

With important corrections (by especial desire) as to the conduct of her Majesty.

498  
THE  
LADY FLORA HASTINGS:

HER LIFE AND DEATH.

WITH QUESTIONS FOR THE QUEEN,

AND

CRITICISMS ON HER COURT.

THE QUEEN OF QUEEN VICTORIA.  
And touched upon the lady queen.  
Peers, Princes, Statesmen, cringing bowed,  
Within that grand and splendid scene:  
False flattery spoke in accents loud

"She knew that she was dying,  
But she dreaded not her doom."

"Go to that chamber of death: take no councillor with thee:— commune with  
thine own heart and be still."

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her with kindness; but amidst the strife of parties, and the din of factions—  
by their idolatry of the queen, lure her on to her ruin. Let them not "kill

## OBJECT OF THE PUBLICATION

Can such things be?  
And overcome us like a summer-cloud,  
Without our special wonder?

An influential organ of the aristocratic classes has published a very strong appeal to the public in favour of observing the strictest silence relative to the circumstances and the cause of the unhappy death of the lady Flora Hastings. This is claimed on the ground of mercy to her family, and it is also said that, if they who are blest could influence the motives and the actions of those who are still on earth, it would be the behest of the departed one, that respecting her own wrongs and her family's sorrow, all mankind should hereafter "hold their peace."

BUT THIS MUST NOT BE: it would be base not to do justice to the fair, the slandered fame and memory of the DEAD; it would be spurning the admonitions and slighting the decrees of heaven, if we were not to educe from the recent palace-calamity, stern but profitable warning for the LIVING.

Lady Flora has been the *first* victim to slander in the court of Victoria. May this exposure, and the reflections which accompany it, have some effect in preventing a similar fate from falling on others; and thus the first sacrifice will be the last.

## THE COURT OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

False flattery spoke in accents loud  
Within that proud and splendid scene:  
Peers, Prelates, Statesmen, cringing bowed,  
And crouched before the baby queen.

THE greatest nation and a sceptred child! What a contrast! The former RULED, and the latter the RULER! Can the contrast be strengthened?

The poet of Nature, and of the best code of ethics which *man* has yet propounded, tells us that

"Uneasy sleeps the head that wears a crown."

Whatever may be the sleeping-hours of her present most gracious Majesty, her wakeful moments seem fraught with joy. Every pleasure which the richest nation in the world can afford, and even the joys which other countries yield, are all at the beck and command of the "sceptred child." Instead of the paste and paper soldiers which form the armies of other youthful strategists, real men and genuine heroes compose her armies: she has a nation's resources for pocket-money; she has a palace for her nursery; the wise men of the age for her nurses; and dominions, upon which the sun never sets, for her play-ground.

Thus would rhodomontading politicians, yclept republicans, prattle, not having before their eyes the fear of queens, nor the power and charms of monarchy.

Far otherwise do the great bulk of the nation talk! But let them not, by their idolatry of the queen, lure her on to her ruin. Let them not "kill her with kindness;" but midst the strife of parties, and the din of factions—

and notwithstanding the adulation of courtiers, and the blandishments of a palace, let her sometimes hear

“What princes seldom hear;  
What courtiers seldom tell—the TRUTH.”

One feeble pen, at least, shall write—one feeble tongue, at least, shall tell it.

If Englishmen are attached to their queen, and they ought to be—if they are proud of her sway, as they say they are—and if, as they are justified in doing, they fondly cherish the hope that, by her virtues and the favour of her people, she will prove “the Elizabeth of a better age,”—it behoves them to be watchful of those who compose HER COURT.

She is little more than a child, and has not experience; she is a female—and to woman’s proverbial frailty she adds the instability and caprice of youthfulness: she is a queen, and is exposed to all the craftiness and temptations of cunning ministers, who are attached to office for its emoluments, and not for its duties or honour. She is surrounded by parasites, anxious only for place, and who care not what they do to her or to others, in order to obtain it. And lastly, she has frequently about her person, and generally in her presence, a horde of foreign un-English adventurers, who know little about our institutions, and who care less about our honour as a nation, or our greatness as a people. It is an extraordinary anomaly that a bevy of German prince-lings, who at home have less territory, and far smaller incomes, than our country squires in England, are popped into such places about the palace as makes Victoria’s court more like a German hospital, than the residence of an English sovereign.

The familiar position in which some of these Germans or other Continentalists are placed about her majesty is singular enough. For example; two hair-dressers, of un-english extraction, recently received from VICTORIA presents of a silver set of tea-service for their attention to her Royal person. But less is to be cared about these *underlings* than about others with German names, and with thorough German hearts, whose very presence before her Majesty is contamination. It is pretty generally understood that in the recent “untoward events,” as the mild Marquis of Londonderry calls them, about the non-change of the Ladies of the Household producing no change of ministry,—in that affair it is pretty well known that the Tory aspirants for office insisted upon the retirement from the palace of a certain lady called Baroness Lehzen. Against this lady’s character, as elevated by all the honor of strict female virtue and chastity, there is no charge—not a blot nor a stain. But as an intriguer, as a courtier, it has been said that “She has been spared too long,” and that her “expulsion from the country to which, happily, she does not belong, is necessary for the happiness and the honor of her royal mistress.” Of the lovely ENGLISH WOMEN by whom the diadem of the maiden Queen is upheld, it behoves us not to speak. Whatever of beauty and virtue the ranks of the titled and honoured can yield, are the ministering spirits at the foot of Victoria’s Throne. Would that as much could be said of those of the other sex who stand in the presence of Majesty!

Little does it become us—less is it our inclination, to mix up the matters of the Palace with public affairs. But the Queen’s circle is not merely a family:—the secrecy of the hearth exists not, when what is said or done relates, most materially and importantly, to the public. Of late, however, there has been an ungainly effort to drag every thing connected with the Palace before the public. Shortly before the slander against Lady Flora

Hastings, the public had the scandal, that the Queen had practised manual exercise upon the cheek of a lady, who was afterwards stated to be Lady Flora Hastings. Within the last few days another slander has been started. It appears that somebody told somebody that somebody told them that somebody said to the Queen, that when she went to Ascot Races she was hissed, by the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Sarah Ingestrie.

Peers have the right to demand an interview with the King; and one of the above-named noble ladies seems to have imagined that *a priori* Peeresses have a right to demand an interview with a Queen. One of them actually sought such an interview with her Majesty, relative to this supposed Lichfield accusation. The application was, however, refused, and very properly; for why should the Queen be teased as an arbitratress in female squabbles? On the other hand, why should she be exposed, or rather, why does she submit to the tattle of those who are near her person? It appears, however, that Lady Lichfield was *not* the informant of the Queen, as to the hissing.

The public have heard enough of Court scandals like these. Another was that when the Queen, as above referred to, in a moment of irritation, (to which even queens are prone) slapped a lady's face, one of those who were present, and whose feelings unfitted her to be a glozing parasite of a court, expressed to her sovereign, in terms such as the occasion demanded, her regret that such a course had been taken. The scandal went on to affirm that thereupon the Queen ordered the lady to her own private room, in which she remained, until, by the interference of the Duchess of Kent, she was set at liberty. The scandal was completed by the declaration that the lady who was thus used was no other than her whose loss is now so much deplored. In addition to these scandals, and Court-*fibberty*-fibs, a string "much longer than my arm," might here be spun. But enough is already known; and from that which is known, what results? Why, that in spite of the guardian care of the Duchess of Kent, and in spite of the advice of the Duke of Sussex, the COURT OF VICTORIA IS NOT WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE. Her majesty may be headstrong, or those who surround her may be head-weak or heart-tainted:—no matter what is the cause—here is the result. Her court is not what it ought to be, or the gabble of palace scandal would not continually ring in our ears nor would slanderous tongues have put aside the splendid robes of the titled victim, to enshroud her with the cold revolting habiliments of Death. This is enough to make every husband, wife, sister, brother, or friend declare that something is wrong in the court. It is not for the writer of these pages to assign the cause of this. With regard to too many of the other noblemen and gentlemen around her majesty, the less said the better. A few are examples fit for imitation in all that that pertains to public and private virtue. Of others—let the registers in the Courts of law declare an opinion. Are Crim. Cons. and chastity synonymous? Is gambling, honesty? If so, the Court of her Majesty is a *via latica* in which all the purity of every virtue is concentrated.

And truth to tell,—the "bill of fare" of household and official dainties, which was prepared when the Tories recently attempted to take the reins and profits of power, was quite as unique a specimen of political *cuisine* as that which is now spread in the palace. Sad indeed is the reflection that our *great men* are thus stained—that vice and wealth thus so often go together. Away with misanthropy, but welcome to rigid virtue! All must agree that the Queen's court is not (as already said) what it ought be. By the efforts of popular virtue, let aristocratic vice be restrained, and

royal purity of mind be scrupulously guarded. A vicious aristocracy, an unprincipled ministry, babbling courtiers, slandering beldames, jealous "rough decrepid hags," and ambitious maidens, if left without the compass of good example, and without the influence of virtuous precepts, will soon make the court of even a maiden queen a national pandemonium. Such was the court of France when Masillon preached; and the vices of that court ended in a bloody revolution. Thank God, the heart of our Queen is good! May that Providence which deprived her of a father's care, but which continued to her an adored mother's love and a wise good uncle's counsel—may that Providence sustain her in the courses of virtue which alone can command the affection and respect of her people: may it put evil counsellors from before her;—may it teach her that the happiness of the people is the throne's security and the sovereign's honor. May all kind of evil speaking be set aside; **MAY SLANDER NEVER HAVE ANOTHER VICTIM**;—and oh! that virtue and delicacy, and truth and justice, may daily increase, out of the royal and aristocratic circles, the number of their votaries!

### COMMENCEMENT OF THE SLANDER AGAINST LADY FLORA HASTINGS.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

**EARLY** in March, the crop of court scandal was exceedingly plentiful, and there was no lack of calumny-mongers to reap it. Not to speak of the statements relative to disgraceful reductions in the salaries and allowances of the royal servants, we proceed at once to that which was the crowning scandal of them all; the basest in its origin, and, thank God, the only one which was murderous in its consequences. As Maid of Honour to the Duchess of Kent, Lady Flora Hastings was a frequent guest at the royal table; and none were more worthy, either as regards the honors of her family, or the lustre of her own private virtues. The daughter of the great Moira—a member of one of the most resolute liberal families—was well entitled to grace the court of her who fills the throne of a monarch, who called Flora's father his intimate and cherished friend.

It is exceedingly difficult to assign a cause for the base and assassin attack which was made upon her unblemished fame. Had she been a flirting, coquetting miss, in her teens, her spirits mercurial, and her conduct unguarded, though innocent; it might not have excited surprize if some of the court babblers had ventured to assail her reputation. But she was not a giddy girl; thirty-three years and a half had rolled over her head, and had introduced her into the maturity of staid womanhood. Her temperament was not warm; her words were few, and her manners, though cheerful and obliging, were nevertheless so restrained and so guarded, that they would have rendered her the ornament of any circle into which she might have fallen. She had the dignity required for a court, united with the unaffected simplicity and the unsophiscated innocence, which are the appropriate—as they are the characteristic—jewels of the humblest cottage girl. Such being her character, so prudent and so mature, so guarded and unstained, why was it ruthlessly assailed? Whence came the assassin hand, which sought so pure a victim?

It is well known, that upon the accession of a new monarch, the smiles of courtly favor frequently fall on other faces than those upon which the

last sovereign shed the light of his countenance. There are such persons now in the Palace; persons whose politics by no means recommend them to the special favour of a liberal queen.

If Lady Flora had acted haughtily or disdainfully to these, it might have been supposed that from them the barbed-poisoned dart was thrown. But such was the goodness of her nature—such the free communion of her love,—that to these, and to all, she always proved herself an ingenuous associate, knowing no guile—a companion-courtier free from all intrigue.

It has even been said by the organs of the Tory party, that the attack upon her was made from the Liberals in the palace, because she exhibited too much regard for their political rivals. The fact is—and it is well known in the palace—that Lady Flora was no politician at all. On the false assumption that she was, and that her influence was displayed somewhat in favour of the Ministerial opponents, it has been asserted that she was slandered by some of the Liberal ladies in the queen's confidence; and more than one lady has been mentioned as the guilty party. The noble ladies who have been so coarsely and unjustly dragged before the public, as the perpetrators of this unwomanly outrage, are the Marchioness of Tavistock and Lady Portman. It is now, however, understood that they had no share in the shameful forgery—and that it was much talked of in *the palace* before the month arrived during which it was their turn to be “in waiting.” Those two noble ladies, after having been daily attacked by some portions of the Tory press—and after having had all the opprobrium of the foulest falsehood heaped upon them, have thus been acquitted by one of those public organs, which, for once at least, has shown that its love of truth is greater than its hatred of a Whig. The *John Bull* says:—“In a matter like this, we know nothing of politics; political feeling ought never to interfere with truth, and, although the Marchioness of Tavistock is the daughter of the Conservative Earl of Haddington, and Lady Portman the daughter of the Conservative Earl of Harewood, they are married to Whig lords, and, in right of that connexion, hold offices in the Whig household; still truth is truth, and the truth is, that both these ladies are as blameless of originating a scandal, so ill calculated to elevate the character of a maiden Court, as we are who never heard of it, until it was the common talk of the circle.”

The question, WHO IS THE SLANDERER? still returns upon us. Is the honour due to Sir James Clarke? Did he, from the *appearance* of Lady Flora—labouring as she was under a painful disease—did he ever drop a word, a hint, which formed the basis of the charge? Had Baroness Lehzen—from her hatred of any and every *English* favourite—had she any act or part in disseminating the falsehood? If she had, why did she fix upon the poor Lady Flora? Can it be possible that Lord Melbourne, or any of the ministers, “fathered the lie?” Certain it is that they stood in need of something to divert public attention from their policy of *abandoning every good measure*, and from certain court questions, in which the entire household were included. Could it be that the venerable *gallant*—or that any of the salaried placemen, or subservient expectants, who are ready to do his bidding—could it be that they unfeelingly made her ladyship the scapegoat for their political crimes, by throwing upon her virtue the slur of infamy, in order that the shame and ruin, which was their own due, might become HER hapless doom? Surely this could not be: cruel, unfeeling, and heartless as was the reply of Lord Melbourne to Lady Flora's venerable mother, when she sought justice for her injured child—bad as that letter was, the writer of it never could have sanctioned so foul a course as that which has above been alluded to. WHENCE

THEN, CAME THE SLANDER? The Whigs say the Tories have killed her ladyship, and the Tories lay her blood at the door of the Whigs! What proof is there that she fell a victim to the party feelings of either? The queen is less to be blamed than has been imagined—unless, indeed, her Majesty was the first to throw out the ungracious insinuation. If she did so—if, with her upright and illustrious mother by her side—she gave utterance, before any portion of her Court, to the base and indelicate supposition, it is only telling the truth to declare, that she has not the propriety of her sex, or of her age—and that a too-confiding people must have given her credit for a greater amount of the virtues which endear and ennoble social life, than she in reality possesses. But, if the queen did not originate the report—if it reached her unsuspecting ears before the idea entered her young heart—did she, even then, act as became her?

It is painful to indulge in these speculations; it would be less so if by them the guilty slayers of “a fair sweet lady” could be dragged from the splendour which shields their guilt and exposed to the infamy which that guilt deserves. After all, it is not unlikely that the rumour originated with some prattling girl, some aged *roue* or perfumed boy about the Court. The personal *disfigurement* to which her ladyship’s complaint subjected her, would be a welcome theme for the ribald jests of the old and of the young, who may be dead to the sense of virtue and to the claims of woman’s chastity. But what are we to think of a Court, not only containing, but mainly composed of, such living libels on their race? Let the origin of the slander be viewed as it may: speculation may do its best; the ENTIRE IS YET A MYSTERY, and most likely so it will remain. Heaven grant that if ever it is developed, it will not fix the fault upon any Englishman, far less upon any ENGLISH WOMAN. And, so soon as that guilt shall be fixed upon a foreign minion of the Court, may the next tide bear her on its ebbing waters, from the land she has injured and disgraced, to the land from which she came, and which, IF IT BE VIRTUOUS, will not bid her welcome.

#### COMMUNICATION OF THE SLANDER TO LADY FLORA.

“Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as unsunned snow,  
Yet shalt thou not’scape calumny.”

It would be useless to enquire how long the authors of the scandal gloated over it in private, before they ventured to let it reach the royal ear; but the following is a correct statement of the first intimation respecting it, which was made to its own unhappy object. The facts have been given to the public, under the signature of Hamilton Fitzgerald, Esq., Lady Flora’s uncle, and have not been contradicted in a single particular. He wrote his statement on the twenty-first of March, and the following is its substance.

Some weeks previous, Lady Flora arrived in London, from Scotland. Her ladyship was in a bad state of health, and was attended professionally by Sir James Clarke, who was then physician to the Duchess of Kent, as he still is to the Queen.† Her disease manifested itself by a swelling of the stomach—for the enlargement of the liver downwards had not then proceeded so far as to affect the lower abdominal parts. Her ladyship took much and severe exercise, and the swelling was much abated. On the first day of March, Sir James

† Does not this fact render the conduct of Sir James Clarke unwise, unaccountable, and reprehensible?

Clarke went to her room, and told her that it was the opinion of some of the ladies about the Court that she was pregnant.

It was thus abruptly and unceremoniously that the strange imputation was conveyed to Lady Flora. Of all the Queen's friends, even including her mother, no female was selected to bear the delicate message: not the least regard was paid to the feelings of the noble lady; and if, in acting thus, the Queen did right, heaven forefend us from palace propriety!

The indignant lady repelled the foul slander as became her station, her family, and her innocence. Sir James, however, begged her to admit the condition in which she was, *in order to save her character*. Lady Flora, in the pride of conscious integrity, declared that she had nothing to confess. Her ladyship spurned the proposal, and the chagrined doctor then declared that it was the will of the Queen—of that young and inexperienced creature—that Lady Flora should not again come into her presence, until it had been *proved* that she was innocent, by a medical examination of her person.

All this had been discussed and arranged in the royal closet, without a word being said to the Duchess of Kent, who was not only Lady Flora's mistress, but Victoria's mother. Nay, it must even have been kept from Lady Forbes, the relative of Flora. How repugnant to all the high notions which have been formed of the character of the Queen, is the idea of her having acted so rashly, so unfeelingly, so unfilially, if not so indecently! Upon her, or her instigators in this atrocious conspiracy, great blame must fall.

From the room of Lady Flora, whom he left in sorrow and affliction of spirit, the doctor went to the Duchess of Kent and expressed to her his belief that Lady Flora was with child. The plot was well laid; and as soon as the doctor had left the apartments of the royal mother, in came Lady Forbes, who communicated to her the command of the Queen, that Lady Flora should not again enter the royal presence until she had undergone a personal examination, for the purification of her character from the foul accusation, which some enemy whom she knew not had made. The Duchess of Kent, as became a woman and a mother, met such a proposal with the contempt which it merited. She said that she knew too much of the honor of a Hastings, and too much of Lady Flora's own virtue, to believe the calumny; and she refused to permit Lady Hastings to undergo the coarse and degrading ordeal, for which the Queen (!) and her physician called.

Mothers, and particularly mothers so attentive and tender as the mother of our Queen, are always sensitively alive to any slight, either in affection, or in want of confidence, on the part of those whom they have trained in the way they should go. How the Duchess of Kent was affected by the conduct of Victoria upon this occasion, it is not for the writer to surmise.

On the second of March, the consent of the Duchess, was, however, obtained; and to vindicate her character, by instantly giving the lie to the slander, Lady Flora consented to the examination. It is stated to have been a very strict one; the result was the triumphant establishment of her untarnished innocence. Oh, but at the expence of how much feeling was that vindication wrought! How many and bitter were the pangs which the struggle between personal delicacy and outraged character occasioned! From that hour she scarcely smiled again: though innocent, she drooped; though vindicated, she died. Honor is a tender plant; once smitten with the rude breath of falsehood—it seldom again rears its head in vigour and loveliness.

Sir James Clarke, and another Clarke called Sir Charles, immediately upon the examination, gave her ladyship a certificate that she was not pregnant, and that there were no appearances upon her person that she had ever been so. A CERTIFICATE indeed! What a plaster for a wounded mind! And



then, thus ticketed and certificated, the injured and insulted virgin might join the Queen's circle and sit in the presence of her slanderers! The maid of honor was assimilated to the maid of the kitchen, and must produce a *character*, or be supposed to want one. Such is the marvellously proper Court of her Majesty.

These savage and disgusting proceedings soon reached the ear of Lady Flora's brother, who, though severely indisposed at the time, forgot his own sufferings to revenge the unsullied honour of his noble sister, and the outraged dignity of his illustrious house. He hastened to the palace in which his sister's slanderers were harboured. He insisted upon seeing Lord Melbourne, who declared that he had not been at all concerned in the proceedings. This was all that the Marquis required of HIM. He then exercised his right as a peer of the realm and demanded an interview with the queen. It could not be refused. He saw her; and whilst he acquitted her Majesty of all desire to injure his sister either in her feelings or her character, he manfully denounced those who had basely led her Majesty to sanction so gross a violation of both. He did his utmost to discover the authors of the calumny; and, had they been discovered—if of one sex they would have experienced the bravery of a Hastings, or if of the other, they would, through the law, have felt his resentment.

When it was too late—when the injury was done—when the degradation of an examination was accomplished, the queen communicated to Lady Hastings her sorrow at what had happened, and even tears rolled down the royal cheek whilst her Majesty regretted that she had been betrayed into the conduct she had pursued. Why did she not offer the only reparation in her power, viz. the exposure of those who had betrayed HER, and slandered an innocent woman, whose family has rendered such eminent services to the nation.

The Duchess of Kent, who acted like a mother throughout the whole of the melancholy and disgraceful transaction, wrote a most feeling letter to the Dowager Countess of Hastings, the mother of the Court victim, to soothe her afflicted maternal feelings. That venerable lady is now on the verge of death: her life has been a protracted one; but her heaviest sorrow was reserved to the last: it came at a moment when its force was not needed to snap the worn thread of life. She lived to know that Flora was dead—that heaven had received from the palace an inmate; and in all probability, before these pages meet the public eye, the mother and her child will have met in the regions of glory, where the roses never fade—where slander cannot come, and “bliss perennial reigns.”

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### SIR JAMES CLARKE.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the bosom the deep-seated sorrow \* \* \*

THE court of the present Queen is not infested with so many Scotchmen as other courts which have gone before it. Sir James Clarke is, however from “the land o' cakes.” Within the last few days reports have been spread that he was the author of the report; and on the other hand it is said it arose from circumstances connected with Lady Flora's journey from Scotland in a steam-boat, with Sir John Conroy.—What next?

It is much to be feared, that, whoever were the originators of the slander, they will escape the shame and the odium of an exposure. If Sir James was the first who uttered it, his reputation as a physician is not less damaged than his character as a man. And on the other hand if he were merely concerned in it, inasmuch as he received the royal command to ascertain her ladyship's real condition—HE best knows whether it was necessary for her to be subjected to that strict personal investigation which she underwent, and which, to one of a pure and chaste mind, must have been little less revolting and painful than the imputation of the charge from which it was to free her. Whatever may have been the opinion of the Queen's physician upon this point, a strong conviction prevails in the minds of the matrons and fathers of England, that he who had not sufficient skill to spare her ladyship the pain of such an ordeal, is little fitted for the high station he fills. Sir James, however, is still the favourite medical adviser of the Sovereign; and it is understood that there are few greater favourites at court. If he were equally the favourite of the public—his popularity might be envied. He has been properly dismissed from attendance on the Duchess of Kent.

#### BIRTH OF LADY FLORA.—HER ANCESTRY. ;

Her ladyship was born in Queen-street, Edinburgh, on the 11th of February, 1800. She was consequently thirty-three years, four months, and twenty-three days old when she died. She was the eldest child of the late Marquis of Hastings by Flora, in her own right Countess of Loudoun in the Peerage of Scotland. The marriage, which took place while the Marquis (then Earl of Moira) was Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Scotland, was celebrated with much state, on the 12th July, 1804, at Lady Perth's house, in Grosvenor-square. The noble bride was given away by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and the ceremony was performed by the Bishop of London. The Marquises of Hastings are in the Peerage of Ireland as well as of England. Their noble house is descended from Paulinus de Rawdon, who was captain of a troop of Archers in the invading army of William the Conqueror, from whom he received the grant of a large extent of land near to Leeds. Mr. George Rawdon, the 19th in descent from Paulinus de Rawdon, who distinguished himself for his loyalty in the Irish rebellion of 1641, was in 1655 made a Baronet of England. In 1750 Sir John Rawdon was raised to the Irish Peerage, as Earl Moira, and in 1783 the holder of the title was made a British Peer, as Earl Rawdon of York. The father of Lady Flora, at the age of 17, and so early in his career as at the battle of Bunker's Hill, by his gallantry in leading on the grenadiers of the 5th regiment elicited from General Burgoyne the celebrated exclamation, "Lord Rawdon has this day stamped his fame for life!" On his return to England, after having distinguished himself throughout the American war, George III. created him a British Peer, and appointed him one of his own Aides-de-Camp. When the war with the French Republic broke out, his lordship was made Major General, and was named to a command in which not only were most of the ancient noblesse of France anxious to serve under him, but an English general-officer of high reputation and acquirements, was eager to forego his claim to seniority, from deference to his lordship's gallantry and skill. At the time when the British forces, under the late Duke of York, (who was as much fit to be Commander-in-Chief as he was to be Bishop of Osnaburgh) were in a position of great jeopardy near Antwerp, it was the dashing advance of Lord Moira at the head of 10,000 men, that relieved at least, if it did not actually save, the army.

In 1803 his lordship was appointed to the high and exalted rank of General, and to the command of the forces in Scotland. In 1806 he became Master-General of the Ordnance and Constable of the Tower. In 1813 he was named Governor-General of India, and Commander-in-Chief of all the Forces in the East Indies; and on the 6th of February, 1817, the thanks of Parliament were voted to his lordship, then Marquis of Hastings and K.G., for his judicious arrangements in the plan and direction of the military operations against Nepal, by which the war was brought to a successful issue, and peace established on just and honourable terms. The noble Marquiss subsequently went to Malta as Governor and Commander in Chief, and died there in 1824. Few men enjoyed a more brilliant career, and none were admitted to a closer friendship with the King whom he served.

The maternal ancestors of Lady Flora are also distinguished in the annals of England. The family are a branch of the house of Argyle, and were very wealthy and influential so early as the days of David I., king of Scotland. The Loudoun Peerage was created in 1641, though the patent for it was made out in 1633. The delay was occasioned by Sir J. Campbell in whose favour it was drawn, having become obnoxious to the party in power. After the battle of Worcester he was compelled to hide himself in the Highlands, and he and his son were the only persons exempted from the amnesty given by the usurper to Scotland. The Loudouns, as well as the Rawdons, have been distinguished for their military valour, as was alluded to in the letter from the Dowager Marchioness to the Queen, which is hereafter inserted. The father of the Marchioness, James, 5th Earl of Loudoun, had a troop in the Scots Greys at 19 years of age, and died a general officer. His father commanded the British cavalry at the battle of Fontenoy, where he was killed in his 78th year. He was a K.B., a Lieut. Gen. in the army, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and Colonel of the Scots Greys. The present Marquis of Hastings was born on the 4th of February, 1808; and her ladyship has also left three sisters to lament her fate. The motto of the Hastings family is, "Et nos quoque tela sparsimus."—in allusion, no doubt, to the pursuits of those of their family who came over with the Conqueror.

ILLNESS OF LADY FLORA.

But *she*, the stricken one, seemed alone,  
 Amidst that crowd of creeping things  
 To pine as if she would be gone,  
 As though her soul's impatient wing  
 Would fain transport her far from here,  
 From princely pomps and palace glare,  
 Unto some higher brighter sphere,  
 To breathe a kinder purer air.

From the hour that Lady Flora Hastings was stricken by the venomous tongue of calumny, she continued, it is true, at Court, but she enjoyed not its pleasures: what can give a broken spirit rest? She was a mere palace automaton with a pensive mind and a heavily laden heart. It is true that she had gained a triumph, but it was a triumph under which e'en the victor sank. It is true she had the kind and affectionate consolations of the Duchess of Kent.

Oh, blest be the heart that feels  
 Another's grief, another's woe.

The Queen too, did her utmost to soothe her wounded bleeding feelings,\* but the wound was too deep to be healed: the poisoned dart had penetrated too far to be extracted.

When Lady Flora joined the Palace festivities, which she did very shortly after the exposure of the disgraceful transaction, it was hoped that her strength of mind and her consciousness of innocence had enabled her to set her enemies at defiance. A very few days after the examination she dined at the table of her Majesty, and from that period up to the commencement of June the name of Lady Flora Hastings occupied a most prominent position in all the festive or formal arrangements of the Court. At the palace, in the parks, at the royal chapel, at the opera, in fact at all the places to which royalty resorts, either from fashion or from duty, for pastime or for prayer, the departed lady was present; honoured for her virtues, pitied for her recent misfortune, and beloved for her gentleness.

At the commencement of June the name of her ladyship suddenly disappeared from the lists of those who joined in the gaieties of the Court, and although she once subsequently appeared at the opera, the illness which proved her last was even then upon her. We need only here detail the particulars of that illness: a bed of sickness affords little for record. On the 13th of June her ladyship's illness became alarming: on the last Saturday in that month she received most devoutly the Sacrament from the Bishop of London, in the presence of the good Duchess of Kent, and although the symptoms had for some time been such as to create the greatest alarm, hope was cherished until the evening of Monday 1st of July. For several days before, bulletins had been issued: her illness varied but little: the work of death was gradually but steadily done. All that art could do could not stop its ravages.

If the royal lady who wears Great Britain's Crown had lain upon that bed of sickness, the Duchess of Kent could scarcely have been more attentive to her than she was to the faithful dying maiden who had incurred shame in her service.

\* Unhappily, it has since transpired, that her majesty has here received more credit than was due. It is now too well ascertained that she never spoke to Lady Flora, after the appearance of the letters, written by Lady Flora's mother and brother, thereby exposing her to a daily insult. The insult of the Queen was the greater, as the appearance of Lady Flora in public was so much more frequent than previous to the slander.

The Queen only visited the sick chamber once, but her inquiries were frequent respecting the state of the noble patient. Lady Flora heard of her Majesty's intention to visit her with delight, and expressed her happiness that, ere she died, she should be able with her own lips to communicate her sentiments to her Majesty. The Queen was with her for only a few minutes, and took no notice of the Marquis of Hastings, or Lady Sophia, her sister, when she passed into the sick chamber. The entire of what passed at that solemn and affecting interview is now a secret which is confined within the breast of the Queen; but certain it is, that had it been satisfactory, the departed "palace martyr" would have spoken it with joy to her family, instead of which she remained silent upon the subject. She died, like her divine master, FORGIVING HER ENEMIES. The Queen was deeply affected; for even a queen so young, so light-hearted and so loved, cannot look unmoved upon the bed of death—much less upon such a bed of death as that on which the victim of slander lay.

No atom of yours, ye perishing flowers,  
Is lost to this beautiful world of ours:  
Not one deep grief of the spirit broken  
But cheers the soul with some blissful token  
Of the strengthening love that to us has given  
Deep trials here, but bright hopes in heaven.

All palace festivities were suspended and the movements of high life received a check. Immense crowds were earnest in their inquiries respecting her ladyship; the anxiety was general; it was shared by all: it was as widely spread as the sorrow created by her departure from this unkind world. Nothing that could be done to alleviate her sufferings was omitted. But neither medical skill nor royal favour, nor the prayers of the people so fervently offered for her ladyship's recovery, could stay the hand of death. Her brother was constantly in attendance; and had any lesson of resignation been needed to his dying sister, she would have received it in the Christian fortitude with which he contemplated his bereavement of one whom he loved so well. She frequently spoke of her mother: she knew that that venerable lady was dangerously ill; and upon one occasion she expressed to the Marquis her regret that he was not by his mother's bed instead of hers: she added, "We shall meet in heaven."

### THE DEATH OF LADY FLORA.

Mother with a tearful eye,  
Thou hast seen the loved one die;  
Hopes resigned and joys departed,  
*In thine old age broken-hearted*—  
To her God her soul has gone,  
Brother, sister, mother, lone!—  
Her joy and grief alike are o'er,  
*God hath got an angel more.*

ON Monday, July the first, the symptoms were such as banished every hope. She lingered, however,---though happily not in severe pain---until two o'clock, on Friday morning, when her brother---at length unmanned---shed his tears upon the sad

"---last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,"

Her death was tranquil, as her life was pure: she closed her eyes as if to sleep---but it was the sleep of eternity---and those eyes, which have recently

shed so many tears, will be opened no more until that day "of solemn and irrevocable doom," when one of the tests of merit will be "Hast thou borne false witness against thy neighbour?" Her last moments were composed and self-possessed, and her last words breathed forth blessing upon the mourning relatives, friends, and attendants who surrounded her. And, to quote the words of the *Standard*, "Notwithstanding the bitter persecution and the fiend-like malice which had shortened her days, no syllable of reproach or enmity escaped her lips. May the display of Christian and of feminine excellence which shed its mild and melancholy lustre over the death-bed of Lady Flora Hastings, produce its natural and salutary effects wherever the example of Christian and feminine virtues is required!"

When the Queen was informed of her death she wept bitterly: she ordered the Palace to be closed, and every mark of respect suitable for so solemn and melancholy an occasion was strictly observed.

### EXAMINATION OF LADY FLORA'S BODY.

—"A butcher with horn-handled knife,  
Carves up humanity as though 'twere mutton.

THIS revolting operation was performed at Buckingham Palace on Friday June 6th. Doctors Chambers, Holland, and Merriman, Sir A. Cooper, and Sir B. Brodie, were present. Sir Benjamin Brodie was the officiating surgeon. Her ladyship died from an enlargement of the liver, which, pressing downwards, produced an enlargement of the abdomen, and internal inflammation. This enlargement was the only pretext for the slanderous imputation, from which the detailed report of the surgeons' fully cleared her. Any strong mental anxiety would accelerate the death of a patient labouring under disease of so important an organ.

A rumour has gone abroad that the examination took place at the desire of her noble brother the marquis. Doubtlessly he was desirous and anxious that everything should be done which could wipe even the semblance of a stain from the honour of the house of Hastings. But—the decision of the painfully delicate question did not devolve upon the marquis—the dying voice of his lamented sister decided the course which was to be taken. "Lady Flora Hastings, two days before her death, requested that her remains should be subjected to the most minute examination. Let the world think of this request so urgently enforced. Let mankind figure to themselves a noble lady, exquisitely susceptible of all those emotions of female delicacy which impart to English women their peculiar and their greatest charm—let them think of her issuing from her dying lips, with an earnestness, with an energy which physical weakness made more authoritative and sublime, a request, a command that she should be subjected, after death, to an examination, the very idea of which is repugnant to feminine sensibility. And, impressed with this image, which seems so monstrous and unnatural, let them reflect upon the circumstances which produced it, and which render it natural, lovely, chaste—upon the circumstances which transform a vision of horror into all that is "wisest, virtuous, discreet, best." Lady Flora Hastings knew her enemies too well, and had too anxious a regard for her own posthumous fame, and the honour of her noble family, to be indifferent to any guarantee against detraction. Defamed while living, she nobly determined that no pretext or subterfuge should be left for courtly defamation after her death. She felt herself reduced to the painful necessity of choosing between the scruples of female delicacy and

the unclouded brightness of female honour. And even in the state of bodily weakness to which her slanderous persecutors had reduced her, she had still so much strength of mind as enabled her to prefer the latter. For this noble decision the women of Great Britain will hold her ladyship's memory in eternal reverence." Her body was removed from the palace early on the 9th of July, to the Steam-boat, which conveyed it to Scotland,

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CORRESPONDENCE.

No. I.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST.

SIR—Being unable to reach the original calumniator or calumniators of my daughter, Lady Flora Hastings, and having received no mark of public 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.

Loudoun Castle, April 8, 1839.

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No. II.

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 to 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 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

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."

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No. III

" Loudoun Castle, March 8, 1839.

My Lord—I trouble your lordship with the enclosed 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."

No. IV.

" South-street, March 11, 1839.

" Madam,—I have this morning received your ladyship's letter of the 8th instant, 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."

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No. V.

" Downing-street, March 12, 1839.

Madam,—According to your ladyship's desire, I have delivered to her Majesty your letter of the 7th instant.

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.

The Marchioness Dowager of Hastings, &c."

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No. VI.

" 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 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.

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

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No. VII.

" 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 acknow-

ledging the 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."

## No. VIII.

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

If the Queen wishes 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 transactions 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."

## No. IX.

Madam,—I have the honour of acknowledging your ladyship's letter of the 15th inst., 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 any part of it.—I have the honour to remain, madam, with high respect, your ladyship's humble and obedient servant,

(Signed)

MELBOURNE.

The Most Noble the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings."

## No. X.

"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 left in my power of showing that it is not from the numerous difficulties which have been thrown in the way of finding out the slanderers of my sister that her family have 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 allow 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 that baleful influence which now surrounds the throne, and it is to clear that 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 has been placed by the garbled statements which have appeared in the public prints, published unknown to every one of its members an authentic statement of facts, I feel convinced that the thinking part of the community will no longer require from the wounded feelings of a brother 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. I should have INSTANT relieved her from this, had I not known that by so doing, I should give fresh opportunity for calumniating her, and act 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."

Thus the correspondence stands: not a word in reply to this has appeared before the public;—of the correspondence the world will judge, and but one opinion can be formed of the cowardice and cruelty of the Queen's advisers in this transaction. It will be long before her Court is purged from the stain:—may it never experience such another.