ROSE of the GARDEN

KATHARINE TYNAN

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Lady Sarah Lennox

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The Romance of Lady Sarah Lennox

A NOVEL BY

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THE STORY OF CECILIA, BETTY CAREW
PRINCESS KATHARINE, ETC.

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To the one of Lady Sarah's blood in whom live her wit, her immortal charm, her kindness.

Since writing this romantic study of Lady Sarah I have learned from her great grandson, Captain Frederick H. P. Williams Freeman, that her family has always felt she was treated badly by Sir Charles Bunbury and that if ever a woman had an excuse for running away from her husband, she had.

The book owes much to *The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, edited by Lord Ilchester and the Dowager Countess of Ilchester, and acknowledgments are here gratefully made.

K. T.

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CHAPTER I

THE COLD BRIDEGROOM

I

SALLY was born a child of romance. Her father, the then Earl of March, was taken almost from the nursery to be married to little Lady Sarah Cadogan. Poor Lady Sarah was sold to pay a gambling debt. My Lord March, who was very happy at Eton and had not come to that age when a girl is anything but the inferior of a boy, on being presented to a crying and frightened child from the nursery damned as prettily as any grown-up gentleman; and with a muttered "Dash it, they shall not marry me to that dowdy," glowered at the unhappy child who had as little use for a bridegroom as he for a bride. However, he was married willy-nilly: and the matter seemed of less importance to him when he was carried off straight from his bridal to make the Grand Tour. In time

he almost forgot that unpleasant episode with the shivering dull child, whose leaden complexion and heavy hair were made the more hideous by her sacque and petticoat of white satin embroidered in pearls.

They parted without a word, a kiss: the little countess quite as well pleased to be quit of her bridegroom as he of his bride. Her wedding clothes were taken away and laid in sweet-bags. She went back to the schoolroom, sewed her little samplers, carried a blackboard and studied languages and the use of the globes: till, at twenty, she threw over the traces, and refusing any longer to work at her embroidery-frame, to model wax flowers and paint in water-colors while the countess her mother read aloud from Blair's *Grave* or the works of that learned divine Doctor Doddridge, she claimed her position as Countess of March and was all of a sudden a woman of the world.

II

In London there were plenty who would have been ready to induct the young countess — a wife and yet not a wife, ignored and condemned by her lawful husband — in the ways of vanity and folly, if not worse. But the young Countess of March,

brought up in excellent religious principles, had her talisman against the wiles of foppery and the world. She was very pensive in appearance — her face of a clear oval, almost colorless, but relieved from insipidity by the beautiful dark eyes in which was a depth of feeling seldom found in English eyes. True windows of the soul were they: and over them were fine delicate eyebrows of a most lovely arch and curve. Her head was crowned by heavy masses of soft night-black hair. In her portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, then a very young painter, we see her a charming creature, leaning by a pedestal on which is a statuary of Cupid transfixed by his own arrows. She had an extraordinary pensive grace. Her hand, supporting her forehead, does not hide the charming profile, the bewitching brows, the curved lips made for laughter, but by sadness foreign to their nature drawn a little downward at the corners. She had emerged indeed from the weeping child, who had always suffered from a cold and had been as dull in the schoolroom as she had been depressing in the nursery.

III

She rode, she walked, she danced, she sang, she played the harp. In a day when beauty was held to be more delightful because of its *bêtises* she dared to be a woman of wit and spirit. There were bets at the clubs in the first year of her living in London as to how soon Lady March would take a lover and who would be the happy swain. By and by the gentlemen began to talk of her as an icicle, a prude, a stiff and starched piece of propriety. To one gentleman, and he very young and unsophisticated, Sir Anthony Scrope, of Scrope in Devon, who was genuinely and honestly in love, she proved herself neither prude nor icicle. She had seemed to look kindly on the youth's passion for her, with a kindness which might have deceived others but roused no hope in the unfortunate gentleman's breast that his flame was returned. Said he to a couple of fribbles who were quizzing him at White's because her ladyship had smiled at him: "Sirs, she is kind: as kind as my mother or the Virgin Mary;" and that seemed so strange an utterance in such a place that he went out with his face aflame, in a dead silence.

IV

She had sent for Anthony Scrope and received him at her lodgings in St. James's Street, where her old duenna, deaf as a post, sat and knitted in an adjoining apartment.

"Sir," she said, when he had drunk tea with her, "I will not conceal from you why I have sent for you. If you had pursued me as others have, with a shameful insolence, the ardor of their pursuit being whetted by the knowledge that I am a wedded wife, I should not have sent for you. Your case is very different from theirs: for I can not disguise from myself that you have honored me by something very particular in your feeling toward me, in which respect is not forgotten."

"Oh, Madam," broke out Anthony Scrope, only restrained from falling on his knees by the presence of Lady Nicholson in the next room, who although deaf, was not blind. "Oh, Madam, I have never deceived myself. I love you to distraction; but I have never imagined for one moment that you would deign to cast a look upon such a one as I. Believe me that in loving you I did you no wrong: rather has it been that loving one so far above me has kept me honest and upright in thought and

deed. The only excuse I have to offer for my presumption in loving such a lady is that I am the better man for it."

"And a very good excuse, too," she said, while her smile deepened its kindness. "If ever I have need of any gentleman to defend me I shall remember Sir Anthony Scrope. But now it seems to me, Sir Anthony, that the best service you can render me is to go back to your own Devonshire. I own it would not be unpleasing to me for you to stay and adore me: and if I were another woman I might be content to take all and give nothing. But not being that woman, and London being a dangerous place for youth and simplicity, I would ask you to do me so much service as to return to your own country, so that evil tongues may not defile our friendship. When a woman is unprotected, as I am, the greatest service a man who loves her may render her is to keep away from her."

He began to stammer something about being her bond-slave and that he must obey her, however hard were the commands she laid upon him, but she lifted a hand to silence him.

"I would have you go free," she said. "I could very easily delight myself in a devotion like yours, but I should be a worse woman for doing it. In

Devonshire is there not some one beautiful and kind . . .?"

"I do not know how you knew, Madam," he said. "There is my cousin, Susan, a good girl and handsome, and we were children together. But I did her no wrong in loving your ladyship. We were but boy and girl, brother and sister almost. There is no room for passion in a tie so calm."

"I think perhaps," she said, and her smile was bewilderingly kind and soft, "that when you left home you turned your back on felicity. Going toward the sunset you shall find it again."

Perhaps her smile was too kind. He lifted his head and his eye had fire in it.

"God forgive me," he said, "for asking the question, but — am I sent away because of another man?"

"Why, yes," she said. "I like you so well, Sir Anthony Scrope, that I could hardly send you away if there were not another man."

He saw blood and his head swam. But she had taken his hand in a cool gentle clasp.

"Do me no wrong in your mind," she said, "for the man I love is my unkind, my neglectful husband. Not to any man in England would I tell

this but to you. His image has grown in my heart from our first meeting."

V.

Meanwhile the Lord March had enjoyed himself like other gentlemen of his age and circumstances. He had made the Grand Tour; and being come to full manhood, yet delayed to return to his country and his friends. He had found the world a pleasant place, and many ladies to smile upon him, for he was rich and handsome, young and of a fascinating manner. He hardly remembered his child-bride except to think of her with a momentary repugnance. Intolerable that because their fathers gamed high *his* life should be sacrificed to an ugly child somewhere in the mists of England!

He had learned to feel, for he had been played fast and loose with by a lady who had lured him to her side many a time only to cast him free again, till she tired of the game and settled to domesticity amid her black-eyed babies at her villa among the hills. Her whistling him down the wind had left him to a world in ashes, or so he thought, although since he was but twenty-five he might have known that a world in ruins is easily rebuilt for one of his age and condition. The Princess Magda had left

him cold to other ladies. He was sick of adventure: and one day he remembered that he had a country of his own and that his father and mother, growing old, constantly entreated him to return.

About Lady March he had no curiosity. He knew that her mother had carried her home after the marriage, and he supposed she was still in her father's house, if he gave a thought to her at all. She was not likely to disgrace him, he had said to himself, remembering the ugliness of her pale face, distorted by tears. He supposed that some time he would have to see her. He would make it plain to her that he expected nothing from her, that she need expect nothing from him. The Dutchwoman he called her in his mind, because my Lady Cadogan was of that nation, and said to himself, new from the burning eyes of Italy, that he needed no Dutch vrouw, broad-built and plain, to sit at his table.

But, back again in his native country, he became aware of a curious softening in his regard toward her. Poor wretch! Was it her fault that she was ugly? Was she not to be as much pitied as he? Was not she, as well as he, the victim of their fathers' vices? His repugnance for her was somewhat softened by his pity. He remembered his own

boyish brutality and cried out on himself for an unmannered ape: to his amazement, he was aware of a pang of pity as he recalled how she had shrunk away as before a blow from his insolent and angry gaze.

He supposed he would have to see the poor wretch. After all, she bore his name: she was his wife. It was no fault of hers that they were bound by a chain which neither of them had desired. The thought of being husband to her had hardly presented itself to his mind. She might be as unwilling as he. Surely if she had common spirit and pride she would be unwilling. He was free to confess that he had treated the poor wretch ill.

VI

Arriving in London he made inquiries, and discovered that Lady March was not with her parents in the country, but in lodgings in London, where she resided with an ancient cousin for duenna, and a lap-dog; that she lived very quietly for the most part and was engaged in good works; that she sometimes went into the gay world, and being a devotee of music, was frequently to be seen at the Opera.

It was the night of the first production of *The*

Beggar's Opera. All the town was going: and my Lord March, unwilling, nay, dreading to meet his ugly bride, postponed seeing her for yet another day and went to the Opera instead.

He found himself alone at the Opera. He had been long enough away to prevent his knowing the world or being known. Attired very soberly, he sat in the pit like an apprentice. From thence — while the Fantini warbled her sweetest, and her rival nightingale, Gozzoli, shook showers of golden notes that soared and flew in the opera-house and fell again like golden stars — he saw a face so beautiful that, being impressionable and young, he seemed to pass into a trance-like state of amazement and delight as he gazed upon it.

The lady to whom it belonged sat leaning her cheek in her hand, the elbow resting on the ledge of her box. She was very beautiful, young and sad. Her small head, sprung from a neck white and slender, was crowned with so heavy a weight of soft dark hair that it seemed impossible so delicate a stem should bear it. Her cheek was of a lily-like pallor. His eyes devoured the little head against its background of scarlet and gold curtain. The small, pale, pure profile, the line of the cheek where her hand did not conceal it, the snows of

neck and bosom, the soft, dark mournful eyes, divined rather than seen, ravished him. "She is the most beautiful thing alive," he said to himself, "and she is sad." He was suddenly thrown into a paroxysm of burning jealousy of the man who could make her sad.

As though she was drawn by his gaze she averted her eyes from the stage, and in the obscurity of the pit she sought for and found him. The dark stars of her eyes, as he called them with Italian fancy, rested upon him: straightway the Lady Magda, and all those other ladies who had played with him or with whom he had played, were forgotten.

He knew then that this was the one woman for him. All the others had been but fancies. This was the *one* woman.

She kept her eyes on him for a full minute, it seemed to him; there was something strange in the gaze which he could not understand. Then she turned away from him and resumed her watching of the stage. He put his hand on a neighbor's arm. "I pray you, sir, of your goodness," he said, "to tell me, if you know it, the name of the lady in yonder box, the pale lady in white, with her hair worn natural."

"Where do you come from," replied the man,

staring, "not to know the beautiful Lady March, the most beautiful and the most virtuous woman in London, although her husband, the Earl of March, keeps away from her as though she were an ogress?"

The earl looked up and perceived that Lady March had left the house. He was just in time to intercept her as she entered the coach. Indeed, he followed her within it and took her in his arms. Pardon was neither asked nor given: no explanations were made beyond "My dearest delight, I am your husband," and the sigh with which Lady March sank into her husband's arms.

CHAPTER II

THE GIPSY'S PREDICTION

I

OF this strange and passionate reunion was my heroine, Sarah, born.

She was a wild child, a creature of spirit and fire. She was one of a family of two boys and four girls, all handsome, brilliant, witty and of a volatile spirit. Sarah perhaps inherited more of her passionate mother than the others, with her clouds of night-black hair and her beautiful brows. She had a most ravishing complexion, in that respect being different from her pale mother. The contrast of ebon hair and brows with the clear rose and white of her complexion was very dazzling. She had a beautiful figure, more goddess than woman. But that belongs to Sarah later. Let me turn now to her exquisite babyhood.

II

There was a day when little Sally, walking with her French nurses in the green and pleasant fields

near Fulham, encountered a gipsy woman. Sally was then but five years old. The mademoiselles would have swept Sally away, half-frightened of the dark and tragic-looking gipsy; but the woman, who had the air of a queen, passed them by haughtily and fixed her regard on little Lady Sarah. So bright, so piercing was the regard, so fierce and splendid a person the gipsy woman, who indeed was a queen of her wild tribe, that any other child brought up as Lady Sarah had been would have bawled with terror. Not so Sally.

Dropping the hand of her frightened *bonne* she skipped to the side of the gipsy woman, and looked up in her face as little abashed as could well be conceived; she thrust her hand in a friendly manner into the hand of the gipsy, saying in her French manner, for she knew but little English: "*Bonjour, Madame. Il fait beau temps ce jour, n'est-ce pas?*"

"That is prettily said, my pretty bird," said the woman. "I know no furrin tongue except the Romany; but would you like your fortune told by poor Miriam, the gipsy? You know enough English for that."

Sally looked at her, her head on one side, bright and reflective as the bird by whose name the woman

had well called her. "Oh, yes, yes," she said, "I know enough English for that." She spoke like a foreign child.

The nurses, somewhat alarmed, for the place was lonely and the gipsy awe-inspiring, called to the child to come away: *"Venez vite!"* but Sally, shaking her dark hair, answered that: No, no, she would not till the dark lady had told her her fortune.

The gipsy woman, leaning down, took the little hand in her own, and a shadow fell upon her as her eyes grew strange and dreamy. She looked in the child's hand, and while she held it, she produced a crystal ball and gazed in it; and she shuffled a pack of cards, giving them to Sally to cut; and at last she spoke.

"There is shadow first, my pretty one," she said; "and a great sorrow. But afterward there will be joy; and there will be much love; and the little dark head may wear a crown if it will. There will be much liking but only one love."

Having got so far she looked in the crystal ball and her face was very troubled. Suddenly she bent and kissed the little hand, the lines of which she had been studying.

"There will be a fair evening, my beauty," she

said; "a fair evening and a brave husband and brave sons. And their mother will be a proud woman. She who might rule England and will not, will yet be the queen of a happy home and a husband's heart; and she will be a great woman for her country, for she will be the mother of a race of great fighting men. That is all, my bonny little sweetheart — the clouds breaking up in the west and a calm evening and a quiet night. And my little lady, the Queen of Hearts, I see no more than that."

With that, bidding the nurses, who did not understand a word she said, take home their little lady, because the mist was coming up from the water-meadows that made lovely the banks of the river with melilot and purple lady-fingers and the water-avens and such plants as love an oozy slime for their roots, she disappeared in the direction of Hammersmith.

III

A few months later Sarah's beloved father, the Duke of Richmond, lay dying.

Sally, the youngest of the flock, had been carried away to Holland House at Kensington by her eldest sister, Lady Caroline Fox; and since a gloom lay

over the great house, and no one had time to attend to a little girl, she crept within the big doll's house in the nursery, and sat, with her spaniel on her lap, wondering why it was that she must be taken away from her dearest mama and papa, and why everybody went about with such miserable faces, and why the maids cried.

The great house seemed to echo with emptiness from garret to basement; the very birds were still in the gardens that lay smiling outside in the sun. Sally did not know at all what was befalling her; but the solitude and the manner in which she was brushed aside by her elders depressed her spirits. In the doll's house she was safe from being pushed on one side, and she could weep a few tears if she would into Beau's silky coat and no one would ask her as a maid had done yesterday, with the sharpness of grief in her manner, what she was crying for, adding a sour prophecy that by and by her little ladyship would have plenty to cry for.

Sally must have fallen asleep in the doll's house, for she was awakened by the sound of a bell tolling somewhere; and Beau was licking her face and imploring her to wake up and release him from the thraldom of the doll's house and to remember that he had had no dinner, and that it was now about

five o'clock of the afternoon. Sally was hungry too. At five and a half the pangs of hunger are apt to be insistent; she was cramped in the doll's house, too, being rather a bigger doll than it was built for, so that if she inhabited it it must be in a cramped position.

IV

She pushed open the movable front of the doll's house, and Beau scampered out into the wide nursery. There was not a sound of habitation as Sally came forth to join him. The whole suite of nurseries lay empty of movement except for the dancing of the shadows of leaves on the floor and the wind that came in and blew the curtains about and rustled the leaves of a picture-book which lay open where Sally had flung it. Where was mademoiselle, where was Justine the *bonne,* where were the servants, men and maids?

Sally, preceded by Beau, stole from one nursery to the other, looking eagerly for some one she knew, for she had begun to tire of her own company. There was not a soul. Her tears were on the point of flowing again, for the loneliness, and the jarring bell outside that reminded her uncomfortably of how she had missed her mama and

papa for quite a long time, when she discovered her dinner set out on a table — a dinner of bread and milk and some apples which were the thought of a young maid who came from Canterbury way, and had brought some Kentish codlings with her in her box.

Sally ate her dinner, sharing the bread and milk with Beau, the two supping from the same spoon; and when Beau was greedy and would not wait his turn Sally rapped him seriously on the head with her spoon, telling him to keep his place and that greediness was a shameful thing in man or beast.

The meal over she looked for something to do. There was a blackbird singing outside the window on the bough of a tree. He had sung right through the meal, and he had kept watching the proceedings of Sally and Beau, his head cocked on one side as though he were vastly curious about them. She was quite sure he was saying something, but for a while she could not make out what it was because of the tolling of the bell, which seemed heavily to oppress her little heart. But at last she thought she understood. The blackbird kept singing over and over, "Come out! Come out! Come out!"

Now to come out consorted very well with Sally's

mood. She was always a little rebel, and it pleased her far more to run in the sunny glades of the park alone with Beau rather than with mademoiselle or Justine, or to walk sedately with her grown-up sister Caroline and Mr. Fox. She had never been permitted to run about alone even in the park, but she had had her escapades while the nurses talked with the gardeners and the park-keepers and one another.

She had once escaped and climbed a tree close to the park walls and had looked out into a wide park beyond, in the midst of which rose the Palace of Kensington, which was the King's house. On that occasion she had had an adventure, for she had seen an elderly gentleman in a bag wig and a cocked hat, with a bright star in the lapel of his lace-trimmed coat, and he was walking and talking with a very mountain of a lady.

What does Sally do but call out in her highest pipe: *"Bonjour, Monsieur le Roi!"* and then before the gentleman could do more than exclaim: *"Ach, Gott!"* before the lady could swing herself slowly round, like a boat tacking, in the direction of the voice, Sally had fallen from her bough and was invisible.

She had often wanted to peep over that wall

again. She had liked the King's red face and his comfortable homely figure. Caroline and Mr. Fox had been away now for several days. Sally couldn't tell how many days, because a day was so enormously long to her that a succession of such spreading hours could not possibly be counted over in her little brain. Mademoiselle and Justine had forgotten her. Sally had a faint sense of injury about that. Her toilet had been made somewhat carelessly of late; she had had to tie strings and fasten buttons for herself and Justine had been sharp with her.

Her heart sprang up at the thought of what a frolic it would be to get away from the great empty-feeling house out into the park, with its many delights. She was yet stiff from her cramped attitude in the doll's house. It would be good to run on the soft velvety grass which was whitened all over with daisies; and perhaps the blackbird would play with her as well as Beau if once she was out-of-doors. He was certainly saying, "Come out! Come out! Come out!" and beginning to flutter up and down in a growing impatience because she delayed.

V

All the corridors and passages in the house were drenched in sun as Sally and Beau went down the stairs. The doors of the rooms stood open as Sally passed and there was no stir of life in them. The house might have been a house of the dead, for all that it was so bright with sunshine and the gardens outside gay with flowers. The loneliness chilled Sally's little heart; she remembered how Beau had howled in the night and frightened her; the sound of the bell, she knew not why, seemed to set a great black wing between the sun and the world, to cast a shadow over the pleasant gardens, despite the shining of the sun and the gaiety of the flower-beds and the sparkle of the water in the fountains.

Not a soul in the house! The servants were in their quarters, perhaps, but they were at such a distance, down such remote corridors and twisting staircases that Sally did not know the way. She did not particularly want to see the servants, unless it might be Kentish Betsy. She wanted, indeed, not to see them. Perhaps the bell would not be so alarming and depressing if one were outside the house. She supposed it was to call people to church. Sally had been to church and had found it less de-

pressing than most people since she had gone to sleep; but she had awakened in terror to a thunderous voice overhead and a pointing finger which seemed to be directed at her and a fierce face somewhere in the gloom. She had no wish to go to church again. She hurried out of the house by the open hall door, dreading now that mademoiselle or Justine should remember and intercept her.

The very blackbird, or at least she thought it was he, was walking about prettily on the velvety sward between the flower-beds. As Sally and Beau came running toward him he fluttered a little way ahead, looking back at them, and then made a short flight. So he really did mean to play with Sally. Anyhow, he led her a fine dance, in which she clean forgot the tolling of the bell. She forgot everything but that the day was fine and the sun shining, and that it was good to be skipping along under the dancing leaves, with a blackbird for playmate since Beau had had these few days past a depression of his spirits.

The bluebells were all coming out under the trees where there had been daffodils. They, too, danced prettily and stood like so many shining fairies — a whole cloud of fairies where the wood thickened and was dark. Sally forgot the blackbird and be-

gan to gather the bluebells. She had her arms full of them when she remembered the blackbird. Suddenly she saw the wall before her and knew it for the wall over which she had looked one day; there was a little gate in the wall almost hidden by the ivy which hung over it; the gate was slightly ajar.

CHAPTER III

SALLY HAS A FROLIC WITH THE KING

I

HERE was an adventure indeed. When Sally had climbed the bough on that other day she might have got right on to the wall that separated her brother Fox's house from the King's palace; but it would have been a great drop down the other side. She was quite sure the blackbird had guided her to the door in the wall. It was just such a thing as a blackbird would delight in doing. Already Sally had had some of Monsieur Perrault's fairy tales read to her by mademoiselle, and she knew how friendly birds and beasts could be with men.

The blackbird had flown away; she had forgotten him for the bluebells; but he had led her straight to the spot where the forgotten gate stood ajar between her and the King's palace. She wanted to see the King again; to come dancing up to him and say: *"Bonjour, Monsieur le Roi?"* and drop a curtsey prettily, as she had been taught to do.

The mountainous lady might be there, but the thought did not daunt her. Fat people were generally good-natured in her experience; indeed, all Sally's world had smiled on her hitherto, a fact which had not prepared her for the absence of mademoiselle and Justine and the sharpness of the servants, except Kentish Betsy, these last few days when Lady Caroline was away and they did as they liked. Sally was dimly aware that there was something in the sharpness that was half-tenderness.

She scraped through the thorns and briers that had nearly closed the gateway, and emerged triumphantly on the other side of the wall. Beau followed loyally, though wearing an air of uneasiness, and looking back over his shoulder as he followed her to see if any one human would come to restrain this wild and precious child. Since no one would come he must, of course, follow her; but it was a dispirited Beau that came creeping after Sally, his tail down, as though he were guilty of some enormity; or perhaps could not cast off the depression of the bell as easily as Sally had done.

There was a herd of deer feeding in the park. Some of them had branching antlers, while others, the does, with the fawns running by them, had no horns, but looked at Sally as she came dancing

over the grass, with beautiful large eyes full of a mild gentleness as though they pitied the child. Sally dropped a curtsey to the greatest deer of all and pirouetted before him. Fortunately it was not a time of year when the stags are dangerous: perhaps even if it was this great lord of the herd would have had the magnanimity to spare Sally, because she was little and wild and lovely, and thought all the world to be her friend.

They met various other creatures on the way. The King's peacock trailed his splendors on the terrace as they approached the palace; and the King's mastiffs bayed far off, as though they would have torn the child and Beau to pieces, but bounding up to Sally, they only licked her hands held out to caress them, and slavered on her with their great hanging jaws, taking no notice at all of Beau, who had given himself up for lost.

II

The young sentry in the courtyard of the palace looked in amazement at Sally and Beau. He was not long up from the woods and fields of Sussex; and he thought Sally, in her kerchief of white and gold over her stuff petticoat of green, must be a fairy or perhaps a daisy come to life. Before he

could gather his wits to challenge such a thing, Sally and Beau had run by him and in at the open door of the palace, where the King's butler sat in his big chair between the pillars of black and white marble, fast asleep.

Another child might have thought him the King; not Sally, who was too used to fine feathers to be deceived by the liveries of royal red and gold.

She ran past the sleeping beauty in the chair. His mouth was open; he snored prodigiously and his fat head waggled on his fat chest; his hands were lightly crossed on a mountain of stomach.

His snores followed Sally and Beau as they went up the marble steps, at the head of which was a picture of a handsome boy standing by his white pony, clad in a riding-suit of Lincoln green. He looked very proud and withal honest and simple. It was a newly-painted portrait of the Prince of Wales's eldest son, who in time must come to be King of England, and, according to rumor, was likely to make a better King than ever his father would if he should succeed.

Sally stood a second to glance at the engaging picture of the boy before going on down the corridor. She had quite forgotten the bell by this time; a spirit of mischief had awakened in her, so

that seeing an amazed footman approach her from the distant end of the long corridor, she turned and took one at right angles, dancing along it and laughing to herself as she ran, determined not to be caught up by the footman till she had explored further.

As she neared the end of the corridor she saw that a door stood open, but she could see nothing beyond it because of the great screens of Spanish leather, with golden peacocks upon them. Within the doors, she was suddenly enveloped in the most delicious fragrance. She seemed to be drenched in roses, so that she looked about her wonderingly, half expecting to find the corridor a bower of roses; but there was nothing to explain that extraordinary sweetness. The paneled dark walls were hung with portraits and had cupboards against them filled with beautiful china and silver; statues of white marble gleamed from recesses in the walls; but there was absolutely nothing to explain the presence of the perfume of roses.

Standing still in her amazement she had all but been caught by the footman, who had tracked her on her adventurous career. She would have been quite caught, and the adventure at an end, for his feet on the deep carpets made no sound, had not

Beau growled and made her turn about. She laughed as she escaped the clutching fingers. Her laugh was a thing of joy; it was high and sweet, like the song of a bird. She laughed as she darted from under the ogreish hand held out to seize her, and fled into the room of the open door, running around the screens and across the wide expanse of polished floor toward the two persons the room contained.

III

Now Sally was in the thick of the roses, though the origin of the delicious scent was as mysterious as ever. There was an old gentleman sitting in a gilt chair in front of a marble basin. He had apparently been having his head washed, for his person was enveloped in towels, and a little man who stood behind him was drying his head in other towels of fine lace-trimmed damask. Facing him behind the basin stood a big bottle adorned with gold, full of a colorless liquid, and on the bottle was written in gold letters "Water of Roses"; but that told nothing at all to Sally, who did not yet know her letters.

She recognized the old gentleman at once for the one she had seen in the chestnut walk. She

was not at all afraid of him, although his face was redder than ever from having had his head held over the basin. Some children might have thought the red face and the bristling eyebrows rather fierce. Sally only thought it was funny to see the King without his wig; the bullet-head covered with short grizzling hair had a most humorous effect to her mind.

"*Bonjour, Monsieur le Roi,*" she said, her face dimpling. "*Aimeriez-vous vous laver la téte? La mienne a été lavée de temps en temps, mais Justine tire mes cheveux et me fait pleurer. Vos chaveux sont si drôles et courts, qu'on ne peut pas les tirer.*"

"Donner und Blitzen!" said the Victor of Dettingen. "Where haf you gome from, you leedle girl?"

"*Par dessus le mur, Monsieur le Roi,*" said Sally, enjoying herself immensely.

"Oh, over der vall. And you half gome to see der King haf his head washed?"

"*Naturellement, je ne savais pas qu'on vous lavait la tête,*" said Sally. "*Je vous ai vu l'autre jour dans l'allée des chataigniers avec une dame très gr . . .*" Sally pulled herself up on the point of calling the lady fat. She had been told not to make

personal remarks. "*Une dame,*" she repeated with emphasis, in order to assure herself and everybody else that she had not meant to say "fat." "*J'ai su que vous étiez le roi à cause de la belle étoile que vous portiez.*"

"*Ach!* you were den the schild that called '*Bonjour, Monsieur le Roi!*'" Sally did not find it very easy to follow him. English was a difficulty to her and the King's English was very bad. "I was sure I heard it — so! Bud de Gountess of Yarmudt she said it was no schild, but de blackbirds. How do you gome in my balace, you schild?"

He shook his head at Sally with a pretended severity, and Sally laughed again her high ringing laugh. The old gentleman with his wig, with his shining red face, and his comical speech, touched her sense of humor. But she liked him immensely. His beetling brows did not deceive her, and he was so clean and sweet with the scent of roses.

"You laugh at der King, you leedle girl," he said, shaking his head and seeming to blow clouds of the delicious incense from him with every movement. "I do nod know how you goom in my balace; but I vill chase you. Is my head dry, Du-

pont? I vill chase the naughdy schild dat laughs ad der King."

Sally was delighted. She had had no expectation of such a frolic.

"*Vous ne pourriez pas m'attraper, Monsieur le Roi,*" she said, running away from him and slipping round a screen.

"Den I vill try," returned the monarch, cutting short his toilet. "I vill dry, you leedle girl, and ven I haf caught you I vill giss you. *Ach,* I vill gobble you oop!"

Sally did not feel a bit afraid, although she felt that curious excitement which in children is half terror and half delight, which so easily turns laughter into weeping.

IV

There began a most delightful frolic. The Palace of Kensington had been very quiet when Sally entered it, as quiet as the palace of the Sleeping Beauty or the great red house beyond the walls. The single toll of the bell still floated in at the open windows, but Sally had forgotten about the bell. She went dancing like a sunbeam over the wide polished floor. She sped in and out among the furniture. The King followed her, panting and

laughing. He still had a towel about his shoulders which Sally imagined to herself as the mantle of the giant.

"*Ach,* you Yacobide!" the King said, bursting with laughter, "you vill kill der King. You vill be hanged for high treason. I vill gatch you, if I haf to die for id. *Ach,* you vairy, you leedle imp . . . !"

Sally danced out into the corridor, through another open door and another. She was in a suite of drawing-rooms of apparently endless perspective. There were many mirrors. The rooms were full of dancing Sallies and funny old kings in pursuit with towels about their shoulders.

Beau followed miserably. He just kept out of Sally's way as she fled hither and thither. When the toll of the bell came at intervals Beau shivered and lifted his head as though to howl.

At last, in the last drawing-room of all, from which there was no exit, Sally crept under a sofa. The King went looking for her in likely and unlikely places, breathless, and still laughing. Sally would have eluded him, dancing out from the cul-de-sac, under his hand, between his straddling legs, but for Beau, who betrayed her hiding-place by sitting down and whining beside the sofa.

"I haf gott you, leedle girl," said the ogre, his hand closing on Sally's hair. He drew her out ever so gently, considering that he was an ogre. "You are my brisoner. Vat shall ve do vid her, Dupont?"

The valet had followed quietly, and seemed to be enjoying the frolic as much as the King.

"Have you thought whose child she is, Your Majesty?" asked Dupont; but the King did not hear him. His eye had fallen on a magnificent oriental jar, one of a pair as big as those in which the Forty Thieves hid themselves in the story of Ali Baba.

"You are my brisoner and I shall bud you in brison, you leedle girl, dat gomes ofer der vall to blay dricks on der King."

The King lifted Sally, dropped her into one of the jars and put on the lid. Sally found herself sinking into something soft and sweet and spicy. The jar was half full of pot-pourri, made from the famous recipe of Mrs. Chambers, Queen Anne's waiting-woman.

"Your Majesty, the child will cry. She will be terrified," said Dupont, coming a little nearer, his finger-tips laid softly together and his little keen face showing sharp anxiety.

There was not a sound from the jar.

"She vill not gry, Dupont," the King said, watching the jar, nevertheless, with an air of some misgiving. "She is nod der kind to gry. She vill laugh; you vill see, Dupont, she vill laugh."

"There is no air in the jar, Your Majesty," said Dupont, visibly anxious.

"*Ach,* dere is a hole in der lid. She vill not smoder, der schild."

Suddenly from the depths of the jar came Sally's voice, singing —

"'*Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre.*'"

The two men looked at each other. Sally ended in a burst of laughter.

"I vish my grandson, George, vas merry like her," said the King. "He is doo solemn."

He lifted the lid off the jar, picked out Sally and mouted her on his shoulder.

"You vill haf dinner vith der King," he said. "Vere is der Gountess of Yarmudt, Dupont? She must see der leedle girl from ofer the vall dat said: '*Bonjour, Monsieur le Roi!*'"

V

He turned toward the door. Sally, insuppressible, mounted the King's back to his shoulders,

and sat with her two fat legs about his neck, her arms clasping his head. Not an attitude that conduced to speed or ease of progress. She encouraged her steed by smacking his cheek now and again or pinching his ear while she sat hunched up on his shoulders.

Half-way down the long drawing-rooms the progress was arrested.

"His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and His Royal Highness Prince George," shouted a voice, the voice of a footman, made big and rolling by the sense of importance.

Sally could see them coming quite three rooms off, a pale gentleman, with a thin sneering face, whom Sally instinctively disliked, a handsome serious boy, following in his wake.

She had no idea of the discomfort of her steed, whose face had suddenly turned a deep purple. But she allowed herself to be dislodged easily, the King stooping to let her alight on a big sofa. He stood where he was without advancing, and the child, watching him, had an idea that he stiffened. She could see his face in a mirror, and the expression was frowning, not in the least as he had looked when he smiled at her.

"So — Frederick!" he said in a gruff voice.

"Have we been interrupting a game?" the pale gentleman asked with a manner suavely contemptuous. He was dressed in the height of elegance, whereas the King, under his towels, wore a shabby soldier's coat; his accent, though German, was much less pronounced than the King's.

"What a pretty little girl!" said the handsome boy, coming forward and staring at Sally.

"I might perhaps come at another moment, Your Majesty," the thin sneering voice went on. "But affairs of state — the death of the poor Duke of Richmond —"

Suddenly Sally screamed. Her little hands began to beat the air.

"Confound that bell!" said the pale gentleman, still smiling. "We do not need it to remind us. What is the matter with the little girl?"

The King turned and stared at Sally. A curious pallor came over the dark-red flush which he had worn since the Prince of Wales had come upon the scene.

"It vill be his leedle girl," he said. "She said she game ofer der vall. *Gott in Himmel,* I might haf known."

The boy had put his arm round Sally with a timid serious air of grief and sympathy.

But after all it was the King who lifted her up from the couch, where she sat screaming and fighting the air.

"Dis is no man's vork," he said. "Go for de Gountess, Dupont. Dell de Gountess she is to come at vonce."

All during her life afterward Sally was to associate the scent of roses with an overwhelming horror and disaster, and yet with a ray of light in it, as from some one who was kind and who tried vainly to comfort her.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH SALLY MAY BE QUEEN

I

THE next meeting between Sally and the boy who was to be King of England did not take place for nearly ten years. Poor Sally was barely five and a half when her mother died — not being able to endure life without the husband she loved so passionately. Sally had spent the years following her orphanhood in Ireland under the care of her sister Kildare, and had become something of a wild Irish girl, the natural frolicsomeness and freedom of her character being developed in that country of which a soft wildness is the most tender characteristic. During those years she had the companionship of her sister Louisa, the sweetest by common consent of this lovely bunch of sisters, if not the cleverest and most fascinating. Indeed, in Lady Louisa heart dominated all else. There could be no imaginable circumstance, says Sally, in which Louisa's sisterly love could not be trusted, little knowing when she said it how warm a breast,

how kind a heart she would have to lean upon at a time when many doors would be closed against her.

At the age of fifteen she has returned to her sister Holland in London, and she goes to court. In the year 1760 a young lady was grown-up at fifteen, *passée* at twenty-five, and in the sear and yellow at thirty. How the forty or fifty years following were apportioned, unless there was some vast desert of middle-age, I know not.

Sally is come to court by the King's command, he having heard that his little playmate is over the wall at Holland House. Contemporary chroniclers say that she is in the very prime and flower of her beauty — at fifteen years old.

She is introduced into the royal circle. The King gives her a great smacking kiss before all the courtiers.

"Goom," he said, "you vill sing me *Malbrouck*. Sing it vonce again, *mein Kind*. *Ach*, the leedle sweet voice of id and the varm feel of id aboud my neck. That vas a schild. You haf not the vildness nor de blayfulness now, Lady Sarah."

Poor Sally flushed up to her hair. The courtiers stared. Some tittered.

"You vill goom vid me. I vill show you the

char vere you vas hidden, vere you sing *Malbrouck. Ach, Gott,* vhy vill you grow oop?"

Sally drew back, blushing painfully.

"*Gott* in *Himmel!*" said the King tragically. "She vas begome stupid, dis ding of quicksilver."

II

It was a most awkward moment for Sally. Tears filled her eyes. The circle seemed to close in nearer the King, leaving her outside.

She had led the life of a child in Ireland. She was hardly older for all her fifteen years than the latest baby in her sister Kildare's rapidly filling nursery. She had played with her pets, her dogs and cats, her squirrel, her pet lamb, her pony; the sea-gull who had been found by her after a winter storm with a broken leg, which she had put in splints and mended after a fashion. What had she to do with kings and courts? Her sister Holland was frowning as she talked with the Duke of Newcastle in an oriel. Sally wanted to go to her, to escape from the spot on which she stood. There were acres of polished floor to cross before she could escape. She wanted to get away out of this dreadful palace, away from this alarming old man who had called her stupid. She wanted to run,

run, anywhere out of sight, but for preference back to Holland House. She and her sister Louisa still had their rooms at the top of the house, looking away over the trees to the river and the distant Surrey hills. She wanted to hide her face, to cry out her mortification, to be alone except for a friendly dog. Even her sister Louisa's tender sympathy would hurt; even the eyes of her nephew Charles James Fox, who was scarce younger than herself, and with whom she had struck up an alliance since her return from Ireland.

She blinked. The tears were horribly near to running down her cheeks. She looked wildly from one side to another. Her feet felt glued to the space of polished floor on which she stood. How was she ever to escape — across those great vistas of rooms into the blessed peace of the park outside?

Some one approached her. She did not recognize him for the young prince who had been watching her with an anxious and sorry gaze. He drew her arm through his and led her across the room. Her eyes were too blinded with tears to see the expression in his.

Very gently, very carefully, he led her through the long suite of rooms, and by a private stair out

into the gardens. They went down the long walk side by side. At the round pond he stopped.

"Shall we feed the water-fowl?" he asked.

He had not said a single word on the subject of Sally's discomfiture.

III

Now when it was a question of creatures the matter became irresistible to Sally. The inclination to run home to Holland House had quite left her. It was a beautiful day of summer. There was a whole fleet of swans and other beautiful birds sailing on the waters of the round pond. They went to a cottage for bread to feed them; and only then did Sally realize that her companion was the Prince of Wales.

She forgot to be shy of him in the joy of feeding the water-fowl. They were accustomed to being fed, and they came and gobbled out of her hands and allowed her to stroke their plumage while they ate. The swans sailed like a beautiful flock of boats in the sunlight. In their wake was a little duck, a greedy gobbling creature with a scarlet bill and a head like a jewel. They disturbed the moored fleet of water-lilies upon the pond. Sheep

bleated in the fields beyond the park. There was not a break in the bird-singing. The leaves were just growing dark and the trees assuming the majesty which is theirs in high summer.

"Oh, it is perfect, perfect!" cried Sally, clapping her hands. "Look at that swan! Is it not the most beautiful creature on earth?"

"I know one more beautiful," responded the young prince, turning on her his serious enamored gaze.

IV

Sally ran away from the prince after that. She thought what he had said rather silly. Although she was fifteen and a grown-up young lady the woman was not yet awake in her. She thought it a great pity the prince could not be just a boy — a dear boy, like Charles Fox, who was so gay and lovable and spirited and generous. She liked him because he had been sorry for her, and had helped her to escape from that dreadful room and the presence of that rude old ogre, his grandfather. She was sorry, too, that she had lost the kind riotous old playfellow of that dreadful day of roses long ago and had found an ogre instead. And now this boy who had come to her deliverance must

needs be silly. There was only one person Sally could have borne silliness from, and that was her cousin, William Gordon, for whom she had had an adoration all her life. William Gordon was never silly in the prince's fashion: only Sally was accustomed to feel that William, if he would, could compel her to do anything, or accept anything.

However, Lord William was making the Grand Tour at this moment, and Sally only wanted her playfellows. Louisa hardly came under that description. She was Sally's elder by some years, already getting up to the middle age of twenty. Louisa was a person to go to when Sally got hurt or was in trouble or disgrace. The playfellows were Charles Fox — Stephen his brother was fat and placid: not a lively spirit like Charles — and Charles's cousin, Lady Susan Fox-Strangways, a lively self-willed child, with a dear little shy face like a kitten. And, of course, there were the dear animals; and Sally's reading and music and painting. She had learned to play the harp in Ireland, and she could bring out of the strings a wailing music that seemed the very soul of that beloved unhappy country. She had no time to be silly; and she really wished the prince would not be so *particular,* as she had heard her elders call it.

V

A little later Sally's ogre is dead, and there is a new king. And now Sally is out of the nursery and schoolroom and goes to court, but is still more concerned with childish things than her uncle, Mr. Henry Fox, approves of.

Within a very short time of the King's accession it was obvious to every one that his intentions and attentions to Lady Sarah were particular. The poor young King is fought for by Whigs and Tories. A mere boy, he is in the hands of strong men: Pitt, Lord Bute, the Duke of Newcastle. The parties seem as though they would tear him to pieces. At times he breaks away from his ministers, showing that independence of thought and character which marked him during his long reign. He added to the formal address to his people, drawn up for him by his ministers: "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton."

Lady Susan Fox-Strangways says that if she were the King she should delight in shocking the ministers. Sally agrees with her half-heartedly. She is a little afraid of the direction the King's shocking his ministers may take.

Henry Fox would very much like a hand in the

game, although he professes virtue and is bitter about Pitt. He is very ambitious for the advancement of his family. He has not yet received the peerage he covets. Why, with a niece on the throne of England, it will not be a beggarly peerage that will content him.

He looks at Sally, and her beauty delights his eye. "She is not easily described," he says, "except by saying that she has the finest complexion, most beautiful hair, and prettiest person that ever was seen, with a sprightly and a fine air, a pretty mouth and remarkably fine teeth, and an excess of bloom in her cheeks; but this is not describing her, for her great beauty is a peculiarity of countenance that made her at the same time different from and prettier than any other girl I ever saw."

VI

The King's infatuation is plain to all. Mr. Fox stands in the background, smiles and rubs his hands together. The Duke of Newcastle is enraged. Mr. Pitt displays no feeling, but makes Sally a pretty speech when he meets her. The court stares as if it sat in a circle watching the King and Sally, who wishes uneasily that William Gordon would come back from his travels and take her part against

all those who are pushing her in one direction, and that a direction she does not wish to take.

She eludes the King, and will creep under the wing of a dowager when she goes to court. The King, though his looks are particular, does not attempt to force her conversation. He talks to her obliquely through Lady Susan, who is her inseparable friend.

VII

It is Twelfth-night of the year following the King's accession, and Sally, treating His Majesty as though he were any other agreeable boy, romps with him through the figures of "Betty Blew," a country dance she has brought from Ireland.

The King, over-serious for his age, forgets for once to be anything but a boy, but presently he leads her into the tea-room and there begins a private conversation with her. He asked her about Ireland and my Lord and Lady Kildare; and he asks shyly which takes the lead, "For," says he, coloring very much, "either husband or wife must take the lead."

"Any man who allowed his wife to govern him would be a fool," says Sally bluntly. Then she

looks straight at the King. "For the matter of that, Your Majesty," she says, "all the world says that you are governed by your mother."

The King blushes and laughs.

"Is not a mother the best governor for her child?" he asks.

"That may be so," says Sally; "but a German woman can not be the best person to govern England."

Mr. Fox nearly swooned when he heard of this rashness of Sally's, but said upon reflection, "Since it has done no harm, it may do good." He then pressed Sally to know what else took place in the conversation.

"He talked rather sillily," said Sally. "I did not like him so well later; at first I thought well of him because being King of England he did not disdain to be merry."

"And what was it in his conversation which struck you as being silly, my dear sister?" Mr. Fox inquired blandly.

"Why, he asked me," said Sally, considering, "whether I thought a King should be governed by his inclination or by reasons of state, and I answered him that it depended on the force of the inclination."

"That was well said, my dear sister," said Mr. Fox. "And what further?"

"He went on to say," said Sally, trying to remember, "that if it were a question of the choice of a queen, whether motives of policy should move him or his own heart, to which I replied that it depended on which was the strongest."

"Spoken like the famous Signor Macchiavelli, the learned doctor of Florence," said Mr. Fox.

Sally liked to be approved and ransacked further in her pretty head.

"He asked me," she said, "if I did not think it would be an excellent idea to connect Holland House and Kensington Palace by a passage."

"Good lord!" said Mr. Fox.

The King said freely at that time that Lady Sarah was the most delightful creature in all the world, being so frank and free from guile. "She would not tell me a white lie," he said, "although all the world is ready to tell me black ones."

VIII

It is of a Thursday in March. Every one is aware of Sally and the King, who, nevertheless, leaves her sparkling like a jewel in the shade, to

which she retreats from him, and approaches Lady Susan.

"You are going into Somersetshire," he says, with a lingering sidewise glance at Sally. "When do you return?"

"Not before winter, Sir," says Lady Susan, blushing all over her little sly face, as Sally loved to call it.

The King, sighing heavily —

"Is there nothing will bring you back to town before the winter?"

She: "I do not know of anything, Sir."

He: "What? Not a coronation?"

She (in a flutter): "Oh, Sir, I should certainly come to see that."

He: "I hear it's very popular my having put it off."

Lady Susan finds nothing to say, only looks at her pretty feet. The next sentence makes her jump.

"Would it not be a much finer sight if there were a queen?"

She (looking up): "That would depend, Sir."

He: "Why, of course it would." He smiles and is suddenly shy. "I have had many applica-

tions from abroad, but I don't like them. I have none at home; I should like that better."

"Oh, lord!" says Lady Susan to herself, looking the picture of kittenish innocence, "is the man going to fall into my arms for lack of Sally's?" But she pretends to be very embarrassed and says nothing.

The King bends and whispers in her ear. Every eye is upon them, although there is a feverish pretense of talking.

"What do you think of your friend? You know whom I mean. Don't you think her fittest?"

"*Think,* Sir?" repeated Lady Susan, sillily and all in a schoolgirl flutter. She is wishing he would address himself to Sally. Was ever woman in such manner wooed as by whispering in the pretty ear of a friend?

"I think none fitter," he says in a loud voice, so that all the room hears.

He then crosses the room to Sally, and with all his heart showing in his handsome young face, he says: "Madam, pray ask your friend what I have been saying and make her tell you all."

He leans over Sally, trying to look into her averted eyes.

"Promise me," he says.

"I promise, Sir," says Sally, feeling as though she must run into a mouse-hole to escape this amorous King.

IX

"The worst of it is," says Sally to her dearest Sue, "the worst of it is the way they look at me when I return home. There is a new air about them as though they saw the crown on my head and I was no longer simple Sally. My brother Fox is the worst of them all. I have no taste for queenship. I am not yet grown up, though I go to court. I wish they would leave me to my animals and my play. It is hateful to be treated with respect; and to think that I am watched by ministers as a cat watches a little, gentle furry mouse like my Sue. I wish I were back in Ireland where there was not this talk of marriage."

In a postscriptum she adds — these female friends wrote almost daily when they were not beneath the one roof —

"William Gordon has returned. He sups with us o' Saturday."

CHAPTER V

THE TREE OF LOVE

I

SALLY had acquired her great devotion to her cousin, Lord William Gordon, during a visit they had both paid to Carton, when she was but seven, and he, a tall boy at the College of Eton, had petted and played with her, allowing her to follow him about like his dog.

At that time Sally had a trick of walking in her sleep, which caused a good deal of alarm to her relatives, and the maid who had her in charge was accustomed to sleep with her bed across the door leading to the nurseries, so that Sally could not escape without climbing over her and so awakening her.

But one night she slept sounder than usual. She woke up in the dark hour preceding the early summer dawn to the knowledge that something had happened, that some noise, the closing of a door perhaps, had awakened her from her sleep and to a great terror.

She jumped up. Sally's bed was empty, but it was yet warm, showing that the child had not long left it.

Now the girl had the wit not to alarm the house, for her grace the duchess was about to lie in with her sixth child. Instead, having put a garment upon her, she ran hurriedly to Lord William Gordon's room and awakened him.

"Her little ladyship is not in bed," she said. "I think 'twas the clang of the house-door awoke me. She will be out of the house and wandering over the country, poor lamb. If I found her I wouldn't dare speak to her to break her sleep: but you could do it, for she's mortal fond of your lordship."

"I'll follow you," said the boy, springing from his bed. "Have you got a lantern? It's very dark."

"The day'll soon break," the woman returned. "There's a lantern in the stable-yard, but before I could get it the whole house would be awake, and her grace must not be alarmed. If we was to catch her up before she got far it would save all the vexation. Is a poor girl to lose her place because she sleeps sound? There's a trouble in the east. The day'll soon be breakin'."

She was a true prophet. As they stole like conspirators out of the house there was a trembling in the gray sky to eastward. For the time it was very dark. They could but follow the roadway with their feet as they went along, calling softly to the child.

Presently they left the firm roadway and found their feet in the grass. It was drenched with heavy dews. The grass about their feet was like the plashing of rivers.

"God help her, poor lamb!" lamented the woman. "She'll get her death of cold. Och, wirrastrue what come over me at all to sleep so sound, barrin' I was at my cousin Bridget's wake last night. I did wrong to stale out an' lave another in charge of the child, an' I'm punished now. I don't care if they do send me away as long as the child comes to no harm."

They had wandered for some time. The trembling in the east broke into a succession of pale streaks. A little glimmering of light came about them and showed them where they were. They were almost up against the high ivy-covered wall of an old churchyard, long disused, in which the people of the country sometimes buried their dead by stealth.

William Gordon stopped with a baffled air.

"It is not likely she would come this way," he said. "Let us turn back. We shall soon be able to see."

Suddenly the most dreadful wail came from the churchyard, most sad and piercing, rising and falling again.

"'Tis the banshee!" cried the woman, clutching William Gordon's arm, "or it is the ghost of my poor cousin Bridget that was buried only yesterday. Oh, my Lord, come away before it happens again. Oh, glory be to God, what is it at all? It's Bridget wants prayers, maybe, or some other misfortunate sowl. Come away out of it before any harm befalls us. The Cross o' Christ between us and harm, isn't it a dreadful sound?"

She turned and ran, but William Gordon held his ground. The long lines were growing yellow in the east: a cock crowed from the village and was answered by the cocks at Carton: a bird twittered close at hand. Again the cry rang out. This time it had changed its note: there was blind terror in it. It was accompanied by a sound as though a gate were shaken vehemently.

The boy who had been standing and peering through the now visible dusk leaped at the sound.

He sprang in its direction and found what he had expected to find, a little figure in a white nightgown, shaking the bars of the churchyard gate, now and again leaving off to utter the piercing wail which the boy felt to be so terrible that it must be stopped at all hazards.

He could not tell if Sally were awake or asleep, and at that time there was a belief of fearful consequences if the sleep-walker should be awakened. He could not see if Sally's face showed the blankness of sleep, but his thought, from something strange and mechanical in those terrible cries, was that she was not wholly awake. It was the terror of sleep, not the terror of waking.

If she should wake, he said to himself, in such a place, and mentally anathematized her nurse, whom he suspected of filling the child's mind with terrors — if she should wake!

"I want to get out! I want to get out!" said Sally, in a monotonous voice which persuaded him that she was asleep, although aware of his presence.

"You shall, little one," he said in a manner of brisk cheerfulness, "but you must not cry again."

He shook the gate, tried the handle, but it would no more yield to him than it had done to Sally. He looked about him for a stone. With a curi-

ous air of obedience she stood meekly to one side, her head bent and the cloud of her dark hair falling about her shoulders. All around them was an eery obscurity. Old headstones thrust themselves above the long grass. An owl hooted in the tree above them, startling the boy. If she were to awake now, in this cold grayness, that was almost worse than the dark, it would be terrible.

He found the stone he wanted, almost too big for him to handle, but his concern for his little playmate gave him strength. He made a furious onslaught on the rusty lock. It yielded. He pushed open the gate.

He gave one glance at a heaped new-made grave. He caught a glimpse of something that grinned at him from the grass, a skull perhaps: such things were common enough in the old graveyard overfilled with dead.

His heart was thumping in his side as he put a very gentle arm about Sally. Suddenly she came awake with a cry.

"Where am I? Where am I?" she asked. "I have only my night-dress on and my feet are wet. Why am I out-of-doors like this?"

She hid her face on his shoulder, and picking her up bodily, he carried her away from the place

before she was aware of her surroundings. His voice soothed her. She clung to him sobbing. She was drenched with the heavy dews. When they were well out into the park he stopped, put her down, took off his coat and wrapped her in it.

It was a long time before Sally understood what it was from which William Gordon had saved her, but from that moment she had a most singular devotion to him, adoring him with all her loyal little heart.

II

What passed at the Saturday night supper may be summed up in a brief note of Sally to her *chère amie.*

"He is handsomer than ever, but his eyes looked at me as though I were a child still. They say he is desperately enamored of a beautiful Roman, the Marchesa Coronna. Oh, Sue, he has heard about the King. I am sure of it. I found him watching me with a strange look of interest during the supper. I am not to see him again for he goes to his father the duke in Scotland to-morrow."

Sally, being a baby, cried all night over her

hero's coldness. Being a baby she can not conceal her emotions; and goes to court next day with red eyes and a sullen demeanor. She hides obstinately behind her Aunt Albemarle, but the King dislodges her at last. His eyes are very ardent and he goes straight to the point. He drops into the chair by Sally, takes her ribbon and plays with it, and leans so close to her that his breath is on her cheek. Being the King, he has no eye for the danger-signals in Sally's stormy beauty.

"Have you seen your friend lately?" he asks in a low amorous voice.

Sally, wishing he had been another, answers shortly, "Yes."

"Has she told you what I said to her?"

"Yes."

"All?"

"Yes."

"Do you approve?"

Sally says nothing, but looks black enough to cloud the sky of any young man in love. His Majesty gazes at her for a moment as though he can not believe his eyes, turns very red, and with a deep bow leaves her.

III

Sally is in disgrace. Her Uncle Fox will not look at her. Lady Caroline weeps. She has letters from Lord and Lady Kildare reproving her for her forwardness. Even her sister Louisa, on whose bosom she had been wont to lean, asks her tearfully what is amiss with His Majestey that she can not love him, seeing how much it would be for the good of the realm if Mr. Fox were to rule the King, and not Mr. Pitt and Lord Bute.

Sally laughs in Louisa's face.

"Our brother Fox is vastly mistaken," she says, "if he believes that anybody will long continue to rule that person. For the moment he is no more than a boy — *Mon Dieu!* how slow the creatures grow up as compared with us! — and he submits a while to the rule of the German woman his mother. They say she and the ministers will pick a wife for him from Germany. I have no desire to play the queen. *Vraiment,* I had much rather play with my creatures at home. There is Bino, my squirrel, who is sick. I think vastly more of whether Bino will get well than of His Majesty's passion."

Sally cries at night, but it is not because of the King: and William Gordon has gone traveling

again. They say there is a magnet in Rome that draws him.

IV

Sally is changed. She has writ down, not once, but many times, that if there is a creature she detests it is the male flirt. Yet she competes with Lady Car Russell, the Duke of Bedford's daughter, for Lord Newbattle, a handsome vain puppy who is spoilt by the women.

Who knows but Sally has a design in her folly? She sets her cap at Newbattle, who is not the stuff, nor is any man whose heart is not preoccupied, to resist charming Sally when she sets her cap. Lord Newbattle is in a sense one of the family, his sister being Lady George Lennox, Sally's sister-in-law. My Lady George plays into Lord Bute's hands knowingly and unknowingly. She makes an assignation for Sally and her brother in the park when the shades of evening are falling. Having led Sally into the snare, the perfidious woman departs, leaving, as she says, the lovers together.

There is not a soul in the park. The gates are closed and the keepers gone to their houses. Sally is very angry. Lord Newbattle, dropping on his knees, swears that his only sin against her is that

he adores her too much. He clasps her about the knees and hides his face in her petticoat.

Sally does not know whether to box his ears or not. She is a little daunted by the place and the hour. Lord Newbattle pours out his passion in fervid language. The sheep-bells tinkle in the dark and the shadowy deer move through the glades. He implores pardon for the deception by which he has won this hour alone with his beloved. He is gentle, humble, propitiatory. He conveys delicately to Sally that Lady Car has said cruel and slighting things of her. Sally forgets to be angry with him because of her anger against her rival: she is too generous, too honest with herself not to exonerate him. She has set her cap at him: sought to detach him from Lady Car, between whom and herself there is an antipathy: if he has presumed it is her fault.

And — after all — William Gordon had barely looked at her. His eyes had been too full of another woman. He had been *distrait,* abstracted. After all it was a romantic thing, an adventure, to have a fine, handsome young gentleman at one's feet, with the night gathering over the park.

"If you will take me home," she says, "I will forgive this unwarrantable —"

"My dearest angel!" he cries, leaping to his feet: "then you are mine; and the project my father entertains for a marriage with Lady Caroline Russell is at an end. I will tell him so this very night."

He kisses Sally's hands with a passionate tenderness. She is obliged to him that he does no more; after all, she is not in love with Newbattle, but only playing at being in love, because William Gordon has looked at her without seeing her and she detests Lady Car.

V

He gives her his arm with an exaggerated respect. "You must not be angry with my sister," he says: "she knows how I adore you, and she detests the Russells. There is but to call up a gatekeeper to release us. I am yours to the last moment of life to command me."

Sally, tossed to and fro, is more than a little out of love with her adventure. She has no idea of how yielding is her attitude. There is none to see, except the deer and the sheep. She does not observe that a couple of figures pass by them close at hand, His Majesty and Lord Bute, making a short cut from St. James's to Kensington Palace.

"A strange hour and place for a meeting," said His Majesty.

Lord Bute answered him in a shocked voice.

"Did Your Majesty see who the lady was?" he asked. "She reminded me—"

The King made no reply.

"It was a strange likeness," said my Lord Bute; "but, of course, it could not have been—"

VI

Sally took a whole three days to make up her mind that she did not desire to be Lady Newbattle.

"I have one standard," she confided to her journal, "by which I must judge all men. Though W. G. is cold to me, he represents for me all of manly virtue and courage the world possesses. By him the K—— fails to charm and my Lord Newbattle reveals himself a popinjay."

She had written to Lord Newbattle declining his addresses. She is drying the letter with her sandbox when a letter is handed to her, with the crest of Lord Newbattle's family on the seal.

"I wish," thinks Sally, "that I had not led this unhappy nobleman to believe that my heart could be interested in the matter of his suit. *Pauvre enfant! je ne veux pas qu'il souffre!* I would not

hurt a fly. His folly and vanity make no excuse for the cruelty with which I have led him on."

She breaks the seal with a half-curious distaste. She is sick of men and lovers. Poor wretch! Poor Newbattle! She is nauseated in advance at the prospect of his passionate outpourings.

Sally gasps. Her breath is taken away. *Wretch! Popinjay! Villain!*

Lord Newbattle's epistle declines Sally. His father will not hear of it. All that must be at an end.

VII

Sally is so affronted that she feels she must be queen if only to punish the insolent creature for his presumption. Probably he is laughing at her at this moment with the detestable Lady Car. She could not face the eyes of her world, so she flies out of town to Goodwood, is overtaken on the way by Lord Newbattle, who unsays all he has written and is again her slave. Goodwood is closed against him, but not against Lady George, who carries on the love-making for him. All in vain. Sally is heart-whole so far as Newbattle is concerned.

She will not come back to town to be wooed by the King, as her brother Fox hopes. She flies away

from Goodwood to Redlinch in Somersetshire with Lady Susan Fox-Strangways. They make hay and drink syllabubs and gather roses and feast on strawberries and cream: and the two are irresistible in their country airs. Till Sally, hunting on a mare as wild as herself, has the misfortune to break her leg.

Other people when they break their leg have a wearisome time of mending it. Sally's bone-setter, Mr. Clark, of Bruton, bears witness that she is the bravest and merriest patient he has ever attended. The poor wretch is head over ears in love with Sally, who laughs at him and drives him to despair by her rashness. She will not lie up at Maiden Bradley, where she has met with her accident, but will be laid on a pretty bed and carried on men's shoulders to Redlinch, singing as she goes lest the tears should come for the pain.

VIII

Let Mr. Fox tell in his own words how the King received the news of the accident to Lady Sarah.

"On Monday, which was yesterday, I went to court. The King has asked Conolly a hundred questions about Lady Sal, and was concerned she

should be left to the care of a country surgeon. Conolly told him Hawkins had been sent to and declared there was no use in his going. His Majesty, I hear from Conolly, was most tender. I thought he might probably not speak to me concerning Lady Sal. I determined, however, that he should if I could bring it about. After a loose question or two he in a third supposes I am by this time settled at Holland House. (Now I have you.) 'I never go there, Sir,' says I. 'There is nobody there.' 'Where is Lady Caroline?' 'In Somersetshire, with Lady Sarah.' At that name his voice and countenance, gentle and gracious already, softened and becolored. 'I am very glad to hear she is so well.' 'As well as anybody can be with such an accident, but the pain was terrible from the motion of the coach till she got to Mr. Hoare's.' He drew up his breath, wreathed himself, and made the countenance of one feeling pain himself. (Thinks I, you shall hear of that again.) I added: 'She is extremely cheerful now, and patient and good-humored to a degree.' 'Was she going down a steep hill when the horse fell?' 'I believe not, Sir. The horse put his foot upon a stone which broke, and it was impossible he should not fall. Lady Sarah, I hear,' says I, 'proposes to ride to

London on the same horse to clear the horse from all blame.' 'That shows,' says he, 'a good spirit in Lady Sarah, but I trust there will be prudence in the family to prevent it.' 'I fancy,' says I, 'Lady Caroline will dissuade it; but indeed the horse was not to blame; in rising again his shoulder pressed Lady Sarah's leg upon the stones of which that road is full, and broke it.' Then came again the same expression of uneasiness, which I rather increased by talking again of the pain the motion of the coach gave: and then, relieved by assuring that she had nothing hard to bear now but the confinement, 'I fancy,' says he, 'that is not very easy to Lady Sarah.' And then he left me for some conversation which gave him neither so much pleasure nor so much pain as mine had done."

In contrast with this ingenuous sensibility of the young King, was the unfeeling remark which Lord Newbattle was reported to have made in public on hearing that Lady Sarah's leg was broke.

"That will do no great harm," he said, "for though she is a perfect beauty she has an ill-shaped leg."

Sally's comment on this was: "If his manners

were as well as my legs there would be nothing to complain of."

IX

Two months later Sally is back in London, as fresh and fair as country air and rest can make her. She goes to the play, and the King is in the royal box. His pleasure at seeing her is ingenuously apparent to all the house: and Sally, half frightened, runs away when His Majesty's eye is off her. The Sunday after, when he found her in the drawing-room — Sally had begun to play with the prospect of being queen of England, her appetite whetted perhaps by the opposition of the King's family and ministers — he colored up excessively and went at once to her side, where he talked to her eagerly and to the exclusion of all others while she stayed.

On Thursday at the birthday ball he had no eyes for any one but her. Sally was resplendent in a gown of white lutestring with roses in her dark hair. His Majesty forgot all that was required of him, flung etiquette to the winds for the joy of leaning over Sally's white shoulders, embarrassing her by the nearness of his cheek to hers.

She was conscious enough that all eyes were upon

her and the King: that when they danced the crowd seemed to fall away and leave a circle about them. She caught a glimpse of herself and the King in a mirror while he bowed to her with his hand on his heart in the contre-dance of "All in a Garden Green." She blushed, realizing how particular was his look, his attitude. While they crossed hands and she swept in the curtsey she was suddenly aware of one face among those of the ring of spectators who were watching her. It was the face of Lord William Gordon, older than its years, a little fretted with fine lines as though he had suffered. Oh, Sally's one man! The one man for Sally of all the world! The King was offering his hand now. She laid hers in it suddenly cold. The formal music was crashing about them. "Madam, will you take my hand?" says the King, under cover of the music. His eyes are very ardent; his color is high. What are the ministers, a peck of troublesome relations, as against glorious Sally and love?

"Will you take my hand?" whispered the King, bending over Sally in the figure of the dance to lay a kiss on her fingers. "Will you take my hand and all it contains? I know none fitter to rule my kingdom and me."

Sally is suffused from brow to chin, over her fair

milk-white shoulders, with painful blushes. She knows the room is staring. William Gordon she can see nowhere now. Though she seems to look down her eyes have swept the room and missed him. Too indifferent doubtless to look on at Sally's wooing by the King. Though she blushes she is coldly unhappy. A little while ago she would have taken up the King's challenge. Now — she is unready. She would slip away if she could, anywhere, to escape from His Majesty's looks of love and desire. She has no idea how beautiful she is.

"Will you dance 'Betty Blew'?" asks the King again. "It is a dance I am very fond of because it was taught me by a lady I adore. You know whom I mean?"

"No, Sir."

"A very lovely lady," he says, "the queen of all ladies. She came from Ireland last November was a twelvemonth."

He has led her to a seat by this time, placing her on the left hand of his fauteuil. All the room is prodigiously busy watching Sally and the King. He strokes a fold of her satin gown as he talks, thus displaying a very ostentation and foolishness of love, as though he challenged my Lord Bute, who was in attendance.

"I am talking to that heavenly creature now," he says. "She taught me 'Betty Blew' at the dance o' Twelve-night. There is no other lady in England who would consider as little my being King. I would be loved as man, not King."

"Oh, Sir," says Sally under her breath, feeling herself dreadfully dull and cold before this ardent wooer. If only William Gordon had stayed away from the birthday ball! Why must he come in and spoil everything? "Oh, Sir," she says, and makes an effort to be sprightly. "I have forgotten the Twelve-night ball and the dance of 'Betty Blew.'"

"So have not I," he returns. "I have a very good memory for all that concerns that adorable creature. I have made a pretty new country dance of my own for the queen's birthday. It is to be called 'The Twenty-fifth of February.'"

Sally started and blushed violently. The twenty-fifth of February was her own birthday. My Lord Bute passed by smiling. When my Lord Bute smiled . . . ! Sally would have liked to play with my Lord Bute, whom she detested. But she had not the heart. She had no readiness to reply to the King, who seemed unaware of anything lacking in her.

When it was time for him to leave the assembly he lingered, even returned again and again to say some parting word to her. Such a spectacle of a King in love had not been seen at the court for many a day.

X

My Lord Bute has an attack of the gout. The Duke of Newcastle is coming and going between the duke's uncles and the Princess Augusta. Mr. Pitt makes no sign. Mr. Fox goes out of town for some sea-bathing that is useful in an old disorder of his.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH SALLY STEPS DOWN

I

ALL the world takes it for granted that Sally is to be queen. The courtiers vie with one another as to who is to pay her most court. Lady Barrington, who as a great friend of Sally, laughingly pushes herself before Sally as they go together into the presence-chamber, saying before all the people —

"Look at my beautiful back, for you will not have many more opportunities of seeing it."

It is Mr. Fox's doing that Sally is absent from court for a while, so that by denial the King's passion may be increased. It is glorious June weather; and Sally, in a gown of pink damask with a white fichu sprigged in gold, makes hay in a meadow adjoining the road by which the King takes his morning ride. Lady Susan Fox-Strangways and Stephen and Charles Fox are of the party; but the King sees none but Sally, lovely in

the hay-field, and her laughter follows him as he goes, pelting him, as he says, like a shower of rose-leaves.

Once he dismounts, joins them in the meadow, and forgetting he is a King, makes hay with the merry quartet. He drinks water from the spring out of Sally's hands, pink as sea-shells, and leaves a kiss in the cup. He rests in the shade of trees from the noonday sun. Sally sits on a haycock, His Majesty half reclining on the ground at her feet, his cheek resting on a fold in her damask, while she reads to him the piteous story of the two lovers struck by lightning while hay-making in Somersetshire, with Mr. Pope's elegant epitaph which he composed upon them.

The King turns and asks Sally if she would not like to die so, and when she denies it, he says: "There are too many ready to agree with a King, even in his follies. You would not tell a white lie to please me."

"No," says Sally, "for the one fault I have not got is to depart from the truth."

Afterward they go and drink milk warm from the cow in Lady Caroline Fox's dairy, a very pretty place, lined with white china tiles, a natural stream of water flowing through it, roses and honeysuckle

curtaining the low window and the sweetest smell of fresh cream within it.

After which the King returns on foot to Kensington Palace.

II

On Thursday, June eighteenth, Sally went to court with Lady Kildare. The King looked and was exceeding fond, seeming to desire to let the world know that Sally had him at her feet. He behaved as though he wanted Sally to save him from some peril, seizing her hand, and saying, much to her confusion: "They told me you were to have gone out of town. If you had gone I should have been miserable. For God's sake, think of what I said to Lady Susan Strangways before you went into the country." And again: "For God's sake, think of what I said to Lady Susan, and believe I have an attachment that fire could not burn nor water quench: no, nor time nor death itself have power to alter."

At this point Sally seems to have made up her mind to marry the King; indeed it is pretty certain she accepted him.

She attended two other drawing-rooms, and it was remarked that the King seemed lost for love,

following Sally about, without eyes or ears for any one else. On Sunday, at the Chapel Royal, it was apparent that he heard not one word of the sermon for ogling Sally. One more drawing-room, where the King was followed and spied upon indecently by his sister, the Princess Augusta, and Lady Bute, so that he had no private word, but only a formal greeting of Sally; and her day was come to an end. A little later there is a council, and the King's betrothal to the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg is announced.

The King sends a secret message to Sally that he will love her till he dies, but places the good of his people above his own felicity. Sally does not answer him. She feels he has behaved scurvily; but her heart is untouched. Every one commends her spirit. Even my Lord Bute's party can not mock at her, for she is handsomer than ever and carries her head high, with a light in her eye that defies pity and mockery alike. How explain her? She would have liked to be queen for an adventure, but she would have preferred the throne if it did not carry the King with it. She sings to herself sometimes an Irish song for which Mr. Fox has a disfavor —

"I'll dye my petticoats, I'll dye them red,
Around the world I'll beg my bread
Until my parents shall wish me dead,
Is go dheid tu Mhuirnin slàn."

Mr. Fox says it is a savage thing, only fit for teagues and rapparees. He says that Sally is of that lightness and flexibility of temper and affections that the sickness of her squirrel troubles her more than the loss of a throne. The nursing of it took up all her care and attention, and when, unfortunately, the little creature died, after weeping a day she took into her affections a little hedgehog that she had saved from calamity in the fields, and, absorbed in her pets, she forgot that the town was pitying her.

III

A week after the announcement Sally goes to court and the King, seeing her, falls into a state of the most painful confusion. Sally is very serious and dignified, a mood not at all usual with her; and the King coming to speak with her leaves her, looking so wretched that it is the topic of all tongues.

Will Sally be bridesmaid? That is what every one is asking. She can not be overlooked because

of her rank; and there are bets at White's and Almack's of a hundred guineas on what she will answer to the Lord Chamberlain when he writes asking her desires in the matter.

The invitation duly reached her, and although Lady Caroline Fox was for her refusing, Mr. Fox applauded her spirit when she announced her intention of accepting, saying to her: "Well, Sal, you are the first virgin in England, and you shall take your place in spite of them all as chief bridesmaid; and the King shall repent when he sees your pretty face."

"The little squirrel is dead," reports Mr. Fox to his brother, Lord Ilchester, "and, which is worse, the pretty horse, Beau. Lady Sal, to comfort her, has a young hedgehog, which breakfasted with us to-day. She continues to kiss it very much. She does not seem to miss the prospect of H.M.'s kisses."

IV

After all, Sally is but sixteen — scarcely that. That she should carry herself with such courage and dignity is little short of wonderful; but in those days fifteen was quite a grown-up young lady and ready for marriage and the ruling of a house.

She announces herself to Lady Susan that she has been asked to be bridesmaid.

"My dearest Pussy," she writes, "I have only time to tell you that I have been asked to be bridesmaid, and I have accepted of it. . . . I think it is not to be looked on as a favor, but as a thing due to my rank, a thing of course; then why refuse it and make a great talk? . . . To *him* and his sisters I was, and always will be, as high and grave as possible, for I think the least flirting would ruin my character quite."

Lady Susan is also to be a bridesmaid, and Sally is concerned with the dresses, Lady Sue being in the country.

"I have bespoke you a cheap trimming like mine," she writes — Oh, Sally of the frugal mind! —"as it's long a-getting, and I have ordered a white silk to be laid by for you, also like mine. If anything should put off your coming, pray send a pair of stays for a measure, as the embroidery is to be measured upon them, and that is the longest piece of work."

V

Sally has refused Lord Erroll.

"I'll surprise you when I tell you that Ajax,

even the mighty Ajax, employed begging, prayers and even tears to turn me from my purpose, and I stood it all out for an hour. I could not help crying too at seeing a great man in distress, but yet I did not allow myself to be much moved, for all was in vain.

"Oh, lord, Sue!" she adds, "I nearly forgot to tell you that Charles Fox has written some Latin verses upon you; the purport of them is to desire a pigeon to fly to his love, Susan, and carry a letter from him, and that if it makes haste it will please both Venus, its mistress and him. There now, are you not proud to have your name written in a scholar's exercise?"

VI

Sarah was "chief angel" at the King's wedding, and was beautiful in her white and silver. "Nothing ever looked so charming," said Horace Walpole. "Lady Sarah has all the glow and beauty peculiar to the family. The King could not take his eyes from her; and the dumpy, good little consort, weighted down by the exceeding splendor of her dress, cut a poor figure by Sally, beautiful as Venus, and her flock of doves, the bridesmaids.

"A very awkward incident occurred at the wed-

ding, for Lord Westmoreland, an old Jacobite peer, who had not come to court since the Hanoverian succession but had been persuaded to appear at the King's wedding, being purblind, took Sally for the queen, and went on his knees to her to kiss her hand. Sally, in great confusion, snatched her hand from him.

"'You mistake, sir; I am not the queen,' she said.

"The good little Queen's good-humor saved the situation, for she seemed to find the incident vastly amusing.

"'Ah,' said George Selwyn, 'I am not surprised at my Lord Westmoreland. He always loved a *Pretender.*'"

VII

There is an unrecorded happening in those days. Sally riding her new mare, Fidelle, in Richmond Park one day, comes upon Lord William Gordon whom she had thought far away.

Just in time, for Sally unawares — she never asked any one's advice — had ridden into a herd of deer who at this time were in a dangerous humor, contrary to their usual gentleness. The days are short and the dusk has fallen prematurely

with a London fog. The stags are drawing in upon Sally, belling in an alarming fashion. Lord William, sauntering afoot out of the dusk, is a deliverer to her, for she has lost knowledge of her whereabouts and is riding into a herd, not away from it.

With a greeting as though they met in a drawing-room he seizes Fidelle by the check-strap and turns her head in the contrary direction. Without haste he leads the mare. The fog is thickening, and the stags, baffled by it, have lost sight of Sally and are belling somewhere in the obscurity.

"Now, leap," he says, as the nearest stag is almost upon them.

Fidelle rises and Sally is safe over a fence which she would never have discovered for herself in the dark, on a stretch of velvet sward, with Fidelle's forefeet in somebody's flower-bed. A light shines goldenly through the mist. Lord William helps Sally to alight. As he does so — is it fancy that he holds her in his arms a little longer, presses her a little closer than is necessary?

Sally's wild heart is set beating as no one else has ever made it beat.

"You are very wet," he says, holding Sally by the cold hand. "I did not know the fog was so

wet. Your hand is wet and sweet"—he holds it by his cheek. "This is Sheen Lodge, where Mrs. Wharton lives. She will dry and comfort you and send you home in her coach. I will come with you to make your excuses to your sister."

He gives Fidelle in charge to some one who comes in answer to his call as though he were master of the place, and leads Sally through a hall dimly lit by a fire into a room lit by twenty candles as well as a fire. A little old lady sits by the hearth reading, with great horn spectacles upon her nose. She looks up with a benevolent glance as they come in.

"Is it you, William?" she asks. "It is good of you to come to cheer my solitude. And this young lady? What a lovely thing you have brought me!"

"She is very deaf," says Lord William aloud; "but she understands more than most people who have their hearing."

Mrs. Wharton soon proves the truth of what he has said, for she stands up and passes her hands over Sally's dress and hair, discovering that she is dripping with the wet fog. She calls for her woman, who comes and carries Sally away and dresses her in a pink bed-gown of Mrs. Wharton's,

while her habit is a-drying. Sally never looked to happier advantage than in the loose-fitting jacket, as deep a pink as a country wench might wear — the petticoat of quilted silk to match. She has put on a pair of little pink shoes. Her hair was the wilder and softer because of the rain. The glorious cream and carmine of her complexion was at its richest and clearest. Her diamond ear-drops, which she had no business to be wearing where they might attract wandering cupidity, were not brighter than her eyes. Her lips, softly red as a newly-opened rose, smiled happily over her white even teeth. Her bosom rose and fell and the loose gown, open at the throat, displayed its milkiness.

No wonder that William Gordon looked startled and delighted at this smiling apparition as she came back into the room.

"She is a pretty thing, William," said Mrs. Wharton. "You could not have chosen better."

"She takes it that you are my sweetheart," says William Gordon, his eyes full upon Sally. "There is no use to contradict her. She is very deaf."

"And when is the wedding to be?" the old lady asks, holding Sally by the hand.

Imagining an answer she has not received she wags her head at them and says that she is glad

it is to be so soon, since it will keep Lord William at home.

"Never trust him with those *haliens,*" she says. "A young man should marry in his own country."

Sally does not know whether to cry or laugh. She sits down shyly in the chair Mrs. Wharton has placed for her. There is a high back of red damask to it that sets off finely Sally's cheeks and hair and her gown. She says nothing, but she wonders at the things William Gordon is saying. What does he mean by them? It is not fair to let the old lady take them for lovers. She is wondering, troubled too as to what they will think of the adventure at Holland House. Her sister is sure to be angry. She was against Sally's riding unattended to such distances.

Mrs. Wharton leaves them and they sit in the firelight and talk. Lord William's discretion is what Sally would expect of him. He sets the width of the fireplace between them, yet his eyes cross the space with an expression which, once Sally has seen, she dare not look again. Is it possible that the cousin who fulfilled all her childish dreams of what is best and noblest in man cares for her? For the matter of that — Sally is growing up — she says to herself truthfully that there is a *je ne sais quoi*

about William Gordon which must make her love him even if he were to fall far below her expectations.

He takes the shine out of all Sally's lovers, and they are many. She sits looking dreamily into the heart of the fire. She is wondering if William is still infatuated with the beautiful Roman lady, who, report says, is an angel with a devil of a husband, one so indifferent to her moreover that he does not even care to stick a dagger into the back of a lover.

"So, Sally," says William Gordon suddenly, "I hear that if you had wanted it enough you might be queen instead of the Mecklenburger."

Sally looks down, a picture of lovely confusion, enough to make any man light in the head to see her.

"The King did not know his own mind," she says; "and the Queen is very sweet — kind and gracious, if she is not handsome. She desires me for her maid-of-honor."

"You will not be it," he says in a loud voice which startles Sally.

"Oh, no, I will not be it," she answers, without having any clue to his thoughts. "My brother Fox, whom they have just made Lord Holland, will not hear of it."

"The Queen is either a fool or she is very wise," he goes on in a more moderate voice.

"She is neither a fool nor very wise," returns Sally, "but she is very good. It is as good as beauty and wisdom to have such goodness."

He passed from the subject of the Queen, remarking carelessly that if a woman were so good as all that it might be a reason for a man to be in love with her. "It is moderation that is fatal," he said. "Pretty good, pretty bad, pretty pretty, pretty wise, pretty foolish. It is better to be thorough, little Sally."

Mrs. Wharton came back, preceding a footman with a tray on which was the drink so much in vague among the ladies, the Chinese plant, tea, or tay, with a variety of sweet cakes and cordial waters. She had an evident expectation of finding the lovers engrossed with each other, for she came in with an apology. Presently taking Sally aside while William Gordon played to them on the spinet, for he was very accomplished and had all manner of arts, she said how pleased she was that her boy William, as she called him, was to have such a dear wife.

"I have never had any children of my own," she went on. "Indeed I never married, though as lady-

in-waiting to her late gracious Majesty Queen Anne I had many lovers. I never saw a man I liked so well as William's father, though I did not marry him. And I am glad you have chosen William, my dear, and not George, for George is a hot-headed boy and will be a hot-headed man, whereas I could trust any one with William, he is so tender."

Sally felt herself entirely in agreement with the old lady's sentiments; she tried in vain to make her understand that she was not going to marry Lord William, but gave it up in despair, fearing her denials must reach the player where he sat, his handsome head bent over at the spinet.

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH SALLY HAS HER HEART'S DESIRE

I

SALLY went home in Mrs. Wharton's coach, her cousin riding on the seat with the coachman; and this was a refinement of consideration which made Sally more in love than ever, for she adored such sensibility and delicacy. She was more happy in the dark interior of the coach knowing herself under his care, than the most ardent love-making could have caused her to be. When he assisted her from the coach with an air of the greatest deference, she could not have felt prouder though she had been the queen.

Now Mrs. Wharton, although she lived in retirement, was a person of so much consideration that my Lord Holland was not inclined to blame Sally for an adventure which brought her to such a friendship. Lady Holland, whatever she thought of the adventure, was too rejoiced at having her little sister safely returned to her to complain much

of the one who brought her home in safety. Lord William's infatuation for the Roman lady was well known. It had no taint of the sensual in it. The lady was as devout as she was beautiful and heart-broken by the notorious ill-behavior of her husband. Lord William had a reputation, unique among men of fashion of his day, of an excellent behavior.

He supped at Holland House and the next day returned again to find Sally alone. A young footman showed him in, believing Lady Holland to be at home; she was gone to court; and Sally sat by the fire nursing a cold contracted in yesterday's fog which had ended in a frost, only to become a dripping rain.

II

She was in confusion when Lord William was shown in, being dreadfully conscious of the discomfort of her cold and how her eyes ran and her nose was red and swollen and her voice thick. But the gentleman was not apparently aware of anything disadvantageous in her appearance.

He showed a tender solicitude for her, drawing the screen closer in the warm corner where she sat and her wraps about her throat; and as he did so

his hands inadvertently touched her neck, of which Sally was aware with a tingling shyness.

Strangely enough, as though like drew to like, Lord William seemed somewhat embarrassed on his side and yet excited and eager.

"I have something to show you, Sally," he said, producing a little packet. "That dear old soul gave it to me for you last night. You liked her, Sally, did you not? She was much taken with you and thought your beauty beyond anything she had known."

"She ought to have known me to-day," said Sally, fumbling with her packet.

"I see nothing amiss to-day," he answered, "except a poor child with a cold, which I wish I might have borne myself. Let me help you, Sally."

Their hands met over the packet, and again Sally was aware of a tingling that ran through her from head to foot.

Lord William took possession of the box and opened it. Within lay a string of milky pearls on a satin bed.

"Mrs. Wharton said I was to put them on you, Sally," he said, but Sally drew back. She was frightened and yet delighted. No man had ever

made her feel like this before: and she was afraid of it. He insisted, and tears came in her eyes.

"Poor child!" he said softly, laying the pearls back in their case; and there was that in his eyes which made her feel as though she must run away. She retreated farther back into her corner with an excuse that she found the fire too hot, nearly knocking over her screen as she did so.

"Sally," said he, with a suddenness that took her breath away, "why did you refuse His Majesty?"

She answered with the truth and frankness native to her.

"Why, as a matter of fact, Cousin William, I did not refuse him; the refusal lay with His Majesty."

Her voice shook as she said it, for her pride had been wounded by that which had not had power to wound her heart.

"What?" she went on, with an affected lightness, "have you not heard the gossip of the town, how His Majesty —"

"I am not concerned with gossip," he said almost sternly. "What I do know is the truth. I know that the poor man was head over ears in love

with you, *is* for the matter of that. I do not know how he could resist you. What those qualified to know best are saying is, that with a little polity, anything less than the frankness and truth His Majesty adored in you, you would have been a match for the ministers and the family."

"Lord!" said Sally with a boyish air, "the crown was not worth it."

Lord William smiled.

"Granted, that for Sally the crown was not worth it. Yet she might have found the man worth it. His Majesty is very handsome."

"I never thought of that," said Sally. "If I was civil to His Majesty — I was not always so —'twas to oblige my brother, Fox, who always praised me when the King was pleased. I confess His Majesty behaved very well in one way, if very ill in another. If he deceived me he treated me with honor —" she flushed suddenly and her voice choked. "He never thought of me for anything but the queen of England. He had his counselors ready to talk of an easier way. Cousin William, there was no easier way"— she looked a queen as she said it — "but I will say for him that His Majesty repudiated the suggestion with the scorn it deserved."

"If he had not," said William Gordon fiercely,

"he would have had to answer for it, though he were twenty times King of England."

The greatest sweetness flowed like a wave over Sally's heart at the speech and the manner in which it was uttered.

"I will say to you without boasting, Cousin William," she said, "and I would say it to no other, that if I had cared enough, if I had cared at all, His Majesty would have been mine. I have nothing against His Majesty. There was duplicity, perhaps, inasmuch as he still sought my favor when the marriage with Miss Charlotte of Mecklenburg had been decided upon, but I think he hoped, poor wretch. The Queen is very sweet."

III

At this stage Lord William left Sally abruptly and went away to the other end of the long drawing-room, where he stood by the window looking out at the falling rain and the sodden world outside.

While she waited, trembling, afraid of she knew not what, he came back to her side.

"Sally," he said, and took her hands and bent over her. "Why were you indifferent to His Majesty? Not many girls — I am not saying there is another Sally — could be indifferent to a King,

handsome and young. Sally — was it because your affections were already engaged?"

He had followed her into her corner. He pressed her for an answer, looking into her eyes. At another moment she would have run away from him. Now, overwhelmed with she knew not what feeling, she burst into tears.

"Good God, Sally!" he said, "don't cry. If you cry I shall take you in my arms. Could you love me, Sally?"

He flung himself on his knees and laid his head on her hands. Her tears stopped. What sun had come out, flushing the world with joy? What singing of birds? What delight was heard in the land?

"It was very well I did not win His Majesty," she said very simply. "For if you were to ask me to follow you anywhere over the world, though it were to step down from the throne, I should have to do so. It has always been so with me and always will be. But I never thought you could love me. I have attained the summit of my desires."

"Child!" he answered; and his soberness was quite departed. "You should not so cheapen yourself to me. If your lovely beauty could stoop to one so unworthy — oh, there never yet has been a

frankness and a courage equal to Sally's! — if you could light again the torch of life for one who has dropped it, be content with what another woman has dropped! I thought a while ago that my heart was but the ashes of burnt-out fires."

"We shall light them again," cried she; her hand on his head and she yielding herself to his embrace.

IV.

A little later.

"I thank my fortunate stars," said he, "that her ladyship was abroad and that the mistake of a servant has given me a blessed opportunity, for ladies of your quality, Sally, are not often let alone with a man even if you call cousins with him."

"Oh," said Sally, "for the matter of that I would have run away anywhere to a meeting if I had known you wanted me."

Then he would have Sally tell him when and what exact moment she had begun to love him, and to ask her with a lover's curiosity what there was in him that she should prefer him before the King. At which Sally grew saucy, for she was a creature of many moods and every one a greater delight than the last, and she would not answer him, but played with him, laughing to find him her

captive at last whom she had never hoped to be hers.

She had forgotten her cold, and indeed she never looked more radiant than when she played with him; he called her a laughing goddess and a cruel beauty and his heart's tyrant, while the seriousness which had misbecome his years dropped away from him like a mask.

V

A footman came in with cups of chocolate on a tray which they took and sipped, sitting demurely either side the fire, Sally playing at being a modish fine lady talking scandal over a dish of tea. But presently her mood changed like the wind. He had been interrupting her in her play with his fondness, telling her that his dear old lady, Mrs. Wharton, had been a wise woman else she never could have known that he and Sally were lovers; that he had told her on his fingers it was not so, that Sally would not stoop to his age — he was at this time twenty-five — but that she pretended not to understand, and had left them together for a kindness while she found the pearls for Sally's milky neck for a wedding present.

"Tell me now," said Sally, interrupting him. "I

will never ask you again. Oh, you shall find me generous: I abhor a jealous wife. Have you given up Madame Coronna with all your heart?"

"You have no reason to be jealous, Sally. That angelic woman sent me to you. If she had not detached me from her I should not be here."

VI

It was not altogether what a girl desires to hear from her lover, but Sally had a greater soul than most girls, and if she was dismayed she quickly sent her dismay packing.

"Tell me of Madame Coronna," she said, looking up at him in the firelight; and he thought he had never seen anything lovelier than the gentleness and sympathy of her expression.

"I will tell you about her," he replied in a low voice. "Indeed, I would not ask any woman to marry me until she knew what that adorable woman has been to me. Sally, I thought I was done with love. Child, be content that you have kindled a new fire in the ashes of my heart. She banished me from her and I am here; and she bade me carry her your love and blessing and to tell you you need not grudge the comfort my devotion has proved to a dying woman."

"I only fear," said Sally humbly, "that I shall not satisfy you after her."

Adorable humility! Lord William turned and smiled at her and there was nothing amiss with his expression. She looked up and saw that look and her heart leaped to answer it.

"You should not have left her," she said; and was unaware of her own beautiful generosity.

"I would not," he said, answering her as simply as she had spoken; "but she is incurably ill. She has gone into the Convent of the Spirito Santo to die. It was somewhere I could not follow her. Oh, Sally, if you had seen her face when she talked of dying! They will lay her on a bed of ashes to die. So used kings to go to meet their Creator. I would she might have died on my breast, in my arms."

His voice was suddenly morose, his eyes gloomy. He had forgotten Sally. For the moment the dead or the dying woman had taken back her gift.

VII

Sally kept her secret to herself. Time enough to impart it when her lover wished. She laid away the string of pearls after setting them against her neck before the mirror, her eyes shy because she

felt William Gordon's eyes yet upon them; and kept her secret in her heart. It made her eyes bright and her cheeks bloom beyond comparison, so that Lord Holland, coming in from a council meeting, tweaked her ear and said: "It is well, Sally, you show such roses. What would not Her Little Majesty give for even two out of your garden?"

That evening she sang her wild Irish song —

"I'd sell my rock, I'd sell my reel
I'd sell my only spinning wheel
To buy for my love a sword of steel
Is go dheid tu Mhuirnin slàn."

which Lord Holland held no song for a young lady and smelt rebellion in it, saying Sally was too fond of Irish rogues and rapparees.

She said nothing of Lord William Gordon's visit, but as chance would have it the conversation turned on the family at dinner, Lord Holland saying that there was a drop of the zealot or the madman in all that family. Sally was suddenly confused and drew the banner-screen between herself and the fire as though she found it too hot, but really to have her face in shadow.

"It would be a pity to burn your cheeks, Sal," said my Lord Holland, "seeing that so many fine

gentlemen singe their wings at the light of your eyes."

"What do you mean, Henry?" asked Lady Holland, who was literal-minded. "Do you speak in general, or are you particular?"

"My Lord Erroll, they say, goes about and sighs like a lover," said Lord Holland, with a merry glance at Lady Sarah. "As for Mr. Bunbury, he has not backed a horse these three days, and they say Ruff's *Guide* hath fallen out of his memory. It was the only book he ever affected till he looked in Sally's eyes. Now he says they mean more to him than the Bible."

"For shame, Henry," said his lady. "You should not talk such nonsense. If the young man said it, he should not. Bunbury is extremely handsome; but he smells too much of the stables and he is as hoarse as a groom."

"He has never yet been in love with anything beyond a horse," says my Lord Holland. "Sally would have the first of him, and she would keep him beyond what Newmarket claimed, which would be a good deal. Since Sal is a sporting vargin herself she might not find him amiss. Better have a horse for a rival than a lady."

"That reminds me," said Lady Holland, "that

William Gordon is come to town. They say his flame is dying."

Sally's heart gave one great leap and pulsed furiously in her ears so that she missed somewhat of the conversation. She drew her chair back in the shade of the screen and hoped that her confusion would pass unnoticed while she composed herself to listen.

"To my mind it was a touching thing," said Lady Holland, "and she no longer young."

"Some men would say — some men do say — the more fool he that had nothing for it," said Lord Holland cynically. "'Tis the way of the Gordons to be fools and knights-errant."

Sally's cheeks flamed. She said in a voice that trembled, although she tried to keep it quiet, that for the matter of that all self-sacrifice, all devotion, all poetry and romance were folly to some men; and that for her part she hated the talk of the clubs, which was not fit for ladies' ears.

"Hoity-toity," said Lord Holland, "you will get used to the creatures, Sal, when you have one of your own. Not but what I approve your sentiments. I remember now that you and William Gordon were great friends."

"It would not to do marry him," said Lady Hol-

land, calmly matching the silks for her embroidery. "There would be too much in his past for any woman to endure. I have heard she is a heavenly creature."

"Then the fitter for an angel," said Lord Holland. "They say William Gordon would never have left her if she had not driven him from her by a ruse."

Sally waited, impatient to hear more. But the subject of William Gordon was done with. Lord Holland remembered a good story of what Colonel Barre had said in the House. Sally, palpitating to be alone, so that she might recover herself, took the opportunity of her brother-in-law's laughing excessively to escape to the privacy of her bedchamber; and appeared no more that evening.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH A BLOW FALLS UPON SALLY

I

THE next day Sally rose up with a most lively expectation. Remembering her lover's ardor she felt that he would devise a way of seeing her. How she did not ask herself; and she had forgotten her chill of last night when her sister had spoken about the past Lord William's wife must succeed to. For the matter of that Sally was ready to take the risks. She said to herself that there were things in his life she could never share, dreams, hopes, aspirations which the dead lady would take away with her. What matter! With what was left Sally would be rich enough.

She sang as she dressed herself, taking particular care with the choice of her gown and her ribbons —

"I would I were on yonder hill,
'Tis there I'd sit and cry my fill
Till every tear would turn a mill,
Is go dheid tu Mhuirnin slàn."

The sad song was never sung to a happier countenance.

The day continued wet and she did not go abroad. It was one of those days of January when things seem at their worst, just before the February skies break and the singing of thrushes is heard in the land. Lady Holland had her duties to the Queen — she was one of Her Majesty's wardrobe-women — and she bade Sally be happy and nurse her cold beside the fire, with a posset to sip and *Evelina,* by Miss Burney, a book which was just then setting the town aflame, to read.

At first Sally was in a mood of great cheerfulness. She could not lose herself in *Evelina.* Her own romance was far too much with her at the moment for her to care greatly about the joys and woes of an imaginary heroine, though she kept breaking out into the wild Irish song which had haunted her persistently of late.

She worked at her embroidery frame a while and she played with her dogs. She practised her harpsichord and did a little at her water-color paintting; but nothing was done to her own satisfaction.

II

She sat down to write to Lady Susan Fox-

Strangways; it was something to do while she waited for what the day was sure to bring.

"My dearest Sue,

"I have got a great cold and am very cross so shall not write an agreeable letter. Charles is as disagreeable about acting in our play as can be: he won't learn his part perfect, won't rehearse and in short shows plainly that the reason he won't enter into it is your not being here. In fact

'Charles will not play
Since Susan is away.'

"Stephen's last advice to me is, 'Don't refuse a good match when you can get it and don't go to the play too often.' Knowing me you know how like I am to take his advice. Pray when do you come to town? I will send you a translation of Charles' verses done by an Eaton boy; they are very pretty. I have got a dressed sack, and dear Mr. L'Estorel has dressed my hair *en perfection,* so that it becomes me very well; 'vain thing,' you will say, but I wish you would get one too: it is very pretty. I was at Lady G. Sackville's one night and played at quadrille with Lady Eliza Keppel, Lady Car Russell and Lord Garlise. This is a

queer letter, but it is better than none. I wore my trimming upon garter-blue satin and a white and silver body to it; it was beauteous. There were many fine gowns at the birthday. Lady Northumberland complained that the crowd was so great she could not walk *gracefully*.

"Oh, lord, only think that I should have forgotten to tell you about Lord Newbattle. I have come off very well I think; you shall hear. Louisa showed him my letter and he read it, and said he thought I was vastly in the right for that he must own it would be a foolish match for us both, but that he was very glad to find I had a regard for him; for he was sure he had never behaved ill to me and was glad to see I did not believe all the stories I have heard of him. He sent his *respects* to me and assures me he is very much obliged to me for my regard and that he agrees with me quite about it, but hopes we shall be very good friends. At the same time he told Louisa he would keep out of my way for fear of being in love with me. He told her he had lived in a kind of hell to forget me. 'After all,' says he, 'it is much better as it is, for I should have made a d——d bad husband.' All this you will allow is very proper and right, is it not? I sent him my compliments, thanked

him for his regard and assured him of mine. So it is well over.

"As for Mr. B.——"

III

At this point Sally flung her letter into a drawer of her bureau to finish another time. While she had been writing it her mind had stood quite outside it, debating the likeliness of Lord William's coming in the morning or the afternoon. The afternoon would be more correct, but he was not like to be bound by correctness. It had seemed hard for him to tear himself away last night. It was mostly likely he would come at the earliest possible moment.

The Paris clock on the writing-table ticked out eleven silvery strokes. Perhaps he would not come till the afternoon, and yet any moment might bring him. Where she sat she could hear the great knocker of the hall-door. It had sounded for various reasons some half-dozen times, each time flinging her into such an excitement that the beating of her pulses in her ears would not let her hear. Once the footman had brought in a note, and she had been so much discomposed that she had scarcely been able to give an answer. While she

had been writing to Lady Susan her ears had been on the stretch for a rat-tat. And with all this "caccle," as she called it — Sally was not much of a hand at spelling — she felt she was deceiving her friend. They had no thoughts from each other. What would Lady Susan think if she knew that while Sally was "caccling" her mind was full of a matter so momentous to herself?

As for "Mr. B——" —what was the good of telling Sue about him, since he was as hopelessly over and done with as "Prince Prettyman" himself? She would not finish the letter to her friend till she could tell her what was in her head and her heart.

She smiled, remembering that her last letter to Lady Susan, written after a visit she had paid to Lady Ilchester, was full of sage counsel upon the imprudence of a *mésalliance*. Lady Sue's theatricals had brought her in touch with a most vivacious and agreeable but impossible Irishman, Mr. William O'Brien. Her mother had been vexed with Lady Sue's preference for this gentleman, seeing that the Duke of Gloucester and Mr. Charles Fox were among her lovers, and Sally had been prevailed on to advise her friend against the dangerous Irishman. To be sure she had found it easier because her in-

clinations were toward her friend's favoring her nephew Charles' suit. Sally was very fond of Charles Fox, and thought his dark and lively countenance, his wit and sparkle and the brilliancy of his mind, much preferable to the amiable Irishman, whom she hoped Lady Sue would not have the madness to consider seriously.

Now she smiled to herself at the picture of Sally a preacher of prudence — Sally, who was willing, nay, eager, to take what the world would call another woman's leavings. As for fortune, Lord William would have but the slender provision of a younger son while Sally's fortune depended on the favor of her brother, the duke. How Sue would turn the tables upon her!

IV

Although impatient she kept her heart high with hope while the morning turned round to afternoon. A day of incessant rain, the drip-drip from the boughs and eaves, the forlorn and sodden lawns, the dejected flower-beds, the misery of everything out-of-doors, seemed to oppress her with some bitter foretaste of a more dreadful day to be. It was a day for any but lovers to keep to their houses; and no one came while the short afternoon waned

to darkness. The stir of the great house did not reach Sally in her drawing-room. No coaches or chairs came with visitors for Lady Holland; and of that Sally was glad. It would have been mightily inconvenient if visitors should chance when my Lord William arrived: and Sally was glad the wet day made them disinclined to venture forth.

She imagined a fog over London, a fog creeping from the river and the marsh-lands about Westminster and joining with the London smoke to make a strange night of the streets, where the watch went about with lanterns and the link-boys ran with lights to keep unhappy wayfarers from slipping into a drain or the river, or being overcome by footpads. Immediately she was alarmed for her lover. If he should have set out on foot early in the morning to make his way to Kensington and had wandered into the river or some other danger! She was wild with fear. Why, he might be lying dead under the dripping ooze of river-mud and water-weeds for all she could tell. What was she to do? How get into touch with Lord William to know that he was safe?

A footman came in with her dish of tea. "Tell me, Thomas," she said. "Do you suppose there is a fog in the town?"

"It is more than likely, M'lady. The sky is very dark that way."

"A bad fog, Thomas?"

"Very like, M'lady."

While they spoke a sudden rat-tat sounded on the hall-door knocker and Sally's heart leaped out of its heaviness. Oh, it was he, it was he! The revulsion was so great that for the moment she was quite overset. She stood clasping and unclasping her hands, half-way between the door and the fireplace, while the young country footman, who was in love with Sally as all male creatures were, hurried to admit the visitor. Sally would have boxed his ears if she could have known his thoughts. Watching the door, her joy so over-leaped itself as to fall into a sort of disgust. She was not sure she wanted William after all. What a day of suffering it had been!

It was only the exhaustion of certainty after doubt. She heard the caller admitted. Thomas had left the door ever so slightly ajar and she was in the drawing-room nearest to the hall. She felt a cold fresh wind come in and heard the murmur of a deep masculine voice. She stood a picture of expectancy, her hand pressed upon her side where her heart was leaping.

The door opened.

"Oh, so you have come at last!" she cried, running toward the door in a whirlwind. Perhaps she had not said it; perhaps she had only thought it. Would she parade her passion before a servant?

"Mr. Bunbury!" said the footman.

Sally's leaping heart was suddenly quiet.

V

Mr. Bunbury came in with a timid air, which changed to one of delight as he observed Sally's appearance of expectancy and that she was alone.

"It is the very height of good fortune that I should find you, Lady Sarah," he began.

But Sally had no art to conceal her tears. She was only sixteen, although so much was expected of her. All of a sudden she seemed to have known always that he would not come. He might be dead or drowned. God knows what had happened. It was enough for Sally that he was not coming, would never come. Tears, large and liquid, formed in her eyes and ran down her cheeks; while the comely youth who had caused the catastrophe stood staring at her, with such an expression of dismay as Sally would have found comical at any other

moment. Just now she was too dejected, too miserable, to laugh at anything.

"Good lud, Lady Sarah, what is it?" asked the astonished young man.

"I wish you would go away," said Sally. "I wish you had not come. It is very forward of you, seeing my sister is abroad. I do not entertain visitors alone."

"Good lud!" said Mr. Bunbury. "Yet I could, without being a coxcomb, have sworn that you were glad to see me. Your whole air showed it."

Sally went and leaned by the mantelpiece, her head among the Dresden shepherds and shepherdesses, by the Sèvres clock and candelabra. She only answered Mr. Bunbury's remark by an indignant shrug of her shoulders. She had put on her prettiest frock, a Pompadour sacque of white paduasoy sprigged with rosebuds, over a petticoat of scarlet satin. Her finery somehow enlightened him.

"Oh," said he in an unwilling voice. "'Twas some other buck you waited for and I am the unluckiest man alive to have come in his stead."

Sally wept on, too depressed even to pity the young man. He showed no sign of going, but

stood moodily contemplating her averted head and heaving shoulders. His own figure reflected in a mirror confronted him. The glass showed a very pretty fellow, in a coat of dark blue laced with silver, and white breeches. His face was really charming. In fact the delicacy of its oval, the regularity of the features, the large eyes, the curling brown hair, the sweetness of the mouth, narrowly escaped being feminine. But there was a *je ne sais quoi* about the young man, even apart from his fine manly figure, which made it absurd to think of him as anything else but a very manly fellow.

"Shall I find your flame for you, Lady Sarah?" he asked in a freezing voice. "If I were but acquainted with his name I should fly."

He had hardly meant it, speaking out of the bitterness of jealousy; but Sally's tears suddenly ceased to flow. She turned to look at him, careless of the disfigurement of her features caused by the tears: hope flickered like a firelight over her face.

"It is my cousin, Lord William Gordon," she said timidly. "I expected him to-day and he has not come. I was afeard he might be drowned in the fog."

"But there is no fog."

"I thought there was a fog and Thomas the

footman thought it very like. Those creatures always agree. Since he has not come I was afeard something had happened to him. It has been a long lonely day."

Sally's simplicity fairly baffled the young man. His handsome face cleared. He remembered to have heard that Sally had been brought up with her cousin. It was common talk that he was bound hand and foot to the Roman lady, Madame Coronna. Was it likely he and Sally should be lovers?

"If it would give your mind any relief," he said, and looked at the clock, "I could get news of him within the space of an hour or two. He lodges in Westminster — does he not?"

"At 9 Barton Street, close to the Dean's Yard."

She looked at this other lover of hers, her face steadily brightening. She had been vaporish, foolish. How had she come to make such an exhibition of herself? She mopped her eyes with her handkerchief to wipe away the tears, and her smile came out sweetly like sunshine after rain.

"That will be vastly obliging of you," she said; while to herself she sighed her relief that she would not have a night to pass in ignorance of what had kept William Gordon from her side.

She gave Mr. Bunbury her hands to kiss and he went. She felt that she had never liked him so well as when the door closed behind him. How handsome he had looked as he had stood there, frowning and shy. He was much handsomer than William Gordon, whose countenance was marred by a fine network of lines and the tragic sharpness of his features. Although, of course, there never could be any man but William for her.

VI

Sally waited long for her message and was silent and abstracted through dinner and after dinner, when she and Lady Holland, Lord Holland and Charles played at ombre.

They had no clue to her gloom. She had said nothing of Lord William's visit to her the preceding day, and the young footman, palpitating with jealousy though he was, had spared to comment even to the servants' hall on the length of time Sally and Lord William had been closeted together.

He could have told the secret of Sally's gloom if he would. He watched her as he handed the dishes at supper and made up the fire in the drawing-room afterward, with a somber and intense

gaze which would have amazed and shocked Sally if she had only comprehended it.

There was another sore heart in the servants' hall, for Jane Tranter from Banbury, the third housemaid, who was in love with Thomas, cried her eyes out in bed at night, vastly incommoding the servant who shared her room by the intensity of her sighs and sobs, because Thomas was unhappy and had lifted his eyes so high when there was a faithful heart in Jane's breast ready to give him its all. He was unaware even that Jane tried to dress her coarse mane of hair in imitation of Lady Sarah's beautiful tresses; that she tried to copy Lady Sarah's gestures before the glass; that she practised saying "La!" and "Good lud," in the manner of Lady Sarah. So lamentably had the poor girl failed in her efforts to please him.

VII

Sally had time for a sick certainty of a night of suspense before she was put out of pain.

She went to bed early, complaining of a headache. It was taken as a natural consequence of her cold, and the others bore with her pettishness and silence, Lord Holland remarking that if Lady Sarah was not better Green must be called in, as he was

sure she had a fever the night before from the brilliance of her cheeks and the brightness of her eyes.

Escaped to her own chamber she found Jane Tranter replenishing the fire.

"There are two notes for you, M'lady, laid on your table. Thomas gave them to me. They have but arrived. Shall I send your ladyship's woman?"

"I shall not need her to-night," Sally answered, palpitating till she had locked the door upon Jane Tranter and was alone. How fortunate it was the notes had not reached her with all the eyes upon her! She had no idea of the humble devotion which had spared her that ordeal.

She untwisted the first letter, taking the second and thrusting it into her bosom. She thought she perceived in the first the faint odor of the stables which Mr. Bunbury was never without. She held it delicately away while she read it.

"He is not at his lodgings. I was assured he had left London for Dover this morning to embark on the French packet-boat."

Sally, with wide eyes, stared at the letter.

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH SALLY SEES A GHOST

I

LADY HOLLAND knocked at Sally's door later on and was not admitted. She concluded the girl to be asleep, and left her in peace for the night, but being informed by the French maid in the morning that her mistress would not rise, she climbed the stairs to Sally's room, a pleasant room from the windows of which one could look away over the river to the hills of Surrey.

She found the door unfastened and went in. Sally lay with her face to the wall. Lady Holland bent over her and the girl's face of dull wretchedness shocked her kind heart. What could have happened to Sally, brightest of the bright, who had cared more for a squirrel's sickness than the crown of England?

Lady Holland had never had a daughter of her own. The young sister, scarcely older than her own sons, was very dear to her. She bent to Sally and strove to turn the desolate face to her bosom

with murmurs of tenderness that softened the ice of the girl's heart. Sally, at last, with a long shiver, turned to the comfort and began to weep.

It was some little while before Lady Holland extracted the full story from her, and then she spared to utter any reproaches for Sally's concealment of Lord William's visit. Indeed, she did not think of it as showing want of candor, a thing it would be hard to attribute to Sally, who, if she had a fault, erred on the other side of a too great frankness. She attributed the silence rightly to Sally's shyness over what was really her first love-affair, and the suddenness with which Lord William's offer had been made.

"Alas, my poor Sal," she said, having brought the girl to something like reason, "was I not right in saying that a woman would have much courage to marry a man with such a past? The marchesa, every one is agreed, is an angel and yet is liable to hold her lovers like a devil. I can not be sorry my little sister will not have such a rival in her husband's heart."

Sally let her take the letters from her hands, and read them through. Lady Holland first read Lord William's letter, and shook her head over it as she read.

"MY HONORED AND SWEET COZ:

"Last night I saw a chance of happiness, after years which have been half exquisite sweetness, half torture. I thought I could begin again and forget in your young beauty and grace the chains which have bound me, which I never could have broken of myself. Alas, my child, that dream is no longer possible. The lady who sent me to you has need of me. I must be hers while she lives and I live. She deceived me about the convent. She only desired to set me free, since she was so long a-dying. God help her, she asked my pardon because she was so long. She has gone back to her husband. It is murder, just murder. No woman could endure a life with that monster, much less she, the most delicate and sensitive of creatures and dying by inches. I go to her as I must always go to her if she needed me. She has not sent for me. It is the last thing she would do. Oh, Sally, if I were in your embraces I should have to go for her lightest call. She can not set me free so easy as she thought and I thought. I did you wrong, my child, but I might have done you a worse wrong. Forget and forgive me.

"Your most unhappy cousin,

"WILLIAM GORDON."

Lady Holland was troubled. She wished that he had not written. It was a letter to appeal to a noble and romantic nature like Lady Sarah's.

"You must think no more of him, Sal," she said; and then she fell to commending Bunbury's behavior.

"Are you not touched, Sal?" she asked. "What devotion! What unselfishness! A lover to go seek a lover! He is very handsome, as handsome a gentleman as ever I saw."

"He smells of the stables," said Sally ungratefully, and turned away her head. Her pride was sorely hurt.

II

Two months later she had begun to consider Mr. Bunbury, who had acted his part well, if indeed one can talk of acting a part when his conduct was the result of natural good-heartedness. While Sally was in the first bitterness of losing her lover he kept away; after a time he came quietly back, when his manner was admirable, as Sally was forced to acknowledge, for while it was obvious to all the world that he was her slave yet he asked nothing in return.

The day came when Sally asked herself whether, having been ill-treated by two men, she could not find a measure of content in the third who adored her. Indeed, it was true that Bunbury was very handsome. The girls raved about him, while Sally protested peevishly that she did not love a beauty man.

Perhaps she was decided by Lady Car Russell's attempt to detach him from her. These two girls must always be antagonists. She began to look a little more kindly on his suit — to think of it as just possible. No word had come from Rome and they did not know that a tragedy had befallen there.

Just before Christmas, 1761, Sally writes to her confidante, Lady Sue. It was a moment when she was fractious, sick to death of love and lovers.

"I find I forgot to answer your last in regard to Mr. B——. He has (what is called) followed me constantly since I have been in town. I have not put myself in his way (d'ye takę me?), for at Leicester House (*en présence de ma sœur*) I changed places three times and he followed me; at night I went with my sister to the play; there was he in the front boxes, and came at once to my

house and corner; this you will allow is *particular*. My sister, who is quick at these sort of things, will have it that I shall have to answer his declaration immediately, but I think not; and why? Because that talking of people who married for money and rank and so forth, he said he had the comfort to think that if he married a fine lady she would love him vastly, for that he was so poor she must live on love and bread-and-butter with him. This I took as a hint he did not intend to ask me in spite of all that has gone by, and told him I thought he had much better not marry in a hurry, as he would not easy meet with such a person. At this he looked blank or angry or both, and I, I know, was very cross, so he departed after a farewell of freezing politeness, and I have not seen him since.

"His conversation is usually loud and on indifferent subjects. He cares nothing for the arts. Of poetry I dare swear he has not read a line. But he knows as much of a horse as any jockey at Newmarket, and the dogs adore him. And, oh, Sue, he *is* handsome, and though he has no fineness of conversation and is unlettered as any pretty fellow of them all, he did show himself both delicate and sensible in the matter you know of. He is a young

man of parts, honest at heart, and I would wish to see him married to my dearest friend.

"He has *free access* to this house by coming to see Stephen and talking politics with Lord Holland.

"Adieu. If I see him before I send this I will write more, and if he says no more he is, according to my brother Holland, 'a shabby dog.' No more or no less, for I am not sure what he means nor what I mean. My sister says he meant a *kind of offer*. What do you think? Do not show this to any one. I don't know what I should say if he asked me outright.

"Pray in your answer call him the marquis, which is my name for him. He is so like a marquis in a French story-book that I delight in him. He is the prettiest French marquis ever was seen.

"Lord Shelbourne is here *caccling*, so I can write no more."

III

On June second Sally was married to Mr. Bunbury in the private chapel of Holland House, and went at once to her father-in-law's house at Barton, Suffolk.

IV

Sally likes Barton vastly and has seen but few

of her neighbors, who let her go her own way, which she finds very comfortable. The country has hills not steep enough to make good walking —she has a fancy for breasting hills like a young pony — but good enough to be pretty. Yet she sighs for the Irish mountains as she remembers them from her brother Kildare's house at Carton; and there are times when she finds herself singing the Irish song which made Lord Holland swear lest he should weep —

"Since my lover said adieu,
I have roamed the wide world through,
To heal the heart he broke in two,
Is go dheid tu Mhuirnin slàn."

She is soon caught into her husband's pursuits, and reports to Lady Sue —

"I must now tell you about Newmarket while it is in my head, and I will write about the fair when it is over. The Duke of Cumberland won two matches, and the Duke of Grafton a plate with a vile horse. Magpie ran and was beat. I saw him in the morning with his horses; 'tis a dear soul. I lost my money. All the men wish you was here; whatever I talk about they say, 'Pray tell us something of Lady Sue'; nothing ever was like it.

"I've been teaching dear Poll. He says already: *Avez-vous dejeuney?* quite pretty. My brother George has come and I have left him to tell club stories and Mr. B—— to listen to them while I write. I have written a great deal of *small talk,* as Mercadiie hath it; and so your servant."

V

In October of that year Lord Holland is offered by Lord Bute the secretaryship of state and the leadership of the House of Commons. He declines the former, but accepts the latter. Sally writes to Lady Sue —

"Before I begin about the fair, let us talk of that incomprehensible thing, politics. Is not your uncle a goose for preferring the hurry and bustle of this new place to his own nonsensical quiet life? . . . To tell you about the fair, in short words I hate it all, and am tired to death. Sally has the vapors. She has headaches, heartaches. She lies down in a darkened room, and her pretty good man, with creaking shoes and the odor of the stables, comes in and lays his hand on Sally's brow. He will talk baby-talk. 'How is 'oo to-day?' he says, and Sally has to bite her lips to keep from scream-

ing. If only for one day he would not talk nonsensical I could love him! Is not Sally a wretch?

"But to the fair, which you will expect to hear about. And after all, Sally has not always the vapors and her good man is very kind, more than she deserves, poor girl. In primis, my Lord Orrery is with us and went to the assembly; he is an agreeable sensible man and I like him vastly. Lord and Lady Petre, Mrs. Howard and many others of that lot are here; I danced with Lord Petre, and he is a nasty toad, for I longed to spit in his face! (Oh, Sally!) I was very civil, however, to the rest, who I liked very well, so tell Mrs. Digby of my good deeds, not my bad ones, for 'twas because of the Duchess of Norfolk I did not proceed to extremities with my partner. Your ladyship's health was drunk by Mr. Rookwood Gage and young Metcalf, who is in love with you."

VI

It will be obvious to those who know anything about Sally that at the time of writing this letter she was ill at ease. Indeed, it was the prelude to a somewhat bad breakdown in her health, by which Mr. Bunbury lost his hope of an heir. Not even to her dearest Sue did Sally confide the innermost

secrets of her heart. But her diary, kept with more or less assiduity, enlightens us.

"On October third," she writes, "I was walking in Kensington Gardens on my way to see my sister at Holland House. It was a stormy afternoon, and the leaves were drifted down with the gale; there was a piercing rain with every gust, so that few town ladies cared to be abroad. But I am not a town lady, and never shall be; and there was something in my humor that was in tune with the wild heavens and the weeping wind. Oh, I have a prevision of rains yet to be: and I am *désolée.* Why should Sally be *désolée,* with a young handsome husband to adore her, the dearest of homes and many delights? Mr. B—— was enjoying himself at Newmarket and elsewhere. I had sat at home at Barton as long as I could endure it; but my poor devil of a horse was as lame as a dog, and while the gentlemen were abroad coursing, hunting and doing every pleasant thing on earth, I sat at home fretting and fuming, insufferably *ennuyée* with a parcel of dull women. They told me for my comfort that I should have to sit at home more and more for some time to come, which was a pretty prospect for poor Sal, who was abroad whatever weather there was, and liked nothing bet-

ter than a hard day after the hounds and to come home 'dhreeped,' as the dear Irish say, but happy and hungry.

"I was in that mood of discontent that I relaxed the vigilance I had observed over my thoughts since I became a wife; all of a sudden my sky was obscured, and the whole world dreary for William Gordon. Perhaps it had always been so only that I would not let it come into sight.

"Suddenly, far down the vista of the broad walk I saw a figure approaching, the air and the walk of which made me feel faint for a moment and then yield myself to an overmastering and careless passion of delight, forgetting that I owed duty elsewhere and sinned in yielding to such transports. I had often been deceived before. More times than I can recall my heart has leaped up at the turn of a head, a distant view of a figure that was like his. Yet I think all the time I deceived myself wilfully in so far as I knew that if he really came I should have no doubt.

"It was he. As he came closer I saw the ravages that some intolerable grief had made in his face.

"'Oh, Sally!' he said and held out his hand. I put mine into it and his was as cold as marble. He

sighed, and it was the sigh of one whose heart is broken.

"'Oh, Sally,' he said, 'are you not sorry for me?'

"I did not know what he meant, but I guessed that Madame Coronna must be dead. I forgot everything but that he was the one love of my life and he was in bitter grief.

"'Come and tell me,' I said, drawing him with me to the little tea-house in a glade of the gardens, deserted now that winter was upon us.

"'Tell me all,' I said; and I held his hand in mine, which was warm from the muff. I felt that I wanted to warm and shelter him; to comfort him would be enough; I did not think of myself.

"'You heard of that dear martyr, Sally?' he said. 'Of her dreadful death?'

"He sobbed as he said it with his head turned away, and I knew the dreadfulness of a man's tears.

"'I have heard nothing,' said I. 'Nothing since you left me.'

"'But the news went everywhere,' he returned, staring. 'It was in May he killed her. She always knew he would kill her. He broke in with his murderers one night to her villa among its gardens. We were off-guard, for he had been re-

ported to be sick to death — a lie to blind us. She was stabbed from head to foot. She lived long enough to see a priest, to forgive her murderers, to bid me come to you and be happy, a thousand times happier, she said, because I had been an unhappy woman's one friend. Oh, Sally, there were tongues even to blacken that whiteness; but she was pure as an angel in Heaven. No man could have an unworthy thought of her. She was a woman for a man to adore selflessly, to serve with his life if needs be, but never, never to smirch with an unworthy passion.'

"I felt as though I were turned to stone. I had not heard the news. How I came not to have heard, God knows. Among those nearest there was a conspiracy of silence. How I failed to hear it by chance was one of the strange happenings of life. At the time I had married Mr. Bunbury William had been free to come to me. God knows I could have waited till he had outlived the first grief and horror. Now it was too late.

"'Was it not piteous?' he asked, as piteous himself as a child.

"'It was most dreadful,' I answered, moistening my dry lips. I felt that I must present a disordered aspect, but perhaps I did not.

"'How sweet you are!' he said, 'with your hair ruffled by the wind and the rain on your cheek.'

"Then I knew that I could have made life over again for him: and it was too late. I had to tell him.

"I think I must have sighed the heaviest sigh that ever was heard, for he spoke to me tenderly.

"'Poor child,' he said, 'do I oppress you with my griefs? I was on my way to look for you, Sal. I only landed two days ago. I've been creeping about in the sun trying to get rid of that horror. I think I am my own man again. If Sally would but put out her little warm fingers to help me, to save me, why, I might begin to live again.'

"I do not know how I broke it to him that I was married; but in his anger, his despair, I learned at last that I should have had nothing to fear from the poor dead lady.

"I will not dwell upon it, the storm which broke upon us and by which we were bent. I can feel the rain on my face still, or was it his tears? I think I was mad. He did not ask me to go with him, or I should have gone, forgetting duty and honor and love and the excellent religious principles in which I was brought up . . . !

"I have been very ill. Now I am well again,

only very cross and sick of the world. My husband is patient when he is with me, and he is not angry because his hopes have been disappointed. He cried over the little creature, and I had no tears. I look at his young smooth face. Many women would adore him; when I can bear with him I am very fond of him. But he is much away. Perhaps he had no real need of a wife. His dogs and horses are enough. Oh, fatal second of June! Oh, unhappy Sally!"

CHAPTER X

FROM SALLY IN TOWN TO SUSAN IN THE COUNTRY

I

SALLY is too wholesome a creature to keep crying for the moon. Mr. Bunbury perhaps finds out that he is neglecting his lovely wife. He is going to Lord Orford's, and Sally goes with him — "Though my heart is broke," she says, "I die to go coursing."

She has her animals and she has some ambitions left. Mr. Bunbury desires to be appointed Irish Chief Secretary. How they would have adored Sally — that nation which adores beauty and wit and breeding and grace, and snaps its fingers at money-bags! He was appointed three years later by Lord Weymouth, but the ministry went out before they could embark: Lord Rockingham's party came in and the appointment fell through.

II

"My dear Lady Sue,—

"I will answer your delightful silly letter,

for silly it is to be sure, but you know 'tis not the worse, but the better for that in my opinion. As to politics, I have renounced them and their vanities, for 'tis only wishing for what one can't have and expecting that one don't get. The short of the moral is that I am mad to think there is no likelihood of my being *Madame la Secretaire*. Let me tell you of two events that have happened in the sporting way. Snap is given away, because he was not a good dog, forsooth. Pray scold Mr. B—— when you see him, for 'tis a burning shame. The next is that I have a dog and a horse lent me, both of which I purpose keeping by good or bad means. The horse Mr. Vane lent me, and is without exception the dearest thing I ever saw, though 'tis not handsome nor a bred one: in short, every one says I ought to keep it, and indeed I think so and intend to do so. The dog is a spaniel so like Rose 'tis taken for her by all the servants, but though its person is like, its education has been such that he is as clever as Le Chein Savant, for, put a dozen things together, he will bring what you bid him, provided 'tis what he had heard the name of before.

"I have begun my dear plantation by the garden wall, and it's a beautiful creature: I have planted all the trees you bid me and others that I have

thought of. I have fished out two cedars as high as a chair, and they flourish charmingly: is not that a treasure?

"I had a letter from Mr. B.'s aunt, Mrs. Handasyde, in which she tells me that Princess Augusta walked all about the palace with a Miss Holland who lives with Mrs. Handasyde. She asked her what Mrs. Handasyde's name was before her marriage. 'Bunbury,' says Miss H. 'She was a sister of Sir William Bunbury.' Princess Augusta: 'I think I have seen a Miss Bunbury at court. I think I know the family.' Miss H.: 'Sure Your Royal Highness must have heard of Mr. Bunbury who married Lady S. Lennox,' at which Miss Augusta colored up so violent, looked so angry and gave no answer, that Miss H., poor girl, was like to be in hysterics. Did you ever hear of such a toad as 'tis?

"I have been a-hunting with Mr. Verney, and I hunted twelve miles one day, which tired me to such a degree that I was as *sick as a dog;* and though I had not eat enough to keep life and soul together, for 'twas not a bit since eight o'clock till six at night, I could not even touch a sausage, but went straight to bed. That has cured me of being out so long, but not of going for one chase or two,

which I would do this minute but that this devil of a frost hinders me, so Mr. B—— and I sit scolding and grumbling, he because he can't course, and I because I can't hunt, and that I fear 'twill kill my dear cedars. That is the present state of affairs in this house."

III

The next letter is from Holland House. Sally has been to court.

December 24th, 1762.

"I went last Thursday to court through an immense mob and like to be killed in my chair, and when I arrived I met the Queen coming out, but no King, for he went to the House of Lords in his odious fine coach, which created a greater mob than the coronation. This put me too much out of humor to bide there, but I went to-day and I was graciously received by His Majesty. The King asked me if I had not had fine weather all the summer. 'Yes,' said I, and that was all. I went to see the little arrival, and I kissed it, for 'tis a beautiful, strong, handsome child, and my sister said it was wrong to kiss it, and the nurse reprimanded me for calling it a *child,* and said it was a fine young *prince.* But for politics I might have

been its mother; and then it would have been handsomer.

"The Duchess of Grafton was there too, and having left red and white quite off, she is one of the coursest brown women ever I saw: her person is better though. Mrs. Digby, with her usual goodness, says you are so altered that she is afraid you have quite lost your complexion, etc., but she was in the wrong box, for neither my sister nor me saw the least alteration in you. Lady Garlise and Lady F. Harper were there together, both in white and silver, both powdered, both little and prettyish, in short, they looked like two little fairies. Mr. Pitt has the gout and soar throat and a fever.

"I've told you everything I could think of, and if you're diverted I'm satisfied. My brother Holland is hurrying me to death to get out of his chair in which I am sitting and writing, so adieu."

IV

"Holland House, Wednesday,
December 30th, 1762.

"My dearest Lady Susan,

"I would not write as I had nothing to say before now.

"My sister bids me tell you you must not wear

such a pretty cap as a pearl one in the country and forbid my ordering one (for I can't make it). I easily agreed to it, for the duchess had taken my cap for a pattern, but now that Lord Shelbourne is going to the Bath and may chance to see you I will order it.

"My sister has got Lord Albemarle's picture, all in panoply. Is not that charming?

"I wish you would come to town, but I fear ye charms of Somersetshire will keep you longer than I wish you to stay.

"Charles Fox came to the play last night, *coiffé en ailes de pigeon* and powdered.

"*J'ai soupé avec Monsieur de Nivernois, Monsieur d'Usson, etc., etc., chez Monsieur d'Aubigné l'autre jour. Madame la Duchess n'a pas dit un mot de François. On m'assure que Monsieur d'Usson est charmé de moi. Je dois passer une semaine à Goodwood avec lui et beaucoup d' autres: il y a ici un gentilhomme, Monsieur Drungoold, né en Irelande, mais qui a passé sa vie en France; il me fait mille compliments.*

"*Adieu, Mademoiselle! Je me suis épuisée en nouvelles, et it faut avouer que vous n'avez jamais reçu me lettre plus vraiment possédée que cellec-y de vottre très obéissante amie.*"

V

"Holland House, January 4th, 1763.

"Thursday Night.

"DEAR LADY SUE,

"Sitting by the quadrille-table where Mrs. Greville, Charles, Lord Holland and my sister are playing, you must expect to hear about their games: my sister has just won a mediator vole in favorite in the double tour. She bids me tell you she is vastly tired of not seeing you. Mr. Bunbury is gone to Woburn, and I am called the widow, and my brother Holland exercises his wit upon the occasion. This cold weather keeps him very weak. Pray, are you absorbed in thought or reading or what, for you never favor your friends with your news."

VI

Sally spends a great part of that year in town, either at Holland House or a little house of her own at Westminster: by October she is back again at Barton, with more leisure for her correspondence and with a prospect of returning to town, since Mr. Bunbury must attend the winter session of parliament. She is really enjoying the country life,

although she gives that rustic, Sue, some London news, beginning her country tale —

"Mr. Garrick (sweet soul) is gone for some time to Italy: the playhouse goes on the same and has only some additional forces, particularly a Mr. Powell who, I hear, is a very good recruit for tragedy — and Foote — in short, it will flourish very well for one winter till that angel comes back.

"You have made a mighty pretty discovery, Miss, truly —'I can think there is happiness in ye country with a person one loves.' Pray now who the devil would not be happy, with a pretty place, a good house, good horses, greyhounds, etc., for hunting, so near Newmarket, what company you please in ye house and two thousand pounds a year to spend? Add to this that I have a settled comfortable feel that I am doing so right that all my friends approve me and are with me as much as possible; in short, that I have not one single thing on earth to be troubled about *on my own account.* Pray now, where is the great oddity of that, or the wretch who would not be happy?

"Now for news! Of Suffolk it must be, for I know no other. Newmarket was charming: all the charming men were there. Dear Mr. Meynell lost sums of money on a horse of my brother's, beat

by ye little mare Hermoine, of Mr. Calvert: its name was Goodwood and got by Brilliant: but I hear he has made up all his losses again at cards at Euston, where the duke and all the Newmarket set are: he, *a fat wretch,* has won everything on earth; poor dear Mr. Greville has lost: Sir John Moore has lost near five thousand pounds between Quinze and horses. Lord Orford has taken to hawking larks; it's pretty if 'twas not so cruel, for the hawks are *little, little* things and very tame.

"I must just tell you one thing that will divert you. Lord Villiers, that little toad, pretends to be seriously in love with me: he is a very good actor, for his *likeness* never made better love, or rather looked it better (for I insisted on his not speaking whether in joke or earnest); he is so like him when he makes *les yeux doux* and sighs, it is quite ridiculous: you would be in love with his looks, I assure you."

Lord Villiers' love-making doubtless was modeled on the King's. Sally's heart, or pride, are long healed of that wound. If all else were as well with her!

VII

There was a deal of play-acting at Holland House, with other diversions, in the winter of 1763–4, and Lady Sarah and Lady Susan were among the bright particular stars of the drama. Horace Walpole was a frequent guest, and writes —

"I was most diverted and excessively amused on Tuesday. There was a play at Holland House, acted by children — not all children, for Lady Sarah Bunbury and Lady Susan Strangways played the women. It was *Jane Shore*. Mr. Price, Lord Barrington's nephew, was Gloster, and acted better than three parts of the comedians; Charles Fox, Hastings; a little Nichols, Belmour; Lord Ophaly, Lord Ashbrooke, and other boys did the rest; but the two girls were delightful, and acted with so much simplicity and nature that they appeared the very things they represented, and Lady Sarah was more beautiful than you can conceive, and her very awkwardness gave an air of truth to the sham of the part and the antiquity of the time which was kept up by her dress, taken out of *Montfaucon*. Lady Susan was dressed from Jane Seymour: and all the parts were clothed in ancient habits and

with the most minute propriety. I was more struck with the last scene between the two women than ever I was when I have seen it on the stage. When Lady Sarah was in white, with that beautiful dark hair of hers about her ears and on the ground, no Magdalen by Correggio was ever half so lovely and expressive."

VIII

It was remarked at the time, somewhat to the annoyance of Lord and Lady Ilchester, that Lady Susan's love-scenes with Mr. William O'Brien were so true to life that 'twas impossible not to believe them real. Mr. O'Brien was a brilliant and attractive young Irishman, without fortune and of ancestry which went back to the Flood. To him the English aristocracy were mushrooms of yesterday. In fact, his genealogical tree, which he carried with him wherever he went, proved the descent of the O'Briens from Adam with not a hiatus between.

He was gay, he was tender, he was good, he was a man of parts, but he had not a stiver. Only his charm and brilliancy had brought him into the society of Holland House where these qualities were passports.

Sally was in the secret long before any one else suspected it. She writes in her diary —

"Lord, I could laugh. Here have I been preaching wisdom by the yard to my sweet music, Sue. If she could only look within me and know of what folly I am capable if but I had the chance! Perhaps she does. She sends me a glance from her dear little sly eyes sometimes and I am mumchance. Lord and Lady Ilchester would never forgive it: I pray that prudence may prevail with Sue if not duty. She says her duty is to Mr. O'Brien. I could bless them if it were not for prudence. Sally, a matron these two years back, must pretend a prudence if she has it not."

Again: "There has been a prodigious scene. They have charged Sue with her partiality for the Irish beggar, as Lord Ilchester calls Mr. O'Brien in his wrath. The little baggage has been obstinate, stormed, defended her choice. I adore her for it. Presently my Lady Ilchester has a spasm of the heart which brings poor Sue to her knees. She promises to give up her lover rather than incommode her mother's heart. N.B.— I believe my Lady Ilchester's heart is as sound as my own!"

A couple of months later: "She is being painted by Miss Read. We are all flocking to Miss Read

to get our phizes done since Her Majesty set us the example. She is being painted in white satin trimmed with bands of sable, and a beaver hat, the strings of Mechlin. I do not like it. Read shall not have me. She makes Sue a dowager. Why not Mr. Reynolds? The picture he made of me and Susan and Charles Fox is a sweet thing. It was mobbed at the Academy."

In April there is another entry: "I am shocked at Sue: I am vastly diverted with Sue: I am delighted with Sue, and will stand by her against the world. She has eloped with O'Brien. She parted with him forever on the first of April, which was last Monday and a very proper day for the performance. She obtained permission for a last meeting, and they were in each other's arms for an hour. I wonder at Lord and Lady Ilchester! Sue is a puss: she has a will of her own. This morning, the sixth, she left the house to breakfast with me, she said, attended by a footman. She was to go on to Read's for a sitting. A couple of streets off she found she had forgot her beaver, and sends back the footman, who is young and new from the country, to fetch it to Read's. Hardly is he round the corner when there comes up a hackney coach with O'Brien inside it. They are off to Covent Garden

Church, where they get spliced, and they have made a run for it to Dunstable, where Mr. O'Brien has a villa. The hackney-coachman has turned informer. Lord Ilchester tears his hair. His lady is in hysterics. Sue is in Paradise. They will hardly believe that I did not abet her flight. I must sit down now and write to Sue, concealing from her how much in my heart I am with her. The Ilchesters would have a very bad opinion of me if they knew how much."

IX

Sally writes a letter of exquisite tenderness, with counsels of sober wisdom in between, for she foresees that Lady Susan will not be forgiven and will be left to lie on the bed she has made for herself; and that there will be poverty hard on the heels of the honeymoon.

"As I can not see you, my dear, as often as I wish, I must write, for though seeing you puts me in spirits, they now quite sink to think I can not go to you the moment you want me. Indeed, I love you more than I thought I was capable of loving anybody: how melancholy I shall be without you, my love; I miss you everywhere."

Sally foresees that the time will come when her

friend will have to count the cost, the tender parents wounded and estranged, the loss of friends and position, the poverty, and foretells that love will be enough for Sue as it would be for herself.

"I think Mr. Bunbury's love and attention would make me happy whatever happened to me. It doesn't prevent me feeling miserable at times; but I think from what I feel myself you may expect great happiness. When my spirits are good all situations are equal to me with a person I love, and the more I have to employ my attention and time the better my spirits are; besides, you are not *nice,* and you have sense enough to find amusement in anything. I wish your temper may be like mine in regard to money, for, believe me, were I to hear at this moment I was to live on two hundred pounds a year it would not give me a minute's uneasiness but with regard to its vexing Mr. Bunbury: and my vanity, which is a fault in itself, would help me then by making me show the world I could be happy in any life and bear any inconvenience with a man I love. . . . Can you, my love, think I would give you up, or that Mr. B. loves me so little as not to feel the distress you are in? . . .

"I have written a great deal and have not said half I had to say: but it is like our conversations

which never cease. Don't show this to Charles or to Mr. O'Brien, because I don't love to have my letters read by anybody but those they are written to. I ought not to except your husband, but he doesn't know me enough yet, nor is he partial enough to read my letters, for they require a partial friend. You are one, my love, that I can trust with my faults. God bless you, my dear soul. Think that I love you the more, the more you want my love. Adieu, my sweet dear."

X

"'Tis well," confides Sally to her diary, "that I may comfort poor Sue, seeing that but for the goodness of God and the virtue of one I dare not think upon, I might be in a position to-day to require all pity and all affection far more than she, the pretty mouse."

CHAPTER XI

WHAT A THING FRIENDSHIP IS

I

SALLY, in the eagerness of her friendship, overreaches her own good endeavors. She precipitates a meeting between Mr. William O'Brien, her husband, now Sir Charles Bunbury, and Lady Holland, the last two of whom were naturally on the side of the aggrieved parents and against "the Irish adventurer" who had been the cause of all the trouble. Sally pleads so prettily for her friend's pardon that I must quote her, since it is one of the things by which we love her, by which she lives again.

"Sir Charles says he would do anything to oblige you, for believe me he loves you very sincerely. I could not help telling him you were hurt at his behavior to Mr. O'Brien, and that he might have obliged you without doing anything contrary to Lord Holland's opinion, which is a law for him. He had no very good excuse to make for himself, but his being so excessively vexed and unhappy at

having hurt you was, in my opinion, a much better excuse than any, as it showed the goodness of his heart, and he can not bear to think he has offended or mortified you in anything, particularly in so delicate a point. I was the innocent cause of it, for my great eagerness (now that I had got leave to see you) to bring about seeing Mr. O'Brien too, made my sister and Sir Charles more violent than they would naturally be about it, and you know that a fit of contradiction makes both sides exaggerate; but though Sir Charles was more obstinate about this than I have ever seen him, the moment his heart was moved by thinking he had vexed you he relented, and vowed that he did what he now thinks was very unkind, and there is nothing he would not do to make it up to you. He desires me to tell you this, and to tell both you and Mr. O'Brien that he very sincerely asks your pardon. Do, my sweet Sue, forgive him and love him for my sake, for indeed he deserves your love and I should be miserable if you disliked him. I am sure I have set you the example, for as I know you will make Mr. O'Brien rather partial to me, and that your fondness for him and his for you is so great that altogether I look on him as my friend just as much as you; and of course I make myself his

champion on every occasion, and defend him, not only about his match, but his manner, his prudence, etc., in fact everything I think and everything I *do not* think, for I have no notion of allowing my friend has *any* faults to those that don't love them full as well as I do."

II

Sally writes in her diary: "I have just been writing to poor sweet Sue, making my husband's apologies handsomer than he would have done it. Pretty creature! I would do more than that for her. Sir Charles is furious because she chose the Irishman, as he will call him — he has not learned to love the country as well as I do — before Charles Fox, who is magnanimous to the last degree. I am in secret agreement with Sir Charles. Mr. O'Brien is a very pretty fellow, but not to be compared to my nephew Charles, who has a spirit, a grace, a sprightliness, a wit that mark him out from the other young men of the day. He is an elegant creature; and there is something about his bright eyes and dark hair that have always delighted me. However, Charles, and the King's brother and all the other gentlemen must go by the board when the Irishman whistles. Charles has prevailed on Lord

Holland to allow the pretty creature four hundred pounds a year, which I think is downright handsome. After all, the puss is not to be pitied. She has the thing which of all on earth is most worth having. Poor Sally has a husband who loves her nearly as well as he loves the best mare in his stables."

III

Lady Susan and her Irishman sail overseas for America, where Lord Holland has procured them a grant of land. Sally writes to her friend in the backwoods, giving her bits and scraps of the life she has given up for love. Apparently she fetches and carries for her friend other than gossip.

"That devil Mr. Coates has not finished your picture yet. I took your papers to Mr. Touchet. I want to know if I am to do anything about your tambour. I have heard nothing of your stuffs yet.

"Mr. Touchet writes me word you did not see your mother; I can't write to her about it, I think, though I long to know if she sent to you.

"Pray, have you any objection to my calling you Netty, for it's a sweet pretty name, and it's more natural to my tongue than Susan. I shall take the liberty before I have your answer. Netty, then,

only think how happy I shall be at Newmarket next week, if Sir Charles's mare Hermione wins the match. The Duke of Grafton's Antinous runs two matches. Pray do you like to hear of Newmarket? I have heard from Mrs. Greville from Spa. 'The ballroom is absolutely a masquerade; some are in large hats which Lady Mary Coke has taught them to turn up behind, saying it is the custom with us; others are curled up to the top of their heads, and we had a little Princess Sapirka from Poland that wore a Turkish habit and her head French; and if you could but hear the noise and clatter we all make with our different languages, you might have a pretty good idea of the building of Babel. Pray don't laugh at me when I come back, for I have the Irish brogue on one side of my tongue and the French on the other.'

"Mr. Touchet tells me you did not sail till the wintry weather ceased. I rejoice in this sweet weather for your sake. I have begun my gown: it is vastly pretty, and I love it vastly; the stripes go on like lightning, but the flowers are a little tedious. I gave Lady Emily Hervey a print of your picture. She has written under it: 'The prettiest creature of the world.'

"Pray give my compliments to Mr. O'Brien and

tell him I shall keep his sweet little book for his sake; that whenever I look at it I shall remember when we were together, and he seemed to adore you, and whenever I think of that I shall love him, not forgetting how pretty he looked when he gave it to me."

IV

"Barton, October 11th, 1764.

"I am in the utmost anxiety and impatience to hear of my dearest Netty's arrival; next month I do hope will bring me news of you, my dear soul, for believe me I do love you beyond what I can express. The weather has been pretty good, and Mr. Touchet assures me you have had a good voyage. He is a dear man, for he tells me everything about you. How I long for a letter from you, my love!

"My gown is beautiful. I like it most excessively, and find that the French gold works so well that it is the pleasantest work I ever did, it's so quick.

"The race at Euston was the prettiest thing I ever saw: I doted upon it, for I rode on my beautiful Weazle, who was gentle enough to let me gallop backward and forward, so I saw the whole

course. Sir Charles is quite a determined horse-racer, and I must say I am glad to have all the pretty creatures here."

V

"Lord Carlisle has been here from Cambridge," she writes: "he is grown very tall, and is really the most agreeable young man I ever saw. I mean as to his manners, for I am not enough acquainted with him to judge of his sense; but he has the most remarkable attention and politeness to women I ever saw in anybody, and that is very pleasing at his age, for I can't help looking upon him as a schoolboy for the life of me, though he is such a great creature."

Sally has a deal of fashionable gossip. Her pages read like Debrett. Here and there something stands out beyond the category of the fine people, their love-affairs, engagements, marriages, divorces, lyings-in. There is news of Sue's two lovers who have forgotten her. "The Duke of Gloucester is desperately in love with Lady Waldegrave; it's a falling off, I think, from your little cunning face to her insensibility. . . . Charles is in town, and is violently in love with the Duchess of Hamilton. He is all humbleness and respect and never leaves

her. I am vastly glad to see him improve so much; he is now very manly and very much liked, I think, in the world; he is a sweet boy, and I hope will continue as amiable as he is."

VI

There is one name Sally never mentions, yet we find oblique references to its possessor. Lady Susan was somewhat in her confidence, and has been giving her good advice, a pretty turning of the tables, for Sally had hitherto been the mentor, although against her will, for she has been chosen to convey to Lady Susan the strictures of her family on her extravagance, an office which must have been sorely against the grain. Sally takes her friend's advice sweetly, as is her way: "I am as much displeased at my giddiness as anybody can be; but I flatter myself that with a little attention I shall have no reason to be angry with myself on the same subject, for I have thought very seriously lately, and I don't see why I should behave like a *silly vain fool* when I am not one. You see, I commend myself, but really I may say so much when at the same time I own that my sense is of no use to me: I am ashamed to own it, and I think it so wrong that I do firmly intend to be more exact in my behavior."

One can only guess at what indiscretion may have caused Sue's rebuke and Sally's *peccavi*.

VII

Sally makes a friend of an old lover.

"Lord Newbattle is come to England with Lady George, which puts me in the way of seeing him a good deal. He is very much improved and grown wiser; I think we avoid each other a good deal, but he told me he hoped I did not take it as a sign of being at all angry with me, for that it was only to avoid any reports there might be made of our talking together. I told him it was the very same case with me: so thereupon we shook hands and promised always to take each other's part if we were abused upon any subject; but to have little or no conversation together. My sister Holland told Louisa that she had observed me and Lord N., and that it was impossible to behave better than I did; so do you see, Netty, I am very pert upon this good behavior of mine, and it's so pleasant to feel one does right that I never intend to feel otherwise again."

VIII

"Paris, May 8th, 1765.

"I arrived here this day sennight, my dear Netty, and am so taken up with everything that I do not know where I am. In the first place the town is beautiful and the people so genteel that it's a real amusement to drive about the streets. I have seen no beauties yet, for there being no assemblies, 'tis ten to one if I should see them before I went if 'twas not for Marli where the court now is, and I am to see the King play at cards. Louisa is here. She and I go back in a month to England. Stephen and Charles are with us: we had a very pleasant journey, and I should like it vastly if my dear Sir Charles were here too, but I own I am so impatient to get back that it takes off my pleasure. The Ambassador and Lady Hereford are very civil. There was never anything so beautiful as their house; it is quite a palace, even here where the style of houses in general is charming in my opinion. 'Tis true they are inconvenient and dirty, but for one's own apartments they are delightful. In the first place they are upon the ground floor, and have every one a garden (where there are horse-chestnuts for shade); the rooms are large, the win-

dows immense and all down to the ground, the furniture very fine (if new), for there are commodes even in our lodgings and looking-glasses in every part of the room, and very large ones. The houses are dirty and cold, but yet I own I like the style of them infinitely."

IX

Sally tells Lord Holland how well she was received at Marli: "We luckily saw the King and royal family, but perhaps you have not heard the story about in Paris of how the King embraced me twice, and one of the seigneurs said, '*En verité, c'est trop, Sire.*' '*Je ne sais si c'est trop, mais je sais que ça me plait.*' says the King. Was it not charming?"

Lady Louisa Conolly further reports to Lord Holland: "I must tell you that Sally learns to dance and be graceful from a famous dancing master here: I think he will spoil her, for she walks with such an air. She and I went to St. Cyr the other day, and one of the nuns told us that if we would kneel and pray to the relicts of a saint that there was there we should have children, for that the *Dauphine* had never had any children till she did, so you may be sure we immediately began our

prayer; and if we succeed we will send the Duchess of Richmond there."

X

A little later Sally writes to Sue, blaming herself for her "intolerable idolence," which has been the cause of her not writing. "I recollect that I wrote to you in a monstrous passion once," she says. "I totally forget what I said, but I know that I have since changed my opinion about many things that then appeared very different to me. I trust, however, my sweetest Netty, that you've forgiven me, for you know me too well not to know that when I am angry I am more absurd than anybody, for I write and say every nonsensical thing that enters my head. But I need not make myself uneasy, for I feel that I love you too well for you to doubt it. I am in very low spirits just now. Oh, Sue, your poor Sal has a heart ill at ease!"

Sally is out of spirits, but presently she has recovered and is gossiping away as cheerfully as of old. Charles James Fox who has been inconstant since Lady Sue jilted him, is in love again, not with Mademoiselle Coislin with whom he ought to be in love, but with another lass. Sally always laughs at this nephew who so much resembles herself.

"Do you know the impudent toad made love to both at a time?" she says, and you hear the laughter in the voice that has been stilled a hundred years. "I told him he was too young for such schemes and would fail in both, but he trusted to the ladies' characters, and I believe he may succeed. Stephen and I are grown violent friends; Charles is vastly jealous and abuses me for it; but there is no reason, for I must always love him, he is such an amiable creature."

She harks back to the Paris visit for her dearest Sue —

"We were at L'Ile d'Adam, a place of the Prince de Conty's; it's very pretty and an agreeable house; Madame Bouffler does the honors there. The prince is the most agreeable man that ever was: he is about forty-seven. He is like my father's picture, but handsomer: in short, he is delightful. Louisa and I both dote upon him, for there is no sort of attention he did not show us. If we don't go to Ireland Sir Charles promises I shall go to see him again: he goes with me to Paris the end of this year."

XI

Sally has somewhat to say of the French beauties.

"There are very few handsome women in Paris. The Duchess de la Valliére, who is fifty-two, is the handsomest woman I saw, but indeed she is extraordinary. Her face is now as beautiful as an angel's and looks only twenty-five; her person is bad, but she hides that with a cloak. The Princess of Monaco is reckoned a great beauty there, but here she would only be a very pretty woman; her face is round and flat, but her countenance is meek and sweet; her complexion is very fine, and her figure the most perfect made of any woman in the world. She is the only lady who doesn't wear rouge, for all the rest daub themselves so horribly that it's shocking. Madame d'Egmont is the next beauty; she has a pretty Chinese face, is very affected and fashionable, and so is made a beauty. The Princess of Chimay, who is not reckoned a beauty, is my favorite; she is quite unaffected and simple in her manner, her figure is like Lady Mary Fitzpatrick's, but taller; her head is like the Gunnings; her complexion good if she did not ruin it, her eyes are small and dark and she has regular small features. She

has a noddle with her head that makes some people reckon her like me. She is a sweet sensible little woman, and my cousin, for she is the Duke of Fitzjames' daughter."

XII

"Barton, July 6th, 1765.

"I came from Woburn the other day with Madame Bouffler and brought her to Newmarket and here. She is just gone. She liked Newmarket vastly. There was a meeting of two days this year to see the sweetest little horse run that ever was; his name is Gimcrack: he is delightful. Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Grafton and General Conway kissed hands the day Gimcrack ran; I must say I was more anxious about the horse than the ministry, which sounds odd, for Sir Charles loses four thousand pounds a year by the secretary's pay. . . . I will give orders about your flower-roots and things very soon. I wish you would not leave it to me to choose what you'd have. It's the most difficult thing in the world; but if I must, the thing I'd choose for myself would be a very good horse; if the expense of keeping it is not an objection I think it a very good thing, but pray tell me your choice sincerely.

"I have bought you a little French white china cup. I think it very pretty, but if you would like a colored one better you shall have it, if they come safely through the customs and are not all broke. I would have bought you something else, but tea-things I know you have, and upon my word china is so dear, and I spend so much more than I mean, that I am quite ruined, and now the *good place* has gone it's really serious. Adieu, my dearest Netty."

CHAPTER XII

THE PASSING SHOW

I

"I COULD not bear Redlinch where I stayed one night only; and even at Melbury you were not free from my thoughts one moment. I do assure you I spent much of my time in looking at your picture by Ramsay that hung in the closet to the chintz room, where I slept. I can not think that my dear Netty will long doubt my love for her.

"How beautiful Melbury is! All the orange-trees and mirtles are delightful; and the wood is the sweetest place I ever saw in my life."

II

Sally and Sue have a lover's quarrel, but between October 1765 and January 1766 have had time to make it up. They are always falling out — like lovers, says Mr. O'Brien: always making up. We are in the dark as to the cause of these quarrels. Is it some folly in Sarah which her friend would fain put an end to, and has Sarah, having made

confession, refused amendment? I spare you the kisses and cries of reconciliation.

"I am very glad you told me about the horse, for I am so horse-mad that I thought it was impossible but you must like it, and had got one for you. I allow the chaise is much more useful, and have ordered one. . . . You shall receive it at New York as soon as possible, with the harness and the carriage paid for.

"I find my sister Holland has sent you the flowers; indeed I have a thousand pardons to ask you, for I own I had totally forgot them, but if you will write me word if you want the narcissuses and hyacinths, I will take care that you have them with the pots for next year.

"As for the fashions, such figures as are seen at public places are not to be described. I am sorry for our English taste, but so it is. However it is, as you may imagine, very *vulgar* to dress so. I think that by degrees the French dress is coming into fashion, though 'tis almost impossible to make the ladies understand that heads bigger than one's body are ugly; it is growing the fashion to have the heads *moutoné*. I have cut off my hair, and find it very convenient in the country without powder, because my hair curls naturally, but it's

horrid troublesome to have it well curled; if it's big it's frightful. I wear it very often with three rows of curls behind and the rest smooth, with a fruzed *toupé* and a cap — that is, *en paresseuse.* There is nobody but Lady Tavistock who does not dress French that is at all genteel, for if they are not French, it is so ill-dressed, 'tis terrible. Almost everybody powders now and wears a little hoop; hats are vastly left off; the hair down on the forehead belongs to the short waist, etc., and is equally vulgar with poppons, trimmings, beads, garnets, flying caps and false hair. To be perfectly genteel you must be dressed thus. Your hair must not be cut off, for 'tis much too pretty, but it must be powdered, curled in very small curls, and altogether be in the style of Lady Tavistock's, neat, but it must be high before and give your head the look of a sugar-loaf a little. The roots of the hair must be drawn up straight, and not fruzed at all for half an inch above the root; you must wear no cap, and only *little, little* flowers dabbed in on the left side; the only feather permitted is a black or white *sultane,* perched up on the left side and your diamond feather against it. A broad, puffed ribbon collier, with a tippet ruff, or only a little black handkerchief, very narrow over the shoulders; your stays

very high and pretty tight at bottom; your gown trimmed with the same, very straight down the robings, and a narrow flounce at bottom to button and to be loose at the fore part of your robing. The sleeves long and loose, the waist very long, the flounces and ruffles of a decent length, not too long or so hideously short as they now wear them. No trimming on the sleeves, but a ribbon knot tied to hang on the ruffles. The men's dress is exactly what they used to wear latterly: that is three or four curls high at the sides. Some people wear it cut short before and combed up *en brosse* very high upon the top of the head; it is called a *greque,* and is very pretty when well done. Mr. Robinson says that every one now dresses their hair so well that the old macaronis must be quite plain to distinguish themselves, and indeed it's true, though I think the hair much prettier in this style than down at the ears in Sir Charles' way. I have given you a pretty good bore upon dress, but I was provoked at Mrs. Cary setting such vulgar fashions."

III

I have felt obliged to quote Sally on the fashion at such length, because it shows her very woman; perhaps, too, because such things must be of inter-

est to the feminine mind. This was written on an occasion when Sally was in high spirits, the shadow which we find creeping steadily nearer in her letters being for once lifted. This same delightful letter contains so many glimpses of the manners and doings of fashionable society at that day and hour that I must needs continue to quote. Sally is in her sprightliest mood; a charming woman, indeed.

"I told you the word 'bore' is a fashionable one for tiresome people and conversations, and is a very good one and very useful, for we may tell anybody (Lord G. Cavendish, for example): 'I am sure this will be a *bore,* so I shall leave you, Lord George.' If it was not the fashion it would be very rude, but I own I encouraged the fashion vastly, for it's delightful, I think; one need only name a pig or pork and nobody dares take it ill, but hold their tongues discreetly. 'To grub up,' is also a new expression, which can not be better illustrated to you than by supposing you were talking to Mr. Robinson, who diverted you very much; in comes the Duke of York or Gloucester, and by sitting down by you 'grubs up' poor Mr. Robinson for perhaps the whole evening. The dukes will either of them serve for an example of a bore, too, also Lord Clanbrassil. When you know what

'lending a tascusa' is, you are *au fait* of the *bon ton.* You have lent that puppy, Major Walpole, many 'a tascusa,' and indeed I think you have the knack of 'lending them' better than anybody, so when you are *glumpy* and some puppy comes and talks to you, the snub that they will get from you is exactly a 'tascusa,' in its full force. Take notice, the word, though it appears Italian, has no meaning of its own. It is like 'chiquinno,' which is used for any card under a five at quinze."

IV

"The new importation of this year for young men is Lord Mount Stuart, Lord Orrery and Stephen Fox. Lord Mount is tall, well-made and very handsome; he is sensible, and 'tis the fashion to cry him up. I think he is very conceited, and seems to me very proud and vain, but yet is very well-bred and does vastly well for a beau. Lord Orrery I dote upon, though he is not handsome or conceited, but I know him to have so amiable a character from Sir Charles, whose greatest friend he is, that I like everything he does. I am grown to love Stephen excessively; in my journey to Paris I grew to know him better, and I really love him dearly now.

(Charles is very jealous of him), I find he is vastly liked in general. . . .

"I was in town for a week for the meeting of parliament. Sir Charles goes again next week. I don't propose leaving this sweet Barton till the end of February. I divert myself so much here that I have not a minute on my hands, and I long to be here almost for some time. I propose reading a vast deal. I have left off riding a good deal, and I have taken to drawing. If I can finish a little drawing I will send you one, though 'tis not worth it, for I can only copy prints and I have not patience to do more than a head, but it diverts me vastly. Sir Charles has promised to come to see me in February, if I don't go to town before then, as he fancies I shall be tired."

V

February found Sally ill with a fever, which though it only lasted a week and was doubtless the plague influenza, yet left her so low, she writes, that she had no energy to do anything. She is as comfortable as possible in Sir Charles' absence, with Mrs. Soame to read to her in the evenings, and her mornings occupied with the flower-beds out-of-doors. She hates going to town, because she can

not endure the thought of changing a way of life that is perfectly happy and agreeable to her.

"You may well say, 'Why do you go, then?' To that I answer, 'For two reasons, the first because Sir Charles neither can nor likes to stay at Barton, and comfortable as I am here I own that I am never really happy without him, and I flatter myself that is the same case with him, which makes him press my going to town. The second reason is that I find Lord Holland is in a very declining way.

"The little politics I know is that Mr. Pitt is given up even by his friend the Duke of Grafton, who after all the court they paid him owns that he is totally unpracticable, and that no one can do anything with him. By way of news Mr. Rousseau is all the talk. All that I hear of him is that he wears a pelisse and a fur cap, that he was at the play and desired to be placed where he might not see the King, which, as Mrs. Greville says, is 'a *pauvreté* worthy a philosopher.' His dressing particularly is, I think, very silly; and if, as the papers say, he told Garrick that he made him laugh and cry without understanding a word, that, in my humble opinion, was very silly too, for I am sure neither Lusignan nor Lord Chalkstone is likely to do that if one doesn't understand the language. He sees few

people, and is to go and live at a farm in Wales, where he shall see nothing but mountains and wild goats. '*Autre pauvrété!*'

"I have very little else to say, my dear Netty, for this place affords but second-hand news and chat, and very little of that. My creatures are the people of most consequence here, and I have got an Angora cat that is so beautiful that she is the admiration of the county; I am distractedly fond of her and she is never from me a moment, having one great perfection that endears her to me, and that is she puts me in mind of you from morning till night, and has the slyest, pretty little look I ever saw in any one but you and her. I should have called her Netty if I had not been obliged to call her Laura after the person who gave her to me and desired me to do so."

VI

A little later Sally is in town and very gay. She finds time to tell Netty about all the smart people and their doings, among them Lady Ilchester and her two daughters, who are "going out" that season. "Everybody likes Lady Henrietta. I, for one, think her charming. Indeed, my sweet Netty, when your sister is by me in a public place, she has

such looks of you that my heart is so full I can hardly help crying, particularly as without flattery I can not but make comparisons that make me regret my dearest soul more every day . . . nothing can ever efface you from my memory and prevent my indulging myself with your dear idea. . . . The Duchess of Richmond has come over for six weeks, as pretty and English as ever. They dined comfortably with me to-day; the duchess is gone to the opera; my Bunbury is asleep on the couch, and I am writing to you and to twenty other people besides.

"The new play of the clandestine marriage is a charming acting play. The epilogue is sad stuff, though by dear Mr. Garrick wrote it, but so he did Lord Ogilby's character; I don't know how it will read, but the parts are written for the actors, and they do act like angels in it. To be sure, Mr. Holland looks a little stately, but, however, it does very tolerably, and indeed I must say one thing, and that is that the plays are so infamous of late that it appears better than it can possibly read. Mr. Powell, Holland and Mrs. Yates (the support of our stage) scream at one another like screech-owls and bellow their parts without any feeling or sense. Mrs. Cibber is gone; Mrs. Pritchard going; Miss Pope grown horrid ugly and a bad actress; a devil

of a man called Dodd that dares to act parts that were once so sweetly performed; in short, the whole is terrible, and it is only this play, where there are no great parts, and where they all act as well as they can, that is bearable.

"Mr. Garrick is gone to the Bath. Poor Stephen is come to such an excess of deafness that it is quite melancholy and shocking; I can't bear it, for I do love him so very much. Charles is in town, and is either stupid or melancholy, I don't know which. He says he is like the King in *Tom Thumb,* for he is not quite well and he is in love. This time with a Mrs. Burrerd, whom he doesn't know nor can he get presented to her; poor soul, he is in a piteous taking."

VII

Sally has been ill. It is not often that she is ill, for her beauty is the beauty of perfect health.

"I have been sick. Is it not ridiculous? But I am in a hopeful way, my illness being caused by too much health and great fulness of blood, which has at times by overheating myself really made me ill; but now I am very careful and very well, only grown thin, and as Lord Holland says, 'like half-penny ale.' I am grown tall, too. In short, though

my phiz remains my person is changed. As to my phiz, I am grown to look older; I have less color and my nose is grown long, so you may guess I am not much improved; indeed, few people are with growing old." (Sally is at this time twenty-two years of age.) "But I flatter myself I have one advantage over many people, and that is that I tell myself every day: 'I am not old, but I am passed the age of a girl; it is time for me to check my vanity and to remember that if I don't make myself agreeable I have no right to any attention from my acquaintance. You see 'tis still vanity that carries me on."

VIII

Stephen Fox is to be married to a wild Irish girl, Lady Mary Fitzpatrick, daughter of Lord Orrery. She seems to have had the sweetness, the bright evanescent beauty that belong to the consumptive. She was to die of that fatal disease, but the seeds of it were lying dormant when Sally described her in words of such charm that I must quote them.

"As for Stephen — he is, as Lord Holland says, 'a lucky dog.' Indeed, you know her figure, but not her enough to know that she answers the French expression of *une phisionomie interessante* more than anybody, and that her character fully answers

the partiality you must take for her from her manner. There is a *doux je ne sais quoi* about her that is charming; her voice goes to one's heart and leaves a sort of tenderness in it that there is nothing she can say will be indifferent to me. In short, Netty, it is a little blessed angel."

Does not Sally know how to give her own sex noble praises?

IX

"I am vastly diverted with your fashionable people. By this time I hope you have got a pink and green lutestring ready-made with all *accompaniments,* that I sent you. I was so provoked that Mrs. Cary should set a fashion that I ordered it all myself and hope you will accept of it and dress yourself very smart for the First Assembly; and then let Mrs. Cary and the governor's wife hold their tongues and be as genteel if they can.

"Your chaise is departed, but I have a great many excuses to make for it, for I would have a whim and I've spoilt it. You must know that there is now a rage in London for gray equipages; and Mr. Beauclerk came out in the most *fringant* equipage, all gray and silver, that ever was seen; and I was such a ninny that I ordered the chaise to

be so too, not considering that there is no flat space to make any pattern upon and that the high varnish was the great beauty of it; so when it came home it was quite different from what I meant, and I was very mad and was going to send it back, but I considered that it was of as much use to you as if it was green, and that I should perhaps make you lose the season for it, and so I let it e'en go and ask you ten thousand pardons for my conceit.

"I enjoy myself prodigiously at Holland House. The sweet place looks heavenly. Adieu."

CHAPTER XIII

SALLY CHOOSES LOVE

I

"I AM back at Barton once again, and though I say it that should not say it, it does look beautiful. I have turned out some silver pheasants and they come and feed at the door with the peacocks; only think how pretty this is. I intend Barton shall grow like Mr.—— I forget his name, Lord Weymouth's gamekeeper's house, with all manner of creatures about. I do dote on creatures. I can never see a young calf or a lamb, or a little donkey that I don't want to take the creature's head in my arms and embrace it. As for babies — Sir Charles would be bored to death with a brat. As for me I adore the little animals and can not see one in a poor tramping wench's arms that I don't envy her and want it for myself.

"Lord Holland mends very much. He lives upon strawberrys, peas and minced meat; he can't eat solid meat, but as he eats a great deal I can't think him the worse for that. I hope to God he

will be able to go to Naples, which is his present intention, next October. Stephen and Lady Mary, Charles, William and Lord Carlisle will be there; don't you think it is very tempting for us to go, too? I own that when I am at Paris, where we mean to be in October, I shall hardly be able to resist pursuing my journey, if Sir Charles will agree to it, which I fancy he will; for he doesn't dislike the thoughts of it and you don't know perhaps that I'm reckoned to govern him; I really think it is true, but I use very little art about it, for the moment I want anything I tell him of it and he is so very good and spoils me so much that he seldom refuses me; so that it comes to the same thing as being henpecked, as Lord Holland tells him, only it is *fort flatteur* for me that he should have the same indulgence for me now as if I were not an old married woman.

" He indeed spoils me excessively, yet I will confess to my dearest Netty, who is as my other self, that all this indulgence counts less for my happiness than if he were to sit down with me to a Darby and Joan existence with a dozen brats; I should have love enough for a dozen. But 'tis no use to talk of it. He doesn't like the country life and I dote upon it. Barton is intolerable dull to him,

and he is scarce back from London but his fancy flies to Newmarket. He is for town and I am for the country; and his amiability doesn't allow of his insisting that where he is I shall be. Perhaps I should be better pleased if his complaisance did not carry him so far."

II

The next letters tell us of the house-parties at Barton and the fun fast and furious, the theatricals, the dancing, the outdoor life, the christening of new foals, etc. Sally has forgot perhaps that she sighed for domesticity.

"I have got Charles Fox into such order that 'tis quite ridiculous; he will toad-eat me beyond all imagination; I'm right proud of it, I can tell you, and the more that he doesn't do so by Lady Mary and says he is really afraid of me. 'Afraid of you!' I think I hear you say. Yes, indeed; but 'tis not from my great dignity, I confess, 'tis from a more pleasing reason, that is, he knows how excessively I do love him, and because I believe he loves me full as well and he knows I can't bear to think I'm not in favor with him; indeed, he is such an amiable creature it is impossible to know him and not adore him. Dickson is exactly the same as he

was. He acted 'Cacefoze,' and was most pleased with calling me 'A Whim-Wham,' 'A Thing of Clouts,' etc. You can fancy how we laughed."

III

Sally's letters are carried on faithfully for the next couple of years. We have plenty of good advice to Lady Susan, who, poor soul, seems to have been somewhat over-advised. We find Sally occasionally in the rôle of a candid friend, but not often: usually her sweetness and tenderness wrap up the pill in a sugared coating. She is more to Lady Susan, who seems never to have been wholly forgiven by her family, than any one else, father or mother, brothers or sisters. Poor little Lady Susan, constantly in the part of poor relation, job-hunting for her O'Brien, may be excused the occasional petulances with which she annotates Sally's letters.

To her it falls now and again to drop a word in season in her friend's ear. Sally, beautiful and young, with a charming young husband, wit, sense, wealth, all that could make life pleasant, has recurring attacks of the blues.

"Sir Charles has a complaint in his stomach that obliges him to go to Bath and Spa, both; I hope

it will agree with him, which will comfort me for my trouble; but I own I am wore to death with routing. My spirits are vastly lowered since you saw me; I long much to stay here a whole long summer. It is a sweet dear place, and I am never tired of it. Sir Charles has won with all his horses at Newmarket, which vastly delight him. What pleases my lord pleases me. Believe me, I am not insensible of the blessing of my good husband. I take it that we are two of the luckiest women alive to possess two such dear creatures. Mine has not a fault, unless it be that he loves Newmarket more than Barton, and doesn't know the felicity it is to sit by a fire of a winter night with a book and hear the wind howl without. He is not framed for domesticity, but he is as handsome as ever and as young. I should be a monster of ingratitude if I ever made a single complaint and did not thank God for making me the happiest of beings."

Lady Susan's comment on this was a shrewd one.

"My poor Sally," she says, "tenderest, truest friend woman ever had. She is writing down her own heart, and I fear a serious dissatisfaction with life behind all these protests. She was ever a thing of spirit. God send her the help she needs!"

IV

"It snows in May and is miserably cold," writes Sally. *O si sic omnes!* "I've been ill and confined to my room for six weeks with a nervous fever."

"What is this about fevers?" comments Lady Sue. "A fig for your fevers! You never used to have 'em. If I hear any more of it I shall come home and nurse you, despite the gloom of my family at the prospect of my return. Oh, Sally, can you send me some violet roots? I think I could grow them. In your last letter was somewhat that savored of violets; and I dreamt you and I were in the shrubbery at Redlinch, seeking white violets under the leaves, of a March day, and the tally-ho of the hunt sounding in the distance. Do you remember?"

It is come to Netty's lot to scold Sally and Sally takes the scolding sweetly.

"I will begin with those stories you have heard of me and by thanking you for the kind, gentle and sensible way you advise me, my dearest heart. I am very conscious that the less a woman is talked of in general the better, and in particular upon such subjects. I am very well aware of my own vanity

and folly, which has led me to love admiration in general, perhaps because I shrink from what is particular. Be assured, my dearest Netty, that my morals are not spoilt by the French: they are so totally different from my character and from what I was brought up to think right, that it would be having a very mean opinion of me to think that three months could undo all that nature and custom have taught me. That I have in every action of my life kept up to the very good education I have had is, I fear, too much to say; nor would I believe it scarce possible if it were not for Louisa; but she is an angel and I am a weak, unsteady, thoughtless, vain creature; but still I assure you it is not possible with a good heart, which I pique myself upon, to change so dreadfully without being a miserable wretch. I do assure you that my first thought and regard is to my husband's happiness and that I do very sincerely desire the good opinion of the world and the regard of my friends. I guess what story has reached you, on which you found your warnings; but, believe me, very dear soul, that what might be an occasion of weakness to me once is no longer so, and that you may set your dear heart at rest concerning me. If to minister to a sick soul and a heart in trouble is to be condemned then am I worthy of

condemnation. But if I know my Netty she will say no."

V

To this Lady Susan made the laconic answer: "For God's sake, Sally, let any one comfort your cousin William rather than you. I do not believe that he is dying. He was always broken-hearted. If you love me, Sally, let another woman comfort him."

VI

We are come now almost to the end of the letters. Winter is setting in at Barton. Sally is at last to have the bliss she desired, the bliss of motherhood.

"It is October now," she writes, "and the trees prettier than you could imagine, all crowding up to the windows to have a look at me. The new library is finished and is a most comfortable apartment. The ceiling is stuccoed in gold and white. All the bookcases have brass lattices, and above them the busts in marble of the Greek and Latin philosophers and poets. Miss Blake is with me. Her dear little sly phiz reminds me of yours. Would to God I could see it! I neither walk nor ride, but go out in the cabriolet. Sir Charles is

vastly impatient of imprisonment to a house. He is between London and Newmarket: seldom here. I am never ill, which perhaps you did not know had happened to me often during the last two years. The sun seems to shine through the honey-colored leaves even when there is no sun. The gardeners are putting in bulbs. Many things will have happened, my dear soul, before they push their pretty noses through the earth.

"Are you still politician enough to be eager over the fuss they make with Mr. Wilks? If you are I wish you would write an anonymous letter to His Majesty — to advise him not to skulk in his den like — I don't know what, for my loyalty forbids my naming what a *pauvre animal* I think him. It really provokes me to see him so bullied; but you know *we* always prophesied he would never make a figure, once being out of our good graces, and we never were mistaken, certainly. Do you know that he has made his brat the proudest little imp you ever saw, just like himself?"

VII

This is the last of the letters for a period of nearly seven years, during which many things happened. Among other things Lady Susan and Mr.

O'Brien returned to England in the summer of 1770, but Sally was not then in a condition of mind to give her friend the welcome which she would have given her in happier circumstances, so true is it that most of the happiness of this mortal life consists in anticipation and that the thing realized falls far short of the anticipation. "The event of February 1769 was that toward which I now know my whole life had been leading," Lady Sarah wrote in her diary. "God knows I have repented. It was never sweet to me at the best, for in moments that would otherwise have been Elysium my conscience reproached me for what I had done. Let me say for both of us that we did not sin lightly. Ours was *une grande passion.* In a manner I was his only love, as he was mine, for the poor Roman lady was never his love but only his saint. For my sin against a too trusting husband I can not forgive myself. I should never have married him, or he should not have left me so much alone. I have loved greatly; I have sinned greatly; I have suffered greatly."

VIII

"Let me write so far as I may, her vindication, her exculpation, her apology," says her lifelong friend.

"This dearest, brightest, warmest of women had the irreparable misfortune at a very early age of falling violently in love with her cousin, Lord William Gordon, a young man of a refined and pensive beauty, great nobility of character and a warm heart. It was impossible for Sally to love and not be loved. Unfortunately, in his early manhood, out of the nobility and generosity of his character, as I believe, he formed an attachment or friendship to the beautiful Princess Coronna whose unhappiness it was to be married to a wicked devil and rake, who having obtained possession of her beautiful person wreaked on it his evil rage — such as devils feel — that he could not harm her soul. Lord W., persuaded, I am certain, by some fantastical knight-errantry which was entirely to his credit, devoted himself to Madame Coronna's service, she at this time being a sick woman and living apart from her husband, that ape and devil in man's shape. Lord W. left Sally's side after he had become aware that his passion was returned, on the

news that Madame Coronna had gone back to her husband, which was a part of the poor soul's generosity that she might place a barrier between them, leaving him free to marry Sally. I need not relate how her husband murdered her, with which Europe has rung and which wicked deed the foul devil expiated on the scaffold. Lord W., distraught with the sight he came suddenly upon at the villa, lonesome and in the country, where that wretch had taken her to murder her, was at first too sick of life to remember what happiness might yet be his. When at last he remembered the solace of Sally's lovely beauty — and I do believe she was the sweetest, sunniest thing the world ever saw — when he turned to Sally's arms for a refuge and her bosom to pillow his head he found that she was already another's, and that other one by his generosity, his unsuspiciousness, his youth and charm, not lightly to be wronged.

"All the world is buzzing with Sally's name. She stood always so above scandal — a miracle, seeing that she was so mad and merry — that now she is a titbit indeed for them who love to see defiled what has been more than common white.

"Well, if ever a pair was to be pitied, it was in my opinion these two; for they had spent above

seven years in keeping apart violently, who if but once the restraint was removed would rush together with an irresistible force. They saw each other from time to time, but by accident. Lord W. roamed the world ill at ease. Sometimes the desire to look upon Sally once again would drive him home for a few days. On many occasions she saw him, without speaking,— once from her box at the Opera, where she caught sight of him in the shadows of the pit. Another time as she leaned from her window at night she saw him look at her from the darkness of trees. He would vanish again to the ends of the earth. He has lived among the North American Indians, and has sojourned many months in the East Indies. He has been treasure-hunting in the Caribbean Seas. Anything that would keep him from Sally's beauty and Sally's heavenly charm. Alack, poor lovers!

"The time came when Lord W. was obliged to be in England because of the dangerous illness of his father. They met, they touched hands, they spoke. They deceived themselves. Sally has sworn to me when I reproached her for an occasion of danger, that a great change had come over them for they were both grown calm. 'It is the approach of age,' she wrote. She had sent me her

picture colored with the same letter. I glanced at it: the ravishing complexion, the kind deep eyes, the lovely hair, the enchanting smile were all there. She should have sent me the uncolored print she sent to Mr. O'Brien. I could better then have believed that they were grown calm.

"Sir Charles Bunbury's too simple trust drove the poor things together; for what does he do, Sally being interesting and keeping the house at Barton, but bid Lord W. there to look after his wife? They say he commended Lord W. to the graces of a pretty Miss Blake who is devoted to Sally and kept her company. Poor wretch! I should like to shake him. He is as pretty as a picture, but stupid. What has he to do with a quicksilver thing like Sal?

"Even then — I know they parted not once but many times. 'Twas Sir Charles' apparent carelessness about his wife that turned the tables at last. When Louisa was born he was not to be found. There was a cock-fight somewhere — or a match. He is a great child. He blubbed over her when she was very ill, but no sooner does she begin to mend than he is coursing in the next county. A man so excessively fond of sport has no business to marry — a creature of her sensibility, too.

"They are at Carolside in Berwickshire, and little Louisa Bunbury with them. I hear it is a fine child. I am glad the mother's love has not deserted the poor brat. There is a terrible commotion in the family. The pride of Lady Kildare is wounded beyond cure. Lord Holland is too sick and his wife too busy keeping him with her to care much or show it. Lady Louisa Conolly is in tears. I hear that neither Charles Fox nor his brother Stephen will hear a word against her. The Duchess of Richmond is very incensed; but I hear the duke says he will receive her if but she will come back. She will never be happy in that situation and the joy they can snatch will be at the best but a bitter one.

"The whole world pities Sir Charles and blames my poor Sally. I hear that Sir Charles is so vastly pleased with a filly he is training for the Thousand Guineas Gold Cup that he is scarce aware of his loss."

CHAPTER XIV

HER PENITENCE

I

ON a weeping day of May Sally came back. There had been a storm in the night, and the pretty flowers were all beaten down, their faces in the earth; it yet rained and was cold, and there were heavy cloud-shadows everywhere, and the wind sighed more like autumn than spring.

"There is snow on the hills," said Sally's brother, the duke, as they sat in the post-chaise together, huddled in cloaks, for the wind was very keen. "The blossom will be all spoilt this year; and 'tis hard on the ewes and lambs. It is the latest snow that ever I remember."

The duke was an easy-going, good-natured man, and very fond of his pretty young sister. He was uneasily conscious of the tragedy in Sally's face as she sat trying to quiet the fretful child, which cried, poor innocent, as though it knew how its mother had laid her life in ruins. Sally stared before her while she rocked the child to and fro in her arms,

and the expression on her face was not good to see. She had had three months of passion, and never for one moment had it been sweet, because remorse had turned it sour. Time had been when she had said that she would belong to the man who needed her, whom she needed, though all the laws of God and man stood in the way, and would not repent. But the grayness of ashes was in her eyes and on her cheeks as she sat nursing the querulous child and gazing out at the harsh day. She had not understood her own capacities for remorse, for repentance.

The duke leaned over and gave his fingers to the child to hold.

"See how fast she clings, Sally!" he said. "She will know what she wants and will have it, the pretty creature."

He was troubled when he had said it, fearing he had said the wrong thing. But Sally had not heard him. Her heart and mind were back in those parting hours with her lover, when they had had their last walk, dumb with grief, beside the waters of the Leader. The path which they paced up and down during those three months they were together is yet known by the name of the Lovers' Walk. You shall see the walk if you visit Carolside in our

day; and the thorn-trees the hapless lovers planted side by side have intertwined, branch and stem.

II

The duke had thought to have a hard task to separate them. He had undertaken it against the wishes of his family. His duchess had mocked at his undertaking anything so hopeless. Sally's sisters, while they loved her still, had no hope of his success. "Give her my dear love," said Louisa, the most tender of them, "and tell her that when she will come she will find my arms open to receive her."

"Better let her be," said some one else. "Since she has burned her boats for her lover, let her stay with him. Will her husband receive her? Or will the world be kind? What about the women's tongues? She is too beautiful and too witty not to have made enemies."

"Under my protection," said the duke haughtily, "no one will dare treat my sister with disrespect." He was as proud as the devil, though a simple soul, as Sally used to say in her triumphal days.

He was simple enough now as he sat opposite Sally in the post-chaise, miserable because of the misery of her face, racking his kind mind to find

something to say that would not hurt her. They were traveling to Goodwood, changing horses at every stage. Somewhere at the back of the duke's mind there lurked a dread that Lord William might repent his giving up of Sally and might follow post-haste. So there were no stoppages; only fresh horses at all the posting-houses they came to and pushing on night and day, snatching some food while the horses were changed, till it was all a dream of fatigue for poor Sally; and as for the child, it fretted day and night.

III

By the end of the second day the duke was fuming against Charles Bunbury who could not keep his wife himself and would not set her free to marry a man who wanted her. It had not been to his mind, this thrusting the lovers apart. They had been most unhappy in loving where they were not free to love. The tragedy of their passion dignified it. Neither was of that spirit to be happy amid the shipwreck of all their ideals. There were women who could have been happy in the circumstances. Not Sally, who could not cast away the precepts of virtue in which she had been brought up, nor lower the honorable pride which belonged

to her as to all her family. The apples of Eden were bitter in her mouth.

The second night out they halted for sleep. The duke was dazed for sleep and the driver nodding on his box. The next morning they pushed on again. They were now well over the border, and, barring highwaymen — and since they rode without pretension to be anything but modest travelers they might hope not to attract highwaymen — they would reach Goodwood some time in the evening of the fourth day. The child slept at last; the cold in England was less than it had been in Scotland and traveling more tolerable. The duke began to be reassured about the danger of Lord William's repenting and following them, and became more apprehensive as they drew nearer London of the danger of highwaymen; but they were fortunate enough, when about fifty miles from London, to fall in with a detachment of soldiers also traveling toward London, and under their escort they traveled in safety.

IV

A night spent in London, where Sally refused to meet any of her own kin, and with her infant spent the night under the roof of Madame Lefevre, her

old French governess, and the next day they were on their way to Goodwood, this time under escort, since they traveled in the duke's carriage. It was a melancholy journey.

Now for the first time Sally opened her lips to ask what was to be done with her. The good-natured duke, who could have wept to see the beauteous thing Sally was reduced to this Medusa-face, leaned across the child to take Sally's hand in his.

"My dear little sister," he said, "I will take care of you."

"I will not face my world again," said Sally; and the duke wished she would have wept, although he was no more partial to a woman's tears than any other man. "If I could but find a mother for this innocent whom I have robbed of everything; if but Louisa would take her and rear her as her own, I should be no trouble to you. There is a convent I know in Italy where they would receive me. Once the *grille* closed behind me you could think on me as dead."

"I do not want to think on you as dead," replied the duke. "I had rather you lived, child. Why should you rob this little one of a mother as well as all else she has lost?"

"The duchess will not receive me," said Sally; and never looked prouder than in her humility.

"Why, I think you wrong her grace there," said the duke. "She is kinder than you think. But you must not talk of convents. They sound a death-in-life place to me. If you desire ghostly comfort you shall have it from Doctor Godwin, my chaplain. If I were you, Sally, child, I would not look behind, but before. If the Christian religion means aught to you, as I know it does, that is a religion which is very kind to the penitent."

Sally winced and again the duke reproached himself for his obtuseness.

"If it is not to be the convent," she said, "what are you going to do with me, Charles? Your friends will not receive me, even if your wife will."

The duke thrust out his under lip. He was inordinately proud, for all his easy ways.

"I should like to see the one," he said, "man or woman, who will not follow where I lead. But I have thought of everything for you, Sally. You need not face the world till you will. You shall have the use of the Dingle till I build you a house, which I shall proceed to do at once."

At this evidence of her brother's tenderness for her Sally at last wept.

V

At the Dingle Sally lived retired from the world, some considerable portion of which would have been willing to welcome her. Indeed, the world was kinder than she thought, for that part of it which was worthy consideration looked upon her not as a woman lightly sinning, but as one who had had a great passion, the object of which through the cruelty of fate had been forbidden her.

In time all the members of her own family came back to her. The Duchess of Richmond treated her most truly as a sister. Lady Louisa hurried to her side as soon as she might, for she was in Ireland. Presently Lady Holland came to tell her the sad incidents of the death-bed of Lady Cecilia, the youngest of the Lennox sisters, who died of a decline in Italy in the year of Sally's great trouble. Sally in sober garments, as nun-like as she might wear, the life and sparkle gone from her face, her footsteps sad and slow; Sally devoted to her infant, and striving to keep a cheerful face lest the babe should be frightened of her gloom, was a touching spectacle.

The sisters whispered together concerning her. She had appointed to herself a life at the Dingle

only a little less sad than the life at the Carmelites would have been. So great and fixed was her grief that they feared its ultimate effect on her bodily health. She began to grow hollow behind the ears; her nose to sharpen; she had a cough. She seemed like to go the way of Lady Cecilia.

Doctor Godwin visited her a great deal, and read spiritual books with her for her comfort. Blair's *Grave* and *The Mercy of God as Displayed in a Hell for Sinners* did not seem to have the uplifting effect on Sally which the pious man designed. He had begun upon *Death Considered under Nine Headings, with an Appendix on the Tortures of the Damned and the Errors of the Popish Doctrine of Purgatory,* when Sally one day tossed the book in the fire and burst out laughing, afterward apologizing profusely to the learned divine, who was not, however, placated, nor could he be brought to believe that she was sorry, no matter how many excuses were made him.

VI

The duke expressed himself as being vastly pleased at Sally's treatment of his chaplain; and while the duchess was rather shocked, she was forced to acknowledge that it seemed like Sally re-

turning to her old self. The duke sent a special messenger to Lady Louisa to tell her the incident, as though it were a joyful piece of news, and while it comforted Lady Louisa, it made her weep too.

But the incident had not the significance they had hoped, for after it was over Sally returned to her solitary way of living, which made her deny herself at times even to the members of her own family. It was a very wet winter following that in which Sally had forgotten religion and duty and all else because of her fatal passion. She hardly ever went out, not even to attend the chapel of Goodwood House. She had one old servant, who had followed her from Ireland for love of her, and a young nurse who helped in the care of Miss Louisa Bunbury; the child throve as though her mother was not a mourning penitent and never caused in any one the slightest concern as to its health.

It was the Irish servant, Bridget O'Neill, who spoke to Lady Louisa of the habit of solitariness that was growing on the mistress she adored.

"She isn't a baste, to be always alone," she said; "and 'tis a mad woman or a dead woman you'll find her before long, my lady. What did I hear the crathur moanin' to herself last night whin I listened at the dure of her room to see if she was

asleep? She kep' sayin' to herself over an' over, 'The thorn-trees have grown and they have knotted together.' What d'ye make of it, my lady? Ravin', I call it. An' times she'll sing to herself, an' 'tis the terrible lonesome song of *Shule Aroon* she does be singin', an' 'tis worse thin cryin'."

Lady Louisa was dreadfully shocked and perturbed. She tried to induce Sally to return with her to Ireland, but Sally seemed most unwilling to meet any of those who had known her in the brilliant days of her honor and renown. She was still thinking of the convent in its nook in the Apennines, where the nuns never spoke, but fasted and scourged themselves and wore hair-shirts for the sins of the world, and were on their knees before the altar night and day.

VII

The devoted sister turned away in tears from the spectacle of this ruined Sally craving for the death-in-life of the cloister as the only refuge for her broken heart. Her incessant brooding could only end one way. Sally would be driven mad within a short time, if it went on.

Lady Louisa, in her desperation, had a wild idea. Sally's husband had made no sign. The duke had

urged a divorce on him in the hope that the lovers might be enabled to marry, but Sir Charles had refused to consider the question of divorce. "A dog in the manger," said the duke, and anathematized the husband.

Lady Louisa had the strange idea of appealing to Sir Charles to set Sally free. She took a chair to his house in Privy Gardens, where she found him breakfasting, although it was afternoon; and the room in which he sat, in which she had last seen Sally in the splendor of her beauty and pride, presented so disordered and chilly an appearance, that she felt the bitterness in her heart evaporating, drop by drop.

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" asked Sir Charles, starting to his feet and treading on a dog's tail as he did so. Half a dozen dogs lay about the hearth, eying the cold ashes of the grate disconsolately.

He set Lady Louisa a chair.

"I hope you're not chilly, ma'am," he said. "My rascally servants neglect me. They have forgotten to light the fire, although it is three of the afternoon. May I offer you a cup of chocolate?"

The chill of the place seemed to settle clammily on Louisa's heart. Her eyes, roaming hither and

thither, took in the signs of a dissipated night. A broken decanter, the wine sopping into the carpet, lay on the ground at her feet. There were cards flung about the table; a heap of sovereigns was at one corner. The report that the deserted husband distracted himself with faro was apparently not an erroneous one.

Tears gathered in Lady Louisa's kind eyes. She looked at the young man who sat toying without appetite with his breakfast. The wholesome sunburn had gone from his face. He was pale; his eyes, sunken, showed heavy rings about them. His dark hair was in disorder; his person displayed neglect. Her heart bled for the man who was one of the handsomest, most debonair of his day. Surely Sally was right when she said that the consequences of sin were endless.

"Oh, Charles," she said, "what desolation!"

She had come in with a heart steeled against him, if a heart can be steeled that is naturally all softness.

"Oh, Charles, what desolation!"

The tears overflowed her eyes and made two disconsolate rivulets down her fresh and fair cheeks.

VIII

Sir Charles sprang to his feet.

"I'm confoundedly sorry, Louisa," he said. "Don't cry. I can't bear to see a woman cry. Why, what's the matter? Sally isn't dead?"

The consternation in his face struck her as so strange and unexpected that her tears ceased to flow. She looked at him, a soft image of Sally.

"She is not dead," she said, "but she will be dead or mad if she will not give over grieving. But indeed, Charles, 'twas not for her I wept. My concern was to see the plain evidences here of what my poor sister's conduct has driven you to. It would be the last straw, if she knew."

He shrugged his shoulders, and she thought she had never seen him look so handsome. She had a wonder that Sally could have given him up — even for Lord William.

"I am not worth your tears," he said. "For the matter of that, you don't expect a man to be domestic without a wife. The nights would be long but for the cards. There is no great harm in it. I am not broke yet."

"It would kill my sister," Lady Louisa said, growing tearful again. Living in Ireland, she had

not heard that Sir Charles Bunbury was consoling himself as men of fashion usually do.

"How is she?" he asked, and he seemed much moved.

"Oh," said Lady Louisa, "is it possible you care for her still?"

"I care for her damnably!" he returned; and for once Lady Louisa spared to rebuke the oath.

"Then," she said, getting to her feet, "'tis no use stating my errand. I came to ask if you would not divorce my poor sister, so as to give her a chance of beginning life again. I hardly think happiness is possible to her; she is too conscious of the wrong she has done you and herself. She is very proud, Sir Charles. The position she finds herself in is more than she can endure."

"I am sorry to incommode her," he replied, his face hardening, "but leave her free to marry her lover I can not and will not! Take her that message from me."

"Alas!" said Lady Louisa, "God forbid that I should add that to the burden she already bears. She has no thought of marrying. Her only desire is to flee away and be at rest. She would now be in a convent in Italy — where she would be as secluded as in her grave — if we would consent to

it. Poor child! She only longs to die to her old life. If you saw her, Charles, even you would forgive her."

"Sally in a convent!" he said. "Shut away from the sun and air! Why, she was the freest creature that ever walked. What a seat she had in the saddle! 'Twas a thousand pities I never had her heart."

CHAPTER XV

SHE CHOOSES THE HARD WAY

I

SALLY was walking up and down by the banks of a winter stream. The branches of the trees met over her head; but all the leaves were down under her feet. The stream flowed sluggishly: it was the overflow from the string of lakes that ran like the beads of a rosary through the Sussex woodlands. Very different from the Leader in flood, when she and William Gordon, hand in hand, had looked into each other's miserable eyes and said farewell.

The duke had had Doctor Harvey to Sally, and he had prescribed the open air. Sally followed his prescription obediently. This obedient Sally, who had always been so wilful, a lovely rebel against authority, made those who loved her weep. She paced up and down by the banks of the sluggish English stream while the rain beat upon her and the wind cried about her ears, seeing always the Leader in flood, feeling William Gordon's tears on her face, in that last interview when they had clung

together a while before he put her away and ran from the place. She knew now why the wind and the rain, the sound of waters in flood had ever troubled her with a prevision of griefs to be.

There was not one hope stirring in Sally's head, as there was not a hint of life in the stripped and desolate woods.

II

She was living over again, as she lived over again day and night, the parting with her lover. Even the consolations of religion were denied her, because she felt she had not truly repented, else she would have turned away resolutely from such thoughts. It was late afternoon of the January day, and the dusk began to gather in the Lady's Walk as the place was called. Some poor unhappy lady had drowned herself there, and the Sally of the happy days would not have found herself in the Lady's Walk at dusk for anything you could give her. But this Sally was "fallen too low for special fear."

The mists were rising and the rain came on thicker: it was time she should go in. The thought of the lighted room which awaited her did not draw her: she was past such appeals; the chill and sad-

ness of the world out-of-doors were more in tune with her mind. She leaned above the water. In parts it was very deep and filled with water-weeds that fattened in the slimy ooze at the bottom of the stream.

She stood by a little bridge. She thought the water flowed stealthily as though it had secrets to hide. She could see her own face reflected dimly in the water, like a drowned face. It seemed to draw her toward it. She leaned a little nearer. She was not afraid of the stream nor its secrets. A strange thought came into her mind. If she were to yield herself quietly to the stream would she sink, or would she float? Would she be carried over the weir a mile down and into the mill-pond? If she sank, how long would it be before her body should float?

She looked about her to see if there were any stones with which a body could be weighted so that it would lie quietly at the bottom of the stream.

III

"Sally."

Some one had come quietly along the Lady's Walk and spoken almost at her ear. She started violently. The name had been whispered. She

turned with a wild expectation of seeing her lover. Oh, indeed, she was not truly repentant; she had not torn the forbidden passion from her heart. The wild hope fluttered and died. Terror and shame took its place. He who called her name was her husband.

She covered her face with her hands and shrank back, praying for the mountains to cover her, but his voice was kind.

"You are not afraid of me, my poor girl," he said; and then: "Good lud, Sally, I am not going to eat you. When you looked at me first I thought you were glad to see me, a mad thing to think, my girl, wasn't it?"

She blessed the slowness behind the handsome young face which had not discovered that it was the lover she expected to see and not the husband. Her heart slackened somewhat from its wild gallop. He drew her face upward to him; unloosed her fingers from before her eyes.

"What are you doing here, my girl?" he asked gently. "You should be within doors. I don't like this river. Ugh! There are toads and water-newts in it, I am sure. 'Tis a dead stream."

"I was thinking how 'twould be to lie at the bottom of it," Sally said quietly.

"What a devil of a thought!" Sir Charles commented in a shocked voice. "I see you have been left too much alone. It's devilish vaporish here. Come to a fire where we can talk. I'm deuced hungry and cold, and you make my flesh creep, Sally."

He drew her arm within his. She noticed idly that he was in a riding dress, and how well his figure looked in it: the riding whip he carried tucked under one arm; his cocked hat was set rakishly to one side. His spurs clanked as he walked.

"There is no accommodation for your horse," she said. "Is it Mercury?"

"Mercury has fallen lame. 'Tis the Bastable mare. A pretty thing but ill-tempered. I left her at Goodwood House. They told me you had no stables."

"You should not ride her," said Sally. "She is a treacherous devil of a beast."

It was so easy to fall back into the old ways with him, now that she was no longer terrified of him. She was full of amazement. He behaved as though he had nothing to forgive, no honor to defend. She hardly knew whether to love him for his gentleness or to be dismayed.

She watched him eating with the appetite of a

hunter. He pressed food on her, but she would have none of it, sitting by and watching him, in her long plain black dress wearing the air of a penitent. She was wondering at the soft downiness of his skin like a young creature's, at his unflawed color, the brightness of his eyes. Nothing could be less like a betrayed husband.

Presently his hunger being satisfied, he turned his chair toward her where she sat pale in the firelight.

"Why do you wear those ugly blacks, Sally?" he asked discontentedly. "Haven't you a decent gown to put on?"

She did not answer him, and he came and stood by the fire, straddling the hearth-rug, his hands under his coat-tails, looking down at her from a height.

"I hate your blacks," he said, frowning. "Louisa frightened me damnably. She said you wanted to go into a convent."

Amazement upon amazement! He spoke as though she were the Sally of a few months ago, the Sally who was gone forever.

"And now," he said, "you frighten me with your talk of drowning. Ugh! I hate that river of yours, Sally. It reminds me of a time I was

otter-hunting and waded in a dashed deep pool, and I trod on a water-rat — full on the slimy fat body of it. The brute nipped me. Poor wretch, I suppose it could do no less."

Sally had a sickness of recoil. When she had thought of the bottom of the stream she had had no thought of the living creatures there. The rats would have eaten her. The place was full of them: she remembered now that her dogs were always hunting there, the scuffling in the reeds, the squeak of a rat when it was caught; and how the dogs came out with bloody ears and jaws.

"I am glad I didn't drown," she said slowly.

"You wouldn't think of it again?" Sir Charles asked anxiously.

"I give you my promise."

"Louisa wanted me to divorce you, Sally. All your family are in hopes of a divorce. Did she come from you?"

She shook her head violently. She was too weary even to desire a divorce. Could she go back beyond the mournfulness of that last parting and make a new marriage and begin life over again? She was not sure she even desired it. She wanted to be quiet, to rear her baby and make her peace

with God — in time, when she had brought the evil passions of her heart into subjection.

"You would wish to marry again?" she said, lifting her heavy eyes to him.

"Not I. After Sally no other woman could content me. I was not going to divorce you that that fellow might marry you." A sudden fierce light glowed in his blue eyes and Sally saw that he was not indifferent. "It was revenge enough for me when I heard you had left him. I waited for that. I knew you would prefer your God to him. 'Tis a way women have. If I had not known it — poor devil — I'd have run him through."

IV

Sally was overwhelmed. How little she had known of her husband all those years, taking him to be so simple. She had dreaded that he would kill William Gordon. All the time he had left him contemptuously to what would befall him on the day when her conscience awakened and she should leave him. Her family might have pleaded, stormed, reasoned in vain if the virtuous woman in her, fashioned during many generations before

she was born, had not come awake, the first delirium of passion being over. She remembered her lover's incredulity at first, his anger, his grief, his despair when he realized that she would go, that she must leave him, that something stronger than her will, stronger than the influence of friends, the opinion of the world, was to stand between them inflexibly forever. The struggle had exhausted her, drained her dry of feeling. Her husband had foreseen it all the time! Oh, it was a light shed on one she had thought so simple. Something of a new respect for Sir Charles sprang up in her heart. His contemptuous pity for the man who had stolen her from him was a masterpiece. She had a curious whimsical vision of how it would work out in a play — with Mr. Garrick in the part of the husband.

V

"You will rest the night at Goodwood?" she asked.

"If you turn me out I shall beg the duke's hospitality," he replied. "But — we are yet husband and wife. Why not let bygones be bygones? If I forgive, no one else will dare say a word. Come home with me, Sally. I can not do without you

any longer. 'Tis fine hunting weather at Barton, soft and still, with the scent lying. I acknowledge I was to blame. I was always after the horses. You might well think I'd forgotten I had a wife. But I hadn't, Sal, I hadn't. You made salt and savor, my girl. It's been infernally dull without you. I have as pretty a mare as ever stepped, the very brown of your eyes. Come home and let us be happy together. If I don't forget you shall never know that I remember."

His magnanimity overwhelmed her. Tears stood in her eyes and relieved her heart.

"You are very generous, Sir Charles," she faltered.

"Generous! Not I. I've suffered damnably, Sal, damnably. I couldn't have kept my hands off him if it wasn't that I knew you'd make him suffer more than a quick death would do. What's death to a man for whom Sally has given up the world? Don't let's talk of him. He's done. You've sent him out in the wilderness. Your duty lies with me. I'll never visit it on you or the brat. Come home with me, Sal."

She looked up at him, and all the graciousness of his youth and comeliness overwhelmed her. He was immortally young and handsome by the sad

and worn lover of her life for whom she had deserted him. He had always been kind. The memory of a thousand kindnesses rushed over her in a flood. He had been so sunny, so sweet-tempered, so debonair in their years together. And now he was offering her the shelter of his name once again: a restoration to the esteem of the world — others, besides the family she had disgraced, would feel that so far as might be she had wiped out the disgrace. There would be the safety, the honor, the happiness for the child.

The prospect of a renewed life with Charles Bunbury was for a moment in her mind; and it was a fair and peaceful vision enough. Barton, the home she had come to love with a passion — the old servants and friends, the dogs, the horses, old friends all: the good comradeship of the hunting days and the racing days together. How good it would be — how good!

But for another woman, a woman who had not her sin behind her. The virtuous woman in Sally had been as adamant to her lover: now she stood as adamant to herself, closing the doors of possible happiness in her own face. She would not go back to her husband. Intolerable, impossible idea! Her life was pledged to prayer and penitence and fast-

ing. A great passion had undone her. She must pay the price now. There was no turning back from the narrow and straight way of salvation she had marked out for her treading.

VI

"You will come back to me, Sally?"

He looked down at her; and the confident expression of his face changed, passed through doubt to a piteous entreaty. Her face wore the look against which William Gordon had flung himself in vain. The hopelessness of it, the finality, turned her husband's heart cold. Nevertheless, as the other man had done, he dashed himself against the wall of her resolve, broke himself uselessly. There was only penitence possible for her — not ease and a happy life and restoration to the favor of the world. His pleadings, his arguments with her, failed. At last, angry and miserable, he flung himself from her presence and went out into the night.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BEGINNING OF SPRING

I

FOR some five or six years after that night when her husband left her, Sally lived in as much, in more, seclusion than if she had had her will and been an inmate of a convent. She devoted herself to the care of her child, to gardening and such outdoor pursuits as she could carry on within her own small domain which she never left: she read a great deal, she carried on various good works, she prayed much. Sometimes she allowed herself the relaxation of music, but not often. She saw the members of her own family, but no one else. We have no record even that she saw Lady Susan O'Brien, who had returned to England with her husband in the year following Sally's flight.

So many summers, so many autumns, so many winters, so many springs, passed over Sally's head while she lived dead to the world and content to be forgotten. Till one spring, to her grief, her dismay, her consternation, she found an irrational

hope begin to spring up in her heart. What was it she expected with the first crocus, the first song of the thrushes, under a pearly sky of February? She had been forgetting her repentance so far as to play with her child, and to laugh one of her high brilliant peals of laughter at some prank of the little creature.

The first time she heard her own laughter she was overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, till old Bridget, peeping in at the open door of the nursery, said —

"Oh, glory be to God, 'tis good to hear your ladyship, and like fresh rain to the cracked earth the sound of your laughin'."

She found Sally standing still in a pause of consternation.

"Oh, Bridget, I did not mean to laugh so loud," she said. "I was forgetting how loud I could laugh in the old days. I have no right to it now. And see the child. I have startled my poppet. She did not know that her mother could laugh."

"'Twas time for her to learn it, then," the old Irishwoman said, with a grim affectionateness. "Her little ladyship has a right to a mother that can laugh: and beggin' your ladyship's pardon, I wouldn't give a fig for a religion that wasn't cheer-

ful, aye, an' joyful. I'd take it as a sign that God is good an' forgives."

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings and simple people!!! Sally took it for an oracle. After that the house was often brightened by her laughter: although in her moments alone she wondered what the spring in her heart might mean — whether it was a snare for her foolish feet, a temptation, or a sign from God like the arch in heaven that the days of His anger were over and there was a covenant of His peace upon the world.

II

In 1776 Sir Charles, after delaying all those years, finally divorced Sally. She went back to being Lady Sarah Lennox and resigned herself to a quiet and peaceful old age, full of good works and holy living, with her child and her people for solace in the little house her dear brother, the duke, had begun to build for her.

III

Meanwhile she was coming back to an interest in the world, her heart healed and grown strong in the solitude. The divorce for a time opened her wounds, till she realized that Sir Charles did not

seek a release for himself, but only to set her free. The men who had loved Sally were not quick to console themselves. William Gordon was somewhere out of England. She was glad he had let her alone during all those years. Over is over, dead is dead: and she had no desire to be any man's wife. She had her child, and she was surrounded by many dear pets; and the flowers came up in her garden-beds year after year for a fruition of her hopes. Love had brought her bitter trouble: it had shipwrecked her life, and she had only saved her soul by watching and prayer and fasting and much tribulation. At thirty years of age Sally resigned herself to being done with love. She dreaded it as a devouring fire, and was glad to be come to an age of quiet pulses and sober emotions. "I am now come to thirty years of age," she wrote in 1775, "and am resigned to being an old woman."

IV

In 1775 began again her correspondence with Lady Susan O'Brien, from which we learn so much of her mind and doings. She has been drawn out of her solitude to stay with Lady Louisa Conolly at Castletown. This uprooting shook her so completely out of the habits she had formed in her

solitary life that it was easy for her to go back to those of the life before the great change.

Lady Susan and her husband are at this period living at the old Manor House at Stinsford near Dorchester, which belonged to Lady Susan's mother, Lady Ilchester: and they are still seeking that ideal job for Mr. O'Brien, in which they shall live happy ever after, a job long in coming. Indeed, poor Lady Susan's aristocratic relatives seem to have been able or willing to do singularly little to afford her a modest settlement in life; and her husband, charming and constant as he was, seems to have been singularly unable to stand on his own feet.

Perhaps there were letters between Sally and her dearest Sue all those years which may have been destroyed. The first of the resumed letters suggests no gap in the correspondence.

V

Sally is very proud. She is all for reconciling Lady Susan and her family: and that reconciliation has hung fire for many years. But Sally accepts her punishment — runs to meet it even: a part of it which galls her proud soul — although it has striven

Lady Susan O'Brien

after humility on its knees — is that people may not desire to meet her.

"Lord and Lady Stavordale have made Louisa a visit. I did not intend to force my company on either Lady Stavordale or Lady Harriet, your sister; but Lady Stavordale inquired about me in so obliging a manner that I could not any longer deny myself the pleasure of seeing them. . . . One reason also for my seeing them was that I had no other house to go to, and as they stayed a few days I could not well confine myself to my room. I hope Lord and Lady Ilchester will not disapprove of my acquaintance with those ladies, for I have too many obligations to your father and mother not to be hurt at the thoughts of displeasing them, but I think if they knew the pleasure I have had in seeing so very amiable and beautiful a creature as Lady Stavordale, they would not be sorry I had so much satisfaction."

Lady Susan annotates this —

"She is the humblest creature in all the world: very different from our fine ladies *whose only fear is to be found out:* but she is as proud as the devil."

"You will wonder perhaps at my sudden fancy for the Beauteous Irishwoman, as they call her,"

Sally goes on. Lady Stavordale was an O'Grady of Limerick — alas! that such beauty and grace should pass! —" but indeed you can not wonder, for her face and manner are so bewitching, and I defy any person of taste and feeling to pass a day with her and not feel charmed with her, except it is some of the *fine people* whose taste is spoilt *pour la belle nature,* and they indeed may accuse her of the horrible fault of not powdering her beautiful hair, and differing in every respect from *une belle maitresse,* for she seems not to have a guess that she is the prettiest of creatures."

It is a proof of how Sally has mended in her solitude that she flings herself heart and soul into the Sisyphus-like task of reconciling Lady Sue to her brothers and sisters. Now that the passions are all dead, there is a certain sad amusement in reading of how Lady Sue, not a bit quelled by her years of a humble estate, " had written a violent letter " about her Aunt Digby; and how her family was all by the ears; and how the sweet Lady Stavordale deduced from her husband's indignation against his sister his great love of her, since " such excessive disapproval " could be only evoked by one who was the object of much love to the " disapproving " party.

Sally is never tired of giving good advice: there are reams of it: and one can see the graceful head bent over the writing-table as Sally evolved schemes and representations that would make every one acknowledge that they had been entirely in the wrong, although unintentionally so, and every one else in the right, although they seemed not to be so.

Lady Susan replies with a full setting-forth of the unkindness of her family — they seem to have been a prickly lot indeed. "My brothers and sisters are very unlike yours. I wish there was a Lady Louisa among us to keep us from *freezing* as we do when we are together. Lady S. is the most likely to do so."

VI

The American War of Independence is now in all men's minds. Sally will have Susan's view of it. One of her own views is so truly feminine and Sallyish that I must quote it —

"I suppose you are violent for your American friends. I hope they are good sort of people, but I don't love Presbyterians and I love the English soldiers, so that I, at present, hate those who use them ill beyond the laws of war, which scalping

certainly is: and I don't believe a word of the soldiers doing more than they ought."

Here is a bit of Sally's craft —

"As you are so near your father and mother I do hope you may profit as much as possible by the neighborhood. Your mother loves cards: you should make it a point to have a party for her, and whoever she likes are those to choose."

She is devoted to her little daughter, the more that she can never repair the wrong she has done her. There is an air of asking nothing for the child: one would almost call it belittling if the mother-fondness did not flash out now and again. Louisa Bunbury has a certain likeness to the beautiful and charming Lady Stavordale.

"I saw her likeness to my girl and am both glad and sorry for it, for a plain likeness of a pretty woman is terrible, but yet I like to see it myself, because I admire Lady S. so excessively. I wish my girl might be like her in everything. I have not the least chance of resembling Mrs. O'Grady in her education and example, for I hear there was never so charming a woman, and Lady S.'s greatest admirers say that she could not help being charming brought up by such a mother.

"Since you desire to have an account of me I

shall tell you that I pass my time very pleasantly. I live almost all the day long with my sister. Mr. Conolly seems to like my being here, and shows me so much kindness that I hope it is not disagreeable to him, and I'm sure it makes Louisa happy, for she scarce passes a day without telling me that having me with her is one of the greatest pleasures she has: there is something so pleasant in being so sincerely loved and welcomed that it is not wonderful I should be perfectly happy. We have a good deal of company. They come in a very pleasant way, dropping in at dinner-time and going away soon after, so that they never interfere with any employment we have. Some of my old acquaintances among the ladies have been vastly civil to me, quite kind indeed, and some of Louisa's acquaintances have been very civil, and great part of both sorts have taken no notice of me. *Je m'en console* for this reason; I don't want *company,* for I have *society,* which is better, and as I always take the civilities I meet with from ladies as a *favor* I'm not ambitious of being obliged to people I don't care about: and yet when they do it from a good-natured motive I am always *doved* with it and like them vastly. The only person whose countenance I regret is the Dowager Kildare's; and it

does vex me that she doesn't take notice of me, but I can easily comprehend her prejudice against it, though she is a vastly good and sensible woman, and above all the prejudices of old age: but this I suppose strikes her as *countenancing a fault,* and she can't bring herself to it, and indeed I don't wonder, though I intend to try all I can to persuade her to it, and I don't despair of it in time. I can't give you a *positive* account of my good behavior, for I'm a partial judge. I hope I am very *grave* and *dignified.*"

Lady Susan annotates this letter —

"Nonsense! She would always be a queen. I should like to see her among the Irish ladies, with her proud head bent. Humble, she would be more than ever a queen."

VII

"I am vastly pleased with this place and with my sister Leinster's place at Carton, and with about four or five places along the banks of the Liffey toward Dublin: rocky ground, a river, trees and some taste in gardening must make them pretty. There is also a chain of mountains to bound the prospect, which is very pretty, but then *tout est dit.* The country is ugly, poor, neglected, bare of trees: the

roads are between mudd walls: no field to ride in, and desperate hedges and ditches to cross if one goes out of the road, so that riding seems impossible for a woman, walking out of the grounds still worse, and hunting, coursing and following shooters quite impracticable. What I admire in Sussex is that a house with three or four acres of land is all I should want, and I could amuse myself with the beauties of the country without depending on the neighborhood or my friends or anybody."

VIII

"Castletown, July 29th, 1775.

"My Dearest Lady Susan,

"It is with the greatest satisfaction I have read your letter relative to your family, and I could never praise you enough for the propriety of it, if the devil hadn't tempted you to put in some of your comical expressions, so it was impossible for me to show your letter to Lady Stavordale."

Here follows a lecture on the desirable dutiful behavior to an elder brother, illustrated by the example of "my sister Leinster," who two years after the death of her duke married, to the amazement of her world, her son's Scotish tutor, Mr. William Ogilvie.

"You know that being a widow is of itself a reason for making her her own mistress if her age did not: you know too that when by Lady Bellamont's impertinence she was forced to take *un parti,* she told her son, her mother-in-law and her sister that she thought it very possible she should marry Mr. Ogilvie. They all agreed in the same thing for answer, that they could not wish it, but if she was happy it was all they wished: and that she could not choose a person they had a higher regard for. With such a sanction you would perhaps think that there was nothing for her to do but to inform her brother *tout simplement,* but I wish you had seen the affectionate, the reasonable manner in which she wrote to my brother, and indeed to all her friends. One of her expressions to him is: 'I am content that you should call me a fool and *an old fool:* that you should blame me and say you did not think me capable of such a folly: talk it over, say what you please, but remember that all I ask of you is your affection and tenderness.' My brother says there is no resisting her, owning herself in the wrong and begging so hard to be loved, so you see the good effects of meekness: I assure you my sister *gains* friends instead of loosing any by her manner."

To this bit of family history I can not resist adding another. Mrs. Delany tells us that the Duchess of Leinster was reputed the proudest woman in Ireland, if not in England and Scotland as well. Her granddaughter Pamela, Lady Campbell, has told us of the first introduction to her of "the Scotchman who kept a school in Cole's Lane," whom she was afterward to marry.

"Lady Leitrim was one day spending the evening at Leinster House with the duchess when the groom of the chamber came in to announce to her grace that the new tutor, Mr. Ogilvie, had arrived.

"'Show him to his room.'

"'If you please, your grace, is he to have wax candles or tallow?'

"Upon which the duchess turned to Lady Leitrim and asked —

"'*Qu'en pensez-vous?*'

"Before Lady Leitrim had time to answer the duchess decided for herself.

"'Molds will do till we see a little later.'"

IX

To continue Sally's lecture to Lady Susan upon her manner to her family.

"I will tell you fairly they think you give your-

self airs, and I know of old that nobody but a very few unprejudiced persons can put up with that. You know too that, as I have said, your manner is apt to set people against you: you toss *up your head,* a great crime in many people's eyes, for it denotes contempt, and you have a *directing* way. Lady Stavordale let drop a hint that made me say your manner was naturally so, and that Lord Holland had increased it greatly by admiring it in you, so that I believed you did it without knowing it now from custom. 'Why,' says Lady S., 'does she do so to you?' 'Oh, yes,' I said; 'to everybody, it's her manner of speaking: she has no thought of governing no more than you have, but it's her *way,* in short.' 'Well, I'm glad to hear that,' says Lady S.; 'for it is one of the things they are most angry with her for; they say she wants to govern me. Now I really attributed that manner to her knowing that I was very young in the world, and that she thought it right to direct me a little. I thought it not the least unreasonable, although not very pleasant, but as her intention could only be for what she thought my good I never took it in the least ill, but I'm afraid it displeased them a good deal.'

"Tell Lady Ilchester that I admire her sweet little granddaughter, Eliza, of all things, and think her

very like Lord Stavordale, a little like Lady Ilchester and the image of little Lord Holland; in short, altogether she is a sweet, little, fair, fat child, and I take it for granted will be a violent favorite. *Elle a la physionomie remplie d'esprit.*"

Lady Susan comments on this furiously.

"*Direct! Govern!* She would direct and govern if she were dead. Yet she is such a friend that I must needs forgive her."

CHAPTER XVII

IN WHICH SARAH IS CAST DOWN

I

THE American War of Independence was in Sally's mind more than most people's, because the British General Howe was married to a sister of Mr. Conolly, and was staying at Castletown House, while her husband was leading the troops in America. Moreover, General Lee, who is on the other side, is a Bunbury cousin; and it is a question of Lady Susan's as to Sally's opinion of him which draws forth her ladyship on the whole question.

"I think His Majesty and poor Mr. Lee are much upon a par: they are both vain and obstinate; the King has a bad cause and Mr. Lee a good one, for the King wants to oppress and Mr. Lee wants to put it out of his power; but, in my mind, both their intentions will come at last to the same thing, for if the King *can* oppress I don't think it at all clear he will do it, and if he does his son may be a better man, and if he isn't there will still be time to fight. Though I am certainly no admirer of the

King's character I don't believe he is a bit more nor so great a tyrant as my cousin Lee would be were he King himself, for he loves his own way as well as anybody. Only two things I think won't bear dispute — first, that those who cause most lives to be lost are the worst people; secondly, that the Bostonians being chiefly Presbyterians and from the North of Ireland are daily proved to be very, very base people, being quarrelsome, discontented, hypocritical, enthusiastical, lying people. Yet I hate the King should conquer too, for he sits there at his ease at Windsor and fancies he has nothing to do but order America to be conquered; he will grow so insolent about it that it will provoke me beyond all patience; and were it not for the blood, any drop of which I think of as much consequence as the King's, I should wish him to have a complete mortification in seeing Ireland whisked away from him while his troops are sailing; he uses poor dear Ireland so ill already that he does not deserve to keep it.

"Louisa is trembling for fear of an invasion, upon which she concludes they will cut down all the wood here and so ruin the beauty of Castletown. And now, enough of politics."

"Enough of politics, indeed!" It is quite evi-

dent that Lady Sarah is not done with the world. There is a lovely picture of her as the Mourning Bride about this time, soft and pale. One wonders if she was not more bewitching in her sadness than in her brilliancy.

II

We come to the time of the divorce, which must have put Sally in the dust again for the time being. The hour has gone by when she can have the shelter of her husband's name if she will. Alas, he has grown indifferent, with the easy good-natured indifference which is the most immovable of all. Sally is frank out of the bitterness of her heart.

"Goodwood, April 10th, 1776.

"I do not wonder that any report should come to you even in your desert, for I never yet saw the place that was free from them in England, and I suppose other countries are the same only we don't know it. I don't know what you have heard about me, only of a divorce taking place now which should have taken place long ago. This piece of news is true, and I am not sorry, since Sir Charles, *whatever he felt once,* has now positively affirmed that he has no desire to live with me again. You

will know what it costs me to write this. I did flatter myself that he was not indifferent toward me, but I ought to have realized that, as we did not meet, his indifference to me must have been growing day by day.

"There is no news that I have heard of that other you ask for. But, enclosed as I am within the walls of Goodwood as of a nunnery, there might be news that would never come my way. Wherever he may be, so long as he is in this life I do not think he has forgotten me. I am sure I should know if he were dead. The common wind would carry it to me; everything would tell it.

"This thing has shaken me out of my hard-won peace. A week ago I was full of an unreasonable hope and joy. I was delighting in my flowers, in the songs of the birds and the prattle of my engaging Louisa. I thought I had come to the period when Heaven willed that I might rejoice again. I was wrong, as it proved, and I have been reminded roughly.

"I am ashamed of my little world. The papers do not trouble me, for I do not look at them — and yet I am vexed with the knowledge that other people do if I do not. I am very eager to go anywhere out of the way, and the duke has been so good as

to hurry his intended journey abroad to take me with him, so that I may be gone before all this wretched business begins. Sue, I feel as though I should die of it. My innocent child, too! Oh, Sue, if we could only see the intolerable punishment we lay up for ourselves when we deviate from the paths of duty we would never stray. The safe narrow ways are best.

"I confess I thought Sir Charles had still some tenderness left for me. As to the report of my being about to be married, I assure you it is not true. I am now come to thirty years of age, when a woman is sober if ever she is. I have entered the *quiet vale* that leads to old age and eternity. After thirty it is unbecoming for a woman to think of a husband, although there are instances, like my sister Leinster, in which the rash step has had no evil results.

"My spirits are not so low as they are worried and perplexed; I long to be gone, as being quite alone is not pleasant, and yet I hate to see anybody, even the servants, whom I know study the newspapers, and, I suppose, make their remarks on me as I sit at dinner."

III

The divorce was granted in May 1776, and Lady Sally had to bear it in England as best she could, not being sufficiently well to escape the bruit of it by going abroad with her brother the duke to his farms in Aubigné. That must have been a hard summer for her ladyship; she did no letter-writing even to her dearest Sue, an indication of a disordered state of mind with her. Obviously her thoughts had been turning toward her husband in those years of her solitude; and it must have been a terrible blow to her when the divorce proceedings were taken after an interval long enough to make it unlikely that they ever would be taken.

She writes again in September —

"I am sure you will be glad to hear my health is now quite restored; I am so much better than I was that I am a different creature. I am not a philosopher, for I am frightened at being sick and fancy I shall never recover, and now I am well I do a thousand foolish things and think I never can be ill; and so I have got the toothache and a violent cold with sitting out in the dew with my Aunt Albemarle, because I would fancy that at thirty one can do as one does at seventy-three, which is quite a

mistake. I am not young enough for anybody, I find, for I really feel myself growing old in a thousand things; yet there are times I am younger than my little Louisa, and I forget everything and romp, till I am abashed with her solemn gaze. She is a sober puss.

"Have you heard anything with reference to a marriage for Sir Charles? If there is no such thing I am at a loss to know why he brought the divorce after all this time. He is very attractive and none knows it better than I.

"I was in town for a few days with the Duchess of Richmond, who took me to have something done to my teeth, which have given me woeful trouble. I hope to be delivered from the toothache all winter which of late has been my lot. I used never to know what the toothache was, nor the heartache. I saw not a creature in town, nor, indeed, did I wish to see any one, since you and Lady Holland were not there. Adieu, my dearest Sue."

IV

"You talk of the time when we used to *fancy great things.* I know what you mean and I am most sincerely glad I am not queen. *Sarah Lennox would not change places with Her Majesty of*

England. In the first place I should have quarreled with the King long before this, and my head would have been off, perhaps. My God, what a horrible thing this war is! If I had loved and liked and married the King, and not had interest enough to prevent this war, I should certainly go mad to think a person I loved was the cause of it.

"My brother is going to fit up a house for me just by Goodwood; then, whenever you are in London, you must come and make me a visit, *chez moi.*

"I desire my compliments to Mr. O'Brien; and tell him he could not apply to a better person than me in the *dog way,* for in the first place I shall be delighted to give him a dog, and in the second I pique myself on understanding the dear creatures; but in order to suit him exactly I must ask him several questions which I have enclosed. My brother has a very pretty breed, but it's of the old Holland House Ranger breed and inherit all his crossness and pomp, which some people don't like; now I do. There is another breed which is all good temper and gentleness. My brothers have also famous pointers which I can get one of. I have some very pretty spaniels, but till I know exactly what he wants I can't tell if mine are the best sort for Mr. O'Brien. I am mighty glad he takes to some country sport.

Have you a horse that is pleasant? You used to like it vastly formerly. Adieu."

V

A year later we hear of Sarah's house, the quiet nest to which she has come, which is to content her till she is carried out of it to a narrower.

"My house is built; a part of it is actually covered in; the rest will be built in the summer, and the following summer I hope to inhabit it, and never to leave it excepting for brief visits to my dearest sisters. How I shall enjoy the comforts of a *home,* a *pretty home* and one given to me by the best of brothers, built by his own plan and owes all its beauties to his plantations, so that 'tis entirely created by him, which adds most excessively to its merits with me. It is in his park, just a mile from Goodwood, in a valley open to the south, with a little prospect, and all the hills round it planted, which make fine sheltered and dry walks and rides, and from them there is a noble prospect; in short, it is *exactly what I like,* and you know that a paradise can't please more than *just what one likes.* Till it is finished I lead a vagabond life, sometimes at Stoke, at Goodwood, and sometimes at a little puddling bathing-place of my brother's by the sea,

where I have spent almost all the summer. It agrees with my daughter and with me, too. I shall therefore pursue it all next summer, and take my leave of it when I go *home,* for I doubt that when once settled it will not be a trifle that will force me from my *shell,* in which I look forward to years of a peaceful growing old.

"My brother and the duchess go to Paris next spring; not for my brother to turn Catholic and sit in the French Parliament as reported, but to return the civilities he met with.

"There is also a fine lady there whom I hear the French say *qu'il aime avec passion,* and he doesn't deny it, but tells the duchess and us all he must go see her again, which the duchess takes with a vast easiness. I knew her and think her excessively pleasing and quite the proper age for him, for I tell him I did not at all approve of his flirtation with a little dab of a miss twenty years younger than himself, and he allows it was ridiculous; and this affair is quite proper, *dans toutes les formes.*

"After Christmas I shall have Goodwood House to myself, and I don't see why you should not make me a visit. I have some hopes of persuading Lady Holland to do so, and you might come together. I hear she likes her house at Windsor vastly; she

leads a very retired life, but is in good spirits and cheerful, vastly occupied with her children and enjoying the society of a few friends. Our dear amiable Stephen could not have made a better choice. Alas! that death should so soon have cut short their felicity. I don't much wonder at his widow avoiding the life of the fine ladies. I won't affect the *old lady* so much as to say they did not do so *in our time,* for they certainly did much the same in every respect but the racketing their health so entirely away as they do now.

"The pretty Duchess of Devonshire, who by all accounts has no fault but her delicate health, dines at seven summer as well as winter, goes to bed at three and lies in bed till four; she has hysteric fits in the morning and dances in the evening; she bathes, rides, dances for ten days and lies in bed for another ten; indeed, I can't forgive her, or rather her husband, for ruining her health, though I think she may wear ten thousand figaries in her dress without the smallest blame.

"Pray give my best compliments to Mr. O'Brien and tell him I hope he has not wanted his dogs this year, for it is not my fault I did not send them as they were not born; but I beg to know if he still wishes a pointer and two spaniels, because in spring

I can send them to London for him just before you go out of town, as I wish them to be under your protection when they arrive and not to be neglected by servants."

VI

"So young Lady Ilchester means to be *sur un certain pied. Tant mieux:* I thought she had too much sense not to make a proper figure if she undertook to make one at all. What I heard was a little circumstance that made me see more than ever the absurdity of fine people. I heard that Lady Ilchester appeared at the Opera without powder, dressed in a poking queer way, with Lady Sefton, and caused great speculation to know who that queer but pretty little vulgar woman with Lady Sefton could be. Now to be sure it requires but a small examination to find out that the genteel Lady Sefton is in nature a most complete vulgar: to my certain knowledge her gentility never went further than her clothes, and 'the pretty vulgar little woman' has more true real gentility about her than most people I know, for her understanding is enlarged and her mind very far above the common rate. But such is the world that a little powder and gauze properly disposed secures a proper respect,

and the neglect of it gives a *mauvais ton.* But I fancy a good house and good suppers will soon recover the *faux pas* of going to the Opera *sans poudre.*

"My sister has met Sir Charles at a rout. She says he inquired after my health most amiably and also my little Louisa, which is the way to a mother's heart. My sister reports that although he receives many civilities, he is no way particular with any one and seemed vastly bored when she first observed him, but he cheered up most excessively on catching sight of her."

VII

The letters which follow are much concerned with the fatal illness of that pretty creature, Lady Holland, who died of consumption in October 1778, and with public affairs. But we like best to hear of Sarah in her domestic moments, as when she and her little girl are at the sea in that "puddling" bathing-place of the duke's, which would be — what flourishing seaside town now?

"I am by the seaside, bathing my daughter, who is a poor skinny miss and recovers her looks prodigiously with the sea-air and bathing: she is the awkwardest girl I ever saw, which provokes me,

for she is one of those people whom all the teaching upon earth will never make graceful. So I have given up her having a pleasing manner, for I will not be like Lord Chesterfield, fretting and wishing for what is *not the nature of the beast.* I therefore content myself, and am vastly contented with my little girl being *no beauty,* but excessively civil, obliging, good-natured, good-humored and sensible; and if I can moderate her giddiness, and make her apply enough to learn all necessary things for the full and complete enjoyment of a country life, I shall be satisfied. I have not the talent for education nor she the disposition to learn anything that calls for perseverance — although a sweet child to her mother: but she will never make a prodigy. Luckily I am no admirer of prodigies, so it's no misfortune to me nor even mortifies my vanity: so long as it doesn't hurt her happiness her being not brilliant, I have only her happiness to care for: and that I am sure is secured by a moderate amount of talents, rather than the reverse. I have been accounted very witty and clever: yet see what I have made of my life. I pray my child may be preserved from my pitfalls, of which a too great power to please the opposite sex must be accounted one.

"I have been forced to send your dogs to a gamekeeper, because they were so very naughty: but he keeps them in a house, so they won't get mangy, and I hope will behave themselves prettily when they arrive, which shall be some time in the winter, by which time they will have learned how to behave themselves, and a basket shall go with them."

Lady Susan has annotated this: "Poor dear Fop! He was the kindest, sweetest, faithfulest dog. He lived twelve years." Alas! the dear dead dogs, and the dear dead ladies! The wind sighs in the autumn branches as one reads, and there is a lamentation for all the summers past, and the birds that sang in the branches, and the dead roses and the cheeks of damask that crumbled before the touch of Time like the dead leaf rustling in the winter forest.

The house that is to bound Sarah's hopes and fears goes on apace.

"You can not imagine how pretty my house is. I have laid out occupation for myself for many years, as I am determined to furnish it by slow degrees, for the sake of my pocket as well as of my amusement. My brother puts chimneypieces and ceilings for me, most prettily decorated, and

I shall live for a year or two very comfortably with bare plastered walls, and do the bedchambers neat and comfortable first, and so on till it's all done. My house consists of a large staircase of twenty by sixteen, a housekeeper's room on one side, a pantry on the other with a passage to the offices, which are out of the house; and then to the front I have a drawing-room of twenty-eight by eighteen, and a dining-room of eighteen square. Above are two bedchambers of eighteen square and a little dressing-room, and two smaller bedchambers at the back for servants. You see that nothing can be more compact. Besides this, there is a little greenhouse by way of pavilion to answer the offices, and a little colonnade of four columns on each side to join them to the house, so that it's both pretty and convenient. I am only afraid I shall ruin myself in furnishing it, for nothing ugly should be put in so pretty a house, and to split the difference, I mean to have everything plain, which is neither *ugly* nor *dear*.

"Adieu, my dearest Lady Susan."

CHAPTER XVIII

FALSE DAWN

I

"WHAT part of Ireland is your sister Lady Fanny in? If in Dublin I should suppose my sister Louisa has seen her. But perhaps nothing happened to bring them much acquainted, and Louisa does not seek enlarging her acquaintance, for she has so many more than she can manage (leading a country life) that she could not do it but for the footing which her peculiar character has established, and which nobody but herself could venture at; and, indeed, I believe that it is because she *aims* at nothing that so great an allowance is *given* her. Do you know that she scarce visits anybody, nor does she receive visits dropping in at any odd times? But she now and then goes to town to see the world, and there she says, with such a civil good-natured face, that she is to blame, and tells the people it will be so good-natured of them to show forgiveness by coming and dining with her such a day, that they come; they see that

she has ten thousand occupations and that she enjoys her home, so they go away pleased with their reception and bid her never think of a formal visit. She takes them at their word, upon condition that they will come every now and then to dinner on a Sunday, when she is always at home; so she has contrived to *pay no visits,* be *liked,* be *civil* and to *have no trouble,* for she escapes cards, which she doesn't like, on the excuse of Sunday, and in summer she diverts them as well as a fine house, pretty place, variety of company and a hearty welcome will do. At Christmas they have always about a month's round of different parties, and several fêtes in the course of the year."

This, it will be owned, is a very pretty bit of observation on Sarah's part.

II

"I have sent you the two dogs, which I hope will arrive safe to you and that you will like them; but pray tell Mr. O'Brien he must be very careful how they first walk out after they have recovered their shyness, for if he doesn't from the beginning keep them within bounds and make them obedient to every call, they will hunt sheep like little devils; so that all their good conduct depends on their first

method of training, which requires constant attention at first. The tail of the red and white one is very long; I don't dislike it if they are pert dogs and look *grand,* like the old Ranger, but if they drop it and look sneaking it is too long. However, if you have it cut I advise that the operator may not be a person that the dog is expected to love, for he has a great deal too much sense to forgive such a person at his age. They are both very different characters, just like their father and mother. The red and white is waxing good-humored and likes everybody; the black and white is sulky, attached and obstinate. I hope they will turn out good spaniels, for they are of a remarkably good breed.

"You abuse poor Abbotsbury for being dull. I have a notion 'tis what I should like of all things — a quiet place by the open sea. I am very much in love with my house, but I doubt I shall ever again be so happy as I was at Barton. Do you hear anything that Sir Charles is like to be married? He said — but what does it matter what men say? When I see what I have gained by being pleasing I am glad my child is plain. The card-playing which you delight in would kill me. 'Tis not *living,* to my mind. I believe I should

have the vapors all day if I played an hour at cards, so you see how little of a fashionable I am; my aversion to them you can not imagine, but my daughter makes up, for she will play them forever if I was to let her. I think it an odd taste for a child.

"You ask me about Mrs. Damer. She does not live with her mother, but in a house she has hired. She set off upon the most perfect intentions of prudence; she was not ashamed of saying she had been rich and was now poor, and therefore should not attempt any expense beyond her income, which is very good for all the comforts of life though not for magnificence, and she piqued herself upon showing she could give up her former expectations of grandeur with philosophy. She likes traveling, books, a comfortable home, both in town and (*for a little while*) in the country; and those she prefers to fine clothes, fine equipages, and finery of all kinds. How long these wise resolutions will last I can't tell, for she is vain and likes to be at the head of the great world, and is easily led into that style of life. Upon the whole, I think she is a sensible woman without sensibility, a pretty one without pleasing, a prudent one without conduct. I believe no one will have a *right* to tax her with any fault,

and yet she will be abused, which, I take it, is owing to a want of sweetness in her disposition: she is too *strictly right* ever to be beloved."

III

Lady Sarah's next letter contains a full, true and particular account of the court-martial on Admiral Keppel, "who owes the glorious result of this trial to the four pleasantest of all reasons: first, to truth; secondly, to the uprightness of his judges; thirdly, to the general high esteem and respect of all sea-officers; fourthly, to the fears of guilty wretches who are daunted by his plain dealing." London is illuminated for two nights on the admiral's acquittal. How his mother took it Sarah tells us in her inimitable way.

"Your anxety about Lady Albemarle is very kind and just, for she has indeed suffered a great deal, not from any fear of her son's demerit, but from fear of villainy; however, she now begins to recover her spirits, which were terribly hurt, and now she will, I hope, fill up all the chinks of fear with anger, a much better companion for the dear old soul, who is more affectionate, more delightful, to all her relations than it's possible to describe; indeed, they all deserve it of her except me, who have no other title

to her goodness but my love for her. However, she makes no difference, but treats me just as she does the rest. I must give you an instance of it. My brother was so ill that I went up to town *de mon chef* with my girl, and fearing my sudden appearance might startle him, I debarked at eleven o'clock at night in Lady Albemarle's house; she was out, so I established myself there, and at twelve she arrived, and stopped all my speeches with: 'Child, hold your tongue. What's an old aunt fit for in the world but to make those she loves comfortable? You have obliged me beyond imagination, for now I know you are convinced of your welcome.' She showed me every attention and kindness it is possible, and now I leave you (who know the regularity of old ladies and the great fuss they make with little things) to judge if she is not the most delightful of old ladies."

IV

"Now if I was not afraid of running into the spirit of scandal I would tell you all the chit-chat that comes round to me, but I have a constant monitor that tells me forever: 'Would you like to have all your faults the topic of conversation?' and the same whisper checks me. However, it is

no scandal to tell the Duke of Dorset is about to marry Lady Derby, who is now in the country, keeping quiet and out of the way. There is a sort of party in town of who is to visit her and who is not which creates great squabbles, as though the curse or blessing of the poor woman depended on a few tickets more or less. I don't know her well enough to guess how far this important point concerns her; but I am told she has been and still is most thoroughly attached to the duke, and I should suppose she will be very happy if the lessening of her visiting-list is her only misfortune.

"This subject leads me to one which I will not make a secret of to you who have always shared my thoughts. I hope you will not laugh at me for the wish I have long entertained of seeing Sir Charles again. I hope my dear Lady Susan knows me enough to comprehend that I never could return the great goodness of Sir Charles to me by the least grain of dislike. I was *indifferent;* and another person had that extraordinary influence over me that, poor wretch, I could not resist him. He has told me that I have precisely the same influence over him, and that if I willed to lift but my little finger I could draw him across the world to my side. Well, he has kept the width of the

world between him and me, not offering a reparation which would not be accepted if he had; yet he is still dear to me, but not as in the old days when I paid so high a price for his society and would have given my life to confer on him the slightest happiness. All that is over with my wild youth. I am thirty-four. Imagine it, Sue! I am thirty-four, and sober as my years demand. Yet — am *I*? Have you heard the rumor of Lord W. G.'s marriage with Lord Irvine's daughter? My sister Louisa heard it whispered. I dare say it is but gossip. I am not in love with Sir Charles; but with this indifference as to love I have always had an interest in everything that concerned him, and the desire has grown on me to receive his pardon. I wonder if I shall see him again. They tell me he is as handsome as ever and as much a boy. 'Tis surprising he keeps unmarried."

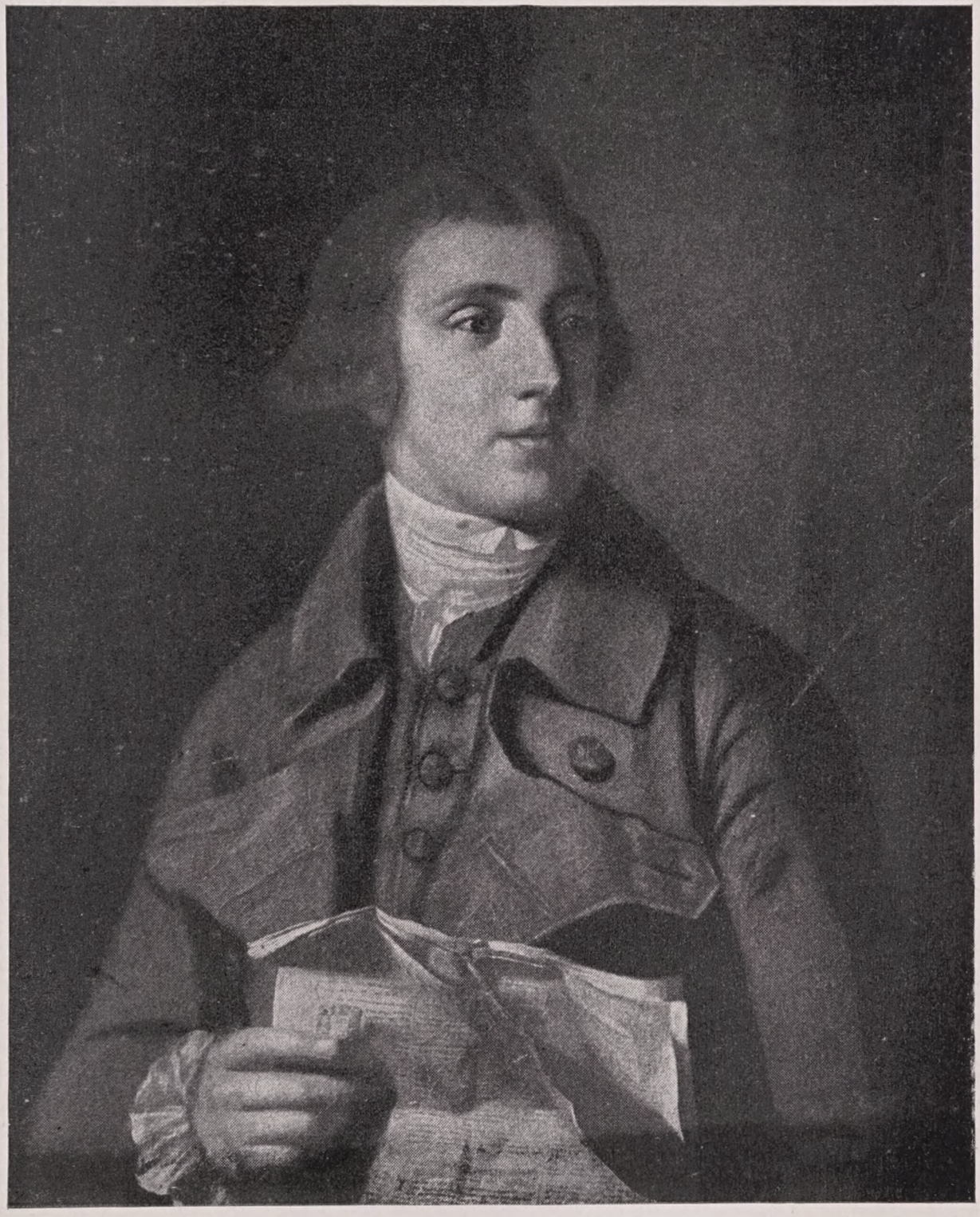
V

Lady Sarah seems to have gone from her letter to Lady Susan straight to her diary, to which she confided what even that friend must not know.

"I have always been called frank," she writes, "yet here have I been beating about the bush with Sue, meaning to tell her, yet not daring, what is in

my mind. For in the first place, with regard to Lord W. G., although he will ever be dear to me, yet it is as though he were dead long since. My pulses are hardly stirred when I hear his name. Oh, indeed, we suffered too much ever to be happy in the common way. Whereas Sir Charles Bunbury, once my husband, remains in my thoughts as a spirit of youthful cheerfulness, such a one as did not content me in my youth which knew not how well off it was, but that seems vastly pleasant to me now. I have never told any one, not even Sue, of how he would have taken me back if but I would have gone. My family would think me mad to refuse, but at the time I could not do it. What! broken with love for another man to turn to the arms of my husband! I felt I had died to him when I left him. God knows I suffered the pangs of death. Dead women do not come back to take up the duties of wives again and to be happy, forgetting their agony.

"I will acknowledge that at first my thoughts were entirely concerned with Lord W. G. Oh! when I recall the weeping skies and the river in flood; when I think upon two poor souls clinging together against the moment when they must be torn quivering from each other, to live with half a life



Sir Charles Bunbury

and half a soul and half a heart, *je suis desolée;* it seems madness to hope that in green quietness and solitude such wounds should ever heal.

"Yet, as the years passed, the desolation of that time faded. *Il y a toujours le printemps.* The poor body began to flourish again. With the improvement of the body the mind began to put forth new shoots. I had always been fond of gardening. It seemed to me a recreation permissible in my repentance, since for my child's sake it was best I should live. I was horrified when I first found I could be hungry again for my food. I began to be glad, half afraid. When I planted my bulbs of a winter day I found myself imagining how on a spring day they would come forth glorious in all their radiant colors, like a rainbow on the earth, to show that winter and the rain should pass away. I felt my heart running forward to meet the spring. While I made my garden I was thinking of Barton and how Sir Charles used to admire my gardening, the more, he said, as it agreed with my complexion and figure. When on some dark January day I heard the first song of the thrush, putting our dear robins to shame, my heart would leap with the strangest sensations of hope and joy such as ought not to have been possible to a woman who sincerely

repented of a great fault as I thought I had; and though I tried to keep my heart quiet, asking with indignation what it thought of good could possibly be coming to a woman who had drunk all joy in a draught, yet it would not heed me, but leaped and sang like the cheerful tenant of a dull house.

"I do not know at what time I began to discover that those strange hopes and quickenings within me had reference to Sir Charles; but one day I was struck dumb with the discovery that it was so. I gathered roses from a dead summer. The thought rushed upon me overwhelmingly of what it would be if I might go back to Barton and take my place by the side of that good comrade who was once my husband, in honor and peace once more. I could not control the joy that shook me at the prospect, though I kept saying to myself, 'Tis impossible! You have burned your boats. Think of the desolation of the Leader in flood, and the storm that stripped the blossom from the trees, and realize that there is no turning back.' My troublesome tenant would keep singing and leaping all the time, although I turned out the lights and drew down the blinds."

VI

"I said somewhat to you in my last letter, my dear Lady Sue, of the wish I had that I might see Sir Charles. I have seen something in the faces of my sisters of late; my brother is the most candid of men and lets fall a hint that if I were to remarry me no one would think the worse of me for it. By which I think it has been whispered from one to another that Sir Charles seems not ill-disposed. Do not laugh at me! I have left off my blacks. As I do not go abroad, no one will accuse me of indifference to dear Lady Holland. But that was not the reason why I was wearing pink when my brother surprised me feeding Juno's puppies, who are just weaned. I had a coat of pink on to save me from the dear little wretches, who crawl all over me to the destruction of my clothes. I looked up from my task and saw my brother gazing at me with an air of amazement. 'Why, Sal,' he said, 'with the sun in your hair and your eyes, and the pink you are wearing, you are like the girl you were when you married.' Since then I have observed in him a new view of my case. He would have me come to Goodwood House, where they are entertaining a large party; but that I would not

do lest I should encounter any of the over-nice."

VII

"February 6th, 1779.

"My dearest Lady Sue,

"I have heard from Sir Charles. He wishes to see me. I have given him leave to come. Why should he disturb a hard-won peace unless he came for something particular? He is to sup with me on Thursday evening. I am ashamed before the servants. If you were here I should ask your advice on my clothes. My fine ones are somewhat old-fashioned. He liked to see me in rose-color. I have a rose satin from the old days, which I have been meaning to cut down for Louisa when she is older. If her complexion don't improve 'twould kill her. I have also a blue damask laced with silver. Don't laugh at me at my age thinking of such follies. My brother is right. He says the open air has kept my complexion. I have tried the rose satin on before the glass. It is vastly pretty and becoming. But, after all, I shall not wear it. *Tous les roses dans mon jardin sont passées; les oiseaux sont partis.*"

CHAPTER XIX

THE FROST

I

IT is half past six on Thursday evening, and Lady Sarah is expecting the pleasure of Sir Charles Bunbury's company to supper. What days those have been! What an ordeal to tell the servants she is expecting a gentleman to sup. Such a thing had not happened in all her years at Goodwood, unless the gentleman might be a brother or a nephew.

She turned hot and cold while she told her cook. Usually she was very easy to please in her food. Now she went all manner of colors while she suggested what was like a banquet to her modest establishment. She remembered that Sir Charles used to have an excessively good appetite of his hunting evenings. She catered for him as generously now as she had ever done, and felt that the woman looked slyly at her, and that the young footman whom the duchess had obliged her to have when

she went to live at Halnaker, put his hand over his mouth as he passed out of the room to cover a smile.

It was an exquisite day of February, one of those days with the crocuses pushing their heads above the earth and the birds singing that stabbed her with a poignant hope. The snowdrops were out in all the shrubberies and the garden beds, and she had chosen them to decorate the table, which, set for two, was drawn within a screen near the fire, for the evenings were apt to turn cold.

She was less afraid of Bridget's eyes than the eyes of the others, though she was troubled by their wistfulness. Bridget was her maid now; and that evening she dressed her lady's hair without powder, in soft masses drawn away at either side of her face. She grumbled when Lady Sarah passed by the rose dress and the blue dress and selected a black velvet, that in which Sir Joshua Reynolds had painted her as the Mourning Bride.

"Not that, my lady," she said, and whisked it from Sally's hand. "It would be a bad omen: it would be, indeed, my lady, and most unlucky, so it would, if you was to wear the black like that. I'm not saying you should wear the pink or the blue, my lady, though you'd be an angel in either.

Wear the white, my lady. There can be nothing amiss with white."

Sally allowed herself to be persuaded by the faithful servant, and put on her a dress of old yellowed lace which became her mightily. Sally's sidewise look, so soft, so arch, so irresistible, was never more beautiful than in the gown of lace which brought out the likeness she certainly had to the unfortunate Queen of the Scots, Mary Stuart, whose blood ran in her veins. When you saw Sally it was as with the lovers of that unhappy Queen. Sally's nose might be thick: her eyes small and somewhat sunken; no one ever paused to ask why it was that when Sally came in sight you forgot to ask where her beauty lay. Beyond the ravishing complexion, beyond the lovely hair and the bewitching smile, there was something about Sally that made her the loveliest creature of her time.

II

The blackbird had sung in the shrubbery that evening, almost breaking her heart with his untold secrets of love. The night came on brilliant and frosty, the evening star lying in the crescent of the young moon, a palpitating and throbbing jewel.

The smell of the spring flowers was in the room. Louisa was gone to bed. While Sally waited she almost wished she had kept her up. She was dreadfully afraid of the interview with Sir Charles now that it was to be. She was afraid of what he might do: she was afraid of what he might not do. As she stood in her drawing-room waiting for him by the chimneypiece, no one to see her but her dogs, she was pitifully agitated. Her hand, lifting an ornament and replacing it, shook so that she all but dropped the pretty thing. Her heart went from trembling to heaviness: she had a sick sense and apprehension of it. She was as vaporish as any miss she had ever despised. She felt that her hands were cold and that her head ached and throbbed with expectancy. The time passed, insufferably slow. She saw all the aspects of the familiar room strangely. So should she remember it, she said to herself, drawn away, detached, as though it were a room in a stage-play into which she was looking.

When the clock struck the hour of six at which hour she expected Sir Charles and he was not come, her heart sank like lead. In the clear frostiness of the evening she heard the hour struck from the clock-tower of Goodwood. She wondered if

the frost were so great as to impede travelers. He would come riding. He never separated himself willingly from the back of a horse. It had been wet weather of late and the pools had lain in the ruts of the road. She had a passing terror that his horse might have slipped and come down. Supposing while she waited in the pleasant-lit room he was lying out on the hard road, his horse a-top of him! Such things had happened, might happen again. She was wretched.

While she quailed she heard the sound of the horse's feet ringing on the frozen drive. They came nearer, nearer. Her color changed rapidly from red to white and white to red. Her heart was fluttering like a caged thing.

The dogs sprang up, barking loudly, their friendly tails wagging. They ran to the door and sniffed. She heard the hall-door open. The drawing-room door came slightly ajar with the draught and the cold air entered the room. The dogs were welcoming a congenial traveler as though they had known him all their lives. She had a sensation of physical faintness. Her eyes turned toward the door like dying eyes. Sir Charles came in.

III

He advanced to her side and kissed her hand. He was looking remarkably well in a plum-colored suit which became his brown and ruddy complexion. He looked clean and wholesome: not a day older than when she had married him. She said to herself with a sharp bitter pang that he had not suffered because of her; and yet how he had pleaded with her ten years ago to return to him!

As he bent over her hand she was aware of the slight odor of the stables of which she had been used to complain. Now she thought it delicious. It belonged to the good days, to Barton, to honor and peace and safety, to the days when they went hunting together, following the fox from morning to dusk and riding home side by side though the russet Suffolk lanes.

"How well you look, Sally!" he said, admiringly. They might have parted only yesterday. She was glad that Bridget had prevailed with her to put on the lace. Nothing could have been more becoming. She was wearing a tight-fitting collar of garnets about her throat and a couple of stars of the same in her hair. The things had been his gift, held back as of little intrinsic value when his

family jewels had been restored to him. Nothing could have become her better. She wondered if he would remember that he had given them to her and had praised the whiteness of her neck as their background.

He did remember. He spoke quite easily, saying he was glad she had kept the garnets. He asked for Louisa and was sorry she had not been kept up to see him. "You know of old I am deucedly fond of children, Sally," he said. He talked as if they had not been parted for a day, standing beside her in front of the fire, unembarrassed, cheerful, pleasant as of old.

IV

They went into supper and sat facing each other across the cloth as they had sat for years as husband and wife. She had planned her little meal with care, going back over a decade of years to recall the things he had cared for, the wines he had preferred. Not a dish was placed upon the table that was not a tribute to the days they had spent together. Her own hands had arranged the flowers. She had been restless about the rooms, settling things to greater advantage, even in obscure corners, beyond the reach of the candles, to

which it was little likely his eyes would penetrate.

In one way she was rewarded for her thought. He ate heartily. There had never been a time when his appetite had forsaken him. He congratulated her on her cook and remembered that the French sauces were those she had brought from Paris, which she was used to compound with her own hands. His eyes glistened with enjoyment of the good food and wine. "I always said, Sally," he remarked gratefully, "that there never was a woman like you — a beauty, a wit, a bit of a bluestocking, a Diana of the chase, a good comrade, and yet at home in your own kitchen."

A pang of something like terror shot through her. Strange, strange, that he should have forgotten the one essential matter in which she had failed toward him, a matter in which any woman who had kept her marriage vows had excelled her and put her out of all consideration.

She was grateful to him that he talked so easily and so incessantly while the servants were in the room. He talked about Barton as though she had left it yesterday. "Your plantation by the garden wall has grown out of knowledge," he said; "and the first day I went hunting I wore a bunch from

your violet bed. They are the best in the whole county."

He told her of the old neighbors; who was dead and who married and who had children. And mentioned that Rattler, a son of her old terrier, Sport, who had died in the second year of her life at Goodwood, had children as good as himself.

"One of the cedar trees on the lawn came down in the big storm last October," he said. "I had it cut into book-shelves for your room. 'Twas too sweet to burn."

"*Her* room!" His easiness began to hurt. At first Sally thought, or thought she thought, that he acted a clever part to deceive the servants. Even then she wondered that he had learned to act. He had always had a naturalness that at times was an embarrassment.

At last the servants left them and they retired to the drawing-room to have their coffee after the French fashion. After they had drunk it, sitting each side of the fireplace, he would have her play and sing to him. She remembered how she had mocked him in the old days because her music put him asleep after a hard day in the saddle. She would be pulled up in midmost of her singing by a snore, and she would look round to see his head

lolling, mouth open, fast asleep. Only an exceeding comeliness could have borne the test of that sleep as his did. She would leave the piano lest she should break his sleep, and sit down opposite to him with the needlework she loved, till he awoke refreshed and ready for his game of basset or piquet.

Now as she played and sang to him she had something of an expectation that he would drop asleep; but he did not. When she glanced round at him he was lying back in his chair in so comfortable an attitude that it seemed he must desire to stay so and not turn out into the chill night. He was drawing the silky ears of the spaniel Chloe between his fingers, and she was looking at him as though she loved him, which was usually her attitude toward gentlemen.

V

Sally sang less well than usual. She had an uneasiness at her heart that prevented her doing her best. What would he say? What would he not say? Certainly he had no appearance of a man who has come charged with anything fateful to himself or another. He looked entirely at his ease, extremely happy and comfortable. Tears

rushed to Sally's eyes. She had been anticipating the meeting with an ashamed pleasure. There had been no reason for such a thing. The tables were turned. When last they met it had been he who wept.

She went through her songs — the songs he had once loved — and they seemed to awake no memories. She played to him on the harp and had knowledge of how beautiful she looked enough to keep her from meeting his eyes, despite the cold conviction settling down on her heart that his excessive amiability was the result of a complete indifference.

When she had returned to the fireplace he told her family news, the things that had been befalling his sisters and their husbands and children, going on easily to London gossip, of which she scarcely received any impression. With a few feet of space between them she was conscious of his nearness and that it made her tremble. He laughed and was easy, looking across the few feet of space at the beautiful head bent over its needlework. Had he forgotten the time when he had said that he adored Sally when she was domestic and would not let her sew for kissing her? He seemed to have no desire, sitting there with that

kindly look upon his face, to lessen the distance between them.

She had no idea that she was going to care so much. She had debated within herself what should happen if he was too forward. She had not known whether she wanted him to be forward or not, whether any approach on his part would not send her flying back to the cloister of her penitence. Now it was he who was unready. It was she who had been only too ready.

He was in the midst of the recital of a somewhat dull country jest — he had a rustic taste in stories — when the tears which had been stinging and burning at the back of her eyes suddenly overflowed them. She broke into a most bitter sobbing, and overwhelmed with shame that she could not keep her emotions from him, she cowered, hiding her face with her hands, the tears escaping through her fingers and tasting salt in her mouth.

VI

In an instant Sir Charles was by her side, stroking her hair with a rough kindness.

"Why, Sal, Sal," he said, "what is the matter? If I had known you would take it like this I should

not have come. You will have to banish me for the future, my girl."

The excuse with which she had explained to herself her desire for a meeting recurred to her to cloak her folly. She waited till the first violence of her sobbing was over. Then, shaking and taking long breaths, she looked up at him, a faint smile breaking through her tears. He looked so young and so uncomfortable and so mystified, and withal desperately sorry for her, in an impersonal remote way.

"I have never obtained, nor ever asked, your pardon," she said. "It has weighed heavy on my mind that I behaved so ill to one from whom I had received only kindness."

"Why, Sally," he said, "do not grieve about that. It hit me infernally at one time — you know I'd have taken you back, if but you would have come. The world has many women, but only one Sally. All that is over and past. You have my complete forgiveness. The only thing I can not pardon is that you should make your pretty eyes red for me."

"I made you suffer," she said; and was suddenly aware that this minute atoned for somewhat of that suffering, so blank was her disappointment, so

wilted the young flowers of hope that had been springing up in her heart.

"That is all over," he said, with steady kindly eyes. "I am contented in my comfortable middle age. It is a compliment to you, Sal, that I have never thought to put another woman in your place."

Oh, it was intolerable, this kindness of his! If he would only be angry, be cold, be anything but this cheerful kind person who broke her heart.

"You have not said you forgive me," she said, with a dreary air of saying something rehearsed beforehand.

"Why, I will say it readily enough," he returned, smiling as though he humored a child. "I forgive you. For the matter of that I have never been hard to you in my thoughts. I was a damn stupid fellow for you to marry, and I dare say I seemed indifferent to the jewel I had won. I never was indifferent — not for a minute. You should have seen me when I realized that my jewel had been filched."

He turned away and walked to the end of the room.

VII

For the rest of the interview let Sally speak for herself. It left her quite without hope for the time being. But her pride kept her from betraying to her friend the blow she had received.

"When I saw him I was too much overcome to have any sensible conversation with him. I was indeed as stupid as an owl. His extreme delicacy in avoiding to give me the least hint about my conduct before he was obliged to it; the ingenious manner in which he offered me comfort, talking about Lady Derby's case as I would wish him to talk about mine, did at last restore my spirits in some degree. He contrived to convince me that he looked upon me as his friend and one whose friendship he was pleased with and desired to keep. I can not describe to you how sad I felt at the time; but since my heart has been lighter with the assurance of his forgiveness. Indeed, it has gone back to its old way of lifting and lighting for the flight of a bird or the color of a flower, or some faithfulness of a dog or the soft freshness of the west wind. This, I think, will convince you, even if you do not desire to be convinced, that the love

which you talk of is out of the question, for love has ever given me a heavy heart.

"I was rejoiced to see Sir Charles look so well. He will be a boy when he is fifty. He was in very good spirits, and even rallied me because he found out that I was ashamed to see him before the servants, holding my hands and looking in my eyes and saying he would see me when and as often as he would and the devil take the consequences. Is this a lover's conduct? I tell you it is not. I could not argue that point with him, but I said, to cover my embarrassment, that I was very glad that he could see me with such good humor, to which he answered: 'Why should not I? I was never one to bear malice.' Then he teased me, asking why I should be put out of countenance because he came to see me and why any one should misunderstand it. This conduct of his set me for the second time into the most violent fit of crying: at which he drew away, and said very sorrowfully that I *drove* him from me, and that if his presence made me unhappy I must not admit him again. And so we parted the very best friends in the world; but it is very true that every thought of him and his forgiveness of me is like a dagger in my heart."

CHAPTER XX

DOMESTICITIES

I

"WHEN a hope is lost," says Sally, "put a stone above its head, but never write a name upon it."

"I am like an old leaf in autumn," she writes, two months after that meeting with Sir Charles Bunbury, "that sees its friends falling about it and knows its own turn will come soon. I am most profoundly grieved for the loss of Mr. Garrick. Mrs. Garrick's grief too engages my thoughts. After thirty years of marriage she was not only in love with her husband, but he was the whole and sole business and occupation of her life. To nurse him when he was sick and admire him when well has been her employment so long that she must now feel the most bereft of mortals. She has no children to occupy her mind, no relation she is attached to; she has led a life of company and business; the spirit of her society is lost; business she can not have, for her house in town and country

are so complete that she has not a chair or table to amuse herself with altering. She has nothing to do but *vegetate,* without any views, any enlivening hope, without any motive of exertion of mind. In my eyes her loss is one of the very greatest a human creature can feel. My own feeling for Mr. Garrick makes me easily comprehend that those who lived with him must now be very miserable; for I am one of those who in spite of envious abuse of the world looked on him in a much higher light than the first genius in his line of life; for I looked on him as a generous humane man, whose failings were wonderfully slight when compared with the temptations he had to fail. I can not help being sorry, too, for the rising generation that will never know what good acting is, and look upon it as a piece of good luck that I was born in his time.

"Henry Fox has been here. His looks, his manner are all delightful. He has the most good, true military air, the most noble ways; in short, he is altogether delightful. His face is like my sister Louisa, with Charles' look in the eyes, *ce que fait une tres belle phisionomie,* and yet he is not handsome by way of beauty. He has all his two brothers' pleasant ways of ease, good humor, fun and

quickness of remarks, without having wit and brilliancy. All his accounts of the service are told with such modesty and propriety that 'tis charming. He adores the Howes; he thinks America can not be conquered, and laughs at the folly of supposing it; he says the Americans never plunder without leave; he doesn't say so of the English. I think his ambition is to be a general as soon as proper. I think I have given you a very good account of a young officer."

II

"My brother's militia are ordered to Exceter toward the middle of summer; so perhaps you will see them and give me your opinion of it; for we are mighty proud of it in Sussex and think it can be matched with any militia in England. I wish you had seen the duchess when she was told she was to go to Exceter. 'Well,' said she, 'if I must, I must. Now let me see what good I can find in it? First of all, thank God, my good cousin, the Bishop of Exceter, is in Heaven, and won't plague us with his dignity nor his tiresome wit; then I can see Mount Edgecomb, which I never should have seen otherwise, and I shall read a thousand books which I never find time to read at home.' So saying she

has packed up her mind to it and goes with the regiment, which is here innoculating, so can not go yet. Don't you admire the prodigious practical philosophy of the duchess?"

III

"My sister Leinster and Mr. Ogilvie are just arrived from Paris in London and are coming here. I long to see her. I have seen *him* and think him a very good sort of man, most sincerely attached to her, which is all *my* business in the affair; for as to the rest she is *old* enough to know her own mind much better than others could direct her. She certainly did not marry him *pour l'amour de ces beaux yeux,* for he is very ugly and has a disagreeable manner, but as she says he has known her for so many years that he could not possibly he mistaken about his *mind,* and that is to love her to adoration, and that's very captivating; and after all, I don't think a husband can have a *greater* mind than to love his wife to distraction, from taste, from reflection, from esteem, in short, from everything that can constitute real happiness.

"My brother and his wife have taken my daughter to town for a month to learn to dance; the very kind manner they did it in makes the offer

so pleasant that it comforts me for her absence, which I confess I can very ill support, but as it's for her good I can not repine.

"Our militia march to-morrow morning. In about ten days they will pass your doors. I hope you will go down to the pale to look at them; I commend to your notice the captain of grenadiers and one of his lieutenants, both very handsome men, for the credit of Sussex.

"Dowager Lady Albemarle is here. She is ten years younger for the admiral's trial, and he is twenty years younger, she says. Besides all the toasts and fine ladies, Lady Betty Compton and the Duchess of Rutland wear his hair in their lockets; so that he must grow young.

"Adieu. My compliments to Mr. O'Brien."

IV

"What times these are! I hope all I truly care for may escape danger and then I shall be too happy; for the calamities that surround this poor country are dreadful. Pray write to me what you mean to do in case the French land.

"You ask me what sort of girls the Lennoxes are. All my advice to you about avoiding family quarrels has not been able to shield myself from

suffering by them; so that I am not able to give you as good an account of that part of the family as I should wish. Lady George led a very retired life for some years, and I think was obstinate in keeping her girls children too long. My brother George gave in with as little reason, for I never could see any for it, except that it gave them too much trouble to change their way of life, which the taking the girls out must have done. However, within the last year and a half, a great change has taken place, for she dresses her daughters as much as anybody, sends them out as much as the country permits of, and lets the eldest go to London; all of which my brother George and she used to exclaim against violently. The only thing wanting is her going to town herself with her daughters, which is, I think, a thing proper for all mothers to do; but she has conquered her aversion to it, I hear, and will go in the spring. Lord Lothian, whom I must always think of as Lord Newbattle, who used to neglect his sister very much, has taken to her prodigiously. He is now everything with her.

"I confess I dread meeting Lord Lothian again, seeing the changed circumstances in which we should meet. He has sent me through his sister some prodigiously civil messages; but I confess my

experience of him in old days was not such as to make me feel that I should find in him that delicacy and carefulness proper to my situation.

"To return to the Lennox girls, since you display anxiety regarding them I will try to depict them for you as faithfully as I can. The eldest, Louisa, is middle-sized, elegant to the greatest degree in her form, and rather plump. She has a true Lennox complexion, *rough* and showy; her hair is fair; her eyes, little and lively; her nose is like her mother's, which is pretty, and her mouth and countenance as like my sister Leinster's, full of ten thousand graces; her teeth good, but not superlatively fine. Her sense quick, strong and steady; her character is reserved and prudent, but so very complaisant that it's hard to discover she has a choice, and yet she has her prejudices and is firm in them. She likes the world as one does a play, for the amusement of the moment, but her turn is a jolly country life, with society, where walking, working and a flower garden are her chief delights; she doesn't love reading, calls every one wise or affected who is the least learned; she is herself free from any tincture of affection or vanity, not seeming to know how pretty she is. She is femenine to the highest degree; can laugh heartily at a broad

joke, but never makes one. Louisa is, as you know, nineteen. The next, whose name is Emily, is seventeen; and the next, Georgiana, fifteen. Their characters are all three as different as it is in nature to be. Emily is a fine, tall, large woman with a Lennox complexion, but *red* or *auburn* hair; her features coarse, her mouth ugly, yet her teeth excessive white; her countenance very pleasing and all goodness like her character, which is more like my sister Louisa's than anybody's I know, but for want of the same cultivation it will not be so useful, perhaps. Her taste for her amusements is very great, but her adoration for her sister and the same complaisance of temper make there appear but little difference in their manner, for what Louisa does is a law to Emily. Georgiana is rather little and strong made. Her countenance is considered very like mine, for she has little eyes, no eyebrows, a long nose, even teeth and the merriest of faces; but all her liveliness comes from her mother's side. She has all her will, all her power of satire and all her good nature too, so that if she is not led to give way to the tempting vanity of displaying it she will be delightful, but you know by experience the dangers attending on wit, and dear little Georgiana, I fear, will experience them. Her manners are, of course,

more lively and less prudent than her sister's, but the same good humor and complaisance reigns among them all. I am astonished that Lady George is not dying with impatience to produce girls she has so much reason to be proud of; for she is excessively fond of them and they live like sisters with her."

V

"My Louisa was at Lady Holdeness' for some time and with the duchess, and also with Lady Lothian — *que c'est drôle, n'est-ce pas?* Lord Lothian was particularly taken with her. The child does not know that he might have married her mother. So she has been *vue et approuvée dans toutes les cours.*

"You see you have had a dose of my relations and must now submit to have one of my house, which I hope to inhabit in a few months. Did I ever describe it to you? For if I did not you must tell me, for it's absolutely necessary you should have a proper idea of where I am, or you can not converse with me in comfort if I'm all abroad and you don't know where to look for me — I am now up to the ears in blankets, beds, curtains, grates, fenders, chairs, tables, etc., and I wonder I did not

inform you that the price of blankets is fallen because of the American War, which I never approved of till now that I get my blankets cheaper for it.

"Your answer to me about Sir Charles made me laugh. I used to think 'twas no laughing matter, but the spring always makes me light-hearted and light-headed. For some reason I am *entêtée* this weather. Indeed I would give you leave to laugh if I was to marry him again, but that will never be, I assure you; first, because Sir Charles loves his liberty and doesn't love me. He never was framed for the life of a married man, and he enjoys his bachelorhood too well to resign it without some temptation, which I do not afford him; and secondly I hope I shall never be idiot enough to marry *avec toutes mes annés et tous mes défauts;* but if I ever do you may certainly consider me as *mad* and that I've met with a man as mad as myself. Now as Sir Charles *n'est rien moins que fou,* we shall, I hope, be friends as long as we live. If I were well disposed to take such a step I doubt that he would be, so 'tis as well I don't cry for the moon. I see he has been very active about bringing in a bill to amend the jails and the convicts on board the hulks. He has a heart full of mercy; I remember him with

a sick horse or dog; and I love him for it, though I shall not be his wife again."

VI

"You know, my dear Lady Susan, I have little or no news to tell you from a country where you know nobody, nor indeed where there is anything stirring, for Sussex is famously dull; it is a corner of the world and no thoroughfare. There is no trade but smuggling, so that it gives a general dulness to the place, and the inhabitants of the towns have no earthly thing to do but gossip. Portsmouth *lies* and *news* furnish a little materials now and again and in summer the fine ladies at Brighthelmstone agitate the sails for a little while, but otherwise we fall into our dull home gossip. I say *we* because I dare say I am as bad as others, though I don't mean to be so, and I can't accuse myself much of entering into theirs, for I seldom see them. I have no carriage, which is a charming excuse for going seldom, and as few of them have any I see but few; I never had the art of managing my time, nor the gift of rising early, so now I've to teach myself all I wish to teach my daughter. As I love reading, writing, planting, walking and sometimes

working, I never find time enough to do half what I like nor a quarter of what I ought."

VII

"Do you remember the gipsy's prophecy when I was but five years old? Two-thirds of it have come true. (I wonder if she saw a river in flood when she looked in the ball and was silent for pity to a child.) As for the brave husband and gallant sons — there her wit failed her. *Je ne m'en fâche.* I do not know what has set me to think upon the gipsy.

"Your letters are better than mine, my love. My last I have totally forgot, as I always do in so great a degree that it grows quite absurd, for no sooner is a letter sealed than my memory is enclosed with it and I often wonder when I receive the answers what they can mean. This want of memory in me has grown so bad that I look upon it as *old age; vu que je m'en aperçoit de mille manières differentes.* It is very true that thirty-five and past is not *young. Il s'en faut beaucoup,* but one need not be quite old at that age as I am, both in looks and health, unless one has had bad health, which I have not; but so it is, and there being no remedy for this disease I will only take care, if

possible, not to let it be attended with its usual companions of crossness and discontent.

" You ask me if I am frightened out of my senses about the riots? I will own to you that I was affected by them most sensibly. *I* was perfectly safe and out of the way, but my brother's regiment happening to be on their march very near London at that time it seemed probable it would be sent to London; my brother had made himself remarkable for his abhorrence of the mob's proceedings, and was for having them severely punished; in the madness of the riots I knew not but his person might become an object of rage and revenge to them; and as governments are not famous for their skill in the military line, I thought he might get into danger through their stupidity, and not be released from it by their *zeal for his safety,* as those officers, who being their friends, are more precious to them.

" Besides this little agitation of mind which, thank God, was soon released by his regiment being encamped at Dorking in Surrey, was added the most uncomfortable feeling by the perpetual talk, abuse and abhorrence that rang in my ears of a name I never can hear with indifference; and so great is the power of one's feelings over one's reason that although when alone and to myself I could condemn

the conduct of that poor deluded Lord George Gordon and deplore the dreadful consequences, when others abused him it was with the utmost difficulty I could command my temper, not to defend an indefensible course. I never saw this unfortunate Lord George and I believe he has not behaved well to his brother; but no matter for that; he *is* his brother and therefore has a claim to my anxiety for his fate, which, as it must sorely afflict his brother, gives me very great concern. I hear he is wonderfully clever but wrong-headed, and I suppose is carried away by imagination beyond all bonds of reason. If he lives he can not be a happy man, for the dreadful consequences of his conduct will forever pursue his mind, poor soul.

" Pray tell me something more about your mother and her way of life, for I can never forget or cease to love her. Does she enjoy her former amusements at Melbury? Has she made anything more of the pretty wood with the water in it which in itself was so beautiful? Does she love cards as well as she did? Has she neighbors who can come and make her party? I love her so excessively that I would spend every night of the week at *quadrille* or *ombre* with her, though I detest the sight of cards, and am a rustic dame, yawning

prodigiously if I am out of my bed after ten o'clock.

"Well, I think I will let you off for the present about my house, especially as it will be more advanced when I write again. I am as fond of it as a snail of his shell, and I don't think I shall creep out of it to marry any man. Is not the duke an angel brother to build it for me?

"Adieu."

CHAPTER XXI

THE ASSEMBLY

I

"MY Aunt Albermarle is here; and, as you may well believe, all the talk is of Admiral Keppel's being beaten for Windsor and the King's part in it. With all due respects to His Majesty I say it, but in my opinion, for which he would not care if he has not forgotten me, he has hurt himself a vast deal more than he has hurt the admiral. A seat in *this* parliament and in *these* times is no such very valuable privilege as to break an honest man's heart if he loses it, particularly when, as at Windsor, the electors came to him with the most affected countenance, saying, 'Sir, we honor, we esteem, we love you, we wish you were our member, but our bread depends on our refusing you our votes; you are too good to wish us to be ruined by His Majesty's anger.'

"So speaks the lower class; the other class, which are *gentlemen, soi-disant,* say, 'Sir, we have the

greatest respect for you, but the roof we live under must plead our excuse.'

"I hope you agree with me in thinking the tradespeople ten thousand times more respectable than such gentry, though one of them is no less a person than the Earl of Hertford's son, Colonel Conway, but *all the blood of all the Howards* would not ennoble him in my eyes, I must confess, with such dirty shabby servility. I wish I knew him and could ask him a question or two.

"'Pray, sir, why is your being in the King's house a reason for voting against Admiral Keppel?'

"'Pray, did the King ever tell you, or order you to be told, that he hated Admiral Keppel?'

"'Pray, why does the King hate him?'

"There are strange reports about the underhanded and indeed some open ways used to force the Windsor people to vote against him. The next day the admiral went to a camp in Windsor Park to pay his respects to the King, who turned away and would not speak to him; but the Prince of Wales and his brother came up to him, condoled with him on the shameful conduct of his enemies, and the Prince of Wales, said: 'Remember, I am not your enemy, but your friend, and I wish you

had met with success.' I fancy the poor boys will get flogged for this, for it's *said* the King beats them.

"You can imagine how the old soul takes all this, with perfect spirit and perfect good temper. She is too young for her eighty odd years, and will walk half over the county to revisit some place she knew as a girl. She will not sit behind horses going up a steep hill lest she should give a bad example to common folk. If you say it is too much for her, she bids you remember the horses. It is the most generous, enthusiastical young old soul alive.

"Mr. Burke being thrown out at Bristol is not much to their honor, but it is true merchant-like, for they are so selfish they can not bear his principles of freedom should extend to any one but themselves, and his wishing Ireland had a free trade is his crime."

II

"Hove, Near Brighthelmstone.

"9th April, 1781.

"If my affection for you, dear Lady Sue, was to be measured by the regularity of my correspondence *j'aurais mauvais grace a y pretendre;* but I could not very well give any tolerable reason for

never writing to you during the whole winter when I've so very often thought of you. I have passed this whole winter within two miles of Brighthelmstone, for the benefit of sea-bathing, partly for Louisa's and my health, but still more out of a desire to be useful to my brother and the duchess, who have a little protégée they are mighty fond of and to whom sea-bathing was necessary. As she was too ill to be trusted with servants I offered my services, and have accordingly now passed seven months here. I have been very well repaid for my trouble by the pleasure of being of use to the little girl, who is quite recovered; otherwise my sojourn has not been remarkably pleasant. To a person like me who has no society or acquaintance but her near relations, to be separated from them is the greatest solitude. For although the place has had a tolerable number of people in it continually, yet I've never mixed in the society there, though by walking about a great deal I've become perfectly acquainted with a number of *faces* and *names* whom I know no more of."

III

"My spirits are by no means good; but I still prefer the greatest solitude to company I do not

love; for I must more than *like* my company to be perfectly comfortable.

"I have once been tempted to the assembly rooms and am not like to go there again. I went in the company of Lady Fanny Beauclerk, who overcame all my objections by the statement that I should hear good music, and that I might sit in a corner if I would and no one disturb me. You shall hear.

"The music was very well and I enjoyed it, but when 'twas over I found it not so easy to detach Lady Fanny, and I, being her guest, having come in her coach, I was obliged to wait upon her pleasure. When at last I had prevailed upon her to start we had to find Miss Beauclerk, who was dancing in an adjoining room. She was engaged in dancing when we arrived: it was the country dance of 'Apples and Pears in a Green Garth,' and it was prodigiously pretty to see how they romped through it. Miss Beauclerk is a girl of very graceful figure. You will hardly believe it that they prevailed on me to join in the dance. I have always been excessively fond of dancing, which must be my excuse for such a folly at my age. My partner in the dance was little George Beauclerk, a pretty boy whom I used to nurse on my knee when he was a

child and fetch lollypops to when he slept in my old nursery at Holland House, when Mr. Beauclerk and Lady Fanny used to stay with my sister and Lord Holland.

"I was enjoying it like the youngest, with a greater security because I believed I was known to none there but my own party, when — oh, Sue, pity me! — I caught sight of a red and foolish face, a face I had last seen — in Berwickshire — in those mad days. It was Sir Harvey Lovell, whom you will remember. He forced himself into my presence once. I told you of it and no other soul on earth. I knew you would not betray me even to Mr. O'Brien.

"The odious wretch grinned foolishly when he saw me — I had to take his hand in the figure of the dance.

"'What, my lady,' he shouted like a bull of Bashan. 'This is very different from our last meeting. I had no idea I should find my lovely friend in this dull provincial spot.'

"Oh, Sue, pity me! The dance had suddenly stopped. I did not know that there was something amiss with the music. I thought it stopped for me. The most intolerable feeling of loneliness and desolation came down upon me. I looked at the

foolish insolent face — I hardly saw it for the faces of the dead and those dead to me that filled the ballroom. I hardly missed the music for the sound of the Leader in flood crying in my ears. I felt myself turning dizzy and sick. I have not been in my usual good health of late. Solitude of mind does not agree with me. As in a dream I heard his great coarse laugh.

"'Your old flame,' he said, 'was married to-day.'

"The brutality of it was like the sting of a whip in my face. I reeled. The music struck up again. Some one, a stranger, led me away out of the dance and into the winter garden — fetched me some water — was kindness itself, letting me be till I had recovered myself. If anything could have consoled me in that wretched hour his manner would have afforded me consolation. I am done with assemblies. Yet I was innocent enough: just a moment of folly when I was as young as my own girl and I was confronted with that great oaf and silly devil who brought up all my past to me.

"I had the most violent fit of weeping before I was done: during which my unknown friend stood and watched me with the most griefful air. I did not even think to ask his name. When I was

sufficiently collected to speak I asked him to find Lady Fanny, which he did and brought her to me where I stood hooded and cloaked in the hall. She knew nothing of my mishap. I would not have her know, nor any one else but my dearest friend with whom I can share all my thoughts. As he helped me into the coach he stooped and kissed my hand with the utmost of respect. There was curiosity in Lady Fanny's voice as she said she did not know I had any friends in Brighthelmstone. I answered that I had a dozen. Fortunately she did not ask me his name. She was distracted when the question was on her tongue by the sight of an old tree cowering by the roadside which she took to be a highwayman. The terror lasted her till we got home. She left me at my lodgings in Hove without having asked me the question to which I dreaded having to make an answer."

IV

"This is going to be a long letter, my dearest Lady Sue — I had written so far, when I was obliged to lay my letter aside — for after so long an absence of letters there is so much to relate; and the oddity of it is that I did not write because I had nothing to say up to the time of the assembly ball,

and since I began the letter many things have happened.

"The day following the assembly, on which I should have been a prey to the saddest thoughts, when I should have been resolving that never again so long as I lived should I expose myself to the risk of meeting such a reminder of my past as happened to me at my gayest, most foolish moment, I was instead full of thoughts of the strange gentleman who had been so kind to me. In my retired life it was improbable I should ever see him again; and after the cruelty of that encounter I confess I dreaded that he should know my history. Better that the incident should sink out of sight as a stone dropped in a stream rather than that noble countenance should look on me with reproof and condemnation. For it was a very noble countenance, my dear Lady Sue, and a noble carriage and figure. He wore his hair powdered and tied with a black ribbon. His features were stately and dignified. It did not need his uniform to tell me he was a soldier. I should have known it the world over. His blue eyes had a straight keen glance as though they were accustomed to measure the chances of battle. Somewhat of the eagle in them, but not for me. When he gave me his arm to lead me

from the assembly I caught the glance with which he swept my enemy: it was as though he spat in his face. I have seen a duel fought for less, though no words passed.

"My dearest Lady Sue, I know now who he is. He has written. He has asked if he may wait upon me. He knows the admiral and Harry Fox and twenty other common friends. That tells me he knows my history. But proud and virtuous as he is, I am sure his eyes had nothing but respect for me. I am very proud, my dear love. If you could know how I have shrunk from the other feeling in men's eyes, you would pity your poor Sally. Perhaps he knows — I wonder if he heard the tale first from some one who loves me — that I was not light and shameful. It was a great passion: the one great passion of my life; oh, Sue thank Heaven you have been preserved from such. It was that the gipsy saw in her crystal: that when he asked me I could deny him nothing. I think he, no more than I, imagined such an ending. We loved greatly: we fell: we have repented greatly. I do not grudge him what solace he may have of his marriage, if it is true he is married. Passion has burnt itself out with me. I am thirty-six years of age. I have repented greatly. God has forgiven

me, and of late years the flowers have come back to my life, springing up in all sorts of strange places. I am quite an old woman: sometimes I feel only a poor child, who has been in disgrace and forgiven and can bask in the sun again."

V

"I have seen my friend: I know his name. He is Mr. George Napier, second son of Lord Napier. He has served through the American War with great distinction. He is six feet two inches in height, of a beautiful figure and a noble face. Whatever he has heard about me I need not fear him. The kindness of his blue eyes as he looks at me is such as any woman must delight in.

"Do not accuse me of follies. Can I not at my age, with my history, have a friend? My dear love, Lady Sue, we have always been truthful, sometimes hard with each other, though the hardness was but a rind to the greatest sweetness within. Tell me if I may not solace myself with the friendship of this noble gentleman. I hear nothing but praises of him. He has had great trouble, having lost his young wife two years ago; and he has a little daughter to bring up. She and my Louisa and little Mary Bennett have taken vastly to

one another, although she is but a toddler by my two great girls of ten and twelve. My Louisa adores small children, and Louisa Napier is an engaging little animal.

"We are a great help to the poor man. Oh, Sue, do you not pity the estate of a man who has lost his wife and is burdened with the care of small children? The little Louisa has been left to nurses. Her poor mother would grieve if she could see the state of her clothing. A great pin does duty for strings and buttons, and her lace is in ribbons. She is neglected. I have taken her clothes, to mend them. Poor brat! Her father does not know how she has been left to nature."

VI

"You ask me of Louisa. She is grown to be a most charming girl, though I say it. She is but twelve years old and is very childish in everything, so that although she fully employs my attention she is not yet old enough to be quite a companion. She looks much older than she is, being very tall: she is not pretty, for she has a *very large* mouth and rather thick lips. When she laughs, which is *pretty often,* she *really laughs,* for a smile is out of the question with her, and so she shows a set of

white strong teeth, fitter for a man's mouth perhaps than a fair lady's. She has an ugly nose, pretty long and not well-shaped at the tip; she says herself, for she is as candid with herself as I am with her, that it is long and *retroussé* both; and laughs over it with the most engaging good humor. Her eyes are neither large nor small, but sensible; her hair and forehead very so so; her complexion is brown and healthy. Her figure is straight and good, her motions are too free ever to be *graceful,* as our fine ladies esteem grace. She doesn't know what the vapors are, and has an appetite not genteel; she has never fainted in her life, and is mad for the country and animals. I have written her down as *ugly as the devil,* but she is not. There is about her a *je ne sais quoi* that every one must love her. She thinks of any one's happiness rather than her own. She may startle you with a loud voice and the walk of a boy; but she has nothing underhanded, and she will never learn finesse. Altogether she is a great, gawky, plain, lovely Dear. I would not have her otherwise for the world. She has the power of winning hearts so that people say, 'I thought her ugly at first sight, but discover her to be pretty.' She will make all the world her friend. She has a goodness of heart, a desire to please,

an unaffected straightforwardness which is rather boyish than a girl's qualities, and exceeds anything I ever saw in anybody. Next week she goes to London, to Richmond House, where they have most kindly shown her every attention and goodness.

"Sir Charles and all his family have taken her *en amitié* that they have her with them very constantly: I fear that with the variety of friends who desire to take her out I shall not have much of her. But she doesn't think any one like her mother, and would give up the finest engagement ever was for a country walk or an evening beside the fire with me. I don't think it a good thing in general to be sought after, but in her peculiar situation one must bend to circumstances, and since at twelve years old they carry her about as if she was twenty, it is to be hoped that at twenty no one will take it in their heads to doubt about being civil to her, for they will have had full time to consider of it. Therefore I rejoice at the manner in which she is received; and can not say how I love Sir Charles and his family for not letting my fault influence their conduct toward my innocent great baby. Mrs. Gower has asked to have her for a fortnight after the duchess is done with her. Nothing can be more pleasing to me than all this, and when I can at-

tribute it to her own dear little engaging ways it gives me so much pleasure that my heart is full of gratitude to the kind Prompter of all kindness.

"I must tell you of the dear Duchess of Bedford. She has brought little Caroline Fox to my Aunt Albemarle and desired her to tell the Duchess of Richmond that she would be very glad whenever her grace would send for Miss Fox, as nothing would please her more than to have my brother's family take notice of her, adding that *she begged she might see a great deal of Miss Bunbury.* So you see my heart is *doved* by her old grace and her gracious ways. In consequence of this Lady Albemarle carried Louisa to Bedford House, and the girls have dined together and were to go to the play with our duchess, which is all delightful."

VII

"This letter has taken an unconscionable time in the writing. I wrote it from time to time when people would allow me. Louisa has left me for the duchess. I hope you are perfectly assured now that she is my first thought: this being sought after while it gratifies me, leaves me without her companionship. You, who have always companionship, must pity me. Adieu."

CHAPTER XXII

INDIAN SUMMER

I

"I RETURNED from Hove in April, and now it is June at the time of my writing to you, although you were very prompt in an answer to me. *Je crois que le diable se mèle de nos affaires.* Here are you scolding me exactly as I scolded you when you followed the dictates of your own heart rather than your head. I have been putting a suppositional case to you. What will you say when I tell you it is my own?

"You remember the officer at Brighthelmstone, at the wretched ball, who so obligingly, so chivalrously came to my rescue at a moment when I was feeling as though I had been shot through the heart? I ran away from Hove to avoid him, *parcequ'il me donne une serrement du cœur,* and we did not meet again until the other day when, as I was stepping out of my chair at my Aunt Albemarle's door, he was going in. He came forward to assist me with the greatest of politeness in the

world. At the sight of me joy flashed from his eyes. His face is naturally serious, yet it has a *je ne sais quoi* that tells of humor not far off — for he is an Irishman. We went in together to pay our respects to the old soul. While we were there in the little drawing-room her ladyship was called away to her youngest grandchild, who had just produced a tooth and was only to be comforted asleep by his granny. She has the most wonderful way with old and young.

"We were in the little drawing-room, the curtains closed between us and the room where people came and went and were entertained by Elizabeth Keppel till her old ladyship should return. I suggested joining the crowd and stood up to do so. In a manner of the utmost respect, yet with the greatest importunity, he begged me to be seated for a while. There was that he had to tell me, after hearing which, if I pleased, he should speak no more. With a prodigious tremor, for which I could not account, I set myself to listen."

II

"I believe I have told you, my dearest Lady Sue, that he is excessively handsome. The light in the little drawing-room was dim: and his profile

showed against the window. I was arrested by the fineness of it. It had a look fierce and valiant: the head, held a little thrown backward, had something of the eagle in its glance, as though the eyes looked at sunsets and were not afraid. A romantic face. My thoughts went back to Sir Philip Sidney and others of the heroical days. His eyes were of the most shining blue. They would look unafraid down the throat of a cannon; yet they can soften wonderfully for a woman.

"I will tell you somewhat of what he said — not all. There were some things that must be between him and me and God. He began in a manner of great circumspection; and I divined that he would not have his leaping heart to run away with his tongue. He said quietly that ever since I had left Hove so abruptly he had desired to meet me again and to learn how I was affected toward him.

"'I have lost not long since,' he said in tones of the deepest feeling, 'a most dear companion. She died of a fever at New York, and with her our youngest pledge of love. When the grave closed upon her I felt that I was done with love of women and that my country must henceforth be my mistress. She was the most amiable of creatures. Fate or Providence having dealt me so cruel a blow

at what was but the outset of our lives together, I did not imagine that I should again expose myself to the danger of such a trial as is involved in the losing of a dear helpmate; until, one night at Brighthelmstone, the beauty of a lady in distress so overwhelmed me with compassion that I was carried out of myself. And presently I began to perceive, having seen more of the lady, that my heart was not dust and ashes, a charnel-house of dead memories as I had supposed, but yet warm and living, capable of rejoicing greatly as well as suffering: in short, putting forth fresh leafage of greenness from a trunk blasted by the lightning and supposed dead, but yet not so, and now miraculously come to life.'

"When he had said so much he leaned forward and took my hand.

"'Strange,' he said, 'that I should find that lady who had wrought such miracles in me in the person of the cousin of the gallant Keppel, whose deeds I adore while I am proud to call him my friend. I assure you, madame,' he said, 'that ever since our meeting, my thoughts, my hopes, my aspirations have been centered in this one end, that I should meet you again, and, if you were free to listen, should pour forth to you once the passion with

which your face inspired me, so that, as the old poet said well —

Since first I saw your face I resolved
To honor and renown you.

I have said my say,' he concluded, 'and now you are free, if you will, to bid me remain silent forevermore.' "

III

" My dearest Lady Sue, you can imagine the extreme state of agitation into which I was thrown by this honest and manly avowal. I had resigned myself long ago to being done with life. You know my situation. I am a woman who, having burned her boats for love, have considered myself as cut off from that happy security wherein fortunate women dwell with their husbands and children. I esteemed myself lucky in having so much to solace my loneliness. I had the child whom I had so cruelly wronged, to whom I might make up yet in some measure for the injury I had inflicted upon her. I had my dear family and some steadfast friends — you, my dearest Sue, ever first among them: I had a home I loved, given to me by the dearest of brothers. Over and above all I had the

consolations of religion which, perhaps, would not have burned so brightly for me if my situation were more fortunate. Yet,— to be done with life at twenty-four! Oh, Sue, the fault I committed was over and done with at twenty-four, and to be done with life as well was surely hard. I thought I was willing, but I was not.

"A prisoner within me, the spirit of youth at times yet capered and sang. Do what I would joy waited to surprise me. I found after the first years of my penitence that the green shoots were coming out and up in all manner of unexpected places. I was frightened the first time I heard myself laugh, playing with the child. She had pulled my hair about my ears. I saw it in the glass and my flushed and smiling countenance, and I felt with a shock that my hair should have been off — my poor, pretty, fly-away hair — and my head covered with a cap such as the Colletines' penitents wear at the Asile in the Rue Champèry. I remembered how the cap round the sullen girlish faces seemed to me an intolerable cruelty and affront.

"I knew now what had been the matter with me those last months when my foot could scarcely keep from dancing for all the years of my age. Oh,

Sue, if you could know what I have had to bear! I am very proud; and I was the object of scorn. Cold devils of prudes who had never known what it was to love greatly, to be greatly loved, as I, looked at me askance as they passed by on the other side. I had a spirit quick and eager: if I were a man I should have been another Fox: as my nephew Charles says, I have the *flair* for high politics more than any woman he has ever known. I have always been greedy for the great things of the world; still I was humble to country ladies and a nurse to Louisa and dug my garden less well than a gardener's boy. Oh, there were times when I was balked and miserable.

"And here — I could not believe my ears — was a man of the highest probity, the most unflecked conduct, the most rigid standard of honor — and he was offering me the happy security of his name and honorable protection. Oh, no fop would dare, as fops have dared, to convey by a smirk and a twirl of the cane that my situation was not the same as an honorable woman's. It was too much."

IV

"'My sword to defend you, my body to adore you, my heart to lean upon, my honor and esteem

to crown you.' He had broken into impassioned words. He is the finest gentleman living.

"In the great pier glass which I faced I saw the curtain which shut off the little drawing-room lifted by a hand. I could have screamed. If we were to be interrupted! This had to be finished one way or another within the walls of that room which I have never thought beautiful apart from Lady Albemarle's presence. The curtain dropped again. I knew the old hand, with the signet-ring too large for it held in place by a keeper. The old love is as much in sympathy with lovers as though she was a girl. She must have known.

"Suddenly an overwhelming despair came upon me with a certainty that he could not know my history. He was speaking to an unknown lady — Madonna Innominata, in all that counts. When he knew how poor Sarah Lennox had lost all for love he would be amazed, grieved, horrified. The thought of his face was too much for me. The expression I imagined in his eyes withered me. As I covered my face with my hands I felt his scorn like a destroying flame."

V

"I sobbed out my story in his arms and felt them close about me. As for the things he said — those were the things I shall not write even to you. 'All the world knows you might have been queen of England,' says he, 'and you are come down to be queen of a poor soldier's life and heart.' Do you remember the gipsy's prophecy that I should yet be a queen? I dare not think upon what else she said."

VI

"Did I tell you? He is a son of the late Lord Napier and uncle of the present Lord N. He is a younger son, so of course has nothing. To mend his fortunes he married in Minorca an officer's daughter as rich as himself. He made her very rich, poor soul, in all the happiness that a wedded life can afford; but after barely four years of married life she left him, with one babe, the pledge of her affection. I think now I told you all this before. I shall never be jealous of her, poor pretty wretch, nor send my thoughts enviously to that union of first love: all that shall be swallowed up

in my pity for the woman who possessed so dear a soul and must leave him to me.

"You would hardly believe, my dear Lady Susan, that a man who has had reason to know the distresses of poverty and the inconveniences of a poor marriage should be so eager to put himself into the same situation again — and for a woman who is no angel, as you well know. You will think ill of his sense for the choice he has made of me, for most things considered, there is in all marriages one thousand to one they will turn out ill, and in mine ten thousand to one; but no one argument that has been urged to Mr. Napier has had the least effect upon his determined purpose. He is no more sensible than any other man in love, and ends up all with if I love him he is the happiest man alive. I do love him to his entire satisfaction, and being certain of that he laughs at every objection that can be brought, for he says that, loving me to that degree he does, he is quite sure never to repent marrying me, and that he will take his felicity where he finds it: in short, nothing can be more firm, or, if you are pleased to call it so, more obstinate, than he in thinking me the most desirable thing on earth, and the only one to make him happy *en dépit de tout.*"

VII

"As for me, my dear Lady Susan, my situation is easily understood. I thought myself arrived at as much happiness as ever I should enjoy sheltered as I was at dear Halnaker under the egis of my dearest brother's affection: but the tenderness I feel for Mr. Napier, my gratitude for the excess of his partiality toward me, the pleasure of being so sincerely and deeply loved, and the hope, after twelve years of a loneliness which only my own heart knows, of the full and comfortable companionship which is afforded by a happy marriage tempts me to risk the comfort and security of life at Halnaker for an uncertain future. In short, my dear Lady Susan — and you have only to look at your O'Brien to understand how I feel — there is the *man,* and the man outweighs all that might be piled on the other side of the scale.

"Dearest Sue, it has not all been cakes and ale. Despite the security and peace of Halnaker, I have to set against it that I have very few friends, and they, by their avocations, are drawn out into the world and away from me, whereas I, by my situation, am kept within the green enclosing hedges of my home. It has come to this, that I rarely see

my relatives, except my brother and the duchess: and as for friends, their visits have grown rarer and rarer. So poor Sally sits alone and a-cold. I am not by nature one to do without the alleviations of friendship. The only things that might counterbalance the happiness I look for in a marriage with Mr. Napier were, first, the good of my dear child, and second, the loss of my brother's friendship. You will easily believe, my dear Lady Sue, that my heart has been torn in pieces by the doubts and apprehensions caused me on these two points. I could tell you ten thousand reasons for and against: but when all is said and done the issue was never in doubt. There is always the *man:* and the man is worthy of all I can suffer for him.

"But although *I* am persuaded, it requires much pains to persuade my friends of it, and I have not yet succeeded as I would like. My two sisters approve, Lady Albemarle, esteeming Mr. Napier as he deserves, gives me a blessing: my brother doesn't like it and can't be persuaded to see its advantages. He says: 'Why change when you are well? You risk all and may lose all.'

"He vows all the time that 'tis only his affection for me sets him against it, yet tells me plainly that I must have no hope of his protection in the matter,

since he could not encourage what he hoped might not happen; that I must seek the countenance of those who saw differently from what he did: but that he would be neither for nor against me.

"I wait on my sister Louisa who is coming from Ireland shortly. Mr. Napier says I have but one fault, that of *delay,* but he finds it so excessive that he can scarce forgive me it. He has given me the greatest possible proof of his affection for me. He is going to *sell out.* I know how great a sacrifice this is, and I bring him no fortune but myself. He says it is *enough* for any man. It is a thing he doesn't understand and scolds me for, that after those years of solitude I am afraid to walk alone even to my marriage. It is like some one who rises from a bed of sickness and dare not face the unsteady earth without a comforting hand. My sister Louisa will steady me. He says I have him and I believe is jealous of Louisa; I am well assured that I have him, but I need the countenance of my own family.

"My brother George says that the Lennox women are the devil for romantic folly. My sister Leinster with her 'beggarly Scotch tutor' (according to the duke) is my justification. She had not my excuse, for Mr. Napier is charming.

"In the month of July at furthest I look to be settled *chez moi,* not in my own dear beautiful house amid the Goodwood roses which have done famously at Halnaker, but in some little house near London if not in a London lodging. I care not how vile it is, but shall hug the sacrifice for love's sake. A retired life suits me very well in all respects, and I shall continue it in the midst of London, being well content with the perfect friendship I shall find at home. I gave up the world on sound and fair reasoning, and nothing shall induce me to seek it again to the detriment of Louisa's character. I am not a fit person to introduce her into the world, and I never will attempt it. I will not do as I have often seen mothers do, make her innocence and pleasing ways a support for me by not letting her go without me into the world: at the same time I will not let her be like Fanny Wriothesley was, at *everybody's* service: she will not go into the world but under the protection of those near relatives *whose protection is so very advantageous to her.*

"You and I shall never go again all bonneted up and hooded up in public, and giggle and laugh at the ridiculousness of the world, but I will not promise that we don't laugh at home and do it in

more comfort; as by that means we shall not run the risk of being abused for it, but enjoy our fun in a quiet way."

VIII

"We have both played — or at least I play and you have played — a deep game for happiness. You have won. I pray there may not be ruin for me on the cards. But it could only come with the loss of Mr. Napier. He is my King of Hearts, and the Ace is in my hands. I talk as though I were in society. But behind the talk my heart keeps saying to itself: *God give poor Sally another chance.*

"Have you heard of Lord William Gordon's marriage? It does not grieve me. I am glad that he should be happy at last. The woman who gave up everything for a great passion is dead and forgiven. *God gives poor Sally another chance.* Adieu, my dearest Lady Sue."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CANDID FRIEND

I

LADY SUSAN writes —

"My dear Lady Sarah — You think that when you set an imaginary case before me, asking for my advice upon it, that I must have guessed it was your own. You are wrong there. I should have made twenty guesses before lighting on that.

"Let me, as one who gave all for love, and has saved some happiness out of an ocean of worry and vexation, implore you to consider what you do. I could hardly believe myself awake when I read your letter and perceived what it meant. I perceive already by it that you are excessively in love; and of course everything will appear to you in a delusive point of view: that is what I wish you to be careful of. But that you will not be, as it is the very nature of passion to deceive; and I think the greatest excuse for *a young fool* more than *an old one* is that sentiments they feel for the first

time they naturally think can never alter, an illusion any second passion must destroy.

"I have no doubt the duke will remain kind and friendly to you as is his nature, but by what you say it is clear he is extremely against your marrying; and may not this have the effect of lessening his regard for you, which alone will make you very unhappy?

"As to Miss Bunbury, I sincerely hope she will not feel the change of your situation, but I think you must be *sadly in love* not to see the danger of it; she will certainly have only a share of your affection and attention, of which she now has the whole, and what is divided must be lessened.

"Your living at Goodwood has probably been a reason of the fondness the duke and duchess have for her; her being at a distance from them may diminish it, for we are all *animaux d'habitude,* and I conceive a great difference between being a very good uncle and showing her what is called kindness and protection and having the sort of love and fancy I imagine him now to have for her. As for your giving her a better education with Captain N.'s help, it is all stuff and nonsense. You deceive yourself, my dear Lady Sarah, you deceive yourself. You are certainly very capable of giving her your-

self as good a one as you could wish her to have: and I think he will agree if he is reasonable, as no man in love ever was, that you are much more capable of it alone than with him to share your attention. I am sorry if you will marry — for I see you pitch this letter to the devil — that it is a man of small income: it is an additional and never-ceasing little plague that goes on tormenting one incessantly: and neither time nor habit that lessens every other ill has the least effect on that.

"There is a perpetual little uneasiness caused by the want of money: a little something which arises every day and every day demands a fresh remedy, like the continual pricking of a pin which, though no very violent agony, is yet enough to make uncomfortable the whole life. You may trust me on this subject: my experience is too good, and though Captain N. may be used to live on a small income and economize he will not like it a bit better, for in this case *l'habitude n'y fait rien.*

"As to the approbation of your two sisters, I am satisfied it is only because they see you are determined. Her Grace of Leinster may well feel that one folly in the family is enough, and may reproach herself that she set you the example of following rather inclination than duty. If they thought you

would be easy without the marriage I am persuaded they would strongly advise you against it. As to Lady Albemarle's opinion, I don't think it of much consequence: I hear she weeps over *Clarissa Harlowe* and reads fairy stories when her Bible would more become her age. If her advice did not jump with your inclinations I do not think you would attach more importance to it than I do.

"I wonder to find how much I have gone on writing, for when I began my only intention was to wish you happiness and not say a word of my misgivings. But I can not help feeling hurt at your marrying again: there was a propriety in your retreat, and a dignity annexed to the idea of *one great passion,* though unfortunately placed, that gratified your friends and silenced your enemies. I have so often heard you praised and admired for not marrying again and giving up your time to your daughter that I grieve you should change a plan, the only one in the world perhaps that could thoroughly reinstate you in the good opinion and esteem of everybody.

"Mr. O'B. is in London and I am at Melbury with my mother, surrounded by oaks, but not at all conscious of the oak-like disposition with which you used to credit me. I am become a willow and

very often a *weeping* one, for my spirits are but low and I can't form any scheme which affords me any pleasure.

"What does the duchess say? Does she not laugh at you for your folly?"

II

Sally read this letter between laughter and tears. It hurt cruelly, yet there was object for some bitter humor in the spectacle of the woman who had given all for love become a weeping willow, and yet with a most oak-like capacity for striking hard and resisting the tender appeal of her friend's situation.

"I wish she had kept to her original intention," said Sally, reading the letter in her pleasant morning-room at Halnaker, overlooking the park where the duke's deer were feeding.

There were phrases that stung like the slash of a whip. "An old fool." Sally turned to the glass to consider the face of the woman so designated. It was a fair and glowing face, supported on a slender pillar of a neck. What maturity had come to her had given her a more winning charm. The channels of the long and bitter tears of her penitence had but given her beauty an alluring sadness

of experience. Her lips and her cheeks were red: her eyes, but for the tears, had been bright. She had the figure of a married sylph. Grace went with her as she walked, stayed by her when she stood or sat. Innumerable little loves laughed from the dimples of her cheeks. Her lips, drawn downward with the hurt of her friend's letter, had a more bewitching line than when she smiled.

"It has not been all cakes and ale for the gallant O'Brien," said she to her image in the glass: and the image in the glass laughed back at her through shining tears.

III

Sally might take her own way as her friend predicted, but it was possible to plant thorns in the way where otherwise should have sprung roses. She could smile over parts of Lady Susan's letter, remembering how most of its arguments might have applied to the writer's own case. The thing that went deep was the argument about her daughter. Louisa Bunbury's situation appealed to no one as it did to her mother, whose love for her daughter had the poignancy of a passionate duty, a passionate reparation. She owed Louisa all she could do for her; all she could sacrifice for her.

Was it possible that her marriage would be a wrong to Louisa? that all the arguments by which she had persuaded herself that it would be a benefit to her girl were but specious and selfish? Was she throwing golden dust in her own eyes?

Would the time come when the child upon whom she had lavished everything of a mother's devotion should feel herself pushed out, her place taken? A wave of color flooded Sally's cheek as she recalled the gipsy's prophecy. Heroic sons! She was to be the mother of heroes, according to the gipsy queen. The sons of such a one as Mr. Napier might be heroes. But for the moment the thought of the unborn children who might push Louisa from her mother's heart had no trembling joy in it. She did not desire to be the mother of heroes. She only cried out in a passionate protest against possible wrong to the child to whom she owed all reparation.

IV

For the first time it came to her mind that Lady Susan, that the duke and duchess, all the people who opposed her marriage, might have right on their side. She would be taking Louisa from Goodwood and the tender friendship of the Duke

and Duchess of Richmond to the poverty in which she must live if she made this marriage of love. She had seen how poverty had wrought on the bright spirit of her friend. Would it, in time to come, affect her somewhat similarly, stealing like a creeping blight over her generous spirit and high-heartedness? Would it crush the noble mind and energies of Mr. Napier? She saw herself as she saw Lady Susan, plainly for the first time, discontented, querulous, blaming all the world rather than herself, making even the radiant image of Love drab and dreary, trailing his wings in a robe of sackcloth and ashes.

She lifted her heart proudly. Lady Susan had blasphemed against love. She would never do that. If she married Mr. Napier — *if* she married him: there was but one thing that could turn her back from the felicity that had opened before her — they would carry poverty with a high spirit. It would be the poverty of the Poverello: the Lady Poverty, and no drab slut pinching and paring. She would never come to be a weeping willow like poor Lady Susan: she would not even be ivy to strangle the life out of her splendid oak. To her last day, whatever befell, she would praise love and not blaspheme against him.

V

She fell from her heights to a valley of desolation full of the cold rain. She did most earnestly desire not to be blinded by passion, as Lady Susan had said she was, to her daughter's interests. Always she had been on her honor not to think of herself so long as she might do something to atone for the unfortunate situation into which she had brought her girl. She had made it a reason for accepting Mr. Napier that he would give her the shelter of an honored name, and that her own more assured position must be advantageous for her daughter. Had that been a specious dust cast in her eyes by passion and self-love? Arraigning herself before the tribunal of her own conscience she was ready to believe that it was so.

Louisa had grown up sweet and sensible. She was now in her thirteenth year, a wholesome country girl of great honesty and simplicity of character. She worshiped her mother, and she had shown some little jealousy of Mr. Napier.

At the moment when Sally sat with her head in her hands, bowed down in an agony of self-accusation, Louisa came romping into the room with a pack of dogs at her heels, bringing the west wind

with her. It was a day of May, the lilacs were in full bloom under the windows of Sally's morning-room, and the May-trees in the park were like so many great bunches of bridal flowers. The birds were singing most sweetly in all the freshly-green branches; there was a whisper of wind in the leaves that was like the flowing of many waters. It was a day for joy.

The child came bounding to her mother's side, as affectionate and as clumsy as her spaniel, and cast herself upon her mother's neck.

"Why are you weeping, you precious mama?" she said. "What is it that troubles you? Is it anything your child can help in? Have I given you trouble by my wild ways?"

Sally clasped the young warm creature to her breast, and controlling her agitation as well as she might, she began to talk to her tenderly, as she had learned the habit of talking in the years of solitude during which they were together. Although Louisa was not a clever creature, yet the excellence of her heart and understanding more than atoned for any lack of quickness in her mind.

"It is well you may be alarmed, my Louisa, at seeing your mother in tears," said Sally, "for I have kept my tears from you all your days. It is

not right that the young should be saddened by the griefs of their elders."

"You would never have a grief if I could bear them for you," said Louisa, "and perhaps I understood better than you thought. I often knew when you wept and wept with you, being careful that you should not know. Do you remember how, when you were ill with a fever, I crept into your room and was found breathing the air about you so that I might catch your fever?"

"I remember it too well, you beloved creature," Sally replied fondly.

"So I would rather have your griefs to bear in my own person than another's joys. You must weep no more except when your daughter is by to stanch your tears. Dearest mama, I entreat that you will share your troubles with me. If you do not do so openly I shall share them in secret, which will be the worst for me. Dearest mama, you will be surprised, but your Louisa knows the cause of your grief."

This last saying cast Sally into the most frightful alarm and mortification. Was it possible the innocent child could know of her mother's transgression? What hint, what whisper of it could have reached her young ears? At the moment she had

a feeling that she would welcome everything, anything, that would keep her ignorant forever.

"You must not look so violently alarmed," said Louisa, patting her mother's cheek. "There is nothing to cause alarm. I have long known that you grieved for the death of the father whom I lost in youth. You can not deceive your child. She loves you too well not to know every feeling of your heart."

VI

Sally was silent for several seconds after her child had spoken so innocently. So that was what she believed! No one had been cruel enough to enlighten her. She sent up a fervent prayer to Heaven from the depths of her heart that Louisa might be kept in ignorance, little knowing how the prayer would be answered in years to come.

Louisa was patting and smoothing her mother's forehead now with two comfortable kind hands.

"I shall make the lines disappear," she said, "that have written themselves on your pretty dear face during the years of your sorrow."

"You darling Louisa," cried Sally, feeling endowed with fortitude to relinquish any prospect, however sweet, for the sake of so dear a child,

"my little wise woman, how will it be if you and I go on together at Halnaker just the same? Surely we suffice for each other."

She did not see for her tears the sudden joyous bewilderment of the child's face, nor how her eyes wandered about the pleasant room, with a look in them as though some precious thing which she had foregone were being given back to her. Well it was for Sally that she did not see! It was a blessed blindness.

"But it would make my dearest mama happy to marry Mr. Napier?"

For a moment a heroic lie hovered on Sally's lips but did not pass them. She could not say she did not care. Her voice trembled as she answered.

"You and I, Louisa, can be happy together. Mr. Napier has a Louisa of his own to solace his loneliness as I have."

"And we would be here together at Halnaker?" Louisa said in a whisper. "Nothing would be changed. We need not go to London and away from the duke and duchess. How beautiful it is! London I can not endure."

"You are a true country bird," said Sally, feeling the last shred of hope disappear. "But you

are right, Louisa. In this dear place we can be happy together."

"And you will not go back to weeping and being sad? You will not wear black always as though you were a nun? You will laugh as I have heard you since Mr. Napier came, but never before? You don't know how differently you look since Mr. Napier came."

"I will try to be all you want me to be," returned Sally in a voice she could make nothing else but doleful. She lifted Louisa's hand and kissed it, saying to her own heart that Louisa had shut the door between her and happiness and had a right to do it. She saw her life settling down into the drab and dreary routine of old. Oh, she was tired of the sackcloth and ashes which she had worn so long! and yet she must resume them; she must give up the love and the honorable shelter — and the hero sons, who should be her delight and her pride, whom she could love without the poignant sense of a guilt which made her love for her girl suffering rather than joy.

Louisa, with a sudden playfulness, as it seemed, closed both her mother's eyes and kissed the lids. She stood up from her place on her mother's knee — she was a great girl to be nursed — and drew

Sally's head to her breast as though she were the mother and not the child.

"Indeed," she said, "I ask your pardon, my dearest mama. Your child was but playing with you. If we lived on here as we have been doing I might leave you one day, and then think how solitary you would be! It has often been very lonely at Halnaker, especially when the duke and duchess were in London. If I am to have a papa I would rather have Mr. Napier than any other gentleman."

"You are certain of what you say, Louisa?"

"If needs be I shall go out to the American War with you and him," said the child steadily. "I heard Uncle George say that unless Mr. Napier sold out you and I would have to follow him to America in a troop-ship. I should not so greatly mind if you were there. Did you think, dearest mama, that your child would have you go back to the sad days before Mr. Napier came? I shall have a sister in Louisa Napier. I can trust my mama to keep a corner of her heart for her child, however much she may love my new papa."

Mother and child clasped each other again, and face to face, each savored the salt tears on the cheek of the other.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RING OF POLYCRATES

I

"THIS is my birthday," writes Sally a year later. "I am thirty-eight to-day, and I see nothing new under the sun except that till I was past thirty-six I never knew what real happiness was, which, from my marriage with Mr. Napier till now is much greater than I had any idea of as existing in human life; and it is no small satisfaction to be able to say that at thirty-eight, as at least it secures that happiness from all the dangers of change in consequence of youth flying away; indeed, if I am to judge from the present of the future nothing can ever diminish my domestic comfort except illness or death, which God keep far from us."

II

"I am very well able to give you my thanks, my dear Lady Susan, for your kind anxiety about my health. I am now perfectly recovered, although being a little weak and nervous: *mais au reste je suis*

enchantée de mon fils. It is a very healthy strong child, and promises very well to make his way in the world as well as his neighbor, poor little soul. Louisa is dotingly fond of it, which you may guess is a very pleasant circumstance, for as I am not one of those who know how to nurse and make a fuss about a child, she is always pressing me to attend more to it; wondering how I can be so little taken up with it, which you can see entirely precludes all idea of jealousy, a passion which, happily for her, she is not disposed to have, but which you know people are too apt to create in young minds where it would never have come of itself.

"The infant is called Charles from dear Charles Fox, who is its godfather; it fights with its fists for what it wants and won't be put off with less, which is perhaps a sign of the great hero the gipsy promised me. It is already like its father, of which I am glad; it could imitate nothing more heroical. Its papa already plans its training, poor mite, and is dotingly fond of it. What do you think? My Louisa raves against me that I call it It. It must be *he* if not *Charles.* What do you think of the puss? She is more its mother than I."

III

"My Louisa is just as you left her, only a little taller and happily weaned of the vile habit she had acquired at Richmond House of supposing it quite necessary for a girl of her age to go to public places at least once a week. She has been out but three times one whole winter and thinks as little about it as I could wish her to do. There is not a soul in London so I have no news to tell you, except that you must sew some black penny ribbons upon every ribbon and gown you have of whatever color, and say it is *à la Malbrook,* as Louisa is doing this moment on an old bonnet: for if you are not *à la Malbrook* you are nothing. The reason? Why the dauphin's nurse sung a Flemish song of *Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre,* and in it the duke's page announces his death to the duchess *tout en noir* and so must your ribbons be. I am very glad my little Charles is no dauphin, no, nor Prince of Wales. By the way the prince they say is *desperately* in love with Lady Melbourne, and when she doesn't sit next to him at supper he is not commonly civil to his neighbors; she *dances* with him something in the cow style but he is *en extase* with his admiration of her."

IV

"We are settled here at Stretton Hall very comfortably; a large house well-furnished and a pretty garden. I fancy we shall not stir unless the dearness of the country should drive us to Wales. Our society is quite to our mind. Louisa and I were agreeing that for people who live the year round in the country 'tis pleasanter to have what is called the lonely time in winter, as one can settle very comfortably to occupations in winter, whereas in summer one dawdles out-of-doors naturally and that is the best time for company. I told you, I believe, of the Moncktons, our very pleasant neighbors; his sister, the fine Miss Monckton, is to pass next summer here, but I've my doubts about liking her: for I've a notion a very, very fine lady and *soi-disant bel esprit est un mauvais meuble pour la campagne.* We have been three weeks on a visit to Crewe Hall, which we all liked vastly. Mr. Crewe and Mr. N. took excessively to each other and stayed till three o'clock in the morning talking and playing at chess. Miss Crewe played at backgammon with him in the morning; she, her mother and brother, played at cribbage with him in the evening, so he was perfectly occupied from morn-

ing till night, and they seemed pleased to find a person ready to be useful to them all, for as young Mrs. Crewe says it is so common in these days to find men who are *ennuyé to* death if they are not exactly in their own set and at their own amusement, that a man who likes anything is quite a treasure in the country. Louisa rode out in the morning (a great treat to her) and drove with Miss Crewe, and though there was no young person there contrived to divert herself vastly, partly with a play acted by children in the neighborhood. Mrs. Crewe and I, who don't love cards or backgammon, used to sit and talk over old stories, of which you may guess we had not a few."

V

"I am now," writes Lady Sarah after five years of married life, "arrived at that perfection of quiet felicity that I begin to tremble at my own happiness. I have my four little children as well as my angel Louisa. Mr. Napier has fulfilled my tenderest hopes and expectations. I am as that gipsy said I should be, a Queen of Hearts. So tenderly am I adored by my husband and children that I sometimes tremble at so perfect a happiness. I feel as though something must be exacted of me,

taken away from me: I must lose something precious else I shall forget that I am mortal. My poverty contents me very well with Mr. N. by my side and my most dear children about me: so that it does not serve to counteract my felicity. I sometimes look back on those quiet days at Halnaker in which after a long apprenticeship I thought I had secured content. How little I knew what awaited me in the mercy of God! Poor woman! I used to be haunted in those years by the sound of the Leader in flood, which seemed to be always with me. I can scarce believe I am that woman to whom such things happened. If it were not for my Louisa who bore me up through those dark years I could believe it all a dream. My blossoming time has come. Think of me as so happy that I am afraid."

VI

"I share many thoughts with Louisa which I should not dream of imparting to another girl of her age. She is a dear angel. Of late she is grown slender and is shaping prettily for womanhood. She will not be pretty, but there is a *je ne sais quoi* of pure goodness about her that far transcends beauty. She has no mind now at all to gaieties of

the worldly sort. She is fond of reading and painting and music: and ever unselfishly disposed to set her own preferences to one side for the convenience or pleasure of others. Mr. Napier calls her the Light of the House, and there is as tender an affection between them as though he were her father, for which I thank my God.

"I said something to her one day of my happiness being so great that it made me afraid. Something looked at me from her eyes that was not Louisa. I have seen the same thing once or twice since and it frightens me. *Il me fait un serrement du cœur.* It is as though she peeped at me from a great distance with a strange smile and away again. There is that in her expression at such a time that makes me feel I must clap my hand to my heart lest it should leap from me in a fright.

"'My dearest mama,' she said, and that which was and was not Louisa peeped at me and fled, 'if you were to be like that King who was obliged to throw his most precious jewel in the sea to save all the rest I would be that jewel.'"

VII

In May, 1875, Louisa Bunbury developed a violent cold and cough. A doctor being called in dis-

covered that the lungs were irritated but not seriously hurt. A milk diet with occasional gentle infusions of bark seemed to cure the cold of its violence, but the cough yet continued.

"So long as her cough continues," writes Lady Sarah to Lady Susan, who is at Spa, "I am in hot water. I am wholly taken up, with Mr. Napier's help, in watching her every hour. Tell me about Spa. It will distract my unfortunate spirits. I wish I could be of use to you; I passed a summer there eighteen years ago, but I am told *que tout est changé* so completely there that I should scarce know it. The place did consist of six or seven largish houses and the rest a neat village of houses containing an entry and staircase with four rooms about nine or twelve feet square, one of them a kitchen, one of them for the landlord (only they are chiefly widows) and the two others for you, with bed-chambers over them: all plain white-washed walls and wooden chairs, *very clean.* Farmhouse windows at which everybody (*for the world lives in the great street)* peeps in as you sit at breakfast, so that if you have not a back room or a large house you are at the receipt of custom all day. If it rains Spa is detestable. If it is fine and your health admits of it 'tis impossible to resist entering into

the good-humored idleness of the place, particularly as 'tis easily done without expense.

"You need never ask a *soul to eat,* but dine at two or three o'clock in peace. You may walk out in the street or in a promenade close by all the morning, buy your own greens and fruit, read the papers at the bookseller's, go a-shopping, or make parties for the evening. After dinner you go *on foot* to the rooms, play ball or walk, make your own party and walk home (or in a chair if sick) at nine, ten, eleven, twelve o'clock. In *my* time all was shut up at that hour, but now I hear late hours, parties at home and dinners are the fashions. My system was *(et je m'en très bien trouvé)* to *cut* all the tiresome English, to join the agreeable ones, if asked: if not I comforted myself with choosing my own society among the foreigners which I always found cheerful, obliging and very often agreeable. I'm afraid the mere eating and drinking are expensive; but your very delightful servant will remedy that by his care. Your dress need cost you nothing but a French lutestring for dress, as the great perfection of Spa is that it is a perfect masquerade, and as you will probably choose to dress French you may do it cheaply. A lady who left Paris last autumn tells me that the *Queen and everybody* wore white linen

levettes and nightgowns all day long, no apron and a chip or straw hat with ribbons, and that when she went to the great milliner for a cap to bring home she told her there was no such thing except a *court cap,* and she sold her a straw hat for five shillings and the lady could not get the same in London under ten shillings, though Madam Bertin gets hers from England: this is an anecdote in dress worth your notice. Take gauze handkerchiefs in plenty of an ell square: I get them reasonable at a shop I will look for the direction of and add it. I know nothing of men's dress, but that a Bruxelles camlet is a stronger kind of Irish poplin and much worn there for habits and coats."

VIII

Having written this lively account, Sarah adds —

"Oh, my dear creature, I have written so much. But I divert myself with these toys. Day by day I see a shadow creeping nearer. My dear angel! How shall I live without her? She is all sweetness. She gets farther and farther away from me and her smile is from another country. Such a strange bright smile. I shall lose the most precious thing. The heart that loves me best is already beyond my reach."

IX

"Your letter from Spa delighted me, being perfectly comfortable and agreeable: and I am glad what I wrote was a help. I am out of that disposition that even now a letter from you can afford me joy; but all such joys are gone from me in two minutes, for when a gleam of spirits comes across me and I think, 'Now I will write to my dear Lady Sue,' and I sit down to write, Louisa's state comes uppermost and oversets all my spirits. They are only kept up by doing a thousand things for her which she receives with the sweetest gratitude. Never was so patient an invalid, yet the patience is so heart-breaking that I could wish her forward and ill-natured. You have not a child, and you do not know the look that is in my child's face, that begins to ask me through that strange bright smile of hers 'What has she to do with me?' I do not know how I am going to bear it. Is she the price I am to pay for the happiness of my marriage, a happiness I never expected nor looked for? I do not know. I only know that I dare not look beyond the day."

X

Six months later, and in the interval she has lost a child and gained a child, for she is the mother of a third son, she writes —

"It is but lately I have had the resolution to write to anybody. I can not talk much about my dreadful loss. She is gone who made me see every pleasure in its brightest colors. All my occupations were directed to *her* pleasure or use, all future plans of life had *her* for my first object, all my joy in kindness was doubled by her sharing it. How can I forget amidst my children, that she is wanting who has been mine these seventeen years when they were undreamed-of? At seventeen she showed how far human perfection can go at that age: no passions had dared disturb that angelic disposition toward everything that is good. Patience, fortitude, self-denial, generosity, feeling and gratitude filled up the measure of her merits, which originally flowed from the sweetest natural disposition and was proved by a long and painful illness in which every day showed some new perfection. . . . In the midst of the dreadful gloom that followed my angel's loss, my husband proved such a source of strength to me that I praise God every day for

having bestowed upon me the love of such a man. He steadied me: he held my hands and bade me look up, to where my adored Louisa sits high above the frailty and suffering of this evil world.

"She comes to me in dreams. She has no more the brightness, the dreadful brightness, which every day carried her farther and farther away from me. She is my little Louisa as in the days at dear Halnaker — when she was all I had. I try not to be a dejected object to cloud the cheerfulness of my husband and friends and of my little children. I can even laugh at times, but in the same moment in which I have laughed I feel *un serrement du cœur* as if all nature were darkened before my eyes and I had no farther business on this earth.

"My sweet lost angel! Do you think she gave her young life for the preservation of my happiness, which else was too great for mortal woman to enjoy?

"I am Queen of Hearts, indeed, Queen of Hearts, — yet there is a thorn in my crown of roses, and there is a thorn in my heart. But there is one comfort. My child will never know now the story of the mother she set above all women."

THE END