady Portman, who has had hitherto no reason to suppose that her conduct, in the discharge of her duty, has subjected her to the slightest suspicion of having acted unfairly towards your sister, and ‘whose part in the business still remains to you a mystery.’ I am willing to attribute to your wounded feelings the undue warmth of your letter, and have, on calm consideration, decided to lay aside my personal feelings on its perusal, in the hope that I may be informed by you hereafter that you are satisfied that Lady Portman has done only her duty.

“I will, under the conviction of this ultimate result, admit that, while you entertain your present feelings towards Lady Portman, you are justified in declining to see her here; and still further admit that, if I was in your position, I should desire to know the whole truth from her. I have, therefore, requested her to draw up a statement of such facts as are within her knowledge connected with the discharge of her duty; and I enclose it herewith, taking leave to add that she has not lengthened it by minute detail, but given the general and essential substance of all that relates to her conduct. If, however, any more particular statements have been made to you, upon which explanation may be fairly required by you, Lady Portman will be happy to afford it, so far as may relate to herself.—I have the honour to be your obedient,

“PORTMAN.”

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STATEMENT OF LADY PORTMAN.

“A few days after I had entered upon my attendance at the Palace, in February, I was informed of the existence of suspicions that Lady Flora Hastings must have been privately married. This information, which was not given me by or from the *Baroness de Lehzen*, drew my attention more particularly to Lady F. Hastings’s appearance, and I then formed the opinion that it was necessary, for the honour of the Court, and for the character of Lady Flora Hastings, that all doubt should be removed upon the subject.

“A few days afterwards Lady Flora Hastings’s medical attendant communicated to me, as the Lady in Waiting, his suspicions that Lady Flora Hastings was privately married, and asked my opinion upon the subject, which I gave only as connected with my observation of her appearance. Sir James Clark subsequently informed me that Flora Hastings had denied to him her marriage, and that he had requested her to select another medical adviser to consult with him upon her state of health.

“It then became my duty to communicate to her Royal Highness the



Duchess of Kent that until those doubts were removed Lady Flora Hastings should not appear in her Majesty's presence. Subsequently, at the request of Lady Flora Hastings, I was present at the consultation of the medical men, who communicated to me, in medical terms, their opinion, explaining the appearance, by which I, as well as others, had been misled. I communicated to her Majesty the result of the consultation, and I soon afterwards had an interview with Lady Flora Hastings; and, having discharged the duty then imposed upon me, I expressed my own feelings towards her, and explained the course which I had felt it to be my duty to take, and I left her with the impression on my mind that she did not think my conduct attributable to any other motive. I remained in the Palace some days longer than I otherwise should have done, in case any information should have been required of me, as the Lady in Waiting, during this painful investigation; and on the evening before I left London, having understood from Sir James Clark that he had suggested to Lord Hastings an interview with me, I wrote to Sir James Clark, saying, that if Lord Hastings wished to see me I would delay my departure for a few hours the next day; but that if Lord Hastings did *not* wish to see me I should be glad to know it at an early hour in the morning, that I might not be detained. I received a note from Sir James Clark the following morning, saying, 'I have just received Lord Hastings's reply, which is, that under present circumstances he does not wish to see your Ladyship.'

"I then felt myself at liberty to return to Bryanston.

"Bryanston, March 17, 1839.

"E. PORTMAN."

After this I found it necessary to take the opinion of counsel as to the best mode of getting at the truth by a legal process; but, finding that all my efforts for redress were ineffectual, I wrote the following letter:—

THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

"Donington Park, April 8, 1839.

"My Lord—I am induced thus publicly to address you, as Prime Minister of the Crown, not only from a feeling of duty to my own family, who have been insulted and wronged to the last degree by the late proceedings at Buckingham Palace, but from a sense that public justice and public opinion loudly demand my adopting such a course. I feel that no public reparation having been made for this outrage against every feeling of delicacy, of justice, and of honour, I should be wanting in every impulse which *ought* to actuate and guide a brother if I did not take the last means now in my power of showing that it is not from the numerous difficulties which have been thrown into the way of finding out the slanderers of my poor sister that her family has been prevented from bringing them to justice, and holding them up to the contempt and indignation of the world, but from the manner in which they have been screened by the Court. And whilst I use the word Court (I will not permit my loyalty to be questioned, such a supposition would ill-apply to one who bears my name), I impute nothing to the Sovereign but the misfortune of being betrayed by the baneful influence which now surrounds the Throne, and it is to clear the Court of these slanderers, and to place this infamous transaction in its true light, that I now address you as the responsible Minister of the Crown. My Lord, you have stated that the removal of these persons would be unprecedented. Need I say that their conduct has been unprecedented, and is calculated, in the highest degree, to throw disgrace and discredit on the Court? A near relative of mine having, from a kind feeling of the painful



position in which all my family have been placed (by the garbled statements which appeared in the public prints), published, unknown to any one of its members, an authentic statement of facts. I feel convinced that the thinking part of the community will not require from the wounded feelings of a brother the repetition of those disgusting proceedings. I once more urge upon you, my Lord, *that* course which you say is without precedent; the occasion will justify you in making one. My sister is daily subjected to the bitterness that results from the presence of those who have so basely slandered her, from which I should have relieved her, had I not known that by so doing I should have given a fresh opportunity of calumniating her, and have acted ungratefully to her illustrious and generous mistress, the Duchess of Kent, whose noble conduct will ever be gratefully remembered by my family, and duly appreciated and respected by every well-thinking person within this realm.

“HASTINGS.”

After the foregoing correspondence had passed, finding that none of the measures required, as well by a sense of public justice as of good feeling, were likely to be adopted, my mother resolved to make public the following letters:—

THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN, TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST.

“Loudoun Castle, April 8, 1839.

“Sir—Being unable to reach the original calumniator or calumniators of my daughter, Lady Flora Hastings, and having received no mark of reparation from her Majesty’s responsible advisers, I consider it due to my personal and family honour to show that I have sought it. I am reluctantly obliged to have recourse to the publication of the following letters.

“The first letter in this correspondence, addressed to her Majesty, would have been very incorrectly placed here, had it not been for its official answer, and the report which is in circulation, that I had been guilty of writing an improper letter, called ‘An impertinent letter to the Queen.’ With whom such an imputation originated (as no copy of it has been given beyond my own family) may appear extraordinary, but it is to me quite immaterial; not so the refutation of a charge so serious.

“Some other letters, received from and addressed to her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, are not inserted, although connected with the same dreadful subject, from a wish to withhold, as far as possible, everything that would unnecessarily associate her Royal Highness’s name with these occurrences, except the expression of my unalterable respect and gratitude for her Royal Highness’s conduct towards my daughter and her feeling towards myself.

“F. HASTINGS (Mure) LOUDOUN.”

THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN, TO HER MAJESTY.

“Loudoun Castle, March 7, 1839.

“Madam—It is hardly to be imagined that your Majesty should feel any surprise in receiving the present letter. The anguish of a mother’s heart, under circumstances such as mine, can only be understood by a mother. But no one can be at a loss to know that loyalty to your Majesty, and justice to my innocent child, demand from me an explicit reference to your Majesty on the atrocious calumnies and unblushing falsehoods against my daughter’s reputation, which the perpetrators have dared to circulate, even in the Palace of the Sovereign. I have had the honour of remembering your Majesty in childhood—I am deeply and gratefully attached to your admirable mother—and I have cherished, in distance, absence, bad health, and many sorrows, a deep interest in the real honour and glory of your reign. My husband served his country



honourably, and with devoted zeal, and was particularly known to your Royal race; and my own family, during a long line, have been distinguished as faithful servants of their Kings. My grandfather lost his life in the service of his Sovereign. With so many claims on my feelings of old—although now unfashionable—aristocracy, it is impossible to suppose me capable of disrespect or want of loyalty towards your Majesty—a feeling, Madam, not less unbecoming towards you than repugnant to what I feel suitable in myself. But I trust a sense of morality is not yet so callous a thing as not to be held in some due respect even in the sight of a thoughtless world, and to justify my appealing directly to your Majesty to refute, by some act, calculated to mark your indignant sense of the slanders which some person or persons have ventured to cast in your Majesty's presence upon my daughter, and betrayed your Majesty to follow up by a course of proceeding such as was no doubt done on their part with a wish to try to degrade the victim of their persecution. It is my duty respectfully to call your Majesty's attention to its being not more important for my daughter than essentially consonant to your Majesty's honour and justice, not to suffer the criminal inventor of such falsehoods to remain without discovery. To a female Sovereign especially, women of all ranks in Britain look, with confidence, for protection, and (notwithstanding the difference of their rank) for sympathy. To such honest feelings of respect (for they take their origin in that) I ought not to suppose your Majesty indifferent; far less can I imagine that, as your Majesty increases in years, you will not feel, Madam, more and more the value of that estimate of your high place, which would make no one doubt your commanding reparation (as far as reparation can be made) for an infamous calumny, as not less incumbent as an act of necessary morality in the case of the public, as it assuredly is to the individual who so severely suffers from such defamation. This is not a matter that can or will be hushed up, and it is all-important that no time should be lost in calling the culpable to account. With this appeal to your Majesty's upright feelings, I have the honour to be, Madam,

"Your Majesty's dutiful subject and servant,

(Signed)

"F. HASTINGS and (Mure) LOUDOUN."

THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN, TO LORD MELBOURNE.

"Loudoun Castle, March 8, 1839.

"My Lord—I trouble your Lordship with the inclosed letter, in order to ensure its *immediate* and *safe* delivery, and I have to request you will present it yourself to her Majesty.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

(Signed)

"F. HASTINGS and (Mure) LOUDOUN.

"To Viscount Melbourne, &c."

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.

"South-street, March 11, 1839.

"Madam—I have this morning received your Ladyship's letter of the 6th inst., together with a letter addressed to the Queen, which letter I will lose no time in laying before her Majesty; and I remain, Madam,

"Your Ladyship's faithful and obedient servant,

(Signed)

"MELBOURNE.

"The Marchioness of Hastings, &c."

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.

"Downing-street, March 12, 1839.

"Madam—According to your Ladyship's desire, I have delivered to her Majesty your letter of the 7th inst. The allowance which her Majesty is



anxious to make for the natural feelings of a mother upon such an occasion tended to diminish that surprise which could not be otherwise than excited by the tone and substance of your Ladyship's letter.

" Her Majesty commands me to convey to your Ladyship the expression of her deep concern at the unfortunate circumstances which have recently taken place. Her Majesty hastened to seize the first opportunity of testifying to Lady Flora Hastings her conviction of the error of the impression which had prevailed; and Her Majesty is still most desirous to do everything in her power to soothe the feelings of Lady Flora and her family, which must have been painfully affected by the events which have occurred.—I have the honour to remain, Madam, your Ladyship's obedient and humble servant,

(Signed)

" MELBOURNE.

" To the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings, &c."

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THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN, TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

" Loudoun Castle, March 10, 1839.

" My Lord—When I observe that no steps are taken to repair, as far as reparation is possible, the indignity offered three weeks ago, to my daughter, within the precincts of Her Majesty's Palace, your Lordship cannot be surprised at receiving this letter from me. I am told that, as the responsible adviser of the Sovereign, your Lordship considers it as your constitutional right to appoint and to dismiss her Majesty's Household. As it is known to be your Lordship's principle, I address myself to you, on whom the sacred trust and heavy responsibility rest, of marking respect for good order and punishing abuse. The nature and the manner of the course pursued in this atrocious conspiracy (for it admits of no other name) were unexampled, and yet *Sir James Clark remains Her Majesty's Physician!* I claim at your hands, my Lord, as a mark of public justice, the removal of Sir James Clark. I am, my Lord, your Lordship's most humble servant,

(Signed)

" F. HASTINGS and (Mure) LOUDOUN.

" To the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Melbourne."

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VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.

" South-street, March 17, 1839.

" Madam—Late yesterday evening, the 16th instant, I had the honour of receiving your Ladyship's letter of the 10th instant, from Loudoun Castle. I mark these dates in order to acquit myself of any delay or neglect in replying to your Ladyship's communication.

" The demand which your Ladyship's letter makes upon me is so unprecedented and objectionable that even the respect due to your Ladyship's sex, rank, family, and character would not justify me in more, if, indeed, it authorises so much, than acknowledging that letter for the sole purpose of acquainting your Ladyship that I have received it.—I have the honour to remain, Madam, with the highest respect, your Ladyship's obedient and humble servant,

(Signed)

" MELBOURNE.

" The Marchioness Dowager of Hastings, &c."

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THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN, TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

" Loudoun Castle, March 15, 1839.

" My Lord—Any expression of Her Majesty's sorrow for the late occurrences is consolatory to me.

" If the Queen wishes any explanation of any part of my letter, which, from



a dubious expression in your Lordship's, I am uncertain of, I am quite ready to give it.

"If Her Majesty had been thoroughly aware of all the circumstances of the case, 'the tone and substance' of my letter could not have excited any surprise. Although *a woman*, the oath of allegiance, which I have taken to Her Majesty, is as dear to me as to any man; and to that, and the true circumstances of the late transaction, I refer your Lordship.—I am, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble servant,

(Signed) "F. HASTINGS and (Mure) LOUDOUN.

"The Right Hon. Lord Viscount Melbourne," &c.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS, COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.

"South-street, March 17, 1839.

"Madam—I have the honour of acknowledging your Ladyship's letter of the 15th instant, which I received yesterday morning.

"I neither had, nor have, it in command to express a wish for any explanation of your Ladyship's letter addressed to Her Majesty, nor of any part of it.

"I have the honour to remain, Madam, with high respect,

"Your Ladyship's humble and obedient servant,

(Signed) "MELBOURNE.

"To the Most Noble the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings."

In this state of things it was determined to let the matter rest whilst my sister remained at Court, which it was judged necessary she should continue to do for some time longer, to protect her from calumny.

Some time afterwards my sister's illness again manifested itself to an alarming degree. Even the public manifestation of sympathy with which she was repeatedly greeted produced so bad an effect upon her that it was judged right to keep her as quiet as possible. I need not add more than that she became rapidly worse, and all medical aid proved unavailing against an illness of long standing, and much INCREASED by the anxiety of mind her wrongs produced, and which at last hurried her to an untimely grave.

I think it proper to state some further facts which have been verbally communicated to me (and for which I so far vouch), that occurred on the occasion of the barbarous and indelicate investigation to which my sister was exposed, although written documents to substantiate the whole of them are not in my possession.

Some questions having been put to my sister, and answered, it was suggested that the inquiry ought not to proceed further, and that they might now feel quite satisfied. Sir James Clark objected, and stated that the 'ladies of the Court would not be satisfied without the strictest examination, and that, if Lady Flora knew her own innocence, she could have no reason to oppose the most complete scrutiny.

It has also been stated to me, and corroborated to the fullest extent by a deposition sworn before a magistrate of Ayrshire by my sister's maid, who was present at the examination, that while the whole demeanour of Sir Charles Clarke during the painful and humiliating scene was characterised by kindness,



the conduct of Sir JAMES Clark, as well as that of *Lady Portman*, was *unnecessarily* abrupt, *unfeeling*, and indelicate. This deposition I withhold, as it contains much that is WHOLLY unfit for general perusal.

I subjoin the following documents in further elucidation of the subject:—

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE LATE LADY FLORA  
HASTINGS TO MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY.

TO THE DOWAGER MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS.

“Buckingham Palace, March 1, 1839.

“She (the Duchess of Kent) shrunk with horror from the idea of my submitting to the test demanded, but I urged her, for my sake, for that of my family and for her own, for I felt it right towards her to allow me to meet the charge in the manner most convincingly and instantly to confute it. I was strong in innocence, and I felt my courage equal to any endurance.”

TO THE DOWAGER LADY HASTINGS.

“Buckingham Palace, Wednesday, March 13, 1839.

“Lady Portman apologised to me. She came to me the Sunday evening, while I was eating my bit of dinner, and told me, with tears in her eyes, that, ‘as all had ended so happily for all parties!’ she was anxious to say that, as perhaps no one had been so inveterate against me in speaking to the Queen. She thought it right to do so, that I might not believe the Queen had a personal bias against me. She meant to say, ‘I am very sorry, but I should (such is my feeling towards the Queen) have said the same of any one respecting whom I (entertained?) the same suspicions.’ I said, ‘Oh, Lady Portman, what surprises me is that you *could* entertain those suspicions. You do not know *me* much, but you knew enough of my people to have known they were impossible.’ I was too ill to discuss the *manner* in which they had been acted upon; so, after giving me a message of regret from the Queen, who said if I would like to see her she would see me that evening or next morning (the first I declined, not being equal to it; and next day it was equally out of the question, as I was suffering from nervous headache, and *scarcely able to speak*), and a request that in waiting or out of waiting, I would reside as her guest at the Palace as long as I liked, ‘to show how fully *we are satisfied*,’ she left me. I gave her my hand in token of forgiveness; but when she asked to come to me afterwards, I declined. It is one thing to forgive and another to forget. Thank God, I can do the first, but my memory is stubborn. \* \* \* \* \*

“He (Sir James Clark) began *that* day to speak to me with *some* degree of feeling; but, irritated by my denial, became violent and coarse, and even attempted to browbeat me.”

“Buckingham Palace, April 6, 1839.

“It is remarkable that from *that second day* (after *Lady Flora’s* arrival from Scotland,) the 11th of January, to the 23rd of February, the idea, however or by whomsoever suggested \* \* \* \* \* was so strong in the Queen’s mind, that she never opened her lips to me!”



## TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

" Buckingham Palace, May —, 1839. "

" Lady Portman had my forgiveness as a Christian ; but I declined ever *after* seeing or knowing her *from her conduct*.

" With regard to the Duchess of Kent, her Royal Highness had a very warm conversation with her, on every bearing of the transaction, and it was in *that* conversation Lady Portman took *upon herself* to *aver*, from her experience as a married woman, that there was no doubt *I was* in the situation they alleged me to be in.

" It is upon that *avermment* that Lady Portman stands committed and convicted as a slanderer, and out of that position no ingenuity can take her ; and it was upon *that* feeling that the Duchess declined *seeing* her, and restricted her explanation of her conduct to a written one, which explanation her Royal Highness merely acknowledged, and referred Lady Portman to Her Majesty's advisers."

EXTRACTED FROM A DIARY KEPT BY LADY FLORA HASTINGS,  
IN HER OWN HAND-WRITING.

" With one exception, an inquiry after Lady Forbes's children, her Majesty showed Lady Flora no notice from the 24th of March, the date when Mr. Fitzgerald's letter was published, until the 9th of June when her Majesty sent to ask how she was."

## COPY OF CERTIFICATE IN SIR J. CLARK'S HANDWRITING.

" Buckingham Palace, February 17, 1839.

" We have examined with great care the state of Lady Flora Hastings, with a view to determine the existence or non-existence of pregnancy, and it is our opinion, although there is an enlargement of the stomach, that there is no grounds for suspicion that pregnancy does exist or ever has existed.

(Signed)

" CHARLES M. CLARKE, M.D.

" JAMES CLARK, M.D."

## PRESCRIPTIONS WRITTEN BY SIR JAMES CLARK.

*Prepared by Mr. Squire, Apothecary, 277, Oxford-street.*

" LADY FLORA HASTINGS.

" R. Pulv : ipecac : comp : 20 grains  
Pulv : ipecac : 5 grains

Optime terendo et adde

Extracti rhæi. q. s.—

Ft. massula in pilul : xii.

divided :

Sig : One at bed-time—

R. Liniment : camphor : comp : 1 oz.

Liniment : saponis comp :

Tinctur : opii a. a. ½ oz.

Sig : Liniment for side.

M.

" Jan. 10th, 1839.

(Signed)

" J. C."

" The above copied by me from the original prescription.

" Kelburne, Sept, 2, 1839.

" JOHN CAMPBELL, M.D."



“ R. Infus : chyraytæ                      6 oz.  
    Acid sulphur : dilut :                      ½ drachm

Sig. A table-spoonful in a table-spoonful of water, morning and noon.  
 “ Feb. 1, 1839.    (Signed)    “ J. C.  
 “ Lady Flora Hastings,”

“ The above copied by me from the original prescription.

“ Kelburne, Sept. 2, 1839.    “ JOHN CAMPBELL, M.D.”

My heart sickens at the repetition and recollection of the scenes I have so lately witnessed ; but whatever may be the opinion of those interested in calling for silence on this subject, I could only regard that line of conduct on my part as the most cringing submission to the *most* atrocious injustice. I have therefore now performed not only a very obvious but a very painful duty, by laying this statement before the public ; and I shall henceforward seek in the bosom of my family that consolation which alone remains to me, namely, the feelings of having done the utmost in my power (under circumstances without parallel or precedent) to wrest from infamy and disgrace the character of her who is, alas ! now no more ; and whose unostentatious piety and meekness might have shielded her from such wrongs, and with the world I now leave that painful subject for ever.

(Signed)

HASTINGS.

## FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO LORD VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

“ Burlington Hotel, June 19, 1839.

“ My Lord—I have allowed the interval which has elapsed since the date of my last communication with your Lordship to pass, in the expectation that a sense of justice towards Lady Flora Hastings would have led to a reversal of the decision that no satisfactory apology or atonement should be made for the cruel insult which had been offered to her feelings and honour, and, through her, to the honour of her family.

“ I have abandoned the hope of this act of justice with regret, because I have felt that it is impossible for me under existing circumstances to take any steps publicly to enforce it ; nor can I make any one personally responsible to myself for the outrage of my sister.

“ But my Lord, your Lordship’s letter of the 17th of March to my mother, Lady Hastings, is of a different character.

“ That letter I have a right to consider as of a private nature ; and I have only been deterred from requiring you to make an apology to the Dowager Lady Hastings for the offensive and insulting terms in which it was couched by the consideration that if I had done so at an earlier date I might thereby have precluded the possibility of that ample and public reparation being offered to my sister which I had a right to expect, and that my demand for an explanation of the language in your private letter to Lady Hastings might have been misrepresented, and erroneously considered as applying to those letters which were written by her Majesty’s command.

“ This difficulty has now ceased ; these considerations are no longer applicable ; and I have now only to require your Lordship to offer such an apology to my mother, Lady Hastings, for the language in which you have addressed her in your letter of the 17th of March, as will be satisfactory to her feelings, and be such as I consistently with my own honour and my duty, can advise my mother to receive.



"Lord Rosslyn, who will deliver this letter to you, is fully in possession of my sentiments upon this very painful subject, and has undertaken to receive and carry to me any communication which you may do me the honour to make to me.—I have the honour to be, &c.,  
(Signed)

"To the Viscount Melbourne, &c., South-street.

"HASTINGS."

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"South-street, June 20, 1839.

"My Lord,—I beg leave to acknowledge your Lordship's letter, which I received yesterday evening from Lord Rosslyn.

"The greater part of that communication I pass by as irrelevant and immaterial.

"The reasons which have induced your Lordship so long to delay the demand which you now make, are for your Lordship's consideration, and not for mine.

"Notwithstanding the peremptory language which your Lordship thinks proper to employ, if I could either feel or be convinced that my letter of the 17th of March last addressed to the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings, was couched, as your Lordship expresses it, in offensive and insulting terms, I should be not only ready but anxious and eager to offer every reparation in my power.

"Your Lordship demands that a satisfactory apology should be made to the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings for the language in which I have addressed her Ladyship in my letter of the 17th of March. If any expression can be pointed out which is disrespectful, I am ready at once to retract it; but with respect to the substance, meaning, and import of that letter, I thought it my duty to write it, and I am prepared to abide by and sustain it. I have the honour to remain, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant, (Signed) "MELBOURNE.

"To the Marquis of Hastings, &c. &c."

THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

"Grosvenor-place, June 20, 1839.

"My Lord,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter of this date, delivered to me by Lord Rosslyn.

"I will admit that your Lordship is the best judge of the propriety and expediency of the 'substance and import' of the letter which you thought it your duty to write, and I cannot believe that you could sustain any deliberate 'meaning' to convey offence and insult to a lady.

"But I must be permitted to repeat that the language of the latter part of your letter, of the 17th of March, to the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings, has been considered so offensive in its general tone, and has unavoidably been so painful to the feelings of my mother, that I felt it to be my imperative duty to call your attention to it, and I have done so in the full confidence and expectation that you will not hesitate to offer to the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings the only reparation in your power, by retracting the language complained of, or distinctly explaining that the expressions which have been so deeply wounding to the feelings of my mother were made use of with no intention to offend.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

"To the Viscount Melbourne."

(Signed) "HASTINGS."

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"South-street, June 20, 1839.

"My Lord,—I have the honour of acknowledging your Lordship's letter of this day.

"Your Lordship has not pointed out the precise expressions in my letter which your Lordship considers to have been offensive, nor have you stated the reason why you so consider them.

"If I were to retract these expressions without substituting others I should leave



my meaning imperfect; and I protest I know not where to find terms which, in my opinion, would be less liable to objection than those which I have employed.

"But the second alternative which your Lordship proposes to me, I embrace without difficulty or hesitation, and I request your Lordship to assure the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings that nothing was further from my intention than to offer her Ladyship any offence, or to treat her Ladyship otherwise than with the respect due to her station, rank, and character, and more particularly due to the painful circumstances under which that correspondence took place.—I have the honour to remain, my Lord, your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant,

"To the Marquis of Hastings, &c.

(Signed)

MELBOURNE."

THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS TO VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

"Grosvenor-place, June 21, 1839.

"My Lord,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your second letter of yesterday.

"Whilst your Lordship adheres to the language of your letter of the 17th of March, you request me to express to the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings that it was not your intention to offer to her Ladyship any offence, or to treat her with the slightest disrespect.

"I shall immediately communicate your Lordship's explanation to my mother, to whom, I trust, it will be satisfactory; at the same time I cannot but regret that in addressing the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings, your Lordship should have made use of terms and expressions which, without the assurance you have now afforded me that no disrespect or offence was contemplated, would, in my opinion, and in that of all whom I have consulted, justly warrant the opposite conclusion.

"I have the honour to be your Lordship's, &c. &c.

"To the Viscount Melbourne, &c.

(Signed)

HASTINGS."

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS.

"Downing-street, June 21, 1839.

"My Lord—I have the honour of acknowledging your Lordship's letter of this day, and remain, my Lord, your Lordship's faithful servant,

"The Marquis of Hastings, &c.

(Signed)

MELBOURNE."

FROM THE LADY FLORA ELIZA HASTINGS TO HAMILTON FITZGERALD, ESQ.

"Buckingham Palace, March 8, 1839.

"My dear Uncle.—Knowing what a very good-natured place Brussels is, I have not a hope that you have not already heard a story with which I am told London is ringing; but you shall at all events have from my own pen the account of the diabolical conspiracy from which it has pleased God to preserve the Duchess of Kent and myself; for that it was intended to ruin the whole concern, though I was to be first victim, I have no more doubt than *that a certain foreign lady, whose hatred to the Duchess is no secret, pulled the wires*, though it has not been brought home to her yet. I told you I was ill when I came to town, having been suffering for some weeks from bilious derangement, with its agreeable accompaniments, pain in the side and swelling of the stomach. I placed myself immediately under the care of Sir James Clark, who, being physician to the Duchess as well as to the Queen, was the natural person to consult. Unfortunately he either did not pay much attention to my ailments, or did not quite understand them, for in spite of his medicines the bile did not take its departure. However, by dint of walking and porter I gained a little strength, and, as I did so, the swelling subsided in a very remarkable degree. You may, therefore, guess, my indignant surprise when, about a fortnight since, Sir James Clark came to my room and announced to me the conviction of the Ladies of the Palace that I must be



privately married, or at least ought to be so—a conviction into which I found him completely talked over. In answer to all his exhortations to ‘confession’ ‘as the only means of saving my character!’ I returned, as you may believe, an indignant but steady denial that there was anything to confess. Upon which he told me that nothing but my submitting to a medical examination would ever satisfy them, and remove the stigma from my name. I found the subject had been brought before the Queen’s notice, and all this had been discussed, and arranged, and *denounced* to me without *one* word having been said to my own mistress, one suspicion hinted, or her sanction obtained for their proposing such a thing to me. From me Sir James went to the Duchess, and announced his conviction that I was in the family way, and was followed by Lady Portman, who conveyed a message from her Majesty to her mother to say that the Queen would not permit me to appear till the examination had decided matters. Lady Portman (who with, you will grieve to hear, Lady Tavistock are those whose names are mentioned as most active against me) took the opportunity of distinctly expressing her conviction of my guilt. My beloved mistress, who never for one moment *doubted* me, told them she knew me and my principles, and my family, too well to listen to such a charge. However the edict was given. The next day, having obtained the Duchess’s very reluctant consent, for she could not bear the idea of my being exposed to such a humiliation (but I felt it right to her, and to my family and myself, that a point blank refutation should be instantly given to the lie), I submitted myself to the most rigid examination, and I have the satisfaction of possessing a certificate, signed by my accuser, Sir James Clark, and also by Sir Charles Clarke, stating, as strongly as language can state it, that ‘there are no grounds for believing that pregnancy does exist, or ever has existed.’ I wrote to my brother who, though suffering from influenza, came up instantly.

“It would be too long to detail all his proceedings, but nothing could be more manly, spirited, and judicious than his conduct. He exacted and obtained from Lord Melbourne a distinct disavowal of his participation in the plot, and would not leave town till he had obtained an audience of the Queen, at which, while distinctly disclaiming his belief of any wish on the part of her Majesty to injure me, he very plainly, but respectfully, stated his opinion of those who had counselled her, and his resolution to find out the originator of the slander, and bring him or her to punishment. I am quite sure the Queen does not understand what they have betrayed her into. She has endeavoured to show her regret by her civility to me, and expressed it handsomely with tears in her eyes. The Duchess was perfect. A mother could not have been kinder, and she took up the insult as a personal one, directed as it was at a person attached to her service, and devoted to her. She immediately dismissed Sir James Clark, and refused to see Lady Portman, and would neither re-appear, or suffer me to re-appear at the Queen’s table for many days. She has crowned her goodness by a most beautiful letter she has written to poor mamma, whom the accounts, kept from her while there was a hope that matters might not become public, would reach to-day. I am told there is but one feeling as respects me—sympathy for the insult offered to one whose very name should be a protection to her, and that in many places the feeling is loudly expressed that public reparation should have been offered me by the dismissal of the slanderers. This does not, however, appear to be the view of Ministers; and as personally I wish for no revenge on those who have insulted me, I cannot say I much regret it, though I doubt whether they are quite judicious as respects the general feeling. As respects parliamentary majorities, they are with regard to the ladies. And poor Clark who has been the women’s tool, could hardly be sacrificed alone. The Duchess has stood by me gallantly, and I love her better than ever. She is the most generous-souled woman possible, and such a heart! this business made her very ill. It shattered me, too, very much, and I am wretchedly thin; but, under Doctor Chambers’s good management, I am getting round, and hope soon to be well. Hastings says he has not done with the business, nor never will while there is anything left to sift.

“Good bye, my dear uncle. I blush to send you so revolting a tale, but I wished you to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—and you are welcome to tell it right and left.

“Your affectionate niece,

“To Hamilton Fitzgerald, Esq.,  
17, Rue de Namur, Brussels.”

“FLORA ELIZ. HASTINGS,



## THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

"Buxton, Aug. 16, 1839.

"Sir—My absence from town (together with other circumstances) has been the cause of my not taking earlier notice of an article in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 12th instant on the subject of Lady Flora Hastings's letter to Mr. Fitzgerald, in which article allusion is made to Lady Tavistock (together with Lady Portman) as 'the two ladies who, manifestly in mistake, too hastily imparted their unfavourable suspicions to their youthful Sovereign.' When Mr. Fitzgerald's letter appeared (in March last) in the public papers, I wrote to the Marquis of Hastings to express my regret that his relation had thought proper to state to the world, on mere hearsay evidence, that Lady Tavistock's name was 'mentioned as having taken an active part against Lady Flora.' His Lordship assured me, in reply, that he was not responsible for any expression contained in Mr. Hamilton Fitzgerald's letter. With that answer I was satisfied, and I have not hitherto deemed it necessary to take notice of the many acrimonious remarks that have since appeared in some of the newspapers on Mr. Fitzgerald's statement; but I am unwilling any longer to allow his authority for that statement to pass uncontradicted, more especially on account of the erroneous impression which the comments of the *Morning Chronicle* are calculated to produce on the public; for while professing to excuse Lady Tavistock's conduct, it does in fact admit the gravamen of the charge which has been so pertinaciously urged against her, and, assuming the office of her defender, takes upon itself to express her sorrow and contrition for having done that which it is absolutely false that she ever did, or ever thought of doing. It might have been expected that the complete establishment and universal admission of Lady Flora's innocence, followed by the melancholy event of her death, would (out of respect to her memory alone) have put an end to discussions and publications which can now have no possible object but that of pandering to a morbid appetite for scandal, or the still more base and revolting one of converting this unhappy lady's name and story into a source of pecuniary gain. I shall not minister to this wicked and despicable purpose by entering into any explanation or making any statements, or mentioning any names beyond what is absolutely necessary for the peremptory and effectual contradiction of a direct assertion, and a tangible charge. I content myself, therefore, with saying that Lady Tavistock never took any part whatever against Lady Flora Hastings; and that, inasmuch as it formed no part of her official duty to communicate with her Sovereign on this subject, she never 'imparted any suspicion,' nor made any communication, direct or indirect, to her Majesty concerning it. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"TAVISTOCK."

## LORD PORTMAN TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

"Bryanston, August 20, 1839.

"Sir—My attention has been called this day to a letter from the Marquis of Tavistock, in *The Times* of the 19th instant, to an article in *The Morning Chronicle* of the 12th of August, and to an article in *The Morning Post*, purporting to be a letter from the Marquis of Hastings to his neighbours at Castle Donington; and I therefore take the liberty of addressing you, for the purpose of preventing my continued silence being construed into an admission of the truth of any of the assertions made with reference to the official conduct of Lady Portman at Buckingham Palace in February last; and for the purpose also of making known, that having hitherto, in submission to the advice of those who are well qualified to give an opinion, abstained from taking notice of the erroneous and abusive remarks made in some newspapers on the conduct of Lady Portman, I shall not be provoked, by the malice of political or of personal enemies, nor by the intended kindness of friends, imperfectly acquainted with the truth, now to enter into any detail of the case; but I shall await the opportunity, which I hope the Marquis of Hastings, by the performance of the pro-



mise made in the letter to which I have alluded, is about to afford me, of proving that Lady Portman did, on that painful occasion, neither more nor less than her duty to the Court, towards Lady Flora Hastings, and towards the people of England, to whom, while she was in waiting upon the Sovereign, she was constitutionally responsible.

I am, Sir, your obedient,

(Signed)

“PORTMAN.”

## LORD PORTMAN'S STATEMENT.

FROM LORD PORTMAN TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

“SIR—Having carefully considered the extraordinary publication given to the world by the Marquis of Hastings in *The Morning Post* of the 14th inst. I feel it necessary, in justice to Lady Portman, to lay before the public only a few observations on this painful subject.

“Lady Portman is called ‘the Accuser.’ Lady Portman never originated any accusation against Lady Flora Hastings: but having been informed of the prevalence of suspicions entertained respecting Lady Flora Hastings, and observing the appearances on which they were founded, seemed to her to be necessary that the doubts which rested on Lady Flora Hastings, and tended to reflect dishonour on the Court, should be cleared up. She was, however, actuated by no feeling against Lady Flora Hastings; nor had she any desire but to discharge, with the most scrupulous propriety, her difficult and distressing duty.

“Lady Portman never thought of nor suggested the Medical Examination: she never received nor delivered any message, suggesting, or requiring, or advising it: she never heard that any thing of the kind was likely to take place until after she had come into the room at the request of Lady Flora Hastings. The statement on that occasion, that the demeanor of Lady Portman ‘was unnecessarily abrupt, unfeeling, and indelicate,’ are only noticed for the purpose of giving to it Lady Portman’s absolute denial: no more cruel accusation than this can be made against Lady Portman, nor any more unfounded and incredible.

“I refrain from commenting on other serious but unintentional mistatements in the publication; but I cannot conclude without declaring, with the utmost sincerity, that to Lady Portman and to me, it has always been matter of the deepest regret that circumstances so singularly difficult and distressing should have occurred to create so much pain and so much sorrow.

“Your most obedient servant,

“Bryanston, Sept. 27, 1839.

“PORTMAN.”



## SIR JAMES CLARK'S STATEMENT.

So long as the accusations brought against me, in reference to the case of the late Lady Flora Hastings, continued to be either anonymous or unauthorized, I felt it right to submit in silence to every species of provocation, rather than bring before the public circumstances of a very delicate nature, which came within my knowledge in the implied confidence of professional intercourse. The publication, however, of the Marquis of Hastings, the nearest relative of Lady Flora Hastings, made me doubt seriously whether, in regard to myself, as well as the profession, I was justified in not laying before the public an account of the case, so far as I was concerned. The renewed attacks which have followed that publication permit me no longer to hesitate ; although, even now, it is with the utmost reluctance I bring myself to enter into details which, I am of opinion, ought never to have been made the subject of public discussion.

On the 10th of January last I was consulted by Lady Flora Hastings, who had that day arrived from Scotland, and had come into waiting on her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. She had derangement of the bowels and of the general health, and she complained of pain low in the left side. There was also considerable enlargement of the lower part of the abdomen.

Under the use of some very simple remedies the derangement of the bowels and the pain in the side gradually abated and ultimately ceased, and Lady Flora complained only of weakness.

The size of the abdomen, however, continued undiminished, and Lady Flora's appearance became the subject of remark in the Palace. About the 1st of February, as nearly as I am able to fix the date, I was sent for by Lord Melbourne, and on going to him, his Lordship informed me that a communication had been made to him by Lady Tavistock respecting Lady Flora Hastings, whose appearance had given rise to a suspicion in the Palace that she might be privately married ; his Lordship asked my opinion on the subject. I stated, in reply, that while I thought such suspicions ought not to be readily listened to, I was, at the same time, bound to admit to him that the appearance of Lady Flora in some degree countenanced them. I added, that without more ample means of observation, I could not venture to give an opinion on the subject ; and his Lordship agreed with me that no step should then be taken in the matter.

From this time the condition of Lady Flora Hastings caused me considerable anxiety. The only source, besides pregnancy, from which the size and peculiar form of the abdomen could proceed, was disease ; but the probability of disease being the sole cause, in Lady Flora's case, was diminished by the circumstance that the enlargement was accompanied by very little general derangement of health. In fact, Lady Flora continued to perform her usual duties with apparent little inconvenience to herself.

I continued to visit Lady Flora about twice a week from the 10th of January to the 16th of February, and on several occasions examined the state of the abdomen over her dress ; but being unable in this way to satisfy myself as to the nature of the enlargement, I at length expressed to her my uneasiness respecting her size, and requested that at my next visit I might be permitted to lay my hand



upon her abdomen with her stays removed. To this Lady Flora declined to accede.

Matters remained in this state until the 16th of February. On that day I found it had been determined that I should acquaint Lady Flora with the suspicions which existed in the palace, and should suggest her calling another physician into consultation with me. Before visiting Lady Flora, I asked Lady Portman, the lady in waiting, if I might use her name to Lady Flora as one of the ladies who entertained the suspicion respecting her. To this Lady Portman at once assented. Her Ladyship then described the peculiarities in Lady Flora's form and carriage which had produced the impression in regard to her state. To the question as to what my opinion on the subject was, I replied that the appearance was certainly suspicious, but that even to medical men such appearances were often deceptive. Lady Portman concluded by observing, that for the sake of Lady Flora Hastings herself, as well as for the Court, it was necessary that the matter should be cleared up. Immediately after this interview with Lady Portman, I went to Lady Flora for the purpose of making to her this very unpleasant communication: I need hardly add that I made it in the most delicate terms which I could employ. After a few remarks on the state of her health, I told her that her size had attracted the attention of the ladies, and that it was now my painful duty to acquaint her Ladyship that they had in consequence been led to suspect that she must be privately married. This was the mode, and these were the words, in which the painful communication was made.

I urged Lady Flora, for obvious reasons, if there were grounds for this suspicion, to acknowledge the fact, and if not, to see another physician at once, to put an end to the rumour. Lady Flora denied that there were any grounds whatever for the suspicion, and named Sir Charles Clarke, who, she said, had known her from her childhood, as the physician she would wish to be called in; but she declined, notwithstanding my earnest entreaties, to see him on that day. This refusal, after the reasons which I had given, lessened very considerably the effect upon my mind of her Ladyship's denial.

After the interview with Lady Flora, it remained for me to communicate what had passed to her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. I therefore informed Lady Flora that I was going to her Royal Highness for that purpose; to the propriety of this Lady Flora immediately assented. I accordingly went to the Duchess of Kent, and stated the nature of the interview I had had with Lady Flora. Her Royal Highness immediately expressed her entire disbelief of anything injurious to Lady Flora's character, and she asked me my opinion. However reluctant I felt to express any doubts on the subject after Lady Flora's declaration, I could not decline giving a conscientious reply to her Royal Highness's question; and I answered to the effect that the suspicions I previously entertained were not removed.

In the course of the evening of the day on which I made the communication to Lady Flora Hastings I received a note from her Ladyship, of which the following is a copy:—

“ Saturday.

“ Sir,—Although I think you perfectly understood me this morning, that I did not wish you to take any steps without hearing from me, it is perhaps



better, to obviate the possibility of any mistake, that I should distinctly say so. I shall be governed entirely by her Royal Highness's wishes and orders.

"Yours sincerely,

"FLORA ELIZ. HASTINGS."

I heard nothing more on the subject till the afternoon of the following day (Sunday, February 17th), when I received another note from Lady Flora, of which the following is a copy:—

"Sir,—By her Royal Highness's command I have written to ask Sir Charles Clarke to name an hour this afternoon to come to me. He has answered my note by coming, and is now here. Could you come and meet him?

"Yours sincerely,

"F. E. HASTINGS."

On receiving this note I immediately went to Lady Flora, and found Sir Charles Clarke with her Ladyship. He stated to me, in Lady Flora's presence, as part of the conversation he had had with her, that he urged her, if there were any grounds for the suspicions entertained, to admit the fact now, as after the examination it would be too late.

After this conversation Lady Flora requested that Lady Portman might be called in. On her arrival Lady Flora retired to her chamber, where her maid was in attendance. After Sir Charles Clarke had made an examination, he returned with me to the sitting room, and stated as the result, that there could be no pregnancy; but at the same time he expressed a wish that I also should make an examination. This I at first declined, stating it to be unnecessary; but, on his earnestly urging me to do so, I felt that a further refusal might be construed into a desire to shrink from a share of the responsibility, and I accordingly yielded. After finally consulting, we gave the following certificate:—

"Buckingham Palace, Feb. 17, 1839.

"We have examined with great care the state of Lady Flora Hastings, with a view to determine the existence or non-existence of pregnancy, and it is our opinion, although there is an enlargement of the stomach, that there are no grounds for suspicion that pregnancy does exist, or ever did exist.

"CHARLES M. CLARKE, M.D.

"JAMES CLARK, M.D."

Before parting with Lady Flora, both Sir Charles Clarke and myself pressed upon her Ladyship the expediency of her appearing on that day at table as usual.

Such is a plain statement of the leading facts of this unfortunate case, so far as I am concerned. That I was unable to ascertain the true nature of Lady Flora's state, I at once admit, and most deeply regret: but when the difficulties which frequently occur in cases of this description, even where every facility is afforded for investigation, are considered, it can scarcely be made a matter of reproach to me that, amidst the disadvantages under which I laboured, I was unable to affirm that Lady Flora's change of appearance was the result of disease, and of disease alone. If even Sir Charles Clarke did not venture to express a positive opinion until after a careful examination, it will be readily conceded that no other person could have done so without recurring to some similar proceeding. And if anything further were required to establish the diffi-



culties of this very peculiar case, and the heavy responsibility attaching to a decision on it, Sir Charles Clarke knows that there are other facts connected with it which prove, in the most unequivocal manner, both the one and the other—facts which do not throw the slightest shade of doubt on the purity of Lady Flora, nor are matter of blame to any one, but which it is not necessary to bring before the public.

The *post mortem* examination established the fact, that the death of Lady Flora Hastings was occasioned by extensive disease, dating its origin ‘at some former and distant period of time;’ and yet such was the obscurity of the symptoms which, during life, accompanied the disease, that its nature became evident a few weeks only before Lady Flora’s death; and the fact of its having involved every organ within the abdomen was revealed only by the *post mortem* examination.

I think it right to notice, in this place, a part of my conduct which may at first sight appear censurable: I allude to the admission of my suspicion that Lady Flora might be pregnant, before I had been permitted more fully to examine into her state. Under almost any other circumstance it would have been highly improper for me to have answered an inquiry on such a subject; but, as I could not authoritatively remove suspicions founded upon appearances, which, taken alone, would in a great majority of cases, indicate what was feared, and not the singular state of disease revealed after the death of Lady Flora, I felt it my duty, considering the very peculiar responsibility which attached to me, to confide the doubt which was in my own mind to those who had a right to demand my real opinion, and who, I felt assured, could not use it in a manner unfriendly to Lady Flora.

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I shall now notice such parts of the publication of the Marquis of Hastings as more particularly relate to me. An extract is given by his Lordship from a letter written by Lady Flora Hastings to the Dowager Marchioness of Hastings, dated March 13th, nearly a month after the event, in which it is stated that at my visit to communicate to Lady Flora the suspicions entertained respecting her, I became “violent and coarse, and even attempted to browbeat” her Ladyship! I hope I may refer to my character alone as a sufficient reply to this accusation; moreover, on the occasion referred to, there could be no motive for such conduct. Any earnestness that I may have shown in my manner could have for its object only that Lady Flora, for her own sake, should see Sir Charles Clarke on that day. In corroboration of my own solemn disavowal of the conduct imputed to me, I refer to the two notes, already given in my narrative, which I received from Lady Flora Hastings within twenty-four hours after the very occasion on which I am said to have thus acted; and, consequently, at the very time when all her feelings may fairly be supposed to have been more excited by the alleged conduct than at any subsequent period: and, as still more direct evidence, I would further refer to Lady Flora’s letter to her uncle, Mr. Hamilton Fitzgerald, dated March 8th, in which—although written for the express purpose of making her griefs known to a relative, with whom she had no motive for reserve, and therefore, in the very circumstances, calculated to elicit com-



plaint—not a word escaped her blaming my conduct or language during either of my interviews with her. On the contrary, expressions occur which she surely could not have used had she really then felt that I had acted towards her in an unfriendly manner.

That Lady Flora intended to misrepresent what actually occurred, I do not for a moment believe. Under the circumstances of excitement in which she was placed, it need not create surprise that she should unconsciously have allowed impressions, arising out of discussions which afterwards took place, to grow upon her mind, till she at length confounded them with facts, or that she should have greatly exaggerated what did actually take place. It is only in this way that I account for some of the statements made by Lady Flora Hastings.

Her Ladyship's written account of the circumstances which took place during the interview on the 16th of February, at which we alone were present, differs widely from my recollection of them. I think it necessary to notice two points in particular—the first is the alleged diminution of Lady Flora's size. On this I shall only observe that I could discover no such diminution, else I should have been too happy to have availed myself of the circumstance to clear Lady Flora's character, and to have relieved myself from a very embarrassing position. The second is, that I told Lady Flora that she must submit to a "*medical examination*." I not only never used such an expression, but never heard it employed for what it has been assumed to imply till after the unfortunate matter was over; in fact, I then believed that a full external examination would prove sufficient to decide the matter. Everything, consequently, which has been asserted, about a "*medical examination*" having been suggested by the ladies, or by me, is utterly groundless.

The only other parts of Lord Hastings's correspondence which require notice from me are two charges brought forward by his Lordship. The first consists of a statement said to have been received from Lady Flora's own lips, that the examination "*was conducted with more than ordinary disregard to delicacy, and to her feelings.*" In corroboration of this charge his Lordship has referred to a deposition on oath, by Lady Flora's maid. "*That the conduct of Sir James Clark and Lady Portman was unnecessarily abrupt, indelicate, and unfeeling!*" I notice this charge in passing merely to give it a peremptory denial. The other charge is in the following words:—"Some questions having been put to my sister and answered, it was suggested that the inquiry ought not to proceed further, and that they might now feel quite satisfied. Sir James Clark objected, and stated that the ladies of the Court would not be satisfied without the strictest examination; and that if Lady Flora knew her own innocence, she could have no reason to oppose the most complete scrutiny." The simple reply to this is that *no such suggestion was ever made, and no such objection ever urged*. Upon what authority Lord Hastings makes this statement he has nowhere mentioned, and I am utterly at a loss to conceive, unless, indeed, it be on that of the foreign maid to whose oath he before refers, and whose knowledge of English may not have been sufficient to enable her fully to understand what was passing. But I cannot avoid expressing my regret that his Lordship did not procure the testimony of the only witness during the *whole* consultation—Sir Charles Clarke—before



he made such grave charges. Had he followed this course, I venture to affirm they never would have been made. Sir Charles Clarke, although he might not have thought it proper to discuss with Lord Hastings the details of what passed at the consultation, could not have hesitated, had he been appealed to, to refute such groundless accusations.

It remains for me now only to repeat my sincere regret that I was unable to relieve Lady Flora Hastings at once from every suspicion. No one has felt more acutely than myself, during the whole of this painful affair, the distress occasioned to Lady Flora and her family, whether arising from the original circumstances, or from the matter being afterwards forced into public notice.

Deeply painful as it has been to me to see my name so long associated with alledged acts and motives at which my very nature revolts, the consciousness of my own rectitude, the friendship of those who, from long and intimate acquaintance, know me to be incapable of the conduct imputed to me, and a firm reliance on justice being ultimately done to all parties, have supported me under an accumulation of attacks such as few professional men can have been subjected to.

JAMES CLARK, M.D.

George-street, October 7, 1839.

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