The Life of Emma, Lady Hamilton

Emma, Lady Hamilton

A Biographical Essay
With a Catalogue of
Her Published Portraits

By
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Painted by S. Joshua Reynolds

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A BACHANTE

INTRODUCTION.

MANY books have been written about the nursery-maid who became the wife of an Ambassador, and the confidante of a Queen, the woman whom Romney painted and Nelson loved. But not yet has justice been done either to the character or to the romantic career of Emma, Lady Hamilton. Women do not get justice easily—perhaps less so in this country than in others, where men are not supposed to have all the perquisites of passion, and women the penalties only. Perhaps we are beginning to acquire a healthier sense of fair play in the relations between men and women, so there is less of that hypocrisy among us that has so long posed as virtue. Women have at least proclaimed the doctrine of equal rights; if they have not obtained them. "The law for the man," they say, "shall be the law for the woman. Shall he sin and be excused, while we who sin are stoned? Shall he be coarse, violent, selfish, luxurious, indulgent, while we must be self-sacrificing, meek and mild in all things? We will exact man's virtue for woman's virtue, and where men have liberty, so shall women!" Such a doctrine, preached boldly now, was unknown in the days of Lady Hamilton. Human nature itself was not allowed to women. Young ladies who had been to a "finishing school" were commonly supposed to have eliminated such an undesirable attribute of womanhood. Men might be as "human" and as "natural" as they liked—and they liked both qualities pretty considerably—but woman, divine woman, must be put on a pedestal to be worshipped as a creature of flawless make. But woe betide her if she fall!

Yet, after all, even in those days, virtue was not easier for women than for men, although men believed it so, or made believe. Women had their wild emotions and their longings, but they had to hide them under the crochet cover, and show a smiling face when their "honour'd sir" came home from hunting, or drinking, or dicing, or other manly pleasures. Willy-nilly, the "respectable" woman had to pose in a strained and unnatural position on the pedestal of man's conceit and selfishness. And woe betide her if she fall! Then there would be fine sport for virtuous men and women, for Lady Sneerwell, and Mrs. Candour, and Sir Benjamin Backbite, for the wits of the coffee houses, the sots of the tavern, the Grub-street hacks, and for all those "malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder character to kill time," to flatter their vanity, or to earn a guinea. The men especially would go a-hunting with a gay Tally-ho! and chase a woman's reputation through the foulest mud, in a brave and gallant way, tearing the clothes off her back when they brought her to the ditch, and, generally, the man who had first ruined her honour, was the one to put the hounds on the scent and ride hardest after the poor quarry. He, of course, was a blameless gentleman, with not a stain upon his character. It was only the woman who had sinned, and she must pay the price.

So it was with Lady Hamilton. There is no need to whitewash her character. She was a woman of warm heart and passions, a woman of perfect beauty, and therefore fine game for the hunter; she was frail, and she fell. But let us give her the fair play which she did not get in her lifetime, nor afterwards. Like many another innocent country girl who came to London in a humble situation, her fresh beauty and her ingenuousness made her an easy prey for a scoundrel with an easy conscience and a fondness for a pretty face. But who will hurl a stone at his victim and let the man go scot free? Rather one's admiration

must go out to the girl who, in spite of an early experience in the wickedness of the world and the selfishness of men, kept so much of her innocence, so much natural affection, such an excellent good heart, such real purity of mind, as "Amy Lyon," afterwards Emma, Lady Hamilton, exhibited for the best part of her life.

For it is impossible to believe that the woman whom Horatio Nelson loved and almost worshipped, whose name was in the prayers he uttered with his dying breath, and whom he left "as a legacy to his king and country," was an abandoned and immoral woman, as commonly described. Nelson had no grossness in his nature. He had a singularly high and noble mind, in spite of the one moral weakness into which he unhappily fell. His love for Lady Hamilton was not wholly ignoble. In her presence he felt inspired, not to indolence and ease, but to greater deeds of glory. Her beauty was a talisman to him in the hour of battle. His patriotism was never so ardent as when he laid his honours at her feet. To him she seemed a good and gracious woman—"one of the very best women in the world"—and never did he feel that he was stooping to a woman of soiled honour, but rather protested his own unworthiness to possess her love. Doubtless he exaggerated the qualities of her character, but it is incredible that a man like Nelson, whose refined and pious instincts were almost in advance of his own time, should have given this homage to a thoroughly evil woman. Nor in any of her letters, many of which have been preserved, is there a word of coarseness, or a trace of low thought, such as must have inevitably crept out in her intimate correspondence to a man like Charles Greville, for instance, with whom she had lived as a wife for several years. In her early days, indeed, and when she and Greville had their *ménage à deux* at Paddington Green, it was the man, and not the woman, who lost his honour. Although the union had not been sanctioned either legally or religiously, there are few

wives who have loved so loyally, or so ardently as Emma Lyon kept faith with her "protector." He gave her a home, and what he no doubt considered the priceless advantage of his cultured conversation, but she had more to give in return, a fresh and exquisite beauty, "more perfect than anything of antique art," as the connoisseur himself admitted when he wished to barter her, a candid simplicity and gaiety of spirits, refreshing even to a cold and blasé gentleman like the "respectable Mr. Greville," a warmth of affection which she lavished upon him in return for his unemotional patronage, the docility of a child, and a gratitude that deserved more generosity than Greville gave. The cruel callousness of the man who took her heart without the slightest touch of compunction, and passed her over to his uncle for a mercenary consideration, is a thousand times more shameful than any act in the life of the woman who became Lady Hamilton. Yet, to his own generation, Greville was a most admirable and highly respectable gentleman, quite a Sir Charles Grandison in his way, so refined were his manners, and so elegant his maxims. There was not a word of reproach for *him;* but all the curs of the town were barking and yelping at the reputation of the woman he had abandoned, when she had become famous and was therefore worth defaming. Every scurrilous tavern-lounging scribbler who could earn a guinea by soiling a woman's honour with his foul pen fastened some story of shame to the early days of Emma Hamilton, when she was a young and humble girl. It was an age when the anonymous biographer could do his worst without fear of libel, and tell disgusting tales, provided he cloaked them under a sufficient show of pious reproach and canting morality. Lady Hamilton, the wife of a British Ambassador, and the woman for whom our greatest Admiral lost his heart, was an excellent subject for such anonymous slander, and she was not spared. Neither was the bite of Sir Benjamin Backbite behindhand. They were eager to have a personal share in the *chroniques*

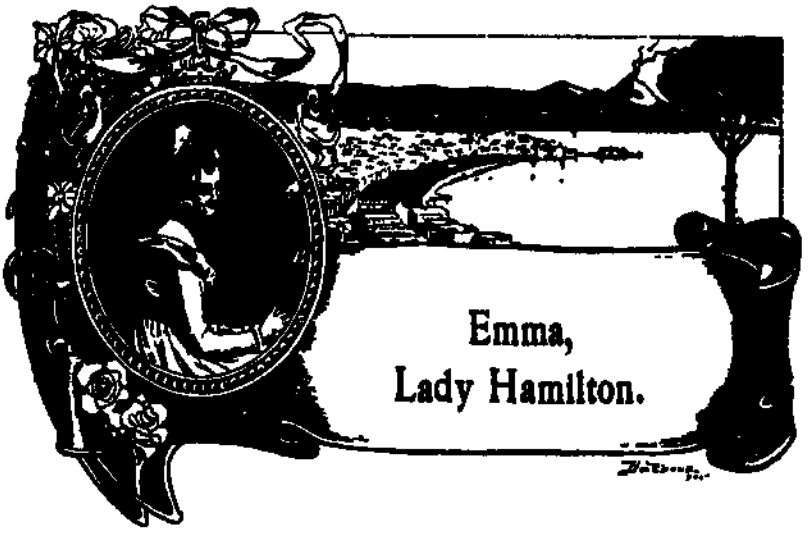
LADY HAMILTON AS "NATURE" BY ROMNEY
From an engraving by J. R. Smith

scandaleuses of so famous a beauty, and boasted in the clubs of incidents in the early life of that lady which had no foundation except in their own imaginings, or hinted with many "I could an' I would," that she had been a good deal worse than was commonly supposed. It is difficult to disprove such stories. Mud has a habit of sticking, and much has stuck to Emma Hamilton. Yet for any clean and wholesome mind it is as well to brush on one side all this scurrility of anonymous pens and club room gossip, and to judge Lady Hamilton by the proved facts of her career. That she was the mistress of Greville is not to be denied, nor even lightly excused, that she lived with Sir William Hamilton years before he married her, is also known, and much more excusable when the facts of her "exchange" are clearly revealed. That Horatio Nelson was her lover and the father of her child is a matter of history. In these facts there is much to be deplored, but on the other hand the character of Lady Hamilton contained much that was admirable, charming, and heroic. Her loyal love for the man who afterwards deserted her was only equalled by the affection and tenderness which she showed for long years to the man who made her his wife. But a stronger instance of her warm heart is shown by her life-long affection for her mother. Women of low and evil character do not as a rule show any reverence or natural affection for their parents. But Lady Hamilton was always tenderly solicitous for her mother's welfare, always eager to have the old lady by her side, even at the most brilliant period of her career, when the humble demeanour and uncultured manners of the mother must have been an embarrassment to her. That, at least, should count for righteousness. Again, when placed by her own merits and natural ability in a position of commanding influence, she used her talents not for purely selfish ends, but in the service of the British nation. Uneducated as she was in any literary sense, there is no doubt that she was a good patriot and a good diplomat. The

influence she acquired over the mind of Queen Caroline of Naples, as her closest friend and adviser, was used always for the good of her country. On two occasions she was of the highest service to England at a critical and dangerous time in our history, once by warning Nelson of a secret combination of powers, and again by enabling him to water his ships at neutral ports. Nor, however guilty her love for Nelson was, did she play the base part of Cleopatra to her Antony. Never did she tempt him from his duty, or cause him to neglect it for love-in-idleness. "If there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons," may not be literally true, but, at least, England did not lose a victory because of Lady Hamilton, and Nelson himself regarded her as his inspiration.

But apart from the moral side of her character, the romantic and extraordinary career of the fair Emma deserves no little admiration; for, in its way, the fact that a girl who had been a poor serving-maid in London, who had no advantages of education, and who had lost her respectability on the threshold of womanhood, should become the wife of a distinguished Ambassador, the adviser and the most powerful friend of a King and Queen, that she should rule over a brilliant salon, a queen herself in society, holding her high position with dignity, graciousness, and consummate tact, is as remarkable as the rise of a Corsican Lieutenant to be Emperor of the French. For men there has always been a "carrière ouverte aux talents," but in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, women, in England at any rate, were the slaves of circumstance and caste. Less difficult was it, as a rule, for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, or a rich man to enter heaven, than for a girl of humble birth to become "a lady of quality," or for one who had fallen to get a foothold on the social ladder. It says much for Emma's force of character, something also—this we will allow him—for the careful instruction of Charles Greville, that she should have been able to play the part of an Ambassador's wife with so

much assurance, and with few, if any, lapses from the social etiquette of the time. But above all it speaks eloquently for the natural charm of her manners. Neapolitan nobles and their ladies would not, perhaps, have noticed a slip in grammar, or an unconventional vivacity of spirits which would have been considered "unladylike" in London, but they were quick to appreciate her good nature, and her simple desire to please and be pleased. But she had one attribute worth more in most men's eyes, and in women's too, than the elegances of "the finishing school," or the niceties of the social code: Emma Hamilton was beautiful in her best years, of such fresh, and sweet, and exquisite beauty, both in form and figure, that it gained her an affection which would never have been hers had a plain appearance been joined to a most irreproachable past. From the portraits of Romney, who never tired of painting her, her face looks out upon us, with its full pouting lips, large fawn-like eyes, delicately chiselled nose, dainty curves of the dimpled cheeks, and pretty pointed chin, smiling sometimes a little roguishly, sometimes pensive and serious, and in one portrait, the "Lady Hamilton in early life," with a sweet and grave innocence in her round, timid eyes. In nearly all these portraits the face conveys the same impression,—that of a piquant and charming beauty, thoroughly English in type, very fresh, and quite unspoilt by pearl powder or paint. In none of them is there any trace of coarseness or vicious self-indulgence. The mouth is a little weak, perhaps, and the laughing eyes do not belong to a woman who takes life very seriously, but in the days of her perfection the beauty of Lady Hamilton was refined and ethereal. If Nelson had never loved the fair Emma, Romney would have given her a fame as lasting as the paint on his pictures. Best, perhaps, had it been for her if that were her only fame.



Chapter I.

ALTHOUGH in the archives of the municipality of Calais the registration of Lady Hamilton's death records her as having been born in Lancashire, it has now been proved beyond a doubt that her birth took place in the village of Nesse, in the district of Great Neston, County Cheshire. The exact date of her birth is still unknown, but in the Church Register of Great Neston there is the following entry:

> Amy, daughter of Henry Lyon, of Nesse, by Mary his wife. Baptised the 12th of May, 1765.

It is believed that the child was two years old at the time of her baptism, and in later life she always kept her birthday on April 26th. Her father, who died within less than a month after having had his little one baptised, was the village blacksmith, from which it will be seen that the most famous beauty in the reign of George III. was of the humblest origin. Her mother, whose maiden name was

Kidd, left in poverty by the early death of her husband, returned with her little daughter to her native place of Hawarden, in Flintshire, afterwards the famous home of W. E. Gladstone. Here Dame Kidd, her mother, received her affectionately, and took to her heart the baby girl, who was to be her pride, and perhaps her greatest grief. "Little Emily," as she was called in those days, seems to have had a happy childhood, and, through all the excitement of her life, and when she had become a woman of rank and fashion, she never forgot the old grand-dame, about whose skirts she had played in the little Welsh village, and who had often scraped up her savings to give to the young beauty for ribbons and trinkets.

Years afterwards, when she was in a whirlpool of social gaiety, the mistress of a brilliant salon, and the brightest ornament of the Neapolitan Court, she found time to remember the old friend of her youth. There are few more simple and touching letters by famous women than the one she wrote to Charles Greville on behalf of her grandmother.

"I will trouble you," she said, "with my own affairs, as you are so good as to interest yourself about me. You must know I send my grandmother, every Christmas, twenty pounds, and so I ought. I have two hundred a year for nonsense, and it would be hard if I could not give her twenty pounds, when she has so often given me her last shilling. As Sir William is ill, I cannot ask him for the order, but if you will get the twenty pounds and send it to her, you will do me the greatest favour; for if the time passes without her hearing from me she may imagine that I have forgot her, and I would not keep her poor old heart in suspense for the world, and as she has heard of my circumstances (I don't know how); but she is prudent, and therefore, pray lose no time, and Sir William will send you the order. You know her direction—Mrs. Kidd, Hawarden, Flintshire. Could you not write her a line from me and send it to

her, and tell her, by my order, and she may write to you, and send me her answer? For I cannot divest myself of my original feelings. It will contribute to my happiness, and I am sure you will assist to make me happy. Tell her every year she shall have twenty pounds. The fourth of November last I had a dress on that cost twenty-five pounds, as it was gala at Court; and, believe me, I felt unhappy all the while I had it on. Excuse the trouble I give you, and believe me, Yours sincerely, EMMA HAMILTON.

This letter, so womanly and kind, is the best tribute to the goodness of her heart, for no woman, entirely given up to vanity and self-indulgence and ambition, would have troubled about an illiterate old woman, who had befriended her as a child, or put aside an annual sum of twenty pounds out of an allowance for pin money that was certainly not extravagant for the wife of an ambassador. Not many women would have felt unhappy at the idea of wearing a gown costing twenty-five pounds at a court ball, nor given the shadow of a thought about "a poor old heart in suspense." But Lady Hamilton kept her simplicity of heart longer than most women who had a knowledge of evil. She "could not divest herself of her original feelings," and, although she had been a frail woman, the victim of circumstance more, perhaps, than of her own weakness, her essential purity was untouched. "Oh, my dear friend!" she once wrote to Romney, with a touching candour, "for a time I own, through distress, my virtue was vanquished, but my sense of virtue was not overcome." Faulty though Lady Hamilton's life was, anyone who studies her character with sympathy and understanding, must acknowledge that there was no trace of inherent vice in her temperament, and that in spite of the villainies that had been practised upon her when she was a young and helpless girl, she remained of a singularly sweet and wholesome mind until the last troubles of her life overthrew her mental balance.

When she was about fourteen years of age she became a nursery maid at the house of Dr. Thomas, at Hawarden, and it was probably upon the recommendation of her master that, a year later, she obtained an engagement in London in the same position with Dr. Budd, a physician of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, whose house was in Chatham Place, Blackfriars. It is a curious coincidence that one of her fellow servants was also renowned in after years as a great beauty, and, under the name of Mrs. Powell, fascinated the patrons of the play-house with her talent and charm as an actress at Drury Lane. One wonders whether good Dr. Budd was aware of what choice flowers were blooming in his dingy dwelling-place, or whether he regarded them merely as human scrubbing and dusting machines. One would like to know a little more of the life led by those two young servant maids, who were both destined to be famous. Perhaps it was at this time that "Little Emily" developed her taste in theatrical attitudes, for which she was afterwards renowned. It is likely enough that, with her fellow servant, who, no doubt, had an early passion for the drama, she visited some of the London playhouses during her "evenings out," and was bewitched by the glamour of the footlights and dazzled by the stars of the stage. But practically the only source to which one may go for information about this period of the fair Emma's life, is one upon which no reliance whatever may be placed. The anonymous "Memoirs of Lady Hamilton," published shortly after her death, contain so much slanderous and scandalous matter which, for the most part, has been utterly disproved, while the text is now discredited, that one cannot accept with any confidence the stories they tell of Lady Hamilton's girlhood, which otherwise do not seem improbable. According to these famous and infamous "Memoirs," Amy, or Emily, as she now called herself, became engaged as an assistant in a London shop, patronised by many ladies of fashion, who were attracted by the comeliness of the


NAWAB SALAR

girl, and that years afterwards, when she was the wife of the ambassador, she drove in a carriage to the place and expressed her gratitude to her old master and mistress for their kindness to her in the past. According to this work also, she was afterwards taken into the household of a "lady of quality," who led a gay and fashionable life, and who found that her new "companion," or maid, added considerably to the attraction of her salon. A very lively picture is drawn of the frivolous existence of the young beauty who provides a text for much heavy moralising on the evils of idleness, and the vicious influence of light and romantic novels upon the mind and character of an impressionable girl. After this experience, it is alleged that Emily fell into the hands of a notorious charlatan, named Dr. Graham, who opened a "Temple of Health," wherein he gave lectures to fashionable, as well as to disreputable people on the laws of beauty and physical nature, using Emily Lyon as a model of "the female form divine." There is no need here to give all the indelicate and repulsive details of a story which rests upon no better authority than an anonymous and scurrilous writer, and has not been confirmed by any contemporary who professed to have seen her personally in the situation described. Undoubtedly there was such a person as Dr. Graham, who gave lectures on hygiene, but there is little proof that there was anything of an indecent or objectionable character in his methods or objects; and there is still less proof that Lady Hamilton was connected with him in any way whatever. There are no allusions to such an episode in her career in any of the letters which she wrote to Greville a few years after the time during which she is said to have posed as "Hygeia," and a careful comparison of the established dates of her early career show how improbable it is that she should have had any regular position in the "Temple of Health." We may therefore pass on one side a story which no doubt originated in

the brain of a professional slanderer, who pandered to the eagerness of a certain public for "Chroniques scandaleuses." There is no more direct evidence for another and more painful story connected with these early years of Emily Lyon. The anonymous writer of the "Memoirs," followed by Dr. Pettigrew, who was a more respectable and trustworthy biographer, relates that Emily fell in with a certain young naval officer named Captain John Willett-Payne, under romantic circumstances, ending in a liason which resulted in the birth of a child. It is said that one officer visited her on behalf of a young married man who had been an old friend of hers in Flintshire, and who had been carried off by the press-gang from his wife and little children. Moved by compassion for the grief of the poor wife, Emily is said to have gone to Captain Payne, with whom she was slightly acquainted, and, with tears in her eyes, begged him to use his influence to restore the "pressed man" to his family, who relied on him for their daily bread. The story goes that the young officer was astonished and fascinated by the beauty and the extraordinary charm of his suppliant, and that he granted her request in return for the favours of her love. Thus it came about that Emily lost her innocence, and while still almost a child herself, became a mother. This fact is undoubtedly true. In the early days of the year 1780, Emily returned to her mother at Hawarden, in shame and distress, and brought into the world a little girl baby, to whom she gave her own name. But there is no certainty as to the date of this occurrence, and no definite proof, beyond the statement of Dr. Pettigrew, that connects the child with the officer who afterwards became an Admiral in the British Navy. Mr. Jeaffreson, the most painstaking and accurate biographer of Lady Hamilton, casts doubt upon the whole narrative. It seems much more probable that the father of the new "little Emily" was a fox-hunting Squire named Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh, of Up Park, Sussex,

with whom Emma Lyon, or "Emma Hart," as she now called herself, lived for nearly a year. This sporting baronet was a young spark whose ideas of morality were certainly not in advance of his time, and who sowed a plentiful crop of "wild oats," before settling down as a county magnate. He became fascinated with the charms of the London servant-maid who was now on the threshold of womanhood, and had blossomed into the perfection of her astonishing beauty. Everything points to the fact that it was he who seduced her from her childish innocence, and he did his best to ruin her irretrievably. He carried her off to his country house, and introduced her openly as his mistress to his set of boon companions. For many months at Up Park Emma went through the wildest and gayest period of her chequered career. It is no wonder if she lost her head for a time. Though not the wife of the handsome young Squire, she was nominally the mistress of his household, and was treated with mock respect, and with what was no doubt the sincere admiration of all the young bloods who sponged on the wealth of a "jolly good fellow," and toasted his fair charmer at many a hunting breakfast. To a girl who had been leading a narrow life in domestic service, all this jovial Bohemianism was intoxicating. Emma seems to have thrown herself into the gaieties of her surroundings with youthful and buoyant spirit. She learnt to ride like a young Diana, and rode to hounds after her sporting squire with a boldness and grace that aroused the enthusiasm of his friends. Probably there seemed no reason to her why such a life should ever come to an end. Youth and beauty do not trouble about the clouds of to-morrow if there is sunshine to-day. But the clouds came, and the dark shadows, as they were bound to come. Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh tired of his toy; or perhaps he resented her high spirits and warm-heartedness, which endangered his sole possession of her beauty;

for, whatever the cause, at the end of 1781, he abandoned her, and Emily had to go back once more in poverty, and deeper still in shame, to the mother and the old grand-dame, who were always ready to forgive her, and welcome her home. Her "little Emily" was being nursed by Dame Kidd, who crooned over the tiny morsel of humanity not with less joy because it was a "love-child." Perhaps the young mother also found a brief joy in nursing her own babe, and forgot the darkness of her future when holding it to her breast. She was not one to "divest herself of her original feelings." In her simplicity, also, she still hugged the hope that Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh would ask her to come back again. She could not believe that he had cast her off for ever. So in her servant-maid handwriting, with round large letters, with much difficulty in spelling out the words, she wrote letter after letter to the squire, begging him to remember his words of love, entreating him not to desert her, and cast her adrift on the world. But never once did the village postman stop at her cottage door, and no answer came from the man who had ruined her. Then the girl-mother got into a panic. The neighbours "looked coolly upon her." Her mother and grandmother could not afford to keep her. What was to happen to her? the future looked dark and dreary; to whom could she turn for help? There was one man among the friends of Sir Harry who had been kind to her in a different way to the boisterous homage of the country squires. He had treated her with a grave and old-fashioned courtesy. He had seemed to her a fine and noble gentleman, amiable with women, and not too severe in his manner, but with none of the noisy licentiousness of Sir Harry's sporting comrades. Mr. Charles Greville had not forgotten her. He had written to her wishing her happiness. Perhaps his interest in her was of a warmer kind than she had suspected when he had been "good to her" at Sir Harry's house. So

she sat down and wrote a passionate and pathetic letter, thanking him for his kind note. "It put me in some spirits," she said, "for, believe me, I am almost distracted." She told him how she had written seven times to Sir Harry, but had got no answer. Then she poured out her distress and fears in broken, ill-spelt sentences. "What shall I dow? Good God! what shall I dow?" she cried: "I can't come to town caus I am out of money. I have not a farthing to bless myself with, and I think my frends looks cooly on me. I think so. O, Grevell, what shall I dow? what shall I dow? O, how your letter affected me when you wished me happiness. O, Grevell, that I was in your position or still with Sir H. What a happy girl I would have been!—girl indeed! what else am I but a girl in distres-- in reall distres? For God's sake G., writ the minet you get this, and tell me what to dow . . . I am almos mad. O, for God's sake tell me what is to become on me. O, dear Grevell, writ to me. Grevell adieu, and believe me yours for ever—EMILY HART.

"Don't tell my mother what distres I am in, and dow aford me some comfort."

This letter of entreaty, which was to lead to a new chapter in her life, is just such a one as would be written by any poor girl whose life had been ruined by a fall from innocence, and who knew not where to turn or what to do to save herself from absolute misery. It is the cry of a wounded heart, turned into panic-stricken pleading of a girl who for the first time in life knows the horror of despair. Yet even in this anguish there is a simple little touch of unselfishness, and thoughtfulness for the feelings of one dear to her. "Don't tell my mother what distress I am in"; these words show the same tenderness which was revealed many years afterwards by the fashionable Lady Hamilton who could not bear to keep a "poor old heart in suspense"—the heart of her old grandmother who had befriended her in her time of trouble.

Chapter II.

"O GREVELL, what shall I dow?" The cry must have stirred the emotions even of that elegant man of fashion, and connoisseur of all bric-a-brac such as Greek antiques and women's hearts—the Honourable Charles Francis Greville, second son of the Earl of Warwick, and Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Archibald Hamilton.

As he read this scrawling letter, unpunctuated and ludicrously spelt, and blotted with tears, there rose to his mind the picture of a girl's face, simple, fresh and piquant, exquisitely modelled and deliciously coloured; and of a girl's form, lissome and a little undeveloped, but with the promise of a ripe and glorious perfection of womanly beauty. "O, for God's sake, tell me what is to become on me." It was not the entreaty of an ordinary girl whose prettiness lasts no longer than that of the hedgerow flower when it is plucked and thrown away. The woman who cried to him for help was a creature cast from a most rare mould. Greville, perhaps, looked round at his Greek busts and Etruscan vases, and the pictures of nymphs and goddesses on his walls, and perhaps there came to him then that thought which was afterwards uttered by his Uncle, Sir William Hamilton, when the two connoisseurs met bartering, in a highly refined and genteel way, for a woman's body and soul. "By heaven, she is more perfect than anything in antique art."

In an elegant hand that contrasted with the servant-maid's scrawl before him, Sir Charles Greville wrote another "kind letter" to the despairing Emily, telling her to come to him for

protection, and sending her enough money to bring her comfortably to London. He warned her against her natural generosity. She was not to waste the money in giving presents to her family and friends. There would be time enough to make a nice present to the old grandmother when she had settled down in his house. And she was to be a good girl and try to please him by obedience and docility, putting away her wildness, and comforting him by improving herself in education and elegant accomplishments. Lord Chesterfield himself could not be more cultured and refined in his sentiments to the weaker sex than the fashionable Charles Greville, who conducted even his immoralities in the most gentlemanly way! To the poor girl in the Flintshire village such a letter seemed as noble as it was kind. As if the sunshine had at once dispelled all the dark clouds from her life, her spirits rose to an ecstasy of joy. She had found a protector who would shelter her from shame, and who would give her a happy home in return for her love, which already she was eager to lavish upon him in gratitude for his generosity. So Emily Hart left the village of Hawarden, to which she was never again to return, and began the new chapter of her life in London. It was in a small but "gentool" town—the old-fashioned adjective comes naturally to the pen when writing of the Georgian period—situated in the Edgeware Road, Paddington, that Charles Greville received the beauty in distress. It was a quiet, and, indeed, a rural retreat, for in those days boys played cricket on Paddington Green, and children plucked wild flowers in the lanes of Edgeware. It was sufficiently far from Mayfair for Greville to keep the privacy of his "ménage à deux," and yet sufficiently close to town to enjoy the society of those friends whose discretion he could trust.

Greville was by no means the wealthy man that he has sometimes been represented by the biographer of Lady Hamilton. His income amounted to about £500 a year before he obtained the appointment

of Vice-Chamberlain at a later period. This, though modest according to present reckoning, when the ideas of wealth have been enlarged by the progress of trade, was considered a comfortable competency for a single gentleman of elegant tastes, though not admitting much in the way of extravagance. But Greville, in spite of being the son of a peer, and having much "blue-blood" in his veins, was not above supplementing his income by a little trading and business enterprise in a private way. It was, doubtless, by his suggestion that he became a kind of London agent to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, for the sale of works of art to the bric-a-brac dealers. As Ambassador and Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Naples, Sir William Hamilton was not only able to gratify his tastes as a connoisseur and collector of Italian antiquities, but also to establish a very successful business, avoiding, of course, any awkward publicity, in articles of "vertu" and the like. Greville and Sir William were men of very similar tastes, the nephew being as much a connoisseur and a savant as the uncle himself. They were, therefore, able to form a very useful and profitable partnership to the advantage of both. For whereas the Ambassador had admirable opportunities for picking up cheap bargains from needy noblemen and Italian dealers, for the ostensible reason of adding to his own private collection of art treasures, Charles Greville, who was a shrewd man of business, could find a market for these wares in England, where at that time every man of wealth considered it "the right thing" to amass "objets d'art." In this way Greville was able to add to his £500 a year, besides gaining a reputation in town as a man of elegance and taste, for naturally his own rooms contained many treasures which he was either unable to dispose of quickly, or held back for his own enjoyment.

When the errant and beautiful Emma came to live with him she found herself in an environment of simple elegance and refinement,

and being a young woman of much sensibility, she quickly adapted herself to her surroundings, and educated her naturally artistic temperament. Greville was a man without any violence of passion, and, in spite of any deep moral sentiment or religious faith, had that reverence of "good taste" which was so characteristic of the eighteenth century. Emotionalism, enthusiasm, passion of any kind was considered "foreign," and therefore detestable, but an easy immorality was tolerated, provided it were conducted in a restrained and outwardly respectable manner. This was typical of Greville's own character, and, although living with a young woman without legal sanction, he did not consider it inconsistent to adopt an almost fatherly, and highly dignified, manner towards his protégée. Like Mr. Joseph Surface, he was a man of many sentiments, and his lectures to Emma on the subject of propriety and general deportment would have gratified the author of the immortal "Grandison." Nor did he stop with the cultured eloquence which made Emma feel herself unworthy of so fine a gentleman and so noble a soul. He was really anxious that she should be a credit to his high ideals of good taste, and possess all the elegance which would fit her for the inestimable privilege of being his daily companion. He therefore procured for her a good singing master, at considerable expense, it seems, and a tolerable master of the pianoforte, so that her good voice and musical ear might be thoroughly well trained, while it was his good pleasure to correct her very faulty spelling and ill-educated handwriting—offending to a man of such refinement—and to put such books in her hand as might develop her intellect as far as it was considered advisable for young ladies of that period. He also allowed her sufficient money to dress in a becoming and tasteful manner, and that she might have all the advantages of a gentlewoman, obtained two maid-servants to wait upon her. Indeed, so careful was Mr. Greville to do everything in a proper and decorous manner, that he

invited Emma's mother from Flintshire, and that amiable woman became a member of his little household. Probably it was Greville who advised Mrs. Lyon to adopt a different name so that the humble origin of "Little Emily" might be lost sight of as far as possible. Henceforth, therefore, Emma's mother was known by the high-sounding name of Mrs. Cadogan, and if the lady's speech and manners were hardly in keeping with so grand an appellation, it was not for the lack of good nature and the desire to please. Indeed, there must have been some sterling qualities in the former blacksmith's wife, for not only Greville always spoke of her with high respect, but in later years she gained the affection of Sir William Hamilton, and the good opinion of Lord Nelson, both of whom sent her their compliments and tokens of esteem from time to time. Greville found her a useful member of his household, for she was an excellent cook, and the little dinners he gave to select friends entirely satisfied his ideals of the culinary art, of which he was as much a connoisseur as of Greek antiques.

Probably Emma's three years at Paddington Green were the happiest in her life. She had quite repented of her "giddiness," and there was hardly anything in her relationship with Greville at this time which differed from the ordinary position of a wife. She had a great reverence for her "protector"—to her he seemed the noblest and best of men—and she listened to his suave lectures with an almost childlike simplicity and docility. She worked hard at improving her education, so that even her spelling became, in time, no worse than that of the average gentlewoman of the day, and Greville was much pleased with the progress she made in singing and playing and other elegant accomplishments. Now and again, no doubt, her higher spirits chafed a little at the constraints placed upon her by the fine gentleman who detested any display of emotion, or anything bordering on "unladylike" behaviour, and a story is told of her, at this time, which seems to show that she was

not always able to control her natural excitability. One evening, so the story goes, Greville took her for a treat to Ranelagh Gardens, where, in a new gown he had given her, she looked more beautiful than any of the ladies about her. For some time she sat listening to a concert in one of the pavilions, with the sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks of a country girl at a play, then suddenly, to the astonishment and mortification of her companion, she rose from her seat and, taking an uninvited part in the performance, sang one of the songs she had been learning under her instructor. This exhibition of her talents was received with delighted applause by the audience, who wondered who the beautiful young woman could be; but Greville, shocked out of all good temper insisted on her leaving with him at once. To a man of his sensitive temperament, shrinking from anything like vulgar publicity, such a performance from the woman at his side was naturally objectionable to the last degree. On the way home he was silent and angry, and the fair Emma's excitement having subsided, she was no doubt conscious of the deep offence she had given to her guardian. Upon reaching the house at Paddington Green she ran up to her bedroom and appeared presently in the old brown dress she had worn upon leaving her Flintshire village. With tears in her eyes she expressed contrition for her fault, protesting that she was unworthy of Greville's kindness and instruction, and that he would be right in sending her away; she would go back to her old home again and be as miserable as she had been when he had rescued her. Greville's anger was dispelled by such simplicity and pathos, and, after reading her a severe lecture in his firmest manner, graciously pardoned the contrite beauty, and restored her to his good favours.

Thus goes this interesting and romantic story; but whether it is founded on anything but the imaginative invention of some anonymous biographer is highly doubtful. Although the fair Emma was

of an excitable nature, and, certainly in later years, took an extreme pleasure in the exhibition of her beauty and talent, it seems improbable that she could have interrupted a public performance in such a sensational and uncalled for manner.

To these days belongs Emma's introduction to the painter, Romney, which led to her first celebrity as a beauty, and to one of the most unfounded and basest accusations against her character. George Romney was, like Emma herself, of humble origin; his father had been a carpenter, cabinet maker and small farmer in a Cumberland village. Showing an early inclination for art, the boy had been apprenticed to an eccentric and prolific portrait painter named Christopher Steele, and under the instruction of this man his genius was quickly revealed. As soon as he had served his apprenticeship he was rash enough to marry, at the age of twenty-two, a girl of his own class, who bore him two children (one of whom died in infancy) at a time when he had the poorest prospects of supporting them. He set up a studio in Kendal and succeeded in scraping up a living by painting portraits of the local gentry. But he only received paltry prices for this work, and his commissions were few and far between, while he was secretly convinced that his power entitled him to both fame and fortune. There was only one goal for his ambition, the great art world of London, and he determined to leave his family under the charge of his father, so that he might be free to work out his destiny. It was in 1762, when twenty-eight years old, that Romney took this bold step. He managed to raise about a hundred pounds by putting up all his stock of paintings and studies in a lottery sale, and, giving half to his wife, arrived in London with the humble capital of fifty pounds. At Dove Court, near the Mansion House, and afterwards in Great Newport Street, where his future rival Reynolds had previously lived before moving into his fine house in Leicester Square, the young painter took lodgings and worked industriously with his

brush. He was successful in carrying off the second prize of fifty guineas, offered by the Society of Arts, with a painting of "The Death of General Wolfe," and this picture he subsequently sold for twenty-five guineas. This success was very valuable to him, not only in providing urgently needed funds, but in bringing him into public notice. He was able to get many sitters for portraits, at the moderate price of five guineas a head, and as he was a rapid worker he soon found himself earning a fairly substantial income. At this time also he obtained the friendship of Richard Cumberland, a well known dramatist and novelist of the day, who had many distinguished acquaintances, and was therefore able to introduce the young painter to patrons of art. Cumberland was quick to recognise the genius of the young North Countryman, and wrote a poem—excellent as a means of advertisement, however faulty in metre—in which he bade "Romney, advance! be known; and be admired." The painter would now have been well able to bring his wife and child to London, and to support them in comfort, but for some reason, which has never been explained, he failed to do so. Perhaps the objection was on Mrs. Romney's side, and being an uneducated, plain country woman, she may have refused to live in an environment unsuited to her nature, where, perhaps, she would have been scorned and ridiculed by her husband's fashionable sitters. Be that as it may, Romney, though he occasionally visited his wife in Cumberland, never lived with her again until a few years before his death, when she tenderly nursed him in his invalid, and almost imbecile, condition. But there is no truth in the charge that Romney was actuated by miserly motives, for he was noted for the generous way in which he gave money to friends in distress, and he advanced considerable sums to other members of his family. For two and a-half years he travelled on the Continent studying the world's masterpieces at Rome, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Turin, Paris and other cities, and then, with a fund of new experience and

new ideals, returned to London and established himself in Cavendish Square. Richard Cumberland and another fashionable *littérateur*, named Hayley, still befriended him by procuring introductions to wealthy patrons, and the Duke of Richmond, whose portrait he painted, and who greatly admired his work, was specially kind to him in this way; he not only commissioned Romney to paint the portraits of celebrities, like Admiral Keppel, Lord George Lennox, Lord John Cavendish, Edmund Burke, and other great people in whom the Duke was interested, but set the tide of fashion in favour of a painter whose genius rivalled that of Sir Joshua himself, and—not a matter of small importance, even to noble lords—whose prices were so very much more moderate.

As the years passed and his reputation increased, Romney put up his price, but between 1776 and 1781 his price for a head was only eighteen guineas compared with the thirty-five guineas of Reynolds for the same period. How paltry do these sums now seem in comparison with the present worth of the pictures by these two masters, and in comparison with the prices of the fashionable portrait painters of to-day!

But although Romney at his best was always a worthy rival of Reynolds, towards whom he always showed a rather morose and jealous disposition, he never attained the same prosperity, or the same contemporary renown. His friend, Richard Cumberland, has left on record the weakness of his character, and the disappointments he met with; - shy, private, studious and contemplative; conscious of all the disadvantages and privations of a very stinted education; of a nature naturally hypochondriac, with aspen nerves, which his own and every breath could ruffle; he was at once in art the rival, and in nature the very contrast of Sir Joshua. A man of few wants, strict economy, with no dislike of money, he had opportunities enough to enrich him even to satiety; but he was at once eager to begin and so slow in finishing his portraits, that he was for ever disappointed

of receiving payment for them by casualties and revolutions in the families they were designed for. So many of his sitters were killed off, so many favourite ladies were dismissed, so many fond wives were divorced before he could bestow half an hour's pains on their petticoats, that his unsaleable stock was immense; whilst with a little more regularity and decision he would have more than doubled his fortune, and escaped an infinitude of petty troubles that disturbed his temper.

Among Romney's patrons and admirers was the Earl of Warwick, to whose notice Richard Cumberland had now brought him, and it was by this means that the Honourable Charles Greville, the Earl's second son, came to select Romney as the painter who might perpetuate the charms of his fair Emma, who was now at the period of her most exquisite beauty. The portrait painter was enraptured at the sight of Mr. Greville's protégée. Here, indeed, was a woman who might inspire his highest genius. Never before had he painted from a model so perfect in form and features, so fresh and ripe in colouring, with such soft and graceful symmetry, with such sweet and sensitive expression. The painter received her as a kind of gift from the gods, as if one of the statues of an early Greek master had been endowed with life, and come in the glory of the flesh to visit his rooms. With Greville's consent, and to the great pleasure of that gentleman, it was arranged that Emma should sit for Romney frequently, and indeed, regularly for some time, so that he might paint her in various attitudes, and as the type of various classical characters.

For two or three years, therefore, Emma's chief change from the monotonous and somewhat narrow existence at Paddington Green was her attendance at the studio of George Romney in Cavendish Square. As the painter has himself recorded, Greville was careful of the proprieties, and Emma invariably made the journey to and fro in a hackney carriage, so that she might not be seen walking in the public streets alone, and on many occasions

was accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Cadogan. These hours with Romney were no doubt very happy ones. Emma delighted in her own beauty, and her innocent vanity was gratified to the full by the painter's homage and flattery. He found her a model a thousand times more valuable than the ordinary fashionable women who had come to sit to him, for Emma, as he soon found, had a natural genius for dramatic expression, gesture and pose. She divined by a kind of inspiration his own ideal of any allegorical or classical characters, and she could adopt with extraordinary facility an expression of timidity, horror, haughtiness, shy innocence, tenderness, grief, or sensuous charm, in a manner that left nothing to his imagination. It pleased her to astonish him with new attitudes and with the variety of her expressions; and no doubt the painter suggested poses in imitation of the classical pictures and statuary which had entranced him in Rome and Florence. It was this training, and the revelation of her own dramatic power, which suggested to Emma, in after days, when she had become Lady Hamilton, the famous "attitudes" with which she used to delight the Court of Naples. In simple flowing drapery, with a shawl, and a few accessories, she used to pose in a series of imitations of classic art, and many tributes were paid by her contemporaries to the real grace and beauty of her performances.

From first to last, Romney painted about twenty-five finished portraits of Emma Hart, or Lady Hamilton, as she afterwards became, besides many studies. He ransacked his limited knowledge of classical mythology and ancient history for characters she might represent, and her face and form are now familiar to all lovers of art, under such various guises as St. Cecilia, Cassandra, Diana, Iphigenia, Calypso, Joan of Arc, Mary Magdalen, "Sensibility," Circe, A Pythian Priestess, A Spinstress, A Bacchante and a Sibyl, besides others in her own dress, such as, the simple, sweet-faced "Emma," showing his beautiful

LADY HAMILTON AS "CASSANDRA." BY ROMNEY.
From the original painting in the Cranbury Park Collection.
By kind permission of Tankerville Chamberlayne Esq., M.P.

model as she may often have appeared to him when stepping out of the hackney coach that came from Edgeware Road. Perhaps it is his "Circe" that best reveals the astonishing loveliness of Greville's protégée, in those early years before her figure had over-ripened. She was then only nineteen years of age, and, in spite of her vicissitudes, she seems from this and other portraits to have retained a virginal innocence of expression, as well as the most perfect delicacy of features. There is, in fact, none of the sensuousness of the goddess who formed men into swine in this youthful "Circe," who stands erect with upraised hand and grave, lustrous eyes, and a purity of expression that might shine in the eyes of a Christian saint protesting against heathen idols, and proclaiming her faith, in the Roman amphitheatre. The chaste and delicate lines of her figure are revealed through the close-clinging drapery, though in perfect modesty. Altogether, Romney's "Circe" is a noble and beautiful creature, and if this was the true Emma, Greville and his uncle did not exaggerate in saying that she was as admirable as anything in antique art.

In an age when any intimate relationship between man and woman was the subject of coarse suggestion and evil construction, it is natural, perhaps, that the frequent visits of Emma to Romney's studio should have provided the choicest scandal for the literary scavengers of the day, who were always eager for the sport of curs, in hunting down a woman's fame. To their low-bred minds it seemed impossible that there should be any innocence of friendship between such a beautiful girl and the painter who loved to reproduce her grace and charm on many canvases. It was known that Romney had a wife and child, with whom he did not live. It was famous also in after days that "Nelson's Lady Hamilton" had been a frail woman. Surely, therefore, every moral and righteous person was justified in drawing the inevitable conclusion? It is a worthy philosophy that belongs not to one age or to one

nation. "Two and two make four" is a simple sum in arithmetic, whether it be in the present year of grace or in the days when the mental arithmetic of society was taught in the school of life where passions were less restrained, and Dame Grundy was always busy with her birch rod. Yet, after all, two and two do not always make four, whatever the school books may say, and though Romney was a wifeless husband, and Emma had been weak, the "inevitable conclusion" is not in this case so easy as it looks. It is a very narrow view of human nature to think that because a woman has fallen into sin she must be always sinning. To any fair and healthy mind there is no evidence whatever that Emma's affection for Romney was not of the most innocent and spotless kind, based upon reverence for a man old nough to be her father, and upon gratitude for all his goodness to her. Surely there must be something rotten in society if a lady cannot sit to an artist for her portrait without causing the whispers of malicious tongues!

In the anonymous "Memoirs of Lady Hamilton," which, in spite of containing a number of lies that have now been nailed to the counter, still influence the public mind against the character of the woman so grossly maligned in them, it is boldly stated that Romney's "propensities to sensual indulgence were well known to all his acquaintances. With Emma he became enamoured while painting her picture, as Apelles fell in love with Campaspe. Certain it is that the modern artist had no cause to complain of the severity of his mistress." This statement is only one of the many gross libels with which the book abounds, for, far from his "propensities to sensual indulgence being well known to all his acquaintances," not a word against his moral character was written by his biographers, Hayley and Cumberland, who knew him intimately, and were candid in revealing his natural weaknesses. Shy and retiring, and even morose at times, he never felt quite at

ease among the fashionable people who came to his studio, and although he rhapsodised over the beauty of Emma to the few friends who obtained his confidence, they at least never suspected or accused him of having anything more than a fatherly feeling for his inspiring model, coupled with a painter's enthusiastic homage for her charms. Nor is there any truth in the statement, repeated in various ways by modern biographers of both Romney and Lady Hamilton, that the characters in which he depicted her could not be even represented without a wantonness of countenance, habiliment, and attitude." Apart from the earnest assurance of Romney's son, that Emma only sat for the face and a first sketch of the figure, the drapery and details of the form being painted from another model, there is nothing in any one of the pictures in which Romney portrayed her that offends the strictest ideals of modesty either in posture or expression.

Above all, the slander is disproved by the behaviour of Charles Greville, who, in spite of his peculiar sense of honour, was certainly extremely careful of Emma's good behaviour while she remained under his protection. As already said, upon Romney's own testimony, he safeguarded her reputation by providing a hackney carriage to take her to and from the studio, so that she need not be seen walking in the streets, and on many occasions Mrs. Cadogan accompanied her That he was perfectly satisfied with her propriety during the whole time she was with him may be seen from the letters which he wrote to Sir William Hamilton at the end of that period. "She has never wished for one improper acquaintance," he said. "She has dropt everyone she thought I could take exception against, and those of her own choice have been in a line with prudence and plainness, which, though I might have wished for, I could not have proposed to confine her. If you can find only one or two acquaintances, and let her learn music and drawing, or anything to keep her in order, she will be as happy as if you gave her every change of dissipation."

And again, in another letter, he wrote: "You know that from giddiness and dissipation she is prudent and quiet, and that, surrounded with temptations, I have not any the least reason to complain of her. My attentions do not lead me to make a parade of her, and a sacrifice of my amusements or business. The secret is simple—she has pride and vanity. I have for some years directed them for her happiness." This alluded, no doubt, to her attendance upon Romney. "She does not," Greville went on, "wish for much society, but to retain two or three quiet creditable acquaintances in the neighbourhood. She has avoided every appearance of giddiness, and prides herself on the neatness of her person and the good order of her house."

It is perfectly evident that Greville was not only thoroughly satisfied with the good behaviour of Emma herself, but that he had not the least jealousy of Romney. Even after he had abandoned the girl who loved him, he wrote to the painter in the friendliest manner respecting his portrait of her as "The Spinstress." The letter is doubly interesting because it reveals Greville in his best "Sir Charles Grandison" manner, self-complacent and full of "noble sentiments."

"There are circumstances in connection with the transaction," he wrote, "which force the natural bias of characters, and render it prudent to change the scene of action to train them to necessary sacrifices. The separation from the original of 'The Spinstress' has not been indifferent to me, and I am but just reconciled to it, from knowing that the beneficial consequences of acquirement will be obtained, and that the aberration from the plan I intended will be for her benefit. I therefore can have no reason to value 'The Spinstress' less than I have done; on the contrary, the first estimation of its merits is ascertained from the offer of a person who does not know the original; yet I find myself daily so much poorer that I do not foresee what I can pay for it; and I am already too much

obliged to you to avail myself, in any degree, of your kindness to me. Perhaps Mr. Christian might accept my resignation of it, and pay for it, and give me the option of repurchasing, if the improbable event of my increase of means shall enable me to recover what I now lose with regret. But I can make no condition, and I leave the full and entire disposal of it to you."

Years afterwards, as Lady Hamilton, Emma remembered her old friend Romney with gratitude and affection, writing to him as "my dear sir, my friend, my more than father,"—terms that do not suggest anything but an innocent and reverent relationship with him, and, as will be seen later, when she returned to England as Sir William Hamilton's wife, she took her husband to Romney's Studio, rejoicing the melancholy painter with the warmth of her greeting, and giving him a spell of new life and hope as she became once again the inspiration of his genius.

Chapter III.

IT has been seen from Greville's letters, previously quoted, that Emma led a quiet and, with the exception of her visits to Romney, an uneventful life during her residence in Edgeware Road, but she was contented and happy. For the first time in her life she was in love, and her heart was filled with the sweetness of domesticity. Greville, the man of culture, the elegant connoisseur, and amiable moralist, seemed to her "the very best of men," as she was afterwards to seem in Nelson's eyes "the most perfect of her sex." It is quite clear from her behaviour and her letters at this time that she had a sincere and ardent affection for him. She was miserable when by any little fault she had displeased him, and happy beyond words when he praised her diligence, her good conduct, or her beauty. High spirited as she was, and "though," as she said, "my little temper may have been sometimes high," she received his reproofs with wonderful docility, and craved for no other companionship so long as he was by her side. Never was she so melancholy and dejected as when she was parted from him, even for a short time.

"Pray, my dear Greville," she wrote in the June of 1784, when she was off to a seaside place in Cheshire to pick up in health, "Do let me come home as soon as you can, for I am almost broken-hearted being from you; indeed I have no pleasure nor happiness. I wish I could not think on you, but if I was the greatest lady in the world I should not be happy from you, so don't let me stay long. . . . Indead, my dear Greville, you don't know how much I love you, and your behaviour to me even when we parted was so kind. Greville, I don't know what to do, but I will make you

amends by my kind behaviour to you, for I have gratitude, and will show it you all as I can: so don't think of my faults, Greville, think of all my good, and blot out all my bad, for it is all gone and buried, never to come again. So good-bye, my dear Greville, think of nobody but me, for I have not a thought but for you; and praying for you and for us to meet again. God bless you, and believe me—Yours truly and affectionately,

EMMA HART."

In the same month she sent another letter to her protector, full of the same warm sentiments and simple promises of good behaviour, if only she might go home to him soon.

"My ever dear Greville," she wrote, "how teadious does the time pass awhay till I hear from you; I think it ages since I saw you, and years since I heard from you; indead, I should be miserable if I did not recollect on what happy terms we parted, parted to meet again with tenfold happiness. O Greville, when I think of your goodness, your tender kindness, my heart is full of gratitude, that I want words to express it. But I have one happiness in view which I am determined to practise, and that is evenness of temper and steadiness of mind, for indead, I have thought so much of your amiable goodness when you have been tried to the utmost, that I will, indead I will, manage myself, and try to be like Greville. Indead, I can never be like him, but I will do all I can towards it, and I am sure you will not desire more. I think if the time would come over again I would be different. But it does not matter, there is nothing like Buying expearance; I may be happyer for it hereafter, and I will think of the time coming and not of the time past, except to make comparasons to show you what alteration there is for the best, so, my dearest Greville, don't think on my past follies, think of my good, little as it has been, and I will make you amends by my kind behaviour."

Reading between the lines of these letters, one may not only see

the very real love of the girl for the man whom she regarded as of infinite superiority to herself, but also, perhaps, a hidden anxiety that he might have grown tired of her, and wished to release himself from his responsibility for protecting her. Perhaps she had already seen signs in him of a certain restlessness and coldness, and he may have thrown out vague but alarming hints that their relationship could not last for ever. His ambitions had been stirred by the prospect of obtaining the office of Vice-Chamberlain, and it is likely that candid friends had warned him of the possible danger to the brilliant promise of his future if he kept up his now well-known liason with the beautiful Emma. Then, too, the expense of the ménage in Edgeware Road was somewhat of a drain upon his very moderate income, and, being a man in whom prudence was never enslaved by passion, he was already considering the advisability of terminating a social tie which had been very pleasant for a time, but which was beginning to be a little irksome and embarrassing. Emma was now a woman of some experience in the ways of the world, and she also had a highly sensitive nature, which would warn her of the slightest change in the temper of her admirer. She might well have been a little panic-stricken therefore at the thought of losing her hold upon Greville's affection and patience. The Honourable Charles Greville, however, was a man who moved slowly and circumspectly. His own sense of dignity would not allow him to break with Emma in so violent and vulgar a manner as the fox-hunting squire, who had been his predecessor. For a time she was lulled into a sense of security, and Greville still treated her with "amiable goodness."

The quiet routine of the little household had been interrupted by the visit of Sir William Hamilton to England in 1784, and Emma was excited and flattered by the homage paid to her by the distinguished uncle of her "ever dear Greville." The poor girl's alarms would have been increased an hundred-fold had she

LADY HAMILTON AS [illegible]

ENGRAVED [illegible]

[illegible]

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overheard the conversation of those two connoisseurs when they sat over their port wine, after she had left them to their tête-à-tête, on the evenings when the Ambassador honoured his nephew with a visit. But she had no fear of Sir William. He seemed old enough to be her father—a suggestion which angered Greville when she spoke her candid thoughts—and he had an easy and affable manner with her which made them the best of friends. His open admiration of her beauty did not startle her. She was accustomed to being judged like a piece of classical sculpture by Greville and his friends, and it did not displease her, for she had no false modesty concerning her looks. Sir William called her "the fair tea-maker of Edgeware Road," and she retorted by calling him "Pliny the Elder," a nickname which he had conferred upon himself in a bantering allusion to the ancient philosopher, who, like himself, was the author of learned books, who, like himself, had lived in Italy, and, like himself again, had a nephew—Pliny the younger—who was his friend and heir. The only difference was that Pliny the Elder had died at the age of fifty-six, while Sir William, who was already fifty-five, hoped to live much longer. So, between "Pliny" and "the fair tea-maker" there was a *bonne camaraderie*, and when Emma went away for the seaside holiday already mentioned, she sent him affectionate messages. "Tell him," she wrote in one of these letters, that "next to you, I love him above anybody, and that I wish I was with him to give him a kiss. Don't be affronted, Greville. If I was with you, I would give you a thousand, and you might take as many as you pleased, for I long—I mean I long to see you."

During that seaside "holiday," which was a time of exile to Emma, she had been comforted by having "little Emily" by her side, and by paying a flying visit to old grandmother Kidd. Greville was willing to provide for her child's education at a good preparatory school, and it was by his wish that she had fetched her from

Hawarden and taken her to the seaside, to which Emma herself had been ordered by the doctor for the cure of a skin trouble, before bringing the little one to London. With her usual generosity and warm-heartedness towards her relatives, Emma gave Dame Kidd five guineas in return for some small sums of money she had spent on the child's dress. "My dear Greville, don't be angry," she wrote in connection with this payment, "I would not take her money shabbily. But Emma shall pay you." The companionship of her child, who had grown into a "romp," and outgrown all her clothes so that the mother was kept busy "making and mending," was a great source of joy to Emma, though of some anxiety too, because "she is as wild and as thoughtless as somebody when she was a little girl; so you may guess how that is." She tells Greville simple little anecdotes which reveal her in a new and touching character. "Would you believe," she says, "on Saturday we had a little quarrel. I mean Emma and me; and I did slap her on her hands; and when she came to kiss me and make it up, I took her on my lap and cried . . . Oh Greville, you don't know how I love her, endead I do. When she comes and looks in my face and calls me "mother," endead I then truly am a mother; for all the mother's feelings rise at once and tells me I am, and ought to be, a mother. For she has a wright to my protection, and she shall have it as long as I can, and I will do all I can to prevent her falling into the error her once poor miserable mother fell into."

Greville was slow in answering this series of love-letters, and the cold doubts that had come into the girl's heart caused her intense anguish and anxiety. "Can you, my dear Greville," she cried to him, "—no, you can't—have forgot your poor Emma already. Tho' I am but a few weeks absent from you, my heart will not one moment leave you. I am always thinking of you, and could almost fancy I hear you and see you; and think Greville what a disappoint-

ment when I find myself deceived, and ever nor never heard from you. But my heart won't lett me scold you. Endead it thinks on you with too much tenderness. So do wright, my dear Greville. Don't you remember how you promised? Don't you recollect what you said at parting?—how you should be happy to see me again? O Greville, think on me with kindness! Think how many happy days, weeks and years—I hope—we may yet pass. And think out of some that is past there as been some little pleasure as well as pain; and, endead, did you but know how much I love you, you would freily forgive me any past quarels, for I now suffer for them, and one line from you would make me happy." Fortunately for her peace of mind a letter at last arrived from Mr. Greville, and by its more than usually affectionate tone dispelled the horrid doubts upon which she had been brooding. Upon her return to London, however, where little Emily was placed in a good boarding school, she came back to a lonely house, for Greville was making a round of social visits, and Sir William was also renewing his old friendships in various parts of England. Emma still pined for her protector, and her spirits were still further depressed by a severe attack of measles which caused her much suffering and feverishness. She had been nine weeks, altogether, without seeing Greville, and the separation was almost more than she could bear. The news of his home-coming was an inexpressible relief, and she hastened to tell him of the joy it gave her: "I think I shall die with the pleasure of seeing you," she wrote. "Indead, my dearest Greville, if you knew how much I think of you, you would love me for it, for I am always thinking of you and of your goodness. In short, Greville, I truly love you, and the thought of your coming home so soon makes me so happy. I don't know what to do."

When Greville did come home, followed by Sir William Hamilton, who renewed his frequent visits, she found her guardian in an affectionate but serious frame of mind. He complained of his

increasing poverty. His financial investments had not been successful of late, he said, and he was becoming seriously embarrassed. Perhaps he had been rash in setting up the house in Edgeware Road without sufficiently calculating the expense that it would entail upon his limited income. Much as he loved his Emma, it would be a real grief to him if he had to deprive her of any of the advantages which it had been his pleasure to give her in the way of singing and piano masters, of which her musical talents were so fully worthy. What was to be done? He must certainly cut down his expenditure, or ruin would stare him in the face.

Emma was distressed and dismayed. She had no idea that he was so straitened in means, and it grieved her to think that she might be one of the causes of his pecuniary anxiety. She consulted her "dear Sir William," and that excellent and distinguished man listened with the utmost sympathy. It was true enough that poor Charles was in debt, and that he would have to revise his mode of life. It had caused Sir William himself some anxious thoughts, after his dear nephew had unburdened himself of his cares. A little plan occurred to him—could not Emma and Mrs. Cadogan accept his hospitality for a while in Italy? He would be delighted to have them. A lonely old bachelor like himself wanted some amiable female society to bring a little sunshine into his household. Then, too, it would be an excellent opportunity for Emma to complete her musical education. Her voice was much too good to leave untrained, or with such very mediocre training as she could get in England. If she would stay with him in Naples for a time it would be his delight to provide her with the most capable Italian professors—the best in the world—and little the knowing how famous she would become when her voice had received proper care. As soon as Charles could leave his parliamentary duties he could join them in Italy, where he would be able to live much more cheaply than in England, and there they would be a happy family

LADY HAMIL[illegible]

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party, the leaders of English society in Naples, and the honoured friends of the King and Queen of the two Sicilies who would welcome Greville and his fair lady as much for their own sake as for his—the British Ambassador's.

It was a beautiful plan. Emma herself was pleased and flattered with the idea, and when she broached it to Greville he professed his gratitude to his dear uncle for so kind and excellent a scheme. Emma little knew of the bargain that had been struck between the uncle and nephew on the eve of Sir William Hamilton's departure for Naples, and did not guess the real reasons underlying the proposed arrangement. The fact was that Greville had seen how enamoured his uncle was of "the fair tea-maker of Edgeware Road," and the idea quickly came to him that here was an excellent opportunity of ridding himself of a girl who, as he now recognised, stood in the way of his ambitions. He was secretly contemplating a marriage with a young heiress whose dowry and distinguished connections would place him upon a higher rung of the political and social ladder. Secondly, he hoped to be his uncle's heir, and to ensure this it was necessary to prevent Sir William, who was still in the prime of life, from entering into a legal marriage. If he "bought love ready made," as a clerical relation had suggested to him, with a very un-clerical sense of morality, that would be an excellent safeguard of Greville's interests. Lastly, if Sir William coveted the fair Emma he would, no doubt, be prepared to pay a good price for the privilege of taking her off his nephew's hands. These were the cards which Greville played with the astuteness and, no doubt, with the fine gentlemanly restraint which always characterised his behaviour. Probably there was a good deal of fencing and subtle bargaining between the two men of fashion. It is improbable that Emma was bought and sold with plain words and at plain figures. There were fine moral sentiments, and the cultured language of the connoisseur, as well as vague, tentative suggestions,

delicate hints, and much verbal ingenuity to smother up a transaction. But though the words of the bargain were, no doubt, subtle and ambiguous, the facts were staring enough. Sir William Hamilton drew up a new will in favour of his nephew, and provided securities for the payment of his debts, in return for which it was arranged that shortly after the Ambassador's return to Naples Emma "Hart" should be sent on to him, Greville cancelling all claims upon her for ever.

It was a clever piece of scoundrelism. The victim went gladly into the trap, or at least without suspicion, and Greville's " sensitive temperament " was saved from distressing scenes, such as would have been inevitable had he abandoned Emma in England. Once in Italy, she would at least be unable to torture his nerves by hysterical reproaches and violent despair. Reproaches by correspondence are not so annoying. Then, too, it would have been awkward in another way to cast her off in London. She had friends who were also his friends. Romney might have talked, Greville's reputation would have suffered. But now the blame would fall rather upon her shoulders than his. The world would think that she had left him willingly to become the mistress of a British Ambassador. So Greville was justified in feeling as self-complacent as ever, and as he smiled into his port wine he had a right to flatter himself on his master-stroke of diplomacy.

The plan worked without a hitch. Emma was sad at parting, but not hysterical. At the cost of a few lies he persuaded her that he would soon rejoin her, and, with the feeling that she was sacrificing her own happiness for a time to ease his monetary difficulties, she stifled her vague sense of alarm, and, with her devoted mother, set out early in the year of 1786, under the escort of Mr. Gavin Hamilton, the painter—one of Sir William's kinsmen—for the city of Naples, which they reached on her birthday, April 26th of that year.

Sir William's reception of Emma Hart at once opened her eyes to the peril of her situation, and filled her with a sense of alarm. The Ambassador "did nothing but look at her and sigh." He was very kind and very generous, but perhaps—no, she would not accuse him of any improper feeling towards her—and she would tell Greville exactly of the way he treated her, and, while expressing her gratitude, hint in very guarded terms of the danger she was in. Surely, surely, Greville meant to keep his promise. He could not forget the love that had been between them, nor be so base as to abandon her to a horrible fate.

Her first letter to Greville shows the torture and bewilderment of her mind. She tries to make the best of everything, to interpret Sir William's behaviour and generosity in a high-minded way, but she cannot help revealing some of the panic in her heart, and hinting at horrid doubts, which might be only the products of a disordered imagination. It was a letter that should have struck even the Honourable Charles Greville with a sense of pity and shame.

"My dearest Greville," she wrote on the 30th of April, 1786, "I arrived at this place on the 26th, and I should have begun to write sooner, but the post does not go until to-morrow, and I dreaded setting down to write, for I try to apear as cheerful before Sir William as I could, and I am sure to cry the moment I think of it. For I feel more and more unhappy at being separated from you, and if my fatal ruin depends on seeing you, I will and must to the end of the summer. For to live without you is impossible. I love you to that degree that at this time there is not a hardship upon hearth, either of poverty, hunger, cold, death, or even to walk barefooted to Scotland to see you, but what I would undergo. Therefore, my dear Greville, if you do love me, for my sake try all you can to come hear as soon as possible. You have a true friend in Sir William, and he will be happy

to see you, and do all he can to make you happy. And for me, I will be everything you can wish for. I find it is not either a fine horse, or a fine coach, or a pack of servants, or plays, or operas, can make happy. It is you that as it in your power to make me very happy or very miserable. I respect Sir William, I have a very great regard for him, as the uncle and friend of you, Greville. *But he can never be anything nearer to me than your uncle and my sincere friend. He can never be my lover.*

"You do not know how good Sir William is to me. He is doing everything he can to make me happy. He as never dined out since I came hear; and endead, to speak the truth, he is never out of my sight. He breakfasts, dines, supes, and is constantly by me, looking in my face. I can't stir a hand, leg or foot but he is marking [it] as graceful and fine; and, I am sorry to say it, he loves me now as much as ever he could Lady Bolingbroke. Endead I am sorry, for I cannot make him happy. I can be civil oblidging, and I do try to make myself as agreeable as I can to him, but I belong to you, Greville, and to you only I will belong, and nobody shall be your heir-apearant. You do not know how glad I was to arrive here the day I did. It was my birthday, and I was very low-spirited. Oh God! that day that you used to smile on me, and stay at home, and be kind to me—that *that* day I should be at such a distance from you! But my comfort is I rely upon your promise, and September or October I shall see you. But I am quite unhappy at not hearing from you—no letter for me yet Greville! But I must wait with patience. We have had company most every day since I came, some of Sir William's friends. They are all very much pleased with me; and poor Sir William is never so happy as when he is pointing out my beauties to them. He does nothing all day but look at me and sigh . . . you are to understand I have a carridge of Sir Williams, a English one, painting and new liverys, and new coachman and

footman, &c.—the same as Mrs. Damer had of her own, for she did not go with is. For if I was going about in is carridge, they would say I was either his wife or his mistress. Therefore, as I am not, nor ever can be either, we have made a very good establishment. I have a very good apartment of 4 rooms, very pleasant, looking to the sea. Our boat comes out to-day for the first time, and we are going for a day or two to Caserta. I was at Paysilipe yesterday. I think it a very pretty place.

" Sir William as give me a camlet shawl, like my old one. I know you will be pleased to hear that, and he as given me a beautiful gown, cost 25 guineas (India painting on wite sattin) and several little things of Lady Hamilton's, and is going to by me some muslin dresses loose, to tye with a sash for the hot weather—made like the turkey dresses, the sleeves tyed in fowlds with ribban and trimd with lace. In short, he is always contriving what he shall get for me. The people admire my English dresses. But the blue hat, Greville, pleases most. Sir William is quite inchanted with it. Oh, how he loves you! He told me he had made is will, and left you everything belonging to him. That made me very happy for your sake. Pray, my dear Greville, do write me word if you want any money. I am affraid I distressed you. But I am sure Sir William will send you some, and I told him he must help you a little now and send you some for your jurney hear, and he kissed me, and the tears came into is eyes, and he told me I might command anything, for he loved us both dearly; and Oh! how [happy] I shall be when I can once more see you, my dear, dear Greville. You are everything that is dear to me on hearth, and I hope happier times will soon restore you to me, for endead I would rather be with you starving, than from you in the greatest splendor in the world.

" I have only to say I enclose this I wrote yesterday, and I will not venture myself now to wright any more, for my mind and heart are torn by different passions that I shall go mad. Only Greville,

remember your promise of October. Sir William says you never mentioned to him about coming to Naples at all. But you know the consequences of your not coming for me. Endead, my dear Greville, I live but in the hope of seeing you, and if you do not come hear, lett what will be the consequence, I will come to England. *I have had a conversation this morning with Sir William that has made me mad.* He speaks—no, I do not know what to make of it. But Greville, my dear Greville, wright some comfort to me. But only remember you will never be loved by anybody like

Your affectionate and sincere

EMMA."

P.S.—Pray, for God's sake, wright to me and come to me, for Sir William shall not be anything to me but your friend."

To this passionate and pleading letter, appealing to his sense of honour, as well as to his affections, Greville made no reply. He had entered into his bargain with Sir William in a cold and calculating spirit, selling a woman's body and heart with as little compunction as he would have sold one of his Greek statues, and with precisely the same mercenary motives, and he was not to be moved by this or the fourteen other letters which reached him at short intervals from his despairing victim. As the weeks went by and she received no answer, the full revelation of his treachery came upon her. She knew herself to be abandoned. He had lied to her when he parted with kisses and promises to rejoin her soon. In making the arrangement for her to go to Italy with Sir William Hamilton, he had known all along that his uncle coveted her not as a guest but as a mistress. He had passed her over to his uncle as though she were no better than a low and vicious creature, who would as willingly live with one man as another, and yet he had loved her! She could be sure of that. The memory of the thousand kind words he had spoken to her, of the years when she had lived with him as his wife in everything but name, of the little quarrels she had had with

him, and which he had forgiven, of his lectures on propriety and good behaviour, which she had tried so hard to model herself upon, of the quiet domestic happiness they had had together, he teaching, and she learning, he praising, and she so pleased and grateful for his praise, came back to her vividly and ineffacably, drowning her very passion and burning indignation in a flood of grief. She loved him still. Base and treacherous though he had been, he was the husband of her body and soul, and she would pardon him everything, and give him the same loyal love, if he would only take her back She had written in anger, perhaps she had said bitter things in her despair, perhaps her reproaches had been too hysterical and violent, perhaps her pleadings had not been humble enough or passionate enough in those series of letters—fourteen in all, which had come from her torn and bleeding heart. Oh, if she could but move him to pity, and awaken in him some of those old kindly sentiments which he had sincerely felt towards her. Perhaps, though fourteen letters had failed, the fifteenth would work the miracle of turning back to flesh and blood a heart that had been changed to stone. So once more, in July of the same year, she sat down with blinding tears to appeal for the last time to her "ever dearest Greville," as she still called him. "I am now only writing," she said, "to beg of you for God's sake to send me one letter, if it is only a farewell Sure, I have deserved this, for the sake of the love you once had for me. Think, Greville, of our former connexion, and don't despise me. I have not used you ill in any one thing. I have been from you going for six months, and you have wrote one letter to me—enstead of which I have sent fourteen to you. So pray, let me beg of you, my much-loved Greville, only one line from your dear, dear hands. You don't know how thankful I shall be for it. For if you knew the misery I feel, oh! your heart would not be intirely shut up against, for I love you with the truest affection. Don't lett anybody sett you against me. Some of your friends—your foes, perhaps, I don't

know what to stile them—have long wisht me ill. But, Greville, you never will meet with anybody that has a truer affection for you than I have, and I only wish it was in my power to show you what I could do for you. As soon as I know your determination I shall take my own measures. If I don't hear from you, and that you are coming, according to your promise, I shall be in England at Christmas at furthest. Don't be unhappy at that; I will see you once more, for the last time. I find life is unsuportable without you. Oh! my heart is entirely broke. Then, for God's sake, my ever dear Greville, do write me some comfort. I don't know what to do; I am now in that state. I am incapable of anything. I have a language master, a singing master, music, etc., but what is it for? If it was to amuse you I should be happy. But Greville, what will it avail me? I am poor, helpless, and forlorn. I have lived with you five years, and you have sent me to a strange place, and no one prospect but thinking you was coming to me. Enstead of which I was told to live, you know how, with Sir William. No, I respect him, but no, never shall he peraps live with me for a little while, like you, and send me to England. Then what am I to do? What is to become of me? But excuse me, my heart is full. I tell you, give me one guiney a week for everything, and live with me, and I will be contented. But no more, I will trust to Providence, and wherever you go, God bless and preserve you, and may you always be happy!"

This letter crossed with one of Greville's, and Emma received the long delayed message with rapturous delight, envying the very wafer with which he had sealed it by the moisture of his lips. "She would give two worlds, had she them, to kiss those lips!" Thus she began her answer with words of tenderness and pretty sentiment, to the man who had been her lover, who, as he read them, must have been startled at the gust of passion and indignation that followed. In his letter, he had put off his

LADY HAMILTON IN MORNING DRESS. BY GEO. ROMNEY.
From the Original Painting.
By permission, from Messrs. Agnew's New Work on Romney.

mask altogether, and, in plain words, had urged her to live with his uncle. In words too plain to be fully quoted, she scorned his counsel, and it is to be hoped they burnt into his brain, shaking him out of that self-complacency beneath which his better nature was stifled.

"As to what you write to me to oblidge Sir William, I will not answer you. For oh, if you knew what pain I feel in reading those lines. You advise me to . . . Nothing can express my rage! I am all madness! Greville to advise me!—you that used to envy my smiles! Now with cool indifference to advise me thus. Oh that, worst of all! But I will not, no, I will not rage. If I was with you, I would murder you, and myself too. Nothing shall ever do for me but going home to you. If that is not to be, I will except nothing. I will go to London, their go into every excess of vice tell I dye. My fate is a warning to young whomen never to be two good. For now you have made me love you, you have made me good; you have abandoned me, and some violent end shall finish our connexion, if it is to finish. But oh, Greville, you cannot, you must not give me up. You have not the heart to do it. You love me, I am sure; and I am willing to do everything in my power—and what will you have more? and I only say this for the last time. I will neither beg nor pray. Do as you like."

Then in a postcript she wrote a threat which may have moved Greville more than all her pleading; for if she fulfilled it, one part of his scheme—that he should be the sole heir to Sir William Hamilton's fortune—might be seriously endangered.

"It is not your interest to disoblige me," she wrote, "for you don't know the power I have hear. Only I will never be his mistress. *If you affront me, I will make him marry me.*"

That postcript must have caused the ordinarily calm brow of Mr. Charles Greville to pucker with an anxious wrinkle. As a

man of the world, and with much experience of women's hearts, he no doubt calculated that he had only to bide his time, and Emma would be forced by the irresistible power of circumstance to accept the protection of Sir William Hamilton. Though now, in the first throes of her passionate revolt against her abandonment, she vowed that she would embrace poverty and misery rather than be anything more than a friend to her amorous Ambassador, there would come the inevitable reaction, when Greville's absolute decision would become plain to her, and unless she had the courage of martyrdom, which he much doubted, she would be bound in the end to succumb to the temptations of ease and comfort, and all the glamour of social success, under the patronage of Sir William Hamilton. That was a result upon which he could have no doubt, unless all his experience had been for nothing. But what about her threat of marriage? In his heart he may have known that that also was not the least improbable of things, for Emma had awakened at last to the knowledge of her power. She knew now that her beauty could cast a spell over men, and that if she used her rare charms for her own ends, she might be the queen instead of the beggar-maid, and rule rather than obey.

If in Greville's study of this problem his logic led him to that solution, he was not in error. Before the year was out in which she had fiercely protested that "Sir William shall not be anything to me but your friend," Emma was the recognised mistress of the British Ambassador, and she looked forward with a quiet confidence to the day when he would make her his wife. She had turned down one more page in her life, and had begun a new chapter in which Greville had no part.

Chapter IV.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON was not a man of heroic cast. In his younger days he had been as easy in his morals as a gentleman of the Eighteenth Century might be without shocking the prejudices of his age, and at fifty-seven he was still a man of gallantry, not yet past the emotion of "the grand passion." But in many ways his character was not unadmirable. He was a man of kindly sentiment, with a considerable strain of generosity. Indeed, according to the code of his time, he had a nice sense of honour as regards his public duties, faithfully serving the interests of his country as Ambassador to the Court of Naples; and, apart from the scandalous way in which he had brought Emma Hart to Italy under false pretences—the blame of which lies much more heavily upon Greville than upon himself—it must be admitted that in his private relations with her he showed more than a touch of chivalry and unselfishness. While she still held out against his proposals, he offered to settle £100 a year upon her for life, whether she decided to leave him, or live with him, and as soon as she yielded to his persuasions, he did everything in his power to secure her happiness and comfort. There is no disguising that he did so at considerable risk to himself. In bringing forward the beautiful Emma in the most prominent and public way as the mistress of his heart and household, he might, and did offend an influential section of the English colony in Sicily, who, for a time at least, did their best to obtain his recall from the position of Ambassador. The Queen of Naples, although reigning over a Court not noted for its scrupulous morality, refused to give entrée to a lady who had no

legitimate right to her Royal favour, and this in itself created an awkward and difficult situation for Sir William Hamilton. It is certainly a compliment to his courage, as well as to his tact, that he was able to protect Emma from insult, and to gain for her, so speedily, a high position in Neapolitan society, in spite of these difficulties and hostilities. But, having said this, one must acknowledge that it was Emma herself who carried off the honours of his social campaign, and it was due chiefly to her extraordinary charm of beauty and character that she was not only tolerated, but in time idolized by the Neapolitans and English alike. Her amazing loveliness—for never had her beauty been more perfect than now—disarmed and captivated the men. That was but natural, and they would have given her their easy homage had she been a very scarlet woman. But what was more remarkable, she gradually bewitched the women by her unfailing good nature, simplicity, and unaffectedness. They, and the men too, soon recognised that she was not only a beautiful woman, but whatever might be her legal or illegal position regarding Sir William Hamilton, that she was a really good woman. If she had been very frail as well as very fair, there is no knowing what might have happened at a Court where the princes and nobles were all too inflammable at the sight of a pretty face. But "Mrs. Hart," as she was called, was the very model of propriety and discretion. Within a few weeks of her landing she had a crowd of would-be lovers sighing around her, and whispering amorous conceits. A Prince followed her about wherever she might go, brought her flowers, carried her shawl, took her to the bath-house and waited till she pleased to come away, like a faithful watch-dog; bowed low over her hands, and implored her with his eyes, and generally behaved like an ecstatic Romeo. And Mrs. Hart suffered him gladly, liking love and homage, but she let him know very clearly and very decisively that she had only one heart, and that was for

Sir William Hamilton. The Neapolitan nobles, she said, were "as proud as the devil. But she humbled them." One, more audacious in his flattery, asked how many lovers she had in Naples, but this was going a little too far, so she "pulled her lip at him," and said, "Do you take me to be an Italian woman who has four or five different men to attend her? Sir, I am English. I have one cavalier-servant, and I have brought him with me"—pointing to Sir William. That reduced the amorous nobleman to silence, and after this rebuke he could only murmur that she was "*una donna rara.*"

The King of Naples himself was soon fascinated by her beauty, and although the Queen could not receive her formally at Court, His Majesty made up for this social disadvantage by flattering attentions whenever he met her in Sir William's company. On one occasion when she was in a boat, the King came sailing past with an orchestra on board his little vessel, and perceiving the Ambassador's lady, ordered his men to go close to her, and to play their music. "He took off his hatt, and sett with his hatt on his knees all the while, and when he was going to land he made his bow, and said it was a sin he could not speak English. But I have him in my train every night at the villa or opera."

It was not only the nobility who worshipped at the feet of Emma; the peasants and the servants were bewitched by her. In her simple white dress, with a blue sash, she seemed to them miraculously like the Madonna as she was painted in their churches, and at a little Italian village, through which Emma passed on a pleasure trip with Sir William, the country people fell down on their knees before her, asking favours from her in the name of the Blessed Virgin in whose likeness the good God had made her. Even the priests were struck with this similitude, and when two of them came to visit Sir William, he made her put a shawl over her head and pose in an attitude of religious adoration.

The priests were exceedingly moved—one of them, with tears in his eyes, said "God had sent her for a purpose." Emma herself was much touched by a visit she paid to a convent of sixty nuns. They received her with the most charming kindness and reverence, as if Emma were some beautiful saint who had come to shed her radiance on their house. The Lady Superior was quite a young woman, only twenty-nine years of age, and Emma was "quite charmed" with Beatrice Acquaviva, as she was called. Sir William was away at the time, so Emma wrote to him a pretty description of the fair nun, and of the scene at the convent.

"She took the veil at twenty," she says in this letter, "and does not repent to this day. Though, if I am a judge of physiogomy, her eyes does not look like the eyes of a nun. They are always laughing, and something in them vastly alluring, and I wonder the men of Naples would suffer their only pretty whoman, who is really pretty, to be shut in a convent. But it is like the mean-spirited, ill taste of the Neapolitans . . . She kissed my lips, cheeks, and forehead, and every moment exclaimed "charming fine creature," admired my dress, said I looked like an angel, for I was in clear wite dimity, and a blue sash. She admired my hat and fine hair, and she said she had heard I was good to the poor, and generous, and noble-minded. 'Now,' she says, 'it would be worth wile to live for such a one as you. Your good heart would melt at any trouble that befel one, and partake of one's grief, or be equaly pleased at one's good fortune. But I never met with a friend yet, or ever I saw a person I could love, tell now, and you shall have proof of my love.' In short, I sat and listened to her, and the tears stood in my eyes; I don't know why. I thought what a charming wife she would have made. What a mother of a family; what a friend, and the first good and amiable whoman I have seen since I came to Naples, for to be lost to the world—how cruel!" Beatrice Acquaviva thought she could read the beauty

of Emma's heart in her countenance and complexion, and compared her figure and features with the marble statues she saw when she was in the world.

"I think she flatered me up," said Emma naïvely, "but I was pleased."

Sir William Hamilton was more than loyal to his promise to give his mistress the best training for her voice that Italy could offer, and what with singing and other lessons, sitting as a model to the artists engaged by Sir William, and the daily round of social gaieties, Emma's time was fully occupied. The Ambassador's country house at Caserta, which he now had done up in the most elegant way for her pleasure and comfort, was thronged with painters and professors, sculptors and enamellers, who came in the service of the famous beauty. Sir William had fitted up a special painting room, where Emma posed for at least two hours each day, and this studio was placed at the disposal of the artists, who came flocking in from Rome to study from a living form as perfect as any piece of classical sculpture. By August of 1787, Sir William already possessed eleven portraits of her, but he was never satisfied, and always wanted more. At the same time, her head was being cut in stone for the cameo of a ring, and she was being modelled in ware and clay. From the studio she went to the music room, where Galvia, the great master, was waiting to flatter, as well as to train her voice. Afterwards she practised at the pianoforte with another distinguished professor, then read Italian with a reading master, and studied drawing, which she found "as easy as A.B.C." In the evening, Sir William Hamilton gave select parties at which Emma presided as a kind of Queen of Beauty, flattered, praised and applauded with as much enthusiasm and admiration as if she were really a divinity who had come among the mortals. Sir William only invited those people whom he could trust to

behave with respect to his household goddess, and no one received a second invitation, of whatever rank he or she might be, if "Signora Hart" had any reason to complain of incivility. When the Ambassador left her for some weeks, while he went on a sporting expedition with the King of Naples, Emma kept open house in exactly the same way as when he was with her, and with his consent and wish extended her hospitality to all his English and Neapolitan friends with as much freedom and authority as if she were his wife as well as his mistress.

The Italian people, indeed, did not trouble themselves much, if at all, about so fine a distinction. The marriage bond has always been of a looser character in Italy than in our country. A legal or religious ceremony seems to them rather the private concern of a man and woman than anything to do with Society, and if two people live together with every sign of affection and loyalty they are generally regarded as models of propriety. Even the Church would not frown very severely on such a union, and Emma Hart numbered several distinguished clerics among her friends. One, a charming and brilliant Abbé, was never tired of telling his friends "how beautifully and elegantly behaved in manners and conversation" was their Ambassador's lady. But the English residents and visitors had also put their prejudices on one side when they saw how perfectly decorous "Mrs. Hart" was in her behaviour, and with what an excellent and charming dignity she presided over her salon. Emma tells Sir William in one of her letters how an English friend had confessed that "when he first came in I frightened him with a majesty and Juno look that I receeved him with. Now he says that whent of on being more acquainted, and I enchanted him with my politeness and the manner in which I did the honours." This same gentleman, a certain Mr. Hart, was also enchanted with Emma's voice, with which she entertained her company. "He said it was the most extra-

HAMILTON READING THE GAZETTE BY [illegible]

ordinary thing he ever knew." That, perhaps, was a somewhat doubtful compliment. "But what struck him most was holding on the notes, and going from the high to the low notes so very neat." After this visit "he went awhay with his head turned."

Upon Sir William's return to Caserta he gave a diplomatic dinner, at which Emma scored a great triumph. There were sixty guests present, among whom was "the Banti," the prima donna of the opera, who was to assist at the concert arranged by Emma for the entertainment of all these distinguished people. After the first quartette the hostess was to sing the first song. At first she was very nervous, for "the Banti" is a famous singer, and she placed herself close to her. "But when I began all fear went awhay, and I sung so well that she cried out 'Just God, what a voice! I would give a great deal for your voice.' In short, I met with such aplause that it almost turned my head. Banti sung after me, and, I assure you, everybody said I sung in a finer style than her. Poor Sir William was so enraptured with me! For he was afraid I should have been in a great fright, and it was of consequence that evening, for he wanted to shew me of to some Dutch officers that were there, that is with a sixty-four gun and frigate."

Upon the following day these officers gave a dinner on board to Sir William and Emma, giving them a royal reception by manning the yards, dressing the ships and firing a salute of twenty guns. Emma presided at the table as "mistress of the feast, drest all in virgin white, and my hair, all in ringlets, reaching almost to my feet." The gallant sailors were so enamoured of their guest that they would hardly let Sir William carry her away, and, at the last moment, would have another bottle to drink to "the lovliest woman in the world." In the evening they accompanied the Ambassador and his lady to the opera, where it was gala night in honour of the Spanish King's birthday. "I had the finest dress made up on purpose," writes Emma, "as I had a box near the King and Queen.

My gown was purple satin, with white satin petticoat, trimmed with crape and spangles. My cap lovely, from Paris, all white feathers." The Commodore of the Dutch frigate rode in Sir William's carriage, "and the officers came next, and attended my box all the time, and behaved to me as tho' I was a queen."

These social successes, gratifying as they were, hardly equalled the triumphs which Emma achieved when she went on a tour with Sir William Hamilton and a gay party to the "heel of the Italian boot." At all the towns in which she stayed she was received with the flattering homage of the Italian nobility, who were completely subjugated by her beauty and talents. Princes of the Royal blood were proud to converse with her, and grandes dames, like the Countess Mahoney, congratulated the Ambassador on the possession of such a good and beautiful woman. Afterwards she was even more deeply gratified by the warm friendship shown to her by two great ladies from England, whose patronage did much to break down any prejudice against her still existing in the minds of English residents and visitors. These were Lady Elcho and the Duchess of Argyll, the latter famous in her youth as "the beautiful Miss Gunning." As the years passed, and it was seen that Sir William Hamilton still had the utmost affection for the mistress of his household, never being quite happy if he was out of her presence, and rejoicing openly in her great beauty, her many talents, and her intellectual powers, there were many people who believed that Emma was really his wife, and that a secret marriage had taken place at an early date in their relationship. It was convenient for many of the English ladies who visited Naples to spread these rumours, and pretend to believe them, even if they did not do so with sincerity. It is quite an English characteristic to assume that all is nice and proper if there are any advantages to be gained from such assumption, and in this case the hospitality of an Ambassador, and the piquant pleasure

of being acquainted with so famous a beauty, converted many scandal-mongers to charity. Some of Sir William Hamilton's most intimate friends were bold enough to question him on the subject; and although he denied the rumours of marriage, he announced his intention of making Emma his wife as soon as he could gain the consent of the English king. There is no reason to doubt that he had a very sincere love and respect for his mistress, and, indeed, to the end of his life, his admiration for her never waned. And, although it cannot be supposed that Emma loved him with the same romantic passion which she had felt for Greville, one may not disbelieve her own assurances that Sir William's generosity and tenderness towards her had inspired her with the warmest sense of gratitude and affection. Her letters to him, whenever he was away from her side, which was not often, were full of endearing words, and wifely solicitude for his health and comfort. When he fell ill for a time she nursed him with the utmost devotion, and it was not, perhaps, an exaggeration for her friends to say that she had saved his life. For Greville she always cherished a tender sentiment that the memory of his treachery could not efface, and she corresponded with him frequently, keeping him well posted with the progress of her career. But in these letters there was not, after she had entered the household of the British Ambassador, a word that showed disloyalty to Sir William, or an expression that Greville could have interpreted as an avowal of his old dominion over her. With great tact and womanly restraint she placed him on the footing of an old friend, who had also the claim of kinship with her protector; but even the worst enemy of the woman who became Lady Hamilton could never accuse her of any impropriety in her tone towards Sir William's nephew.

It was in 1791 that the Ambassador left Italy for a holiday, and set out for London with his beloved Emma. He made no secret

of the fact that the chief object of his journey was to place her in the full position of wifehood by a legal and religious ceremony of marriage in England. To Emma these weeks must have been a time of happiest exultation. At last the ambition of her life was to be realised. In the old-fashioned phrase of the homely people from whom she had sprung, she was to be made "an honest woman." Never again would the dread horror of abandonment besiege her soul. She was to have security of tenure in her love, and at the Court of Naples she would be able to reign in Society not only as the Queen of Beauty, but as the honoured wife of the British Ambassador. In spite of her social successes she had not yet obtained the personal friendship of the Queen of Naples, and there were still ladies of the Court who followed the lead of their mistress, and held aloof. Those disadvantages would now be removed, and Emma was justified in dreaming of a brilliant future in which her influence in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies would be unbounded. In London, with all the excitement of receiving presents and purchasing her wedding dress, Emma might have been pardoned if she had given but little thought to the old friends of her days of poverty. Perhaps, even, one could have understood her feelings if she had deliberately broken with everything and everyone that formed a connection with the time when she was a humble and unclassed girl. But this was not the case. One of her first pleasures was to seek out her old admirer and devoted friend, George Romney, who for five years had cherished her memory, and pined for her presence. At this time he had fallen into a melancholy and morbid condition. Ill-health and disappointment had almost ruined his inspiration, and he was the victim of a settled gloom. But when Emma came to him with Sir William, bright and beautiful as ever, overflowing with tenderness and sympathy, the sun shone in the heavens again, and the painter was filled with a new sense of life and inspiration. She

told him the news of her approaching marriage with tremulous emotion and tears in her eyes, contrasting the difference in her position to that in which she had last been to Romney's rooms; and then she told him how much joy it would give her to sit as his model whenever she could spare the time from her numerous engagements, just in the same old way.

Romney sat down to tell all this delightful story to his friend Hayley. "At present," he said, "and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady. I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life—I told her you had begun it,—then she said she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself in being my model. So you see I must be in London till the time when she leaves town."

About a fortnight later Romney wrote again to Hayley:

"I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present, and everything is going on for their speedy marriage, and all the world following her, and talking of her, so that if she had not more good sense her brain must be turned.

"The pictures I have begun are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante. I am also to paint a picture of Constance for the Shakespeare Gallery."

In poor Romney's nervous condition he fancied that Emma had been cold to him before setting out on a visit to the country house of one of Sir William's relatives, and he wrote Hayley a miserable letter on the subject. Hayley, who seems to have been singularly

lacking in discretion, and not without some justice, has been called Romney's evil genius, commiserated with his friend in an absurd poem, which only deepened the gloom of the neurotic painter. Fortunately it was not of long duration, for Emma appeared at his studio a few days later, and treated him with so much affection as an old and revered friend, and was so eager to resume her sittings, that there was no possible excuse for the idea of any "coldness."

"When she arrived to sit she seemed more friendly than she had been, and I began a picture of her as a present to her mother. I was very successful with it, for it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted over her yet." With these words and others, showing Emma's cordiality to him, Romney hastened to show Hayley that his poem need not have been written after all.

So Emma at last became Lady Hamilton, as she had threatened Greville she would, when he abandoned her in what now seemed the distant past. She was radiantly happy, and London Society was excited and enchanted by the beauty and charm, the singing and acting, of the British Ambassador's wife. The director of the opera offered her two thousand pounds a year, with a share in the profits, if she would engage with him, but Sir William made it the opportunity for a *bon mot*, and said, with a pleasant smile, that he had engaged her for life. One little trouble alone broke the happiness of this time in London. Queen Charlotte, who had heard many rumours about her past life, refused to receive her at Court. But otherwise, London had made much fuss of her, and she left for Italy again with her husband, with the good wishes and congratulations of all their friends. Her reception in Naples as the wife of the Ambassador, and her own state of mind, are best described in her own words as she wrote them to Romney on one of the last days of the year 1791.

"My dear friend," she said, "I have the pleasure to inform

you that we arrived safe at Naples. I have been receved with open arms by all the Neapolitans of both sexes, by all the foreigners of every distinction. I have been presented to the Queen of Naples by her own desire. She has shown me all sorts of kind and affectionate attentions. In short, I am the happiest woman in the world. Sir William is fonder of me every day, and I hope he will have no cause to repent what he has done, for I feel so grateful to him, that I think I shall never be able to make him amends for his goodness to me. But why do I tell you this? You know me enough. You was the first dear friend I opened my heart to. You ought to know me, for you have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days. You have known me in my poverty and prosperity, and I had no occasion to have liv'd for years in poverty and distress if I had not felt something of virtue in my mind. O, my dear friend, for a time I own, through distress, my virtue was vanquish'd, but my sense of virtue was not overcome. How gratefull now then do I feel to my dear, dear husband, that as restored peace to my mind, that as given me honor, rank, and what is more, innocence and happiness. Rejoice with me, my dear sir, my friend, my more than father. Believe me, I am still that same Emma you knew me. If I could for a moment forget what I was, I ought to suffer."

Once more a new chapter in Emma's life had begun, and, as Lady Hamilton and the friend of Queen Caroline of Naples, she reached a position that must have seemed a whole lifetime removed from the days when she was the poor little nursery-maid of Dr. Budd in the City of London.

Chapter V.

WHEN Emma returned to Naples as Lady Hamilton, she attained a position not only of the highest social influence, but also, as time went on, one of considerable political importance. Queen Maria Caroline, who had formerly held aloof from the Ambassador's mistress, now gave to the Ambassador's wife her cordial friendship, and later on her intimate confidence. There were reasons, apart from Emma's fascination, why the Queen of the Two Sicilies should be gracious to Lady Hamilton. The Revolution in France had burst forth in a tempest of human passion, before which the old régime of feudal tyranny had been shattered, and all the old fetters of social caste and creed had been broken by the new spirit of democracy. Queen Maria's sister, the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, and her brother-in-law, King Louis XVI., were made the scapegoats of a system which was not of their fashioning, and on the scaffold paid with their own blood the penalty of their predecessors' immorality and cruelty. The falling of their heads into the basket of the guillotine, a basket loaded daily with a bloody harvesting of fair and noble fruit, resounded over Europe, and the thrones of other nations trembled with the ominous warning of a social earthquake. The spirit of Democracy, a spirit of hope and liberty to those who had been the slaves of feudalism, a hydra-headed, bloodthirsty, and ferocious monster to those who had been born in pride and bred in luxury, aroused the latent passions of humanity, not in France alone, but in many countries of Europe where the pomp of Courts, and the glitter of a wealthy aristocracy were contrasted with the poverty

LADY HAMILTON ("THE SPINSTRESS")
BY GEORGE ROMNEY.

and squalor of the people who produced the wealth, but did not share it. In spite of a political and democratic tyranny not less cruel for a time than that of the old régime, and when afterwards the young Napoleon rose like a new god of battles upon the ruins of the old dynasty; in spite of a military autocracy, more dangerous to the welfare of the people than the Sovereign power of their old Kings, the watchword of France, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," rung like a trumpet call through Europe, so that the ramparts of mediævalism were in peril of falling like the walls of Jericho. Italy, as well as the other nations, heard the call to liberty, and to the Court of Naples the murmurings and rumblings of neighbouring Vesuvius were symbolical of the smouldering fires in the hearts of the Neapolitan people. Ferdinand of Naples was doubtless indifferent to all such signs of eruption. He was one of those stupid, easy-tempered, self-indulgent men, who, so long as they can satisfy their animal appetites, and get sufficient entertainment to prevent the occasional boredom of life, do not trouble their heads about signs of the times or gloomy portals. Ferdinand was a *fainéant* king. The business of the State, that is to say the collection of taxes to pay for his luxury, he left to his Ministers, who might rob or oppress the people as much as they liked, provided they gave him plenty of pocket money. The most serious work of his life was hunting wild boars and other game in his dominions, and his highest ideal was to be a good sportsman. For this reason he had a great admiration for the British Ambassador, Sir William Hamilton, who was also a good shot, and a pleasant companion on a hunting expedition.

Queen Maria Caroline was of a different temperament. She held in a firm grasp the helm of State which her Royal husband was so perfectly willing to relinquish to her, and, as her woman's wit was quick to see the signs of coming danger, she was not less astute to cultivate friends who would be her best defence when

the danger came. She was certainly not blind to the fact that on the small stage of Naples the drama of the French Revolution might be played out in miniature. There were the same contrasts in society, the same type of idle, vicious aristocracy preying upon a down-trodden and despairing peasantry. Already the "new ideas" had infected the population with the poisonous bacillus of Liberty. The democrats, or Jacobins, as they were called, formed a strong and steadily increasing party converted to the Napoleonic ideal by Garat, the French Ambassador and spy, who was steadily though secretly at work undermining the foundations of the throne. So much the Queen learnt clearly enough from her own spies and secret agents. Worse still, the poison was operating not only among the mob, but was spreading into the ranks of the nobles, many of whom were plotting to set up a Republic upon the model of France. But Queen Maria Caroline had greater strength, and less womanliness, than her sister, Marie Antoinette. She was determined to take a lesson from the tragic fate of that sister, and to deal with revolutionaries with little mercy. Swiftly and relentlessly the leaders of the Jacobin movement were arrested and thrown into prison, and there they would have rotted to death if, at a later date, the Queen had not been forced to liberate them as "an act of clemency" by the threatened violence of their followers. But as history was being quickly made in those years, when Napoleon's sun was rising over the battlefields of Europe, Queen Maria Caroline realised with ever growing conviction that to one nation alone must she turn for protection, not only from her own subjects, but from the relentless hand of the Corsican, whose eyes were already turned towards the Two Sicilies. England alone, of all the countries of Europe, had successfully defied the French Eagle. England's supremacy of the sea was the only power that could save the Court of Naples from being swept into the limbo of wrecked kingdoms. It was, therefore, a matter of

high policy, as well as, no doubt, one of personal attraction, which encouraged the Queen of Naples to establish the most intimate and friendly relations with Lady Hamilton. Emma's connexion with the Vice-Chamberlain, the Hon. Charles Greville, with whom she maintained a regular correspondence, enabled her not only to obtain private information as to the feeling of the English Court regarding the situation at Naples, but also to keep open a secret channel of communication with England by which she could impress her personality upon the English King and his advisers, with whom Greville was, of course, on friendly terms. Then, as the wife of the British Ambassador, Lady Hamilton formed a convenient medium by which the Queen could communicate with him without arousing the suspicion of the French party in Naples, and without even the knowledge of her own Ministers, in whom she had but little faith. Finally, Sir William was flattered and pleased at any attention shown to his wife, and his loyalty to the interests of the King and Queen, so necessary now, when they relied upon his friendship as the best security of their kingdom, was assured by the Royal favours lavished upon Lady Hamilton herself. All these reasons combined to make Emma a person of high importance at the Court of Naples, and enabled her to bask to the fullest extent in the sunshine of the Queen's indulgence.

Hardly a day passed without Lady Hamilton spending some hours in the Queen's presence. Horses, carriages and grooms from the Royal stables were put at her disposal, and a Royal dinner party was never considered complete unless she graced it with her beauty. When Sir William Hamilton fell ill—and he was now, as old age came upon him, frequently troubled with bilious disorders—the Queen sent sympathetic messages many times a day to Emma, and actually offered to relieve her in her arduous duties of nursing. Upon Sir William's recovery from one of these illnesses, the Royal

Palace at Caserta was placed at the disposal of Lady Hamilton, so that she might take her husband there for a change of scene during his convalescence.

Emma's life during these years was very busy and brilliant. No longer did the great ladies of the English aristocracy hold aloof from her as a person of doubtful reputation, but at her house at Caserta she constantly entertained such distinguished visitors as the Duchess of Ancaster, the Devonshire Family, Lord and Lady Cholmondeley, Lord and Lady Palmerston, Lady Plymouth, Lady Spencer, Lady Bessborough, Sir George and Lady Webster, and Lord Bristol. These ladies were indebted to their hostess, not only for the pleasantest hospitality and entertainment, but also for their introductions to the Queen of Naples, who was always gracious to Lady Hamilton's friends. "Our house," said Emma in a letter to Greville, "has been like an inn this winter, as we have had partys that have come either to see the environs, or have been invited to Court." Although Sir William and Lady Hamilton had taken up their residence for some time at their country house at Caserta, they drove into Naples almost every day, where they entertained on a large scale. Fifty people often sat down to dinner at the town house, and afterwards there were balls attended by three or four hundred people of high rank, so that usually it was in the small hours of the morning before the Hamiltons returned to Caserta for sleep and rest. But they had to be up again in good time in order to attend the twelve o'clock meal at the Court, where the Royal Family dined early. On evenings when the Hamiltons were not entertaining themselves they generally remained at the Palace, where they were treated *en famille*. At such times Lady Hamilton had long and intimate talks, tête-à-tête, with the Queen, and afterwards there was music in the private apartments. "Yesterday," Emma writes on June 2nd, 1793, "the King and me sang duetts three hours. It was but bad, *as he sings like a King*."

It says much for a woman of such humble up-bringing that, in spite of her intimacy with the Queen, she does not seem to have aroused any jealousy or hostility among the other ladies of the Court, nor did she ever endanger the favour shown to her by any undue familiarity in public. "The Ministers' wives are very fond of me," she wrote in the same letter quoted above, "as they see I have no pretentions; nor do I abuse of Her Majesty's goodness, and she observed that the other night at Court at Naples, [when] we had a drawing-room . . . I had been with the Queen the night before alone, *en famille*, laughing and singing, &c., &c., but at the drawing-room I kept my distance, and pay'd the Queen as much respect as though I had never seen her before, which pleased her very much. But she shewed me much distinction that night, and told me several times how much she admired my good conduct. I only tell you this to shew and convince you I shall never change, but always be simple and natural." There can be no doubt that Lady Hamilton was just as "simple and natural" as Emma Hart had been. It was about this time that she wrote to Greville on behalf of her old grandmother, and many passages in her letters, both now and later, show that her love for her mother was as strong as ever in spite of her change of fortune. Her charming naturalness, her spontaneous gaiety, and her simple delight in her own beauty and talents disarmed the criticism of ladies who would have resented any haughtiness or pretension on her part, while her sincere affection and dutiful regard for Sir William enabled her to behave with a liberty and unrestraint of manner towards the men who crowded her salon which would have been injudicious, to say the least, in a woman whose reputation was not secure. Her popularity was so great that it was above the prejudices of political parties, and although the Jacobins had no friendliness for the English as a nation, regarding them as the protectors of oppression, they had, both now and later, when

political passion ran very high, a real regard and admiration for the wife of the British Ambassador.

Lady Hamilton's letters of this time reveal her delight in her new powers and distinction. She remarks to Greville upon her "very extraordinary situation" at the Court, and prides herself upon having "got into politicks." She is never tired of praising the character of the Queen, hoping, no doubt, that her artless eulogies will be repeated by Greville to high personages in England. "If you could know her as I do," she writes to Greville, "how you would adore her! for she is the first woman in the world; her talents are superior to every woman's in the world; and her heart is most excellent and strictly good and upright. But you'll say it is because we are such friends that I am partial; but ask everybody that knows her. She loves England, and is attached to our Ministry, and wishes the continuation of the war as the only means to end that abominable French Council."

The Queen herself placed implicit trust in the discretion of Lady Hamilton, and on several occasions placed in her hands secret despatches containing private information upon the political intrigues of France with European Powers, in order that Emma might show them to Sir William, for transmission to his Government. On more than one occasion these despatches were given to Lady Hamilton before the King of Naples, to whom they were addressed, had heard of their arrival, and it is evident that the Queen knew she was playing dangerous cards in handling the private correspondence of the King in this manner. "I only beg of him" (that is Sir William Hamilton) "not to compromise me," she wrote to the Ambassador's wife, when enclosing a cypher letter from Spain, "which must be returned before twelve o'clock so that the King may have it." Surely there has been no stranger thing in history than the way in which a woman who had begun her life as a domestic drudge in London became the confidante of

State secrets of the highest importance to the destiny of Europe!

Considerable controversy has arisen as to the actual contents of the cypher letter mentioned above. Dr. Pettigrew, the early biographer of Lady Hamilton, declares it to have announced the intention of the King of Spain to join hands with France, the early news of which enabled the British Ministry to send orders to Sir John Jervis to strike an immediate blow against the Spanish fleet. Dr. Pettigrew supplemented this information by a romantic story of the way in which Lady Hamilton managed to prevail upon the Queen to steal the document from the King's despatch bag, and to let her copy it for transmission to the British Government. There seems no doubt now that this touch of romance was purely imaginary, and that the document was sent to Lady Hamilton upon the Queen's initiative. But Nelson himself always firmly believed that the news of the Spanish King's alliance with France first reached England through the medium of Lady Hamilton, although he did not attribute Sir John Jervis's victory to the immediate result of this information. Whatever may be the exact facts of the case, and no documents in existence are able to decide this particular point, it is clear that Lady Hamilton was enabled to transmit important information to the British Government from time to time, owing to her intimacy with the Queen, and a letter written to Greville in 1796 shews that she then regarded herself as having earned the gratitude of the nation by important services.

"We have not time to write to you," she said in a hurried note on September 21st of that year, "as we have been three days and three nights writing, to send by this courier, letters of *consequence* for our Government. They ought to be grateful to Sir William and *myself in particular*, as my situation at this Court *is very extraordinary*, and what no person has yet arrived at. But one has no thanks, and I am almost sick of grandeur."

One must go back now to an incident in 1793, which, though she

knew it not at the time, was to have the most potent influence upon her future life. This was the visit of a young naval officer, named Captain Horatio Nelson, sent with despatches to Sir William Hamilton. At that time Nelson was without fame, and known only to the Admiralty as one of those gallant and promising young men, of whom there was then no dearth in the Navy. Nevertheless upon his arrival at Naples, Sir William Hamilton perceived in him some characteristics of future greatness which marked him out from among the other naval officers who put in from time to time at the Italian port. For Nelson, who was thirty-four years of age, had an insatiable desire for fame, and a consciousness of his own genius, which gave to his personality an impressiveness of a different type to the ordinary characteristics of the English seaman. His frail body was animated by an extraordinary energy, and in his large restless eyes there burned a fire that shewed the spirit of the man. Sir William prophesied to Lady Hamilton that he would one day rise to a high position, and he treated him with a respect and a flattering hospitality beyond what was due to an officer of his moderate rank. We do not know what were Lady Hamilton's sentiments at that time towards the man who afterwards became her hero and her lover. In none of her letters at this time does she write a word that might be interpreted as a foreboding of the fate that should bind her to that great, little man, in an immortality of fame. On Nelson's side it was certainly not a case of love at first sight. He was married, and undoubtedly at that time happily married, and he only felt a sense of gratitude to the beautiful wife of the Ambassador who had shown so much generous hospitality to him. The captain of the *Agamemnon*, who had been feasted and housed in Naples, not only at Embassy balls, but at the Court by the King and Queen, was recalled to stern duty by the news of "a French man-of-war and three sail" anchored off Sardinia, and thus, with pleasant memories of his

DY HAMILTON (*SENSIBILITY*)
GEORGE KOMITY
kind permission of the owner Lord Burton

reception, left the place to which, five years later, he would return with all the triumph of a conquering hero.

During these five years the Hamiltons heard the name of Nelson too often to forget the slight, delicate, ardent man who had been their honoured guest, though as yet he still achieved nothing but the promise of greatness. But in many a sea duel, in many a dangerous cutting-out adventure in the boats, in the vanguard of many a heroic battle with the fleets of France and Spain, Nelson was mentioned in despatches for his gallantry and daring and swift resource. But during those same years a greater name than Nelson's had dominated the imagination of the world. Napoleon had been working out his destiny, and on the chessboard of Europe he had played for kingdoms, with kings as pawns. There is no need even to outline the great Napoleonic drama, but a few words must be said as to the situation of Naples in 1798. Ferdinand had been forced to enter into a treaty of alliance with France, much against his will, and the leaders of the Jacobin movement, who had been imprisoned four years earlier on the charge of plotting against the lives of the King and Queen, were now released with a free pardon. But the danger of the Neapolitan Kingdom was now extreme. The revolutionary spirit was stronger than ever among the people, and many of the nobles; and Ferdinand and Maria Caroline knew that they held their crowns by an uncertain tenure. They learnt also that Napoleon was only 'biding his time to dethrone them and make the Two Sicilies a Republic State under the dominion of France. In the spring of 1798 news was brought that his fleets were already in motion for a descent upon Sicily and Naples, and saw their safety depended absolutely upon the succour of the British Navy.

It was Lady Hamilton who appealed to the British Government for help. She wrote an imploring letter to Earl St. Vincent, setting forth the extreme peril of the Neapolitan Court, and

begging him to send a fleet to their rescue. This letter was answered by the Admiral in the most chivalrous terms, addressed to "The Patroness of the British Navy," telling her that he was sending "a knight of superior prowess" to the succour of their Sicilian Majesties. This "knight" was Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, who was commissioned to proceed in quest of the armament preparing at Toulon and Genoa, the object whereof appeared to be an attack upon Naples or Sicily. "Upon falling in with the armament, or any part of it," he was instructed to use his utmost endeavour "to sink, burn, and destroy it."

Nelson firmly believed for a time that the object of Napoleon's great fleet was to make an attack on Sicily, as his Admiral had suggested, and he sent assuring messages to Sir William and Lady Hamilton that he would defend the two Sicilies with his utmost energy. But he did not find it easy to come in touch with the French battleships, and his own fleet was dispersed in a heavy storm. Afterwards he found that the enemy had given him the slip, and he was entirely baffled as to Napoleon's destination. He swept up and down the Mediterranean, and with full sail hurried away to Egypt, Syria, and Asia, and then back again in eager search, without once catching a glimpse of the French line of battle, or obtaining any authentic information as to their whereabouts. It was now absolutely necessary for him to enter and victual his ships in Sicilian ports; but as this would be in defiance of Ferdinand's treaty of alliance with France, he sent Captain Trowbridge to Naples to obtain formal permission for this privilege. The episode now occurred upon which Lady Hamilton based her claims, in later years, for a pension from the British Government, and one that Nelson himself referred to, in the clearest and most emphatic terms, in the famous codicil to his will, recommending Lady Hamilton to the gratitude of the nation on account of her great and patriotic services. When all the romantic

and imaginary details have been put on one side, it is clear that Lady Hamilton used her great influence with the Queen to obtain the necessary authority for Nelson to get fresh supplies for his fleet at Syracuse and other Sicilian ports. That she had any great difficulty in persuading the Queen is extremely doubtful. It is quite possible that Ferdinand may have been in fear and trembling of Napoleon's wrath, should he violate the treaty with France, but Queen Maria Caroline herself was quite clear-headed enough to see that her only hope lay in the success of Nelson over the French fleet, and that in the event of his defeat nothing whatever would save the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from the revolutionary party in their own State, or from the ruthless hands of Napoleon. It was, therefore, her only true policy to give every possible facility to Admiral Nelson, especially as, if she did not grant the required permission, he was quite strong enough to take by force what he asked for so civilly. Nevertheless, nothing can rob Lady Hamilton of the honour of having ardently, and with the sincerest patriotism, represented to the Queen of Naples the claims of the British Navy upon her good services, and of having obtained for Nelson, promptly, and in the clearest possible words, the permit which he considered so necessary to his success.

Nelson's belief in the importance of this service is not to be doubted. "The British fleet, under my command," he wrote on board the *Victory*, a few hours before his death, "could never have returned the second time to Egypt had not Lady Hamilton's influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse that he was to encourage the fleet being supplied with everything, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse and received every supply, went to Egypt, and destroyed the French fleet."

If Nelson himself believed his victory at the Nile to be due in no small measure to the way in which Lady Hamilton had acted

in the interests of her nation, it seems a cruel injustice to the memory of that remarkable woman to refuse her any claim to honour in regard to this service, because the details of it have been too highly coloured and exaggerated by some of her biographers. Perhaps Nelson himself may have read too much into the episode—for one can hardly believe that he would not have obtained what he wanted at Syracuse, if permission had been withheld—but, at least, we may acknowledge the patriotic and admirable behaviour of Lady Hamilton at that critical time.

As all the world knows, Nelson at last discovered the French fleet in Aboukir Bay, and at "the Battle of the Nile," as it is now called, achieved one of the most brilliant and heroic victories in the history of naval warfare. When the Admiral's despatches were brought to Naples, the English party and the Royalists were delirious with joy, and the Jacobins became very quiet and subdued. To Queen Maria Caroline, and to Lady Hamilton, whose warm and emotional nature made her feel the liveliest sympathy for the Royal family, with whose interests also her own future was bound up, the news came as an almost painful shock of relief. They had been haunted by a great fear. For months they had been living, as it were, on the edge of a crater, which might belch forth its fiery lava of human passion and engulf them in the horrors of revolution and foreign occupation. Nelson had been their only hope. To Lady Hamilton, as well as to the Queen, the figure of Nelson was radiant with the glamour of a Christian hero against the powers of darkness. His name had been devoutly spoken in their passionate prayers; they had prayed to the God of battles to strengthen his right arm, so that he might shatter the great enemy of mankind. Such language seems extravagant in these days, but it is not easy now to realise the dread terror inspired by the genius of Napoleon over the minds of those who were opposed to his ambitions. When, therefore, the great tidings

of Nelson's victory were brought to Naples, the usually calm Queen lost her self-control and gave way to hysterical tears of joy, while Lady Hamilton was carried away by her emotion. It must be confessed that the fair Emma was nothing if not theatrical, and her characteristic led her to take part in an exhibition which would seem rather startling in these days to the wife of a British Ambassador. She drove through the streets of Naples, with the two naval officers who had carried the despatches, wearing a band round her forehead, emblazoned with gold letters spelling "Nelson and Victory!" by which she announced the great news to the populace. But this demonstration was as nothing compared to the emotion with which she greeted the Admiral himself when he came in triumph to Naples. Upon going on board his flagship, the *Vanguard*, Lady Hamilton embraced the one-armed, one-eyed, hero in a kind of ecstasy of gratitude, and exclaiming "O God, is it possible?" fell into a sudden swoon.

"She fell into my arm," wrote Nelson to his wife, "more dead than alive. Tears, however, soon set matters to rights." She was able to hide her emotion during the arrival of the King, who stepped on board Nelson's ship with the greeting of "Deliverer and Preserver," but Nelson was more touched by the passionate homage of the beautiful woman than by the grateful compliment of Ferdinand.

The Admiral was weak with wounds and fever, and at the British Embassy Lady Hamilton tended him with devotion. But he was not allowed to rest and recuperate quietly in Naples. Tremendous festivities were arranged to do him honour. The King and Queen held great assemblies at the Court, where all the Neapolitan nobles, even those, no doubt, who were secretly in sympathy with the French, paid the most flattering and outwardly enthusiastic tributes to the British Admiral. Sir William Hamilton was not behindhand, and spent a fortune upon a fête in honour

of Nelson's fortieth birthday, at which nearly two thousand people were present. But Nelson, thorough Englishman in his instincts and piety, felt no affection towards all the smirking and grimacing people who overwhelmed him with sickening praise and heated adulation. He saw through their brilliant uniforms into their false and vicious hearts, and soon discovered that all their pomp and luxury and gaiety covered corrupt and squalid natures. In coarse, sailor language, he dismissed them, in a letter to Earl St. Vincent, as "fiddlers and poets, whores and scoundrels." Only one woman seems set above these gilded popinjays on a pedestal of purity and noble character. Startled and touched by the extraordinary emotion of Lady Hamilton, whose perfect beauty and grace lifted such emotion above any hint of ludicrous effect, the Admiral, never insensitive to woman's charms, although spotlessly pure hitherto in all his relationship with women, felt himself drawn more and more towards her.

Her natural simplicity of manner was sweet and refreshing contrasted with the painted and artificial witcheries of the Neapolitan ladies around her. Her gift for high sentiments, and the noble dignity of manner which she undoubtedly possessed at this time, perhaps from close association with a queen, and also from companionship with the many great English ladies who had received her hospitality at Caserta, deeply impressed the simple sailor, whose long service at sea had not allowed him to see much of the fair sex. At this time, at least, during the first few weeks he spent at Naples, Nelson's feelings towards Lady Hamilton were certainly devoid of passion, and were only based upon a tender and reverent esteem for a lady who had shown him great kindness and a beautiful homage to his genius. Quite candidly, and without any *arrière pensée*, he was able to write to his wife about the gracious woman who had nursed him.

"I hope some day," he wrote, "to introduce you to Lady Hamilton. She is one of the very best women in this world; she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's, to me is more than I can express; I am in their house, and I may now tell you it required all the kindness of my friends to set me up."

What were Lady Hamilton's sentiments towards him at this early period of their intimacy we can only guess. It must be remembered that Sir William Hamilton was now an old, a prematurely old man, and although she had loved him, and still loved him, grateful for all his kindness to her, there had never been any romance of passion in that love. But now in her own house was a man, a hero, adored by England, worshipped as a hero by every English maid whose heart might be moved with hero-worship. This great man, weak in body but strong in spirit, a knightly St. George who had sorely wounded the Dragon of France, and was ready and eager for further fights, looked to her as his comforter and healer, and unburdened his heart to her as a woman who could understand; he told her his secrets and his hopes as a woman worthy of the highest trust, and, to her who had been hardly treated in the past, who had been scorned as a frail creature, who had indeed been guilty of weakness and sin, he expressed a chivalrous reverence, and gave the homage of his great genius as to a woman of extraordinary virtue and high nobility of soul. One cannot wonder if already Lady Hamilton was stirred with dangerous emotion, and troubled with the first warnings of a seductive passion. To have the homage of a Nelson, whom all the world applauded, was an exultant thought to a woman who had sprung from the humblest rank of life, and who had known much of man's patronage, but little of man's reverence.

This dangerous intimacy between an emotional woman and a

sensitive man was interrupted for awhile by Nelson's departure from Naples to an attack upon Malta, where the French were in possession, and by many exciting events which took place during his absence.

The defeat of the French fleet had aroused a sudden and fresh outburst of martial enthusiasm among the Neapolitan loyalists, and strengthened the hands of the Royal Family. The treaty with France was renounced, and Garat, the French emissary in Naples, was packed off to his own country, and an army of nearly forty thousand men was raised by Ferdinand, and, under an Austrian General, named Mack, took the field against the French veterans in Italy, full of enthusiasm in their own powers, and with the highest hopes of gaining glory at a cheap price. But glory does not come to them who are not prepared to pay for it with dear blood. The Neapolitans were better as "fiddlers and poets" than as fighting men, and not many weeks after they had set out in gallant array, and all the glitter and panoply of war, they were beaten back by the French troops of far inferior numbers, ignominiously, disastrously, and most ingloriously. The tables were turned. The Jacobin party in Naples, who had been lying very low when Nelson's ships had been in the harbour, now sprung up with renewed audacity. The Revolution which had been long smouldering broke out into red flames. Murder stalked the streets, and popular riots threatened the Royalists with all the horrors of a Neapolitan reign of terror. The Royal Family was in extreme peril, and Queen Maria Caroline, who had shown the strongest mind in the past, became panic-stricken, while Ferdinand, *le roi fainéant* in time of peace, revealed some signs of courage in the hour of peril. He was for staying and defending his Court against the revolutionists with the aid of his bodyguard and the brave "lazzaroni," or beggars who had lived lazily on his charity and were now ready to fight, standing

LADY HAMILTON (EMMA HART) BY ROMNEY.

[illegible]

for the privileges of beggary against the champions of a political liberty that would probably deprive them of the daily bread for which they did not need to work. Maria Caroline, however, remembered the fate of her sister, Marie Antoinette, and she had no ambition to gain the crown of martyrdom. So Ferdinand was persuaded to escape from Naples and seek safety and flight across the water in Palermo.

Strange as it may seem, the person upon whom the Royal Family relied the most for their rescue from their perilous situation was Lady Hamilton. This was the most romantic episode of her remarkable career, and never before or later did she rise to such a height of real heroism; to her activity and discretion the King and Queen certainly owed their successful flight with all their treasure. Never having taken part in politics, and being unsuspected as an "intrigante" by the Jacobin party, she was able to receive private communications from the Queen without arousing suspicion. Although the Court was surrounded with spies, it never seemed to occur to the revolutionists that the constant messages passing from the Palace to the British Embassy were of any serious consequence. Yet, as a matter of fact, to Lady Hamilton there were secretly conveyed many cases of good red gold, ducats with the Royal stamp, and all the precious crown jewels. Night after night these cases of treasure were carried by trusty servants to the British Embassy, for consignment by Lady Hamilton to Admiral Nelson's flagship which had again entered the harbour of Naples. Lady Hamilton faithfully carried out the Queen's wishes regarding those precious "stones," and kept Nelson in touch with the arrangements for the escape of the Royal Family. For many days Lady Hamilton was busy also in packing the art treasures of Sir William, which were also to be put on board one of the British vessels in the harbour, and in conveying secret warnings to his English friends that the time was at hand when

they must leave the city of Naples. Then, one dark night, the Ambassador's wife joined the Royal Family at the Palace, where they were all waiting in readiness for an adventure which was not without the elements of tragedy and peril. But Lady Hamilton cheered them with her courage and assurances, and at the appointed hour they moved silently out of the Royal residence and made their way down a long subterraneous passage to a cove off which the *Vanguard* was lying-to. Here Nelson was waiting to receive the fugitives, and they were conveyed on board his ship, while the revolutionaries in the city were in absolute ignorance of what was taking place. The voyage to Palermo was a perilous one. A terrific hurricane broke over the British ships, and it seemed as if they would founder every minute. Poor Sir William Hamilton, bold as a hunter of wild boars, completely lost his nerve before the danger of the storm, and sat in his cabin with a revolver in each hand, vowing that he would blow his brains out rather than drown like a dog. But Lady Hamilton showed the utmost heroism, and her cheering words of hope, and ministering hands, were very welcome to the King and Queen and the Royal children. One of these little ones, the youngest infant, was seized with illness brought on by sea-sickness, and breathed out its poor little life in her arms. This tragic event filled the Royal Family with the most gloomy foreboding, and Ferdinand regretted for the time at least that he had ever been prevailed on to leave his palace at Naples. At last, however, they were landed safely at Palermo, and here, after a little while, both the King and Queen recovered their spirits, and their Court life resumed once more its ordinary routine of careless luxury and brilliant frivolity.

At Naples, when the flight of the Sovereign and his Consort was discovered, the revolutionary party assumed the reins of government until French troops took possession of the city, when

the short-lived Neapolitan Republic, after the massacre of many thousands of loyal Lazzaroni, was established. But it was not long before the most ardent of the Neapolitan firebrands repented of their bargain, and a strong reaction set in. The French Generals and the agent of the Republican Convention imposed an enormous tax on the citizens of Naples and the peasants of the surrounding country, and robbed the city of all its treasures with a shameless greed and rapacity never surpassed by French soldiers who made booty a privilege of victory. It soon became evident to Ferdinand that he had very little to fear from his own subjects if the British fleet could drive out the French army from his Neapolitan territories, and he was confident that, with Nelson's help, he could recover his kingdom. Admiral Nelson was not the man to avoid any encounter with the French, by land or sea, and his instructions at this time from the British Government gave him a perfectly free hand to crush the new-formed Republic, which owed whatever power it might have to French arms and influence, to expel the enemy from all the fields, forts, and islands in their possession, and to reinstate King Ferdinand in his dominions.

After having chased and defeated a French squadron, and thus disappointed the great hope of reinforcements that had been cherished by the Neapolitan Republic, Admiral Nelson, whose flag was now on the *Foudroyant*, returned to the Bay of Naples, carrying on board King Ferdinand himself, from whom he received full powers of action over his Neapolitan subjects, and accompanied also by Sir William and Lady Hamilton, the former, of course in his capacity as British Ambassador, the latter for future services as an interpreter. At the time several important forts which had fallen into French hands were being besieged by a combined force of British, Russian, and Turkish allies, together with a small army of Neapolitan loyalists under the

leadership of an ecclesiastic named Cardinal Ruffo. Among these forts were the castles Ovo and Nuovo, which harboured many of the most prominent and distinguished Neapolitan revolutionaries, and a difficult situation arose when Cardinal Ruffo established a truce on favourable terms with the defenders, and obtained a cessation of hostilities preparatory to the surrender of the forts with all honours and privileges.

The naval officer in command of the British force had been induced by Cardinal Ruffo to put his signature to the surrender, but before the capitulation could be accomplished the terms of surrender were repudiated by King Ferdinand and Admiral Nelson, who considered them a shameful concession, and invalid without their sanction. A stormy scene occurred in Nelson's cabin, on board the *Foudroyant*. Cardinal Ruffo, speaking passionately in Italian—not one word of which could Nelson understand, but which was interpreted by Lady Hamilton who was present at this historic interview—demanded, pleaded, and implored, that his treaty should be respected and his honour upheld. Fiercely and piteously by turns he endeavoured to persuade Nelson that by all the recognised rules of war, as well as by the faith of gentlemen, the terms of surrender which he had granted to the beleagured garrison should be carried out to the letter. But Admiral Nelson sat impassively with a stern face, turning a deaf ear to the tornado in Italian, but listening silently to Lady Hamilton's quieter rendering of the Cardinal's harangue. Nothing would alter his determination to repudiate a treaty arranged without the sanction of the King, and of himself, as Admiral of the Fleet, and Ferdinand's plenipotentiary. At last, baffled at every point, Cardinal Ruffo left in a rage, and eventually the garrisons were compelled to surrender unconditionally, and "the rebels," as Nelson wrote afterwards, "came out of the castles to be hanged or otherwise disposed of as their Sovereign thought proper."

Shortly afterwards another episode occurred which gave a handle to Nelson's enemies, and afterwards to the slanderers of Lady Hamilton. This was the execution of a distinguished Neapolitan rebel, named Prince Carracciolo, who, after a trial by court-martial of his own countrymen, was condemned to death and hanged on the fore-yard-arm of the *Minerva*. It has been alleged with the most monstrous inaccuracy and injustice that Lady Hamilton used her influence to prevent Nelson from exercising the prerogative of mercy, and that she gloated with a fiendish delight over the death of this unhappy nobleman, actually being rowed round the *Minerva* to get a good look at the body swinging from the yard-arm. All this is a tissue of lies, for Lady Hamilton was not present at the execution, and, as a letter from the Queen of Naples proves, she was much distressed by the horror and tragedy of this event. As for Nelson himself, he had very little to do with the execution, merely giving orders for the court-martial of this traitor by his own countrymen, and authorising the sentence to be carried out. There is not the slightest doubt that the Prince fully deserved his fate, for, after having feigned the greatest loyalty to the Royal Family, he had taken up arms against his Sovereigns and become one of the most prominent leaders of the revolution.

The short lived Neapolitan Republic was now crushed out of existence, the French were bundled out of Naples and the surrounding country, and the rebels paid the heavy price of an unsuccessful insurrection. It must be admitted that Queen Maria Caroline, who now held the reins of power again, her husband reverting to his former carelessness of sovereign authority, did not show much, if any, womanly mercy towards the revolutionary leaders who were now repenting in prison. "Off with their heads" was the tenour of her despatches from Palermo, and a bloody equivalent was taken for the assassinations

committed by the men who had enjoyed such a brief triumph.

Lady Hamilton, whose influence over Nelson and the Queen was fully known, became the great hope of the unhappy prisoners. Her warm heart and womanly feelings were appealed to by many of the rebels who had gloomy forebodings of their fate. Letters poured in upon her filled with the most piteous and heart-rending prayers for her merciful intervention, and expressing the utmost confidence in her great power to moderate the punishment of these offenders, if she would but speak in their favour. It was an extraordinary position for a woman who had risen from such a humble origin, but although the rebels did not exaggerate her sensibility, they overrated the extent of her influence. Queen Maria Caroline was determined to wreak her vengeance to the full upon those who had conspired against her husband's crown, and however much affection she felt for the wife of the British Ambassador, she was not prepared to allow her any authority over the lives and fate of the delinquents. Nevertheless, Lady Hamilton did her best on behalf of those who appealed to her charity, and if in most cases they suffered the extreme penalty of their rebellion, it was not for want of mercy in the heart of the Ambassador's wife. In another way she became the Lady Bountiful of the Neapolitan people, for she had the privilege of distributing large sums of money sent to her by the Queen for the relief of the unfortunate families who had suffered from the scenes of violence in their city. Afterwards Lady Hamilton received £9,000 from the Queen's privy purse for distribution among the Maltese, who had also suffered much during the French occupation of their island. For all these services Lady Hamilton was rewarded by an honour which had never before been granted to a woman. Upon the suggestion of Nelson himself, the King conferred upon her the Order of the Cross of Malta. From the Queen she received a more

substantial recognition of her services. Upon her return to Palermo in Nelson's flagship with Sir William Hamilton and the King, the Queen received her in public with the most affectionate embraces, and placed round her neck a gold chain to which was suspended a miniature portrait of Maria Caroline herself, set with diamonds and gems forming the words " Eterna Gratitudine." Some days later the Queen sent her two coach-loads full of magnificent dresses worth several thousands of pounds, and a portrait of King Ferdinand studded with jewels and valued at a thousand guineas. Sir William Hamilton also received many valuable gifts from the Royal Family. Apart from the really great services that had been rendered by the Hamiltons, and especially by Lady Hamilton, to the King and Queen of Naples, they merited compensation for the very severe losses they had suffered on account of the revolution. Sir William's house at Caserta, on which he had lavished such large sums of money, had been looted and practically destroyed by the rebels and their French allies, and worse still, many of the precious art treasures collected during the course of many years by the Ambassador, and packed on board the *Colossus* at the time of their flight to Palermo, had been lost in the disastrous wreck of that vessel. The presents from the King and Queen, which made some amends for these grievous losses, were also parting gifts, and mementos of Sir William Hamilton's official connection with the Court of Naples. At the beginning of 1800, shortly after his return to Palermo in the *Foudroyant*, the Ambassador received the news of his recall to England. It did not come as a surprise to him, nor did he consider it as any censure on his official conduct. Old age had now come upon him with rapid strides, and he was a broken and enfeebled man. He had long complained to the Home Government that he was growing tired of his duties, and would be glad of a release from them. Nevertheless, it was with natural pangs that he found himself

compelled to terminate his official career, and receive his successor in office, the Honourable Arthur Paget. Lady Hamilton perhaps felt his recall more keenly. She could not but reflect that, as the wife of an Ambassador, she had enjoyed a higher dignity than she would have again when Sir William was only a private gentleman with diminished fortunes; and at this time, however, any gloomy thoughts which may have occurred to her were dispelled by the sunshine of Nelson's presence, and by the daily increasing knowledge that the great little Admiral depended upon her smiles and sympathy for happiness. Nelson, for his distinguished services as "Preserver of the two Sicilies," had received the Dukedom of Bronté from the grateful King, and had been created a peer of England as a reward for his victory at the Nile. While the Court was still at Palermo, before returning to Naples, he had not been idle, or become enervated by the love and passion which now undoubtedly possessed him. He had chased a French fleet and captured a great battleship called *Le Généreux*. But now his work was done for the time being in the Mediterranean, and he was free to return to England, and to his poor patient wife who was awaiting him so anxiously at home. It would have been better for him if he had made his homeward voyage without delay; but he lingered on, unwilling to sever himself from the company of the Hamiltons, and spent several weeks in cruising round Sicily and Malta with the Hamiltons on board his flagship. It was during these days, no doubt, that this intimacy with Lady Hamilton ripened into something warmer than Platonic friendship. Constantly in the company of the beautiful woman who had seemed to him "incomparable and divine," the impressionable suitor forgot the faith he had sworn to another woman whom he had once sincerely loved. There is no record of what took place during that cruise which so altered his relations to Lady Hamilton, and it is impossible to say upon whose side lay the burden of the fault

LADY HAMILTON BY ROMNEY

From the original painting

By kind permission of [illegible] The Earl of [illegible]

which is the gravest blemish upon the noble reputation of one of England's greatest heroes. Doubtless, under the blue sky and on the placid sea, this man of battles, and this woman of many weaknesses, became the victims of a passion which had begun in honour and mutual reverence, and was to end in a guilty and secret bond of body and soul. From the date of that fateful voyage, Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton became all in all to each other, and in that intimacy and communion, beautiful and ennobling if it had been founded upon moral law, they remained until death came between them.

Upon returning to Palermo at the end of May, 1800, Nelson was invited by the Queen to take her to Leghorn with her four children, and as the Hamiltons agreed to accompany them, *en route* for England, the Admiral was not loth to accept the Queen's proposition. Upon their arrival at Leghorn they found that place in a state of wild commotion owing to the approach of a French army, and the Queen's party found it discreet to leave the Royal Palace for the greater safety of *H.M.S. Alexander*, which was now flying Nelson's flag. The Queen decided to go to Vienna, and again Nelson and the Hamiltons were persuaded to accompany her. The journey was really a triumphant progress for the great Admiral, whose victory at the Nile had been the severest blow to Napoleon's ambitions; and the Hamiltons shared in the extraordinary demonstrations of homage. At every town where they stopped they were received with popular ovations and sumptuous fêtes, and upon their arrival at Vienna, the Austrian Court, including the Emperor and Empress and all the great nobles, arranged a long succession of festivities in their honour. Lady Hamilton was treated with as much respect as if she were a reigning Queen, and her marvellous beauty was the theme of everyone's conversation. For nearly a month they remained at Vienna, and then, on the 27th of September, 1800, the Hamiltons bade farewell to Maria Caroline with

whose fortunes their own had been so intimately associated, whose House they had served with a long fidelity, and with whom they had enjoyed a friendship of the most intimate and cordial character. Nelson still accompanied his friends, and on their way to Hamburg, where they expected to find a frigate to convey them to England, they stopped at Prague and Dresden, where they again experienced all the triumph of public ovation. Then at last, after ten days at Hamburg waiting for a vessel homeward bound, they crossed the sea and arrived at Great Yarmouth on the 6th of November. Even now Nelson could not tear himself away from the company of Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and the fellow travellers journeyed slowly to London, through towns where Nelson first learnt the love which the English people had for him, through villages where old men brought their little grandchildren to gaze on the great Admiral who had thrashed the French, through one long echoing cheer from English throats for the hero of the Nile. Thus they came to London, where they now separated, Sir William and Lady Hamilton to find a temporary dwelling-place in Grosvenor Square, where a friend had placed his home at their disposal, Lord Nelson to go to Nerot's Hotel, in King Street, where an anxious wife, who had heard many strange tales of his association with a fair enchantress, awaited him with a troubled and heavy heart.

The happiest and most brilliant days of Lady Hamilton's life were at an end. The years that were to follow in England were not without their hours of exultation and secret ecstasy, for the love of Nelson, who was to rise to great heights of fame, was a wonderful gift to a woman who craved for love, and was eager to share in the glory of her lover. But they were years also of feverish excitement, of constant anxiety, of disappointed ambition, and if we may read her character rightly, of secret shame. For the shadow of sin obscured the sunshine of a love that might have been so glorious, and in her heart Emma Hamilton knew that she had fallen again from the virtue which, in spite of her early lapses through ignorance and circumstance, she had always cherished.

Chapter VI.

LORD NELSON'S relations with his wife must have been exceedingly uncomfortable from the very first day of their meeting after so long an absence. It seems that Lady Nelson at first endeavoured to hide her feelings towards the woman for whom her husband showed such an extraordinary regard, and of whom many scandalous stories had no doubt reached her ears. Although Nelson himself, simple soul that he was, probably had not the least idea at this time that his liason with Lady Hamilton had become a matter of public gossip, it is certain that it already afforded a subject for malicious tongues and scandalous pens in London. Stories of the early years of the famous beauty's career, grossly exaggerated, and, where facts failed, audaciously invented by scurrilous wits, were in active circulation. Club men whispered abominations from ear to ear, and husbands told their wives at home that they had better be careful of Lady Hamilton if they should meet her in Society. Human nature would have been different then than now if some of these suggestive tales had not been confided to Lady Nelson herself by "kind friends" who "thought it right that she should know." Perhaps she was wise and charitable enough not to believe the insinuations against her great husband until she could form her own opinion on the subject, and for this reason she did not refuse to meet the Hamiltons as he so ardently desired. But when she did see Lord Nelson in the company of the beautiful woman, whose name was on everybody's lips, she saw with a woman's intuition, sharpened by the jealousy of a wife, that there was a secret understanding between them in which

she had no share. This revelation came to her at the theatre, where the Hamiltons shared a box with them, and, overcome by a sudden emotion, she fell back in a faint. This incident, which did not pass unnoticed, afforded fresh gossip for the Society scandal-mongers, and their excitement was still further increased a few weeks later when they learnt that Lord Nelson had accompanied Sir William and Lady Hamilton to a Christmas house party at Fonthill, in Cheshire (given by Sir William's cousin, Mr. Vathek Beckford) while Lady Nelson remained alone in town. Then there came to London in private letters, which soon became food for public tittle-tattle, numerous descriptions (highly coloured no doubt) of the various incidents that had taken place during those country festivities. Lord Nelson had travelled down in the Hamiltons' company, and upon being received at the steps by all the assembled guests to the strains of "God save the King" and "Rule Britannia," he had entered the house with Lady Hamilton on his arm. During the whole of the visit he had no eyes (or perhaps one should say, no *eye*) for anyone but Sir William's wife. They had been seen frequently together in intimate conversation. His reverence and admiration for her was most noticeable to every observer. It was perfectly evident that the great Admiral worshipped the very ground under Lady Hamilton's feet. So ran the gossip of the day; and again, no doubt, there were kind friends of Lady Nelson who communicated these facts to her in delicate consideration of her feelings. Upon Nelson's return to town the relations with his wife were more strained than before. A quarrel took place over the dinner table. Nelson alluded to his "dear Lady Hamilton," and all the jealousy, the just jealousy of an injured wife, broke out in a passionate protest that she was tired of hearing about "that woman," and that he must choose between them, for she would have all of Nelson's heart or none of it. This domestic drama, tragic for all concerned, had reached its inevitable crisis. Nothing

could patch up a peace between husband and wife, for Lord Nelson was bound to Lady Hamilton by secret ties of intimacy from which he could not release himself without tearing out his own heart. It was therefore agreed by Lord and Lady Nelson that they should separate, and from the beginning of 1801 Nelson never lived with his wife again. He was not ungenerous to the woman he had wronged, and settled £1,600 a year upon her, a handsome allowance which at least ensured her all outward comforts, though her inward happiness may have been destroyed. Poor Lady Nelson has been dealt with hardly and unsympathetically by the enthusiastic admirers of her great husband, yet one's pity must go out to the quiet, commonplace woman who failed to satisfy the ideals and sentiments of our naval hero.

The Hamiltons removed from their friend's house in Grosvenor Square to a house of their own in Piccadilly, which became Lord Nelson's home whenever he was in town with them. Sir William Hamilton was at this time in a somewhat impecunious condition, as it was some little time before he succeeded in obtaining a pension of £1,200 a year from the Government. Lady Hamilton voluntarily sold her diamonds to pay part of the expense of moving into the new residence, and Sir William parted with a good many of his pictures. Lord Nelson had something to say to Emma on both these subjects in his letters to her. He was indignant with Sir William in allowing her to sell her jewels, and as for the pictures, "I would have starved," he said, "before I would have sold a picture of *you*. I wonder Sir William could do it."

Both Sir William and Lady Hamilton were at this time indulging in ambitions, and putting forward claims for past services, which only led to much feverish excitement and ended in disappointment. The ex-Ambassador demanded compensation from the Government for the losses he had sustained in the

Neapolitan revolution, but he did not succeed in extracting a penny on this account from the Treasury. Then his wealthy cousin Vathek Beckford, a man who had been under a social cloud for a time, entered into a plot with Sir William Hamilton for buying in peerages, both for Sir William and himself, agreeing to pay £2,000 a year to the former if his influence proved successful. At that time it was not impossible to buy a peerage, or to obtain it through political influence, but Sir William Hamilton either did not know the right strings to pull, or Vathek Beckford's offers did not tempt the politicians then in power. Be that as it may, the scheme fell to the ground, so that the fair Emma was baulked of her ambition of being a peeress.

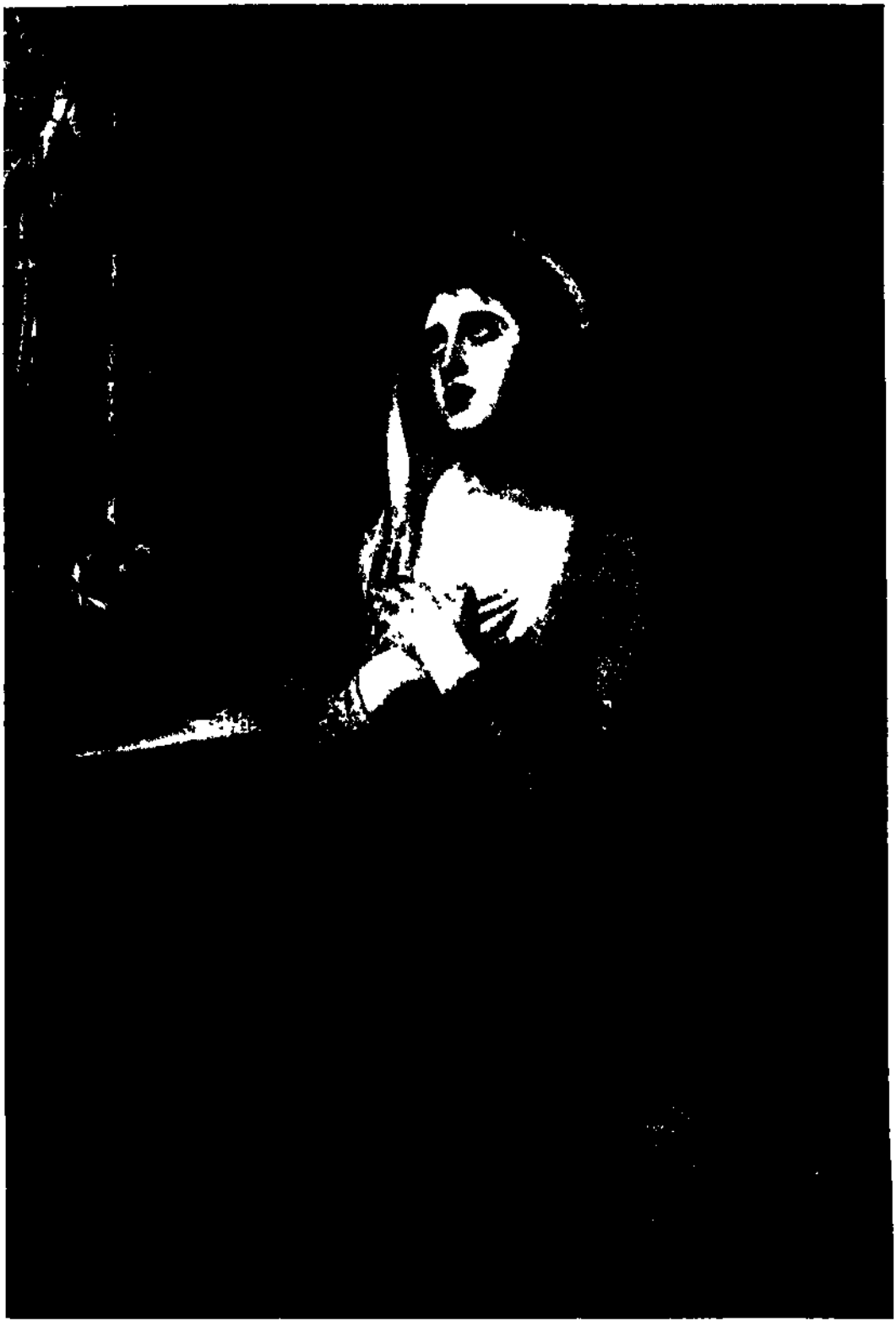
In their renewal of London life, the Hamiltons lived in a style of great extravagance, entertaining lavishly, and indulging in such luxuries as carriages and horses and many servants. For this Nelson again rebuked Sir William in one of his letters to Lady Hamilton, who had recently been complaining of their poverty; but it is more than probable that Emma herself was the active partner in this ostentatious display, eager in her desire to play the same rôle in London society which she had so brilliantly enacted in Italy. It hurt her very much that the Queen, who had heard all the scandal of the town regarding her reputation, would not receive her at Court. This, of course, alienated many ladies of fashion from her drawing-room, and placed her to a certain extent in a dubious social position. Nevertheless, a great number of distinguished ladies, who were not so much influenced by Court example, and who were ready to enjoy a hospitality so enjoyable as that of the Hamiltons, gave a sufficient éclat to her salon, and Lord Nelson's presence alone was naturally the means of attracting a crowd of great people to bask in his glory. Probably at this time Nelson's separation from his wife had not leaked out beyond his intimate circle and family, and as for the

rumours of his relations with Lady Hamilton, propriety itself was satisfied by the fact that Sir William still lived on the most affectionate terms with his wife, and regarded Lord Nelson with the utmost reverence and cordiality. Then, too, the Nelson family—good Mrs. Nelson, the wife of his clergyman brother, a lady of the most old-fashioned virtue and respectability, did not refuse her friendship to Lady Hamilton, and Mrs. Matcham, the Admiral's sister, was equally friendly with the woman who had been the means of separating Lord Nelson and his wife. So, on the whole, Lady Hamilton was not too dissatisfied with her position in London, and, indeed, considering the great secret which she was hiding at this time, it may well have been a cause for much thankfulness.

That she should have been able to keep that secret from her own husband, and from the world, must always be an amazing thing. Towards the end of January, 1801, a fortnight after Nelson had left London for Plymouth to prepare an expedition to the Baltic, Lady Hamilton gave birth to a child, and, according to the story told by the nurse many years afterwards, she took the tiny girl secretly, by night, in a hackney coach, and quite unattended, to No. 9, Little Tichfield Street, Marylebone, where she confided it to the care of a Mrs. Gibson, who minded it until Sir William Hamilton's death. Although much ink has been spilt over this historic baby, and the lack of absolute evidence has caused the story of its birth to be a subject of embittered controversy, there can hardly be a doubt that little Horatia Nelson Thompson, as the child was christened, was really the daughter of Emma Hamilton. And there can be no doubt whatever that Lord Nelson himself fully believed that he was the father of this child by Lady Hamilton. Many writers, jealous for Nelson's good name, have endeavoured to make out that Lady Hamilton foisted somebody else's child upon the simple hero in order to have a greater hold upon his feelings, and, as some have

not scrupled to say, upon his purse. There is no need to go into all the details of an historical discussion that was rather ingenious than profitable. It must be clear to everyone who has read the Nelson and Hamilton letters that the great Admiral acknowledged little Horatia as his own, and what he believed is surely beyond the doubt of others? The story that he was able to see his child before leaving England for his great battle in the Baltic seems likely enough, for it is known that he made a flying visit to London from Plymouth. Afterwards, when doing his duty at sea, he wrote frequently to Lady Hamilton, and from these private and intimate letters we learn more of his relations with the woman who had taken possession of his heart. For a time, fearing lest his letters might fall into wrong hands, Lord Nelson maintained a fiction which it is easy to read through now that we have the clue to it. Whenever he alluded to himself or to Lady Hamilton in connection with their secret love and the fruit of that love, it was under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson (or Thomson as he spelt it, indifferently). He made out that he had this Thompson on board his ship, and had to console him for being parted from his wife and new-born infant.

"I have seen and talked much with Mrs. Thomson's friend," he writes, in March, 1800. "The fellow seems to eat all my words when I talk of her and his child. He says he can never forget our goodness and kind affection to her and his dear, dear child. I have had, you know, the felicity of seeing it, and a finer child never was produced by any two persons. It was, in truth, a love-begotten child! I am determined to keep him on board; for I know if they got together they would soon have another. But after our two months' trip I hope they will never be separated; and then let them do as they please." There are many such references to the mysterious Thompson, and there have been biographers of Lord Nelson simple enough to believe that this person actually existed,



LADY HAMILTON AS A NUN PRAYING.
BY GEORGE ROMNEY
By kind permission of the owner, Tankerville Chamberlayne, Esq. M.P.

that his wife was a protégée of Lady Hamilton, and that his infant was Lord Nelson's god-child. But the fiction is so transparent that one can hardly realise such credulity, and other phrases in Lord Nelson's letters when he dropped disguise clearly reveal the truth. His language was that of an ardent lover, and he acknowledged again and again the secret tie that bound them to one another.

"I have been the world around," he writes in February, 1801, "and in every corner of it, and never yet saw your equal, never one which could be put in comparison with you." In the following month he writes, "You cannot think how my feelings are alive towards you, probably more than ever: and they never can be diminished. My hearty endeavours shall not be wanting to improve and to give us NEW ties of regard and affection." He ends the letter as "for ever, ever yours, only yours."

In May of the same year he writes, "I assure you, my dear Emma, and I feel a thorough conviction, that we shall meet again, with honours, titles and health, and remain together to a good old age. I look at your and my god-child's picture; but till I am sure of remaining here I cannot bring myself to hang them up. Be assured that my attachment and affectionate regard is unalterable; nothing can shake it! And pray say so to my dear Mrs. T. [Thomson] when you see her. Tell her that my love is unbounded to her and her sweet child; and if she should have more, it will extend to all of them. In short, my dear Emma, say everything to her which your dear and affectionate heart and head can think of."

In one letter, written in the Spring of 1801, there is no allusion to "Mr. Thomson," and the Admiral threw off all disguise, knowing that the letter would be delivered safely to Lady Hamilton by a trusted friend.

"Now, my own dear Wife," it runs, "for such you are in my eyes and in the face of heaven, I can give full scope to my feelings, for I dare say Oliver will faithfully deliver this letter. You know, my dearest Emma, that there is nothing in this world that I would not do for us to live together and to have our dear little child with us . . . I love, never did love anyone else. I never had a dear pledge of love till you gave me one, and you, thank my God, never gave one to anybody else. I think before March is out you will see us back, or so victorious that we shall insure a glorious issue of our toils. Think what my Emma would feel at seeing return safe, perhaps with a little more fame, her own dear loving Nelson." Then in a postscript added next day, he says, "Kiss and bless *our* dear Horatia—think of that."

From this letter it becomes perfectly clear that the "Thomson" story was a mere blind, and that Nelson rejoiced in having Horatia as a pledge of love. And it is also clear from one phrase that Lady Hamilton had not at this time confessed to him that she had had a child many years before—the "little Emily," whose fate is still a mystery.

After the battle of the Baltic, Nelson did return "with a little more fame," and he was able for a brief time to enjoy his Emma's company again. But it was not for long, for England needed him, and, whatever his weakness may have been, he never languished in the arms of love when duty called him. Before he went to sea again he commissioned Emma to find a country house for him in a quiet spot, to which the Hamiltons might retire whenever they wanted a rest from town, and where, during his brief spells on shore, he might enjoy their society without objectionable publicity. Lady Hamilton entered into her task with delight, and scoured the suburbs for a likely residence. After much searching she selected a commodious, old-fashioned

villa at Merton, with good grounds, which she felt was the very place to suit Lord Nelson's tastes. Here, Sir William and Lady Hamilton stayed with Mrs. Cadogan, the old mother who continued to flourish and to earn the golden opinions of her daughter's husband and friends. Nelson himself had a high regard for her, and never failed to send her his compliments. From Merton, Sir William wrote to his friend whom he still honoured and revered. "We have now inhabited your Lordship's premises some days," wrote the old gentleman, "and I can now speak with some certainty. I have lived with dear Emma several years. I know her merit, have a great opinion of the head and heart that God Almighty has been pleased to give her; but, a seaman alone could have given a woman full power to choose and fit up a residence for him without seeing it himself. You are in luck, for in my conscience I very believe that a place so suitable to your views could not have been found, and at so cheap a rate. . . . It would make you laugh to see Emma and her mother fitting up pigstyes and hencoops, and already the canal is enlivened with ducks, and the cock is strutting with his hens about the walks. Your Lordship's plan as to stocking the canal with fish is exactly mine, and I will answer for it that in a few months you may command a good dish of fish at a moment's warning."

Lord Nelson had been miserably ill on board ship, and it is rather startling to find this great sailor complaining that "I am so dreadfully sea-sick that I can hardly hold up my head." But Lady Hamilton's letters cheered him up:

"The moment I got your letters, off I came, and have read them with real pleasure. They have made me much better, I think; at least I feel so.

I admire the pigs and poultry. Sheep are certainly most beneficial to eat off the grass. Do *you* get paid for them; and take care that

they are kept on the premises all night, for that is the time they do good to the land. They should be folded. Is your head man a good person, and true to our interest? I intend to have a farming book. I am glad to hear you get fish; not very good ones, I fancy.

It is, I thank God, only six days before I shall be with you, and to be shewn all the beauties of Merton. I shall like it leaves or no leaves.

No person then can take amiss our not visiting. The answer from us will always be very civil thanks, but that I wish to live retired. We shall have our sea friends; and I know Sir William thinks they are the best."

It was on the 22nd of October, 1801, that Nelson went to Merton House, after having spent three months in the Downs guarding the English coast from invasion. It was his longest spell on shore between his return from Italy and his death on board the *Victory*, and lasted for one year and six months, during which time he was constantly in the Hamiltons' company. He was perfectly delighted with the house and grounds at Merton, and spent many pleasant weeks in devising new improvements to the place which he looked forward to in the future as the home of the wife and children which he believed would be his when time should inevitably "remove the impediments." But in spite of his preconceived idea to live "in retirement," those eighteen months on shore were full of social distractions and festivities in his honour. He was too great a hero with English Society for them to leave him alone. For poor old Sir William Hamilton, old in body and mind, though not so stricken in years as older men who were far more youthful, such gaiety and bustle were not agreeable. He was not allowed to end his days in peace, but had to play the host at continual entertainments at his town house during the season, and was rattled about England in a triumphant tour made by Lord Nelson, with his brother the clergyman, and his brother's wife, and, of course, with Lady Hamilton her-

self. Sir William's nerves were now irritable, and there were constant altercations between husband and wife on account of all this entertainment. It was the same old story of crabbed old age and blooming youth. In a pathetic letter which he placed in his wife's room Sir William acknowledged this melancholy fact: "I am arrived at the age," he said, "when some repose is really necessary, and I promised myself a quiet home, altho' I was sensible, and said so when I married, that I should be superannuated when my wife would be in her full beauty and vigour of youth. That time is now arrived, and we must make the best of it for both parties. Unfortunately our tastes as to the manner of living are very different." In this letter Sir William proposed "a wise and well concerted separation," but he was careful to add, somewhat inconsistently perhaps, that he had no complaint to make, although he felt that his wife's whole attention was given to Lord Nelson and his interests at Merton. "I well know the purity of Lord Nelson's friendship for Emma and me. And I know how very uncomfortable it would make his Lordship, our best Friend, if such a separation should take place, and am therefore determined to do all in my power to prevent such an extremity, which would be extremely detrimental to all parties, but would be more sensibly felt by our dear Friend than by us."

Lady Hamilton must have been much moved by this letter. Although she was guilty of secret intimacy with Nelson, we can well believe that she still had affection for the husband who had been so consistently kind and generous towards her during their years of married life. His affection, as well as, no doubt, her own interest, induced her to humour her husband, and consult his wishes more tenderly, so that the domestic friction ceased and the last months of Sir William Hamilton's life were more placid and happy.

His death came somewhat suddenly in April of the year 1803.

For six nights Lord Nelson sat with his friend during his last illness, and Lady Hamilton did all that a loving wife should to alleviate his suffering and soothe his failing mind. To the very end he had no suspicion of his wife or friend, and when he died it was with his hands clasped in theirs.

Generous to Lady Hamilton in life, he took care that she should be well provided for after his death. The bulk of his fortune went to Charles Greville, whom he had always regarded as his heir, but his widow received £800 at once, and an annuity of the same sum, as well as all the plate and furniture of his town house to the value of £5,000. Besides this he had hoped and expected that on account of her services to the nation, part at least of his pension should be continued to Lady Hamilton by the Government. In this idea Nelson himself had always supported him, believing that his own influence and the good offices of Queen Maria Caroline of Naples, would be sufficient to induce the Ministry to grant, say, £500 a year for life, to a woman whom Nelson regarded as having contributed, to no small extent, to his victory of the Nile, by enabling his ships to water and take in supplies at Syracuse, and whom he justly credited as having been the right hand of Sir William Hamilton during his Neapolitan crisis, when the Ambassador's powers were failing on account of his ill-health. Lady Hamilton herself considered these claims fully entitled her to a Government pension, and until the end of her life, especially after Lord Nelson's death, she left no stone unturned to establish them. But in spite of Nelson's great influence, the Ministry turned a deaf ear to these appeals. The Admiral wrote to the Queen of Naples begging her to support Lady Hamilton's case, and reminding her of her former friend's services to both countries. But to the annoyance of Nelson, and the disappointment of Lady Hamilton, Maria Caroline was one of those people who fulfil the old proverb that absence is the grave of love. While Lady Hamilton had been at Naples nothing

had been too much to do her honour, but now the Queen responded in a cold and guarded manner to Lord Nelson's letter, and did not go to any trouble in supporting Lady Hamilton's claims.

Nevertheless, Emma was by no means reduced to poverty by Sir William's death. £800 a year was by no means a beggarly income as money went in those days, besides which Nelson made Lady Hamilton a generous allowance during his lifetime.

Six weeks after Sir William's death, Nelson was again ordered off on active service as Commander-in-Chief on the Mediterranean Station, and on the eighteenth of May he hoisted his flag on the *Victory* at Portsmouth. For nearly two years he never set foot on shore, and during all that time he was doing "sentry-go" in the Mediterranean, waiting to destroy the French fleet under Villeneuve whenever it should slip out of the harbour of Toulon for the attempted invasion of England. Only once more was he to have a brief spell on shore, and when he said the next farewell to Emma and their child, it was to go to his last great victory and his death.

During his long absence Lady Hamilton spent most of her time at Merton, only leaving it for short visits to town, or to stay for a while with Mrs. Nelson, the clergyman's wife, in Norfolk. She was still on excellent terms with all the Nelson family, and Mrs. Nelson, who by all accounts was a most admirable lady, and very strict as regards propriety, thought so highly of Lady Hamilton's good qualities that she entrusted her little daughter Charlotte (afterwards Lady Charlotte Nelson and Duchess of Bronté) to Emma's care for a considerable time. Emma's letters at this time to Mrs. Nelson (now in possession of the Hon. Alexander Nelson Hood) are full of Charlotte's doings, and she was never tired of praising the child's beauty, good behaviour and diligence. It is somewhat amusing indeed to contrast the matronly character and the zeal for genteel etiquette of the middle-aged Emma with the

gay, easy mannered and high spirited Emma of the old days. Her moral sentiments on the value of education, and her accounts of the strict manner in which she coached Mrs. Nelson's daughter in all the elegancies and proprieties befitting a young lady of the period, are somewhat startling when one remembers her own humble origin and lax upbringing. These letters are also interesting as shewing that Lady Hamilton was still received in the best Society, and was still welcomed in many aristocratic drawing rooms on account of her beauty and social charm.

In spite of the difficulty of communication from the Mediterranean, Nelson corresponded with her in frequent and lengthy letters, and, however busy she might be with Charlotte or Horatia (who was now brought to Merton), or with her social distractions, she never failed to give him all the news of her daily life in the most detailed manner. In Nelson's monotonous life on board the *Victory* the arrival of those long budgets were his greatest source of joy.

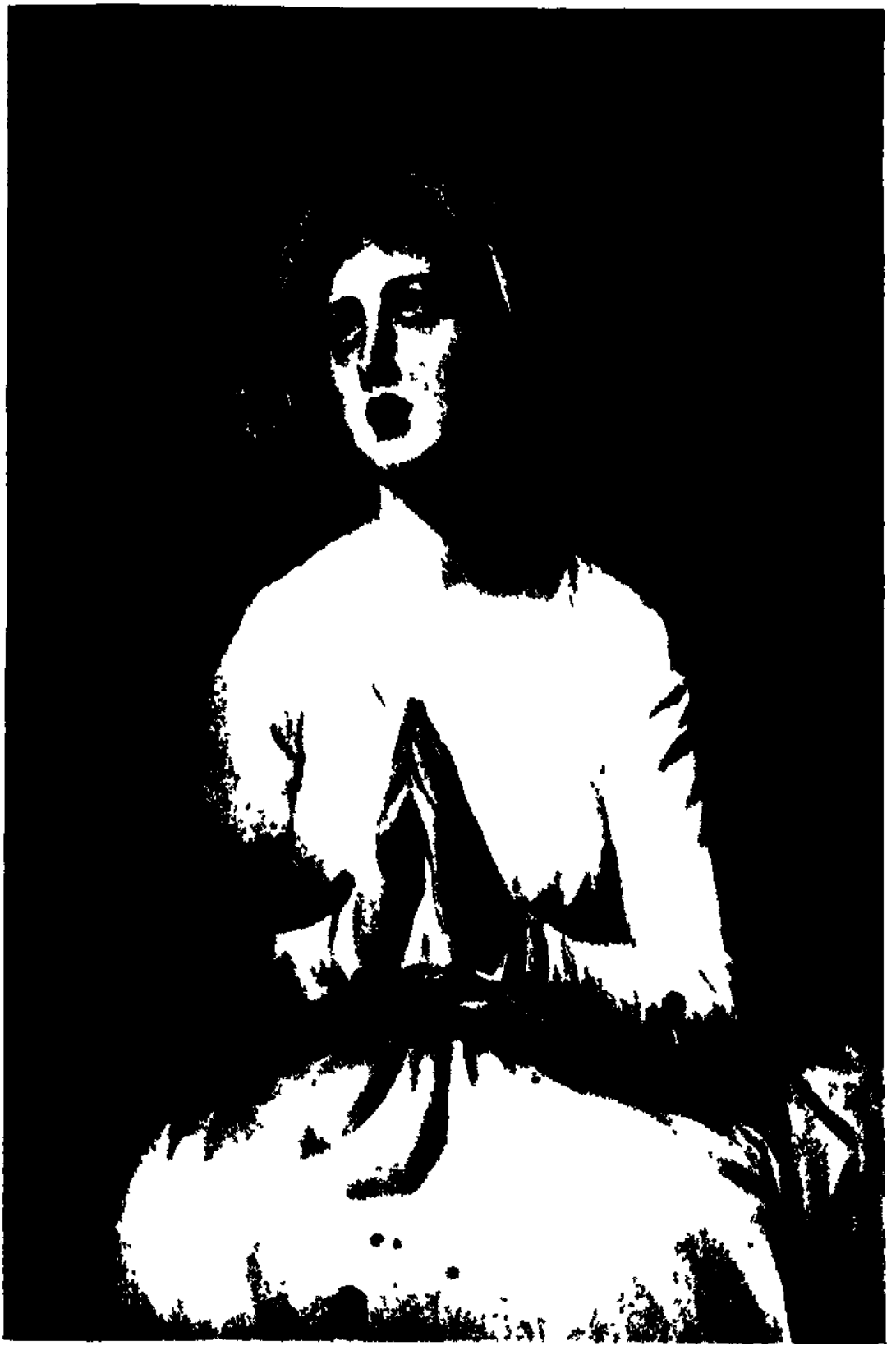
"All your letters, *my dear letters*," he writes, "are so entertaining! and which paint so clearly what you are after that they give me either the greatest pleasure or pain. It is the next best thing to being with you.

I only, desire, my dearest Emma, that you will always believe that Nelson's your own. Nelson's *Alpha* and *Omega* is *Emma!* I cannot alter; my affection and love is beyond even this world! Nothing can shake it, except yourself; and that I will not allow myself to think, for a moment, is possible."

In many of these letters Nelson looked forward to the time when Lady Hamilton should be bound to him by marriage.

"I rejoice that you have had so pleasant a trip to Norfolk," he writes, on August 20th, 1803, "and I hope one day to carry you there by a nearer *tie* in law, but not in love and affection, than at present."

Referring to Emma's efforts to establish her claims for a pension,



LADY HAMILTON — BY ROMNEY

he writes on October 18th of the same year: "If Mr. Addington gives you the pension it is well, but do not let it fret you. Have you not Merton? It is clear—the first purchase—and my dear Horatia is provided for; and I hope one of these days that you will be my own Duchess of Bronté; and then a fig for them all."

It is very touching to see in these letters how the Admiral's heart was filled with love for the little child whom he had only seen for a few brief hours, but who drew out all the sailor's tenderness and sentiment.

"Everything you tell me about my dear Horatia charms me," he writes, "I think I see her, hear her, and admire her; but she is like her dear, dear mother."

Our great naval hero, whose brain was busy and anxious with the enormous responsibility of his task in guarding our shores from invasion, could still think of such a small thing as the fencing of a pond at Merton, so that little Horatia might be safe from the danger of falling in. Referring to various alterations to be made in the grounds of his house, he says, "I also beg, as my dear Horatia is to be at Merton, that a strong netting, about three feet high, may be placed round the 'Nile,' that the little one may not tumble in; and then you may have ducks again in it. I forget at what place we saw the netting; and either Mr. Perry or Mr. Goldsmid told us where it was to be bought. *I shall be very anxious* until I know this is done."

In the same letter he says: "I shall, when I come home, settle four thousand pounds in trustees' hands for Horatia; for I will not put it in my own power to have her left destitute; for she would want friends if we left her in this world. She shall be independent of any smile or frown!"

In a letter written on April 2nd, 1804, Nelson seems to throw some light on the mystery of "little Emily," of whose pathetic fate so little is known since she was sent to boarding school by Greville,

and afterwards educated away from her mother by Sir William Hamilton. It is very probable that Lady Hamilton confessed to Nelson that she had been a mother before she gave Horatia to him as "a pledge of love." If that is so, it is evident that Nelson had forgiven her, and in the letter that follows it can hardly be doubted that he refers tenderly to the death of Lady Hamilton's first child.

"Captain Capel brought me your letters sent by the *Thistle* from Gibraltar. I opened—opened—found none but December, and early in January, I was in such an agitation! At last I found one without a date, which, thank God, told my poor heart that you was recovering, but that Dear little Emma was no more! and that Horatia had been so ill—it altogether upset me.

"But it was just at bedtime, and I had time to reflect, and be thankful to God for sparing you and our dear Horatia. I am sure the loss of one—much more both, would have drove me mad. I was so agitated as it was, and I was glad it was night, and that I could be with myself.

"Kiss our dear Horatia for me: and tell her to be a dutiful and good child; and if she is that we shall always love her."

Reading Lady Hamilton's own letters at this time to Mrs. Nelson and to the father of her child, it does not seem that she was happy. She had not the temperament for widowhood, and Nelson's absence from her was a great grief. She was still sufficiently of the old Emma to require the support of a man by her side, and as she had pined in the absence of Greville, in her early days, and later when Sir William went a-hunting, so now she was melancholy and restless when Nelson was at sea. Knowing how ill he was, for his letters were full of allusions to ill-health and distressing complaints, and weary of the long and dreary time during which he remained inactive in the Mediterranean, she would have been something less, or more, than a woman of warm heart, if she had not occasionally pleaded with him to come home to her, at least for a

brief holiday. But Nelson, however strong his passion for her, had one greater and dominant passion, the love of country and honour.

"I know, my own dear Emma," he wrote, in answer to one such pleading, "if she will let her reason have fair play, will say I am right; but she is, like Horatia, very angry if she cannot have her own way." Here Nelson is called upon, in the most honourable manner, to defend his country! "Absence, to us, is equally painful; but if I had either stayed at home, or neglected my duty abroad, would not my Emma have blushed for me? She could never have heard of my praises, and how the country looks up. I am writing, my dear Emma, to reason the point with you; and I am sure you will see it in its true light. But I have said my say on this subject, and will finish."

Neither Nelson nor Lady Hamilton's biographers had a right to make too much of the natural longing for a woman to have her lover at home, and the great seaman was wise enough to finish when he had "said his say." Lady Hamilton cannot be accused of any lack of patriotism, and there were others at this time, without the same personal interests, who believed that Nelson might very well be relieved for a while of his tedious, and, as the public then thought, his inglorious task of watch-dog off Toulon. Certainly, whatever Lady Hamilton said in her letters did not cause any coldness in Nelson's heart towards her. "You may safely rely," he wrote, on January 13th, 1804, "that I can ever repeat with truth, these words—for ever I love you, and only you, my Emma; and, you may be assured, as long as you are the same to me, that you are never absent a moment from my thoughts." Again and again he repeated with passionate warmth his expressions of unalterable devotion. A great wave of tenderness flooded his soul during the last year of his life, and in his lonely and weary time of watching and waiting on the seas for his country's enemies, he delighted in thinking and writing of all that he could do with his

money for the friends who had been kind to his Emma, for all his relatives, and hers, for the servants who had been faithful to them, for little Horatia, and even for the children who were the playmates of his child. There was but little news of his own to tell in return for Emma's long budgets, and his chief theme was "That I love you most dearly; and hate the French most damnably." He looked forward with the utmost longing as well as with sublime confidence to victory and peace, so that he might return home at last and enjoy the domestic happiness of which he dreamed. Meanwhile, in the cabin of the *Victory*, the fragile, one-armed, one-eyed man sat solitary in meditation, seeing the image of a beautiful woman's face on the charts spread out before him, while the vision of a little angel child hovered above him. Deep and tender and pious thoughts welled up in the great seaman's heart, and inspired the pen with which he scratched out his messages to Merton—that beautiful house of dreams so far away, and yet so near to him in imagination. Yet he could not express all he thought, partly because he was a plain seaman and partly because he feared his letters might fall into wrong hands, as the frigates and letters carrying his despatches were sometimes wrecked or captured.

"I do not say all I wish; and which, my dearest, *beloved* Emma—read that whoever opens this letter, and for what I care, publish it to the world—your fertile imagination can readily fancy I would say: but this I can say with great truth, that I am FOR EVER YOURS."

With such expressions Lady Hamilton may well have been satisfied. There could have been no fear in her heart that this great and simple hero was not all her own, or that he would not place his glory at her feet, holding even glory cheap in comparison to the gift of her beauty and love. Nevertheless, there was inevitably one great haunting fear within her, from which she

could never get peace. What if Nelson died? Confident as he was of victory, he was never one to put away the thought that his life might be the price of victory. In that great sea fight, which, sooner or later, must decide the destiny of England, when Villeneuve should at last decide to leave the shelter of Toulon and hurl his fleet against the British men-of-war, Nelson would then as always be in the forefront of the battle, for he was not one to plan out the attack only and leave his captains to bear the brunt of shot and shell. Nelson was to be where the battle raged most fiercely, and in his same old rash, heroic way, he would expose his body to the enemy. Oh, horrid thought for poor Emma, whose future happiness lay only in the hope of having Nelson by her side, and to whom England's safety and England's glory were even of less account to her than Nelson in the living flesh!

At last, on the 20th of August, 1805, Nelson paid a flying visit to England, and had the great joy of holding Emma in his arms. For a fortnight he revelled in the joys of a domestic life which he knew would be interrupted all too soon by orders for instant action. But he did not allow this knowledge to disturb his absolute felicity, and he kept from Lady Hamilton all thought of the early date at which they must again part. For the first time in his life he realised all the joys of fatherhood, and, with Emma and little Horatia, the days passed like a wonderful dream. Then, very early on the morning of September 2nd, Captain Blackwood, of the *Euryalus*, came post haste from the Admiralty, with the momentous news that the combined French fleet had put into Cadiz. All the fire of Nelson's ardent spirit burst forth at this message, which called him to duty. "Depend on it Blackwood," he said, again and again, as the two friends paced the garden at Merton, "I shall give Monsieur Villeneuve a drubbing." For a time, according to Southey's "Life of Nelson,"

the great Admiral hesitated to break the news to Lady Hamilton, and when he did so her emotion unmanned him for a while. But Emma was not a woman to hold back such a lover as Nelson from the path of duty, nor was Nelson a man to hesitate for one moment between his domestic peace and his country's service. One can hardly credit the accuracy of the theatrical language attributed in Southey's "Life" to Lady Hamilton, nor do the words supposed to have been spoken by Nelson ring true. "Brave Emma, good Emma!" He is also reported to have said, when she urged him to leave her at once for battle and victory, "If there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons!" But one can imagine that tender and impassioned words must have passed between those two, who, in their own eyes at least, were husband and wife, and the heart melts in one at the picture of Nelson kneeling by the bedside of his little child for a fervent prayer, and giving his last long embrace to the woman who was all in all to him. Perhaps in his heart then, as certainly a few days later, on the eve of battle, he had a premonition that he was going to his death.

His last letter to Lady Hamilton was written on board the *Victory*, off Cadiz, on October 19th, 1805, and none may read it without emotion.

"My dearest beloved Emma and the dear Friend of my bosom,

The signal has been made that the enemy's combined fleet are coming out of port.

We have very little wind, so that I have no hopes of seeing them before to-morrow. May the God of Battles crown my endeavours with success! At all events, I shall take care that my name shall ever be most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life, and as my last writing before the battle will be to you, so I hope in God that I shall live to finish my letter after the battle.

May Heaven help you, prays your Nelson and Bronté.

October 20th, in the morning, we were close to the mouth of the Straits, but the wind had not come far enough to the westward to allow the combined fleets to weather the shoals of Trafalgar, but they were counted as far as forty sail of ships of war which I suppose to be thirty-four of the line and six frigates. A group of them was seen off the lighthouse of Cadiz this morning, but it blows so very fresh, I think [stormy] weather, that I rather believe they will go into the harbour before night.

May God Almighty give us success over these fellows and enable us to get a peace!"

There is no need to tell over again the story of Trafalgar, nor how Nelson died an heroic death in the hour of his greatest triumph, and of his most glorious victory.

The bells of England rang with joy for the shattering of the enemy who had so long threatened our shores with the horrors of invasion. But in the heart of every man, woman and child there was mourning for the death of the Admiral whom they had loved. When the joybells were ringing, that last letter of Nelson's was brought to the woman who had been in his dying thoughts, and she, poor soul, in a passion of grief, knowing now that all she had hoped and prayed for was at an end, turned down the last sheet, and in her scrawling hand wrote the epitaph of her own heart:—

"O miserable, wretched Emma!
O glorious and happy Nelson!"

The remainder of Lady Hamilton's life makes a sad and tragic story, a story of strife and bickering, of disappointed ambitions and vain hopes, of wild extravagance, of debt and difficulty, of foolish words that had best be forgotten.

By his will Nelson had left her £500 a year out of his Bronté estate, a sum punctually paid by the Nelson family in half-yearly instalments, the receipts for which are still in the hands of the

Hon. Alexander Nelson Hood, the grandson of Lady Charlotte Nelson. In addition to this she had from Nelson an immediate legacy of £2,000, the possession of Merton Place, the interest on the £4,000 settled on Horatia, and the annuity of £800 from Sir William Hamilton. She was therefore fully and handsomely provided for. But Lord Nelson, in bequeathing Emma and Horatia to the care of his King and country, and in claiming a pension for her by recounting in the codicil to his will the services he believed her to have done at a memorable epoch of his career, did much to unsettle Lady Hamilton's mind, and to stir ambitions in her which were never realised. The publication of this codicil was a *cause célèbre* in English Society, and there were many friends of Lady Hamilton who injudiciously championed her cause, and urged her on to make claims upon the Government which it did not consider right or just. On the other hand there were many people who violently denounced Lady Hamilton as an intriguing adventuress who deserved nothing but shame and penury. The heated and deplorable controversies which raged over this subject naturally inflamed a woman like Lady Hamilton with a sense that she was being treated with cruel injustice. We may indeed allow that she was treated with a meanness of which England should not have been guilty—for Nelson's sake alone. But Lady Hamilton acted a foolish and injudicious part. She gained nothing but ridicule and scorn by her palpable exaggerations of what she had done for Nelson and England, and of all the losses she had suffered during the Neapolitan Revolution. She deeply annoyed the Nelson family, and alienated these, her best friends, by claiming more from them than she had any right to expect, not having any legal title of relationship, in spite of the undoubted fact that Nelson would have made her his wife had he lived "until the impediments were removed." Surrounded by false friends and flatterers, and prompted perhaps by her melancholy and her disappointed

LADY HAMILTON — ALTER LAWRENCE

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ambitions, she lived at Merton, and at her town house in Clarges Street, with such extravagance and foolish ostentation that, as early as 1808, she was in great monetary difficulties, and endeavouring to sell Merton Place. Her affairs were gone into by a committee of friends who subscribed over £3,000 for her immediate relief, on condition that she made over her country house to them, in trust, to sell at their discretion for the satisfaction of her creditors. After leaving Merton she removed to Richmond, and afterwards to Bond Street, but, in spite of the warnings of her well-wishers, she continued to get into debt to such an extent that in the summer of 1813 she was actually committed to the King's Bench Prison. In this deplorable situation—almost more shameful, perhaps, to those who should have had Nelson's honour at heart than to herself—she was compelled to remain for nearly a year. She was not in the prison strictly, however, but permitted to reside at 12, Temple Place, "within the rules of the Bench." Poor little Horatia was with her, and a few staunch friends of Nelson and herself visited them at times. Only a few letters have been published which Lady Hamilton wrote during this melancholy time. In one of them, dated on the eve of August 1st, 1813, an anniversary of the battle of the Nile, she expresses her "pain and grief" in thinking of "the dear lamented Chief. He could never have thought that his Child and myself should pass the anniversary of that victorious day where we shall pass it." To a kind and wealthy friend, named Alderman J. J. Smith, Lady Hamilton owed her release from an imprisonment that had not been too severe, but was certainly both irksome and ignominious. She was not, however, safe in England if she wished to retain her newly-found liberty, for other writs were out against her from relentless creditors. With the assistance of the same good friend she was enabled to make her escape with Horatia on board a small steamer bound for Calais, where they arrived safely.

She took up her residence in that town, and for a time recovered some of her old spirits, though not the health she had formerly enjoyed. Although most of her money had been swallowed up by her host of greedy creditors she still had the use of the interest on the £4,000 left for Horatia's up-bringing, and which she conscientiously used for the young girl's education. It seems also that the Nelson family still paid her the annuity of £500, so that she was not so terribly indigent as some of her biographers have endeavoured to make out. Horatia went to a genteel day school kept by an English lady, and, according to her mother, made rapid progress in French and Italian, the harp and piano, and all "elegant accomplishments." Lady Hamilton herself enjoyed a little good society among the English residents, and seems to have been fairly happy for a time. But towards the end of the year 1813 she fell seriously ill, and, while waiting for another instalment of the money allowed her, was compelled to part with some of her trinkets, and to take for her own use some of the money which should have been used only for Horatia. So the sad tale comes to an end with her death at the age of fifty-one, on, or about, the 15th of January, 1815, and with her burial, at the expense of a charitable English lady, in the cemetery of Calais, in a plain deal coffin, and with but a few witnesses to the simple and tragic ceremony.

Some time before her death she drew up a will, bequeathing all her personal belongings and her souvenirs of Nelson to Horatia. She appointed Mr. George Macham and the Hon. George Ross as her executors, and as the guardians of "Horatia Nelson" (she had now dropped the *Thompson* fiction), and, so the will goes on: "It is my wish that H.R. Highness, the Prince Regent, or if before my death he shall become King, that he will provide for the said Horatia in such a manner that she may live as becomes the daughter of such a man as her victorious father was; and as His Royal Highness often promised me that he

would have me remunerated, when he had it in his power, for the services that I have rendered my King and Country, and as I have never been remunerated, nor even received one sixpence from Government, let me on my knees beg of His Royal Highness to provide for the said Horatia Nelson, the only child of the Great and Glorious Nelson. And I beg, after my death, that a copy of this, my last will and testament, may be sent to His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, or if he is King, it may be sent to His Majesty, for his high honour and probity, and the friendship which he had for Nelson, will induce him to protect his child for me. H.R.H. always showed me the greatest kindness, and for the sake of Sir William Hamilton, whom His Royal Highness so highly honoured, that he will provide for the orphan Horatia. When my head is laid low she will want protection, therefore, to God Almighty, to His Royal Highness, and to my Executors, I most earnestly recommend her on my knees, blessing her, and praying for her, that she may be happy, virtuous, good, and amiable, and that she may remember all the kind instructions and good advice I have given her, and may she be what her great and immortal father wished her to be, brought up with virtue, honour, religion, and rectitude. Amen, Amen, Amen."

From this remarkable document it may be noticed that although Lady Hamilton repeatedly mentioned Horatia as the only child of Nelson, she never once acknowledged her as her own daughter. At the time the will was written (September 4th, 1811), she still had hopes of receiving a pension from the Government, and she was therefore careful not to endanger her claims upon the Government's gratitude to Sir William Hamilton and Nelson by putting forward a fact which, for the sake of them both, was best concealed. It is said that she even went further, and actually denied in writing that she was the mother of Horatia, maintaining that the child's real mother was "too

GREAT TO BE MENTIONED, but her father, mother, and Horatia, had a true and virtuous friend in Emma Hamilton." No serious consideration need be given to a statement so utterly disproved by all the known facts, and by the letters of Lord Nelson himself. It must be admitted that at this time Lady Hamilton's mental balance was overthrown, and that in her disappointed ambition and distress of fortune she made many wild statements that had no foundation of truth.

The mind turns from the sadness of Lady Hamilton's last years to those earlier days, when, as the fair, vivacious, and lovable Emma, she had lived a simple life with Greville at Paddington Green, and to the time when, at Naples and Palermo, she reached the zenith of her fortune, reigning as the acknowledged Queen of Beauty, the friend and counsellor of Maria Caroline, the faithful wife of Sir William Hamilton, and the still virtuous admirer of Horatio Nelson. We do well to forget the decay of her beauty, and the somewhat squalid circumstances of her end, remembering only the perfect loveliness of those features which Romney painted, and the splendour of her summer-time of womanhood. And so also to all charitable minds it is better to deal mercifully with her many frailties and faults, bearing in mind the natural goodness of her heart, in spite of her unhappy experiences of the world's wickedness, the simplicity which she preserved so long in the midst of a corrupt Court, and, above all, the remarkable strength of character, the wonderful intelligence and tact which enabled her to rise from the humblest rank to a high position, and to maintain it with perfect dignity. The career of Lady Hamilton, apart altogether from her connection with Nelson, is full of romance, and a striking testimony to her charm and wit; but as long as the English nation reverence the memory of their greatest seaman, so also should they think not unkindly of the woman whom he loved more than his own life.

LIST OF PRINCIPAL ENGRAVINGS, AFTER PORTRAITS OF LADY HAMILTON, BY ROMNEY, REYNOLDS, AND OTHER ARTISTS.

ENGRAVINGS AFTER GEORGE ROMNEY.

As "ALOPE."

Stipple, by Richard Earlom. W.L. 10⅝ × 12¾.

I. Before any inscription.
II. Title, "Alope" in open letters. Published 1st August, 1787.
III. Letters of title filled in.

As "THE AMBASSADRESS."

Mezzotint by T. G. Appleton. 23 × 18 (1905).

As "ARIADNE."

Line by C. Brome and T. Bragg, nearly W.L. 12⅝ × 10⅝.

I. "Painted by G. Romney. Engraved by C. Brome," scratched.
II. Inscription engraved, entitled "Kate," in open letters. Published 4th May, 1827.

Mezzotint by H. T. Greenhead. 15⅝ × 19¾ (1895.)

As "BACCHANTE."

Stipple by Charles Knight. T.Q.L. 12⅞ × 10¾.

I. Inscription engraved, title in open letters. Published C. Knight.
II. Letters of title filled in and date of publication, 17th June, 1787 added.
III. Published by C. Knight and Randon, Stainbach and Sayer.

Mezzotint by T. G. Appleton. 17 × 21½ (1902).

Mezzotint by N. Hirst. 12 × 15½ (1902).

As "BACCHANTE." A study.

Line by C. Holl, 7½ × 9½, for the "Vernon Gallery."

Mezzotint by R. Kenealy. 8 × 10. Jan. 30th, 1890.

Mezzotint by E. Gulland. 13½ × 11½ (1902).

As "CASSANDRA."

Line by Francis Legat. W.L. 19½ × 14½.

I. Inscription scratched.
II. Inscription engraved. Published 1st January, 1795.

As "CASSANDRA." Bust only.

Mezzotint by H. T. Greenhead, under the title of "Lady Hamilton when Young." 16⅜ × 17½ (1895).

As "CASSANDRA." Head only.

Stipple by Caroline Watson. 6½ in. circle.

I. Before the inscription.
II. With the title "Cassandra." Published 14th April, 1809.

As "CASSANDRA." Head nearly full face.

Mezzotint by T. Protheroe. 17 × 21⅝ (1903).

As "CIRCE."

Mezzotint by H. S. Bridgwater. 14½ × 23½ (1894).
Mezzotint by E. L. Haynes. 14⅛ × 19½ (1901).

As "COMEDY."

Stipple by Benjamin Smith. W.L 10½ × 12⅝.

I. Title in running and open letters. Published 4th June, 1803.
II. Title in running and open letters. Published 1st December, 1803.

As "COMEDY."

Stipple by Caroline Watson. W.L. 7 × 5⅛. Published 14th April, 1809.

I. Before all letters.
II. With medallion bust of Romney added at foot.
III. Title in running and open letters.

As "CONTEMPLATION."

Mezzotint by E. Wehrschmidt. 15½ × 19½ oval (1897).

As "EMMA."

Stipple by J. Jones. H.L. 10⅞ × 9⅛.
I. The title "Emma" scratched, the rest of the inscription engraved. Published 29th December, 1785.
II. With the title engraved.
III. Modern.

Mezzotint by George Zobel. 9 × 11⅛. Dec. 14th, 1876.

Mezzotint by E. Stamp. 15 × 19 (1902).

As "EMMA," with Handkerchief round Head.

Stipple by W. Read. H.L. 5 × 3¾. Published 1st August, 1815.
I. Title "Lady Hamilton."
II. Title and Name of Engraver.

As "EUPHROSYNE."

Mezzotint by G. S. Shury. 10 × 12, oval (1898).

As "JOAN OF ARC." Head only.

Mezzotint by N. Hurst. 19⅛ × 17¾ (1901).

WITH MINATURE IN BELT.

Stipple by Henry Meyer. H.L. Vignette.
With the Name. Published 10th April, 1815.

As "MIRANDA."

Stipple by Caroline Watson. Head 7⅝ × 7.
I. Before any Inscription.
II. With the title "Miranda." Published 14th April, 1809.

Mezzotint by C. Tomkins. 7⅝ × 9 (1897)

Drawn on Stone by J. W. Slater. H. L. 5⅛ × 4¼.
Title "Lady Hamilton as Miranda," in open letters. Published 17th June.

Engraved by Journard, 7¾ × 6⅛, for the "Magazine of Art."

"In Morning Dress."

Engraved by C. Dietrich for the "Magazine of Art." (1885).
Photogravure by Messrs. Braun et Cie, Paris. (1901).
Mezzotint by R. W. Hester. 15½ × 19 (1903).

As "Nature."

Mezzotint by J. R. Smith. H.L. 13 × 10⅞.

I. Inscription in skeleton letters. The title "Nature," in open letters. Published 29th May, 1784.
II. Inscription engraved. Title in open letters.
*III. Print reduced by removal of the border to 10 × 8. Letters of title filled in.

*Mrs. Frankau in her work on John Raphael Smith gives this as the fourth state. The third state she describes as "Inscription engraved. Title partly filled in."

Mezzotint by Henry Meyer. H.L. 11¾ × 9⅞.

I. Before any inscription.
II. Inscription without name of personage, engraved.
III. "Lady Hamilton" added.

Mezzotint by Mrs. M. Cormack. 16⅞ × 19¾ (1891).

Reading the Gazette.

Stipple by F. Holl. H.L. 10 × 13. Feb. 12th, 1878.

As "St. Cecilia."

Stipple by G. Keating. W.L. 12⅛ × 9⅝.

Inscription (without title) engraved. Published 25th March, 1789.
The British Museum copy has the title in open letters.
This plate was also engraved by R. Earlom.

"The Sempstress." (Ward & Roberts say that this is Miss Vernon).

Stipple by Thos. Cheesman. W.L. 12⅛ × 9¾.

I. Before any description.
II. Title "The Sempstress," in open letters, artist's name in stippled letters, publication line in skeleton letters. Published 25th April, 1787.
III. Inscription engraved.

As "SENSIBILITY."

Stipple by Richard Earlom. Nearly W.L. 12⅛ × 9¾.
I. Title "Sensibility" in open letters. Published 25th March, 1789.
II. Letters of the title filled in."
The British Museum has a preliminary etching before any letter.

Stipple by Caroline Watson. Head 6⅛ in circle.
I. Before any inscription.
II. With the title "Sensibility." Published 14th April, 1809.

Mezzotint by J. W. Chapman. 12 × 14⅛. Sept. 24th, 1891.

"THE SPINSTRESS."

Stipple by Thomas Cheesman. W.L. 14 × 10½.
I. Before any Inscription.
II. With title, artist's name in stippled letters, rest of inscription engraved. Published 1st August, 1789.
III. With the title, "The Sempstress" added.

Stipple and Etching by C. H. Jeens. 10½ × 14. Feb. 14th, 1876.

Mezzotint by H. T. Greenhead. 15 × 21 (1898).

Boydell's "Catalogue" 1803, describes one by Tomkins 10⅛ × 14⅛ (probably an error).

As "SUPPLICATION."

Mezzotint by T. G. Appleton. 15 × 18 (1903)
Title "Lady Hamilton as Supplication."
This is a different version of "Miranda."

As "TITANIA." (Ward & Roberts say that this is Mrs. Oliver, née Shakespeare).

Stipple by Edward Scriven. W.L. 7⅛ × 9⅛.
I. Inscription engraved "proof" scratched. Published 1st December, 1810.
II. Without the word "proof."
The British Museum copy has the artist's name only, scratched.

As "A WOOD NYMPH." (The same authorities say that this is not Lady Hamilton).

Mezzotint by Valentine Green. W.L. 23⅛ × 16⅛.
I. Inscription scratched. Published 14th February, 1778.
II. Inscription engraved. Published 16th October, 1778.

PORTRAITS BY ROMNEY, WITHOUT TITLES.

Stipple by J. Conde. H. L. 4 × 3½.
With the name. Published for the "European Magazine," 1803.
Stipple and Line by J. Skelton. Seated half figure. 9 × 5¾ (1849).
Mezzotint by H. S. Bridgwater. Head and shoulders, full face. 8 × 9½ (1897)
Mezzotint by J. W. Chapman. Seated half figure. 17 × 21 (1894)

ENGRAVINGS AFTER OTHER ARTISTS.

As "Bacchante." By Sir Joshua Reynolds.
Mezzotint by J. R. Smith. H.L. 8¾ × 10½. Published September, 1784.
I. Inscription in open letters.
II. With name of artist and engraver's name and address.
III. Retouched. Engraver's address, "83 Oxford Street" erased; instead, "31 King Street, Covent Garden."
Mezzotint by J. Rogers. "Specimens of Art," Plate II.

"Emma, Lady Hamilton." By Sir Thomas Lawrence.
Engraved by C. Knight for Lawrence's private use. June 20th, 1792.

As "The Comic Muse." By Angelica Kauffman.
Line by Raphael Morghen. 10½ × 13½. With Inscription.

As "A Sybil." By Madame Vigée le Brun.
Litho by Grevedon. 8¾ × 12½.
Title "Lady Hamilton en Sibylle."

"Lady Hamilton." By J. J. Masquerier.
Mezzotint by William Say. 14 × 11. Published 20th May, 1806.

"Lady Hamilton." By De Non.
Etching by Jean Suntach. 5¾ × 7½. Title "Madame Hart."

"Lady Hamilton." By W. Bennet.
Mezzotint by R. Mackenzie. 3⅜ × 2⅛, oval. (1803).

"Lady Hamilton. By H. Sherburn.
Engraved by H. Rogers (1882).

"Lady Hamilton." Head and Bust. By Guy Head.
Litho by B. Reading. 5 × 3.

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