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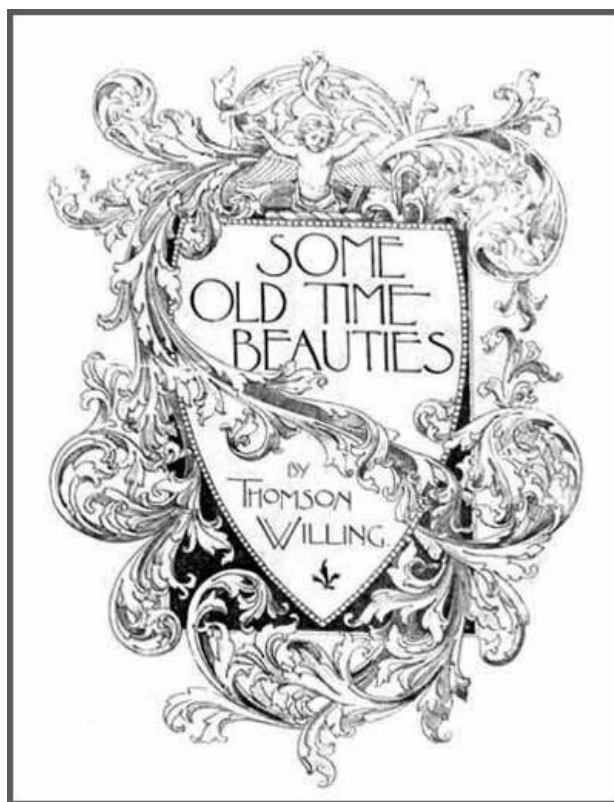
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## **SOME OLD TIME BEAUTIES**

**AFTER PORTRAITS BY THE  
ENGLISH MASTERS, WITH**

# EMBELLISHMENT AND COMMENT BY THOMSON WILLING

BOSTON  
JOSEPH KNIGHT COMPANY  
MDCCCXCV



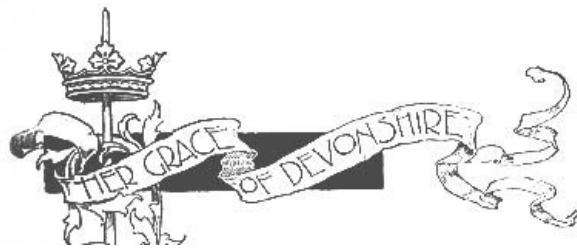
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**GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE  
GAINSBOROUGH**



The Dashing Duchess,—the impulsive, ebullient beauty whose smile swayed ministers, and for whose favor princes were beggars! A loveliness of manner, as of feature, such seductive color,—glowing carnations,—and such golden-brown hair, with a fine figure, made up an opulent personality, than which no more consummate type of beauty has been preserved to us by painter or poet.

Georgiana Spencer was the daughter of Lord Spencer, afterwards first Earl Spencer; but her impulsiveness, her waywardness, and improvidence were a legacy from her grandfather, "Jack" Spencer, the grandson and special favorite of the beautiful Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Her "Torismond," she called him. His was a career of profligacy, a course of error and extravagance. His mother was Lady Sunderland, known in society as "the little Whig," from her small stature and her persistent politics. Her party badge was always worn,—the black patch on the left side of the face, as distinguished from the Tory fashion of wearing it on the right side. So Georgiana came legitimately by her beauty, her Whiggish politics, and her versatile vivacity of manner, as well as her improvidence and indiscretion. <sup>[4]</sup>

But her mother's strong character was a potent influence. She was the daughter of the Right Honorable Stephen Poyntz, and was of high repute for generosity, for sensibility, for charity, and for courteous dignity of demeanor. We hear of Georgiana being a beautiful child; and Reynolds as well as Gainsborough, both made painted record of that childish beauty. Her brightness of mind gave her an interest in art, in music, and in literature; and, though not proficient in the practice of either, she had more than the society woman's knowledge of them. At seventeen, she married William, fifth Duke of Devonshire, ten years her senior. His was a temperament antipathetic to hers,—unsympathetic, unimpressionable, and taciturn, yet withal of the Cavendish characteristic persistency of purpose and honest intent. <sup>[5]</sup>

The Duchess at once became a queen of society in the Carlton House Court. Devonshire House was an assembly place for the Whigs; and its lovely mistress was the hostess of many a statesman exalted by his wit, as of many a politician with following by virtue of his station. Like all radical companies, it was a motley mixture that found welcome there. The Prince of Wales was a devotee. The then shining Sheridan was a frequenter; but with the name of Fox has that of the Duchess been more associated than of aught other. Her supremacy among these companions was not in the manner of the French Salon leaders,—while wit, knowledge, and tact were hers, she lived not by learning, but by her liveliness and jollity. She was not the scholar in politics, but the politician among scholars out of school.

It was a roystering, revelling company; and political as well as personal penury became the <sup>[6]</sup>

portion of many as the result of these improvident and profligate days. The episode of the Duchess's career which is most known, is her purchase, by a kiss, of a vote for Fox when she was championing his cause in an election, and canvassing for votes in company with her sister, Lady Duncannon. It was said, "never before had two such lovely portraits appeared on a canvass." A butcher bargained for his vote by asking a kiss from the lovely lips of the seductive Duchess. The price was paid, amid the plaudits of the crowd. An Irish elector, impressed by the fair appellant's vivacity, exclaimed: "I could light my pipe at her eyes."

Fox was elected for the Tory borough of Westminster, and great was the rejoicing at Carlton House. A *fête* was given on the grounds the day following, and the ordinarily well-apparelled Prince appeared in a superb costume of the radical colors, blue and buff. This was the period of the Duchess's greatest glory, as well as of her most superb charm of personality; and it was about this period that Gainsborough painted his perennially delightful presentment of her. She was then twenty-seven years of age, and had been married ten years. Wraxall wrote what is probably the best contemporary description of her: "The personal charms of the Duchess of Devonshire constituted her smallest pretensions to universal admiration; nor did her beauty consist, like that of the Gunnings, in regularity of features, and faultless formation of limbs and shape; it lay in the amenity and graces of her deportment, in her irresistible manners, and the seduction of her society. Her hair was not without a tinge of red; and her face, though pleasing, yet, had it not been illuminated by her mind, might have been considered an ordinary countenance."<sup>[7]</sup>

It is said of Gainsborough that, while painting the Duchess, "he drew his wet pencil across a mouth all thought exquisitely lovely, saying, 'Her Grace is too hard for me.'"

The lady later knew the cuts of comment, and the keen pain of justifiable jealousy. The rival in her husband's attentions was Lady Elizabeth Foster, daughter of the Earl of Bristol, a brunette of handsome presence, and at the death of Georgiana, in 1806, she became the second wife of the Duke. There was an apparent friendship between the ladies, and Lady Elizabeth for a time lived under the same roof as the Duchess.<sup>[8]</sup>

Madame d'Arblay, in 1791, visited her at Bath, and made record then of her introduction to the Duchess, and indicated the premonition of trouble in this wise. "Presently followed two ladies; Lady Spencer, with a look and manner warmly announcing pleasure in what she was doing, then introduced me to the first of them, saying, 'Duchess of Devonshire, Miss Burney.' She made me a very civil compliment upon hoping my health was recovering; and Lady Spencer then, slightly, and as if unavoidably, said, 'Lady Elizabeth Foster.'" Gibbon said of the latter, that, "No man could withstand her; and that if she chose to beckon the Lord Chancellor from his woosack, in full sight of the world, he could not resist obedience." Reynolds painted a portrait of her, showing a bright-eyed, smiling lady, with close-curved hair, of girlish appearance. In Samuel Rogers's "Table Talk" are several mentions of the famous Georgiana, and especially one which tells of her love for gambling. "Gaming was the rage during her day; she indulged in it, and was made miserable by her debts. A faro-table was kept by Martindale, at which the Duchess and other high fashionables used to play. Sheridan said that the Duchess and Martindale had agreed that whatever they two won from each other should be sometimes *double*, sometimes *treble*, what it was called. And Sheridan assured me that he had handed the Duchess into her carriage when she was literally sobbing at her losses, she having lost fifteen hundred pounds, when it was supposed to be only five hundred pounds." A life such as she then led surely affected her appearance. In 1783, Walpole wrote: "The Duchess of Devonshire, the empress of fashion, is no beauty at all. She was a very fine woman, with all the freshness of youth and health, but verges fast to a coarseness."<sup>[9]</sup>

The offspring of the Duchess Georgiana were: Georgiana Dorothy, afterwards Countess Carlisle, whose letters were lately published, and exhibit an original observation and a terse style of record; Henrietta Elizabeth, later Countess Granville; and a son, who succeeded to the Dukedom. About the latter's birth was some mystery; insinuation was active. The Duchess had little liking for domestic life, so normal neglect of child may have been construed into an unnatural dislike. Her son never married. Through the stress of the home infelicity, her beauty waned; but her bearing and breeding kept her paramount in her set. She is known to this later generation only as a superb beauty who stands with such opulent charm of costume, and of fine hauteur of manner, amid the noble groves of Chatsworth—as the once potential original of Gainsborough's greatest portrait. "The bust outlasts the throne, the coin Tiberius."<sup>[10]</sup>

A most pathetic tribute to the beauty of the Duchess was paid by "Peter Pindar" (Dr. Wolcot), who addressed "A Petition to Time in favor of the Duchess of Devonshire," and implored the Inexorable thus:—

"Hurt not the form that all admire.  
Oh, never with white hairs her temple sprinkle!  
Oh, sacred be her cheek, her lip, her bloom!  
And do not, in a lovely dimple's room,  
Place a hard mortifying wrinkle."<sup>[11]</sup>

"Know shouldst thou bid the beauteous duchess fade,  
Thou, therefore, must thy own delights invade;  
And know, 't will be a long, long while  
Before thou givest her equal to our isle.  
Then do not with this sweet *chef-d'oeuvre* part,  
But keep to show the triumph of thy art."

A dramatic fate has befallen the original canvas. In 1875, it was sold at auction, and was bought by a firm of dealers for the then highest price paid for a single picture in England. The publicity gained by this was taken advantage of by the purchasers to exhibit the picture. One morning when the gallery was opened, the frame only was there; the picture had vanished. The canvas is lost.

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**MARY, THE HONORABLE MRS GRAHAM  
GAINSBOROUGH**



Like the happiest countries that have no history, the tranquil life of joyous content leaves little to chronicle. Only in the nobility of character of a husband who grieved her loss for years, and in his strong dignity, and devotion to her memory, do we get a hint of the gracious and good lady whom Gainsborough has made immortal for us.

And in that phrase of her lifetime, "lovely Mary Cathcart," is a whole biography of benignity and beauty. She came of one of the most ancient and noble families in Scotland, and was the daughter of the ninth Baron Cathcart, called "Cathcart of Fontenoy." Her brother William became the tenth Baron, and afterwards the first Earl Cathcart. He had studied law, but abandoned it for the army, and had a gallant career therein; becoming a lieutenant-general in 1801, and commander-in-chief of the expedition to Copenhagen in 1807; afterwards acquiring reputation as ambassador for several years at St. Petersburg. He was perhaps the earliest of British noblemen to marry American beauties; having wedded the daughter of Andrew Elliott of New York, in 1779.

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In November, 1774, there was rejoicing among the retainers of the House of Cathcart, for there was to be a double wedding. The eldest daughter, "Jenny," was married to the Duke of Athole, that same Duke who became a friendly patron of Burns, and in reference to whom the poet writes, when addressing some verses to him: "It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honor and gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God, in my hour of need I shall never forget."

The second sister, the Hon. Mary, was married to Sir Thomas Graham of Balgowan, a descendant of the Marquis of Montrose and of Graham of Claverhouse. The youngest sister, Louisa, later became Countess of Mansfield, and her portrait, by Romney,—a seated profile figure with flowing draperies,—is that artist's most masterly work. [17]

After eighteen years of happy married life, she died childless; one of those good women that were

"True in loving all their lives,"—

"a surpassing spirit whose light adorned the world around it." Her husband grieved greatly. He was ordered to travel to divert his despair. He visited Gibraltar, and there the dormant martial spirit of his ancestors was aroused by his environment. Though then forty-three years of age, he immediately entered the army as a volunteer. He rapidly rose in his profession, and had an especially brilliant career in the Peninsular War. In 1811, he became the hero of Barossa, and in the same year was made second in command to the Duke of Wellington. He was created Lord Lynedoch of Balgowan, Perthshire, and frequently was thanked by Parliament for his services. Sheridan said, "Never was there a loftier spirit in a braver heart." And alluding to his services during the retreat to Corunna, he said, "Graham was their best adviser in the hour of peril; and in the hour of disaster, their surest consolation." Scott eulogizes him in the poem, "The Vision of Don Roderick," in the lines,— [18]

"Nor be his praise o'erpast who strove to hide  
Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,  
Whose wish Heaven for his country's weal denied;  
Danger and fate, he sought, but glory found.

"From clime to clime, wher'e'r war's trumpets sound,  
The wanderer went; yet, Caledonia, still  
Thine was his thought in march and tented ground;  
He dreamed mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,  
And heard in Ebro's roar his Lynedoch's lovely rill.

"O hero of a race renowned of old,  
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle swell!"

Old Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, wrote of a late Duke of Athole: "Courage, endurance, stanchness, fidelity, and warmth of heart, simplicity, and downrightness, were his staples." They are ever the staples of the Scotch character, and they were all pre-eminent in Sir Thomas. His life was noble, and his affection was faithful to its early troth. [19]

A pathetic history attaches to this picture of Mrs. Graham: When its subject died, the sorrowing husband had it bricked up where it hung, and it was only by an accident that it was discovered at his death, in 1843. It now hangs in the National Gallery of Scotland at Edinburgh. The present reproduction shows but a part of the picture, the figure being full length. It has been excellently reproduced in etching by both Flameng and Waltner.

In 1885, a most comprehensive exhibition of Gainsborough's works was made at the Grosvenor Gallery in London. At it was noted the important part this painter had played in perpetuating the lineaments, bearing, graces, and gownings of the great persons of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

"The lips that laughed an age ago,  
The fops, the dukes, the beauties all,  
Le Brun that sang and Carr that shone."

There was seen The Hon. Miss Georgiana Spencer, at the age of six, and again a later portrait of her as the Duchess of Devonshire,—she of the then irresistibly seductive manners,—and her mother, Countess Spencer, of whom Walpole wrote as being one of the beauties present at the coronation of George III., in 1761. There, too, was Anne Luttrell, daughter of Simon Luttrell, Baron Irnham, who married, first, Christopher Horton, and, secondly, the Duke of Cumberland, brother of the king. Of her Walpole wrote: "There was something so bewitching in her languishing eyes, which she could animate to enchantment if she pleased, and her coquetry was so active, so varied, and yet so habitual that it was difficult not to see through it, and yet as difficult to resist it." And here was another widow who captivated royalty, Mrs. Fitzherbert, who was a daughter of Walter Smythe of Bambridge, Hampshire, and married, first, Edward Weld, secondly, Thomas Fitzherbert of Synnerton, Staffordshire (who died in 1781), and was said to have been married to the Prince of Wales (George IV.) in 1785. And there also was a more notorious beauty, Miss Grace Dalrymple, afterwards Mrs. Elliott,—though divorced later, and becoming the mistress of various aristocrats, notably the Duke of Orleans. [20]

The Duchess of Montagu, granddaughter of the great Duke of Marlborough (one of the Churchills,—a family prolific of beauties), was there seen. Several pictures of the painter's wife (who was a Miss Margaret Burr), of his youngest daughter, Mary, afterwards Mrs. Fischer, and one of his friend, Miss Linley, went to augment this superb congregation of beauties shown. Portraits of Garrick,—that intensely interesting Stratford portrait,—Earl Spencer, Pitt, Earl Stanhope, Colonel St. Leger, George IV., Duke of Cumberland, George III., Earl Cathcart, Canning, Dr. Johnson, Fox, and several showings of himself, made up a body of work unsurpassed in importance by that of the president of the Academy himself. [21]

Gainsborough was born in 1727; he moved to Bath, in its most brilliant period, in 1760. He died in 1788, but had ceased contributing to the Academy four years before, because of a disagreement with the hanging committee. His portraits of ladies were always picturesque and individual, each differentiated from each of his own works as well as from that of other painters. [22]

This portrait of the Hon. Mrs. Graham is delicate in color, yellowed somewhat by its long seclusion from the light,—and will remain one of the most delightful and *spirituel* creations of the old-English school.



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**EMMA, LADY HAMILTON  
ROMNEY**



With the name of Lady Hamilton is ever associated the names of England's most famous sailor and of one of her most famous painters. Hers was a life redolent of ill-repute. Though her beauty was great, it served her for ill purposes; but she came by her lack of character by heredity. She was born in 1761, the daughter of a female servant named Harte, and at the age of thirteen was put to service as a nurse in the house of a Mr. Thomas of Hawarden, Flintshire. She found tending children a tedious task, and forsook it. At sixteen, she went to London, and became a lady's maid there. Her leisure time was spent in reading novels and plays, which inspired a love for the drama. She early developed a rare ability for pantomimic representation; and this became a favorite form of entertainment in drawing-rooms and studios. Her duties as a domestic agreed not with the drama, so her next position was as barmaid in a tavern much frequented by actors and artists. She formed the acquaintance of a Welsh youth, on whose being impressed into the navy, she went to the captain to intercede for him. The boy was liberated, but the comely intercessor was impressed into the service of the captain. From him she went to live with a man of wealth; but her extravagance and wilfulness induced him to forego her company. Then followed a period of the lowest street degradation. From this state she was taken by a Dr. Graham, who was a lecturer upon health, and exhibited the finely-formed Emma as a perfect specimen of female symmetry. She became the topic of the town. Painters, sculptors, and others came to admire the shapely limbs shown under but a thin veil of gauze. The young bloods of the time worshipped,—some not afar off; and one of them, Charles Greville, of the Warwick family, who had essayed to educate her to become a fit companion for his elevated existence, maintained her for about four years. It is recorded, that when he took her to Ranelagh's the sensation was greater than had ever been produced by any other beauty there. Not the winsome and witty Mrs. [26]

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Crewe, nor her friend Mrs. Bouverie; not that first flame of the amorous Prince of Wales, Mrs. Robinson, nor Anne Luttrell, also beloved of royalty; not the Marchioness of Tavistock, whose loveliness has been preserved to us by Sir Joshua, nor the delightful Duchess of Buccleugh; not Lady Cadogan, and not even the dashing Duchess of Devonshire herself,—caused the comment and admiration this low-born unprincipled young woman now excited. Mr. Greville would have married her had not his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, interfered. It is variously stated that Sir William agreed to pay his nephew's debts if he would yield up his mistress; and also that, in endeavoring to free the young man, the old gentleman himself fell into the snare of her charms. "She is better than anything in Nature. In her own particular way she is finer than anything that is to be found in Greek art," exclaimed this *savant* on first seeing her. She was a most enchanting deceiver, and a finished actress in the parts of candor and simplicity, so succeeded in marrying Sir William, in 1791. He was over sixty years of age, a man of much classical and scientific erudition, and had been for many years ambassador at the court of Naples, to which place he was soon accompanied by his bride. She became a favorite with the queen, and a frequent visitor at the palace, also somewhat of a social success among the British residents. She sang well, and made a specialty of showing herself in "attitudes," or what we term now "living pictures," for the delectation of her guests. "You never saw anything so charming as Lady Hamilton's attitudes," wrote the Countess of Malmesbury to her sister, Lady Elliot; "the most graceful statues or pictures do not give you an idea of them. Her dancing the Tarantella is beautiful to a degree." It was here began that intimacy with Nelson which became the great blot on his fair fame. He was then commanding the *Agamemnon*, and she became his constant companion, and was sometimes useful to him as a political agent. After the victory of Aboukir Bay, when Naples went wild in its enthusiastic reception of the naval hero, Lady Hamilton shared the honors of the pageant. She accompanied him in a tour through Germany; and most reprehensible was their conduct, at times, in defying the decencies of polite life. After the Treaty of Amiens, Nelson, accompanied by Sir William and Lady Hamilton, retired to his seat at Merton, in Surrey, and on the death of the ambassador, in 1803, he vainly endeavored to procure an allowance from the government for the widow, on the pretext of the services she had rendered the fleet in Sicily. Failing this, he himself granted her an annuity of twelve hundred pounds. We all know how at Trafalgar, when the hero was dying, he spoke of "dear Lady Hamilton, his guardian angel," and left to her all his belongings, and recommended her to the grateful care of his country. Notwithstanding this, she died almost in poverty, in 1815. In 1813 she had been imprisoned for debt, and when out on bail she fled to Calais, and there the career was closed. It was extraordinary that this woman should subjugate and hold in thrall men of great force of character. She had great loveliness of person; but physical beauty alone is ineffectual to charm such as these. Though not regularly educated, she acquired much general knowledge, and was tactful in the display and use of it.

It was during the period of her posing for Dr. Graham, that Romney became enamoured of her beauty, and painted for us more than a dozen important pictures of her. Those were the days when ladies of rank and beauty were deified; and, following this fashion, Romney rendered "Fair Emma" in many guises. Her ability in acting made her a most useful model. Her features had much mobility, and were capable of expressing, with facility, all gradations of passion and niceties of feeling. Emma took pride and pleasure in serving Romney. He repeated to his friend, the poet Hayley, her request, that in the biography of the painter, Hayley would have much to say of her. One of his earliest classical conceptions painted from her, was a full length of Circe with her wand. Following this was a "Sensibility," which became the property of Hayley. Though we remember Romney chiefly in connection with his Lady Hamiltons, yet he had acquired his reputation and much fortune ere he met her. The great bulk of his portrayals of the nobility preceded his classical subjects, which took form from his superb model. She was Cassandra; she was Iphigenia, St. Cæcilia, Bacchante, Calope, The Spinstress, Joan of Arc, The Pythian Princess Calypso, and Magdalene,—the two latter subjects painted to order for the then Prince of Wales.

Allan Cunningham has this to say in his sketch of Romney's life: "A lady in the character of a saint. This sort of flattery, once so prevalent with painters, is now nearly worn out: we have now no Lady Betty's enacting the part of Diana; no Lady Jane's tripping it barefoot among the thorns and brambles of this weary world, in the character of Hebe. We have none now who either 'sinner it or saint it' on canvas; the flattery which the painter has to pay is of a more scientific kind,—he has to trust alone to the truth of his drawing and the harmony of his colors."

Romney was a transgressor in this way at times; but Lady Hamilton's form was used to impart correct form to the conceptions of the painter,—not the theme used merely to exploit the beauty of the lady. In the exhibition of fair women in the Grafton Gallery in London this summer, she greeted us in the guise of Ariadne. In this the painter's use of the title was apt and justifiable. Here is the lady wholly clothed in the dress of the time,—a dress superb in its simplicity; but her pose and mien is indicative of the forsaken, the forlorn, despairing woman abandoned by her lover,—the fate of which the old story of the Greeks is the eternal epitome. The pathos of the pose, it may have been, as well as the classic face, allured the wanderer in the galleries, and anchored him before this canvas.

The fame of Romney has steadily risen in the several generations from the beginning to the end of the century. Though the painter of many men of fame and ladies of fashion, his work was not held in the greatest regard in his lifetime. Though often spoken of as the rival of Reynolds, he had not the president's grasp of character or his ability in giving classic grace to the dress of the period, and he was never admitted as a member to the Academy.

When Lady Hamilton commenced posing for him, he, perhaps wisely for his fame, reduced the



number of his ordinary sitters, receiving none until afternoon. The picturing of what he termed "her divine beauty" became a passion with him; and the enthusiasm of the sitter was nearly as great as that of the painter, and she enacted his classic conceptions. The result is a superb series of pictures of faultless female form, and loveliness of feature. Of the model's immortal career we have naught now to do. Here is perpetual beauty, and it is ours to enjoy.

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**MRS. SHERIDAN  
REYNOLDS**



There are few names more associated with the brilliant days of Bath, the days of its social and artistic prominence, than those of Thomas Linley, the composer, and of his daughter, Eliza Anne, known abroad as "the Fair Maid of Bath." Linley was born there, in 1735; and after his studies in music on the Continent, under Paradies, he returned to the then fashionable city on the Avon. He conducted oratorios and concerts there, and became a power in the community. Delicacy, tenderness, simplicity, and taste were the characteristics of his compositions. It was said of him, that as Garrick had restored Shakspeare, so Linley has restored the sublime music of Handel. He trained his family to take part in the performances. His son Thomas, born in 1756, developed a marvellous ability in music,—playing the violin with great brilliancy and expression. He was the friend of Mozart, and took at times his father's place as conductor of the oratorios. His career was cut short by drowning, in 1778.

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But it was his beautiful daughter Eliza, born in 1754, who made the sensation of the time, when she sang with her sister, afterwards Mrs. Tickell. "A nest of nightingales," the family was termed. Walpole writes, in 1773: "I was not at the ball last night, and have only been to the opera, where I was infinitely struck with the Carrara, who is the prettiest creature upon earth. Mrs. Hartley I own to still find handsomer, and Miss Linley, to be the superlative degree. The king admires the last, and ogles her as much as he dares to do in so holy a place as an oratorio, and at so devout a service as 'Alexander's Feast.'" Musical prominence and personal beauty in this maid of but twenty made her an attractive flower in bloom to others than the king. The wits and gallants of the gay city sought and courted her. The family of Tom Sheridan, the Irish actor, and then a teacher of elocution in Bath, was intimate with the Linley family. Richard, who was born in Dublin in 1751, his elder brother Charles, and Nathaniel Halhed, a companion and literary partner with Richard, all admired the daughter Eliza. Halhed went to India,—afterwards becoming a judge there,—and Charles Sheridan retired from the race, and left the literary youth to win as pure a heart as ever cheered incipient genius to works of worth. She was lauded in

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verse by her young Irish suitor, and championed in deed. He asserts his constancy in a poem, of which the first stanza is—

"Dry that tear, my gentlest love;  
Be hushed that struggling sigh;  
Nor seasons, day, nor fate shall prove  
More fixed, more true than I.  
Hushed be that sigh, be dry that tear;  
Cease boding doubt, cease anxious fear;  
Dry be that tear."

He proves his devotion by his action when appealed to by his divinity.

A certain Captain Matthews, one of a numerous breed in Bath in those days,—that is, a fashionable scoundrel and a married man,—made himself obnoxious to Miss Linley by improper addresses. He annoyed and harassed her, threatening to destroy himself unless she gratified him, and later attempted to sully her reputation by calumnies. This brought about the culmination of her attachment to Sheridan. She fled her father's house and sought the protection of her lover. Accompanied by a chaperon, they left for France. After some romantic adventures, they were married in March, 1772, at a little village near Calais; but it was a wedding without the wherewithal to maintain a home, so the bride entered a convent, and, later, the house of an English physician, until literature should be remunerative. The eloping lady's father sought the runaways; and, after some explanations, they returned with him to England. It was shortly after this that Sheridan fought two duels with Matthews, being wounded in the later one to such an extent that his recovery was doubtful. "Sweet Betsy" claimed the right of a wife to tend her hurt husband, and so revealed the fact of the marriage in France. The old actor rejected his impulsive son, but Linley's aversion to the union of his daughter being at last set aside, the pair were re-married in England in April, 1773. [40]

The sweet singer had been admired by another, an elderly suitor of much fortune, whom her father had approved, but to whom she was averse. This gentleman now became the benefactor of the pair. He settled a moiety of three thousand pounds on the bride. Her father retained half of this as compensation for the loss of the services of his daughter. On the balance, the youthful couple lived. Sheridan had entered himself a student of the Middle Temple shortly before his marriage. Though their income was small, he would not allow his wife to accept several proffered professional engagements; he did not wish his helpmeet to become a servant of the public. This action incited some discussion, and much acrimonious comment, in her family and among their friends. Johnson upheld his course. Sheridan, in this instance, understood himself and understood the times. He knew of the flippant attitude of the young blades of the town toward all public performers; so he sought to save her, who was so sacred to him, from such insult, insincere adulation, and insinuation as she had heretofore suffered from. They retired to a cottage at East Burnham; and there she, who had received the plaudits of the public as a vocalist, won as noble a name in the character of the ideal wife, one in whom were united all the attributes of loveliness,—temper, manners, virtues, and surpassing beauty. What the then public lost, later generations have gained in the picture of that lovable woman, making a golden age of happiness for her greatly-gifted husband in the little cottage at East Burnham. [41]

Fanny Burney records her pleasant impressions of the bride,—"I was absolutely charmed at the sight of her. I think her quite as beautiful as ever, and even more captivating; for she has now a look of ease and happiness that animates her whole face. Miss Linley was with her; she is very handsome, but nothing near her sister; the elegance of Mrs. Sheridan's beauty is unequalled by any I ever saw, except Mrs. Crewe. I was pleased with her in all respects. She is much more lively and agreeable than I had any idea of finding her; she was very gay, and very unaffected, and totally free from airs of any kind." [42]

In 1775, the husband's genius was acknowledged by the town; for in January, that year, was first presented "The Rivals." In that play he draws from the material displayed by the superficial, flashing, and piquant society of the day at Bath, and from his own experience the inimitable duel scene therein.

Much success followed for the dramatist. In the following year, in conjunction with his father-in-law, he purchased from Garrick the Drury Lane Theatre. They brought out several operas together; Linley's music in "The Duenna" and "The Beggar's Opera," being especially fine. Hazlitt speaks of the songs in them as having a joyous spirit of intoxication, and strains of the most melting tenderness.

In 1777, appeared "The School for Scandal," a theme also suggested by scandal-mongering Bath. His fond and faithful wife lived not to see the dimming of the genius that produced these classics; she died of a decline, at Bristol, in 1792. Her daughter, too, died within the same year. Two of her accomplished descendants, through her son, have displayed some of her romantic taste and charm of manner to a generation just preceding our own,—her granddaughters, Lady Dufferin, mother of the English ambassador to France, and Hon. Caroline Norton, author of "Love not, love not, ye hapless sons of men." [43]

Though she whom he had adored was but three years dead, Sheridan married, in 1795, Esther Jane Ogle, daughter of the Dean of Winchester. With her he obtained some money and this, added to his own, purchased the estate of Polesdon, in Surrey. His wife was, at that time, spoken of as young, amiable, and devoted to him. She died at about the same time as he, in 1816.

In the first flush of those romantic wedded days of their youth how impressive must have been the appearance of that markedly clever young man, eager in the fight for fame, and of his beautiful bride from Bath. Reynolds painted, in 1779, the standard presentment of Sheridan. Walpole's comment on it was: "Praise cannot overstate the merits of this portrait. It is not canvas and color, it is animated nature—all the unaffected manner and character of the great original." The artist said that among all his sitters none had such large pupils of the eyes. With the brilliance of that mind informing the face, his features, though not regular, were handsome. Of all the portraits of Miss Linley, perhaps the one by Gainsborough, in which she is portrayed with her young brother, gives the best idea of the special character of her type of beauty. Here are the large lustrous eyes and the very delicately modelled, sensitive, refined features; here, the luxuriant hair, the slender neck, and the sloping shoulders; and here, the superb poise of head and of mind. There is another fine picture of her by Gainsborough, for this painter was one of the brilliant men who frequented her father's house at Bath. A musician he was, too, and an excellent performer on the violin, so was congenial company in that musical family. He admired the daughter, and wrought for us the delightful records of her beauty. His change of residence, from Bath to London, coincided in date with that of the Sheridans. Opie, too, painted her portrait; not an ideal one, but good in respect to her eyes. And Romney has given us good pictures both of her and Mrs. Tickell. Reynolds's portrayal is supreme in indicating the exaltation of spirit, by the poise of head and perfection of profile. This picture of her as the patron saint of song was exhibited at the Academy, in 1775, just about the time its subject had abandoned public singing. It has been most beautifully engraved by Bartolozzi, and ranks as one of his best plates. When the days of sorrow came to Sheridan,—when his weaknesses of character brought him to a low estate; when poverty became his portion, and the long lost days of romantic love became but a memory; when treasure after treasure, manuscripts, and sumptuous books were disposed of, and presentation pictures were pawned,—this picture of St. Cæcilia, a reminder of the days that had vanished, was the last valued possession to be parted with.



**MARGUERITE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON  
LAWRENCE**

[51]



## LADY BLESSINGTON



The brilliant Blessington,—brilliant in beauty and in intellect! Throughout her life of romance she was fortunate in her literary friendships, through whom a knowledge of her abilities has grown to tradition, but most fortunate in the portrayer of her beauty. Lawrence has painted a picture which it is a perpetual pleasure to behold,—the superb arms and shoulders, the serene, steadfast gaze of the eyes, and the conscious, yet confident, poise of the head forming a record to justify the tradition of great personal beauty and alertness of mind.

Marguerite Blessington's youth was ill-regulated and penurious. She was born in 1789, the second daughter of Edmund Power, of Knockbrit, near Clonmel, in the county of Tipperary. Her father came of a good family, as did also her mother, who spoke unduly often of her ancestors, the Desmonds. Marguerite was not comely in her early girlhood, though her sister Ellen and her brother

Robert were handsome children. As a child, she was sensitive and sentimental, and her delight was to browse in a library,—and it was this taste that equipped her for her later friendships. Her power of imagination was uncommonly strong, and she became the entertainer of her children-companions with stories of her own imagining, as well as by her recitals of legends and romance learned in the library. Her father removed to Clonmel, and became editor of a paper there. He was not prosperous, and was a man of perverse temper, which grew with adversity. Marguerite and her sister were fancied by some wealthy maiden-lady relatives, and were taken by them to a home of comfort. On their return to Clonmel,—beautiful, and with the distinction of knowledge and a clever use of it,—they were a contrast to the ordinary Irish country girl, whose whole equipment of dress and accomplishments was "two washing gowns and a tune on the piano." The girls took part in all the gayeties of the town, and, besides the charm of their conversation, were graceful dancers; and though Marguerite was less beautiful, she was most tasteful in dress, and this became always a noted characteristic of hers. They became the attraction of an English regiment recently stationed in the town, and Marguerite was soon married, through the insistence of her father, to a Captain Farmer, when less than fifteen years of age. This was the great misfortune of her life.

Her husband was subject to fits of insanity, and her whole feeling towards him was that of aversion. Cruelty and caprice were the chief components of his character. From his tyranny she fled,—first to her father's house, but was denied solace there, so sought it elsewhere. She led a somewhat vagabond existence for about nine years, living first with one friend, then with another; thankful for any home, and accommodating herself to any companions. Of this period of her life not much is recorded, save her beauty, for it was shortly after this that her peerless portrait was painted, ere her sorrow and suffering had time to efface the vivacity of youth, but only to give depth to the eyes and interest to the face. She lived in London with her brother Robert until in 1817, when her husband's death occurred by his falling out of a window when in a state of drunken frenzy. Four months after this she became the second wife of an Irish nobleman of a dashing person and little brains, Charles John Gardiner, second Earl of Blessington, when she was twenty-eight and he was thirty-five years of age. With this marriage came a reversal of her misfortunes. Her generosity, sympathy, and good heart soon prompted the improvement of the conditions of her own family, and in this gave emphatic evidence of that devotedness to duty and friends which became her strongest trait. Her youngest sister, Marianne, was adopted and educated by her, and became her travelling companion, and long afterwards her modest biographer. Her sister Ellen married first, Mr. Home Purves, and afterwards, Viscount Canterbury, speaker of the House of Commons.

Lord Blessington's income was great, but his tastes were extravagant as were also his wife's, and luxurious was their home in St. James's Square, and magnificent the manner in which they entertained the brilliant society gathered there; and for three years their brilliant companies of beauty and intellect outshone the congregations at Holland House. In 1822, Count D'Orsay, a polished and accomplished young Frenchman, visited London, and was made most welcome by the Blessingtons. In August of that year they started for a leisurely tour of the Continent. The Countess kept a diary during this journeying, which was published in 1839, under the title of "The Idler in Italy," revealing a keen observation and a capacity for entertaining comment.

Her ladyship was ever ambitious of literary eminence. Possessed of great beauty, and after a time high station and wealth, she yet yearned for the recognition by great writers of her position as one of them. She had published, previous to her continental trip, two volumes,—one called "The Magic Lantern," the other, "Sketches and Fragments," both being accounts of and comments upon London society; both were unsuccessful. Her one book which will remain in literature was consequent upon her meeting with Lord Byron in Genoa, in 1823, and is a record of her conversations with the poet. She who aspired to make her mark in literature has made it, but as the chronicler of the sentiments, vanities, whims, and oddities of another. But it was no ordinary ability that was competent to persuade the great poet, usually unapproachable, to avow, in picturesque language, his opinions on men, women, and manners,—to provide for later times the

data from which to gauge his strange personality.

She has written much of herself into her records; and calumny urged, at the time of publication, that she insinuated in her writings a far greater degree of friendship on the poet's part than really existed. Yet, in refutation of this is Byron's letter to Moore:—

"I have just seen some friends of yours, who paid me a visit yesterday, which, in honor of them and of yours, I returned to-day, as I reserve my bear-skin and teeth and paws and claws for our enemies. [57]

"Your allies, whom I found very agreeable personages, are Milor Blessington and *épouse*, travelling with a very handsome companion, in the shape of a 'French count' (to use Farquhar's phrase in the 'Beau's Stratagem'), who has all the air of a *cupidor déchainé*. Milady seems highly literary; to which, and your honor's acquaintance with the family, I attribute the pleasure of having seen them. She is also very pretty, even in a morning; a species of beauty on which the sun of Italy does not shine so frequently as the chandelier."

The Countess Guiccioli was among those who depreciated the Blessingtons' accounts of the conversations; but then, perchance, there may have been some jealousy of the attractive English woman's influence over the poet. The Blessingtons left Genoa in June of 1823, and continued their journeyings throughout Italy until 1828. In the preceding year, Count D'Orsay had become the husband of the Earl of Blessington's daughter, Lady Harriet Frances Gardiner, when she was but little over fifteen years of age; but they lived together but three years. In 1829, the Earl died in Paris; and the Countess continued there until after the Revolution of 1830, when she returned to England. Her journal of the trip from Naples to Paris, and her stay in that city, was published in 1841, under the title of "The Idler in France." In England she took a house in Seamore Place, Mayfair, and later removed to Gore House, Kensington, with which place is associated the traditions of her elegant entertainings and her intercourse with many men of eminence, but also with a course of living which compromised her reputation in society. Her son-in-law, the Count, continued to form one of her household, though separated from his wife, the Lady Harriet. Though not received in general society, the Countess surrounded herself with celebrities of all nations; and it was at her house that Louis Napoleon was a cherished guest in his years of exile, and from whence he proceeded to head the government of France. Here Bulwer came as perhaps her most intimate friend; here Thackeray was made most welcome, and Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, Canning and Castlereagh were frequent guests. Dickens,—then a dandy like unto D'Orsay, who seemed to be his model,—"Rejected Addresses" Smith, the banker-poet Rogers, Kemble, Wilkie, and Dr. Parr engaged in sparkling converse with their hostess, who sat in a deep arm-chair while Tom Moore was privileged to perch himself on a foot-stool at her feet; and by all these men she was held in unqualified respect. Her income became impaired and unequal to the expense of entertaining. She resorted to literature to add to her resources. She was engaged by Heath, the engraver, to edit a certain class of annuals popular in those days. For some years her income from "The Keepsake" and "The Book of Beauty" exceeded one thousand pounds a year. Her novels, too, were a source of some profit. For "Strathern" she received about three thousand dollars. These romances were weak in character and plot, but were fair pictures of society portrayed with much piquancy. In one, "Grace Cassidy," she describes interestingly scenes of her youth in Ireland. But interest in her work waned, and as she seems not to have thought of retrenchment of her expenditure, disaster rapidly descended. In 1849, she had perforce to sell out, and then moved to Paris, where she died in the same year. She was buried at Chambourcy, near St. Germain-en-Laye, the residence of the Duc and Duchesse de Grammont, the sister and brother-in-law of Count D'Orsay. [58]

She was a woman of great tact, of a sweet delicacy of manner, and of a chivalrous devotedness to friendship. Her friends were carefully chosen, and never deserted. Perhaps no woman of the century has had so many men of mark as her friends and admirers. She had charity towards others' failings. She gave pleasure where she could. She was elegant and dignified in her bearing, though possessed of Irish wit withal. She was very beautiful. [59]

Lord Byron was induced to sing the praise of her picture here given:—

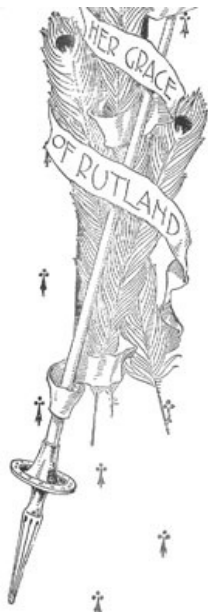
"Were I now as I was, I had sung  
What Lawrence has painted so well;  
But the strain would expire on my tongue,  
And the theme is too soft for my shell. [61]

"I am ashes where once I was fire,  
And the bard in my bosom is dead:  
What I loved I now merely admire,  
And my heart is as gray as my head.

"Let the young and the brilliant aspire  
To sing what I gaze on in vain,  
For sorrow has torn from my lyre  
The string which was worthy the strain."



MARY ISABELLA  
REYNOLDS



Rowlandson, the caricaturist, once published a cartoon entitled "Juno Devon, All Sublime." The rival goddesses in competition with her before that modern Paris, the Prince of Wales, being their Graces of Gordon and Rutland. Beyond the various written records of the opposing beauty of those aristocratic dames who dominated society in their day, we have ample painted evidence of their loveliness. Of her Grace of Devonshire, we have, first, the engraved renderings of "the lost Gainsborough." There are other Gainsboroughs, too,—Georgiana as a child, and a full-length of her standing at the edge of a lawn, her face looking down, wearing a white dress, her right elbow on the base of a column, a scarf in both hands, her hair piled high, but without the hat, as in the more famous picture. There are then several by Sir Joshua. The first, where she stands as a child beside her mother; then, she as a mother with her own child,—a very charming profile, and a picture that insinuates the vivacity of demeanor and the abandon so characteristic of her. [66]

Walpole wrote of this as "Little like and not good." Yet, as to goodness, a modern authority has said: "It is a superb work; and, in motive, color, and composition, it ranks as a triumph alike of nature and art." Again, there is a whole-length showing her about to descend some steps to a lawn, her superb shoulders and neck bare, and her hair highly bedecked with feathers. Walpole writes of another portrait, drawn by Lady Di Beauclerck, and engraved by Bartolozzi: "A Castilian nymph conceived by Sappho and executed by Myron, would not have had more grace and simplicity. The likeness is perfectly preserved, except that the paintress has lent her own expression to the Duchess, which you will allow is very agreeable flattering." In the Royal collection of miniatures at Windsor, are three charmingly executed ivories of her by Cosway. [67] Lawrence, too, made a chalk drawing of her, which now hangs at Chiswick House, in the room in which Charles Fox died. This is an interesting work from being a very early effort of the after-time President of the Academy, and showing that then he had not attained the trick of flattering his sitters, even when they were noted beauties. Angelica Kauffman painted her, and John Downman also made a portrait replete with elegance and picturesqueness. In fact, the comely Duchess pervaded the art of the period. Of her Grace of Gordon, we have, as our ideal presentment of her, the portrait by Sir Joshua. In it her hair is done up high, and two rows of pearls are intertwined therein. The dress is of the Charles the First period, and shows the sweetly modulated shoulders leading up to—

"The pillared throat, clear chiselled cheek,

High arching brows, nose purely Greek,  
Set lips,—too firm for a coquette."

We have also an interesting portrait of her by Romney.

[68]

Of her Grace of Rutland, we have also several pictures by Sir Joshua. There is a whole-length with a decorative head-dress, and a landscape background. The original of this was destroyed by fire at Belvoir Castle. Another, a half-length, in the same costume, and a three-quarter face, is mostly pervaded by a serene sense of pride. There is a drawing of her done by the Hon. Mrs. O'Neil, which is interesting from the picturesque head-dress shown. Her Grace of Gordon was as great a power in the political world as she of Devonshire,—probably greater, for her alliance and principles were with the ruling power. This lady was to Pitt's party what Fair Devon was to Fox's. In fact, it was asserted she endeavored to marry her daughter, Lady Charlotte, afterwards Duchess of Richmond, to the premier. When Georgiana made her famous canvass in favor of Fox, the Tories opposed to her the Scotch Duchess.

She lived and entertained then in a splendid mansion in Pall Mall; and there assembled the adherents of the Administration.

Jane was the daughter of Sir William Maxwell, of Monreith, and in her youth, even, was noted for beauty. A ballad, "Jenny of Monreith," written in her honor, was often chivalrously sung by her son George, the last Duke of Gordon. "Jenny" married the fourth Duke, Alexander, in 1767. The career of the Duke's youngest brother George, identified with the "Gordon Riot," caused the family much embarrassment, and even threatened to derogate from the Duchess's dominance with the ruling party.

Her Grace was of somewhat stronger fibre than she of Devon; more masculinity, ay, even more principle, characterized her. Thrift was a visible virtue, in contrast to Georgiana's improvidence. Command, rather than cajolery, was her political method. Her later life was devoted to securing sons-in-law; three dukes, a marquis, and a knight were of her garnering. She was on good terms with the Regent, and endeavored to aid him in his differences with his Princess Caroline. She is remembered, too, as a patron and friend of Dr. Beattie, the poet, who has eulogized her in these lines "To a Pen":—

"Go, and be guided by the brightest eyes,  
And to the softest hand thine aid impart;  
To trace the fair ideas as they arise,  
Warm from the purest, gentlest, noblest heart."

[70]

The third in that group of goddesses was surely the fairest of them all, of more perfect form, more noble bearing, having that ultimate element of the greatest beauty,—distinction. She came of a longer lineage, and was the consummate flower of beauty wrought by the sun and summers through many generations of patrician life,—life amid the palatial parks, the superb scenery, and majestic castles of England. Such living weaves its sweetest elements into the tissues of the being and works a spell of loveliness such as Lady Mary Somerset. She was the youngest daughter of Charles, fourth Duke of Beaufort, a descendant of the Plantagenets. In 1775, she was married to Lord Charles Manners, eldest son (born in 1754) of John,—that Marquis of Granby whom Junius attacked, who was associated in the government, in George the Second's time, with the Earl of Chatham. The Marquis was a man of much force, and a most hospitable entertainer. He died before his father, the third Duke of Rutland.

Lord Charles succeeded to the dukedom in 1779. He had formed a friendship at Cambridge with Pitt, the son of his father's colleague, and through his influence Pitt entered Parliament. In 1784, he was induced by the young premier to accept the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and it is with the lavish entertainment and high revelries at Dublin Castle that his name and that of his beautiful Duchess is connected.

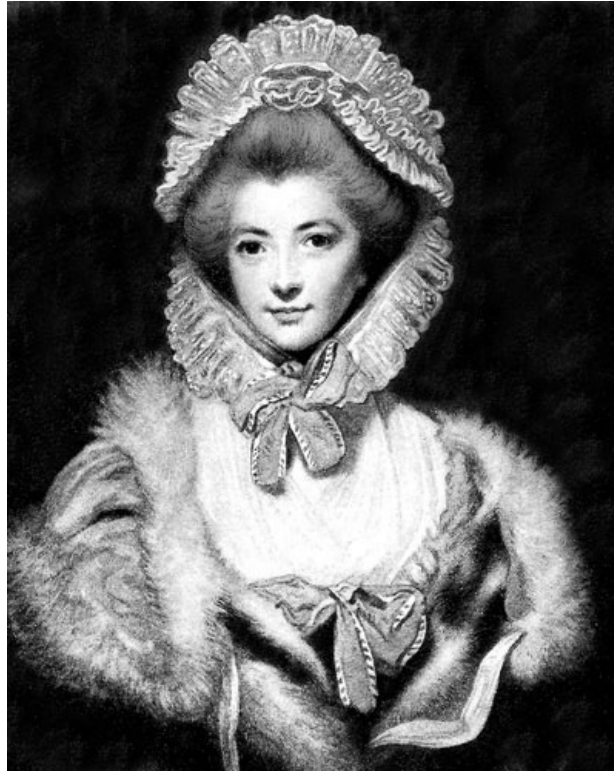
High living soon told its tale, for the Duke died in 1787, at the early age of thirty-three. Though having the most beautiful wife in England, his affections wandered, and tales are told of his attachment to that siren singer, Mrs. Billington. The Duchess's manner had somewhat of levity and much coquetry in it, though she could not be classed with that company who have not time to be virtuous. At the time of her lord's death, she was living with her mother, the Dowager Duchess of Beaufort, in Berkeley Square, London, having been partially estranged from her husband. On hearing of his illness, she started to set out for Dublin; but a message of his death came fast upon the trail of the first news. Perchance it was this estrangement at death, this having parted in anger without the chance of reconciliation in life, that affected her so deeply that, though sought by many suitors, the widow was true to the memory of her late lord. Her son, John Henry, succeeded to the title; and his bride, a daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, was also known as a beauty, and her portrait was painted by Hoppner, in 1798. It was she of whom Greville wrote in his Memoirs, and commented on her lack of taste in spoiling the magnificent Castle of Belvoir, the pride and glory of the Eastern Midlands.

The beauty of the Duchess Mary Isabella was statuesque, classical; her features were noble. She received admiration as her right, but gave not largesse of smiles and wit in return. She was not as the Devonian divinity, "The woman in whose golden smile all life seems enchanted."

Wraxall writes of a lady telling of witnessing a prenuptial display of her person, and being entranced by lithe limb, by the fine and faultless form. Reynolds has hinted at the beautiful body, and the hint ensnares us. Verily, "the visible fair form of a woman is hereditary queen of

us." Wraxall also likens the Duchess to an older-time beauty, Diane de Poitiers,—that famous lady of France, the favorite of François I. and Henri II. Of that lady's beauty, it was written, that it was of the form and feature rather than the radiance of the mind and manner transforming them; and like her, too, our Duchess retained her beauty to an advanced age. She died in 1821. To the last, she impressed one with her dignity, her nobility, her loveliness.

"And they who saw her snow-white hair.  
And dark, sad eyes, so deep with feeling,  
Breathed all at once the chancel air,  
And seemed to hear the organ pealing."



LAVINIA COUNTESS SPENCER  
REYNOLDS



In March, 1781, Walpole writes to a friend: "As your lordship has honored all the productions of my press with your acceptance, I venture to inclose the last, which I printed to oblige the Lucans. There are many beautiful and poetic expressions in it. A wedding, to be sure, is neither a new nor a promising subject, nor will outlast the favors; still, I think Mr. Jones's ode is uncommonly good for the occasion." The ode was "The Muse Recalled," and the occasion the nuptials of Lord Viscount Althorp and Miss Lavinia Bingham, eldest daughter of Sir Charles Bingham, created, in 1776, Baron Lucan of Castlebar. Sir Charles was a man of culture, who was intimate with Johnson, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Reynolds, and Burke. He is frequently pleasantly mentioned by Boswell. He had married, in 1760, Margaret, daughter of James Smith, M.P., a lady of great good sense and rare accomplishments, and three lovely daughters were the issue from this union. Reynolds found in them most pleasing subjects for his pencil. Their pictures appeared at the Academy, in 1786. Lavinia was portrayed as shown in the picture here given, and again in quite as lovely a fashion,—standing out doors and wearing a wide-brimmed hat which casts a broad shade across the face; the wavy curls of hair fall upon the shoulder; in the background is a landscape. The naïvete of the face is exquisitely delightful. The old-time flavor of the whole causes one to recall Locker's lines on the picture of his grandmother:—

"Beneath a summer tree.  
Her maiden reverie  
Has a charm;

[77]

[78]



Her ringlets are in taste;  
What an arm! ... what a waist  
For an arm!"

In the picture of her youngest sister, Anne, is a broad hat, too; she sits full-face, but in her features there is lacking just a little of the quiet dignity of the eldest. All of these portraits have been made familiar to us by the most meritorious mezzotints of them by Cousins. In Lavinia's face there lingers all the enchanting grace of girlhood,—a face yet full of that early beauty— [79]

"Which, like the morning's glow  
Hints a full day below."

A later president of the Academy, Sir Martin Shee, has shown us that face in the noonday of its matronly beauty, and the gentle character and sweet sensibility yet outshine through the mask of the flesh as in the earlier pictures.

Lady Bingham was careful of the education and company of her daughters. The girls were musical, and Lavinia excelled in painting as well. Walpole writes of her being in Italy, in 1785, with Mrs. Damer, his sculptor friend, and of her drawing with very great expression. He was not so complimentary of her music some years before, when he tells of being invited to Lady Lucan's to hear her daughters sing Jomelli's "Miserere," set for two voices: "It lasted for two hours, and instead of being pathetic was eminently dull, until at last I rejoiced when '*the two women had left the sepulchre.*'" [80]

Shortly after this he tells of rumors of the attachment of George John, Lord Althorp, brother of Georgiana of Devonshire, to "that sweet creature" Lavinia. At dinner at Lord Lucan's, Lord Althorp sat at a side table with the girls and a Miss Shipley. "Pray, Lady Spencer," said Walpole, "is it owned that Lord Althorp is to marry—Miss Shipley?" His next reference to the Lucans is in regard to the wedding ode printed on the Strawberry Hill press. The poet therein invokes blessings in this wise:—

"Shine forth, ye silver eyes of night,  
And gaze on virtues crowned with treasures of delight.

. . . . .  
"Flow smoothly, circling hours,—  
And o'er their heads unblended pleasure pour;  
Nor let your fleeting round  
Their mortal transports bound,  
But fill their cup of bliss, eternal powers,  
Till time himself shall cease, and suns shall blaze no more."

He essays to eulogize the bride:—

[81]

"Each morn reclined on many a rose,  
Lavinia's pencil shall disclose  
New forms of dignity and grace,  
The expressive air, the impassioned face,  
The curled smile, the bubbling tear,  
The bloom of hope, the snow of fear,  
To some poetic tale fresh beauty give,  
And bid the starting tablet rise and live;  
Or with swift fingers shall she touch the strings,  
Notes of such wondrous texture weave  
As lifts the soul on seraph wings."

He then proceeds to encourage Althorp to lead a strong, noble life, devoting his great abilities to the state, though he laments the small chances for genuine sterling worth to achieve eminence.

"In this voluptuous, this abandoned age,"

when the leaders of the country are

"Slaves of vice and slaves of gold."

There was much fitness in this poet essaying a homily for the groom's benefit, for he had been the young man's tutor some years before. When the first Earl—a man of most fascinating manners—placed his son in the tutor's charge, he said, "Make him, if you can, like yourself and I shall be satisfied." Johnson said of Sir William Jones, "The most enlightened of the sons of men." He became a great Indian and Persian scholar, and was ever an honored friend of his former pupil. [82]

Previous to his marriage, Lord Althorp had entered Parliament, and, as a Whig, was opposing Lord North. When the Marquess of Rockingham came to power, he was made a Lord Commissioner of the Treasury. In 1783, he succeeded to his father's earldom. The Dowager Countess lived on until 1814. Her character has been variously described. Mrs. Delany calls her "an agreeable person, with a sensible, generous, and delicate mind." She was termed vain. What woman would not be who was mother to such beauties as Devonshire, Duncannon, and Lavinia. In an autobiography by the third Earl, he naïvely remarks that his mother never liked his

grandmother. The pleasing picture of "Ruth and Naomi" is the exception in families.

On the breaking out of the French Revolution, Earl Spencer gave his support to Pitt, by whom he was appointed first lord of the admiralty, in 1794. It was during the period of her husband's brilliant career in this office that the Countess made her greatest success as a hostess in ministerial society. She was a good conversationalist, and especially attractive to men of individuality who admired her sagacious, picturesque pungency of expression. The great naval commanders, who frequented the admiralty, were impressed with the frankness and force of her superior mind, Nelson and Collingwood particularly. She is frequently mentioned in their letters as being sure to have much sympathy in their work. A late biographer of the Earl wrote: "She had the penetration to appreciate Nelson through the cloud of personal vanity and silly conceit which caused him to be lightly esteemed in London society." Her "bull-dog" she used playfully to call him. She visited Gibbon at Lausanne, in 1795, and he writes: "She is a charming woman who, with sense and spirit, has the playfulness and simplicity of a child." By some she was accounted haughty and exclusive. Perchance she was to those who were without the breeding or the brains to commend them to her. Dignified she certainly was, and her influence was wholly for good in the uplifting of politics and the purifying of society. "I would not advise any one to utter a word against any one she was attached to," once said her father. She became the wise coadjutor of her husband in forming the magnificent Althorp Library. [83]

When the earl retired from the admiralty, in 1800, his entertaining became less general. His hospitalities at Spencer House were restricted to his more intimate friends. Here came Lord Grenville, Earl Grey, chief of the Whigs, Brougham, Horner, and Lord John Russell; the younger men to hold converse with her who had known Burke, Pitt, Fox, and all the older time orators and statesmen. [84]

In a series of boyish letters sent by the heir to the earldom to his father the ending of all is in this quaint phrase: "My duty to Mama." The youth did his duty by his mother. She directed his tastes and studies, and when he was at college incited him to try for high honors, and urged, again and yet again, application to study; and through her persuasion he became a reading man. He entered Parliament when of age, in 1803. During the Fox and Grenville administration he held office as a lord of the treasury. When his mother was congratulated on his appointment, she said: "Jack was always skilful in figures, and his work is so much to his taste that I am sure he will do himself credit." He did himself great credit. His career was consistently courageous, honorable, and beneficent. He had character! This is his mother's best eulogy. She died in 1831, shortly after her son had become Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which office he earned his greatest repute as a statesman. [85]



**ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF HAMILTON  
READ**

[89]



The story of the Gunnings is as romantic as any ever wrought into imaginative narrative or incorporated in epic poem. The notorious damsels were daughters of John Gunning of Castle Coote, County Roscommon, Ireland, by the Hon. Bridget Bourke, daughter of Theobald, sixth Viscount Bourke of Mayo, whom he married in 1731. The family was woefully impecunious; so when the daughters, Maria and Elizabeth, grew into marvellously comely maidens, their mother urged their going on the stage to augment the faulty fortune. They went to Dublin, and there were kindly received by Peg Woffington, then in her glory as *Sir Harry Wildair*, and by Tom Sheridan, manager of Dublin Theatre. The stage had not then become the stepping-stone to the ranks of the nobility, so the girls were advised to adventure socially, with their faces for their fortunes. They had not the dresses to be presented in at Dublin Castle, but Sheridan supplied these from the resources of the green-room wardrobe. Attired as *Lady Macbeth* and as *Juliet* they made their curtsies to the Earl of Harrington, the then Lord-Lieutenant. [90]

The hostess of the evening was the handsome Lady Caroline Petersham, bride of the Earl's eldest son. Lady Caroline had been one of the "Beauty Fitzroys," and had been a favorite belle in town before her marriage.

"When Fitzroy moves, resplendent, fair,  
So warm her bloom, sublime her air,  
Her ebon tresses formed to grace  
And heighten while they shade her face."

Walpole wrote of her in his poem on "The Beauties." The raw Connaught girls outshone this dazzling hostess.

Their "first night" was an auspicious success. The *début* was applauded, and the players praised. They were adjudged fitted to star the social capital, so to London they went, in June, 1751. Their reception was magical. The West End went almost mad over them. When they appeared at Court, the aristocracy present was indecorous in its efforts to view the dominant beauties. Lords and ladies clambered on any eminence to gaze. The crowd surged upon them, and it was with difficulty they entered their chairs because of the mob outside. The gayety of Vauxhall Gardens was incomplete without them. [91]

Their campaign was a short and eminently active one; Elizabeth triumphed first. At a masquerade at Lord Chesterfield's, in February, 1752, James, the sixth Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, who was enamoured of the younger Irish girl, wished to marry her at once. A clergyman was asked to perform the ceremony then and there. He objected to the time and place and the absence of a ring. The Duke threatened to send for the Archbishop. With the ring of a bed-curtain, at half an hour past midnight, the wedding took place in Mayfair Chapel. The Scotch were enraged at the alliance, which became an unhappy one. The Duke was vulgar, debauched, extravagant, and "damaged in person and fortune," yet, withal, insolently proud. He betook himself off within six years, and his two sons by the Duchess became, successively, seventh and eighth Dukes of Hamilton; and a daughter married Edward, twelfth Earl of Derby. [92]

The dowager was less than a year in widow's weeds when she exchanged them for more strawberry leaves. She had two ducal offers, from their graces of Bridgewater and of Argyll; she accepted the latter. In March, 1759, she married John, the fifth Duke of that name. Walpole's comment on this was: "Who could have believed a Gunning would unite the two great houses of Campbell and Hamilton? For my part I expect to see Lady Coventry Queen of Prussia. I would not venture to marry either of them these thirty years, for fear of being shuffled out of the world prematurely, to make room for the rest of their adventurers. The first time Jack Campbell carries the Duchess into the Highlands, I am persuaded that some of his second-sighted subjects will see him in a winding-sheet with a train of kings behind him as long as those in Macbeth." And again: "A match that would not disgrace Arcadia ... as she is not quite so charming as her sister, I do not know whether it is not better than to retain a title which puts one in mind of her beauty." [93]

The Dukes of Argyll—Lords of the Isles—have always shown a partiality for beauties as brides. This Duke's father married the beautiful Mary Bellenden, daughter of John, Lord Bellenden,—

"Smiling Mary, soft and fair as down."

She is mentioned otherwise as by Gay:—

"Bellenden we needs must praise,  
Who, as down the stairs she jumps,  
Sings 'Over the hills and far away,'  
Despising doleful dumps."

Walpole says she was never mentioned by her contemporaries but as the *most perfect creature*

they had ever known. The present Duke wedded that charming child, Lady Elizabeth Leveson Gower, who sits on her mother's knee in that surpassingly fine picture by Lawrence, called "Lady Gower and Child." And his son is allied to the Princess Louise, the most comely of Victoria's daughters. [94]

After her sister's death, in 1760, her Grace of Argyll suffered a decline in health. She was ordered abroad for change. She was appointed to accompany the Princess Sophia Charlotte on her journey to England to be married to the King. As they neared the ceremony in London, the Princess became nervous. Her Grace essayed to quiet her fears. "Ah, my dear Duchess, *you* may laugh at me, but *you* have been married twice," said the Princess. The Duchess became one of the ladies of the bedchamber, and was in much favor with the Queen.

In 1767, her father died at Somerset House, and her mother, the Hon. Mrs. Gunning, in 1770. There were three sisters in the family besides our heroines: Sophia Gunning died, an infant, in 1737; Lissy, who died in 1752, aged eight years; and Catherine, who was married, in 1769, to Robert Travis an Irish squire in her own rank of life. She died, too, at Somerset House, in 1773, where she was an upper housekeeper. A brother entered the army, fought at Bunker Hill, and became a major-general in 1787. He was much of a ladies' man. He married a Miss Minfie, author of some novels, and they had a daughter who aspired to repeat the successes of her famous aunts. She managed to marry the Hon. Stephen Digby, who had lost his first wife, a daughter of Lord Ilchester, in 1787. The Duchess of Argyll was created, in 1776, a peeress of England as Baroness Hamilton of Hambleton County, Leicester, and died in December, 1790. By her second marriage she had two sons, successively Dukes of Argyll, and two daughters, one of whom, Lady Charlotte Campbell, attained some fame as a novelist as Lady Charlotte Bury, she having married Colonel John Campbell and secondly Rev. Edward Bury. [95]

We have no evidence of the possession of bright Irish wit by the double-duchessed beauty. Ingenuous enthusiasm, perfect simplicity, and unfailing good humor ever marked her manner, and were a captivating adjunct to her great facial charm. Walpole writes of a pretty sight when their Graces of Hamilton and of Richmond with Lady Ailesbury sitting in a boat together, and proceeds to tell of the suspected jealousy by she of Hamilton of the beauty of his niece, daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, who became the bride of Earl Waldegrave, and later married the Duke of Gloucester, the King's youngest brother. At another time, when a lady wrote telling him of the advent of a beauty who was expected to outvie the Gunnings, he replies: "There was to have been a handsomer every summer these seven years, but when the seasons come they all seem to have been addled by the winter." [96]

One day the housekeeper of Hampton Court was showing the palace to visitors when the sisters were there. She threw open the door where they were sitting, saying, "This is our beauty-room." The pictures and galleries were forgotten by the crowd, which gazed on the beauties instead.

For a decade their beauty was regnant in London. They were not politicians as were their Graces of Gordon and Devonshire, nor had they the ability to become such. Neither were they the associates of brilliant, intellectual men, but participants in the gay, vacuous, showy society of the rapid set of the aristocracy. The elder sister gained the coronet of Coventry, but her vanity caused her own undoing; the younger was a part of the exhibition of "Beauty and the Beast." A high price was paid for her position by the endurance of a period of tyranny and terror. [97]

Some praise must be accorded the beauties, for at a time of much licentiousness of a profligate society and tolerated coarsenesses, the sisters determinedly kept their names free from ignoble soil and scandal.



**MARIA COUNTESS OF COVENTRY  
HAMILTON**



"Two Irish girls of no fortune, who make more noise than any of their predecessors since the days of Helen, and who are declared the handsomest women alive." So wrote Walpole, in June, 1751. If we were to judge of their beauty by the pictured presentments of it, we would certainly agree with "our Horace" when he says he has seen much handsomer women than either. We have no adequate image of their surpassing loveliness, the beholding of which would cause us to feel how merited was their meed of praise, how fair the contemporary comment on their comeliness, and how just the wide fame of a beauty which tradition has epitomized for us in the phrase, "The Fair Gunnings." Though the print publishers of the time actively issued portraits, we feel that none of them picture such a person as would set society and the whole city of London astir by her blazing beauty. [102]

The best-known likenesses are the various pictures by Francis Cotes, one of the founders of the Royal Academy, a painter of considerable merit, who was born about 1725, and died in 1770. It is said that Hogarth preferred him as a portrait painter to Reynolds. His studio was in Cavendish Square, and at his death was taken by Romney; and it was while he worked there that Sir Joshua referred to his rival as "the man in Cavendish Square." The studio was later occupied by Sir Martin Shee.

Cotes's picture of Maria is a half length of a modestly dignified lady, having no tendency at all to that silliness that Walpole insinuates was characteristic of her. The face is oval, the eyebrows well apart and distinctly arched, and the hair brushed back from the forehead and falling on the very graceful neck. The dress is cut low, showing a delicately-moulded bosom. This picture was mezzo-tinted by McArdeU; and there is another, somewhat similar, reproduced superbly by Spooner. His principal picture of Elizabeth is not so attractive as the picture of her sister; the body is too constrained and symmetrically formal; the dress is very low and edged with lace, some flowers resting on her bosom. The neck and breast have not the suave grace of the sister's. This has been engraved in mezzo-tint by Houston. Another portrait by Cotes shows her with fur on the dress. He also painted a portrait of Kitty in a low dress sprigged with flowers, with a sash, and ribbons at the back of the head. This has a wooded landscape background. Below the print of this picture is engraved these lines:— [103]

"This youngest of the Graces here we view  
So like in Beauty to the other two  
Who'er compares their Features and their Frame  
Will know at once that Gunning is her name."

There is an engraved picture of the two sisters together—based on Cotes's portrayals—called "The Hibernian Sisters." Maria is sitting on the left, looking toward the right, with a dog on her lap; the younger is on the right, looking to the front, and holds a fan in her hand. In the background is a garden wall. Cupids surmount the picture. The inscription is in this fashion:— [104]

"Hibernia long with spleen beheld  
Her Favorite Toasts by ours excelled.  
Resolved to outvie Britannia's Fair  
By her own Beauties,—sent a pair."

Reynolds painted them both, in 1753; but he failed to give them the charm we would expect. Unless Sir Joshua's engravers belie him, he did not make Maria even ordinarily fair to look upon. These pictures are not classed among his masterpieces. There is a picture of Maria by B. Wilson the engraver, made before she left Ireland. In it the features are handsome and the figure graceful, though over-dressed, and the whole impression is of a matron in her thirties rather than a maid in her teens. The picture we give of her is from a whole-length by Gavin Hamilton, a Scotch artist, a friend of Burns, born in Lanark about 1730. He must have been a precocious genius, for this picture was engraved by McArdell, and published in 1754. Hamilton passed the greater part of his life in Rome, painting classical subjects and pursuing archaeological investigations. He died there, in 1797. Portraiture was probably a pecuniary pursuit before the classics claimed him. His portraits savor somewhat of the affectations of the "curtain and column" school. His canvas of Elizabeth shows her standing on a terrace with a low dress and long hair, a veil loosely tied across her chest. Her left hand rests on the head of a greyhound. There is a seat to the left and trees in the background. [105]

Houston engraved a portrait of Maria after a drawing by J. St. Liotard. This is a three-quarter length figure. Her hair is in large plaits twined with a muslin veil on her head. The dress is open at the throat, showing a necklace. There is a wide belt with large clasps. Her left elbow rests on her knee. Perhaps the most satisfactory pictures of the Beauties are those by Catharine Read, who died, in 1786; and who is chiefly known by her winsome delineations of the graces of the Gunning girls. We could readily judge from these that the girls were attractive. There is a genial graciousness in the face of she of Coventry, while the Scotch duchess is possessed of a persuasive sweetness of mien. The mob-cap frames a face almost faultless in the regularity of its features. For all the pleasant flavor of these facial charms, there is absent that peerless, regal loveliness, that compelling magnificence of presence, that hauteur which dazzles and enthral. [106]

The originals of these various portraits have been retained at Croome Court, near Worcester; the seat of the Coventry family, at Inverary Castle, Argyllshire; and at Hamilton Palace.

Three weeks after the romantic marriage of her younger sister, Maria Gunning was married to George William, who was Lord Deerhurst—"that grave young Lord," Walpole calls him—until 1750, when he succeeded to the Earldom of Coventry. He had been dangling about her for some time, and seemed nerved to the wedding by his Grace of Hamilton's precipitate action. The Earl took her for a trip on the Continent in company with Lady Caroline Petersham, that other great beauty. Neither caused much comment abroad, and Paris did not ratify the repute of London. My Lady was at a disadvantage from her ignorance of the French language. She complained, too, of the arbitrary rule of her husband in not allowing her red nor powder, so much in vogue with the Parisian beauties. It is told how he saw her appear at a dinner with some one, and took out his handkerchief, and there tried to rub it off. But her fame abated not in England. Crowds continued to mob her whenever she appeared on the street. The King was pleased to order that whenever my Lady Coventry walked abroad she should be attended by a guard of soldiers. Shortly after this she simulated great fright at the curiosity of the mob, and asked for escort. She then paraded in the park, accompanied by her husband and Lord Pembroke, preceded by two sergeants, and followed by twelve soldiers. Surely this outdoes the advertising genius of any latter-day American actress! A shoemaker at Worcester gained two guineas and a half by exhibiting at a penny a head a shoe he had made for the Countess. She was in much favor at Court, and always circulated in an atmosphere of adulation and sensation. The Duke of Cumberland was an admirer, as was also, more emphatically, Fred St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke,— "Billy and Bully" these two blades were termed. There was rumor, at one time, of the Earl seriously resenting the attentions of Bolingbroke. The old King, too, showed her some courtesies; and the most oft-told anecdote of her is about His Majesty asking if she were not sorry the masquerades were over. She assured him she was surfeited with pageants,—there was but one she wished yet to see, and that was a coronation. She saw it not, for the King outlived her by a fortnight. Had she but abstained from the use of paint and powder, her career would not have ended at the early age of twenty-seven. Blood-poisoning came from the use of it. Her beauty paled rapidly. My lady lay on a couch, a pocket-glass constantly in hand, grieving at the gradual decay. The room was darkened, that others might not discern that which so chagrined her. Then the curtains of the bed were drawn to guard her from pitying gaze; and then, on a September day, in 1760, the pathetic end came. Over ten thousand people viewed her coffin. Sensationalism even after the drop of the curtain! The Countess left four children, two sons and two daughters. Of these, Anne, four years old at her mother's death, was one of the children whom George Selwyn showed much kindness to. The Earl married again, the second Countess being Barbara, daughter of Lord St. John of Bletsoe. George William, the son of Maria, came to the earldom in 1809. [107] [108] [109]

In an ode on the death of Maria the poet Mason wrote:—

"For she was fair beyond your brightest bloom

(This Envy owns, since now her bloom is fled):  
 Fair as the Forms that wove in Fancy's loom,  
 Float in light vision round the Poet's head.  
 Whene'er with soft serenity she smiled,  
 Or caught the orient blush of quick surprise,  
 How sweetly mutable, how brightly wild.  
 The liquid lustre darted from her eyes!  
 Each look, each motion, waked a new-born grace  
 That o'er her form its transient glory cast:  
 Some lovelier wonder soon usurped the place,  
 Chased by a charm still lovelier than the last."

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[113]



**ELIZABETH COUNTESS GROSVENOR  
 LAWRENCE**



In these latter days can we imagine a lawsuit, costing contestants thousands of pounds, over the right to a certain heraldic charge? In the fourteenth century Sir Robert Grosvenor was the defendant in such a suit, and we read of Chaucer, John of Gaunt, Owen Glendower, and Hotspur being witnesses before the High Court of Chivalry. Sir Robert established his defence, and since those days the Grosvenors have ever held a high rank in the nobility of England. Quite as proud a patrician position was held through the centuries by the family of Gower. In the early part of this century, the heir of the Grosvenors espoused the most beautiful daughter of the House of Gower, —Lady Elizabeth Mary Leveson Gower. This lady was the youngest daughter of George, the second Marquis of Stafford, who married, in 1785, Elizabeth, who was Countess of Sutherland and Baroness Strathnaver in her own right. The Marquis was created Duke of Sutherland in 1833.

[114]

The Lady Elizabeth Mary was born in 1797, and married, in 1819, Robert, Viscount Belgrave, eldest son of the second Earl of Grosvenor. The portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence was painted in the year preceding her marriage.

The Marquisate of Westminster had been created in 1831, and in 1845, when the Viscount's father died, he succeeded to the title. He had entered Parliament in 1818 as member for Chester. He spoke but rarely in the House, although a hard worker on committees. He greatly improved his vast London property, and had the credit of administering his estate with a combination of

intelligence and generosity seldom seen. Of reserved habits and inexpensive tastes, he was averse to ostentation and extravagance. He died in 1869. His successor was his son (born in 1825) the present Duke, who was elevated to a dukedom in 1874. He is one of the wealthiest peers in the kingdom, is a man of great taste, and has patronized the arts with almost a Medician munificence. [115]

The seat of the family is the renowned Eaton Hall, near Chester; that stately mansion set in the centre of a country rich in pastoral beauty. Its enlargement and beautification was begun by the second Earl in 1802, and has been carried on by its present lord until it is now the most magnificent of all the modern mansions of the nobility. G.F. Watts's heroic equestrian statue of Hugh Lupus, the founder of the family and a nephew of William the Conqueror, challenges admiration as one enters the grounds. There is no great picture gallery in the Hall, for that is at Grosvenor House in London, but the family portraits are here. Let into panels of the dining-room are portraits from the time of the first Earl, who was painted by Gainsborough. The Viscount Belgrave and his lady were painted by Pickersgill, in 1825,—this picture of the latter being much inferior to Lawrence's,—while the present generation was painted almost wholly by Millais,—that of Constance, the Duke's first wife, being especially fine. Leslie, in 1833, executed a group of the Grosvenor family. [116]

Lawrence and Hoppner were to the regency what Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney were to the early days of the reign of George III., as painters of the patrician beauties. What a marvellous mass of records of fair women these five have left us!—Reynolds, supreme in style, painting the character as seen through the fair mask of the flesh; Gainsborough, superbly picturesque, and a faithful limner withal; Romney, impressively picturesque, too, a fine colorist, imaginative, and but now, a century later, coming into his proper meed of praise; Lawrence, elegant, charming,—a courtier indeed; Hoppner, through many years a close rival of Lawrence. To Hoppner we are indebted for the visible evidence of the beauty of many who had repute as fair women. There is that piquant Jane Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford, who greets us in the National Gallery. Then that dark-eyed and winsome Lady Kenyon, who was one of the reigning belles, on canvas, at the Grafton Gallery show in London this year. In this exhibit, too, was his "Mademoiselle Hillsberg,"— [117] a tall and dark dancing woman, which he regarded as his best work. Then there is that group of noble dames by him, which were engraved by Charles Wilkin and published under the title "Bygone Beauties,"—Lady Charlotte Duncombe; Viscountess St. Asaph; Lady Charlotte Campbell, daughter of Elizabeth Gunning; Viscountess Andover; Lady Langham; the Countess of Euston, one of the three beautiful Ladies Waldegrave, painted by Reynolds; the Duchess of Rutland. These are indeed "a select series of ladies of rank and fashion." And with these must be classed that sweet ideal face of Mrs. Arbuthnot, known as "Marcia." At this late date it gives us greeting from how many a parlor wall! Its tender charm makes perpetual appeal to the passer-by from how many a print-shop window!

There seems to have been bitter feeling between Hoppner, who was an intense Whig, and Lawrence, who knew no politics, but was all things to all men. "The ladies of Lawrence show a gaudy dissoluteness of taste, and sometimes trespass on moral as well as professional chastity," [118] and "Lawrence shall paint my mistress and Phillips my wife," were the two rapier phrases Hoppner thrust at his rival. But it is recorded that thenceforth Lawrence's commissions from fair sitters multiplied.

Sir Thomas was a finished flatterer. No man ever knew better, except it was Lely, how to pay the compliment of the brush. This form is the substantial, the lasting compliment for which golden guineas are gladly paid. Grace and elegance are the hall-mark of his every picture. But the artist was a courtier in speech and manners as well, and this got him into trouble once. He was attentive to the ill-used Princess Caroline,—markedly attentive! A royal commission inquired into his conduct, but absolved him from the charges of wrongdoing. When Lady Grosvenor, who had become Marchioness of Westminster, was an old lady, in 1881, she wrote in a letter to Lord Leveson Gower her recollections of the painter: "His manners were what is called extremely 'polished' (not the fault of the present times). He wore a large cravat, and had a tinge about him [119] of the time of George IV., pervading his general demeanor.... I should not say he was amusing, but what struck me most, during my two hours sitting in Russell Square, was the perfection of the drawing of his portraits. Before any color was put on, the drawing itself was so perfectly beautiful that it seemed almost a sin to add any color." This portrait of her, which was painted at this one sitting, is considered the very best Lawrence ever painted. The head has distinction and hauteur, albeit the face is sweetly ingenuous. And the eyes! Well, Sir Thomas always excelled here! Never, since Titian, has painter given us such "strange sweet maddening eyes,"—

"Fathomless dusk by night, the day lets in  
Glimmer of emerald,—thus those eyes of hers!"

This picture now hangs in the gallery of Stafford House, and was mezzotinted by Cousins, in 1844, and included in the published collection of the artist's works. This volume is representative of the artist. It opens with that perennially delightful picture of the "Calmady Children," called "Nature,"—one of the very best and sweetest representations of child life ever made. Here is the elemental artlessness of nature, and here the beatitude of innocence. Another child-picture is the portrait of Lady Emily Cowper, afterwards Lady Ashley, called "The Rosebud." Among the ladies shown are Lady Leicester, Lady Lyndhurst, and Lady Georgiana Agar Ellis, the picture of the latter being surpassing in its elegance. That majestically maternal picture is here of Lady Gower and Lady Elizabeth Leveson Gower,—not our Elizabeth Mary, but she who became Duchess of Argyll. [120]



The Countess of Grosvenor was a lady of high character and most affable manners, and held her exalted position with a dignity of demeanor and a bearing worthy of a descent from the noble Gowers, lords of Sittenham. Her residence latterly was Motcombe House, near Shaftesbury, Dorsetshire. She lived on until our own day, dying at the age of ninety-four.

In 1840-41 she accompanied her husband on a yacht voyage in the Mediterranean, an entertaining account of which she published in two volumes. She was a keen politician, as so many ladies of rank are in England. In 1873 Lady Westminster's son, then Lord Robert Grosvenor, spoke in favor of the Liberal candidate for Shaftesbury. The candidate told her tenants that he believed her ladyship was not averse to his candidature. It was putting his fingers into the den of the apparently sleeping lioness. She wrote sharply: "I beg to undeceive you. I am most anxious for the success of the conservative cause, connected as it is with the preservation of our religion and our loyalty to our Queen." [121]



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