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LADY FLORA HASTINGS.

No. 10

THE COURT DOCTOR
DISSECTED;

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATEMENTS

OF

LADIES PORTMAN AND TAVISTOCK.

BY

JOHN FISHER MURRAY, ESQ. M.D.

"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."—*Marchioness Dowager of Hastings to Viscount Melbourne.*

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THE COURT DOCTOR DISSECTED.

WHILE the Lady Flora Hastings lived there was no excuse for me or any one to assume an interference with the duty of a brother and a mother—to shield from insult and to rescue from outrage the reputation of the sister and the daughter. Nor, now that the victim is no more, would it have been pardonable to violate the sanctity of a mother's and a brother's grief, did not the matter assume, from recent publications, a public and national interest: public, inasmuch as public servants are deeply involved in a discreditable transaction—the attempt to ruin an innocent lady,—and national, as far as the character of our Court is lowered by a participation in, and defence of, a transaction less discreditable than disgusting.

The Marquis of Hastings has done all that man, all that brother can; he has vindicated triumphantly the spotless reputation of his martyred sister. He has failed, it is true, to come at the ultimate author of the slander, and unless he were to war with women, or men more pusillanimous than women, he cannot know the slanderer. He has retired at length, to use his own words, into the bosom of his insulted and afflicted family.

He has done well: his was not the controvertist's

part. It would have been strange, indeed, had *he* been able to freeze down his brother's blood to the zero of the people he had to take to task; base and craven, indeed, would have been the brother of Lady Flora, had he coolly kept his temper; unworthy the gallant father that begot, unworthy the noble mother that bore him!

His Lordship has done well: bravely, and withal wisely, has he vindicated the honour of his name. Less he dare not, more, save in common with his fellow-citizens, he need not do. The rest of this base business is public property; it is our part that the Monarch of our choice be not involved in the disgrace that, in spite of all its adventitious splendours, will attach to a Court, where malignant slanderers are fostered in defiance of public opinion; it is our part that the people participate not, by acquiescent silence, in the disgraces of the Court.

The Marquis of Hastings has no more to do with the palace slanderers, open or concealed. "He casts for ever from him 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 him in a higher quarter."

Confident of justice and sympathy from the British nation? to be sure he is—to be sure he must be: and if that justice has not been sooner awarded, if that sympathy has not been more loudly expressed, Lord Hastings will find the public has not been to blame. There lives not a mother, there breathes not a brother, there exists not a sister in all England, who has not long ago silently done the Hastings family justice—who

has not feelingly and deeply sympathised in their affliction.

The British nation is tardy in doing justice, slow to express sympathy; but their sympathy is not less deep, and their justice not less sure. Besides, justice was confidently expected from a higher quarter; that higher quarter alluded to by Lord Hastings, where repentance had been manifested, and forgiveness prayed from the victim going down into her early grave. The British nation suspended the expression of its sympathies, in the not unreasonable expectation that reparation might pursue repentance, and that convicted slanderers, and the tools of convicted slanderers, if they could not be punished, would at least be dismissed. Had this been done, all further discussion might have been avoided; and until this is done, or until satisfactory explanation be afforded for not doing this, it becomes the duty of the British nation to respond to the touching appeal of the Lord Hastings to extend their sympathy, and to award their justice.

As the case now stands, the public is grossly insulted by the Court party; not only was no reparation made to the victim during her life by the Court party, save blubberings and tears, nor after the death of the victim to her outraged relatives; but the British nation is insulted by the impudent obstinacy with which the authors, aiders, and abettors of this national degradation are defended and caressed in high places.

To be more particular.

I. The lurking author of the slander against Lady Flora Hastings is protected in defiance of popular opinion pointing the finger of scorn so directly upon a certain foreigner, in permanent attendance upon the

Queen, as in common decency, ought to have commanded denial or dismissal.

II. The Ladies Portman and Tavistock, the constitutionally responsible, (as they style themselves,) Ladies of the Bedchamber; of whom being—as they tell us they are, constitutionally responsible there can be no impropriety in speaking publicly—these Ladies, the prompt dispersers of the slanderous lie, are Ladies in waiting as before.

III. The tool of the Ladies in waiting, Sir James Clark, is Physician in ordinary as usual—or at least retains the outward and visible signs of basking in the Royal favour, and this is the worst feature in the courtly case.

Before I proceed to notice the statement of the Court Physician, [that I should have still to call him so,] it will be as well to notice the position in which Lady Tavistock and Lady Portman must, until they give up the original contriver of the lie, hold with regard to this transaction. I will notice only the statements of their conduct given under their own hands, omitting for the present all inferences founded on the complaints of the Lady Flora Hastings.

“When I went to Buckingham Palace,” (says Lady Tavistock), “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’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."

Unfortunately, alas, not for the slanderers but for their victim. "Unfortunately" is an easy, polite, and inoffensive term, worthy a Lady in waiting; I should rather say, rashly entertained, and hastily, maliciously, communicated.

The Marchioness of Tavistock "felt much desire to speak to Lady Flora at once upon the subject"—this was a womanly, a natural desire—"BUT CIRCUMSTANCES OCCURRED WHICH PREVENTED MY CARRYING THIS WISH INTO EFFECT."

Her Ladyship does not condescend to inform the Marquis of Hastings what the circumstances were that prevented her from discharging her *painful duty* as she should have done, by carrying her dreadful suspicion *first* to the unconscious object of it. The paramount duty towards the accused the Marchioness of Tavistock should have known is to give timely notice of the accusation. Would it not have been the friendly, the sisterly, the fellow-Christian-like, to say nothing of the ladylike conduct, in the Marchioness of Tavistock to have indulged her desire to speak to Lady Flora at once upon the subject—to have persisted in that which as it was her first, so was it her fittest determination—and to have permitted no circumstances whatever to alter her laudable resolution to communicate with Lady Flora in the first instance? The name and

family of the Lady Flora deserved this poor courtesy. Her hitherto upright and virtuous deportment, supposing the lurking suspicion concerning her to have been believed *not* to have been a lie, demanded that she should be put upon her guard by friendly caution, and enabled to assure the vindication of her honour by timely preparation. It is horrible, most horrible to reflect, that from the 10th of January, when the slander began to be bruited about the precincts of the Palace, until the 16th of February, when Sir James Clark found it had been determined upon that *he* should acquaint Lady Flora with the suspicions which existed in the Palace :—for six weeks and more was this poor girl enduring the mysterious displeasure of her Majesty, the virtuous indignation of the Ladies of the Court, the sneers, and scowls, and snubs of waiting-maids, and chamber-maids, and maids of honour. In that wide wilderness of women—Buckingham Palace—the poor unhappy lady had no friend; among all the women there was not a woman of Samaria to seek her in the solitude of her chamber, and say, “Dear Lady Flora, forgive me, but your honour is assailed; communicate with your family; be patient and firm; and the consciousness of injured innocence—for I know that you are innocent—will sustain you in triumph to the end.” No such friend had Lady Flora; no Christian, tender-hearted, feeling woman, not a soul to caution, comfort, or advise her. Without doubt the creatures trembled for their situations, and under the circumstances would have deserted the mothers that bore them!

She had no friend; nor was her Royal Mistress in any better condition. Although the honour of the

mother of the Queen was implicated in the impending disgrace of her favourite Lady in waiting, no timely warning was given to her Royal Highness. It looked as if it were a point settled that the disgrace should be equally divided, when the storm burst, between the Lady Flora and her mistress; and that every means of concealment should be adopted to the end that, whenever the storm did burst, the intended victims might be found utterly unprotected from its violence.

The plot—for such I cannot but consider it—ripened like other conspiracies, in the dark. The suspicion was allowed to gather strength by want of contradiction, and was gradually matured into certainty by the thousand and one methods in use at Court for the prompt diffusion of scandalous knowledge. One thing only was to be provided against, that the Lady Flora should not know of her imputed guilt; one thing only was to be provided for, that every body else might know it, and knowing might believe it.

For six tedious weeks was the suspicion of Lady Flora's guilt maturing into certainty. Let us pause to enquire to whom, and in what manner it was officially communicated by the responsible Ladies in waiting; and in this place it may be proper to introduce all that is essential to the purpose of the 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 Lehzen, drew my attention more particularly to Lady F. Hastings' 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'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."

Lady Portman is, to use Lord Tavistock's panegyric of his better half, the most discreet of ladies. She gave *her* medico-legal opinion of the unhappy Lady Flora's case, *only* as connected with her observations of her (Lady Flora's) appearance. She did not jump with Sir James Clark to the conclusion, that because Lady Flora's waist was enlarged her morals were relaxed, or that pregnancy and tumefaction are synonymous terms. Lady Portman, in consultation with the Court Ladies' tool, came to her conclusion, only so far as appearances warranted her in coming to that conclusion; and Lady Portman knew, what Sir James Clark did not care to know, or choose to know, that appearances are not evidences, nor external indications proof.

What a pity Lady Portman, in giving a discreet judgment, did not act upon that judgment with discretion; that she did not arrive at the conclusion naturally following the premises, that appearances are deceptive. What a pity her experience, as a matron, had not enabled her to suggest to Sir James Clark the *bare possibility*, that there might be diseases simulating pregnancy, that a lady's waist might be enlarged, her health apparently good, and yet that she might not be pregnant; what a pity it did not occur to Lady Portman to enquire of Sir James Clark whether, while pursuing his professional studies at St. Andrews or Aberdeen, he had ever heard of a rare and curious infirmity called dropsy?

But no—this most discreet of Ladies in waiting could not find in her conscience to delay for a moment the performance of her *painful duty*, for which she and her fellow Lady in waiting were constitutionally (!) responsible. Lady Flora was enlarged—*therefore* she was guilty—Lady Flora had tumefaction of the stomach: *therefore* she was lost to virtue and to shame: Lady Flora was protuberant—*therefore* she was disgraced, abandoned and undone!

The worst feature in woman's nature is and ever has been the outrageous bitterness, the viperly malignity of legitimated matrons towards a frail erring sister. Enjoying in peace and honour the legitimate gratification of passions implanted in all alike, these women consider it a duty to pursue with unrelenting and brutal ferocity the wretch who has fallen, through man's seducing villany, from her estate of virtue—to hunt her through life from degradation to degradation, much in the same fashion as a smuggler is pursued by officers of the revenue!

Horrid instances of this occur every day—sister disowning sister, and virtuous Christian mothers slamming the door in the face of a fallen daughter; confirmed by degradation in iniquity, and denied, out of servile fear of the monster, society, the poor opportunity of a late repentance, in the bosom of her family.

I will venture, from my experience of human nature, to affirm, that there is not a housemaid in a third-rate street in London who would have acted towards her fellow-servant, whether innocent or guilty, in the cold-hearted, unfeeling, and *painful duty* manner in

which the Ladies Tavistock and Portman behaved towards the Lady Flora Hastings.

In the name of all that is noble—in the name of all that is lady-like—in the name of all that is Christian—in the name of all that is womanly—ought not the Lady Flora to have been put upon her defence on the dawning of the suspicion? Was *she* not interested in the refutation of the infamous aspersion cast upon her fair fame? Was her station in society so low, was her family so despicable, was her previous personal demeanour so equivocal, as to preclude her from the boon of every petty larceny offender: a knowledge of her crime—a copy of the information? If these cold-hearted Ladies in Waiting had not allowed their *vigorous* virtue to outrun their feeble discretion; if they had not permitted themselves to be bamboozled by the lurking slanderer who contrived the plot, into a hasty and premature conviction—judging ONLY from appearances, as Lady Portman confesses to have done of Lady Flora's guilt—they would have resolved that it was their *painful duty* to go at once to Lady Flora, to have the falsehood stifled at its birth; they would have determined that this line of procedure was due to Lady Flora Hastings as a gentlewoman, as the daughter of a house noble on both the father's and the mother's side; due to her, moreover, as the attendant of the mother of their Mistress, and their Queen; due to her as one of themselves. They would have gone to the Lady Flora hand in hand; they would have heard her ladyship's indignant denial; they would have kissed from her cheek the salt tears that would have attested her innocence; they would have hid her burning blushes in their bosoms; and their *painful duty* discharged, as it ought to have been discharged, they

would have returned sufficiently ashamed of themselves, in having for an instant doubted of her honour!

What did the twin constitutional-responsibilities however? The thing they should have done last they did first and foremost—a reference to *the Premier* was, one might think, the latest alternative of their painful duty the only resource left them when time, and pains, and gentlewomanly remonstrance and exhortation failed to wring from the brazen Lady Flora the hoped for, the desired confession that was to bring discredit upon her Royal, and not less noble than Royal Mistress; that was to bring disgrace upon a gallant brother, and weigh down the grey hairs of a venerable parent with sorrow to the grave!

O! my God! had Lady Flora been the guiltiest of the guilty, she deserved not that *Lord Melbourne* should be the first and earliest male depository of the dreadful secret. Lord Melbourne of all men in England! Of all men in England the last man likely, from all we have heard of him, to be the safe keeper of a woman's honour. a man with whose imputed nastiness the Court of Queen's Bench still smells frowzily! A fouler shame could not have been put upon Lady Flora Hastings, or any other woman, than making my Lord Melbourne, or any *he-fellow* the referee, the umpire of her conduct, the arbiter of her destiny!

But to this flippant *Maire du Palais*—this pert and impudent contemner of public opinion, who settles the order of the Queen's eatables and of her empire—who knocks off a colonial constitution to-day, and the Queen's musicians' pint of wine to-morrow—who arranges the Royal table and treasury—who provides her Majesty with commissioners and all the delicacies of

the season—before this notorious individual was the lamented Lady Flora first arraigned ! Before my Lord Melbourne was she, in her absence, and without her knowledge, put upon her trial !

Let my Lady Tavistock and my Lady Portman ask themselves whether it was necessary for the honour of the Court or for the character of Lady Flora Hastings [motives put forward by them for the cold-blooded performance of their *painful duty*], that Lord Melbourne, or any other *he-fellow* need have been consulted on the subject ? Long time could not have elapsed without satisfactory and incontrovertible testimony of Lady Flora's innocence or guilt ; and if her Ladyship's protestations of innocence and denial of guilt must be disbelieved ; if her reputation, family, and station must go for nothing ; could not their constitutional *responsibility ships* have waited for the incontrovertible evidence which, it is needless to suggest to matrons of experience, would have arrived in the ordinary course of nature ?

Lady Portman invited the Marquis of Hastings to wait until April to be solaced with her Ladyship's apology for the outrage on his sister : her Ladyship might have waited as long for the coming evidence of Lady Flora's guilt.

Before I dismiss this couple of aristocratic menials from these pages, I must animadvert in the strongest terms upon the bundle of letters and statements contributed towards the mystification of this base transaction, by themselves and their husbands. The cold-hearted, phlegmatic, and deliberately indifferent tone of my Lords Tavistock and Portman is not less repulsive to one's feelings than the affectation of airs of constitutional responsibility is ludicrous in the wives.

Not an expression of indignation against the originator of this foul slander escapes them ; not a wish that the author of so much private misery and public scandal should be held up to popular scorn and indignation. It is, according to these frigid male and female aristocrats, an *unlucky* business—an *unhappy* affair—an *unfortunate* transaction. Lady Portman “discharged the duty then imposed upon her,” and “explained the course which she had felt it her *duty* to take,” and did all the dirty work that “then became her *duty*.” Lady Tavistock performed with great alacrity her *painful duty* of informing the Prime Minister of the opinion that had been *unfortunately* entertained, and for this she (Anna Maria I.) considers herself *responsible* !

Poor Lord Tavistock declares that his *sposa* is *the most discreet of ladies*—that she knows the original slanderer, but will not give him or her up—not even, as his Lordship pitifully observes—not even *to me* !

He thinks, too, it has been an *unfortunate* business ; but he is *persuaded* that the *best* intentions prevailed among *a few* that were concerned in it : his Lordship then varies his phraseology and comes to the conclusion that it is an *unfortunate subject*, and that the least said about it is soonest mended !

My Lord Portman is wonderfully icy for a new Baron—to read his Lordship’s frozen epistles, you might have supposed that his father had been a Baron before him ; he harps away on his wife’s discharge of her *duty*, and invites the outraged brother of Lady Flora to cool his heels until April, when he (Lord Portman) will be happy to receive his Lordship at Belgrave-square, to be personally informed of such facts as are within Lady

Portman's knowledge, and connected with the discharge of *her duty* on the late *painful* occasion.

There is dignity about the *vieille noblesse*, but what a gingerbread concern is a pitch-forked aristocracy, illustrated by a nobleman of three years' standing!

This quartette of placemen in petticoats and their husbands seem not to know that manly and generous indignation, or warm affectionate feelings, belong to our fallen human nature—if they do, plebeian souls possess them, for these creatures soar far, far above the amiable weaknesses of humanity.

So much for the Mistresses—now for the Man:

“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 to THE PROFESSION, I was justified in not laying before the public an account of the case so far as I was concerned.”

Thus commences the explanatory statement of the Court Physician.

With regard to Sir J. Clark, the profession is hereby invited to form its own opinion; and it is proper that it should be taken for as much as it is worth, in coming to a determination upon the propriety of Sir James Clark's doings, in the case of the late Lady Flora Hastings, so that professional may accompany popular reprobation of his conduct in pronouncing dogmatically upon Lady Flora's *real* state from her mere apparent

condition—in *executing* her Ladyship first, and *trying* her afterwards.

After his preliminary flourish of trumpets, and an expression of no doubt very sincere regret that “he is obliged to enter into details of what never should have been made the subject of public discussion”—an echo of the *hush-up* song of his employers, in short—the Court Physician proceeds to business, and informs us—I give Lady Flora’s account of the matter *pari passu*, with the statement of Dr. Clark—as follows :

SIR J. CLARK.

“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 on the left side. THERE WAS ALSO CONSIDERABLE ENLARGEMENT OF THE LOWER PART OF THE ABDOMEN.”

LADY FLORA.

“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.—*Lady Flora’s Letter to Hamilton Fitzgerald, Esq.*

Thus far Lady Flora and the Court Physician are agreed : Lady Flora was aware of the existence of the last] above-mentioned symptom—so was the Court Physician. The stomach was enlarged, but not a breath of suspicion at this time crosses the mind of Sir James Clark with respect to the possible condition of the Lady Flora ; the *fact is*, the Court Ladies had not as yet laid him on the wrong scent.

We now come to Sir James Clark’s treatment of this

case, of which it seems he had formed a very imperfect diagnosis, if any; omitting altogether in his "STATEMENT" to inform the profession of his opinion of the nature of the disease, [it was clear that on the 10th of January he had no suspicion of pregnancy,] whether, in this case functional derangement was co-existing with structural—whether the disease was hepatic, splenic, mesenteric, ovarial, dropsical, or how otherwise—he tells us of the profession nothing about it; and if I may judge from his mode of treating Lady Flora, I believe he has told the profession all he had it in his power to tell. The statement of the non-professional patient is, in this case, more strictly medical than the account of her Physician. *She* informs her uncle that her disease was hepatic or bilious; that it was attended with its usual accompaniments, pain and swelling. Sir James Clark tells us not so much—tells us, in fact, nothing at all! But to proceed:

SIR J. CLARK.

"Under the use of 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."

LADY FLORA.

"Unfortunately he (SIR J. CLARK), 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."

Truly the porter and pedestrian exercise are more strictly thereapeutical in hepatic disease than the following formula of Dr. Clark, which, etiquette apart, I translate for the benefit of the uninitiated, from the original bad Latin:

“Take of

Powder of ipecacuan with opium	20 grains :
Simple powder of ipecacuan,	5 grains :

Mix carefully together : and add as much of the Extract of Rhubarb as will make the whole into twelve pills : one to be taken at bed-time.

Take of

Compound Camphor Liniment,	1 oz.
Compound Soap Liniment,	
Tincture of opium (Laudanum) of each	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Mix

Liniment for the side.

“ (Signed)

“Jan. 10th 1839.

“J. C.”

This, with an acidulated infusion, which could do neither good nor harm, forms Sir James Clark's treatment in this case of “bilious derangement of long standing,” with its accompaniments, pain in the side and swelling of the stomach.

I put it to any medical man whether it was to be expected that, under the use of the above very simple remedies, (very simple remedies indeed) “the bile would take its departure ?” or that *placebo* practice, like the above, could render any service whatever to the patient ?

Derangement of the bowels is the first symptom. I ask any professional man whether the compound powder of ipecacuan was herein indicated. The general health was also deranged ; no alterative remedy appears in the prescription. There was pain low on the left side ; but no trouble appears to have been taken to arrive at a correct knowledge of the morbid condition producing that pain, or of the therapeutical

indication arising from its presence. There was considerable enlargement of the lower part of the abdomen; and for this, arising from extensive organic disease, a simple discutient liniment, such as we apply to a sprain, appears to have been thought sufficient! It is absurd to pursue further an analysis of Sir James Clark's prescription until we are informed upon what principles he wrote it, and for what disease or complication of diseases, to the best of his opinion, was he called upon to prescribe?

However, the prescription, as might be expected, did Lady Flora no good; porter she tells us *was* of use to her. The little strength that could not be attained by the prescription of Dr. Clark, was the result of the united remedies of Doctors *Barclay and Perkins*.

I remember well an excellent physician, Professor of Practice of Medicine in one of the Universities, and a bright ornament of his profession, to whom I acted as clerical or bed-side clerk in the Infirmary, and whose prescriptions in chronic diseases, accompanied with wasting and debility, used invariably to consist (unless where medicine properly so called was indicated) of two most successful and agreeable formulæ:

Repetatur *porter*! and
Repetatur *beefsteak*!

Admirable remedies, in their way, for which the Latin tongue afforded the worthy professor no terms equivalent!

I now demand the attention of the reader to an important discrepancy in the statements of the Lady Flora and the Court Physician: it is very important:

SIR J. CLARK.

“The size of the abdomen, however, continued UNDIMINISHED; and Lady Flora’s appearance became the subject of REMARK in the Palace!”

LADY FLORA.

“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!”

Here the parties are at issue. But there is this in favour of the testimony of the Lady Flora Hastings, (putting out of view altogether the degree of credibility demanded by her superior station in life to the Court Physician,) that her Ladyship offered to Sir James Clark the fullest and most complete evidence in her power—the evidence more accurate than any other, because an evidence of *measurement*. The unfortunate Lady offered to produce her dresses to convince the Court Ladies’ tool that the swelling had diminished and that she was really better, “in spite,” as her Ladyship innocently says, of the remedies of her Physician. What was the reply to this offer of the already-condemned: the executed victim?

“Well, I don’t think so: you seem to me to grow larger every day, and so the LADIES think.”

“SO THE LADIES THINK!” The rottenness of the nasty affair lies altogether in those very words: so THE LADIES THINK!

When the scent runs breast high you never knew a hound diverted from his game; there is then no hope of check. The Court Physician had been by this time “*laid on*,” and was not to be diverted from full cry by the evidence of an apron-string!

The reply of the Court Physician to the offer of the only evidence an outraged, insulted maiden could tender him [surely this fellow did not imagine Lady

Flora would have herself suggested the horrible alternative] was :

“Well, I don’t think so: you seem to me to grow larger every day, and so THE LADIES THINK.”

Here again I am compelled to place the conflicting statements of Lady Flora and the Doctor in juxtaposition :

SIR JAMES CLARK.

“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 Clark, 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 I had given, LESSENE very considerably on my mind the EFFECT of her Ladyship’s DENIAL.”

LADY FLORA.

“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.

“I said, his supposition was untrue, and perfectly groundless.

“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.”—

(*Case for Counsel’s opinion.*)

Read the concluding portion of Sir James Clark’s statement, and tell me if there was ever a more impu-

dent, unfeeling, cold-blooded sentence penned by man? Read then, I beseech you, the speech of Lady Flora, and say whether the hand of a just God is not visible, conducting this poor Lady, in her great strait, in the path of the strictest prudence and propriety? The vulgar, low-bred, Court-tool, disbelieves Lady Flora, because she will not submit to the outrage ON THAT DAY! His doubts now ripen at once into certainty, because the bewildered victim would be reprieved till the morrow; because she would consult her generous, noble-hearted mistress, and take her pleasure on the matter. The effect of her Ladyship's denial is considerably *lessened* in the mind of the Court Physician, because a high-born, high-principled, high-minded damsel, ON THE INSTANT, without time for resolution, consideration, or advice, does not accept the horrid alternative, (the suggestion not to be thought of without mental disgust,) and ON THAT DAY prostrate herself before the curious eye—ON THAT DAY submit herself to the contaminating touch, of this Inspector of Court Ladies. This pliant echo of "*what the Ladies think*;" THIS MAN OF FEELING!

I would merely ask Sir James Clark the one question:—Have you a daughter?

Put her then in Lady Flora's place, and if there be a man in the profession who would have formed his diagnosis upon "*what the Ladies think*"—if there be one man in the profession who would have *assumed* pregnancy to exist because *one* symptom, common to at least *a dozen different diseases*, was then and there apparent—if there be in the profession a man who would have acted as you have done, or written as you have done; put him in your place, let *him* tell *your*

daughter that “she grows larger and larger every day ; and so the neighbours think”—that “nothing but a medical examination could satisfy the Ladies next door, so *deeply* are *their suspicions* rooted ;” and let him earnestly entreat her to get herself examined by a doctor “ON THAT DAY”, or to confess at once, “as the only thing to save her character.”

What, Sir, do you suppose ? what do you hope ? what do you doubt, would have been the answer of your insulted child ? “Feeling perfectly innocent (she would have said), I should not shrink from any examination, but that I considered it a most indelicate and disagreeable procedure, and would not be hurried into it.”

You are a *Baronet*, I am told ; truly you are a credit to the lowest order of hereditary nobility. Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and his “order” may be proud of you !

The Court Physician, with the effect of Lady Flora’s denial very considerably lessened by her refusal to be victimised at *a moment’s* notice, runs with the scent stronger than ever, in full cry, to the Duchess of Kent ; “to the propriety of this Lady Flora immediately assented.” Of course she did ; her Ladyship had nothing to hide—had nothing to fear.

SIR J. CLARK.

“I accordingly went to the Duchess of Kent, and stated the motive 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.”

LADY FLORA.

“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 against a person attached to her service, and devoted to her. SHE IMMEDIATELY DISMISSED SIR JAMES CLARK, and refused to SEE

“ However reluctant I felt to express any doubts on the subject of Lady Flora’s declaration, I could not decline giving a conscientious reply to her Royal Highness’ question ; and I answered to the effect that the suspicions I previously entertained were not removed.”

Aye, and such a heart ! A noble tribute to a noble Mistress nobly paid ! Generous, grateful Lady Flora !

There is no worse feature in Sir James Clark’s case than his instant dismissal by the author of his fortune, his generous patroness, the Duchess of Kent ; who appointed him Physician to her Royal Highness on the recommendation of her brother, the Prince Leopold of Saxe Cobourg, to whom he accidentally became known while travelling on the continent ; Dr. Clark’s name being then known to the profession only as Physician to Prince Leopold, and author of a book on “ Climate,” which being the only work on that subject at present before the public, must, until somebody undertakes the easy task of producing another, be considered the best.

Sir James Clark then went to the Duchess of Kent. He informed her Royal Highness conscientiously—I do not doubt that the man believed that he suspected Lady Flora—that the suspicions he previously entertained [on no other ground entertained, be it observed, than upon appearances, which, he has himself declared TO BE, EVEN TO MEDICAL MEN, FREQUENTLY DECEPTIVE,] were not removed.

On the evening of the day when she was visited by Dr. Clark, Lady Flora took the pleasure of her Royal Mistress as to the line of conduct most proper for her

LADY PORTMAN. 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 !”

to adopt, and on the following day Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke was invited by the unhappy Lady to meet her accuser.

Before I proceed to dissect Sir James Clark's statement more strictly, in a professional point of view, let the reader just contrast the behaviour of the Duchess of Kent with that of the vile traducers of the Court party. Her Royal Highness was indeed "perfect." She would not stoop to the low suspicion of her dear attendant; she knew Lady Flora, her character, her conduct, and her people—although her Royal Highness did not know, what Sir James Clark ought to have known, and which I will speedily let him know, that there are a dozen or more diseases putting on the protuberance of pregnancy—still, still she trusted in her attached, her devoted servant—still expressed, in the teeth of Sir James Clark, her entire disbelief of anything injurious to Lady Flora's character. *She* did not jump, with *Lady Portman* and her party, to the *worst* conclusion *first*; with her Royal Highness the *guilty* supposition would have been the *last*.

To be brief; she spurned the base accusation, and spurned the accuser down the stairs he had never ascended but by her Royal Highness's goodness.

Everybody knows how popular the Duchess is in this country; everybody *now* will know how much more than all her popularity her Royal Highness has deserved.

SIR J. CLARK.

"The ONLY source, besides pregnancy, from which THE SIZE and peculiar form of the abdomen could proceed, WAS DISEASE."

LADY FLORA.

"He (Sir J. Clark) proceeded to say it (pregnancy) was the only supposition which could explain my appearance and state of health, 'or else you

must have SOME VERY BAD
ILLNESS.' ”

(*Case for Counsel.*)

Upon the before quoted sentences it will be necessary to make a few observations. I will drop professional terms, and be as little technical as may be ; my remarks being for popular rather than professional readers.

There *was* another source then ; a late-discovered source ; discovered after the mischief had been done—after the reputation had been blasted—after the heart of the victim had been wrung—after the Court Ladies, in spite of the orders of their master, Lord Melbourne, would *not* keep quiet—besides pregnancy, to which the appearance of Lady Flora might be attributable ; and in reading the above-quoted sentence of his statement, in which Sir James Clark coolly informs us of this, non-professional persons might be induced to believe that instances of disease simulating pregnancy are as rarely to be seen as the great American sea-serpent ! Indeed, it is no less remarkable than melancholy, that throughout the progress of this disgusting business, disease, the ONLY SOURCE, the frequent source of simulated pregnancy, to which the skilful physician, the good Christian, the benevolent man, would have resorted, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE—that supposition to which the character of Lady Flora, her family and station, her emphatic denials, her virtuous indignation, her tender of all the evidence a modest woman dared to tender, WOULD HAVE NATURALLY POINTED, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE ; appears not to have been considered worth observation, much less patient and deliberate professional inquiry. Lady Flora herself pointed to this probable, this natural

source of her appearance; she declared to Sir James Clark that "it was possible that she might have what that individual scientifically calls '*some very bad illness*,' that "she had thought badly of her state of health," and so forth. These observations, one would think, might have induced Sir James Clark to hold up his nose and try back: to revert to the earliest symptoms of the malady of Lady Flora; to have enquired of her previous advisers into the probable nature of her case; to have written, for example, to the medical gentleman who may have prescribed for her Ladyship in Scotland or elsewhere; to have presumed, in the first instance, HER INNOCENCE; instead of, in the first instance, presuming HER GUILT.

This it is which has confirmed public suspicion that there was a plot into a moral certainty. That the ruin of poor Lady Flora was determined upon, more for the purpose of disgracing her Royal Mistress than herself; that the blow aimed with fatal effect at the Lady Flora, was struck at a higher quarry, and that the victim who fell was not alone the victim designed to fall.

There is no way of accounting otherwise for the studious neglect of all the methods that readily presented themselves, of ascertaining whether the Lady Flora laboured under a complication of organic diseases, the origin of precedent symptomatic ailments, which had, from long continuance, abated of their intensity, (as they always do when the organic disease is fully developed,) but of the nature of which, or of their previous existence, there seems to have been, even upon the face of Sir James Clark's statement, a studious avoidance of enquiry.

There is no way of accounting otherwise for the pregnancy of Lady Portman's and Lady Tavistock's suspicions—that they should have so miserably miscarried—there is no other way of accounting for the impetuous manner in which Sir James Clark, when the ladies of the Palace had laid him on the scent, followed it on until he floundered irretrievably into the dirt!

It is so annoying that Lady Flora should after all be innocent; such a bore, that, after the pains to disgrace her Royal Mistress and herself, *one* should come out of the ordeal with life, and *both* with honour: was ever anything half so provoking?

To suspect, and to be obliged to *un-suspect*; to go to Lord Melbourne piping hot with the salacious discovery, and then to go again to tell his Lordship it was all a falsehood; to concoct, disperse, and lastly *eat* the lie—to insult and meanly beg forgiveness—to have to atone for infamous aspersions by blubberings and tears—to certify to the victim's Royal Mistress that she *was* guilty, and then to be compelled to certify to the universal world that she was innocent;—human nature could not stand it!

Human nature did I say?—It is a libel on human nature to say so; I should have said Courtly woman's nature,—where insolence acts the part of dignity, and pride is the substitute of virtue!

I will not go deeply into the diseases that simulate the prominent symptom of pregnancy, but I may just mention a few of them, for Sir James Clark's information.

- I. Hepatic disease and its modifications.
- II. Diseases of the digestive organs.

- III. Splenic disease, in its utmost development.
- IV. Mesenteric disease and its complications.
- V. Aneurismal diseases of the abdominal arteries.
- VI. Dropsy and its modifications.
- VII. Umbilical herniæ.
- VIII. Abdominal tumours of various kinds.
- IX. Ovarial dropsy.
- X. Ovarial disease of other sorts.
- XI. Complications of two or more of the above or other diseases.

The catalogue might be considerably extended, but there is enough for our purpose. There is enough to confirm the reader in the belief that the maladies more or less simulating pregnancy are neither few nor rare—that the method of forming a diagnosis, that is, of determining the nature of any particular disease, and of distinguishing similar diseases from one another, has long been minutely laid down in these and the other cases wherein pregnancy and disease are likely to be confounded; and that there was, consequently, no excuse whatever for Sir James Clark jumping to the conclusion of “what the Ladies think,” nor for his giving professional countenance to the prevalent suspicion, before he had ascertained, not that it was NOT true, but that it WAS true.

It must be continually borne in mind, in coming to a correct conclusion upon the conduct of the Court Physician in this matter, that the opinion he took up was not his own opinion—that the suspicion he adopted was not his own suspicion—[if it was, why not have communicated it to Lady Flora on the 10th of January] that he allowed himself to be made the Ladies’ tool; and what the Court Ladies suspected, in their profes-

sional capacity, the Court Physician suspected in his. I may also, without impropriety, observe to the Court Physician, that swelling of the stomach is not pregnancy, any more than a fantasia is a fiddle; that it is one, and *only* one, of the symptoms of the impregnated state, and one of the most deceptive, **EVEN TO MEDICAL MEN**, inasmuch as it is common to I know not how many pathological conditions. It was upon this symptom, and upon this symptom alone, that Lady Flora was condemned; upon this appearance was she compelled to submit to an ordeal to which the imputation of guilt itself might, by a soul less noble, have been considered preferable.

Read Sir James Clark's statement; mark and weigh well, as I have done, every the minutest syllable, and say whether he gives any indication of having made the professional enquiry, (for which Lady Flora would have afforded him every proper facility) whether her Ladyship was pregnant, any more than whether she was not.

Where was the necessity, Sir James Clark acknowledges himself, for further investigation—seeing is believing—“nobody could look at her and doubt it.”

To proceed to the next worst feature of this shocking case:—

SIR J. CLARK.

“But the probability of disease being the **SOLE** cause in Lady Flora's case was **DIMINISHED** by the circumstance that the **ENLARGEMENT** was accompanied with very little derangement of health. In fact Lady Flora continued to perform her

LADY FLORA.

“I told you I was ill when I came to town, having been suffering for *some weeks* from bilious derangement, with its agreeable accompaniment, pain in the side and swelling of the stomach.

“However, by dint of walk-

usual duties with *apparent* little inconvenience to herself.

—“and Lady Flora complained only of weakness.”

ing and porter, I gained a little strength; and as I did so, the swelling subsided in a very remarkable degree.” — *Lady Flora to H. Fitzgerald, Esq.*

So, according to the Court Physician, the probability of disease being the sole cause of swelling, in the case of Lady Flora, was diminished by the circumstance that the appearance of her Ladyship was accompanied with very little derangement of health. Here again, I find myself compelled to illuminate the Court Physician.

Symptoms are merely signs of the progress of structural derangement; as the derangement progresses, the symptoms accordingly change, and it is by carefully watching their mutations, that we are enabled to determine the organic lesion, in kind and in degree, and to regulate our treatment accordingly. To illustrate this by a familiar instance, inflammation for example.

This, in its most simple aspect, is indicated by intense burning pain, heat, diffusive redness, and tension; its progress into suppuration is marked by pain of a different nature, throbbing or pulsation in the part, and redness less intense and more circumscribed than before. If the destructive process extends to mortification or gangrene, there is felt little or no pain; for the disorganization is complete. It is thus with internal diseases of various kinds: in the early stage, while nature is struggling with the malady (for in no disease does nature fail to *attempt* a remedy), the indicative marks of progressive lesion, or symptoms, are more violent—the disease is then acute; but when at length the structural derangement has arrived at its

stage of completeness, nature ceases to struggle so violently—the pain is more tolerable or less acute; and the malady is then denominated chronic. That this was the case with the late lamented Lady Flora Hastings was sufficiently demonstrated after death, but judicious enquiry would not the less certainly have elicited more or less of the matter during life.

Because the Lady Flora was not one of the crying sort—because her high spirit, or sense of duty, or silent resignation, enabled her to stifle pain; or because pain long continued had become less acutely felt, *therefore* there could be no disease—because the prominence of the stomach was considerable, and the *apparent* agony of the patient inconsiderable, *therefore* there could be no disease—because Lady Flora went about her business, *therefore* there was nothing the matter with her that she ought not to be ashamed of!

This specimen of Court medical logic will guide the Faculty in future; whenever they are called upon to prescribe for a young unmarried lady with a distended stomach, there is no other enquiry necessary than whether she is able to go about her business—if so, without more ado, cry havoc and hunt dogs at her!

In this sort of way exactly does a chemist and druggist's apprentice form *his* diagnosis. “I say, good woman, you must be in the family way, or you must have some ‘very bad disease;’ but then if you had some very bad disease you would be at home in bed, and not able to come to our shop, therefore,—you need’nt brazen it out; you *must* be in the family way,—don’t tell me, nobody can look at you and doubt it!”

In order to let the public know how little pains Sir James Clark appears from his statement to have taken

to inform himself of the condition of his patient, I will just observe, that in ovarial dropsy, a disease that of all others most closely simulates the outward aspect of pregnancy, the patient is precisely in the condition described by Sir James Clark. The enlargement in these cases being accompanied "with very little general derangement of health." In fact, the patient continues to perform her usual duties with apparent little inconvenience to herself.

If Sir James Clark knew this, his conduct, in not pursuing his inquiries in order to ascertain whether Lady Flora might not have suffered under ovarial disease, is unaccountable; and if he did not know this, he ought to have known it.

Dr. Gregory thus describes the differences observable in the symptoms attendant upon ovarial dropsy and ascites, or dropsy popularly so called.

"The great mark of distinction between ovarial dropsy and common ascites is to be found in the *little* disturbance which the former occasions in the constitution. The appetite remains good, there is no thirst, neither weakness nor hectic are produced, at least in the early stages of the disease.

"So little does the disease influence the general health, &c. (*See Gregory's Theory and Practice of Physic, 3 ed. p. 597.*)

Thus it is perfectly plain that, when Sir James Clark says that in Lady Flora's case the probability of disease being the **SOLE** cause of her appearance, was **DIMINISHED** by the circumstance, that the enlargement was accompanied with very little general derangement of health, he says that which does not at all necessarily follow; he assumes false premises; no wonder, then, that he came to a false conclusion.

It is to me perfectly inconceivable how any profes-

sional man would wish it to be published that his decision, in such circumstances of awful responsibility, should have been based on a *dictum* which every medical man's experience and every medical school-book prove to be false.

Comparisons are odious ! I shall not attempt to settle the order of precedence between Dr. Clark as an authority, and Dr. Gregory as an authority ; let it be enough that doctors differ now as heretofore ; let it be recorded that Dr. Gregory asserts one thing, and that Dr. Clark asserts another thing.

At last came the last—the only alternative left to the unfortunate Lady Flora. Then came the certificate of Sir James Clark, uncertifying all that he had certified by word of mouth ; then came the wailing and gnashing of teeth among the Court Ladies, compelled to go down on their knees before their victim ; then came the cold-hearted Lady Portman, with tears in her eyes, “*as all had ended so happily for all parties ;*” and to “*show how fully we are satisfied,*” as well, indeed, they might ! Then followed statements stating nothing, and inexplicable explanations.

I ought not to have omitted, when noticing the tender of proof, on the part of Lady Flora, by the diminished circumference of her dresses, to state, that this evidence, rejected by Sir J. Clark, was not only the most certain, but the *only* certain testimony the case admitted ; moreover, that it was, although Lady Flora could not have been aware of the fact, the common and ordinary assistant to medical men in forming their diagnosis in the case of abdominal dropsy and other diseases where pregnancy is simulated—if a riband, tape, or cincture of a dress measures to-day

7-8ths of a yard, and this day fortnight measures 5-8ths, even Sir James Clark hardly requires to be told, that, in such a case, there are no grounds for supposing pregnancy to be then existent. Lady Flora tendered to the Court Physician, not merely medical, but *mathematical* evidence of her innocence.

The last strictly *medical* observation I have to make on this case is the most important of any, and therefore I put it last, that the impression may remain strongest upon the public mind.

The horrid alternative to which, by the malignity of viperly women, and the Maccyphantic concurrence, without examination or enquiry, of the Court Physician in “what the Ladies think;” the awful test to which the hard pressure of circumstances compelled the Lady Flora to submit, and than which, to one of her noble spirit, walking blindfold among red-hot ploughshares, would have been luxury—was—hear it ye mothers! and hear it, every mother’s daughter in England!—was actually NO TEST AT ALL. I need not be more particular to the popular ear; the profession will understand me when I say that there are more than one or two medical reasons why the medical examination might have been utterly unsatisfactory, Lady Flora being at the same time, “pure as the untrodden snows—herself more pure.” It might readily have happened (I invite professional contradiction) that while the honour of the victim remained unspotted, the examining (how I burn with indignation while I write the word) the examining Physicians might have been unable conscientiously to have given the certificate they did—the victim would have gone down innocent, but dishonoured to her grave—her family would have never

been enabled to hold up their heads in society—the triumph of Lady Portman had been complete, and Sir James Clark's suspicions “quite correct.”

Think, only think, Lady Flora being innocent as she was proved to be, what *might* have happened? Why that the spotless child of the brave Marquis of Hastings, who fought and bled for his country in every quarter of the globe—the spotless child of the noble Countess of Loudoun—the kinswoman of I know not how many noble houses—the attached friend of so many friends—the pride of her mother's and of her Royal Mistress's hearts, might have been conscientiously convicted of impurity, being innocent, upon the verdict of a couple of Court Physicians!

When I say a couple of Court Physicians, I wish not to be understood to speak disrespectfully of Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke—far from it. Sir Charles is a kind good man, of great ability, of great experience, slow to suspicion, patient of investigation; a man who does not form his diagnosis, in equivocal cases, upon “what the Ladies think;” a man who would not have rejected the evidence of measurement in denial of pregnancy—an officer moreover and a gentleman—bred in a service the first social duty of which is the prompt vindication of female honour; the distinguished ornament of a service in which I am proud to recollect I had the honour of holding a commission.

The last paragraph of Sir James Clark's statement is the worst. After what I have said above, I leave the public to form their own opinion of it, considering it unworthy, in style or substance, of note or comment.

“I think it right to notice (Sir James Clark goes on) in this place a part of my conduct, WHICH, AT FIRST SIGHT, may 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 enquiry upon *such a subject*, but as I could not AUTHORITATIVELY remove suspicions founded UPON APPEARANCES," &c. &c.

Verily, Sir James Clark, if this is your vindication, it were better to have confined its circulation within the precincts of the court.

Having thus far considered the Court Doctor as a *Physician*, let us now examine impartially his conduct as a *man*. It is folly now to enter into any controversy respecting the tone and manner adopted by Lady Portman and her examiner towards the unhappy victim of their suspicions. *They* have this advantage, that the principal witness is dead—Lady Flora has this advantage, that they dared not contradict her while she lived—they dared not to impeach her veracity, though they dared to doubt her virtue.

Lady Flora, too, has the credibility attaching to her character and conduct throughout this business; was ever woman so patient, so judicious, so wise, thus basely assailed? Nothing but the strong hand of a protecting Providence could have saved her from giving, by some burst of natural indignation, a signal triumph to her enemies; and when I come to consider the chances of suspicion following even the last sad alternative her Ladyship was obliged to adopt, it is a miracle to me how she was saved at last!

Her Ladyship denied her enemies the poor satisfaction of seeing her lose her temper; she speaks of Lady Portman with Christian compassion—of her medical *fag* with dignified contempt, and of the combined attack

with the indignation becoming a woman of spirit and of virtue.

Volumes cannot speak the panegyric of Lady Flora ; her heroic conduct, baited as she was, will form a model of conduct for every poor lady whom the breath of courtly scandal (which never dies) may hereafter assail.

What grounds are there, then, to impeach her Ladyship's testimony. *None!* but, on the contrary, the consistency, the propriety of her carriage in the whole affair, makes for her veracity "confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ."

What grounds are there to impeach the testimony of her enemies? *Several.* They originated, or at least stand in the place of the originator of a foul slander—they are arraigned, and their asseverations are no evidence—they are the guilty parties—but of course they use the culprit's privilege, and plead not guilty.

Let them be put, then, on their trial by the country.

SIR J. CLARK.

"An extract is given by his Lordship (the Marquis of Hastings) from a letter written by Lady Flora Hastings to the Dowager Marchioness of Hastings, dated March 13, nearly a month after the event in which it is stated that *at my first visit to communicate to Lady Flora the suspicions entertained respecting her*, I became violent and coarse, and even attempted to browbeat her Ladyship."

LADY FLORA.

"He (Sir James Clark,) began *that* day [Sunday evening the 17th] to speak to me with some degree of feeling, but irritated by my denial, became violent and coarse, and even attempted to browbeat me."—*(Lady Flora's Letter to the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings.)*

The extract above, given from the statement of the Court Physician, refers to one period of time, that of

the Lady Flora refers to another period of time: it was *not* at his visit to *communicate* his or his employer, Lady Portman's suspicions, that Lady Flora accuses him of this brutality; but *after* the result that visit led to—it was not on the 16th of February, as Sir James Clark states in his explanation, before the examination, but on Sunday evening (the 17th), *after* the triumphant refutation of all suspicion, and when Sir James Clark consequently might be reasonably inferred not to be in the sweetest temper, that Lady Flora accuses him of an attempt to browbeat her Ladyship.

What can Sir James Clark mean by this quibbling? Let us take another paragraph of his explanation:

SIR JAMES CLARK.

—“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, not a word escaped her blaming my conduct or language, during *either* of my interviews with her.”

LADY FLORA.

“Unfortunately he (Sir J. Clark) 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.

“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.

“And poor Clark, who has been the women's tool, could hardly be sacrificed *alone*.”—
(*Letter to Mr. H. Fitzgerald*).

This is the direct evidence to which the Court Doctor would further refer. Well, and what does he get by it?

He reminds me of the gentleman (!) who, when about to take lodgings, referred to his former landlady for a character. The good woman replied, that the gentleman was a quiet, sober, regular lodger, but that, on leaving, he had forgotten to pay his arrears, and had by mistake carried away the counterpane!

Sir James Clark thinks Lady Flora ought to have been in a towering passion with him, and to have abused him if she had any ground of complaint, through all the moods and tenses.

Sir James Clark, it is plain, knew not her Ladyship; but it is self-evident, from the last sentence above quoted, that her Ladyship knew *him*—knew him to be the professional puppet, gesticulating in accordance with wires pulled behind the scenes—knew him to be the mere vehicle of “what the ladies think”—knew him, in brief, to be—

“——— a tool

That knaves do work with,”

and treated him with that cool contempt, the appropriate and legitimate sensation of a person like her towards a person like him.

Sir James Clark does not dare to call Lady Flora a liar, but he goes as near to impute a want of veracity on her part as he dare. He does not for a moment assert, he says, that Lady Flora *intended* to misrepresent what actually occurred; but he goes on to say, that sorrow, indignation, and grief, at the strange conduct of Lady Portman and himself, may have clouded her intellect, in short, weakened her memory,

and caused her “to have allowed impressions, arising out of discussions which afterwards took place, to grow upon her mind, until she at length *confounded* them with facts.”

This is a very supposable case. Certainly the poor Lady had more than sufficient provocation to have driven her mad; but have we any internal evidence among the letters, documents, or diaries of the Lady Flora to confirm this *post mortem* hypothesis of her Ladyship’s medical attendant?

Not an atom! Her Ladyship’s head throughout the transaction was as clear as her heart was pure; there occurs not an inconsistency, not an improbability; not the slightest symptom of weak-headedness or of bad heartedness to invalidate her living attestation or her dying declaration.

Besides, we have the evidence of her Ladyship’s attendant, at whom Doctor Clark sneers, as a foreign waiting-maid (if it comes to this, Doctor, the Baroness Lehzen is no more nor less than a foreign waiting-maid); we have this person’s evidence on oath—if she is perjured, why not prosecute her for perjury?—On oath, I say, we have her solemn testimony, that in her presence during *the* outrage upon Lady Flora—as I may call the examination—that while the whole demeanour of Sir Charles Mansfield 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!*

Lady Portman denies this: of course she does; but I have yet to learn that the oath of one waiting-woman

is not better evidence than the assertion of another waiting-woman.

It is so in a court of law, and I have no doubt it will be so in the court of public opinion, which, in this case, is the tribunal that must remedy that of which the law, unluckily, takes no cognizance.

I would ask no more than the petrified tone of the epistles of Lady Portman and her medical *fag*; of the manner of the former asking forgiveness, and the tone of the latter in defending himself, to be confirmed, in my implicit belief, of the truth of every word that fell from the lips of their unhappy victim.

“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 !”

In this sentence, the venerable mother of the victim—in this sentence the Marchioness Dowager of Hastings condemns emphatically the Lady Portman and her malignant clique; *and yet Sir James Clark remains her Majesty’s Physician !* This stamps the *set*; this and this alone, is sufficient to convict the Court party.

Does anybody suppose Sir James Clark of sufficient professional or individual consequence to be protected for his own sake? Does any one believe, that, if he alone were to go to the right-about, he would still be enabled to sneak up the back stairs of Windsor Castle. Long before this, had the Court Physician stood alone in this business, would he have got his *congè*; long before this would he have returned to the place from whence he came.

But poor Clark being, as Lady Flora observed, the women’s tool, could not well be sacrificed alone. The

obscure creature who originated the slander, the party to whom Lady Portman stands in the place of first indorser of the lie : *she* must have gone. The indorser herself must have likewise gone. Lady Tavistock, the aid-de-camp, the lie-carrier, (*for which she considers herself responsible*), must have been also dismissed ; and there are no less than five reasons in the Commons House of Parliament, and two or three in the Lords, why her Ladyship could not be spared : this triumvirate of viperly women must have been knocked down in the same lot with Sir James Clark. The tool could easily have been spared, but the workwomen, for various reasons, could not.

To the instinct of self-preservation, on the part of the Court Ladies, the Minister owes the prolongation of his political existence, and it would be ungrateful indeed if the Minister did not render that service to the Court Ladies which the Court Ladies rendered to the Ministers.

One thing is clear, however, that Sir James Clark cannot remain any longer her Majesty's Physician.

The Duchess of Kent dismissed him *sur le champ*, and her Gracious Majesty will find, it is to be hoped, in time, that there are few things in which the example of a mother, and such a mother, may not with honour and credit be imitated by her child.

It is clear that Sir James Clark cannot remain any longer her Majesty's Physician.

I do not say he is an ignorant man, far from it. If I could prove him to be an ignorant man, that would be a libel—if I could prove him to be a very ignorant man, that would be a very great libel—but if I could bring proof demonstrative that he is the most ignorant

man that ever lived, that would be the greatest libel that ever was known, and damages would be awarded accordingly.

But this I will say, whether it be a libel or not, that he has not proceeded in a case involving such an awful responsibility as that of the late Lady Flora Hastings, with the due deliberation—the cautious circumspection—the hesitating suspicion which such an awful responsibility demanded: this I will say—this I will justify; and it is for this reason that I assert it to be a rash and dangerous experiment upon public opinion to retain Sir James Clark in the important public office of Medical Attendant on our Sovereign.

The question of the tone and manner adopted by the Ladies and by the Court Physician must be determined, as I have said, by the degree of credibility attaching to the party attacking and the party on their defence. Even then, to form a correct opinion will be difficult: there are glances more bitter than death, yet you cannot apprehend the eye: there are sneers severe as stabs, yet you cannot take the upper lip into custody.

There is no coming to a conclusion on this subject, except by the evidence of collateral circumstances; these afford abundant corroborative proof of the truth of the accusation of Lady Flora: more than abundant evidence that the Court party, in her Ladyship's case, superadded insult to injury. The extract from her Ladyship's diary settles this point, unless, indeed, it be affirmed, that in this instance also she should have "greatly exaggerated," as Sir James Clark insinuates, "what actually did take place," or that sorrow should have clouded her reason or her memory.

"With one exception, an enquiry after Lady Forbes' children,

her Majesty showed Lady Flora no notice from the 24th of March, the day when Mr. Fitzgerald's letter was published, until the 9th of June, when her Majesty sent to ask how she was."

If this then was the course pursued towards the Lady Flora in the highest quarter, after the triumphant vindication of her honour, and which appears to have been directed against her because she chose that her vindication should be as public as the suspicion that preceded it, What may we reasonably infer, was the conduct of the Court Ladies and their Physician before and during that vindication? If this was the manner in which her Ladyship was treated when proved to be innocent—what may have been, what *must* have been, the height of her endurance when suspected of being guilty?

Again, Lady Flora, in a letter to her brother, states :

"With regard to the Duchess of Kent, her Royal Highness had a very warm conversation with her (Lady Portman) on every bearing of the transaction, and it was at *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."

HAS THIS BEEN DENIED by Lord Portman, in his statement; by Lady Portman in her statement; or by the Court Doctor in his statement—No!

LADY PORTMAN.

"It then became my duty to communicate to her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent that, until the 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

LADY FLORA.

"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*

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."

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.

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

"I gave her my hand in token of forgiveness, but when she asked to come to me afterwards I declined."

Look, then, on this picture and on this! How stands Sir James Clark in this view of the subject?

SIR J. CLARK

"Immediately after this interview with Lady Portman, I went to Lady Flora, for the purpose of making this very unpleasant communication, and I need hardly add that I made it in the most delicate terms which I could employ."

LADY FLORA.

"On the 16th of February Sir James Clark came to me and asked me if 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."—*Statement for Counsel.*

It plainly appears from this, that the most delicate terms which the Court Physician can employ, (unless

Lady Flora be supposed to have been a malignant liar) are better adapted to the meridian of Billingsgate than to the meridian of Pimlico.

The hopes of England were blasted once by an ignorant physician—what is to prevent a similar misfortune arising hereafter from a weak-minded or unprincipled one?

We have seen, in this deplorable case, that pregnancy may be imputed where it does not exist—what is there to prevent pregnancy being denied in another case where it *may* exist?

What, in short, is to prevent, by means of Court profligates, the throne of England from being one day tenanted by a changeling?

The Lady Flora Hastings has nothing to do with the quarrel between the Court party and the people. Her Ladyship's vindication is long ago complete. Society has no more to do but to honour the memory of her whom "the world will not willingly let die." But we must look to ourselves.

We must take care that the splendours of our beloved Sovereign's reign be not obscured by the perverse retention of convicted slanderers about her sacred person.

We must beware lest, instead of being the envy, we become not, by the degraded doings of people about the Palace, the contempt of surrounding nations—and that the name of a British subject be not disgraced by the disgraces of his Court!

11, *Park-street, St. James's Park,*

Monday, Oct. 14th, 1839.