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**QUEEN CAROLINE**



By the same Author

THE DRAMA OF THE LAW

THE OVERBURY MYSTERY

WHAT THE JUDGE THOUGHT

SEVEN LAMPS OF ADVOCACY

THE BLOODY ASSIZE





CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES

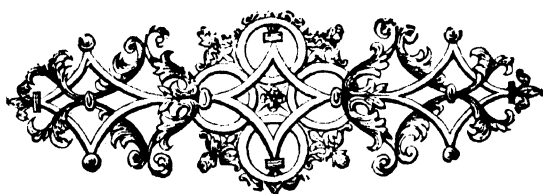
From the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, R.A.  
in the National Portrait Gallery

# QUEEN CAROLINE

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*By His Honour*  
*SIR EDWARD PARRY*

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## PREFACE

CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK has had many biographers, but they have not so much tried to tell her personal story as to make a history of her times. I set out to draw a portrait of Caroline the Woman rather than to discuss the political history in which her life was entangled. But I found that in trying to diagnose the causes of her troubles some analysis of history was necessary.

As I read what I have written I sympathise with Mr. Richard Babley in his vain efforts to keep King Charles out of his memorial. It has been the same here. Just as the figure of Caroline seems to be appearing on the screen in peaceful homely surroundings, you find hateful conspirators, with stink-bombs of calumny, lurking in her gardens, and suddenly a great junk of historical-political, political-historical debris overwhelms your heroine and the pastoral domestic scene is blacked out. You can never get away from the foulness of political conspiracies.

I soon became aware that my predecessors on the trail were wiser than I thought, when they buried themselves and their subject in masses of dockets, depositions, shorthand notes, minutes, précis, affidavits, proclamations and other memorials of official deception. *Il volto sciolto ed i pensieri stretti*, as Baron Ompteda would say. Your affidavit has an honest appearance, but after all it only asserts what some dull fool has been informed and credibly believes. The real Caroline is overwhelmed in a mass of slander and hearsay, and I am inclined to believe that the rescue of this jewel of a woman from the slag of her surroundings is not to be achieved. Nevertheless, the attempt has been an exciting and agreeable adventure.

I must admit that the history books have on occasion



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got the better of me. I plead guilty to an intolerable deal of historical and political scenery in my drama, and have allowed far too many lawyers and ministers and courtiers to tramp across my stage. Caroline's troubles so often interrupted the even tenor of her way, that it is difficult to realise that long years of her life were spent in domestic rural peace and quiet, among friends she loved. She was lonely but not unhappy, and when her enemies left her unmolested in her chosen quiet surroundings the real Caroline shone supreme.

But the difficulty of describing effectively Caroline at peace, is that all her contemporaries were mainly interested with Caroline at war. There is a voluminous record of Caroline in relation to the history of her time, but there is little or nothing of memories of those who knew her personally and cared for her as a friend. The material for a life of Caroline, the Woman, has to be searched for carefully; since it became the fashion to chronicle scandal and slander of her in her later years, and to accent her eccentricities and belittle her generous deeds.

Even my old friend Dr. Doran, who used to give me story-books in my schooldays, makes effective use of the so-called Secret Memoirs of the time at the expense of his heroine. It seems to me impertinent to criticise Dr. Doran, whose "Queens of England" I accepted as gospel fifty years ago, but reading them again to-day I am inclined to think that to treat Charlotte Bury, for instance, as a witness of truth in Caroline's affairs was an error of judgment.

I have read—I will not say digested—the scandalous chronicles, gossip of diarists, files of *John Bull* and other journals, and for my purpose they are not important. The one that is most used is *The Diary of the Times of George IV interspersed with letters from the late Queen Caroline and from various other distinguished persons*. This was published in two volumes by Henry Colburn in 1838. It took the town by storm, was a best-seller and ran through

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several editions in a few weeks. It is said the authoress received £1,000 for her share of the work.

If not written, it was certainly inspired, by Lady Charlotte Bury. Her second husband, the Rev. Edward John Bury, died in 1832, leaving her with two families to support. Her first husband, Colonel John Campbell, had died in 1809, leaving her with nine children. Caroline, hearing of her distress, offered her the post of lady-in-waiting and treated her with great generosity. Lady Charlotte kept intimate notes of the ingoings and outgoings of Caroline's household and received frank, personal letters from her. These she either sold to Colburn to be made up into memoirs, or perhaps wrote the book herself, though it appears to be written by a man. The only excuse for Lady Charlotte Bury was that in 1838 she was probably hard-up and £1,000 was a fortune for her. She wrote a lot of fiction and much of the Diary is of the same stamp as her novels. It is only fair to her to say she does not attribute any evil-doing to Caroline, who to the end treated her with much kindness, sending her 1,000 ducats from Genoa during her later travels in answer to an appeal.

Ill-natured gossip about a benefactress, written to please prying curiosity, cannot be jettisoned altogether but must be used with discretion. For instance, Caroline is made to speak broken English written in the spelling associated with the character of a French maid in an eighteenth century farce. Caroline spoke English with an accent, of course, but not with vulgarity. This artifice is used by the author to belittle Caroline.

Lady Charlotte never acknowledged the authorship of these contemptible volumes, and I should like to believe that she simply sold her papers and someone else wrote the stuff, but the evidence points to her Ladyship as the actual author. It is true that Lady Bury instructed her solicitor to write to the *Morning Post*, to deny that she was the authoress of the Diary, or that "Mr. Colburn has

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ever 'ransacked' or had in his possession any of Lady Charlotte Bury's private papers or letters." The letter is quoted in *The Times* of February 26, 1930. Walter Scott used to deny that he was the author of the Waverley novels. Mr. Colburn may only have had copies of her letters. The solicitor is silent about the fee of £1,000.

The book was received with contempt by critics of the day. Tom Hood humorously expresses the verdict of the decent folk of his time in a punning verse :

"When I resign this world so briary,  
To have across the Styx my ferrying,  
O, may I Die without a Diary,  
And be interred without a Bury-ing."

Another lady-in-waiting, and a really faithful friend of Caroline, Lady Anne Hamilton, was abominably treated by some anonymous scribbler who issued in 1832 a volume, which was attributed to Lady Anne, called *Secret History of the Court of England from the accession of George III to the death of George IV.*

Lady Anne took steps to disown the book. It is said that she had told some of the circumstances in the volume to a friend who betrayed her. The book is written with a creditable detestation of Caroline's persecutors, and in both these volumes there is no doubt much that is not fiction. But they do not help one to realise what Caroline was really like, and what in fact she did, and how she spent her days during the long and somewhat lonely years when her enemies allowed her to live in peace.

There is no domestic life in these volumes. You can find some entertainment in them, but not real facts or true records of human life. It is as if, in pictorial memoirs, you were to go to Gillray rather than Lawrence for a portrait of a lady of the period.

The continuous slanders and libels broadcast by the King and his friends can nearly all be traced to their sources, which are seldom reputable. But of course quite

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worthy and respectable people will repeat common rumour. When a club friend tells you of a disreputable action by an eminent politician whose views he dislikes, and asks you what you have to say about it, the best reply to the gambit is to say that you are sure it is untrue. If he continues with the move of a Bishop, who told it in confidence to his uncle, who is an Archdeacon, you can proceed to checkmate, by telling him that you rather expected that was the source of it.

But seriously, the psychology—or perhaps one should say pathology—of historical, political and social testimony and rumour, requires far more study than it has yet received. You cannot merely disbelieve the facts stated in the official minute of a minister, a bulletin of a royal doctor, or a dispatch of an unsuccessful general, merely because you have generally found such things unreliable. In a police court a man found with stolen goods upon him always declares that he bought them from a man he did not know. It is an instinctive mythical defence of great ancients. Nevertheless, it must be inquired into, for in rare cases it turns out to be true. For the same reasons human testimony cannot be cast aside by any rule of thumb. It was a Cretan prophet who said, “The Cretans are always liars”; yet we are expressly told that “This witness is true.” One must always watch for the exception that proves the rule.

Although I have made a somewhat laborious search among forgotten books and papers I cannot claim to have added much new matter to the many volumes that have been published about Queen Caroline. But the Castle-reagh Correspondence, from the Record Office, and the Vizard papers, to which, thanks to the courtesy of Messrs. Leman, Chapman & Harrison, the successors of the Queen’s Solicitor, I have had access, contain matter not hitherto, I think, published at length. I have, therefore, printed some of these documents for reference at the end of the book. The complete history of the Milan Commission

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remains to be written. It seems possible from Castle-reagh's letter that, somewhere in the Hanoverian Archives, there are secret instructions to Munster and his spy, Ompteda, which would clear up such mystery as remains about the origin of the continental campaign of espionage and subornation, started by the Prince Regent against his wife.

It was well known at the time, and it appears in Castle-reagh's and Stewart's letters, that George had determined by hook or by crook to rid himself of his wife. The Douglas perjuries were accepted by him and maintained by his attorney Lowten, nor did he ever refuse to credit them. He still had hopes that they could be revived against her. The Milan Commission was a direct successor in title to the Douglas perjuries and the depositions Lowten had collected. You can trace the connexion through Castlereagh and Ompteda.

Brougham knew that the whole business was one conspiracy starting with the Delicate Investigation, but the laws of evidence and the gaps in his material made it impossible for him to give absolute proof of a continuous chain of actions and events. It was of course officially denied. Curiously, too, and possibly because of the denial, it was the common belief of the man in the street. In one of those popular ballads founded on Thomas Dibdin's *Country Club* called *The Milan Club*, this is referred to. I quote the first verse.

### *The Milan Club.*

“ Now we're all met here together,  
All birds of Brownish Feather,  
To blacken and betray.  
Pray who is such a ninny  
As not to touch a guinea,  
And while it shines make hay ?  
Why, look, here's Vimercati  
Will soon make up a party  
And pen what must be said.  
But first turn out the waiters,  
I say it—Damn all Traitors.  
Now let the Club be read ! ”

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Then there are called within the circle : Signor Diabolo, in the chair, Colonel Browne and his Italian friends, Signor Mijockey, Signor Sacky, etc. ; and then, curiously enough, " those of the Anglo Milan Club, Bobby Bidgood, Black Cole, and Sir Jemmy and Lady Douglas," Lowten's perjurers. The song ends with a chorus in praise of Eldon and Castlereagh, who complete the army of conspirators.

" Then come let's all be merry  
Here's Bags and High Down Derry  
And all the Milan Club ! "

There is nothing strange in this phenomenon. It is quite possible that some ministers and officials did not appreciate the conspiracy they were taking part in, though it was common knowledge in the outer world. Absurd instances of official ignorance of well-known facts occur in our own day. The recent long-continued dealings of some of the police with night-clubs were quite unknown to the heads of the police and the authorities at the Home Office, but to the man in the street they had long been common knowledge.

It was not Brougham's fault that he did not prove the conspiracy up to the hilt. The secret correspondence about these affairs was not available and its very existence was denied with a solemn emphasis which would not be used to-day. Modern statesmen are content with the retort courteous and the reproof valiant, the lie circumstantial being used with such rare discretion that it is, even when discovered, generally condoned as being for the public welfare.

I do not make apology for the space I have given to the reactions of Caroline and Brougham. On the whole, I think they both came out of the business very well. Their personal relations were curious and have, I think, been misunderstood. Brougham did not treat Caroline unfairly, nor was she really ungrateful to him. They were both of a high-spirited and resolute temper, and used to

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ring their own way, and the comedy of their clash of temperaments throws much light on Caroline's character.

Indeed, it is upon scraps and incidents of this kind that I have had to rely in my effort to recapture what, to my mind, is the real Caroline.

I should like to have written at far greater length of the long years during which Caroline was not a political figure, but a royal lady, deserted by her husband, alone in a foreign country, who sought to live a life of charity and usefulness. One gets glimpses, from casual letters, of the delightful lady entertaining her neighbours, men and women of intelligence and social position, with the substantial hospitality of the day. In the nature of things these records cannot be abundant either in literary quality or historic quantity. But there are some that give us a pleasant and, I think, truthful portrait of the woman herself.

Caroline was not a genius and perhaps not a really great personality among women. She had a good heart, a love of children, a real taste for interesting and beautiful things, an enthusiasm for travelling, and in spite of, and to some extent because of, these instincts, she schooled herself to live for long years in a comparatively simple, homely way and always gained the good will of her neighbours, both rich and poor.

Many speak of her royal aspect and the absence, in daily life, of any offensive expression of the caste which, in the important moments of her career, she insisted upon preserving. She was the good companion, at home and abroad, of artists, men of letters, sailors, lawyers, great judges like Sir William Scott, scientists like Volta, poets like Campbell, and statesmen, who sought her company and good will for the appreciation of her virtues as much as for the appreciation of their own interests. No less than five Lord Chancellors, at different times, were her champions and admirers—Eldon, Brougham, Erskine, Truro and Hatherley. Certainly the last two were her

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devoted friends, and respected her for herself and not for any services she could render them.

For the rest, her sad story must necessarily be the history of a husband's persecution of the wife he deserted, insulted, and hated with a coward's hate. As a royal Queen, and a Brunswicker who knew no fear, there was no course open to her but to defend her honour. She put up a great fight against the powers of darkness, but she failed to this extent, that her heroic defence cost her her life. She was always an intrepid traveller and expressed no fear of her last journey. She made her will. She forgave her enemies. She said gracious farewells to her friends. Then, womanlike, she bethought of a postscript to her will. And that she might have the last word in her controversy with the King and his ministers, and that this should be indeed the *mot juste*, she directed in this codicil that "the inscription on my coffin be—'Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England.'"





## QUEEN CAROLINE

### Chapter I: *Caroline's Father*

"He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar  
And give direction."

*Othello*, II, 3.

To appreciate the nature and character of Caroline you must remember that she was the daughter of the Hereditary Prince of the Duchy of Brunswick. The importance of the Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel family, among the aristocracies of the world, must be acknowledged, and Charles William Frederick, Caroline's father, was certainly the noblest son of that noble family.

He was born in 1735 and succeeded his father as Duke of Brunswick in 1780. In his own time he was regarded as the Admirable Crichton of Germany—one might almost say without exaggeration—of Europe.

If the Hereditary Prince had died before he reached his father's throne, he would have been cited to-day among the great generals of the age. He had an intelligence rarely to be found in successful military men. He told Mirabeau, probably with truth, that he was not fond of war. "Even if it were necessary in an affair so important to consult nothing beyond the contemptible gratification of self-esteem, do I not know how much war is the sport of chance. I have formerly not been unfortunate. Hereafter I might be a better general and yet not have the same success."

It is more than probable that he was a better general in his later years, but he had a run of bad luck and that, in the gamble of war, is fatal to fame. But when he came to England in 1764 to marry the Princess Augusta,

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the sister of George III, he was already a famous hero. The favourite nephew of Frederick the Great, he received an education in the contemporary practice of the art of war, and was given opportunities of distinction in the field of which he made wise use. So that in the later campaigns of the Seven Years' War he ultimately reached the position of second in command to his uncle.

His reputation was world-wide. "His days," wrote the elder Pitt, "are precious to Europe." His exploits on the field were the delight of the populace. His courtesy to the conquered and his care for the wounded made him as popular in France as in his own country. Voltaire, who considered, rightly no doubt, that this young soldier was "as lucky as he was audacious in action," also notes "the modesty with which he accepted the tribute paid to his deserved reputation."

The English people were wild to see him and expected of this legendary hero something wonderful in looks and stature. But he was not physically a giant, and in appearance was intelligent and thoughtful rather than vivacious. Nevertheless, the people of Harwich who had, according to Lady Chatham, "almost pulled down the house in which he was, in order to see him," though disappointed with the first sight of their hero, gave him a rousing welcome.

A leading Quaker rushed into his room and actually took off his hat to him, calling him "Noble Friend," and kissing his hand. The simple fellow explained that though not a fighting man himself, he loved those who could fight well, and with earnest enthusiasm welcomed him to England, saying: "Thou art a valiant Prince, and art to be married to a lovely Princess. Love her, make her a good husband, and the Lord bless you both."

And though the English people came to love his daughter Caroline, in later years, for her own sake, yet many of the older generation doubtless welcomed her first arrival on our shores because she was the daughter of the soldier hero who had fought and bled for England,

## *Caroline's Father*

whom they had seen with their own eyes when he came to marry their Princess.

The Court, however, showed him little civility. The King and Queen did not even allow the Court servants to put on their new clothes, or give orders to the gunner to fire off the usual congratulatory guns.

To understand why the Court behaved so shabbily to their guest we must remember that George III's Queen, Charlotte Sophia, was a Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the ducal possession of her brother. Frederick the Great had invaded this little dominion, and Charlotte had written him a very pertinent letter about the insolence of his soldiers and the misery of her people, pointing out that "the same success that has covered you with laurels has overspread the country of Mecklenburgh with desolation." One cannot, therefore, be surprised that Charlotte Sophia was not eager to show courtesy to Frederick the Great's favourite nephew and most successful general. We shall find, later on, that there was no love lost between our Caroline and Queen Charlotte. These family quarrels are insipid and savourless enough, but if you have a catholic taste for history you must accept such condiments occasionally as flavouring historical research with human nature.

Of course, the incivility of the Court made the people more intent on welcoming their hero. At the theatre and the opera all sorts and conditions of men and women crowded to see and cheer the young hero and his bride. The marriage was solemnized at St. James's on January 16th, 1764. The bride and bridegroom received a loving farewell from the country people on the Harwich road, they had a triumphant journey through Holland and Germany, and were received with joy by their own people at Brunswick.

There were six children of the marriage, two daughters and four sons. Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, whose career we are to follow, was the third child and was born in

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1768, and to appreciate her history you should always bear in mind not only that she was a Brunswicker-Wolfenbüttel, but what it meant to her to be a Brunswicker. Also, she never forgot that she was the daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, and from her earliest days she looked up to her father as a hero and statesman of world-wide renown. She used to say in after years : " My father was a hero : they married me to a zero."

It may sound to modern ears a matter of small significance to be born a Brunswicker, but a hundred years ago the breed of a princess was as important in the Courts of Europe as the breed of a Pekinese would be at a dog show of to-day. In the present age an hereditary prince is only met with in *opéra bouffe* or romance. But when Caroline was a little girl " family " was of the essence of well-being, and the fact that she was a Brunswicker and the daughter of the greatest warrior and wisest statesman that had ever been the head of this noble family, was a matter that was instilled into the child's mind from the earliest and never left her.

There is an anecdote of nursery days which illustrates what I mean. Brunswick was making holiday and a nurse attendant accompanies the child to the Carousel. Naturally, the little lady seeing other children jumping on to the horses of the roundabouts desires to follow their example. The good nurse, true to type, warns her charge that the circular motion of the machine might make her sick and giddy. The child replies at once : "*Ein Braunschweiger darf alles. Furcht ist ein Wort den ein Braunschweiger kennt nicht.*" (A Brunswicker dare do anything. Fear is a word of which a Brunswicker is ignorant.) I like to think little Caroline had her ride and went back to the Palace and told Papa about it. I am sure he approved in his heart, if not with words, and that Mamma laughed at the adventure ; otherwise it would not have been handed down among the courtiers as a family anecdote. And on the giddy-go-round of the world, until the last moment of

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her troubled life, you can see her laughing at fear and justifying her whims of the moment with the thought, *Ein Braunschweiger darf alles*.

That some of her brothers were mentally afflicted seems to show that there was a trace of insanity in Caroline's family which should not be overlooked in considering some of her more eccentric actions. But that the Brunswickers were a brave race seems proved by two of her brothers' careers, for Frederick was an eager soldier and fell at Quatre Bras, and her younger brother, Leopold, was drowned in a noble attempt to save human life when the River Oder burst its banks in 1785. The Duke's natural son, Forstenberg, who was said to inherit his father's military genius, also fell in battle. The Brunswickers were truly a lion-hearted race and Caroline inherited the bravery of her house.

The girl naturally regarded her father with admiration and awe. In the Court of Brunswick, in which she was brought up, she saw him receiving embassies from the Courts of Europe and if she mistook him for a great statesman and an all-wise, all-conquering general, it was an error shared by others and was natural enough in a daughter. Caroline was but twelve years old when, in 1780, the old Duke died and her father came into his kingdom. He was then renowned as the hero of Krefeldt and Minden, and he began to set his dukedom in order, combining intelligent charity with just dealing and liberal treatment of all classes, even calling Jews to his counsel. He reduced taxation, widened the scope of education and became "a prince adored by his subjects." We shall find that his daughter had similar qualities.

Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice has made a very careful historical study of the Duke and it would be interesting to follow some of the details of his career, but for our purposes we only want to know the kind of ideals and notions that such a man would leave in the mind of his daughter Caroline. We desire to picture her young

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environment, and the curious mixture of dignity, ceremonial, independence and liberal thought by which the girl was surrounded. For unless you can do this you will not find it easy to interpret her actions and account for her misfortunes.

The Hereditary Prince was, as we have said, a favourite of Frederick the Great, who in the campaigns of 1760-61 gave him the command of English troops because he was swift in execution and "prone to strokes like themselves." The soldiers delighted in the "Erbprinz" as a colonel, and it was through the returned service-men, who sang his praises, that the English people first heard of the Brunswicker who was to marry their Princess and whose daughter was afterwards to be their Queen.

But when Frederick the Great died in 1786, the Duke had no strong master he could respect and obey. The Frederick William who succeeded was truly a Frederick the Little, a mere pleasure-seeking princeling of negligible competence; and as Carlyle sums it up in his terse, picturesque way, his reign was to be a jumble of "sensualities, unctuous ostentations, imbecilities, culminating in Jena twenty years hence."

It was on September 20th, 1792, that the great Duke had his first serious reverse when, at the head of the Prussian host, he was defeated at Valmy by General Dumouriez, the "wiry, elastic movement man," "one of Heaven's Swiss," as Carlyle calls him, with his ragged army. What is to be said of Valmy, Carlyle has set down in his chapter, "September in Argonne," in the *French Revolution*.

The Duke, however, is acknowledged to have made a masterly retreat, and a year afterwards he is back again at the head of a great army of Prussian and Austrian troops, the chosen Field-Marshal of Vienna and Berlin. In the year 1793 Louis XVI is sent to the guillotine. The great Dumouriez has fled to England. Several of the best French generals have been executed, others are in exile.

## *Caroline's Father*

The case is altered. The luck of war is once again with the Duke.

By the end of 1792 the Duke had already retaken Frankfurt, Mayence fell in July of 1793, and the Duke's armies were driving the French before them back into their own country. He took up his stand with his main army, which he commanded in person, at Pirmasens. This was a position between the French armies of the Moselle and the Rhine, and his intention was "to roll up the former on the one side on his right wing, or turn the latter on the left wing of the lines of Weissenberg by passing through the valley of the Lauter." On August 15th the Duke himself led a storming party up the heights of Keltrich, and on September 14th gained a complete victory over the French at Pirmasens.

One can imagine the rejoicing at the Court of Brunswick and the joy of Caroline, a true soldier's daughter, at her father's triumph. The Duke, flushed with victory, demanded of the King of Prussia that he should be allowed to cross the frontier at once and that he "could not risk his military reputation by any longer inactivity." He asked, in confident and even haughty words, for written orders to justify inaction at such a moment. From Frederick the Great there would have been no necessity for such language, and with Frederick the Little it had no effect. He was commanded to remain at Pirmasens. The whole army "looked forward to an invasion of France." But the diplomatists of Prussia forbade any such movement.

"Think of me," said the Duke to Baron Massenbach, a young major in the German army, after their victory at Pirmasens, "on this occasion and of this hour, and recollect what I have the honour to tell you. We could have conquered France, but we are making her powerful, and we shall all go under." This was a remarkable prophecy.

In January of 1794 he retired in disgust from an



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impossible position. As he wrote to the King, "prudence requires, honour demands, resignation," and when he said farewell to Massenbach on the bridge at Mayence, the young soldier said with some truth and greater sorrow : "Yonder goes the only man in Germany with the ability to save the country and he refuses to do it."

True, he did refuse, but he could only have undertaken the task by placing himself at the head of an army that loved him, and knew that his military advice had been overruled. He was an hereditary duke owing a duty to his duchy. It was not want of moral courage that hindered him. But he was not another Napoleon. He had served his country well and successfully, as a general under a great king, but when his services were rejected, he was not the type of man to seize power by means which to him were rebellious and unlawful. He could only accept his rejection with dignity and philosophy, and return to the humbler task of state government to which it had pleased God to call him.

All his critics have urged that in this action of his life he was wanting in moral courage or, as some put it, "moral determination." Massenbach, in his *Memoirs*, says, "He would never have been so unfortunate as he afterwards was if he had possessed self-confidence and had grasped the helm of the State. . . . He had only to desire it and London, Vienna and Berlin would have fulfilled his wishes. He had strength enough in himself to save Germany. That he would not exert his strength must be his eternal reproach."

I do not call this a just verdict. As a military man he ought to have been allowed to consolidate his victory and make a peace. Who can say now what would have been the result of such action ? But it was not allowed by those whose duty it was to make decisions. The Duke was certainly not one of those Germans who desired the destruction of France. He had no respect for the *émigrés*, he regarded the excesses of the Paris mobs with horror,

## *Caroline's Father*

but his conversations with Mirabeau and General Custine show his sanity of outlook and friendship for the French people, and the best Frenchmen of the day knew him to be a friend of liberty. Like Frederick the Great, his sympathy with the good genius of France was notorious. So much was this so, that on more than one occasion in these troublous times the Duke was approached by Frenchmen, who regarded him as the wisest and best ruler in Europe, to assist in the restoration of law and order in their own country. His reply to all such invitations was : " Prudence has entrusted me with the government of a State of my own. I am the hereditary administrator of my people. That is the first duty I have to fulfil." Narrow loyalty perhaps, but a not unamiable characteristic in a prince who had the opportunity and the ability to cast himself for any part he liked to play in the drama of Empire.

And at the moment when the young Prussian officers were calling upon him to rebel against his king, and to seize the helm of State, this good man saw his duty otherwise. His place was on the quarter-deck of his own small ship among his own folk. At least, so he saw his duty, and who can fairly say he was wrong ? It may be unheroic, but if you are not built on heroic lines and your ambition in life is merely to do what conscience tells you you ought to do, it is arguable that Charles William Frederick's retirement to his Duchy was the noblest action of his life.

How Caroline may have regarded it we cannot say. She had powers of determination of her own, but never quite the sane judgment of her father. That she was glad of his return at this moment, may be reasonably supposed, as the Duke of York, who had been campaigning in Flanders and had visited Brunswick about this time, had reported favourably of his cousin as a bride for the Prince of Wales. From Caroline's point of view the return of her father, therefore, was opportune, as now this marriage business could be discussed.

## Chapter II: *Princess Caroline*

“A child of our grandmother Eve, a female ; or for thy more sweet understanding, a woman.”

*Love's Labour's Lost*, I, i.

WHATEVER verdict we may pass upon the subsequent actions of Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, it must be admitted that in her youth she was an engaging and attractive personality. Had she been born in a more enlightened age, and among people with a saner moral outlook on life and its duties ; or even, in the age in which she lived, had she been the child of a less unfortunate and important family, she might have been a happy wife and the mother of happy children.

To begin with, she was, from girlhood, far too independent and modern for the society of her time. She was the companion of her brothers in their out-door sports. Her brother, Frederick William, who ultimately succeeded his father, seems to have been her favourite. He was a year or two younger than she was and was his father's favourite son, so much so that when the Duke presented him to the King of Prussia he said, with tears in his eyes, *Sire, voici le dernier des Bronsvics*. Unhappily his older sons were nearly imbeciles, but this lad was a real Prince. Baron Christian Ompteda, who met the young man in 1791, speaks of him as polite, kind, of a good natural intellect and not without education. He was a soldier after his father's heart and was then a major and had already received the Order of the Black Eagle. He fell at Quatre Bras on June 16th, 1815.

She was her father's spoilt child, and from the earliest said her say and had her way to the astonishment and concern of governesses and ladies-in-waiting. But she

## Princess Caroline

had an affectionate nature and responded to sympathy and sensible remonstrance. As she grew up her vivacity, mental activity and habit of prompt, if often unwise, decisions, gave her a position of ascendancy in the little Court, that was not altogether in harmony with the trim ideals of the proper place of the young unmarried woman in regal society. Terror and coercion had no effect upon her conduct, but had she had wise parents and tutors, much might have been made of such a fascinating child.

Her father spoiled her and her mother was an essentially futile personality, who forbade her German tutors to educate their pupil according to the dry scholastic national methods, as these were not English, but the Duchess was not herself sufficiently educated or sensible to replace them by anything which was English and more useful.

So that when the patient tutor asked a question out of Leske's *Elements of Natural History*, such as, "In what country is the lion found?" he received the answer, "In the heart of a Brunswicker"; and the little girl's cute answer was repeated by one courtier to another, and so to her proud parents, and was entered in the diaries of the court ladies. Thus it remains with us to-day as perhaps the earliest saying of little Caroline.

Out of the mouths of royal babes all words are wisdom, yet we may sympathize with the feelings of the German pedagogue, anxious to fill the mind of his pupil princess with useful knowledge concerning the habitat of the lion.

Neither father nor mother laid any stress upon her religious education. The Duke, no doubt, expected his daughter to make an alliance of political value to the causes he upheld. This might be with a Prince whose country was Roman Catholic or of the Eastern Church, or no doubt preferably to all concerned, a Protestant of some kind. His common sense would lead him to expect his daughter to accept the creed of her husband, and therefore the technicalities of any particular Protestant creed—or indeed of any creed—were not enforced upon the young

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mind of the Princess and her education in religious matters was more or less formal. Some have seen in this neglect the cause of all her troubles, though to my mind it had little or nothing to do with them.

But the manner and customs of Court life must have affected the outlook of such an intelligent girl as Caroline. The relations between her father and mother were destructive of any real appreciation of the domestic happiness of family life. The Duke's view of things was that only private families could hope for happiness in the married state "because," as he said to his friend Massenbach, "they are free to choose. One of my class must marry according to certain conveniences, which is a most unhappy thing. The heart has nothing to do with these marriages, and the result is not only to embitter life, but also to bring the most disastrous experience on those who come after." Here he probably referred to the physical and mental condition of two of his sons.

The Duke had very little time to give to the consideration of his children's welfare. He and his Minister, Féronce, were daily engaged in schemes of business and a wide correspondence with European statesmen. When he left his bureau he made his way, not to the apartments of the Duchess, but to those of Mademoiselle Herzfeldt, his mistress, a most important lady in the Court circle. The Duchess seems to have suffered her gladly and Mirabeau, who found Mademoiselle "the most reasonable woman at Court," tells us that "so proper is his attachment, that when he had, a short time since, discovered an inclination for another lady, the Duchess leagued with Mademoiselle Herzfeldt to keep her at a distance." This alliance between wife and mistress against other trespassers is characteristic of the amenities of the Court of Brunswick.

But though they agreed in this instance to work together, it was not always so. Caroline used to say in after life that she was not sorry to leave Brunswick and

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that she was sick and tired of it ; but she was sorry to leave her father, for he was the one person she loved. When she spoke of him to her waiting-women, it was with tears in her eyes. The grown woman still worshipped the memory of her noble father, but experience had taught her how unfortunate her early training and surroundings had been for the life to which she was destined.

She never blamed her father for his attachment to Mademoiselle Herzfeldt, which had lasted for thirty years. She used to speak of this lady as " the beautifullest creature and the cleverest." But she agreed that the domestic arrangements of Brunswick led to domestic discomfort, " for though my father continued to pay my mother all possible respect, my mother could not suffer this attachment, and the consequence was I did not know what to do between them ; when I was civil to the one I was scolded by the other, and was very tired of being shuttlecock between them."

It seems quite possible that Mademoiselle was a good influence over Caroline, whose mother had no control over her, and gossiped and chattered to her daughter in a very undesirable way about all sorts and conditions of people. The rest of the lords and ladies she met at Brunswick, or on occasion at the Court of Hanover, were not people who would be likely to exercise any wise or useful influence over a headstrong girl. What could you expect of the mediocre notabilities that surrounded the young princess ?

There was, for instance, the young Walmoden, a grandson of George II and his famous mistress the Countess of Yarmouth. The old lady herself had been at Brunswick after her retirement from England. There was also a Count von Schulenberg, who recalls to mind Countess Ehrengard Melusina von der Schulenberg, Duchess of Kendal, the woman who hastened after George I when he came to the English throne, and bled the country of many thousands of pounds. Melusina is remembered

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as a woman of record rapacity, who, as Walpole justly said, "would have sold the King's honour for a shilling advance to the best bidder." But this Count Schulenberg at the Brunswick Court may have been an honest man, especially if he inherited some of Melusina's wealth.

There was a younger couple, too, Herr and Frau von Waggenheim, that we meet at the Court dances and entertainments. Dr. Doran notes that "the gentleman drank and that the lady thought the example worth following." Such were the courtiers who set Caroline the debutante an example of Court manners.

There seems some evidence that the Countess von Bade, Caroline's instructress, who was more seriously minded than the rest, did her best to instil good principles into her pupil's mind. She was a Lutheran and honestly explained to Caroline that even a governess was not always moral, and that she herself was wicked, because an evil spirit impelled her, and that she was by nature too feeble to resist.

"If that be the case," said Caroline, with pert assurance, "you are simply a piece of clay moulded by another's will."

Upon this the Countess started a discourse on the orthodox Lutheran doctrine on these difficult subjects, when Mamma stopped the discussion in the rôle of the infallible parent: "My dear, we are all bad—very bad; but we were all created so, and it's no fault of ours."

The Countess von Bade had not much chance of educating her charge in such surroundings. Another governess was the aged mother of Count Munster. Caroline was not an ungrateful pupil. For many years afterwards, it is recorded by a lady who sat next the Count at dinner, and found him "a delightful and particularly sincere person," that the Princess of Wales addressed him very graciously, saying: "That whatever little good she had in her she owed it to his mother, who had been her governess."

It was in this strange human menagerie that the young

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Brunswick lioness remained for the first twenty-five years of her life, before she went out to range the world alone, where she found little of human guidance and still less of honest friendship. The intense loneliness of Caroline from the day she left her father to the day of her death seems to me the tragedy of her career, and the way the kindly, generous, tactless woman kept a brave heart through her trials and forced some fear or respect from the jackals who beset her throughout her life, showed that the leonine nature of a Brunswicker was a real hereditary attribute and not merely a courtier's myth.

Like other young women of her age, she was of a romantic turn of mind. We read of her suffering from a severe sickness, the Court doctors unable to diagnose the cause, her mother discovering that her heart was wounded, and her father suggesting a change of scene and prescribing the seclusion of a distant country house. Her health restored, she is received again at the Court with demonstrations of joy. There is no doubt the girl was popular. Her very boldness, and her open speech to peasants and the minor officers of the Court, made her a real favourite among these classes, but the seniors and upholders of etiquette looked askance.

However, her father was glad to have her back again. The young officer in whom she had taken too lively an interest was sent to join the army at Tirlemont. At first she is inclined to rebel against his exile. A wise old lady of the Court cautions her to exercise greater judgment in future and to accept the present philosophically. She betters her mentor's advice by the cynical reply : " Gone is gone, and will never return, and what is to come will come of itself."

Caroline was always fond of travel and liked to stay at common inns or to visit cottages and talk to the women and children. She had a real love of children and was a great supporter of a vocational school of crafts which was opened in her father's reign. On this she spent her



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money freely and she had many secret charities of which there is, of course, no record : though, after she left for England, many of her humble pensioners spoke of the kind Princess with the sorrow of people who had lost a friend.

She received several offers of marriage. There was a young officer of the house of Mecklenburg put forward by her parents and rejected with ridicule. There were the Prince of Orange and Prince of Darmstadt. But like Portia she would have none of them, and railed at her fate as a princess ; though, as she was not allowed to choose whom she would, she exercised to the full her liberty to refuse those she disliked.

During the Wars, Frederick Augustus, Duke of York, George III's second son, had spent a great deal of time with the Austrian and Prussian armies, and naturally paid a visit to the Brunswick Court to see his aunt and cousins. This must have been prior to 1787, when he returned to England. It is said that he visited the Court to see his cousin Caroline with a view to making her a proposal himself. There is a story that George III gave him a splendid set of diamonds as a present for Caroline and that the Duke adorned his favourite Mary Anne Clarke with the jewels and carried her to the theatre to display them. This, I think, is wanting in authority. The Duke was in Germany following the manœuvres and fighting with our allies off and on from 1782 to 1787. During these five years he may have seen his cousin more than once, but he never declared himself as a suitor, and had he done so she would probably have added his name to the list of rejects. The story comes down to us by way of Charlotte Bury's *Diary of a Lady in Waiting*, in which the diarist informs us that she wheedled Mary Anne Clarke into showing her all her letters and papers, and though Charlotte Bury cannot be set aside altogether as a witness of the times she lived in, she was a very unreliable and undesirable gossip.

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When her book appeared anonymously in 1838 it was at once seen that it must have been written by someone with intimate knowledge of the life of Queen Caroline. It was reviewed in *The Edinburgh* by Brougham, who described it as a "silly, dull and disgraceful publication." *The Quarterly* was equally scathing. Both reviews attributed the authorship of the book to Lady Charlotte Bury, an opinion which is probably correct.

But with regard to this story of the Duke of York having himself considered making a proposal for the hand of his cousin, the mere fact that Lady Charlotte should have been on terms of intimacy with Mary Anne Clarke, the famous mistress of the Duke of York, who ruined his military career by selling promotions and official positions in the army, shows her gluttony for scandal and the type of reminiscences we are dealing with.

I doubt if the Duke of York had anything very much to do with Caroline's marriage to his brother, but that must be dealt with later. Very likely George III in the year 1794, being anxious that the Prince of Wales should marry and settle down, would consult his second son, who had certainly been at Brunswick six or seven years previously, to ask him what he thought of his cousin Caroline, and the Duke reported favourably of what he knew of her. It was thus decided by George III in November, 1794, that James Harris, Earl of Malmesbury, should proceed to Brunswick to demand the hand of Caroline of Brunswick for the Prince of Wales. But in order to understand why George III took this step, why the Prince of Wales consented to be a party to it, and why the marriage was made, it is necessary to enter upon the story of the early life of George, Prince of Wales.

### Chapter III: *The Prince of Wales*

“Behold the child, by Nature’s kindly law,  
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw :  
Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,  
A little louder, but as empty quite.”

Pope : *Essay on Man*, II, 275.

THE reasons for devoting the next few chapters to the early life of the Prince of Wales are, firstly, that he was destined to marry Caroline and become her evil genius, and, secondly, that in so far as there is any excuse to be found for his misdeeds, it lies in his upbringing and the circumstances of his youth.

But whilst admitting that he had temptations, and that his acute selfishness and greed were to some extent hereditary, nothing can extenuate the treatment of his wife. It would be unfair to compare him to Nero, Caligula, Elagabalus and fabulous human Minotaurs. But, to put it frankly, he was a decadent and degraded personality in his relations with women. In conceit, selfishness, cruelty and absolute want of chivalry towards the women he honoured with his affections, he stands unrivalled. His falsehoods to them, and the lies he told his friends about them, are so exceptionally base, and yet so characteristic, that they are important in Caroline’s story, since his treatment of his wife runs in parallel lines to the treatment of every woman he ruined.

How far these things are pardonable on account of the unfortunate circumstances of his youth, can only be decided by setting down the story of his career up to the date of his marriage with Caroline.

George Augustus Frederick, eldest son of George III and Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, was born at St. James’s Palace on the morning of August 12th,

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1762. He was therefore six years older than his future wife, Caroline of Brunswick.

The King had recently bought, for his wife, Buckingham House, on the site of the present Buckingham Palace, as Somerset House, which was the royal residence in those days for the Queen or Queen Dowager, was already considered too far east as a house for Majesty to live in. The Prince, however, was not born at Buckingham House, or the "Queen's House" as it was called, but at the Royal Palace of St. James's, where the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor attended in accordance with constitutional etiquette to greet their Prince.

His Majesty, however, remained at Buckingham House, and on receiving the glad news showed his delight by presenting the bearer with £500. The usual addresses of welcome and congratulation poured into the palace. The Protestants were especially delighted that the Hanoverian succession was established, and in their message to the King the Quakers expressed the hope that Providence would long "preserve a life of so great importance to his royal parents, to these kingdoms, and to posterity ; that, formed to piety and virtue, he may live beloved of God and man, and fill at length the British Throne with a lustre not inferior to his predecessors."

The panegyric of yesterday too often reads like blatant mockery to-day. Though of course Dr. Fothergill, the author of the address, may have thought, in his references to the first three Georges, that he was not asking Providence for too great a boon, in pleading that the baby prince should turn out "not inferior" to his forbears.

The Prince was a pretty baby, and to the delight of society, when he was but twelve days old, it was announced that he was to be on view from one to three on Drawing-Room days. Crowds of ladies flocked to see the baby and taste caudle and wine and cake—the daily expense of the latter was some forty pounds. The visitors were not allowed to touch the baby, who was railed off as he lay in

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state. Outside Court circles this novel ceremony was resented by old-fashioned people as un-English and unnecessary. The child received the usual royal christening, titles and honours were showered upon him, his establishment was discussed and settled, and wet nurse, dry nurse, governess, and rockers of the royal cradle, were duly appointed and their salaries provided for.

Everything was done that the most exacting baby could demand, and in every way George Augustus Frederick started life under the pleasantest auspices. There is a charming portrait of mother and child, by Francis Cotes, R.A., the fashionable portrait painter of the day, in which the infant sleeps on his mother's arm and is, to use the doctor's usual phrase, "something like a baby." His mother is made an attractive young woman, too, which was more than other artists have done for her, and the picture is an elegant delineation of regal domesticity.

Little George was certainly a fascinating child and had from the earliest attractive manners. At the age of three he received, as Prince of Wales, a deputation of the Society of Ancient Britons on St. David's Day. He lisped a few phrases of thanks, which delighted the loyal Welshmen, and the story was told throughout the land as a portent of the wisdom and courtesy of the heir to the throne.

It was not until 1771, when he was nine years old, that his serious education began. The King had made up his mind that he should be privately educated under his own superintendence at Kew. This decision was much criticized by the upholders of the public school, but whether Eton or Westminster could have made a reputable citizen out of George, Prince of Wales, may well be doubted.

Lord Holderness was now appointed Governor of the Prince and his brother Frederick, who was not yet Duke of York, but was known as the Bishop of Osnaburg, the bishopric and emoluments attached thereto having been conferred upon him by election when he was only six

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months old. Robert D'Arcy, Lord Holderness, had a past career as a Minister. Politically he was a mediocre placeman, with a German wife, who had been pensioned off with £4,000 a year and the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports. But as a tutor and governor to the two young princes he was probably as good as, or better than, another. He was a dull, formal man, it is true, but good-tempered, diligent and kindly. He was fond of music, and at one time had been a great patron of the opera, and it may have been in his household that the Prince was first attracted by music, his interest in which is one of the few redeeming features of his career.

Through the influence of Lord Mansfield, William Markham, Bishop of Chester, was appointed the Princes' tutor. He had been head master of Westminster. Jeremy Bentham remembers him as a tall, portly man who had married a Dutch woman with a fortune and whose business "was rather in courting the great than in attending to the school." Dr. Cyril Jackson was the sub-preceptor. He was a Manchester Grammar School boy who had migrated to Westminster, where he was one of Markham's favourite pupils.

The King's instructions to these gentlemen were that his boys should be treated as other boys were treated, and "if they deserve flogging let them be flogged." The Princess Sophia in later years told Lady Murray that "she had seen her two eldest brothers, when they were boys of thirteen and fourteen, held by the arms to be flogged like dogs, with a long whip." But the followers of Solomon, and other advocates of corporal punishment, will receive no encouragement as to the efficacy of the treatment from reading of the moral results of this discipline upon the young princes' characters.

But that it drove some classical learning into the head of the Prince of Wales may be admitted. To this extent Markham and Jackson's educational work seems to have been a success, and no doubt up to a point George III

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As pleased with them. He himself was an educationist of the Blimber type, as far as book learning went, and the royal schoolroom at Kew was "a great hot-house in which there was a forcing-house apparatus incessantly at work." The Prince and his brothers were expected to work an eight-hours day of close confinement to classics and other branches of learning. Exercise and a careful regimen of diet, laid down by the King, were the continuous order of the day, and the amusements of the youngsters were of an educational and improving character.

We read that in the garden at Kew, the Prince as a boy of twelve, with his brother the Bishop of Osnaburg, were set to dig a plot in the garden and sow it with wheat. This they were expected to attend to personally in their play-time and it was weeded carefully, and when the crop ripened it was duly reaped and harvested by the young farmers. Then they threshed out the corn, parted the bran from the meal and attended the process of bread-making. The resulting loaves were eaten at a meal at which "the King and Queen partook of the philosophical repast, and beheld with pleasure the very amusements of their children rendered the source of useful knowledge."

This kind of thing was no doubt gratifying to the parental vanity of Farmer George and his wife, but to the boys who had been swotting for eight hours at sums and irregular verbs it was a very poor substitute for a game of cricket. It is not to be wondered at that as they grew older and looked forward to freedom and irresponsibility, the chains of such discipline grew irksome.

It seems very doubtful if the placid and almost austere domestic life prescribed by George III for his children, satisfactory as it was, no doubt, whilst they were still babies, could have had anything but a depressing effect on the coarse, active, high-spirited natures of the Prince of Wales and his brother when they were grown boys. There is a description of the family life at Kew, said to date about 1775, which, though idyllic in sound to the

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parental idealist, must have been exasperating in practice to the ordinary apple-eating boys of twelve and thirteen.

"Their majesties," it is said, "rise at six in the morning and enjoy the two succeeding hours which they call their own ; at eight the Prince of Wales, the Bishop of Osnaburg, the Princess Royal and the Princes William and Edward are brought from their several houses to Kew to breakfast with their illustrious parents. At nine the younger children attend to lisp and smile their good-morrows ; and whilst the five eldest are closely applying to their tasks the little ones and their nurses pass the whole morning in Richmond Gardens. The King and Queen frequently amuse themselves with sitting in the room while the children dine ; and once a week, attended by the whole offspring in pairs, make the little delightful tour of Richmond Gardens. In the afternoon the Queen works and the King reads to her. . . . In the evening all the children again pay their duty at Kew House before they retire to bed ; and the same order is observed through each returning day."

The King fed chiefly on vegetables and drank little wine. His household was run on an abstemious if not niggardly diet, by no means necessarily healthy for growing boys. He and the Queen lived in what was known as the White House, at Kew, and as their family increased, establishments for the children were found in the neighbourhood. Thus the Prince of Wales, his brother the Duke of York, and their suite occupied the Dutch House, which became known as the Prince's House. The Dukes of Clarence and Kent occupied Cambridge Cottage, and the smaller children lived in a house called King's Cottage. Richmond Gardens are now part of Kew Gardens. They were thrown into one area, the extent of which was much the same as it is to-day, some time before 1785, and we owe much of their beauty to the care of George III who took the greatest delight in their cultivation and plantation. Under the skilled advice of Sir Joseph Banks, who



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roduced the fuchsia and the hydrangea to these new surroundings, the King sent all over the world for new botanical treasures which he housed or acclimatized in Kew Gardens. Educational and interesting as all this might have been to intellectual children, one cannot help thinking that, for boys of the type of King George's sons, a cricket pitch and a football field and lads of their own age to play with, would have done more for their moral salvation than botany and horticulture.

In May, 1776, the existing educational establishment of the Prince and his brothers was suddenly abolished and replaced by new and inferior individuals. Lord Bruce was the new governor. Hurd, Bishop of Lichfield, for whom the King had a great fondness, was the new preceptor. He was a man of feeble character and mediocre scholarship. The sub-preceptor was the Rev. William Arnold. He was a great favourite of George III, who appointed him Canon of Windsor, and Archdeacon. He died insane in 1802, but he was never a man of robust intellect and had attacks of aberration of mind at a much earlier date. Doubtless he was an able mathematician and a learned divine, but not exactly the man to gain the confidence of two lads of the type of the Prince and the Duke of York.

This change of rule came at a bad moment and started unhappily. Lord Bruce resigned in a few days, having been deeply insulted by the Prince of Wales openly correcting his Greek pronunciation. The fact that my lord was in error and the Prince was right made things impossible, and Bruce left Kew and was replaced by Lord Montague.

The reasons for the change of establishment are said to have been due to some political intrigue, but this is not very clear. The tutors did not retire in any disgrace. Markham was translated to the See of York and Cyril Jackson obtained the rich preferment of Dean of Christ Church. Lord Holderness retired to the country and

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died in 1778. But this change of tutors and withdrawal of continued and familiar discipline came at an unfortunate time for the young prince. He had no companions of his own class. He was already getting out of hand, and his new teachers never attained the authority over him that Markham and Jackson held. From a very early date he indulged in pranks at his father's expense. There is a well-known story of him at the age of ten or thereabouts putting his head into the King's apartment and shouting out : "Wilkes and Number 45 for ever !" This was no doubt mere mischief, but as time went on he became increasingly disrespectful and careless in his manner to his father, he was openly rude and disobedient to his tutors, and became furtively addicted to tippling and low company.

But, as far as tutors and teachers of accomplishments can educate, we may account the Prince a well-educated youth. His classical attainments, though not exceptional, were respectable for a man of rank and fashion, and his knowledge of modern languages was well above the average. German, the family tongue, came easily to him, but he spoke Italian and French quite fluently. In accomplishments he was supreme. Mrs. Delany, writing when he was sixteen, says: "The Prince of Wales danced a minuet better than I ever saw danced." As a musician, too, he was a very capable amateur. He studied the violoncello under the celebrated John Crosdill, and became a player of more than ordinary merit. He learned singing from Sir William Parsons, the conductor of the King's band. He could take part in a catch or glee, and became an active member of the Gentlemen's Glee Club, an association of noblemen and gentlemen who met at the Thatched House Club, under the professional guidance of Parsons, and enjoyed a convivial evening singing glees and catches in which the Prince joined in a lusty bass. This must not be confused with "The Glee Club," which met at the Freemasons' Tavern, for whose members Samuel

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Nebbe, in 1790, composed his "Glorious Apollo," which was ever after sung at the meeting as the opening glee, a custom honoured by the Manchester Glee Club to the present day.

I know that Croker said that the Prince's "voice, a bass, is not good and he does not sing so much from notes as from recollection. He is therefore as a musician far from good." This may be true enough in 1822 when it was written, but his life of dissipation would not have improved his voice, and earlier memories of it seem to show that as a young man he sang with taste and feeling and played with knowledge and pleasure to himself and others. One should not rob so unpleasing an individual of any gracious qualities, and in a music-room, among lovers of music, you meet George Augustus Frederick in the days of his youth at his best. Had he nothing to answer for but his management of his bass voice all would have been well.

Also, from the earliest he must be credited with an outward charm of manner, elegant deportment and powers of fascination peculiarly attractive to the class of women among whom he was thrown. He was always an expert in matters of dress. He had a coarse humour and was an excellent mimic. It is to his credit, too, that he was good-natured to the menials who served him. But, when you have set this much down, little else can be recorded in his favour.

By nature he was "selfish to a degree, so extravagant that he seemed to act upon the practical conviction that all mankind (including womankind) were born for his exclusive use." Everything that thwarted his desires had to be swept aside, and any check to his immediate wishes roused his enmity and prompted his instinct of revenge. The education he had received did little or nothing to rescue him from himself. His mother was inclined to spoil him, his father to repel him and cramp his liberty, and he despised the former and hated the latter. He felt

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that during the long dreary years of his pupilage he had been denied his rights, and at the age of eighteen he demanded of his father that he should be given a commission in the Army and wider personal liberty. His Majesty refused both requests, and the lifelong quarrel between father and son which disgraced the Court of England with such tragic results started from that moment. That their disputes waxed and waned and their battles raged with varying fury and energy is true enough, but never from their first open dispute was there peace between father and son. Politicians made their parties round the combatants, and the lives of many, who were outside the curtilage of these troubles, were tainted and spoiled by this hatred of father and son and the selfish extravagance of the Prince, which were the cause of so many tragedies.

We have only to deal with these matters in so far as they affect the trials and troubles of Caroline of Brunswick, and we may hope to eliminate the long-winded political intrigues which surrounded these family quarrels and affected the life and happiness of this unfortunate Princess. But the emancipation of the Prince from parental control and his unfilial conduct to his father have a direct influence on Caroline's fate.

In 1780 the Prince of Wales struck a blow for freedom, and was sufficiently supported by the King's advisers to obtain a separate establishment for himself in a portion of Buckingham House. This great event dated from January 1st, 1781. It was the old domestic trouble of the latch-key. The good King knew his son would misuse it. The elder statesmen said that some time or other it would have to be granted and there was no time like the present. The King was overruled. The Prince gained his latch-key. He was free of the town, and at every audience the ministers had to attend during the next few months, they had to listen to His Majesty's complaints of his son's misconduct and the justifiable reminder : " I told you so."

## Queen Caroline

| The Prince's first guide along the road to ruin, a highly practised and efficient tutor in wickedness, was his uncle Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland. The Duke was at this time a man of thirty-five. He hated his brother, the King, and as Mr. Drinkwater says in *Charles James Fox*, "found a graceless satisfaction in turning the Prince's apartments in the 'Queen's House' into a combined gambling-den, pawnshop and brothel." Unfortunately, the King would not allow his son to pay visits through the country to the houses of the nobility and gentry, where he might have met companions more worthy his position. His first entry into social life was under the ægis of his Uncle Henry.

There are many stories of the kind of revelry that the Duke and his friends enjoyed. At a dinner at Lord Chesterfield's house at Blackheath when the party, such as were able, left the table and went outside to take the air, one of the guests loosed a savage dog among them, which rushed at a footman and tore his arm, and then flew at a horse which he nearly strangled. This sobered the party, and those who were capable of defence banded together against the infuriated animal, which went for the Prince of Wales and might have severely mauled him had not someone felled the beast to the ground with a well-aimed blow. In the excitement, the Earl of Chesterfield fell down the stairs leading to the house, seriously injuring his head ; and when they went to pick up the Prince it was found he was too drunk to know what was going forward, so he was lifted into his phaeton, where he fell fast asleep, and Uncle Henry drove him home to Buckingham House.

The Duke of Cumberland was a coarse brute and had a contempt for his nephew's finicking ways and love of elegance. The only taste they had in common, outside the realms of vice and immorality, was music, the Duke owning a very fine collection of musical instruments. The Prince soon found that he could travel the easy paths

## *The Prince of Wales*

of profligacy without assistance, and that men like Fox and Sheridan, who were willing to entertain their future sovereign, were pleasanter companions for a youth of fashion than his blackguard uncle. The Duke is said to have nicknamed his nephew "Taffy," and, the Prince taking offence at being so addressed, a coolness arose between them, and the young man went his own way. He was from the first a master in the art of dismissing a friend or companion for whom he had no more immediate use. The Duke on his part had only taken up his nephew and introduced him to his friends, in order to spite his brother the King, and having no real affection for the youth, and no purpose to serve in pleasing him, was very ready to let him go.

Huish, in his *Memoirs of George IV*, says that it was at this period Mrs. Robinson first attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales. "She was in the twenty-first, and his royal highness in the nineteenth year of his age." Huish made a very careful study of the Prince's various amours, in the details of which it will not be necessary to follow him ; but the story of Perdita and Florizel, as the actress and the Prince were called, is characteristic of his attitude towards women and his early appetite for luxury and dissipation. These things were recounted by letter writers to the Courts of Europe, and Caroline's parents can have been under no delusion of the life and character of the man to whom they surrendered their daughter.

## Chapter IV : *Perdita*

“ . . . the hatefulness of man.  
Who spares not to end what he began,  
Whose acts are ill and his speech ill,  
Who, having used you at his will,  
Thrusts you aside, as when I dine  
I serve the dishes and the wine.”

Rossetti : *Jenny*.

It is reasonable to retell the stories of Perdita and Mrs. Fitzherbert in relation to the life of Caroline, because the Prince's apologists make kindly excuse for his misdeeds to his wife, by pointing out that he married her against his will and for reasons of state. This is not accurate in fact and one might demur to the plea. But in reading Perdita's story, which is certainly the least squalid of his amours, one finds that from the beginning of his career he had a selfish contempt for the women he purchased, and when weary of their society treated them with a meanness and cruelty which are unusual, even in a prince, and are not characteristic vices of a prodigal son.

The affair had all the makings of a royal romance. The prints and pictures of the day convince us, that when Fortune cast Mary Robinson and George Prince of Wales for Perdita and Florizel, she had this excuse, that Nature had done her best to make the puppets outwardly fitted for their parts. All the great artists opened their studios to Perdita. Sir Joshua painted her portrait at least twice and she sat to him as a model for compositions. Zoffany, Cosway, Dance, Romney, Hoppner and Gainsborough have all left us their happy memoirs of the pert angel face of the dainty actress framed generally in the curls of a saucy silver grey wig of the period. There are several portraits of this lady in the Wallace Collection and the

## *Perdita*

Garrick Club. It was a face for artists who can model dainty curves and catch the fleeting smile of a kindly, winsome face. There is an engraving of a picture by Stroehling in Huish's *Memoirs of George IV* which has always been a puzzle to me, since the figure is so unlike the idea of the woman's appearance that all the other artists have given us. But then they concentrated their energies, as a rule, on the lady's face. P. E. Stroehling was, according to the dictionaries, a Russian painter educated in Italy at the expense of the Tsar. If, as is said, he did not come to England until 1804, it is difficult to understand how he obtained a commission from the Prince to paint the famous actress, before she had become his mistress about 1779. It is said by Huish that George suggested the sort of picture he would like, and especially requested that two doves should be introduced in allusion to Florizel's lines :

" So turtles pair  
That never mean to part."

Mary is seen lying in dishabille on a sofa by a marble bath, watching the turtle doves flirting above a fountain. She has no wig on and her cropped hair is naturally inelegant, but the artist has made her a stout woman of no great beauty. The engraving is not a very expert affair, and, comparing it with the beautiful portraits by greater artists, I sometimes wonder if Mary ever sat to Stroehling in scanty draperies—even "not without some reluctance," as Huish tells us. Perhaps she refused, and the artist hired another model and, knowing the hereditary Hanoverian taste in female beauty, exaggerated the volume of Perdita's charms. Or perhaps the picture is of some later favourite of the Prince.

Of Florizel, at this age, Thackeray, somewhat grudgingly, says : " I suppose he must have been very graceful." There can, I think, be no doubt of it. He was a handsome and fascinating figure in his youth, as you may see in



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nsborough's picture of him standing by his horse, but even there he seems too carefully dressed to ride far afield. Cosway, painting him as Florizel, in gorgeous attire of silk and beads and sashes and embroidery, makes a gallant show of his masculine vanity. But even in his youth he had a flamboyant and rather puffy appearance, which would have warned a discerning man that unless he was careful in his habits, his reign as *jeune premier* would be short, and in early middle life he would be cast for the part of the fat and elderly Adonis.

Mary Darby—Robinson was her married name—was not a member of any theatrical family, and it seemed quite improbable at her birth that she should ever become a leading lady. Her father, Nicholas Darby, was an American and captain of a Bristol whaler. He was of Irish extraction. Mary's mother was a granddaughter of Catharine Seys, of Beverton Castle in Glamorganshire. She also claimed descent from the philosopher Locke.

At the time of Mary's birth, November 27th, 1758, Captain Darby lived at the Minster House, Bristol, on the Minster Green (now the College Green), near to the Cathedral. When Mary was a little girl of nine her father went away on an expedition to Labrador, where he intended to establish a whale fishery and introduce to the Esquimaux the blessings of civilization and factory labour. The adventure was a failure. The captain retreated to America. Mrs. Darby received letters from him, but these became fewer and shorter. At last it came to her knowledge that he had made a new alliance with an adventurous lady who had gone with him to the wilds of America, and that he did not intend to return to his wife and family.

Mrs. Darby's financial position did not allow her to continue at Clifton, where they had moved before her husband went abroad, and she and her children went to London and settled in Chelsea. Her husband had now returned and made some financial arrangements for his

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wife's board and children's education, and then returned to his American establishment.

About the time Mary was born, Hannah More and her sisters had started a girls' school in Bristol, and Mary when she was old enough was a pupil there. It should be remembered that Hannah More was a great friend of Garrick and had a peculiar veneration and admiration both for the actor and the man. This may account for the kindly reception the great actor accorded to Mary when in later years she came to ask his advice about her going on the stage. She was Garrick's last pupil, and his affection and esteem for Hannah More may well have been the cause of his devoting his last energies to training the girl for a successful debut.

From her earliest years Mary was a precocious child. She recited the verses of Pope and Mason and wrote poetry of her own. When they first went to Chelsea Mary had been placed at school with a Mrs. Lorrington, a clever woman who encouraged her in writing verse and assisted her talents. Unfortunately the lady was eccentric and addicted to drink.

Her father's remittances failed to arrive, and Mrs. Darby decided herself to start a school and take away Mary, who was nearly fourteen, to help her. This school made a good start, and in eight or nine months had ten or twelve pupils. When Captain Darby returned again from America, his pride was deeply wounded at his wife demeaning herself by keeping a school. He commanded her to discontinue the business and again Mary went to a finishing school at Oxford House, Marylebone.

When Mary was fifteen there was another financial crisis in the family affairs. This time Captain Darby finally deserted his wife for better or worse. Mrs. Darby and her daughter were left to fight their battles by themselves. At the school in Marylebone Mr. Hussey, the Covent Garden ballet-master, taught dancing. He introduced Mary to Thomas Hull, the actor and

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Dramatist, and he it was who encouraged her to approach Garrick.

Mary was now fifteen years old and of a commanding figure for her age. It was her governess's firm belief that her pupil possessed an extraordinary genius for dramatic exhibition, and for once the schoolmistress was right. The world contains apparently an inexhaustible supply of scholastic stage aspirants, whose performances do not as a rule meet with the same enthusiasm from experts that they receive from their governesses and fellow-pupils. Mary Darby, however, was an exception. Hussey took her to see Mr. Hull, who lived at King Street, Soho. He heard her recite some passages from *Jane Shore* with approval, and probably introduced her to Murphy.

"I was shortly after," she writes, "presented by a friend of my mother's to Mr. Garrick. Mr. Murphy, the celebrated dramatic poet, was one of the party, and we passed the evening at the house of the British Roscius in the Adelphi." Mr. Garrick was then living at No. 5, Adelphi Terrace. This must have been about 1773-74, and it may well be that Hannah More was the friend who had written or spoken to Garrick about the girl, as she was visiting Garrick about this period. If, as it says in Mary's autobiography, "it was during the last year" that Garrick played, then it would have been some time in 1776, which seems impossible. Dates in dramatic biography are often puzzling.

Garrick appears at once to have decided that Mary Darby had the makings of a leading lady, and offered her the part of Cordelia, which he proposed to teach her to play and promised that he would play the King on the first night's trial. He advised her, until the day was fixed, to attend Drury Lane as often as possible, and he gave her several rehearsals to perfect her in the part.

Mary Robinson never played Cordelia to Garrick's Lear. Whilst the rehearsals were going on she and her mother were lodging in Southampton Buildings opposite

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to the house of Mr. Vernon, the solicitor. This gentleman had a young articed clerk named Thomas Robinson, the son of a wealthy client in South Wales. When Mary looked out of the drawing-room window, Tom used to gaze at her in admiration and then, as she says in her memoirs, "turn away with evident emotion." Mamma pulled up the lower shutter of the window and told the girl to keep away from it. But the fascination of Tom overcame her sense of obedience.

Mr. Wayman, an attorney, for whom her mother had a great regard, accepted a retainer from Cupid at the request of young Tom. He invited mother and daughter to dine at the "Star and Garter" at Greenwich. Arriving at the inn, says Mary, "The person who came to hand me from the carriage was our opposite neighbour in Southampton Buildings. I was confused, but my mother was indignant. Mr. Wayman presented his young friend—that friend who was ordained to be MY HUSBAND!"

This was the way in which Garrick lost his leading lady. The young man was found to have means; it seemed to the mother to be a good match; and although the girl was only just in her sixteenth year, the banns were published and the young couple were married on April 12th, 1774, at St. Martin's Church. I have not found any entry of such a marriage in the register, and it may have been at some other church.

After the honeymoon they hired a handsomely furnished house in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. Mr. Robinson had desired that the marriage should be kept secret until his articles were over, but at length Mary's mother insisted that he should introduce his wife to his family. It turned out that he was the illegitimate son of a gentleman in South Wales whom he called his "uncle," and from whom he had money and expectations.

Husband and wife visited Bristol with Mrs. Darby, and, leaving her there among friends, paid a visit to Mr. Harris, the alleged uncle, who received them kindly.

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They then all returned to London and Mr. and Mrs. Robinson settled down at 13, Hatton Garden.

From the earliest, Mary Robinson took a real delight in the racket and luxury of fashionable life. She and her husband were constantly seen at Ranelagh, Vauxhall, the Parthenon, the opera and the play. Lord Lyttelton, George Robert Fitzgerald and other men of fashion sat at the feet of the beautiful Mrs. Robinson or were her cavaliers in the Park. She was an adept at new and bizarre costumes. One day she was the *paysanne* with her straw hat tied at the back of her head, walking with demure visage as if awed by the wonders of St. James's Street and Pall Mall. Another day she was the "dressed belle of Hyde Park, trimmed, powdered, patched, painted to the utmost power of rouge and white lead ; to-morrow she would be the accoutred Amazon of the riding-house, but be she what she might the hats of the fashionable promenaders swept the ground as she passed."

Meanwhile Mr. Robinson neglected his wife and led a life of dissipation more suited to his masculine tastes, so that within two years of marriage he was in debt and danger of arrest, and went down into Wales to beg for assistance. This was not forthcoming and, returning to town, he was arrested and thrown into the King's Bench. His father sent him £1 a week and he was offered law-writing, which he refused to do.

"In this depth of misery," says Lætitia Hawkins, "his wife was eminently meritorious ; she had her child to attend to, she did all the work of their apartments, she even scoured the stairs, and accepted the writing and pay which he had refused." Here this brave, loyal woman lived for fifteen months and began writing those poems which were afterwards published under the patronage of the Duchess of Devonshire and gained Mrs. Robinson considerable literary fame.

In May, 1776, a new Act for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors opened the door of Mr. Robinson's prison and

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the two were once more seen in the great world. Mary was intent on making some effort to provide for her husband and daughter. She met William Brereton, of Drury Lane, and he brought Sheridan to see her, and at his suggestion she once again applied to Garrick, who had just said his farewell to the stage on June 10th, 1776, but still retained his interest in the theatre.

Garrick again received her in a very kindly way. He was delighted with everything she did, both her dancing and singing, but especially with her voice, which he declared reminded him of his favourite Mrs. Cibber. The great actor at once decided that she should make her appearance as Juliet with Brereton as Romeo. Garrick himself superintended the rehearsals with detailed care, sometimes going through the whole part of Romeo himself until he was exhausted.

Her debut took place at Drury Lane on December 10th, 1776. The bills announced "a young lady, being her first appearance on any stage." The theatre was crowded with fashionable spectators. Garrick sat in the orchestra throughout the whole performance. Sheridan stood at the wings with many friends who had come to encourage her by their presence and applause. Garrick's instinct was right. The girl was an actress. She walked the stage to the manner born. She had a fine voice and Garrick had taught her to use it. The audience saw that she was beautiful and could move gracefully. They could hear every word she spoke and yet her voice was soft and musical. When the curtain fell the audience knew that a new star had risen across the footlights. Mary Robinson had arrived.

But for the intervention of George, Prince of Wales, there seems little doubt that the young lady might have had a successful career upon the stage. She played nearly all Shakespeare's heroines from Ophelia and Lady Macbeth to Rosalind and Portia. She had the assistance of her friend Garrick, who coached her in her parts until his

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death in January, 1779. Had he continued to superintend her work, it is possible he might have saved her from the hands of her royal lover.

On the 3rd of December, 1779, "by royal command, His Majesty's Servants played *The Winter's Tale*." This is the date given by Dr. Doran in his classic history of the theatre, and by all the other authorities I have seen, except Mr. Joseph Knight in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, who says 1778. My old friend Joe Knight was a great authority on the time of Garrick, and I can only think that he passed a misprint. George Prince of Wales in December, 1779, was only seventeen and a half, and was beginning to agitate for greater freedom, which he soon obtained. A year earlier, under the stringent care of his father and mother, he could scarcely have organized an intrigue of this nature with a young married woman who was the leading actress of the town.

Mary herself was only one and twenty. Her husband was a wastrel and took no interest in her work as an artist, except to come down every week to draw her salary at the treasury, which he carried off to spend in riotous living. At that time of course, as Mr. Mantalini reminded his wife, "a married woman has no property ; not a single individual dem my soul." We can imagine Tom Robinson, the rakish young attorney, explaining the true inwardness of this law to his hard-working wife.

Mrs. Robinson confessed to a "strange degree of alarm" at having to play before royalty. When she appeared in the Green Room apparelled as Perdita that elegant actor, Gentleman Smith, who played Leontes on this important occasion, complimented Mrs. Robinson on her charming appearance and laughingly exclaimed : "By Jove, Mrs. Robinson, you will make a conquest of the Prince : for to-night you look handsomer than ever."

The young princes occupied a box with their attendants opposite the royal box and, in spite of being under observation, the Prince of Wales openly expressed his enthusiasm

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for Mrs. Robinson to Colonel Lake and the Hon. Mr. Legge, who were with him in the box. Indeed he used such ecstatic and excited language, and spoke so openly that Mary could not but hear his words as she stood on the stage near their box. The Prince's particular attention to Perdita was observed by everyone, and when the royal family at the end of the play had condescended to bow their thanks to their servants, and just as the curtain was falling Mrs. Robinson recalled in after years that "my eyes met those of the Prince of Wales and with a look that *I shall never forget* he gently inclined his head a second time. I felt the compliment and blushed my gratitude."

Then began a long and highly sentimental courtship. The young Prince wrote fervent letters to "Perdita," signed "Florizel," and his young friend, Lord Malden, was Cupid's messenger. He too was new to the business of intrigue. He carries the Prince's first letter to Perdita and trembles when he delivers it.

"I hope I shall not forfeit your good opinion," he stammers out—"but——" He breaks off in confusion.

The beautiful actress picks up her cue readily enough.

"But what, my Lord?" she whispers.

"I could not refuse—for the letter is from the Prince of Wales."

Garrick had not taught the lady for nothing. She tells us how she "registered" astonishment, agitation, disbelief in Florizel, and then dismissed the ambassador with formal but doubting courtesy. What did poor Florizel think of it all when Lord Malden returned to him?

We know what Mrs. Robinson thought about it. "A thousand times did I read the short but expressive letter." Her "heart beat with conscious pride" when she remembers its terms. They correspond; but at present there is no meeting. She receives a miniature of her royal Florizel painted by Meyer. In the case is a small paper heart, on



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one side of which was written *Je ne change qu'en mourant* ; on the other, *Unalterable to my Perdita through life*.

At this time the young princes are still under strict surveillance at Kew and meetings in London are deemed too dangerous. But one night Lord Malden and Mrs. Robinson dine at an inn on an island opposite Kew. They cross the river on receipt of a signal. They land before the iron gates of the palace. The Prince and his brothers walk down to the avenue to meet them. There is a hurried interview. Noises are heard of voices "off." The fickle moon is rising. "A few words of the most affectionate nature" are uttered by the Prince, and Lord Malden hurries her away to her boat.

The result of this is that Mary determines to capitulate. "The rank of the Prince," she says, "no longer chilled into awe that being who now considered him as the lover and the friend." It must be remembered that previous to the first interview the Prince had sent her a bond of the most solemn and binding nature containing a promise to pay £20,000 to his lady love when he came of age. It was signed by his Royal Highness and sealed with the royal arms.

From this time on there were further meetings, but care was taken. The Prince was not yet established on his own, and until that was achieved he could scarcely carry off Mary Robinson from the stage and place her in comfort. Nor is it to be supposed that she would have been ready to go unless she believed her future was reasonably secure.

Whoever defined romance as the offspring of fiction and love, may well have had Perdita in his mind. Mrs. Robinson's clever literary treatment of her love affair in her reminiscences hides the facts in a warm mist of romance. The truth remains that Mary was ready to leave her worthless husband and her laborious profession to be the well-kept mistress of the Prince of Wales with a prospect of adequate compensation for disturbance.



*R. Cosway R.A. pinx.*

*L. Saillier sc.*

GEORGE, PRINCE OF WALES  
AS "FLORIZEL."

From the Mezzotint in the British Museum  
Engraved by L. Saillier from the portrait  
by R. Cosway, R.A.



## *Perdita*

That she loved the Prince in her way there is no doubt, but that she loved jewels, beautiful dresses, and the prospect of brilliant society, where she was to rule as queen, is equally certain.

The terms of her capitulation being arranged, at the close of the season, Mary Robinson, on May 31st, 1780, said farewell to the stage. She left her home in Covent Garden and migrated to Cork Street, where she lived under the young Prince's protection. His uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, was delighted with this proof of his nephew's independence and encouraged him in the intrigue.

She now enjoyed a life of great expense and ostentation. She complains of the scandalous paragraphs in the press about her and the Prince, and although she makes public appearances at Ranelagh and the Park, she coyly expresses surprise that people should crowd round to see her. How long exactly the Prince remained true to Perdita it is difficult to make out. She herself fixes the date of his desertion as 1781, but more probably it was some time in 1782, when the Prince was carrying on an intrigue with Mrs. Elizabeth Armistead, who later on lived with and married Fox. This good lady who, as Mr. Drinkwater rightly says, "settled down to a life of charming and blameless domesticity with Fox," had many promiscuous amours in early life. The Duke of Cumberland took a friendly interest in this new adventure of his nephew, knowing how deeply it would wound the King.

The Prince, who from the first could never understand why he should not have his selfish way about his pleasures without worry or trouble, sent Mary a curt letter saying they were to meet no more. Mary made vain efforts to recall him, but all to no purpose. There was an interview which produced nothing but vague friendly conversation. "I began to flatter myself," she writes, "that all our differences were adjusted. But what words can express my surprise and chagrin when on meeting his Royal

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Highness *the very next day* in Hyde Park, he turned his head to avoid seeing me, and even affected not to know me." The romance of Florizel and Perdita was over. There remained only the squalid sequel to such suits, the settlement of the question of costs.

It seems likely that the Prince left this in the hands of Charles James Fox. This was in the summer of 1782. Gossip has it that Fox for a time filled the Prince's place in the affections of Mary Robinson. It was said that Mr. Fox was so warmly attached to the beautiful Perdita that his friends at Brooks's seldom saw his face. Walpole writes that Charles Fox is "languishing at the feet of Mrs. Robinson" and that George Selwyn, on hearing this new scandal, wittily remarks: "Who should the Man of the People live with, but the Woman of the People?" Fox had recently resigned office and Lady Sarah Lennox writes to Lady Susan O'Brien, Lord Ilchester's daughter, about their defeated champion: "*Pour se désennuyer* he *lives* with Mrs. Robinson, goes to Sadler's Wells with her, and is all day figuring away with her. I long to tell him that he is superior to Alcibiades, for his courtesan forsook him when he was unfortunate and Mrs. Robinson takes *him* up."

The question of costs gave a great deal of trouble. Mrs. Robinson was in debt, and being of a literary turn she announced her intention of publishing Florizel's letters. George III got frightened and wrote to Lord North to purchase these documents. Mary sold them for £5,000, but she never mentioned the £20,000 bond. This, though bad in law, was awkward in fact, and Fox negotiated the matter with the ministry. It was commuted in 1783 for a life pension of £500, half of which continued to Mrs. Robinson's daughter on her mother's decease. This was officially recorded as in consideration of "the resignation of a lucrative profession at the particular request of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales," a pleasing example of the discretion of the Treasury in adjusting the conflicting interests of

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the King's conscience with the more urgent financial claims of deadly sin.

Mary Robinson travelled and wrote plays, poetry and romance. Her poems were very popular and the allusions to her royal lover were eagerly read by the loyal and inquisitive subscribers to the libraries. She was a dutiful daughter and a good mother, and both as an actress and a writer was a hard-working and capable craftswoman. In these pursuits she at least knew her business, even if she failed to reach the heights that her contemporaries claim that she achieved. She was a favourite with many men and women of sense and attainments in art and letters. It seems to have been her insatiable appetite for worldly things, dress, good living, the attention and applause of the gay world, that ruined her life. In the days of her vanity she was celebrated for foolish displays of vulgar ostentation, all of which are duly recorded; but a few, like Lætitia Hawkins, remember her brave loyalty to her husband in prison, and the energy with which she entered on her literary career when, deserted by her royal lover, she had to face the liquidation of her debts and the support of her mother and daughter.

She died at the early age of forty, crippled with paralysis, and was buried in Old Windsor churchyard. When the world heard that they had lost their once popular idol they dropped tears upon her shrine. For, in their way, they had loved her, and she won all sorts and conditions of people by her charm of manner and kind disposition. With one accord all paid their tribute to the departed, and even the sedate Hannah More had no word of blame for her prodigal pupil. "I make the greatest allowance for inexperience and novel passions," writes Horace Walpole in excuse for her conduct. But I think Mrs. Siddons spoke the world's epitaph on Mary Robinson: "Poor Perdita! I pity her from my very heart."

## Chapter V : *Mrs. Fitzherbert*

“ Such haughty myndes enur’d to hardy fight,  
Disdayne to yield unto the first assay.  
Bring therefore all the forces that ye may,  
And lay incessant battery to her heart ;  
Playnts, prayers, vowes, ruth, sorrow, and dismay :  
And if those fayle, fall down and dy before her ;  
So dying live, and living do adore her.”

Spenser : *Amoretti*, Sonnet XIV.

THE story of Mrs. Fitzherbert’s liaison with or marriage to the Prince of Wales, whichever you choose to rate it, is an unhappy business and it had a very direct bearing on his relations with his legal wife Caroline. Indeed, had the Prince been satisfied with one mistress, and Mrs. Fitzherbert been agreeable to accept the position as Mademoiselle Herzfeldt had done at Brunswick, Caroline would doubtless have consented to the arrangement, treating it as an accident arising out of and in the course of the status of marriage in royal households. But the affair was a curious and complicated business, and the true story of Mrs. Fitzherbert’s so-called marriage to the Prince of Wales has only been released for publication in recent years.

In 1833, after George IV’s death, a box of papers was deposited with Messrs. Coutts under the seals of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Albemarle and Mrs. Fitzherbert’s second cousin, Lord Stourton. Mrs. Fitzherbert wished to preserve evidence of her marriage with George, Prince of Wales, and King William IV, who was a good friend to her, was very willing that she should place these papers in the hands of trustees appointed by him and by herself.

In 1841, Lord Stourton thought that the time had come to tell the story of Mrs. Fitzherbert’s life, but the Duke of Wellington protested strongly against breaking

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the seals that guarded the papers. His lordship died in 1846, leaving the correspondence and papers he had collected on the subject, together with a narrative which Mrs. Fitzherbert had dictated to him, to his brother, Charles Langdale.

When Lord Holland wrote his Memoirs, the account he gave of the matter was that the marriage was all nonsense, and that the position of Mrs. Fitzherbert was really no different from that of the Prince's various mistresses. Mr. Langdale thought that this slur on the memory of his relative ought to be refuted and again applied to the trustees for leave to break the seals. Their view, however, was that the story was better forgotten.

Mr. Langdale then published his *Life of Mrs. Fitzherbert* in 1856, and the box at Coutts's still remained unopened. At some later date the box was removed to Windsor Castle, and it was not until the beginning of this century that, by permission of King Edward VII, it was opened and Mr. W. H. Wilkins was allowed to copy and print extracts from the papers it contained. He published in 1905 his *Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV*, a very thorough and elaborate biography of his heroine, which for all time will be the standard authority on the subject. It is due to the author's energy, and King Edward's sense of charity and right action, that the story of Maria Fitzherbert is no longer a mystery tainted with the whispered scandal of political busybodies.

To begin with, it seems that Maria was not the lady's legal name. According to the family records it was Mary Anne Smythe, who was born in July, 1756, just six years before George, Prince of Wales. The Smythes were Catholics, so there is no record of her christening in any parish register. Her father, Walter Smythe, belonged to a north country Catholic family. He had served as an officer in the Austrian army and, returning to England after Culloden, had married Mary Errington, a Durham lady of great beauty and possessed of a moderate fortune.



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AFTER the birth of Mary Anne they came south and settled at Brombridge, near Winchester.

The Smythes were strict Catholics at a time when the public exercise of their religion was socially inconvenient. Even when the prohibiting laws against it were not enforced Catholic education in England was scarcely possible, and the parents sent Mary Anne to Paris to be educated at the English convent kept by Conceptionist nuns.

When her father and mother came over to visit her they got tickets to see Louis XV dine in public—which in those days was one of the sights of the town. They got good places behind the barrier to watch the monarch feed. When he came to the *poulet* he pulled a chicken to pieces with his fingers, which so delighted little Mary Anne that, ignoring the notices about silence, she burst out into a merry peal of laughter.

His sacred Majesty took it very pleasantly and, calling the Duke of Soubise to his table, bade him carry a dish of sugar-plums to the fair-haired little English girl. Years afterward the Duke reminded Maria Fitzherbert—Mary Anne, the name she received at the font, seems to have been renounced before her marriage—of this incident, which in her superstitious way she regarded as a prognostication that she was to be a favourite of Royalty.

On her leaving the convent and returning home, she found a very eligible marriage had been arranged for her with Mr. Edward Weld, of Lulworth Castle, Dorsetshire. Mr. Weld was a widower of forty-four and an invalid, but he had great possessions. The young lady made no objection and they were married in 1775, when Maria—as she preferred to call herself—was eighteen.

All we know of her married life at Lulworth was that she was painted by Gainsborough, who gave her a grey wig instead of her own golden hair, which she used to wear *au naturel* despite the fashions in that case made and provided. In the year of her marriage Mr. Weld fell off his horse, and though apparently uninjured, came

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home, went to bed and died of shock. He had forgotten to sign a will making a provision for his widow, but his brother, who in the absence of children came into the estates, made her an allowance. Maria Weld returned home.

The beautiful young widow had many suitors, and after losing her father in 1778, she married Thomas Fitzherbert, a wealthy Catholic of Norman descent belonging to Staffordshire. Mr. Fitzherbert was only ten years her senior and, unlike poor Mr. Weld, who was a recluse and seldom left Lulworth, was fond of society. So the Fitzherberts not only entertained the county people at their home at Swynnerton where they lived, but came up to London to their house in Park Street, Park Lane, every season. The beautiful Mrs. Fitzherbert was in her element and was welcomed among people of rank and fashion.

Unhappily, Mr. Fitzherbert was in London during the Gordon Riots when the No Popery mob swarmed into London to pillage and destroy. He seems to have behaved with great pluck and energy in endeavouring to quell the disturbances and save the lives of the priests, but he caught a violent chill which settled on his lungs, and after a long illness he died at Nice in May, 1781, leaving Maria once again a widow.

This time her provision was not left to family charity. She had a fortune of £2,000 a year, the remainder of the lease of the Park Street house, together with all her husband's furniture, horses and carriages.

She remained in Nice for a time and then lived in retirement at Paris, but so wealthy and charming a young widow, with a house in Park Street, could not be allowed by society to desert its sacred circles. Her friends continually wrote to recall her to her social duties in England. The world of fashion was awaiting her advent. We hear of her at Brighton in 1782. Later on it is rumoured she has taken Marble Hill at Richmond. Here again she might have feared whispers of prognostication, for the

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house had been built for the fair Howard, favourite of George II, who made her Countess of Suffolk, a lady who affected such extreme propriety of demeanour that her friends assured themselves that her relations with the King were purely platonic.

But she still hung back from rejoining the world of fashion which she had quitted at her husband's death. She had been a widow nearly three years before she returned to Park Street, and the *Morning Herald* of March 20th, 1784, announced the glad news to the town: "Mrs. Fitzherbert is arrived in London for the season!"

When and where the Prince first met Maria Fitzherbert one cannot say, but one must not picture him as a recluse from women and the world after he had parted from his much-loved Perdita. He came of age in August, 1783, and established himself at Carlton House, which stood, facing the north, opposite what is now Waterloo Place, separated from Pall Mall by a row of columns, some of which now form the portico of the National Gallery.

Here he lived a life of riotous excess, and to disgust and annoy his father identified himself with Fox not only in politics, but in gambling, drunkenness and dissipation. One wonders how men like Fox and Burke and Sheridan could associate with such a shallow creature as George Prince of Wales. But politics makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows. They tolerated him as an ally, and in those days the glamour of rank blinded the eyes of worshippers to the ugliness of their idol. The Prince could entertain, he could utter popular phrases, and tell the man in the street that he existed solely by the friendship and benevolence of the people, and swear never to desert their cause; he could dance, play, sing, and was a handsome young fellow with a pleasant smile; moreover, he was a gloriously munificent host, ready to spend the last sovereign he could wring from the unfortunate taxpayers in the vanity of waste and profusion.

Thackeray's verdict is a sound one when he says:

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"Friendship between the Prince and the Whig chief was impossible. They were hypocrites in pretending to respect him, and if he broke the hollow compact between them who shall blame him?" He treated his political friends as he treated the women he ruined to give him pleasure, but grave statesmen should not have been seduced by his advances, and one cannot grieve over their betrayal. In the same way, some of the Court ladies who sought for his patronage had full warning of the price they would pay for it, and one can pass over their stories of neglect and desertion without wasting pity on them. His pursuit of the wives and daughters of common citizens in company with such foul boon companions as Colonel Hanger and Colonel McMahon are dealt with at length by Huish in his *Memoirs of George IV.* They must be borne in mind when we are discussing the rights and wrongs of Caroline of Brunswick, but the squalid details of them are happily irrelevant to our story.

The case of Mrs. Fitzherbert is, however, another matter. The lady has nothing in common with the ruck of women who hunted after the Prince's favours or the miserable creatures who fell into the snares of his aides-de-camp, Hanger and McMahon. That the Prince would meet this charming lady soon after her arrival in London was obvious; that he would admire her and seek to make a conquest was probable; but that he should really entertain a serious affection for her, and that she with her knowledge and experience should seriously return it, seems a strange romance.

At the end of her first season in London Mrs. Fitzherbert seemed eager to escape from the attentions of the Prince, or at all events to retire from his public display of admiration at theatre, ball and opera, which caused their friendship to be town talk. She spent the summer at Marble Hill, and the Prince followed her. He was now two-and-twenty and the widow was about twenty-eight; but the young man was as nearly seriously in love with her

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as it was possible for such a being to be. She was interested in the beautiful youth, proud of a Prince's devotion, and ready to listen to his suit and repel it with kindly sympathy, for she had pride enough to determine that "though she was too inconsiderable a person to become his wife, she was too considerable to become his mistress." She was a Roman Catholic, and therefore could never be accepted by the England of her time as wife of the heir to the throne and, as she knew, the Royal Marriage Act made any form of marriage, they went through, illegal. Under these circumstances she refused to give any serious encouragement to the Prince's advances. But she did not deny him her house, and when he was not at Richmond he was pouring out his laments to "my dear Charles" and to his old flame, Mrs. Armistead, who was now *de facto* Mrs. Fox.

Now, naturally enough, Fox and the Whigs did not want to be mixed up with the scandal of the Prince contracting a marriage with a Roman Catholic, and not only remonstrated with him but were ready to assist him in negotiating a surrender of the lady without the complications which might follow a religious ceremony of marriage. Mrs. Fitzherbert, however, was adamant, and made up her mind to retreat to the Continent out of the Prince's way. This was the position when she came back from Richmond to Park Street in November, 1784.

When the Prince heard that his beloved was preparing to fly abroad he and his young friends planned an attack on her citadel which they believed would cause her to alter her determination. Four members of the Prince's household—Lord Onslow, Lord Southampton, Mr. Edward Bouverie, and Thomas Keate, the Prince's surgeon—arrived at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house and, with much detail and apparent earnestness, informed her that the Prince had stabbed himself and was lying in a dangerous condition at Carlton House, and she must come at once and see him before he expired.

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The story they told sounds so silly and romantic that one can hardly understand Mrs. Fitzherbert accepting it as truth, but the men who vouched for it were in the phrase of the world "gentlemen"; and if Keate, the surgeon, added his testimony to theirs, the poor lady had excuse for believing it. But her knowledge of the reputation of Carlton House was sufficient to make her fear a trap. After much parley she agreed to go if a lady of high character would go with her. At once the name of a friend of both parties—Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire—was suggested, and Mrs. Fitzherbert consenting to take counsel with the Duchess stepped into the Prince's coach and they all drove to Devonshire House.

Now, Georgiana was the goddess of the Whigs, a friend of Fox, who had found his way to Westminster by means of her canvassing the mob with frank abandonment and ducal kisses. She had been a patron of poor Perdita and a firm friend and ally of the Prince. Whatever may have been her attachment to Mrs. Fitzherbert, her enthusiasm for Whiggery would make her a willing agent to obtain the lady for the Prince by any means short of an illegal and treasonable marriage, and she was a lively young person, to whom a romantic adventure of this nature would make an irresistible appeal. The Duchess and Mrs. Fitzherbert therefore went on together to Carlton House, where the Prince was discovered lying on a couch covered with blood.

The ladies were told a curious story. Either he had stabbed himself or shot himself or fallen on his sword. At all events, there he was lying on a couch with a wound in his side covered with blood. Why the surgeon left him in this condition does not appear. Cynics suppose that the Prince had been bled by Keate and the whole business staged with his assistance. The drama was too realistic for poor Maria Fitzherbert, who, seeing a Prince bleeding to death all for the love of her own beautiful self, nearly swooned away. This seemed to have a

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recuperative effect on the Prince, and when she comes to she is asserting with some force that "nothing would induce him to live unless she promised to become his wife and permitted him to put a ring round her finger." All this is so absurd as to be scarcely credible, but the story seems founded on statements made by Mrs. Fitzherbert in after years. The Duchess of Devonshire lent her friend a ring, Maria Fitzherbert promised to marry the Prince, who, soothed by her compliance, allowed her to depart. The ladies, accompanied by the Prince's gentlemen, returned to Devonshire House, where everyone sealed and signed a deposition of these extraordinary events.

Upon returning home, however, Mrs. Fitzherbert came to the conclusion that she had placed herself in a false position. She wrote an angry letter to Lord Southampton, declared that she had acted under duress, and the next morning she left England.

For more than a year she remained abroad, and there is much gossip extant about her doings. It is alleged that the Prince went to France incognito to visit her, but there is no evidence that he did, and it seems improbable. He was embroiled with other minor love adventures and troubles arising out of his gambling and other debts. But he still visited his friends Fox and Mrs. Armistead, who had settled at St. Anne's Hill, Chertsey, and paraded his lovelorn state to his former mistress, before whom he would roll on the floor and tear his hair, "swearing that he would abandon the country, forego the crown, sell his jewels and plate, and scrape together a competence to fly with the object of his affections to America."

You can imagine, therefore, that when, early in December, 1785, Charles Fox heard that the lady was again in England he sat down and wrote a very sensible letter to his friend, pointing out to him the dangers of the position. He writes on December 10th saying : "I was told just before I left town yesterday that Mrs.

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Fitzherbert was arrived, and if I had heard only this I should have felt most unfeigned joy at an event which I knew would contribute so much to your Royal Highness's satisfaction : but I was told at the same time . . . there was reason to suppose that you were going to take the very desperate step (pardon the expression) of marrying her at this moment. If such an idea be really in your mind, and it is not too late, for God's sake let me call your attention to some considerations."

Mr. Fox then sets out very forcibly the legal position under the Royal Marriage Act and his belief that a marriage with a Catholic would necessarily bar the Prince from succession to the crown. Any form of mock marriage would be neither honourable nor safe. "This," he adds, "appears to me so clear that, if I were Mrs. Fitzherbert's father or brother I would advise her not by any means to agree to it, and to prefer any other species of connection with you to one leading to so much misery and mischief." It is a pity Fox wrote the last phrase ; it was irrelevant to his argument and unworthy of him, but he probably thought the Prince might use it to persuade Mrs. Fitzherbert to live with him and so save a dangerous and difficult political situation.

The Prince replied by return : "My dear Charles,—Your letter of last night afforded me more true satisfaction than I can find words to express." This of course was a mere courteous falsehood, but what followed was a carefully drafted and really statesmanlike lie. "Make yourself easy, my dear friend," he continues. "Believe me the world will now soon be convinced that there not only is, but never was, any ground for these reports which of late have been so explicitly circulated." Fox seems to have accepted this not only as a denial of his marriage but of any intention to marry. This seems wanting in astuteness, but perhaps he had his suspicions and did not wish them to be verified.

The Prince when he wrote this had already arranged



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the details of his marriage. Her relations did not share Mr. Fox's moral sentiments. Mr. Errington, her uncle, promised to be present at the marriage and her elder brothers were eager for it. It appears that if the parties were married by a clergyman of the Established Church that would satisfy the religious views of the Roman Catholic Church. The Prince himself was eager not to be married by a Roman priest.

There was some difficulty in persuading a clergyman to undertake the affair. It was illegal under the Royal Marriage Act to solemnize a marriage with a royal prince, and some sort of ill-defined but terrible penalty might fall on the head of the priest who did such an act. But money will accomplish most things, and for £500 down and promise of future preferment a young curate who had recently taken orders agreed to run the risk. His name was the Rev. Robert Burt. The marriage took place on the evening of December 15th, at Mrs. Fitzherbert's house. Her uncle, Henry Errington, gave her away, and he and her brother, Jack Smythe, signed the marriage lines as witnesses. The Prince walked from Carlton House to Park Street accompanied by Mr. Orlando Bridgman, but whether this gentleman was actually present at the ceremony seems doubtful. That other of the Prince's servants or friends were present, as has been asserted, seems highly improbable. The certificate of marriage is signed by "George P" and "Maria Fitzherbert," and was kept by Mrs. Fitzherbert. It was with her papers at Coutts's Bank for many years and is now at Windsor Castle. At some time or other she had cut off the names of the witnesses, fearing, we may suppose, that they might suffer for their imprudence if the document fell into undesirable hands.

Mr. Burt was appointed to the living of Twickenham, where Mrs. Fitzherbert was a parishioner, and in 1791 he suggested that he might be made Prebendary of Rochester, but nothing came of it, and in that year he died at the

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age of thirty-one. He is said on his death-bed to have confessed the part he played in the marriage ceremony.

The actual details of the affair were not known to many at the time, but the fact that a marriage ceremony of some kind had been performed was a very open secret. The Prince's agents had been scouring the town to find a parson to do the deed and letters had passed on the subject. It was well known to Mrs. Fitzherbert's friends that she had for long stood out on the question of a marriage ceremony.

Therefore, when her own friends saw her with the Prince at the opera, or met him with her in society, there was no doubt in their minds that she was secretly married to him. This was openly talked about. Early in February rumour was busy with different versions of the celebration of the marriage. The story, says Walpole, "reaches from London to Rome." But even he cannot get any certainty out of the contradictory reports he receives and, writing to Sir Horace Mann, our envoy at Florence, admits that "I know nothing but the buzz of the day nor can I say more upon it."

But if the rumour reached to Rome we may be sure it also reached to Brunswick. Aunt Augusta would certainly hear all about it, and very probably stories of Prince George's naughty doings were whispered to Cousin Caroline in the schoolroom. Dr. Doran declares that the Prince told his mother the whole story, and adds : "It is certain that Her Majesty received Mrs. Fitzherbert at a Drawing-Room in the following year with very marked courtesy." Mr. Wilkins, however, says her name is not in the Drawing-Room lists, and that contemporary newspapers commented on the fact that Mrs. Fitzherbert never appeared at Court. The Queen may, however, have received her privately. Many ladies of the highest rank and position were satisfied that a marriage ceremony had taken place, and received Mrs. Fitzherbert without demur. It was known that she went openly to Mass, and

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this was a sure signal that according to the rites of her religion she was joined in the estate of holy matrimony to George Prince of Wales. Her Catholic friends explained this to those who visited them, and her status was unquestioned among the Prince's brothers and the wide circle of his friends.

Quite early in the spring of 1786 caricatures of the Prince's marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert were publicly sold in the shops. Gillray published two companion pictures, *The Follies of a Day, or The Marriage of Figaro*, in which the Prince is being married to Mrs. Fitzherbert by a priest who resembles Burke, the bride being given away by Colonel Hanger. In the companion piece, *The April Fool, or The Follies of a Night*, the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert are dancing a reel. Burke is fiddling with the tongs on a gridiron, Fox is drumming on a warming-pan, and Hanger dances round flourishing his cudgel. On the wall there hangs a picture labelled *Hamlet*, in which the King is George III, receiving a messenger who rushes forward, saying : " I will be brief ; your noble son is mad."

In view of the publicity of these advertisements of the marriage, and the reception of Mrs. Fitzherbert as a married woman by the inner circle of the Prince's friends, including Fox, Sheridan and the Duchess of Devonshire, it seems amazing that when, a year afterwards, on April 30th, 1787, the question of the ceremony came forward in the House of Commons, Fox should have denied that there was any truth in the rumours and have asserted that the Prince had instructed him to say so.

But this displeasing incident arises out of the life of gambling and waste that landed the Prince into a morass of debt from which his political associates were seeking to extricate their royal patron at the public expense.

## Chapter VI: *Gambling and Waste*

“For the spirit of play having overspread the land, like a pestilence, raged to such a degree of madness and desperation, that the unhappy people who were infected, laid aside all thoughts of amusement, economy or caution, and risked their fortunes upon issues equally extravagant, childish and absurd.”—Smollett: *The Adventures of Count Fathom*, chapter 50.

NEITHER the Prince of Wales nor the Duke of York could ever be made to comprehend the value of money. The novels and plays of the eighteenth century abound in such prodigals. But these are often steered to a happy ending by the intervention of a good woman, who reforms the wastrel, drags him from the brink of the pit and converts him to sanity and happiness.

No such fate awaited George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales. Nor did he ever seek it. He wallowed in vice. It was done elegantly, in beautiful clothes, amidst luxury and in a scented atmosphere. Perhaps he had heard his friend Burke say: “Vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness.” But the Prince sinned without discretion or distinction, sousing himself in the trough of the extravagance of the moment and lying inert and helpless at the bottom of it, until his friends pulled him out and tried to make him outwardly clean and presentable.

By the age of twenty his own instinct directed by his uncle, Henry of Cumberland, had enabled him to discover and practise most of the vices of the rich and corrupt few, who dominated the fast set of his day. With the exception of Lord Moira, not a wise mentor for a headstrong prince, he does not seem to have had a single respectable friend in the world. For even assuming that Fox’s friendship with such a man was human and sincere, and not merely a political alliance, no one would insult

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the brilliant orator and patriot statesman with the epithet "respectable." Though probably no one could have hindered the Prince on his downhill path, yet Charles James Fox, as his senior and friendly adviser, must take his share of the responsibility of helping him to his journey's end. One need not exaggerate Fox's personal want of discretion, for he is only a minor figure in Caroline's drama, but he plays his part in the scenes that lead up to her tragedy.

A modern writer has said that Fox's character, both public and private, was enough to make any man detest him. "He was factious, dissolute, untrustworthy, a gambler, a voluptuary, a cynical sentimentalist, and a politician without principle or even scruple." There is some truth in all these statements. As Mr. Drinkwater admits, he drank heavily, gamed abominably, and was careless but never cruel in his intrigues. But his fellow men did not detest him, for they recognized the greatness of the man and his services to the cause of freedom. He had noble qualities, beyond his unhappy vices. His friend the Prince had none. And that Fox was an evil companion for the young man cannot be gainsaid, for he not only encouraged him in rebellion to his father, but helped him on his financial road to ruin by pandering to his dissolute tastes.

The end of the eighteenth century was a period when excessive gaming was a curse and a nuisance, and George Selwyn, Lord Carlisle, Stephen and Charles Fox were the leaders of the fashion. Charles would sit up playing at hazard at Almack's from Tuesday evening till five on Wednesday afternoon. On Thursday he would make an oration at Westminster, then "to dinner at half-past eleven at night; from thence to White's, where he drank till seven the next morning; thence to Almack's, where he won £6,000; and between three and four in the afternoon he set out for Newmarket." The brothers Fox held a gambling record, when Stephen was only twenty-five and

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Charles twenty-two, and in three nights the pair of them lost £32,000.

Well might George III's parental heart feel grieved when he learned that his son, the heir to the throne, was "seeing life," as the phrase is, with such a comrade as Charles Fox. But what help was there for the poor old man? He consulted with Thurlow, his Lord Chancellor, and with tears in his eyes begged him to advise how he could save his son: "Sir," replied my lord, "you will never have peace until you clap 'em both into the Tower." But this ancient custom had gone out with the Stuarts, and this was Thurlow's way of saying that Charles Fox had better be left alone.

So the Prince went his way, and not only lost money at the clubs and at his friends' rooms, but went with Fox and others to the semi-private gaming-houses kept by ladies of position. There was money to be made by keeping these night clubs, as no doubt there would be to-day. One cannot read the stories of ill-fortune that pursued the young guardsman or midshipman, of good family, who was ruined in these hells, without coming to the certain conclusion that there was a considerable amount of cheating going on. In games played for small stakes there is no incentive to cheat, but where gambling is carried on the temptation to the low-grade individuals that haunt gambling-dens is irresistible.

The most celebrated of "Faro's Daughters," as Gillray christened the ladies who kept faro banks for all comers, were Lady Archer and Mrs. Hobart, afterwards Lady Buckinghamshire. They were leaders of fashion and closely associated with Lady Mount Edgcombe, Lady Cecilia Johnstone, and Lady Craven, then Margravine of Anspach, in the promotion of the social amenities of flirting, gambling and private theatricals. Mrs. Hobart was the chief authoress and actress attached to the private theatre the Margravine had built at Brandenburgh House. She was so stout and short that when dressed as a fairy

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she resembled a "spangle pudding," but, as many fat folk do, she danced so lightly and gracefully that a wit of the day accounted for her activity by the surmise that she was hollow.

Gillray was devoted to her curves and rotundity. You will see in his caricature of *La Belle Assemblée*, published in 1787, the four ladies offering an oblation to the Temple of Venus. Lady Cecilia Johnstone, a thin, elderly creature, plays a lyre; Lady Archer, dressed in a riding habit, leads a lamb to the altar by a garland of flowers—perhaps symbolic of the youths she had ruined at her faro table; Lady Edgecumbe, a haggard creature, offers a pair of turtle doves; whilst the corpulent Mrs. Hobart throws incense on the flames.

Lady Archer, who seems to have been one of the worst of these harpies, was a friend of Fox and had helped him in the Westminster election. She was a noted whip and drove four greys in a high phaeton, to the admiration of the mob. The satirists were never tired of jesting about the achievement of her complexion, and, as the *Morning Post* observed, "her *cosmetic powers* have long been held in public estimation." All these middle-aged leaders of fashion gave entertainments where facilities for gambling, and a freedom of manners permitted to guests of both sexes, were greatly appreciated by the bright young people of the day.

The scandals arising out of these squalid parties found their way into the journals. It was soon known that the Prince of Wales lost large sums of money at these houses but still continued to visit them. It is said he was attracted to Lady Archer's house by one of her daughters, but the greedy price which her mother set upon her, and her cynical bargaining, disgusted even the Prince of Wales. The police heard rumours of robbery and cheating at the ladies' houses. Gillray made pictures of them dividing piles of gold and notes, and quarrelling over their shares after the guests had departed. He portrays old Lady

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Archer smiling through her paint, as she turns up a card, saying : "The Knave wins all." Then she sweeps the rouleaux of gold and bank-notes from before the astonished losers, the Prince of Wales and his disgusted friend Charles Fox.

We are apt to picture an earlier century as more vicious than our own, and to thank Heaven that we are more moral than our forbears. There were of course a large number of sane, domestic citizens at the end of the eighteenth century who hated these excesses, but their attitude was not picturesque and did not attract Gillray, nor was it such good copy for the *Morning Post* as the adventures of the Prince of Wales at Lady Archer's. The bright young people of all ages are much the same ; and powder and paint, though unpleasant to look at, have a curious attraction for women. But just as to-day the street betting-man is hunted down and the turf commission agent sits at the end of a Government telephone, so in those days the small fry were prosecuted and the rich gamblers ignored, and blunt, honest Lord Kenyon said his say about it as a modern judge might to-day.

He was trying an action to recover £15, won in a public-house, and in his summing-up Lord Kenyon warned the ladies of fashion, who ran the faro dens, that they erred in thinking that they were too great for the law. "If any prosecutions of this kind," he said, "are fairly brought before me and the parties are justly convicted, whatever be their rank or station in the country, though they be the first ladies in the land, they shall certainly exhibit themselves in the pillory." Gillray, of course, took the hint and gave the world *Discipline à la Kenyon*, with Lady Buckinghamshire tied to a cart, the Judge following with birch and cat-o'-nine-tails and a placard with the warning : "Faro's Daughters Beware." A few years later, when Fox grew older and the Prince was ruined, the faro tables fell into disrepute, the ladies and one of their croupiers were heavily fined, but of course there was no



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standing in the pillory, a privilege reserved for meaner offenders.

Women and gambling were not the only conduits of waste through which the Prince poured the contributions of the taxpayer. There was building, from the days of Solomon a mania of royalty, but having this, at least, to be said for it, that it gives employment to architects, bricklayers, plasterers, hodmen and other worthy citizens.

The Prince came of age in August, 1783. He established himself in Carlton House. He took his seat in the House of Lords. He assisted Fox in his Westminster Election in company with all the pretty ladies, from the charming Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire, downwards to old Lady Archer and her daughters. He was heavily in debt when he came of age. The House of Commons voted him £30,000 to liquidate his liabilities, the King made him an allowance of £50,000 a year. He also had the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall, said to be about another £13,000.

This amount of bounty was of no use whatever to a Prince with the habits and friends of George Augustus. He spent huge sums on Carlton House, he planned and began his absurd Brighton Pavilion, he started a racing stud at a cost of £30,000, he married Mrs. Fitzherbert, as we have seen, and by the end of 1784 he was another £160,000 in debt. His early life seems to consist of recurring cycles of insolvency. Except for the magnitude of his embarrassments his career was similar to that of Wilkins Micawber, though as a royal personage his body was sacred, and that bane of the good Micawber's existence, arrest on mesne process, had no terrors for him. Nevertheless the lovely Fitzherbert, who presided at Carlton House, was not protected from her creditors and they threatened her with imprisonment; even Shylock was no longer ready to find the Prince ducats without security, and security was not forthcoming.

In 1786 there was a further crisis and at the close of

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the London season, which at Carlton House had been particularly brilliant and enjoyable, the Prince of Wales called his dear friends Fox and Sheridan into council. It was then resolved to appeal to Pitt and his Government for a sum of £200,000, which roughly represented the Prince's then indebtedness.

The King had to be consulted and he asked for a schedule of his son's debts. This was sent to him, and it included £54,000 for Mrs. Fitzherbert's jewellery and furniture. The King declined to sanction any increase of allowance. The Prince wrote to his father and threatened to leave Carlton House, turn away his suite, his servants and his workmen, and retire into private life. The King made no reply. His son actually sold off his horses and carriages by public auction. They only fetched £7,000. No doubt a large part of his insolvency was caused by reckless expenditure with corrupt and faithless tradesmen. Our system of domestic economics still invites tradesmen to give wholesale credit, charge excessive prices, and so compel the honest, who pay, to finance the dishonest, who owe.

A quarter of a million, even if a large percentage of it was excessive profit, was too much to lose ; moneylenders and luxury traders began to put on the screw ; something had to be done. The Government could not stand by and see the farce played out, and the heir-apparent living in poverty with Mrs. Fitzherbert merely to annoy his hated father. Besides, that solved no problems. The Prince had at first retired to Brighton with Mrs. Fitzherbert, where they lived very quietly. During the next year he stayed at country houses which were lent to him. But nothing happened, as the King stolidly refused to respond to his son's bluff.

The Prince was not the sort of person for whom the *res angusta domi* had many attractions, even with the society of his charming wife. His gesture of living in retirement away from the world of fashion and setting aside a portion

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of his income to pay his debts deceived no one. Everyone knew that trouble would come of it all, but Pitt and the King were glad of a respite from the scandals that buzzed round the Prince and his doings, and Fox and the young man's opposition friends were seeking to help him as soon as political capital could be made out of his squalid affairs.

To whom the discredit of the next move belongs is not clear, but it was a shrewd manœuvre. It was discovered that the Prince was negotiating a loan with the Duke of Orleans. Two women of doubtful character, friends of the Duke, were to receive from the Prince a bond payable on his father's death. These women were to be trustees for the Duke of Orleans. Never since the days of Charles II had an English Prince pawned himself to France.

Paris cackled of nothing else, for the Duke and his women, with finger on lips, told everyone the great secret, and not to be acquainted with it was to be out of the world. The Duke of Portland in Paris, on December 13th, 1786, writes to Sheridan in alarm that he has confirmation of the intelligence and that in the interests of the country the business must be stopped.

Both political parties were in agreement about the impossibility of allowing the Prince to sell himself to France. Whether he ever intended to do so, or whether the whole affair was not another bluff to draw the King into a more pliant frame of mind, remains doubtful. But at last, after endless *pourparlers*, a peace was patched up between father and son, and Pitt came forward with a scheme to pay off the Prince's debts, once again, on his assurance that, in future, his expenses should not exceed his income. It was in the debates arising out of these money arrangements that Mr. Rolle, Member for Devonshire, wanted to know the true facts about the alleged marriage of the Prince with the Catholic lady in whose company he was constantly seen.

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To the Englishman of that day, the notion that the heir-apparent could go through the form of marriage with a Roman Catholic was abhorrent. Many constitutionalists held that under the Bill of Rights such a marriage would exclude the Prince from the throne. It was, of course, null and void under the Royal Marriage Act. But Mr. Rolle was eager to know whether in fact any religious ceremony had taken place, as he would regard such an act as little short of treason.

It was on this occasion that Fox made his celebrated statement that the suggestion was a monstrous invention, "a report of a fact which has not the smallest degree of foundation, a report of a fact actually impossible to happen." Not content with this, he added "that the Prince had authorized him to declare that as a Peer of Parliament His Royal Highness was ready in the other House to submit to any of the most pointed questions that could be put to him upon the subject, or to afford the King or his ministers the fullest assurances of the utter falsehood of the fact in question." In answer to Mr. Rolle, he confirmed what he had said, by assuring the House that he was not speaking of any questions of legal marriage, but he was saying that no such thing had ever happened and the whole story was "a base and malicious falsehood." Mr. Rolle asked whether he spoke with authority. Mr. Fox declared he had spoken with direct authority. Evasive answers are often given by official statesmen, but here Fox's statements were absolute and direct denials of the true facts. And now Mr. Sheridan came to his aid and argued that Mr. Rolle should express himself satisfied with Mr. Fox's statement.

From these speeches it seems clear that, to both of his friends, the Prince must have lied in the most barefaced way. But, granting this, it appears to be somewhat reckless of them to have made a public announcement merely on the word of the Prince, when had they asked Mrs. Fitzherbert about the position and whether she would authorize

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such a statement to be made, they could have learned the truth.

Fox declared afterwards that he had the Prince's authority in writing for his statement, but he never produced it. Sheridan's position is more curious, for at a later stage in the proceedings he made an allusion to the lady which is difficult to comprehend, in which he said she was entitled to the sympathy and consideration of "every delicate and honourable mind," and that her name was one "which malice or ignorance alone could attempt to injure, and whose conduct and character were entitled to the truest respect."

According to Lord Holland, Mrs. Fitzherbert was furious with Fox for his statement. The Prince went to Grey and asked him to tone it down. Grey naturally said he should settle the matter with Fox, and then the Prince said : "Well, then, Sheridan must say something." Accordingly Sheridan did come down to the House and uttered some unintelligible sentimental trash about female delicacy, which implied the displeasure of the Prince and still more of Mrs. Fitzherbert at what had passed in Parliament, but did not directly or even remotely insinuate that what Mr. Fox had spoken was beyond or without the authority of the Prince of Wales.

This position is a little puzzling. Fox and Sheridan both knew that the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert were living as man and wife. They cannot have been ignorant of the rumours of the marriage ceremony. Fox said the Prince had denied it to him, and when the Prince went to Grey and Sheridan to have a further statement made, Fox must have known that he had been deceived into making false statements to the House at the Prince's request.

Until Mrs. Fitzherbert's papers were allowed to be published, George IV's contradiction of the fact that he had gone through a form of marriage was credible. That loyal toady, John Wilson Croker, was honoured by his

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patron with an interview at Windsor in 1825. It must be remembered that George had long before that date finally deserted Mrs. Fitzherbert.

In his statement the King gave Croker a long account of the "absurd story of my supposed marriage" in which he says : "When Fox mentioned it to me I contradicted the supposition at once with '*pooh !*' '*nonsense !*' '*ridiculous !*' etc., and Fox was quite right to deny the fact in the House." Why George should have volunteered this falsehood to Croker, and why Croker should have set it down as though it might be received as truth, is hard to understand.

The bearing of this matter on Caroline's case is to show that no statement of George or his friends, about the King's discarded wives or favourites, is worthy of any belief unless corroborated by independent reputable testimony.

The result, however, of all the lying and chicanery in the House about the Fitzherbert marriage, was satisfactory to the Prince and his friends, inasmuch as the Prince got the money he was after or, at all events, enough for present purposes. The King gave him a further £10,000 a year, and he received £161,000 for debts and £20,000 for continuing the building of Carlton House.

The Prince saw his father and after a long interview promised amendment. What he told him about Mrs. Fitzherbert does not transpire. They were reconciled and everyone was happy. At a drawing-room all the Prince's household kissed hands. The Duke of York had now returned from his seven years' absence, to the delight of all the family. On the terrace at Windsor the good King and his sons took their evening walk together, and showed themselves to the people. There was peace in the House of Hanover.

But there were storms in the House of Carlton. Maria Fitzherbert was furious at the statements made by Fox in the House and refused to see him again. Sheridan was

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still in favour and the Prince was soon forgiven, and the happy couple, once again in funds for the moment, went down to Brighton earlier than usual to open the season. "The Prince," says the *Morning Herald* of July 24th, 1787, "was never in better health or more buoyant spirits," and he and Mrs. Fitzherbert promenaded daily on the Steine, to the great admiration of the fashionable visitors that crowded Brighton.

Having gained all he wanted for the moment, the Prince made no pretence of altering his habits of extravagance or slackening his political and personal hostility to his father. George III was certainly to be pitied in the conduct of his sons. The Duke of York, whose return had been looked forward to by the King with such enthusiasm, turned out to be just such another rake as his brother, and had similar low tastes. "The Duke of York," writes Lord Bulkeley, "in politics talks both ways and, I think, will end in opposition. His conduct is as bad as possible. He plays very deep, and loses ; and his company is *mauvais ton*." Even the Prince thought his brother's style "too bad" and Mrs. Fitzherbert declined to receive his lady friend, the Countess of Tyrconnel, on the ground that she was a lady of "contaminate" character, whatever that may mean.

The good influence of Mrs. Fitzherbert over the Prince, which is spoken of by the lady's friends, seems to have been more imaginary than real. That she hated his foulest companions and grudged the money he spent at the faro tables, the race-course and prize-fights, goes without saying, but she could not check his low habits.

The noblemen and gentlemen of Brooks's gave the Prince a broad hint of what they thought of his conduct by blackballing Tarleton and Jack Payne, two of his set. But the Prince replied by starting a new club of his own under the management of his German cook, Weltjie, where he could drink and gamble with the dregs of humanity, in whose society he really felt at home.

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These doings of his two eldest sons had no doubt an injurious effect on their unhappy father, whose mind was becoming seriously affected by his political and domestic troubles. His first illness in 1765 had rendered it peculiarly necessary that he should not be exposed to worry and unpleasant affairs of business. During 1789 it became clear that he was again threatened with mental trouble and the Court and the Ministry were in fear of what might happen if he became unfit to rule and the Prince, now a man of seven-and-twenty, asserted his rights in a Regency.

It was as late as November, 1789, when the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert heard direct news of the King's illness. Rumours had been afloat all the autumn in clubs and coffee houses, but no one at Court had sent word to the Prince. He determined to see for himself what was happening and drove to Windsor. His Majesty was no doubt mad, but his medical advisers put him under no restraint. The Duke of York was already at the palace, but the King loved his second son, and he had a quietening influence on the sick man. The Prince of Wales, on the other hand, had for years enraged his father whenever they met.

That night, as they all sat at dinner, it was obvious that His Majesty was disturbed in mind. Suddenly, without provocation, he flew at his eldest son, seized him by the collar, pushed him against the wall, shouting at him that the King of England was entitled to speak his mind. The Queen was in hysterics, the Princesses screamed. The Prince released himself and dissolved in tears. The Duke of York and some of his brothers led His Majesty away to his rooms. No longer could the dread news be hidden. The King was mad.



## Chapter VII: *Father and Son*

“Up, vanity !

Down, royal state ! all you sage counsellors, hence !  
And to the English Court assemble now,  
From every region, apes of idleness.”

*Second part of Henry IV, IV, 5.*

IN order to disclose the truth about the misfortunes of Caroline, the personal conduct of her husband and the behaviour of his relations are of more importance than the political motives which prompted the movements of the minor characters in her drama.

But as the story of her life is played out in an atmosphere of political intrigue, mixed with personal ambitions, unless you make sufficient allusion to these mildewed historical records, which contain matter of no merit or importance to mankind, you cannot understand why George, Prince of Wales, married his cousin Caroline and deserted and persecuted her afterwards.

Now what Fox said in 1788 matters as little to the world of to-day as what Gladstone said in 1868. The decomposition of political oratory is a very rapid affair. But what actually happened to George III had a direct effect on the life of Caroline and her future husband. For when his unhappy father went out of his mind, his son was seized with a keen desire to be Regent, or even to take the reins of government and depose his father, and this struggle for the Regency had naturally a most unfortunate effect on the relations between father and son.

Parliament met on November 20th, 1788. Pitt wanted no interference in his government of the country by the Prince of Wales ; but Burke, Fox and Sheridan were all for the right of the Prince to be Regent and to make them his ministers. The debates on these matters are

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of no moment to this story, except to remind us that the difficulty of Fox's party was to counter the unpopularity of the Prince. The country had just had to pay his debts ; they hated his methods of life, and they still believed in his marriage to a Catholic lady. Fox would not have the face to deny this in the House again, so in his absence from the House, Grey was put up to say that " what he (Fox) asserted on a former occasion was strictly true." Mr. Wilkins, Mrs. Fitzherbert's biographer, is, I think, right in his suggestion that whatever may have been the position at the former debate " on this occasion men like Grey and Sheridan, if they did not know the full facts of the case, knew for certain that a ceremony of marriage had taken place."

No one knew it better than Fox, for Mrs. Fitzherbert would not receive him and complained bitterly of his betrayal of her in the earlier debates. Sheridan was her favourite to-day and Fox was bitter about it. Still, they all had to stick together round the Prince, and try and make him Regent, for only by that means could they gain office. In public, Mrs. Fitzherbert's marriage was denied again and again, though pamphleteers published full accounts of her wedding, and the Pittites met the denial with mock respect. In private, at Carlton House, the presiding goddess was Mrs. Fitzherbert, and no one questioned her status. Here the Duke of Portland, and the Duke of York, and Sheridan, had confidential suppers with the Prince and his acknowledged wife, discussing the formation of the new Ministry ; but to these entertainments Fox was not invited because the lady was angry with him.

Poor Fox came back from the Continent as soon as he heard of the King's illness, and found Sheridan had taken his place as adviser to the Prince. The party leaders were at sixes and sevens, and the pertinacious Mr. Rolle was determined to cross-examine him about his knowledge of the Fitzherbert marriage if he got the chance.

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Under these tangled circumstances Fox went to Bath, but "whether," says William Grenville, "he is very ill, as some say, or wants to shirk the discussion about Mrs. Fitzherbert, as others assert, I do not know." His illness, however, enabled Grey to say for him what he could not have said for himself.

Pitt's plan of a very modified Regency, with the Prince in leading strings, was of no use to Fox and his friends. They got wind of what was going forward from Lord Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, who was found to be in direct communication with the Opposition. Although he kept his secret visits to Fox from his own Cabinet, they were common property in political circles, and the caricaturists represented him taking off his coat, turning it inside out, and exclaiming : "One side will do as well as the other."

This was naturally distasteful to Lord Loughborough, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, who had marked himself down to be the new Lord Chancellor. If Thurlow rattled and kept his place that would be inconvenient to the Chief Justice. He therefore advised that the Prince should boldly seize the throne and claim to exercise all the powers vested by the Constitution in the kingly office, just as if his father was naturally dead.

Pitt and his ministers heard of this wild scheme, and let it be known that if anything of the kind were attempted Wedderburn would go to the Tower. This cooled the ardour of the revolutionary lawyer and the idea of a *coup d'état* was abandoned. Thurlow, too, came to the conclusion that his new friends were not going to succeed, and in a crowded House, with Pitt, Burke and Wilkes standing on the steps of the throne to listen to his oration, he left the Woolsack and with tears in his eyes made a speech of rare eloquence, expressing his unalterable determination to stand by his Sovereign, to whom he owed a deep debt of gratitude, winding up his peroration with the startling words : "When I forget my Sovereign may my God forget me !"

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"Oh, the rascal!" muttered Pitt, loud enough to be heard by those near him. "Forget you?" said Burke. "Why, it's the best thing that can happen to you." But Wilkes had no such charity for the traitor. "God forget you," he said scornfully, "He'll see you damned first."

And while their poor father was in the hands of the doctors and keepers, and their mother was weeping her eyes out, the Prince and the Duke of York were drinking and gambling at Brooks's, and canvassing for support for the Prince to be made Regent with the fullest powers. The Duke of York was a drunken sot in those days, and, except as a pigeon to be plucked, was not popular at the Club, but the Prince was to make all their fortunes. When he came back from Kew and, clever mimic as he really was, gave them an impersonation of the strange antics of their unfortunate Sovereign, the noblemen and gentlemen applauded his skill, and roared with laughter at his grimaces. For Brooks's, where the Princes were often to be seen, openly rejoiced at the downfall of the King, and when at *écarté* a king was played, the jest was to cry: "Damme, a lunatic!"

At first the King's doctors seem to have been afraid to treat the patient properly, for fear, if he recovered, they might be ill-treated themselves. In their deposition, made before the House of Commons Committee, they took a very gloomy view of his condition, and it seems doubtful if he would have recovered had it not been for the services of the Rev. Dr. Francis Willis.

This gentleman was regarded by the royal doctors as little better than a mountebank and a quack. He had studied medicine at Oxford, and to please his father, one of the vicars of Lincoln Cathedral, he took Holy Orders. But medicine was his real mission in life, and he had great success in his treatment of the insane, to continue which, on the lines he thought wise, he started a private asylum near Stamford. His success in mental cases was largely due, perhaps, to his character and personality. He was

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honest with his patients, fearless but light-hearted, and a man of simple, devout ways, which enabled him to gain a soothing ascendancy over the frayed nerves and irritable tempers of those under his care. From the first he gained the respect and attention of George III, and had only been with him a few hours when he took the responsibility of allowing him a pen-knife to trim his nails, and in a day or two a razor for shaving. The astonished Sir Lucas Pepys and Dr. Warren were terrified at their new colleague's hardihood. But His Majesty had found a friend, a doctor who handed him a razor because he trusted him, saying as he did so : " I know that your Majesty is too good a Christian and has too much sense of what you owe your people to attempt self-destruction." This may have been quackery from the point of view of such medical science as existed at the end of the eighteenth century, but it succeeded. It became noticeable that since Dr. Willis's arrival at Kew the King's conversation became more brisk and coherent. When free from paroxysm he was gentle and resigned and discoursed sensibly with his friend and physician, who from the first had prophesied his cure. Brooks's Club and the Princes and their friends had no use for this quack doctor from Stamford. Sir Lucas and Dr. Warren, who shook their heads and announced that the King was really worse, must obviously be right, since they were regular practitioners of the highest reputation. Sir Lucas was a martinet, and a man of firmness and determination ; and Dr. Richard Warren was a fashionable doctor earning, it was said, nearly £10,000 a year. It was ludicrous to pit a country parson, with an Oxford licence to practise, against such eminence.

Party hatred and malice seized on the evidence of the medical experts and carried the war into the sick-room of the King. Pitt and the Queen were said to be in collusion with Dr. Willis to keep the King's real state of health dark, and so hinder her son from fulfilling his legitimate ambition of becoming Regent with absolute

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powers. So satisfied were the opposition of the permanence of the King's condition, that they began to form a Regency Government, and the Prince and his brother were both to be Field-M Marshals and Mrs. Fitzherbert was to be created a Duchess and Lord Loughborough was nominated as Chancellor. This was so much talked about in the households of the Prince's friends that at a ball at Devonshire House the door-keeper announced "The Lord Chancellor," and to the surprise of the assembly Lord Loughborough entered, smiling at the lackey's mistake.

But early in February rumours came from Kew that His Majesty was better. He had been walking in the gardens and talking to workmen, his daughters had been allowed to see him, and not only did Dr. Willis report improvement, but the official doctors began to alter their tone. The greatest masters of medicine cannot support a mistaken diagnosis in the face of manifest recovery, though doubtless many a professional error lies hidden in the grave. And when it was obvious to the household that the King was sane, Sir Lucas and Dr. Warren were able to announce that their treatment had succeeded, and that the King was convalescent.

The Prince and his brother refused to believe it. They demanded to see their father. An appointment was given for an interview in the Queen's presence. The Princes arrived very late, and after a short visit drove to Mrs. Armistead's house in Park Street, where they expected to find Fox. But he had left town. There was nothing more to keep him in London, for the political game was over. The dutiful sons went to the Club, and to visit their friends, to assure them that the King was still out of his mind. When this was repeated to Lord Thurlow he exclaimed: "By God! I suppose they *wind up* the King whenever I go to Kew, for he seems always well when I see him."

When it was publicly reported that Thurlow was

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satisfied and that Mr. Pitt had seen the King, and that all the doctors agreed that there was no longer the slightest appearance of mental trouble, the popular enthusiasm and joy knew no bounds. The whole nation, apart from the political coterie at Carlton House, was, as Lord Macaulay wrote, "wild with delight."

On April 23rd, a national thanksgiving for the King's recovery was solemnized, and the political excursions and alarums of the Prince's friends were soon forgotten in new debauchery and dissipation. For some time the Queen was not to be reconciled to her sons, whose conduct to their father had caused her the greatest misery. Neither did the Prince make any effort to regain his mother's respect and confidence. The Princess of Wales, as Mrs. Fitzherbert was often called—either in derision or reverence, according to the political accent of the speaker—did her best to annoy their Majesties by making her appearance on public occasions in places where she was only entitled to be present on the assumption that she was in law and fact Princess of Wales. Her Majesty refused to receive her at Court, though she could not hinder the Duchess of Devonshire and the Duchess of Gordon from visiting with and entertaining her. But that Mrs. Fitzherbert should appear at public functions as Princess of Wales was a gross breach of Court etiquette.

When Warren Hastings' trial opened in Westminster Hall in February, 1788, it was recognized that it was going to be a political sensation of first importance. The Hall was fitted up with great magnificence. There was a royal box on the right hand of the Chancellor for the King and Queen, a box for the Princes, and another for the nobility. On one occasion when Her Majesty and her daughters made their appearance Mrs. Fitzherbert took her place in the box reserved for the nobility. The Queen, observing this, looked at her with grave displeasure, but as this had no effect on the lady, Her Majesty rose with her daughters and attendants and left the

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building. Soon after the Prince arrived and went at once to Mrs. Fitzherbert, who spoke to him very forcibly about what had happened. The Prince soon left her, but Mrs. Fitzherbert held her ground until the end of the day. This incident seemed to interest the public at least as much as the legal proceedings. The Queen indited a letter of her "high sense of her displeasure at the very marked affront which has been offered to her by the very unseasonable intrusion of a certain lady at the trial of Warren Hastings." Sheridan was called upon to draft a reply for the Prince to write, in which he cleverly made play with the words "certain lady"; and the Prince assured his mother that he was "not acquainted with any lady over whom he possessed such an undisputed right of control as to fix a personal restraint upon her actions." The Queen gave this evasive letter to Lord Aylesbury, who informed the Prince that the Queen would not receive him if this insult was repeated. The Prince handed the letter to Fox, who informed Aylesbury that His Royal Highness the Prince refused to correspond with third parties on a matter which was entirely a private affair between himself and Her Majesty. Later on Lord Thurlow was the medium of a reconciliation between mother and son, and Mrs. Fitzherbert went down to the Pavilion at Brighton, where she had less chance of endangering the family peace.

The Prince continued his vicious and extravagant life. He and Mrs. Fitzherbert were constantly in want of ready money, and it cannot be denied that she shared his mania for spending. On one occasion she incurred a debt of £1,835 which would have landed her in a debtor's prison had not the Prince gallantly fetched his personal jewels from Carlton House and pawned them to pay her debt.

It was in the spring of 1791 that the Prince made his reconciliation with his mother, and the matter is referred to in a letter of Walpole's on March 27th, in the



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following enigmatical terms : “ A gentleman who lives at the east end of St. James’s Park has been sent for by a lady who has a large house at the west end, and they have kissed and are friends, which he notified by toasting her health in a bumper at a club the other day. I know no circumstances, but am glad of it.”

So was the rest of the world. But the penitences of the Prince were never translated into good deeds, and the next scandal with which he startled the world was staged at Newmarket. It may be in this matter that he was the victim of others, for he was not a man of any astuteness ; and indeed it is more than likely that his losses at cards were due to incapacity, and in some cases cheating, rather than ill-luck. The hangers-on in his suite were some of them men of doubtful reputation who lived on their wits.

The facts of the case were unfortunate, and the Jockey Club of the day took a serious view of the business. On October 20th, 1791, the Prince’s horse *Escape*, which had the reputation of being the best horse on the Turf, was beaten by two animals of no particular reputation. Up to this time *Escape* had had a most successful career, having won at Newmarket stakes of 55, 140, 250 and 1,000 guineas, respectively. The downfall of *Escape*, and the way he ran, made it certain to the experts that he had no chance in the race of next day, and bets of large amounts were made against him. Much to the grief of those who laid odds against him on this occasion, he won easily.

This running of *Escape* created a sensation in the racing world. It was alleged that Sam Chifney, the Prince’s jockey, had won £600 or £700 on each race ; both on the day he lost and the day he won, and that a man named Vauxhall Clark, a betting man, arranged the bets for him.

Unfortunately, the Prince had no money on *Escape* the day he lost, but won four hundred guineas the next day. There seem to have been former occasions on which Chifney’s riding of the Prince’s horses had not satisfied

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the experts. Sir John Hall in his account of the Jockey Club scandal goes thoroughly into the history of the matter and acquits the Prince of any fraudulent conduct. Certainly the case is not proven against him. If it were not for his dishonest character in other financial affairs, one would have thought that it would be impossible for a man in his position to stoop to so low an act in conspiracy with a rascal like Chifney.

There was an inquiry into the running of *Escape* by the Stewards—Sir Charles Bunbury, Ralph Dutton, Esq., and Thomas Panton, Esq. These gentlemen were satisfied that Chifney deliberately lost the race when riding *Escape* on October 20th. In later years Chifney published his own account of the matter, but his lame excuses and his shifty, inconsequent explanations rather help to convince one that the Stewards' verdict was a just one.

Sir Charles Bunbury went to see the Prince of Wales and informed him of the decision, and added "that if he suffered Chifney to ride his horses in future then no gentleman would start against him." The Prince seemed to think it derogatory to his dignity to give any explanation of the matter and acted as though he had been wronged and affronted. He refused to desert Chifney and gave him a pension of £200 to be paid as long as the Prince lived. He announced his decision to sell off his stud, and this was done. He never raced at Newmarket again, though in later years his colours were seen at Ascot. As far as a mere layman can understand the mysteries and chicaneries of the Turf, there seems no evidence to link the Prince with his jockey's misconduct, and there are some who maintain that Chifney had not been swindling and that the evidence against him is not convincing.

But these scandals and the terrible state of debt into which he had sunk, owing to his continued extravagance, made it necessary for the Prince to retire into the country and live privately for a while. The King refused to pay his debts and the money-lenders refused to advance further

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loans. The friends of the Prince were not men of solvent character, and his financial outlook was hopeless.

Lord Moira, his friend and adviser, though a brave and competent soldier, was himself a spendthrift, and the bill discounters treated the Prince's promissory notes with contempt. It is stated, probably with truth, that at this time "two promissory notes of His Royal Highness and of Lord Moira for £1,000 each, and an acceptance of the late Archbishop of Canterbury for £500, were offered by a butcher in St. James's market to a notorious discounter of bills living in Piccadilly, who observed that he had never had such a trinity of trash offered to him. The whole were obtained for £250, the Prince's being valued at £150; his Lordship's and his Grace's at £50 each." The "late Archbishop" must, one supposes, refer to Dr. Cornwallis, whose hospitalities were famous, and who shocked the King and Queen by giving grand routs at his palace, but why his name on a promissory note was not as good as money I cannot understand.

But the bishops and clergy of the day were many of them, not unlike the Rev. Sampson, Lord Castlewood's chaplain, who could never resist a bottle, a bet or a game of cards. The Prince had more than one such friend. There was the famous Sir Henry Bate-Dudley, for instance—known as the "Fighting Parson"—a journalist, playwright and sportsman of whom many wild stories are told. Neither bishops nor clergy took their duties too seriously. A parishioner in a South Down parish once complained to the bishop of the diocese that the clerk had given out that there would be no Sunday evening service, as the rector was going to Lewes.

"Why is he in such a hurry to get to Lewes?" asked the bishop.

"He is actually going to ride in one of the races there," replied the aggrieved parishioner with a sigh.

"Then," said the bishop eagerly, "I'll bet you two to one he wins."

## *Father and Son*

But it is difficult to understand a man of Dr. Cornwallis's high character fraternizing with the Prince's blackguard companions—men like the infamous Colonel Hanger, Felix Macarthy, Captain Morris, Colonel McMahon, the Nymers and Pistols that sponged on their royal master and pandered to his vices.

The last effort of the Prince to raise the wind was a very scandalous and fraudulent affair, in which he was joined by his royal brothers the Dukes of York and Clarence. The story of the Dutch Loan is of interest as showing the heroic acts of dishonesty the servants and ministers of the great are called upon to perform in the cause of Mammon. The three royal brothers went to Mr. Hammersley, banker, of Pall Mall, and signed bonds for him to issue to lenders in Holland, through Messrs. Bonney & Sunderland, notarial agents, of George Yard, Lombard Street. The loan was intended to raise £350,000 at six per cent., and the security was the Duke of York's interest in the Osnaburgh bishopric and the property of the other two princes, which was to be held in trust for the bondholders by the Dukes of Portland and Northumberland.

The Princes are said to have received nearly half a million when, in 1792, the French Revolution gave them an opportunity of repudiating liability. Some bondholders came over to England, during the troubles in France and Holland, and approached our Courts in an endeavour to recover the interest on their bonds. A Mr Martignac applied to the Court of Chancery on a motion, when Sir Arthur Pigott, Attorney-General to the Duchy of Cornwall, declared that he had never heard of the existence of such bonds, and could not recognize them or, alternatively, could not admit that Mr. Martignac was a *bona fide* holder for value.

The cause was adjourned on the promise of the Attorney-General to get instructed as to what had really happened and to mention the matter to the Court again. He never did anything, and when the claimant got before

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the judge again, Sir Arthur admitted that he had forgotten all about it. The Court, therefore, adjourned into Chambers, and in the lethal chambers of Chancery poor Martignac disappeared. Whether he was squared, which seems probable, or whether he returned to his home in despair I have not discovered.

A number of other bondholders now arrived on our shores to put forward their claims in the Courts. Lord Sidmouth was Home Secretary and, as always happens in times of revolution and war, had armed himself with a stringent Aliens Act. It must have been fairly obvious to the legal advisers of the Home Office that the Chancery Court could not for long withhold a decree from these bondholders. The Aliens Act was a present help in time of trouble. The bondholders were all aliens, and troublesome ones at that, from an official point of view. Twenty-six of them were therefore arrested, and put on board a vessel in the Thames, which set sail immediately for Holland.

Mr. Huish tells us that the vessel cast anchor at the Nore, under pretence of waiting for the necessary papers from the Secretary of State's office. The horrible story which he relates in detail is, that the crew rowed to shore that night, but before they landed the vessel they had just left had sunk with every soul on board. This accident was never officially reported upon, and what exactly happened seems obscure. But no further bondholders appeared in our Courts, though in after years the bonds were acknowledged and officially dealt with by the State, either by paying them in full or compromising the claims behind the scenes.

By the summer of 1794 the Prince was hopelessly in debt. He seems to have tired of Mrs. Fitzherbert and was in the toils of Lady Jersey. This intrigue is said to have been favoured by his mother. The Countess of Jersey was, in her early days, known as the beautiful Miss Twysden, daughter of the Bishop of Raphoe. She had

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married George Bussy Villiers, fourth Earl of Jersey, in 1770, and was the mother of four children, and at this time was already a grandmother. But she was still a beautiful woman, and not without ambition and a love of power.

Though her husband was still living, she seems to have undertaken to use her faded charms to rescue the Prince of Wales from Mrs. Fitzherbert and to persuade him to enter into a marriage of convenience. The Prince was delighted with his new capture, and the caricaturists are soon busy with the latest scandal.

J. Cruikshank has a picture dated August 26th, 1794, entitled "My Grandmother alias the Jersey Jig, alias the Rival Widows." Lady Jersey sits on the Prince's knee taking snuff, and he says :

"I've kissed and I've prattled with fifty Grand Dames,  
And changed them as oft, do you see ;  
But of all the Grand Mammys that dance on the Steine,  
The widow of Jersey give me."

In this detail the caricaturist was wrong. Her ladyship was not a widow. Her husband had recently been made lord of the bedchamber and master of the horse to the Prince of Wales, and he did not die until 1805.

The Prince having made up his mind to desert Mrs. Fitzherbert, did so with even less courtesy than he had used towards Mrs. Robinson. The blow fell upon her quite unexpectedly. There was no quarrel or even coolness between them, and Mrs. Fitzherbert had always treated his infidelities with much tolerance. Therefore, even if she had her suspicions about Lady Jersey they did not greatly disturb her.

One evening in June, 1794, she was to have dined with the Prince at the Duke of Clarence's, at Bushey. When she arrived at his house she received a letter from the Prince written at Brighton, in which he said he would never enter her house again. Only the day before he had written to her in his usual strain of affection, signing

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himself "Ever thine, G. P." It was a terrible blow to the poor lady, after nearly nine years of what she had satisfied herself was married life, to be discarded in this brutal and inhuman manner as though she had been a casual lady of pleasure. But that was characteristic of the selfish nature of George, Prince of Wales.

It was politically necessary that he should get rid of his first wife and cancel the illegal ceremony of marriage by an open renunciation. Mrs. Fitzherbert was sacrificed to his need of money. It was necessary the Prince should make a marriage with a Protestant Princess and he had agreed with his father that in consideration of his debts being paid he would give his hand to his cousin Caroline. Later on Mrs. Fitzherbert received a pension of £3,000 a year.

In August the King wrote to Pitt that the Prince had agreed to marry his cousin, the Princess of Brunswick, and "lead a life that would make him appear respectable and consequently render the Princess happy." In November the Earl of Malmesbury was sent on a formal visit to Brunswick to propose for Caroline's hand, and on December 30th the happy event was announced in both Houses of Parliament with His Majesty's hopes that his faithful Commons would share his domestic happiness at his son's marriage and "enable me to make provisions for such an establishment as you may think suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir apparent to the Crown of these kingdoms."

The people were under no delusion about what this meant ; but, had the Prince honestly endeavoured to appear respectable and make his wife happy, they would not have grudged the price of such a desirable reformation.

## Chapter VIII: *Lord Malmesbury's Mission*

“There were never so many historians : it is, indeed, good and of use to read them, for they furnish us everywhere with excellent and laudable instructions from the magazine of their memory, which, doubtless, is of great concern to the help of life ; but 'tis not that we seek for now : we examine whether these relators and collectors of things are commendable themselves.”—Michel de Montaigne : *Of the Art of Conference. Essays, Book III, chapter 8.*

JAMES HARRIS, first Earl of Malmesbury, was a man of nearly fifty when he received His Majesty's commands to repair to the Court of Brunswick and demand the hand of the Princess Caroline for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

He was the most trusted and successful ambassador in the King's service. In his different employments in Europe he had shown himself a masterful man, ready to take an independent line and hold it against chicanery and opposition. At all events, the English side of the question was heard and discussed when James Harris was his country's spokesman. Moreover, he was resourceful and subtle : “*Ce rusé et audacieux Harris*,” in Mirabeau's phrase. There are strange stories of his bold and ingenious means of obtaining knowledge of the scenes behind the scenes, without which a negotiator is working in the dark.

But in spite of his ability to maintain his position among the diplomats of his age, he remained an honest English gentleman, with few of the less pleasant habits of his class. Though a friend of Fox in his youth, he does not seem to have been addicted to the drunken gambling orgies of his set. Though he was a Whig, he did not forfeit the respect of his King, and though a friend of the Prince, he did his best to reconcile him to his father and to urge him to a saner course of life.



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It must be remembered that in this mission to Brunswick he was acting as the King's ambassador, and not under the instructions of the Prince, and he was eminently, as Bacon so aptly puts it, one of those negotiators of the "plainer sort, that are likely to do that which is committed unto them and to report back again faithfully the success." He was commissioned to fetch the Princess and carry her to England, not to discuss with her parents the advisability of the match ; so that no responsibility for its unhappy ending rests on the shoulders of James Harris.

Malmesbury had been at the Court of Berlin and was at Hanover early in November of 1794, when he received the King's instructions to proceed to Brunswick and ask the hand of the Princess from her parents.

On November 19th, therefore, he left Hanover and arrived at Brunswick the next day, the state of the roads in the hard frost rendering travel a slow business. The Duchess invites him to dinner. He is presented to Princess Caroline, who is suitably embarrassed. He finds the young lady is "vastly happy with her future expectations" and in his diary he enters the following debit and credit of her charms to report faithfully to his employer : "pretty face—not expressive of softness—her figure not graceful—fine eyes—good hand—tolerable teeth, but going—fair hair and light eyebrows—good bust—short, with what the French call '*des épaules impertinentes.*'"

The Princess saw in the envoy a handsome man with brilliant searching eyes and a kind face. There sprang up between the man and the girl a strange friendship, he striving to prepare her for the ordeal in front of her and to help her to meet it with sense and tact, she seeking his advice and counsel and, as far as was in her power, trying to adapt herself to his ideals of conduct. But on the first day there was only time and opportunity for introduction. The Duchess gave a dinner and "talked incessantly" to the Earl ; then there was a ball and he

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danced with the Princess and afterwards he played ombre with the Duchess. The next day he moved into the palace provided for him, where he found a valet, a concierge, three footmen and a carriage, and two sentinels at the door. All this hospitality and pomp was thoroughly pleasing to his diplomatic self-respect, and he settled down to await the formal opening of the negotiations in comfort and confidence.

The first day having been devoted to the ladies, on the second day the Duke gave an "immense dinner" in the great apartments, and all the family, headed by the Duchess Dowager, now seventy-eight, attended to welcome King George's envoy. On the Saturday, November 22nd, the Earl had a heart to heart talk about Caroline with her mother. The Duchess was a frank, unaffected chatter-box, with more occasional good sense in what she said than she has had credit for. She hated her brother's wife, Queen Charlotte Sophia, and gave chapter and verse for her dislike. Her brother George had selected Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick to be Princess of Wales, but the Queen, who was no less attached to her own family, had put forward her niece, Louisa of Mecklenburg. The Prince of Wales was reported to have said that "one damned German *frow* was as good as another." The gossip of London, or most of it, filtered through to Brunswick. The Duchess diagnosed that Queen Charlotte would not befriend her daughter and she was right. But she need not, from the Earl's point of view, have talked about it openly. In the same way she made it clear that she had no use for her nephew, the Duke of York, and told the Earl how badly he treated his wife. The Earl of course defended him, but the Duchess waved him away and went on to discuss her daughter's future. She explained the advice she had given her in relation, no doubt, to the Fitzherbert business, which to a girl brought up in a Court where her mother and her father's mistress lived in amity would not seem strange. The Earl thought

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her views sound and judicious and especially approved her determination of never coming to England for "she was sure she should be uncomfortable there and give rise to all sorts of jealousy and suspicion, and she had had enough of that."

Then she went on to tell Malmesbury that all the young German princesses had learned English in hopes of being Princess of Wales, but she had never put such an idea into Caroline's head. It would have been better had Caroline spoken and understood her husband's language more thoroughly. She spoke pleasantly of the King, her brother, who loved "her very much, as well as he could love anybody, but that twenty years' absence, and thirty years' living with the Queen had made him forget her." She used to say of her brother George that he was more kind-hearted than wise-headed, but for her sister-in-law she had no good word. Caroline had of course heard all her mother's criticisms of her English relations and knew that her future mother-in-law was not likely to treat her with sympathy.

Whilst the Earl is waiting in his palace for final instructions and credentials much social entertaining continues. He sups with the Hereditary Princess ; he goes one evening "to a meeting called Cassino—cards and dancing" ; he walks on the Ramparts with Féronce, the Duke's minister, who also invites him to supper. Nearly every day he sees the Duchess and listens to her chatter, and one evening he accompanies the ladies to the Opera, sits with Caroline in her mother's box, and finds that she "improves on acquaintance, is gay and cheerful with good sense."

On Monday, December 1st, the King's messenger arrives with the necessary papers from the King, and at nine o'clock the Earl is over at the Palace to see the Duchess, who is delighted, and they anxiously discuss the route by which they will travel home, as the state of war makes travelling a rash and hazardous business.

On Wednesday, December 3rd, according to Lord

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Malmesbury's diary—the date is often given as the 8th—the ceremony of marriage by proxy takes place. Major Hislop has arrived from England with a portrait of the Prince for the young lady, and a letter for the Earl vehemently urging him to bring his beloved Caroline to England without delay.

The Earl set out in his correspondence a description of the formalities of the marriage by proxy, but his editor thought that it was not worth publishing. It was evidently a solemn affair. At one o'clock the royal carriages fetched the proxy bridegroom from his palace to the Duke's, where he is received in state. A marriage ceremony is performed. The Duke answers well but is rather embarrassed, the Duchess is suitably overcome with tears, the Princess Caroline is much affected but gives her answers in the affirmative distinctly and well.

At half-past one the Earl returns to his quarters, enters his own carriage and drives to the Duchess Dowager's, where there is a great dinner with compliments of felicitation to Caroline, who now takes precedence as Princess of Wales.

The next day the marriage treaty is actually signed. It is drawn up in French and Latin. Féronce calls upon Malmesbury, presents him with a snuff-box from the Duke, a diamond watch from Caroline and gives Mr. Ross, the Earl's secretary, 150 ducats. After which there is another great dinner at Court. The Duke of Brunswick would not take any immediate steps for his daughter's departure, although the Prince wanted her to start at once, but the Earl could not take orders from anyone but the King, and the Duke wanted to hear that a fleet had been dispatched to carry the Princess to England before he would let her go. The Duchess, on the other hand, was eager that they should be off.

Whilst correspondence about these matters was going on between the Earl and His Majesty, the members of the family received the envoy in less formal fashion, and

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he had personal conversations with them about Caroline's future. The Duke was of course perfectly aware of the character of the Prince, and after dinner on Friday, December 5th, he laid aside all the finesse and suspicions habitual to the German statesman discussing political affairs with an ambassador, and had a long and friendly talk with Malmesbury about Caroline's chances of happiness in England as the Prince's wife.

He feared the Prince either caring for Caroline too much, or too little, he had a poor opinion of the family and never even mentioned the King. Of his daughter he said frankly, "She is no fool, but she lacks judgment ; she has been strictly brought up and it was necessary." No doubt he thought her education had been all that it should be, or thought it well the Earl should think so. Then he asked Malmesbury to befriend his girl "to recommend to her discretion, not to ask questions, and above all not to be free in giving opinion of persons and things aloud ; and he hinted delicately, but very pointedly, at the free and unreserved manners of the Duchess, who at times is certainly apt to forget her audience. He desired me to advise her never to show any jealousy of the Prince ; and that if he had any *goûts* not to notice them." All this he had set down for his daughter in German, but he wanted Malmesbury to enforce it in talk. This the Earl agreed to do, for he had already taken kindly to Caroline and had noticed that she received his warnings with gratitude. He too had observed that she was "apt to forget her audience," a charming trait in a charming young woman discoursing familiarly with an Earl, but distinctly dangerous in a Princess dancing with a good-looking cavalry subaltern.

The next day he saw Mademoiselle Herzfeldt, the Duke's mistress, who was very fond of Caroline. She said too that the girl required strictness, that she was not clever, nor ill-disposed, but merely easily led astray, and had no tact. Thus coached, the Earl found himself

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taking in the Princess to supper and sitting between her and her mother. She, too, entreated him to advise her frankly, and he boldly suggests to the Princess that she should make up her mind to keep "perfect silence on all subjects for six months after her arrival in England." It was all very well meant, but as futile as most paternal efforts to persuade a daughter, in the days of her vanity, to behave with a common sense with which nature has not endowed her.

One of the state festivities was a visit to the Grand Opera. The new Princess of Wales was much applauded on entering the royal box. The Brunswickers loved their Princess Caroline, much as the English people loved their Princess of Wales in after years. The woman had a way with her, simple folk were bewitched with her roguish manner, she had the royal gift of gaining popular affection without seeking it. Without appraising the *vox populi* too highly, the sour verdict of Carlyle that "popular opinion is the greatest lie in the world" is not sound. Popularity deserves analysis and attention. Caroline was popular because she was kind-hearted, and again because of her misfortunes. The vulgar are more given to sympathy than the wealthy and educated classes. The fact that the popular verdict was always with Caroline is not to be ignored, any more than the fact that it was always against George, Prince of Wales, her husband. In matters of human conduct and right action the verdict of a common jury is more valuable than the considered judgment of a Court of Appeal, though neither is infallible.

But apart from popular respect and affection we shall find that, throughout the long years of her unhappy life, Caroline attracted to her side honest men of worldly experience who believed in her cause and admired the woman for her bravery. To these she would listen with respect, though their cautious precepts were not often to her liking.

James Harris, Earl of Malmesbury, was the first English friend of this wayward Caroline, and if you read

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his diary you will understand in later years the difficulties men like Perceval and Brougham encountered when they sought to sway the actions of Caroline by the forces of reason and prudence. But at all events in her younger days she was capable of appreciating the point of view of her elders, though she always wanted to know the facts and reasons upon which their judgment was based.

So that when she consulted the Earl about appointing someone to her suite, and he advised her against it, and asked her to lay down a rule when she got to England not to meddle with the distribution of offices, she argued the matter, but accepted his verdict. She then surprised him by wanting to know the position of Lady Jersey in the Prince's estimation ; upon which the Earl tactfully offers humble advice to the effect that the Princess of Wales must never be too familiar or easy and never listen to the tittle-tattle (*commérage*) of the ladies of the Court.

That a daughter of the Duchess should eschew gossip would have been a miracle, and indeed Caroline in perhaps a more good-natured way was as big a tattler as her mother. She was always wanting to know the latest story, and loved to retail such things to her ladies-in-waiting, and, as she said to the Earl, "I wish to be popular, and I fear you recommend too much reserve, and probably you think me too prone *à se livrer* ?"

"I made a bow," says the Earl.

"Tell me freely," she pleads, quite honestly as I think, and so James Harris thought, and he was a shrewd man, for he treated her quite seriously, and replied paternally that the *abandon* suggested in the words *se livrer*, could not, in her high station, be indulged in without great risk ; that as to popularity, it never was attained by familiarity, which could only belong to respect founded on a just mixture of dignity and affability.

Of course the young lady appeared convinced and desired her friend to continue to be her mentor, and she goes on to tell him that she knows the Prince is *léger* and

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that she is fully determined not to be jealous ; whereupon the worldly man of the Court declares this to be “ a very wise resolution which I commended highly.”

And these conversations throw this much light on the tragedy of Caroline's life, that her father, mother, and this good wise man who wished to befriend her, were all, with no doubt the best motives in the world, conspiring to hand over her life and liberty to the care of a human being whose public and private life showed him to be a selfish, dissolute, drunken fop, who had never exhibited any honest affection for father, mother, mistress or friend, and was incapable of the least consideration for any human personality other than his own. Yet when they feasted and danced and celebrated the sacrifice of the girl Caroline, she and they were full of the glorious achievement that was to place her in the possession of the Prince of Wales, with the golden corollary to her estate that in due time she should be Queen of England. To moralize on such a proceeding, or to pretend that in any rank of life, at any period of history, such arrangements were uncommon, would be foolish, but in biographical studies it is well before you criticize the human architecture and edifice before you, to dig down to the foundations and see whether they were well and truly laid.

The Earl continues to work hard at his pupil's education, and at a masquerade sits apart with her, and allows her to draw him out on the Prince's habits as a church-goer, and the Queen's conduct of Drawing-Rooms, and he counters her questions with answers intended to impress her young mind with the duties and drawbacks of the position of Princess of Wales rather than its pleasures and *agrémens*. But he will not allow anyone to criticize his Princess but himself, and when that ill-mannered, *méchante*, ridiculous Madame Waggenheim asked him how he got on with the dear girl, and added : “ Although she is no longer a child her education is by no means finished,” the loyal Earl replied with English bluntness,



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fixing his brilliant eyes on Madame : " Indeed, I have seen persons, of an age far in advance of that of her Royal Highness, whose education cannot be said to have even begun," and with a courteous bow he left her to further consider his meaning.

Although it is often asserted that the Duke of York proposed this marriage, yet the Earl of Malmesbury thinks it was the Duke of Clarence who first suggested it, for the amiable reason that " it would plague the Duke and Duchess of York, whom he hates, and whom the Prince no longer likes." This he gathered from conversation with Caroline who showed her good taste in preferring Clarence to York. That the Duke of Clarence originated the idea of the match is very probably correct, for Dr. Croly, in his *Life of George IV*, quotes a newspaper paragraph to the same effect, which may have been inspired from the Court. But however this may be, the Earl, to pique his pupil, praises the Duke and Duchess of York as model royalties, and speaks " with great applause of the behaviour of the Duchess," as though he foresaw that the future Queen of England would be deserted by her husband as the Duchess of York had been.

But he sincerely thought that the good example of the patient Duchess should be displayed to the Princess of Wales as a pattern of decorum. And in a curious passage in his diary he justifies this by setting down that Caroline " has no *fonds*, no fixed character, a light and flighty mind, but meaning well, and well disposed, and my eternal theme to her is, to think before she speaks, to recollect herself. She says she wishes to be *loved* by the people ; this I assure her can only be obtained by making herself respected and *rare*—that the sentiment of being *loved* by the people is a mistaken one—that sentiment can only be given to a few, to a narrow circle of those we see every day—that a nation at large can only respect and honour a great Princess, and it is, in fact, these feelings that are

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falsely denominated *the love of a nation* : they are not to be procured, as the good will of individuals is, by pleasant openness and free communication, but by a strict attention to appearances—by never going below the high rank in which a Princess is placed, either in language or manners, by mixing dignity with affability which, without it, becomes familiarity and levels all distinction.”

You can almost imagine Caroline, when she heard this description of the right conduct of pillars of society in the temples of royalty, crying out like Lona Hessel : “ I will let in fresh air ! I will let in fresh air ! ” But, at all events outwardly, she listens humbly, she desires to conform, she intends to try and carry herself in the attitudes prescribed for persons moving in the sphere to which she is called. Had her husband been a human being of any dignity and righteousness, had he been as kind and honourable as his father, she might have made good. But as she listens she recognizes her dangers and, in gratitude to the Earl for his good advice, urges him to be her Lord Chamberlain and accept a place in the household of the Prince. The old diplomatist begs that she will not ask for such an honour for him. The girl says she fears that it is not good enough for him. He replies that any place near his dear Princess would flatter him, but that he never has asked for a place and never will. The girl sighs and the matter drops.

The day after Christmas Day, at two in the morning, a dispatch arrives from London that the Princess is to set out for Texel, where the fleet will meet her. By the same post the Prince writes that he forbids his bride to bring over Mademoiselle Rosenzweit, who had been appointed her secretary. There are tears and expostulations over this business, but the Earl is adamant. Orders must be obeyed. The Duke explains that the importance of the lady was that she should write and spell English for her mistress, in which arts the Princess is not an adept. We shall see that it would have been invaluable to Caroline

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to have had an honest secretary to advise her. However, it was forbidden and she had to submit.

By the same post came an ill-omened anonymous letter which alarmed the Duchess, who foolishly showed it to her daughter and the Court ladies. It purported to come from Carlton House and warned the Princess against Lady Jersey, who would, it declared, endeavour to lead the Princess into some act of injury to her own and her husband's honour.

It is curious that such a suggestion should be made at so early a stage of Caroline's married life. She herself when she showed the letter to Malmesbury treated the matter with contempt. The idea that Lady Jersey could lead her into an affair of gallantry and betray her did not frighten a Princess of the House of Brunswick. The Earl thought she should at least understand the seriousness of the proposal, and explained to her that any man who dared to presume to approach the Princess of Wales in such a manner would suffer death.

This startled his pupil, and she asked the Earl if he was in earnest ; on which he explained that "such was the English law, that anyone who presumed to *love* her was guilty of *high treason*, and punished with *death* if she was weak enough to listen to him ; so also was she."

But these things were soon forgotten in the business of packing and farewells. At two o'clock on the afternoon of December 29th, 1794, the royal party set out from the Palace, the Duchess accompanying them to Hanover. The Duke weeps at her going. He pleads with Lord Malmesbury to be "her second father" and to write to him. The cannons fire from the ramparts, the escorts surround the carriages, the crowds cheer their dear Princess—Caroline of Brunswick leaves her native land for England.

## Chapter IX : *The Wedding*

“With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow.”—*Book of Common Prayer*.

The progress of the Brunswick cavalcade was naturally slow. The weather was deplorable, the roads were frozen, and the ladies found travelling exceedingly uncomfortable. On New Year's Day they got as far as Osnaburgh. Caroline wanted the Earl to travel in the same coach with her, which he refused to do, “from its being improper.” This vastly amused the young lady, and Malmesbury had to lecture her on her free and easy ways.

At Osnaburgh they heard rumours that the French had driven the Dutch back, and then in the evening dispatches arrived from General Dundas and Lord Cathcart officially informing Malmesbury that they were forcing the French to retreat. But as yet there was no news of the arrival of the fleet, the frost was still very severe, and the Earl did not dare to risk the capture of his precious charge by the French army. Under all the circumstances he decided to wait at Osnaburgh and see how things shaped themselves.

The Earl had a worrying time, poor man, with the two women. Neither the Duchess nor her daughter had any tact, and the former was somewhat selfish, after the manner of elderly people, and was certainly a very foolish person. Caroline, away from her father and the restraints of home, began to flap her wings ; and the sense of propriety, which was very strong in James Harris, was constantly receiving shocks. He is annoyed by the mother's meanness, and frightened by the Princess's reckless disregard of money. He sets down in his diary his daily

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woes. "Princess Caroline very *gauche* at cards—speaks without thinking—gets too easy—calls the ladies (she did not know) 'Mon cœur, ma chère, ma petite.'—I notice this and reprove it strongly. The Princess for the first time disposed to take it amiss ; I do not pretend to observe it."

It was this freedom of manners in Caroline that gave great offence in Court circles and, coupled with her self-will, courage and independence, made her a very impossible Princess, but a popular and beloved woman to those who served her.

The Duchess was very frightened of being captured by the French if they went forward, and proposed that she should return to Brunswick. The Earl had to put his foot down and insist that she should stay with her daughter, until her ladies arrive from England. About the middle of January, Holland is said to be in the last stage of danger, and the Earl decides to retreat to Hanover as no advance can safely be made for the present.

At the Court of Hanover they make a prolonged stay and the Earl continues his education of the Princess, even getting so far as to discuss with Caroline the affairs of her toilet. She piqued herself on dressing quickly, but her mentor disapproves of this. She maintains that wasting time on adornment is foolish. The good man tackles Madame Busche, the Princess's lady, on the subject. He explains that the Prince of Wales is very delicate and expects a long and very careful *toilette de propreté*. To put it bluntly, he tells Madame Busche that from an English point of view, Caroline does not wash with sufficient care ; on the contrary she neglects this duty sadly, and the result is noticeable. The English standards of cleanliness have always been a stumbling-block to the complete comfort of international social intercourse. But Caroline was in an obedient frame of mind, she wished to please her mentor, and in spite of the thermometer standing at 17 degrees below zero (Réaumer's scale), there

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is a triumphant entry in Malmesbury's diary : " Madame Busche executes her commission well, and the Princess comes out the next day well washed *all over*."

Not until early in March is there any possibility of moving. On the 6th, letters came from home with news that the fleet which is to escort the Princess is to go to Stade, in Hanover, at the mouth of the Elbe. On the 16th, Mrs. Harcourt, who is appointed one of the Princess's ladies-in-waiting, arrives from England. Caroline at once takes a dislike to Mrs. Harcourt, but Malmesbury is persuaded by that tactful lady that she is under his guidance, and he notes that Mrs. Harcourt " promises to follow my advice."

At last, on March 24th, a move is made for the coast, and having said farewell to her mother and the ladies of the Court, which Caroline achieves to the Earl's approval, " with grace and propriety," they drive to Walsrode that day, and arrive at Stade, on the Elbe, at four o'clock on Thursday, March 26th. The burghers are under arms, the magistrates are at the gates, Commodore Jack Payne, the Prince's boon companion, who is in command of the expedition, the ships of which are now lying at the mouth of the river, has come up the Elbe to meet the party ; and after a great dinner and supper in the hospitable town of Stade, they all rise early next morning to sail down the river to Cuxhaven, where the fleet is lying, and this they reach about seven in the evening.

It is a calm and beautiful evening. The Princess, in the man-of-war's barge, on which the royal standard is hoisted, makes for the *Jupiter*, a fifty-gun ship, which is to carry her to England. A royal salute is fired as they approach the vessel, the yards are manned, and as Princess Caroline steps on deck the escorting vessels reply to the salute with their guns, according to the rules of courtesy at sea.

At the top of the gangway, as she came aboard, a young midshipman named Doyle handed the Princess a rope in

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order to assist her. You may say he was the first Englishman to receive her as she put her foot on English soil, as the deck of an English ship has not inaccurately been described. He was also the last Englishman to carry her home again when, more than a quarter of a century later, as Captain Doyle he commanded the vessel that carried her coffin from Harwich back to the harbour of Cuxhaven. But this evening she was full of joy and buoyant hope. Even the Earl admires the way in which his pupil carries herself. She is the ideal Princess. "Impossible to be more cheerful, more *accommodante*, more everything that is pleasant than the Princess—no difficulty, no childish fears—all good humour." Alas ! poor Caroline !

Caroline is at her best throughout the voyage. The weather is charming, she is delighted with the ships, and the officers are enthusiastic in praise of her frank manners and good humour. The Earl and Jack Payne have some confidential talk about the Prince and Lady Jersey. The Commodore is against the lady, and her behaviour according to his account is far from proper. However, it seems that she and Mrs. Harcourt are to be the Princess of Wales's ladies-in-waiting.

According to Lord Holland, it was these two ladies who had persuaded the Prince to accept Caroline of Brunswick as his bride, rather than his mother's choice, Louise of Mecklenburgh. They intended to manage the young woman in their own interests, but, had the Prince had any sense of honour or decency, he would never have allowed Lady Jersey to have had any place or position in the household of his wife. Caroline of course understood Lady Jersey's position with the Prince, and this did not make for peace when the ladies came to close quarters. Mrs. Harcourt, however, was merely fulsome and servile, and fully attentive to Caroline's dress and appearance, so that the voyage was a happy one as far as Malmesbury was concerned, and Caroline thoroughly enjoyed it. When the *Jupiter* anchored off Gravesend,

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at two o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, April 4th, 1795, each shore of the Thames was lined with sightseers, the day was delightfully fine and the honest country folk of England's green and pleasant land smiled a welcome on the young Princess.

But on Easter Sunday, of all days in the year, trouble began. The royal yacht *Augusta* took the Princess and her suite to Greenwich, where, after a pleasant and prosperous sail, they found that the King's carriages were not there to meet them. The Earl was informed that it was Lady Jersey who had kept the carriages waiting, and naturally he was very angry about it.

The Governor of Greenwich Hospital receives them somewhat awkwardly ; and they wait for an hour until the equipages arrive with Lady Jersey and other attendants. It is a poor official welcome for the bride. Moreover, Lady Jersey is not in a very pleasant frame of mind. She finds fault with her mistress's dress, which Mrs. Harcourt has taken great pains about, and then she has the impertinence to tell the Earl of Malmesbury "that she could not sit backwards in a coach and hoped she might be allowed to sit *forward*."

The Earl was far too old a hand at diplomacy to let Lady Jersey lord it over them in this way. He informed her that such a breach of etiquette was against the King's orders and could not be allowed, and told her plainly "that as she must have known that riding backward in a coach disagreed with her, she ought never to have accepted the situation of a Lady of the Bedchamber, who never ought to sit forward ; and that if she really was likely to be sick, I would put Mrs. Aston into the coach with the Princess, and have by that means the pleasure of Lady Jersey's company in the carriage allotted to me and Lord Claremont. This, of course, settled the business."

I expect Caroline rejoiced at her rival's discomfiture, and thoroughly enjoyed herself riding forward in a royal coach, whilst her ladyship sat backward and uncomfortable.



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But to anyone without pluck and spirit and a sense of humour it must have been a daunting entry into her new life.

There was no public demonstration as they drove through the streets, and they were set down at St. James's, at the Duke of Cumberland's apartments, at about half-past two. The Earl then notified His Majesty and the Prince of Wales of the Princess's arrival, and the latter came immediately to greet his bride. She was formally introduced to her future husband and, in accordance with ancient etiquette, would have kneeled at his feet, but he with ready grace—he was always at his best in matters of deportment—raised her and embraced her. He spoke barely a word but turned round and retired to a distant part of the apartment, and then called out to the Earl : “Harris, I am not well ; pray get me a glass of brandy.”

“Sir,” replied the Earl, not without good sense, “had you not better have a glass of water ? ”

“No,” answered the Prince with an oath and much out of humour with the suggestion, “I will go directly to the Queen,” and he strode away, leaving his astonished bride alone.

When Malmesbury returned to her she did not burst into tears or complaints, but merely remarked with a touch of contempt in her voice : “*Mon Dieu ! est-ce que le Prince est toujours comme celà ? Je le trouve très gros, et nullement aussi beau que son portrait.*”

It was obvious to her that the man had been drinking : as to his corpulence, always a sore subject with him, this generally receives courtly mitigation at the hands of the portrait painters, and Caroline had been led to expect a more graceful figure of a man.

The Earl does his best to explain that the Prince was naturally a good deal affected and flurried at the interview, and was heartily glad when a messenger summoned him to the presence of the King. His Majesty was more

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interested in the European situation than the arrival of his daughter-in-law, but he did at the end of the audience ask Harris if the Princess was good-humoured, and on receiving a favourable report from her late guardian expressed his pleasure. That night at dinner Caroline forgot her guardian's good advice, and indulged her penchant for "flippant, rattling, affecting raillery and wit," containing some shrewd hints at my Lady Jersey, which that lady had to listen to in silence and the Prince with annoyance.

Lord Malmesbury was "far from satisfied with the Princess's behaviour," but what would you have? Caroline of Brunswick was not intended by birth or breeding to be a doormat for the Mecklenburg woman's son to insult. She was absolutely alone and had to defend herself. Better to hide her anger and disgust under a cloak of raillery than to acknowledge defeat with sad, unhelpful tears.

Caroline had come to see the business through as she had promised her father and mother. She had no romantic notions about royal matrimonial alliances. The Prince, too, was eager for his debts to be paid, and as he had no intention of allowing the duties of matrimony to interfere with the real pleasures of his life, he was ready to accept the inevitable, though he had not the wit to do it gladly. The old King was really the only person heartily delighted at the wedding and hopeful of its result. The Queen disliked the Brunswick girl from the first, and when her son ran off to tell Mamma how disappointed he was with his bride, Her Majesty's condolences were tempered with regrets that he had not chosen her fair niece Louise. The Prince wanted her to advise him to break the marriage off. The King, it is said, would have agreed to this, but if it had happened he would certainly not have paid his son's debts. The Queen refused to give her son any advice, merely saying, "You know, George, it is for you to say whether you can marry the Princess or not."

Lady Jersey no doubt advised her friend, as she had at

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an earlier stage, to see the business through, and promised her aid, which was afterwards forthcoming, to solace the husband when he wearied of his wife. Up to the last the Prince continued restless. The day before the marriage he galloped to Richmond, passing Mrs. Fitzherbert's house. She saw him riding by. Had she waved a signal to him perhaps Caroline would have been saved. The Prince's conduct was town talk in select circles. At the best clubs money was wagered against the marriage coming off.

However, on Wednesday, April 8th, the Prince of Wales came to the altar at the Chapel Royal, and the bets were lost. The ceremonies of the day opened with a family dinner at Buckingham House. It was then necessary for the Princess to go back to St. James's to array herself in bridal robes. As Caroline was leaving Buckingham House the King kissed her in the hall and, going up to his son with tears in his eyes, shook him by both hands.

There are some who think that part of the Prince's aversion to the marriage was due to the fact that he had gone through a similar ceremony with Mrs. Fitzherbert and disliked the idea of bigamy. I doubt if such a thought entered his mind. It is true, however, that he is said to have told Lord Moira, as they drove from Carlton House to the Chapel Royal : " It is no use, Moira, I shall never love any woman but Fitzherbert." But it must be remembered that he was in a maudlin condition at the ceremony. Lord Holland declares that " my brother John was one of the two unmarried Dukes who supported the Prince at the ceremony and he had need of his support ; for my brother told me the Prince was so drunk that he could scarcely support him from falling." Caroline was in the best of spirits. She chatted pleasantly with the Duke of Clarence as she waited with him at the altar for the arrival of the Prince, and she behaved gravely and decently during the ceremony.

The Prince, on the other hand, though some say he was more excited than drunk, behaved in a very curious



GEORGE, PRINCE REGENT, AND CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK, PRINCESS OF WALES.

Woodcut. Anon.  
From the copy in the British Museum



## *The Wedding*

manner. At one stage of the ceremony he rose from his knees and the King had to go to him and command him to continue kneeling.

Dr. Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was unwise enough in reading the service to offer an opportunity to anyone who desired to refer to the Fitzherbert marriage to create a disturbance. At the passage, "any person knowing of a lawful impediment" he laid down the book and looked earnestly at the King and the Prince of Wales. The latter shed tears. Afterwards he repeated with emphasis the exhortation to the husband to live in nuptial fidelity. The Archbishop should have satisfied his conscience about the Prince's right to be married in church before he undertook to take part in the ceremony.

However, no hitch or disturbance took place. As a public ceremony the affair was very splendid. The Prince appeared in the Collar of the Garter and wore a coat of blue velvet, and the Dukes of Bedford and Roxburgh, his attendants, were gorgeously apparelled. Caroline, with a diamond coronet on her brow and her white satin dress covered with jewels, was the radiant princess bride of the fairy tales.

Throughout the whole proceedings only one simple creature, perhaps remembering his own happy marriage, was palpably and honestly affected with the hope and belief that this wedding, too, might bring peace and joy and domestic happiness to his wayward son and heir. When the Archbishop came to the words: "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" His Majesty stepped hastily to the Princess and, taking her hand in both of his, affectionately gave her to her husband.

After the wedding the Queen held a Drawing-Room, and later on there was a family supper party at Buckingham House. After this the bride and bridegroom drove to Carlton House. Meanwhile throughout England the bells were ringing, the people were feasting and drinking to the health and happiness of George and Caroline. In

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London the guns, in the park and at the Tower, had thundered out the good news that her wedding had taken place and from that hour the citizens had made holiday. As night fell, the streets were crowded with all sorts and conditions of people to see the illuminations and cheer and shout themselves hoarse and drink themselves silly.

As for poor Caroline, if her story to Lady Bury is true and accurately reported, she spent her wedding night with her drunken husband "sleeping under the grate where he fell and where I left him."

## Chapter X: *Separation*

“This practice is contrary to Holy Scriptures, involves the greatest confusion and has introduced an accumulation of evils into matrimony ; it is our will that the whole thing be by our authority abolished.”

Cranmer : *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*.

FROM the day of Caroline's marriage to the day of her death her husband treated her with insult and cruelty. He never ceased to persecute either his wife or his child until he had seen them to their graves. He used his power as husband, father, Regent and King to torment and ill-treat these two unfortunates who stood in the way—or to his selfish imagination seemed to stand in the way—of his coarse pleasures and profligate amours.

That Caroline made mistakes in matters of tact and discretion ; that she was often ill-advised by political schemers who took her side or deserted her for their own ends ; that she had a strong desire for the joy of life and a real delight in the companionship of children, in works of charity, and in the society of friends, especially of men of learning, wit, and those well skilled in music and the arts—these things are true about her and were skilfully used to attempt her ruin. If she had been a dull, stupid woman, her husband might have left her in peace. But she was bold, clever, of royal spirit and, though alone in a foreign country surrounded by enemies, never forgot she was a Brunswicker who knew no fear.

The Prince in his relations with women had been used to retain them in his service for as long as they gave him pleasure, and discard them with such public pension as would keep them quiet. Mrs. Fitzherbert had taken a life pension of £3,000 a year and a house in Tilney Street, overlooking the Park, when the Prince threw the handkerchief to Lady Jersey, but one cannot suppose that Mrs.



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Fitzherbert would have played the disgraceful part that Lady Jersey was eager to succeed in. Nor can we conceive that any human creature, whose selfishness had not blinded him to all perceptions of decent and manly conduct, would have made Lady Jersey his wife's waiting woman and carried her with them on the honeymoon.

The Prince took his bride to Windsor two days after the marriage and shortly afterwards they went to Kempshott, in Hampshire. This was a house he had taken for Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she had laid out the gardens and decorated the drawing-room, and here he had a fine pack of foxhounds and splendid hunters in his stables for his friends.

Here Caroline seems to have had no other woman companion but Lady Jersey, her husband's mistress, and the male guests asked to meet her were Colonel Hanger, a coarse fellow with whom no gentleman would have asked his wife to associate, and a few similar friends to help the Prince to while away the time in drink and gambling.

Caroline seems to have had the good sense to bear with these insults until the Prince took her back to Carlton House. Her royal instincts rebelled against the arrangement that Lady Jersey should be the real mistress of the household whilst she was only the nominal Princess of Wales. Caroline determined to assert her rights. She informed the Prince that she refused to dine with Lady Jersey when the Prince was not present, and in no case would she at any time speak to her. The Prince insisted that she should treat Lady Jersey with the same courtesy as she treated the other ladies of her court who were now in waiting upon her at Carlton House. The Princess demanded the dismissal of Lady Jersey. The Prince refused her request with contempt. Caroline appealed directly to the King about it, and he prevailed on the Prince to arrange that Lady Jersey should not come into waiting. This victory of his wife was not to be forgiven or forgotten. It was necessary that the Prince should

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placate his wife, and that they should appear in public as a happy married couple, since at this moment the question of the Prince's debts was coming before the House. So for the moment Lady Jersey, though not dismissed, retired from the scene and Caroline was satisfied.

Both the members of the House and the people of the country were already heartily disgusted with the Prince's misconduct, and it was no time to parade fresh scandals before their eyes. The general body of citizens hoped, with the King, that this marriage would be the beginning of a new life for the heir to the throne. If they were to vote supplies, they must be kept in ignorance of his treatment of his wife.

The debates in Parliament over the payments of the Prince's debts must have opened Caroline's eyes to the kind of man she had married and his reasons for asking her hand. The Duke of Clarence, who spoke on behalf of the Prince his brother, and doubtless at his instigation—for the man himself had as little malice as brains—was grossly insulting to the Princess by openly stating that “it was a matter of public notoriety that, when the Prince of Wales's marriage was agreed upon, there was a stipulation that he should in the event of that union be exonerated from his debts.” Caroline was, as Dr. Doran points out, the *stipula*.

On June 22nd the Prince took his wife to Brighton and there she remained until she returned to Carlton House in November to await her confinement. They attended a field day at the Camp, and the Princess was very delighted with Brighton and announced her intention of remaining there for some months. They stayed at first at Mr. Hamilton's house on the Steine, and later moved into the Pavilion, which the Prince was always altering and rebuilding so that the nondescript monster of a house became a local jest. Here the Prince left his wife and her ladies, preferring to spend his time among his old associates. He was in Brighton in August, but

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for the most part he was at Carlton House and, according to Dr. Doran, "while his wife was in almost solitary confinement at Brighton he was in London, the most honoured guest at many a brilliant party with Mrs. Fitzherbert for a companion." Others, however, say that Mrs. Fitzherbert went off to Margate to join Lady Buckinghamshire. These stories are not necessarily contradictory. It seems unlikely that the Prince renewed intimate relations with Mrs. Fitzherbert at this period. But he seems to have met her in society, and Caroline met her and used to describe her as "fat, fair and forty." Nevertheless, she had no quarrel with the lady who had not, like Lady Jersey, sought to insult and ruin her domestic life. She felt no jealousy of her, nor indeed was Caroline of a jealous disposition. But there was a royal etiquette in these matters which she insisted should be observed, and as Caroline of Brunswick and Princess of Wales she gave her husband clearly to understand that if he chose to keep the Jersey woman in her household he must keep her out of her sight unless she consented to see her.

In this she was right, but it made Lady Jersey her bitter enemy, and while she was at Brighton an incident occurred that warned her of the dangerous nature of her position.

The Queen had received her coldly, she had made an enemy of Lady Jersey, and her husband was not her protector. It was obvious that in her correspondence with her father and mother she would tell them of her circumstances and seek their advice. It may be that the Prince was not a party to this espionage that was started against her in Brighton, but that it was arranged by Lady Jersey. But from this time forward, until the day of her death, she was subjected to a foul system of spying, and lying reports of her actions were carried to the Prince by her servants and his spies.

The Queen still received Lady Jersey, and that the latter planned to steal the Princess's letters and handed

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some of them to the Queen seems beyond doubt. What happened was this. In August, 1795, when she was at Brighton the Princess handed Dr. Randolph, who told her he was going to Germany, some letters for him to deliver at Brunswick. They were private and confidential letters to her family, containing a humorous and detailed account of the way she had been received by the Queen together with her outspoken opinion of Lady Jersey. There is no doubt that the letters did not reach their destination. There is equally no doubt that some of them reached the Queen and were read by her.

Later on the fact that the Countess of Jersey had intercepted letters of the Princess appeared in the press. Lady Jersey wrote to Dr. Randolph about it, but he did not reply. Then Lord Jersey wrote a peremptory letter to the reverend gentleman asking for his explanation. His explanation is very vague except in one particular. He certainly received the packet of letters from the Princess herself, in the presence of all her attendants in waiting, on August 13th. He gave up his intention of going to Germany and wrote to the Princess to ask whether he should consign the letters by a friend or return them. He received a reply from Lady Jersey "with a gracious message from Her Royal Highness requesting the return of the packet." He says he made inquiries at Carlton House and was told to send the letters down by parcel in the Brighton post-coach. This he did and it was "addressed to your Ladyship." It was never delivered to the Princess and its contents were quoted by the Queen. The Princess had no doubt that her letters were stolen by Lady Jersey, and the evidence of it seems conclusive.

Dr. John Randolph was afterwards made Bishop of Oxford, an appointment that aroused public suspicion that he had been a willing party to the transaction. For, according to the evidence of Mrs. Clarke, before the House of Commons, "the person who takes almost all the

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patronage of the Church of England is the First Female Personage in England." This was told her by the Duke of York when she asked him if he could help her to a commission from Dr. O'Meara, who wanted to be a bishop. The Queen was not a person who would allow her prerogatives to be interfered with by Mary Anne Clarke, her son's mistress, who found she could do nothing in the sale of ecclesiastical preferment, though several people, knowing what she could do in army matters, applied to her. If Lady Jersey told Randolph that the Queen would like to see the packet, he may have deferred his journey to Germany out of complaisance to "the First Female Personage in England." In any case, he was remiss in his conduct of a mission of this kind and his act in booking "a parcel addressed to your ladyship, at the Pavilion enclosing the letters of Her Royal Highness," which he had received from the Princess of Wales's own hand, was an error of judgment. But in any case his learning and character fully entitled him to preferment.

In November the Princess returned to Carlton House and a letter of hers to a friend in Germany dated December 1st, 1795, shows that whilst asserting her position in her own household, she accepted her fate with outward resignation.

"I expect speedily," she writes, "to be the mother of an infant. I know not how I shall be able to support myself in the hour of solitude, but I trust in the benevolence of Heaven. The Queen seldom visits me, and my sisters-in-law are equally attentive! Yet the English character I admire, and when I appear in public nothing can be more flattering than the reception which I meet with. I was much gratified some time ago with a visit to one of the principal theatres. The spectacle was imposing, and when the audience rose to sing the National Anthem, I thought I had never witnessed anything so grand before. I am surrounded with miserable and evil principles: and whatever I attempt is misrepresented. The

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Countess still continues here. I hate her, and I am confident that she does me no less. My husband is very partial to her and so the rest you will be able to divine."

Thus ended the year in which her marriage had been celebrated. Alone in Carlton House, without any loyal woman friend to support or comfort her, an exile among strangers, she awaited the coming year and the birth of her first and only child.

On January 7th, 1796, the Archbishop of Canterbury and other dignitaries of State whose duty it is to await, greet and identify, a royal infant, assembled at Carlton House to receive Caroline's baby girl on her arrival into this world of sorrows. A month afterwards, at St. James's, His Grace christened the child Charlotte Augusta, the names of her two grandmothers. The King and the Queen were present and Princess Mary represented the Princess of Wales. These were the child's sponsors.

To the public the event was the cause of much rejoicing, for now the succession was secure. Addresses of congratulation poured in from all quarters. The Corporation of the City had prepared an address for the occasion, and desired the Prince of Wales to appoint a day when a loyal deputation might publicly present it. The Prince, however, sent back an insulting message to the effect that he was too poor to offer a public reception to the City delegates, but that they might come to him in private.

This pretext was put forward because the Prince had already determined to desert his wife and not to live with her again. For the Prince to appear at a public reception of the Lord Mayor, as a loving husband and happy father, at a moment when he was scheming to rejoin Mrs. Fitzherbert and turn his wife out of doors, would have been exceedingly inconvenient. For the time being the Princess remained at Carlton House with her baby. She was always very fond of children and naturally doted on her own child. But she had already been informed that by the law of the land the upbringing of an heir to the throne

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would not be left in her hands, that as time went on the child would be less under her control, and as she told a friend : " This I shudder at very greatly." But at that time she had no prevision of the inhuman treatment that her husband was preparing for both mother and child.

The Prince on occasion came to see his daughter, but did not visit his wife, and he is said to have been at this time at Brighton or at Windsor with Lady Jersey or Mrs. Fitzherbert. At length Caroline complained of his desertion to the King and he reproached his son for his misconduct. The Prince had got all the money out of his marriage that he could hope for, and treated his father's rebuke with contempt. He posted off to Lord Cholmondeley, to order him to go straightway to the Princess and inform her that he refused to have anything more to do with her, and she must accept his decision.

Caroline, with good sense and dignity, refused to take her husband's commands in this form. She told Lord Cholmondeley that the Prince must put his decision in writing, and that if he insisted on a separation then in no case should their former intimacy ever be resumed. The Prince was only too ready to accede to her condition. On April 30th he wrote telling his wife that he was not attached to her and that he considered a separation necessary. He made no charge against her of any kind, but agreed that in no case—not even in the event of the decease of their daughter—would he in the future claim to exercise his marital rights.

The Princess should have been allowed to consult her parents at this juncture, and it is said that she did, before replying to her husband, consult her uncle, " that decent man the King." If she did, he must have advised her to accept the inevitable, for she wrote her answer to the Prince on May 6th. The original of the letter was written in French, and the following translation is taken from Mr. Huish's *Memoirs of George IV.*

" The avowal of your conversation with Lord

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Cholmondeley neither surprises nor offends me ; it merely confirmed what you have tacitly insinuated for this twelve-month. But after this, it would be a want of delicacy, or rather an unworthy meanness in me, were I to complain of these conditions which you impose upon yourself.

“ I should have returned no answer to your letter, if it had not been conceived in terms to make it doubtful whether this arrangement proceeds from you or from me ; and you are aware that the honour of it belongs to you alone.

“ The letter which you announce to me as the last, obliged me to communicate to the King, as to my sovereign and my father, both your avowal and my answer. You will find enclosed the copy of my letter to the King. I apprise you of it that I may not merit the slightest reproach of duplicity from you. As I have at this moment no protector but His Majesty, I refer myself solely to him upon this subject ; and if my conduct meet his approbation, I shall be in some degree, at least, consoled. I retain every sentiment of gratitude for the situation in which I find myself, as Princess of Wales, enabled by your means to indulge in the free exercise of a virtue dear to my heart—I mean charity.

“ It will be my duty, likewise, to act upon another motive—that of giving an example of patience and resignation under every trial.

“ Do me the justice to believe that I shall never cease to pray for your happiness and to be

“ Your much devoted

“ *May 6th, 1796.*”

“ CAROLINE.

In this way did Caroline's marriage come to an end, and if her husband could have refrained from persecuting the woman he had so deeply wronged there would have been no case of Queen Caroline to consider.

For a short while the Princess remained in her apartments at Carlton House, but naturally she wished to



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remove herself and her child from a roof under which she had suffered so much misery and been the unwilling witness of the licentious debauchery of her husband's companions.

An allowance of £20,000 was suggested for the Princess, but there was much discussion about the figures and Caroline, in her impetuous way, said she was content to let her husband provide for her in his own way. She was devoted to her child, but a nursery establishment of her own was essential to a young Princess, and Lady Elgin was appointed the head of this department. For the present, at all events, the mother had free access to the child, and the Prince showed no interest in her.

They remained at Carlton House until the summer of 1797, when a Miss Hayman was appointed a sub-governess of the child. But as the Princess took a great fancy to this lady, who seems to have been very kind to Charlotte, the Prince ultimately ended their friendship by sending her away. It is through Miss Hayman we learn that already the Princess enjoyed the society of George Canning, for as he rode along past Carlton House gardens her little daughter used to be held up by her governess at the summer-house window to wave her hand to her friend. He, in acknowledging the baby's gracious condescension, used to take off his hat with a bow and a sweep, that greatly fascinated the child, so that Miss Hayman records that her little charge "tears her caps with shewing me how Canning takes off his hat to her."

This is the earliest note I have found of Canning's friendship with Caroline. It stands to his everlasting credit that, in spite of political interests, this great and earnest man, who believed in her innocence, refused to be a party to her persecution, when so many of his associates were ready to do the King's pleasure, and for the sake of power and office help him in his wicked treatment of his wife and their Queen.

Canning could not join Eldon in his apostasy. He

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kept his soul clean in this business. George IV of course never forgave him. The party politicians could not understand how any statesman could be so quixotic as to risk his future in the cause of right action. People in politics do not do such things. The few that exhibit such foolish traits pass out of the world of preferment, as Canning did for a time, but find their place in history.

George Canning was in these days a young man of six and twenty, but already an Under-Secretary of State. We find that he and the Princess were friends and allies, and that he and his wife received her at their house and she became godmother to one of his children. There was never a time when some good, honest people did not support this unhappy lady in the days of her adversity.

It was like the methods of diplomacy of the Prince of Wales, that he should inform his wife in the summer of 1797 that she must go into the country a while, so that her apartments at Carlton House could be redecorated. He had determined that she should not reside there again and that her child should be separated from her. A house was taken for her at Charlton, near Blackheath. It was a small place, but sufficient for her and a few attendants. Doubtless she did not know then that it had been occupied at one time by Mrs. Fitzherbert, but so it was.

Lord Cholmondeley had built it and let it or lent it to his friend the Prince. Lysons describes it as an "elegant villa near the chalk pit, in a situation which possesses picturesque beauty." Lady Elgin and Miss Hayman continued to look after the Princess Charlotte at Carlton House, but her mother constantly visited her and she came on occasion to Charlton. The Prince had promised that the child should come and live with her mother, but later on he forbade this, though Caroline wrote and demanded from him the fulfilment of his word. She was not, of course, allowed to return to Carlton House.

In the autumn the Prince seemed to imagine Miss Hayman was too intimate with his wife, so she was

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dismissed and then went to live with Caroline. It is only fair to Lady Elgin to say that she seems in her difficult position to have treated the unfortunate mother with all the kindness that was possible.

In 1799 the little Princess was removed to Shrewsbury Lodge, Shooter's Hill, to be nearer to her mother, and here she remained until 1801, when she returned to Carlton House, and was afterwards at Windsor and Weymouth with the King, but she was never allowed to be under her mother's control. The Princess moved to Montagu House, Greenwich Park.

At the separation the King had stipulated that Caroline should have the care and control of her child until her eighth year, when her education as a future Queen would have to be seriously undertaken. The Prince, however, had no intention of carrying out this agreement. His policy was to separate mother and child, to treat his wife with indignity, and isolate the unhappy infant among strangers.

It must never be forgotten, when we come to consider the charges brought against Caroline by her disreputable husband, that as long as George III was King she had a friend and protector convinced of her honesty of life and ready to protect her. For ten years she lived at Blackheath amid friends and neighbours who knew her kindly ways, pitied her loneliness and admired the brave spirit in which she bore her misfortunes. His Majesty did his best to maintain the maternal rights of his niece and daughter-in-law, "whose injuries," as he told Lord Eldon in 1804, "deserve the utmost attention of the King as her own conduct has proved *irreproachable*."

Lord Eldon in these days was a constant visitor at the Princess's house at Blackheath. He and his brother, that grave and learned judge William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, were friends and advisers of the unhappy lady, and had there been any want of decorum in her household both must have known of it. All this is of importance in

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her history, for, if you accept the overwhelming evidence that exists of highly reputable witnesses, that for the first ten years of her separation her conduct was without reproach, and acknowledged to be so by all but her husband and the dissolute crew by whom he was surrounded, then you will understand that not until her husband became Regent would anyone of repute accept the slanders he circulated against her, and not until he was King could he compel the obedience of hirelings to attack her character openly.

At the beginning of the century, when it seemed clear that the Prince would not return to his wife, since he had gone back again to Mrs. Fitzherbert, the King appointed Caroline, Ranger of Greenwich Park. It was then she removed to Montagu House, which became a centre of social culture, attracting lawyers, artists, men of letters and, as long as her uncle was King, statesmen and politicians. The Queen and her daughters never visited her. Her Majesty had frowned on Caroline from the first. But the King often drove out to Blackheath, and once a week or so she was allowed to receive little Charlotte.

Dr. Burney, the musician, was one of the eminent persons the Princess honoured herself by inviting to her house. His famous daughter Fanny, Madame D'Arblay, on receiving her father's account of the visit, writes : " I am charmed the Princess now lives so cheerfully and pleasantly. She seemed confined not merely as a recluse but a culprit till quite lately." And Fanny thinks " all the world agree she has been the injured person, though some few think she has wanted *retenue* and discretion in her resentment." For though Caroline lived in retirement she was outspoken about her wrongs, and at that moment the Prince of Wales was unpopular and held in contempt by even his own political associates, and Caroline's frank talk was quoted with approval.

One of her near neighbours and firm friends was John Julius Angerstein, one of the founders of Lloyd's, a man

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of great wealth and taste. Sir Thomas Lawrence was a friend of his and through his assistance Angerstein made a collection of pictures which the nation ultimately purchased, and these were the beginning of our National Gallery. Lawrence's portrait of him hangs there still. He was evidently a gentle, courteous, refined man, recalling to me the aspect of Gully, the late Lord Selby—a man of sane judgment and good sense, a very different figure from any of the King's friends.

A great deal is made of what Fanny Burney called Caroline's "want of *retenue*." There is no doubt the parties she gave, and those at her friends' houses, were anything but stiff affairs, nor was festivity checked by Court etiquette. William Windham, in his diary, notes that when the Princess of Wales entertained Monsieur the Comte d'Artois (afterwards Charles X), and Mr. Angerstein and others were present, as soon as the Prince and his suite left, Caroline made a sign for the rest to stay and "a small supper was brought which kept us till twelve." Now these *petits soupers* were, as Dr. Doran says, "hilarious and unceremonious." We read at a later date of Thomas Campbell being present at one of these jolly evenings and the Princess persuaded him to dance a Scots reel. Then on one occasion Sir William Scott and Canning and the Princess played blind man's buff with the rest, though I dare say there were youngsters at the party, for the Princess was devoted to children and young persons, and loved to give them pleasure. These gay doings were gravely disapproved by the staid, economical Queen, and envied by her unfortunate daughters, who had a dull time of it. It is these things, and her free intercourse with all sorts and conditions of people, that gave rise to the gossip of her levity and disregard of propriety which shocked the dull and pompous drawing-rooms of the Queen's old-fashioned friends.

Sir Walter Scott, writing to his friend George Ellis on April 7th, 1806, on his return from a visit to London, tells

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him how he met Canning, "claimed his acquaintance as a friend of yours and had my claim allowed." This was certain, for George Ellis was Canning's dearest friend from whom he "concealed nothing," and Scott had been staying with him at Sunninghill, near Ascot. Ellis wrote pretty verses, collaborated with Canning in the "Anti-Jacobin," and was a friend of Lord Malmesbury, and he, too, was a friend of Caroline, since Sir Walter writes to him, "I had also the honour of dining with a fair friend of yours at Blackheath, an honour which I shall long remember. She is an enchanting Princess who dwells in an enchanted palace, and I cannot help thinking that her Prince must labour under a malignant spell when he denies himself her society."

Montagu House was, according to Miss Aiken, all glitter and glare and tinsel and trumpery, but it looked its best when lighted up, and Walter Scott, made much of by a real Princess, thought it an enchanted palace. This was in 1806, when slanders against the Princess and Captain Manby and Sir Thomas Lawrence and others of her friends were being spread abroad by the Prince's agents. Sir Walter told Lockhart that when her Royal Highness took him into the conservatory to admire some flowers and skipped down the stairs and stood watching him, hampered by lameness, faltering at the top of the flight, she called out to him with mock indignation: "Ah! false and faint-hearted troubadour! You will not trust yourself with me for fear of your neck." Lockhart thinks that his father-in-law regarded this as a specimen of Caroline's "careless levity," but it seems more probable that it was spoken in scornful contempt, since it was just such incidents as these that the Prince's spies retold with advantages as evidence of her immorality. At all events, Scott visited her more than once and recited the poems of his friends Southey and Hogg to her, and she subscribed at his request to the publication of "The Mountain Bard."

Scott came home full of enthusiasm for the kindly,

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generous woman who had treated him so hospitably. In June of that year the new Whig Government impeached Lord Melville and the Scots Tories gave a public banquet to celebrate his acquittal. Scott wrote them a song which James Ballantyne sang. It was received with tumultuous applause by the "five hundred good fellows well met in a hall." The verse about Caroline was the hit of the evening :

"Our King, too—our Princess—I dare not say more, Sir,  
May Providence watch them with mercy and might !  
While there's one Scottish hand that can wag a claymore, Sir,  
They shall ne'er want a friend to stand up for their right.  
Be damned he that dare not,—  
For my part, I'll spare not  
To beauty afflicted a tribute to give :  
Fill it up steadily,  
Drink it off readily—  
Here's to the Princess, and long may she live."

One can hear the after-dinner shout of applause at these generous sentiments echoing across the century.

And Scott, fair play to him, was more steadfast than many. He remained her adherent even during the Regency. For when, in 1813, about three years after the King's illness, he receives a hint that when he next comes to London he might make his bow at Carlton House, although he is greatly flattered he remembers how Caroline had in old days been kind and civil to him and tells Joanna Baillie : "I certainly could not as a gentleman decline obeying any commands she might give me to wait upon her, especially in her present adversity."

Alas ; what was impossible to Scott as a gentleman, became only too easy to him when "our fat friend, being desirous to honour Literature in my unworthy person," made him a baronet in 1818. By 1820 he had no claymore to wag for his heroine and was ready to believe any story told by her enemies and, finding that "nobody of fashion visits her," congratulates himself that he is "well clear of London and its intrigues," and has not publicly

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to pay the price of the honour received from the King by refusing the toast of the Queen.

One must not suppose that the Princess had nothing to do but receive company and give dinner parties. She studied music and painting under masters of eminence, and read English with a tutor, and worked at modelling and fancy crafts of all kinds, at which she was an adept. Then she had her charities to attend to and, shame to say, even these were used as munitions of slander by her enemies when they began to engineer their plans of evil against her.

One has given a few samples of the memories of visitors to Montagu House during the first ten years of Caroline's separation. They all tell the same story. In no way did she seek to molest or injure her husband. Her house was open to all kinds of visitors. She had her charities, her pursuits and hobbies, her gardens and studios, and not only received friendly visits from the King, her brothers-in-law, Pitt, Canning, Eldon and Perceval, who were often at her house, but she resolutely refused to take any part in political affairs. From time to time she was allowed to see her daughter, who, as heiress to the throne, was now under the King's especial protection, an arrangement that was satisfactory to her mother. If she had been left in peace, there was every reason to suppose that as she had begun so she would have continued. It was under these circumstances that her husband, who was beginning to tire of Mrs. Fitzherbert and was now falling under the influence of the Marchioness of Hertford, took the opportunity of his influence with a Whig Ministry to open an attack on the peace and honour of his wife.



## Chapter XI: *Lady Douglas*

“Anger seeks its prey, . . .  
Something to tear with sharp-edged tooth and claw,  
Likes not to go off hungry.”

George Eliot: *Spanish Gypsy*, book I.

It was one of the many misfortunes of Caroline's position that the Queen from the first had received her without sympathy or any show of kindness. Her Majesty at best was a narrow-minded woman. Like many good mothers, she was blind to the ugliness of her son's nature, and her own family was not friendly with Caroline's family. Then, too, the match was not of her making. The King, poor man, constantly visited his daughter-in-law, but he could not make his wife do so.

The effect of this on the ladies in Court circles was obvious. Not that Caroline cared much about it. She laughed at her mother-in-law and pitied her sisters-in-law. She had plenty of pleasant, good women among her friends. Mrs. Canning often visited her, and Pitt's niece, Hester Stanhope, a bright, enthusiastic girl, and she had Mrs. Fitzgerald, who lived with her, and others. But in her immediate neighbourhood there were not many ladies of rank, and those from a distance did not care to make court to a foreign princess living a dull, lonely life at Blackheath, and were content to take their cue from the Queen. Some of the great ladies of the eighteenth century were, as we have seen, very free and easy in their manners and customs, but the compact majority of the aristocracy of British matrons represented a high level of outward morality, with a very strict ritual of tact and discretion. To foreigners this has always been a stumbling-block to the right understanding of British character.

## *Lady Douglas*

They class us under the heading, "hypocrites." This is as incomprehensible to us as it would be to an ordinary cockroach to hear that outsiders classed him as an orthopterous insect of the Blattidæ family. These ideas of foreigners about other people are not necessarily wrong-headed ; indeed, they may have a scientific basis.

I do not suppose Caroline thought she had come among a nation of hypocrites. On the contrary, she was perhaps too much inclined to find in everyone who approached her a good companion. She was herself frank, open and outspoken and liked others to be so, and when she settled down at Montagu House she determined to play her unhappy part in this new world with the courage and high spirits of the race to which she belonged.

But though she was easy of access, she was always a royal person, and if she was justly offended could be very fierce and obstinate about it. To-day Caroline would in many ways have been an ideal royalty. She was entertaining and witty and had no false pride about her. She really enjoyed talking to interesting people, irrespective of their social rank, and taking an interest in their affairs. A hundred years ago, when royalties and even peers and other dignitaries were regarded by themselves and their subordinates as a species of deity, Caroline's manners were considered among her own class to be indiscreet and tactless. "Levity" is the word that worldly-wise people attached to her conduct. In a dull and ponderous world "levity" was more insulting to its stupid inhabitants than vice itself. "Levity" threatened the moral health of the well-bred. Pillars of Society psychologically dreaded "levity" just as they physically shuddered at the danger of sleeping with the window open.

The coarse, solid vices of Prince George and his middle-aged, heavy-sterned concubines were not so disturbing, to the satellites of royalty and the worshippers of aristocracy, as the light-hearted amusements of Caroline and her friends. She won the loyal affection of many

## *Queen Caroline*

good and great men, it is true, but in her rash, open-hearted way she entertained many who sought her patronage from interested motives, and these, of course, deserted her or turned against her when it served their purpose.

From her earliest youth she had two favourite hobbies. She had a real love and affection for little children, and in Brunswick she had many young protégés whose education and happiness was one of the few real joys of her life. Little children would "by instinct find her out and familiarly run to her when taking her walks in the garden of the palace, and she would receive them with affectionate caresses and kindness." Children are like cats in this respect. They know instinctively the lap to leap upon.

The other great pleasure in life that she had experienced but little, though this had made her long for more, was travel. Caroline was really interested in seeing strange people and places and visiting historic scenes. She had seen a great deal of the German Empire as a girl, and there is a story of her standing on the battle-field of Hochkirch in a storm of thunder and lightning and gathering the wild flowers on the mounds at her feet that she might form a wreath and carry it home with her in memory of the dead.

A love of little children and care for the welfare of them and a love of travel to the sites of great deeds and enterprises—these were the two real enthusiasms of Caroline's life. I do not say that such pleasures are necessarily inconsistent with habits of vice and immorality, but I confess that I am unable to agree with the arguments of Caroline's enemies that since she loved children she would be eager to be the mother of an illegitimate child, and that her eagerness to travel was merely a cloak to get away to some remote place where she could indulge her evil propensities. Nor do we to-day share our forefathers' strange, complacent delusion, that England was a moral country, whilst France, Italy and foreign countries generally, were hotbeds of vice.



HER ROYAL HIGHNESS CAROLINE, PRINCESS  
OF WALES, AND PRINCESS CHARLOTTE

From the Mezzotint in the British Museum  
Engraved by F. Bartolozzi from the drawing by R. Cosway, R.A



## *Lady Douglas*

The great majority of the English people never believed the slanders against Caroline invented by her husband and his toadies. But to the foul all things are foul, and there is a class of mind, apparently, that will always prefer to believe in iniquity rather than innocence. The weight of evidence does not burden minds prone to scandal, nor are society slanderers hindered from their wearisome diversion by any instincts of justice and mercy.

I am not one of those who think there is no evidence against Caroline to prove that she was a woman who sinned. There is evidence, but it is testimony of little value, tainted with corruption, spite and even blackmail. If you read in detail what sort of a woman she was, and understand more thoroughly the people by whom she was sustained and surrounded, and the really strong evidence of perjury and subornation in the various plots against her rights and her happiness, you will become as convinced of her innocence as George Canning or young William Page Wood.

I confess that I am a believer in the old Spanish proverb, "Tell me what company you keep and I'll tell you what you are." Caroline had an instinct for good company just as surely as her husband had an instinct for foul company. Her delight in children was merely, perhaps, a branch of this instinct, for children, to those who can speak their language, are the best of all company.

In the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century travel on the Continent was impossible. Europe was fully occupied by Napoleon and his next wars. But some travellers came to England, among them Joachim Henry Campe, a German author who was interested in England and English letters and translated Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* into German. In his *Tour through England* he describes the household of Princess Caroline.

He visited Montagu House in 1802—it will be seen hereafter that the date is important—and was kindly received by Caroline, who showed him her gardens and

## *Queen Caroline*

was at the moment very proud of a potato field, the produce of which she sold in London and thereby got some money for her charities. One thinks this must have been started at her uncle's suggestion, for it was a scheme after Farmer George's own heart.

Herr Campe is very enthusiastic about Caroline's school, to which she devoted a good deal of attention, and he describes it in detail in a letter to a friend. "But you will be still more astonished when I add that this benevolent lady educates not the young Princess her daughter, but eight or nine poor orphan children to whom she supplies the place of a mother. The Princess Charlotte is the child of the State and cannot, unfortunately, according to the laws of the British Constitution, enjoy the advantage of being educated under the eye of her excellent mother. The Princess of Wales supports at her own expense the poor children above mentioned. She boards them with respectable persons in her own neighbourhood, while she personally superintends their education, for which purpose they are brought to her every day."

The picture he gives us of Caroline and her hobby is vivid and real. One can understand such a man appreciating Defoe. He was not repelled by Caroline's levity of demeanour, but of course he was a German and her countryman. To her English critics, the eccentricity of the scene he describes was more apparent than its Christian charity.

"To the latest hour of my life," continues Campe, "I shall ever bear in recollection the interesting scene which I had the happiness to witness during my visit to Blackheath. The Princess ordered her foster-children to be brought in. We were seated at table, where the Princess, Mrs. Fitzgerald and her daughter breakfasted, while I, after the German fashion, took my early dinner. The children entered clothed in a style of neatness and simplicity, they appeared in all respects like the children of respectable country people. They seemed to be totally

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unconscious of the exalted rank of their Benefactress, though I, being a stranger, seemed by my presence to place them under some degree of restraint. The Princess conversed with them in an easy fashion and truly motherly style ; she spoke first to the one and then to the other, and at length to a little boy of five or six years of age who had an eruption on his face. Many an affected woman would probably have turned in disgust from her own child in such a state, but not so the Royal foster-mother of these poor orphans. She took the boy on her lap, gave him some pastry, examined his face to ascertain how far it had recovered since she last saw it, and evinced no displeasure at the caresses of the grateful child."

Caroline told him that she had been blamed for not giving the children a more "polite education," but she explained that she intended them to be workers : "The boys shall be able and active seamen, which is a profession suited to them as Englishmen, and the girls diligent and notable housewives." Admiral Samuel Hood and Captain Manby were her advisers in relation to the boys' futures. Viscount Hood was her neighbour, being the Governor of Greenwich Hospital.

Campe also describes Caroline's ability in modelling, and a bust she had done of her daughter and other artistic hobbies of the great lady, things not important in themselves, but at least evidence that she was not living a life of mere idleness and pleasure. One of these children, who became a great favourite of Caroline, was William Austin. He was born on July 11th, 1802, in the Brownlow Street Hospital. His father, Samuel, was a dockyard labourer. The family was in great poverty and the Princess took an interest in them. The child was brought to her in October and she made up her mind to adopt it, and it was arranged by Mrs. Austin that she would bring the child to Montagu House on November 15th, 1802.

This was the latest addition to the family of nine or ten that Campe was introduced to in that year. But



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William Austin was brought up in Montagu House, the Princess became very attached to the baby she had thus adopted, and it ended by her treating him as her own child. Mr. Perceval got a place for the father at the Docks and Mrs. Austin constantly saw her child, whenever she chose to call at Montagu House, until 1814, when Caroline took the child abroad with her.

That is the short, true story of the adoption of William Austin by Princess Caroline in 1802, and the facts of it were known to all the household and to her friends who visited her at the time. That anyone four years afterwards should have sought to make a scandal of the matter, and that the Prince should have jumped at the idea of charging his wife with being the mother of the child she had openly adopted, requires elucidation and the key to the trouble is undoubtedly to be found in one of Congreve's maxims of feminine psychology :

“Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,  
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.”

And I take it as a reasonable corollary to this proposition, that the scorn of a fellow-woman higher in the scale of society than the lady scorned, reacts in the soul of the scornee in an especially effervescing and hateful manner. Certainly, when Caroline told her servants that she was “not at home” to Lady Douglas in 1806 she acted rightly, but it is less easy to defend her having ever made a friend of such a dishonest person. I gather, however, that the woman in her coarse way was outwardly attractive and apparently ready with sympathy. Moreover, and this was the first lure to Caroline, she was the mother of a beautiful baby.

Lady Charlotte Douglas was the wife of Sir John Douglas, Colonel of the Royal Marines. He had sailed with Sir Sidney Smith, who commanded the *Tigre* in 1798. Sir Sidney seems to have been a brave but excitable personality and had differences with Nelson, who

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ultimately put him in his proper place. His defence of St. Jean d'Acre made his name famous and he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and a pension of £1,000 a year. Colonel Douglas obtained a pension of £433 about the same time.

In 1801, the Douglasses came to live at Blackheath. Sir John was a man of forty-one. His friend Sir Sidney was a year or two younger. He came to live with them, bringing his carriage and horses and coachman. These he left for the use of the Douglasses. He was one of the family there when he chose to come and stay with them. Sidney Smith was a generous, agreeable companion but, as some said, too fond of talking about himself and describing himself as "the most brilliant of chevaliers."

He had served under Hood, and it may well be that Caroline met him at Greenwich Hospital. A naval hero of this flamboyant type would certainly attract Caroline, who would be eager to talk to him about her boys. Many people speak of Sir Sidney as a good-natured, simple man in private life. It was one of his great delights to give pleasure to young people. He was the life and soul of a picnic and would "deliver himself up to its humours and fun with all the abandonment of a boy of fifteen." At indoor parties, too, he was great at charades and conundrums and all sorts of tricks with cutting and folding papers into curious shapes, and these treasures his young lady friends might have at the price of a kiss. His talk was lively and amusing. No wonder Caroline was pleased to see him at her parties at Montagu House.

How she first became acquainted with Lady Douglas is not clear. There is a statement of Lady Douglas's about it to this effect. She says that in November, when her daughter was a baby, "as I was sitting in my parlour, which commanded a view of the heath, I saw to my surprise the Princess of Wales, elegantly dressed in a lilac satin pelisse, primrose-coloured half-boots and a small travelling cap furred with sable, and a lady, pacing up and

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down before the house, and sometimes stopping as if desirous of opening the gate in the iron railing to come in."

Lady Douglas went out to the lady and found she was the Princess of Wales, who said, "I believe you are Lady Douglas and have a very beautiful child. I should like to see it."

Now, having read the whole of Lady Douglas's statements carefully, and being convinced that the woman was a liar and a blackmailer, I think this story is untrue ; but from the feminine details about Caroline's costume, a subject even Lady Douglas might speak the truth about, and our knowledge of Caroline's fervent interest in babies and young children, this incident may be true, for even perjurers season their lies with truth. At all events, during 1801 and until Christmas, 1803, when the Douglasses went to Devonshire, they were constant visitors at Montagu House and with them their guest, Sir Sidney, when he was down at Blackheath. It is obvious, therefore, that Lady Douglas must have constantly seen Caroline's nine children that Campe breakfasted with in 1802, and as she was intimate with Caroline it is difficult to suppose that the adoption of little Austin was not as well known to her as to Caroline's own servants and attendants and other visitors. There was never any concealment about it.

Charlotte Douglas was an ill-bred woman. Her father is said to have been a private soldier and her mother the illegitimate daughter of a Bath attorney. Gossip says that Sir Sidney Smith, who was unmarried, was an admirer of her ladyship, and that she on her part was deeply jealous of the attentions he paid to the Princess of Wales. However this may be, after they left Blackheath the Princess was informed that Lady Douglas had made statements reflecting on her character, and she determined that if the Douglasses returned to Blackheath she would not renew their acquaintance.

When, therefore, in October, 1804, they came back again and Lady Douglas left cards at Montagu House, the

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Princess instructed Mrs. Vernon to write a letter to her intimating that she did not desire her to call again. Lady Douglas wrote to the Princess personally, but her letter was returned unopened. Some of Caroline's friends advised her not to banish Lady Douglas from her presence as she was a malicious woman who would strive to injure her. Caroline was at once the Brunswicker, her pride and common sense forbade her making any terms with a slanderer ; she was firm, and decided that the woman was an undesirable person and should not enter her house again.

Seeing that Lady Douglas's ultimate case was that she had known since 1802 that the Princess of Wales was an immoral woman, and had committed adultery with Sir Sidney Smith and others, and that little Austin was her illegitimate child, her pertinacity in endeavouring to regain her position as a guest at Montagu House and her husband's desire to assist her requires some excuse.

Not content with her letter being returned, she wrote to Caroline's attendant, Lady Fitzgerald. This must have been in October, 1804, for there is a letter of Canning's of that date in which he says that the Princess had just been staying with them at South Hill and had broken her little finger whilst staying there, and Mrs. Fitzgerald in her reply to Lady Douglas refers to this incident.

Lady Douglas in her letter to Mrs. Fitzgerald takes up the usual attitude of the blackmailer and says that "her royal highness had thought proper to confide in me a secret of very *serious importance* to herself ; and I would not after acting in the most honourable manner to her be dismissed by a lady in waiting ; and I meant to be at Montagu House and have a satisfactory conversation with Mrs. Vernon ; and therefore she would be so good as to acquaint her royal highness with the contents of my letter or lay it before her royal highness." Lady Fitzgerald replied that she would not show her letter to the Princess unless she asked to see it.

## *Queen Caroline*

It is clear that if Caroline had cared to buy the woman she was there to be bought. But as, from Caroline's point of view, there was no secret between them to be kept, she thought no more of the matter. I have often thought it curious, in this business of the investigation of Lady Douglas's lying charges against the Princess of Wales, that none of the important people who dealt with the matter seemed concerned with the fact that Lady Douglas's charge against her former friend was one of high treason, that she herself was an accessory after the fact to high treason, or rather from a legal point of view a principal, as accessories in treason are unknown. But the explanation is, I think, that no one who read the woman's statements could fail to see that she was an obvious liar, who made her charges out of venom and spite, in the vain hope that her threats would prevail with Caroline to receive her once again at Montagu House.

Caroline, however, appears to have thought no more about the abusive lady, and her life continued in its accustomed course.

It is important to remember that but for Lady Douglas's charges against her, all her friends describe her as interested in her charities and hospitality and as happy in her life as a deserted wife exiled in a foreign country could well be. The King was kind to her and ready to protect her. She had interesting and influential friends, and for ten years after her husband had set her aside she made no effort to molest him in any way or interfere with his amours.

Nor was she greedy of money or patronage like the mistresses of the Prince and the Duke of York. In 1803, when something had been said about increasing the Prince's allowance, Canning thought it right to see the Princess on the subject, and reported to the Earl of Malmesbury that Caroline had told him "that she thought no woman should put herself forward or interfere in Party concerns in this country, and though she thanked him for his

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attention, requested him not to use her name either in or out of the House, that she was perfectly satisfied with her situation, and did not wish to make it less tranquil and undisturbed by bringing her name under the public eye."

James Harris, Earl of Malmesbury, was very pleased at her sane attitude, and there is very little doubt that had the Prince had the decency to have refrained from persecuting her and her daughter, and had the King's life and health continued so that he could have protected her from attack, she would never have been forced into a position in which she was obliged to take the counsel of political friends to protect her from her husband's schemes against her peace and honour.

## Chapter XII: *The Delicate Investigation*

“What can Innocence hope for  
When such as sit her judges are corrupted?”

Massinger: *Maid of Honour*, V. ii.

“THE Delicate Investigation” was the curious name given to an inquiry made by a tribunal of the Prince’s friends into the conduct of his wife. It was an indecent travesty of justice, and it is sad to record that English lawyers and gentlemen should have consented to play a part in it.

Who invented the phrase, “Delicate Investigation,” I cannot say. It was, perhaps, “delicate” in the sense of being weak, effete and unhealthy; in so far as “delicate” connotes “fastidious” it was no doubt querulous, strait-laced and censorious; but if by “delicate” the implication to be inferred is that it was scrupulous, impelled by a nice sense of honour and of tender conscience, then “delicate” was not the *mot juste*.

And, as will be seen, it was not an “investigation” of any kind. There was no real inquiry, no strict search after the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The accused had no notice of the charges brought against them, Caroline and her alleged lovers were not cited to appear, the inquiry, such as it was, went on in secret behind closed doors, organized and conducted by her enemies. It is true it resulted in proof of her innocence, but even then the Prince’s friends shaped their decree in such a way as to suggest acts of indiscretion against the Princess which were only brought forward when the really serious charge had failed. It is not an exaggeration to say that this cruel Star Chamber libel was the overture to the persecution of Caroline that only ended with her life.

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To understand how such a judicial scandal could take place one must remember—at least in so far as it affects Caroline—the sudden change in the political situation which took place at this time. On January 23rd, 1806, William Pitt died at Putney Heath, uttering his last memorable words : “ Oh, my country ! How I love my country ! ” Caroline lost a good friend. The country lost a minister who would never have allowed her to have been treated with indignity and injustice. The effect on the poor King’s mind was disastrous. A new ministry had to be formed. “ The Prince of Wales,” writes Lord Malmesbury, “ went most heartily and unbecomingly with the Opposition and lowered his dignity by soliciting office and places for his dependents, and by degrading himself into the size of a common party leader.” It was decided to make a coalition, in which Fox and others of the Prince’s friends should hold office under Lord Grenville. This was known as the ministry of “ All the Talents.” Eldon, Caroline’s friend, had to give up the Great Seal, Erskine becoming Lord Chancellor. The latter was still a friend of the Prince of Wales, in spite of his courageous honesty in defending Thomas Paine in 1792, which had greatly disturbed the Prince at the time. Moreover, Lord Moira, a comrade and adviser of the Prince in all his schemes, political, financial or amatory, was made Master-General of the Ordnance. He was an active party in interviewing and encouraging the witnesses against Caroline.

But for this change in the political world, it is quite unlikely that any responsible law officers would have allowed their Ministers to yield to the Prince’s desire for a “ Delicate Investigation.” It must have been a most displeasing task, to an honest man like Erskine, to take a part in it and to discover, when the evidence came before him, what a wretched, lying case his friend the Prince had stooped to put forward ; but it was the price of office, and he had to go through with it. We shall find, when we come to the trial of Queen Caroline, how nobly he sought



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to make amends for having erred and strayed from his high ideals of the administration of justice in taking part in this "Delicate Investigation."

We can now return to the machinations of Charlotte Douglas, which broke out in a new form some time in 1805. The Princess had made it quite clear that she would not relent, and was not to be intimidated by threats of scandal, and after a few months of peace Lady Douglas produced to her husband an anonymous letter containing an indecent allusion to herself and Sir Sidney Smith, which she declared that the Princess had sent to her.

She then wrote the Princess the following note, expecting, no doubt, it would frighten her :

*Madam,*

*I received your former anonymous letter safe ; also your two last with drawings.*

*Your obedient servant,*

*Charlotte Douglas.*

As for these two "drawings" which Lady Douglas described as "indecent," I am not a pornographic expert, but they appear to be merely insane scrawls and scribbles. Whatever meaning they have, the words on them are not in Caroline's handwriting.

The Princess was indignant at being charged with writing anonymous letters, and carried the note to the Duke of Kent for his advice. He sent for Colonel Douglas and Sir Sidney Smith, and pointed out to them the absurdity of taking any hostile steps against the Princess on such a charge and there the matter dropped. The Douglasses never mentioned to the Duke of Kent at this interview anything about the charges of immorality they were spreading abroad against the Princess.

The alleged anonymous letter, for only one seems to have been produced, and that was never shown to Caroline or her friends, was thought to have been an imitation of

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her writing. Lord Cholmondeley, who saw it, and was a friend of the Prince, and had often seen Caroline write, was quite convinced that it was not in her handwriting, and swore to his belief on July 16th, 1806.

It was probably forged by Charlotte Douglas, a not unknown exploit of spiteful women, who have been known to write foul and indecent letters to themselves and others as from an innocent person whom they wished to injure.

In the autumn of 1805 the Douglasses made up their minds, or perhaps one should say Charlotte Douglas made up her mind, for she was commander-in-chief of the campaign, and her husband cut but a poor figure in the business, to tell their story of Caroline's infidelity to the Duke of Sussex. Colonel Douglas was, it seems, in the household of the Duke, and he told him of his wife's statements against the Princess. Even in his deposition, Colonel Douglas whittles his evidence down to hearsay whenever he can, and gives as little direct testimony in support of his wife's statements as may be.

The Duke of Sussex informs the Prince of the charges, and says that the Douglasses have already mentioned them to the Duke of Kent. The Prince sends for his brother of Kent, who explains that the Douglasses never made any charges of immorality against Caroline, but, on the contrary, it was she who had complained of their slanders of her, and of their suggestion that she was the writer of an anonymous letter. The fact that they had told this falsehood about the Duke of Kent to the Duke of Sussex, made small impression on the mind of the Prince. He was at once only too ready to welcome any slander against his wife, and set to work to pick up the threads of the Douglas libels and to weave them into a winding sheet for his wife's reputation. I do not suppose he had any intelligent belief in the Douglas evidence, but it was a weapon with which to injure Caroline, and he was grateful for it and set about to make use of it.

The first deposition made by Charlotte Douglas and

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her husband was taken before the Duke of Sussex at Greenwich Park, December 3rd, 1805. It was a statement made at the request of the Prince of Wales. The chief item of direct evidence was that Caroline had confided to Charlotte Douglas that William Austin was her own child. There does not, in this long-winded rigmarole of gossip and spite, seem to be any definite charge against any particular lover of Caroline, though we shall find afterwards that Sir Thomas Lawrence, who painted her portrait at the King's command, and Captain Manby and Sir Sidney Smith, were all named as possible co-respondents, though they were not cited to appear, nor were they allowed to hear or know the actual allegations and evidence against them.

There are one or two strange lapses in Lady Douglas's statement. She alleges that she found Caroline to be "a person without education or talents and without any desire of improving herself." She constantly expresses her disgust at Caroline's behaviour and loose conversation, and her desire to be free from intercourse with her. Yet when she is no longer invited to Montagu House she is furious with rage. I doubt if Charlotte Douglas or her husband understood when they signed their joint deposition that they were charging Caroline with high treason, and that by keeping her criminal secret for three years they were themselves, in all probability, liable to prosecution as principals in the alleged treason. This aspect of the case, as I have said before, seems to have been very lightly considered by the lawyers who read the Douglas depositions. The cause of this, however, is to my mind obvious. Not one of them believed that Caroline had committed adultery and was the mother of a child. Their difficulty was what to say about a matter which the Prince of Wales had taken up with great enthusiasm, at a moment when at any time he might be their Regent and make or mar their political future. It was not Caroline's fault that she was dragged into the dirt track of party politics.

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She would willingly have remained in retirement at Montagu House. But when the Prince extended his grateful patronage to that vulgar slanderer and liar, Charlotte Douglas, he started a warfare with Caroline of Brunswick in which he made use of every foul weapon which money could buy. Caroline would have been false to her race if she had not been ready to fight for her honour.

About this time the Prince was taking a great interest in the case of Mary Seymour, an adopted child of Mrs. Fitzherbert, whose parents were no longer desirous that a young girl should be brought up in such a household. The case created a great deal of public excitement. In the end Lord and Lady Hertford were made guardians of the child and they allowed her to stay with Mrs. Fitzherbert. Soon afterwards the Prince of Wales deserted Mrs. Fitzherbert for Lady Hertford.

The supplementary amours of the Prince need not detain us, and the scandal of the judicial decision of the House of Lords in the Seymour case, after an eager canvass by the Prince and his brothers, was no unusual matter ; but the interest, to those who desire to follow the life of Caroline in these incidents, turns on the fact that Mrs. Fitzherbert's business was handed over by the Prince to Samuel Romilly, and at the same time the Prince used his influence to make him Solicitor-General. This is how he became the official prosecutor of Caroline before the tribunal entrusted with the Delicate Investigation.

Samuel Romilly was a very learned man, a law reformer, and, as far as reading and study went, a sound lawyer. But though he had practised as an advocate on the Midland Circuit, he does not seem to have attained that knowledge of human nature, and the ways of man and woman, that is essential to the practical business of advocacy.

He turned his attention to Chancery, and by 1802 he was a successful leader at the Chancery Bar. As a man he was honest, austere, without human sympathy outside his

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own circle, conscientious to an almost fidgety extent, yet able to satisfy his political ambitions, which were very rampant on occasion, by the learned dissertations with which he overruled the objections of the still small voice which continued to remind him that he was straying from the narrow path. His entry in his diary in April, 1807, when he determined to follow the common but, as he calls it, detestable practice of buying a seat in the House of Commons, is a beautiful instance of his honesty, simplicity, learning and weakness.

Many have wondered why Romilly ever mixed himself up with such an uncongenial scoundrel as George, Prince of Wales. The answer is that he only did so professionally. And by the unwritten law of the barrister's profession, he is bound not to judge his client's cause, but to advocate it when called upon, irrespective of the character of the citizen who retains his services.

It was Thurlow who brought them together over the Seymour case. Thurlow, who was as clever an old fox as ever practised at the Bar, saw the enormous importance of an evil-liver like the Prince being represented by a puritanical ascetic personality who would exhale an aura of respectability around his client and his cause.

On September 18th, 1805, Thomas Creevey writes to Romilly from Brighton, that he is sending a message from "a person whose desires, in the courtly language of this place, are considered as commands." The Prince of Wales had told Creevey that "he had got a seat in Parliament for Romilly. He had mentioned the matter to Fox," who had expressed the greatest delight at it.

Even Creevey sees that there will be trouble with Romilly's conscience over its owner "politically connecting himself with this same Prince. On the other hand, in the course of things he is to be King and a connexion with him now is a connexion with a most powerful party."

Romilly, to his honour, made up his mind that he could not accept such a gift, and writes Creevey a long

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letter for the Prince to see. Creevey tells him the Prince is evidently hurt by his refusal, but adds : " I took for granted you would do as you have done, and I think you are right."

Romilly obtained a seat for himself, and on February 8th, 1806, four days after the followers of Fox and Grenville formed their ministry, he received notice from Fox that he was to be made Solicitor-General. He knew, of course, that this was due to the patronage of the Prince of Wales, who was already taking his advice in the Seymour case, and had sent for him to look into the business of the Douglas charge against Caroline. According to Romilly's diary he went by command to Carlton House in November, 1805. He had already heard from the Duke of Sussex about the statements made " by Lady Douglas, the wife of one of the Duke's equerries. He told me that the account was to be put in writing and that it should be sent to me, that I might consider with Lord Thurlow, to whom it was also to be sent, what steps it would be necessary to take." The Prince had only as yet heard at second hand the assertions of Charlotte Douglas, but in his ignorant enthusiasm he had already determined that there was sufficient in them to base an attack on his wife.

The statements were brought by Colonel McMahon to Romilly, who afterwards, on December 15th, had a consultation with Thurlow, taking McMahon with him to represent the Prince.

Thurlow had been ill, but as Romilly set down in his diary, " he was in full possession of his faculties and expressed himself in the conversation we had together with that coarse energy for which he has long been remarkable." Thurlow's Rabelaisian vocabulary was noted, and it would have been interesting to have learned the precise epithets that he applied to Charlotte Douglas as a possible witness of truth. Even when bowdlerized into the more befitting phrases of Romilly, who could not befoul the

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pages of his diary with Thurlow's language, it is clear that in his view her deposition was worthless.

Thurlow told Romilly and McMahon "that he had not been able to read all Lady Douglas's narrative, it was written in so bad a hand; but that he had gone rapidly over it and collected the principal facts (and in truth it appeared, from the observations he made, that no fact of any importance had escaped him); that the first point to be considered was whether her account were true, and that for himself he did not believe it. He said that there was no *composition* in her narrative (that was the expression he used), no connexion in it, no dates; that some parts of it were grossly improbable. He then said, that when he first knew the Princess, he should have thought her incapable of writing or saying any such things as Lady Douglas imputed to her; but that she might be altered; that, to be sure, it was a strange thing to take a beggar's child but a few days old and adopt it as her own; but that, however, Princesses had sometimes strange whims which nobody could account for; that in some respects her situation was deserving of great compassion. Upon the whole his opinion was that the evidence the Prince was in possession of would not justify him taking any step on his own part and that he had only to wait and see what facts might come to light in the future."

The fact that the Austin child was only one of nine or ten waifs and strays cared for by the Princess was, naturally enough, never mentioned by Charlotte Douglas, and never seems to have been known to the Delicate Investigators. In a doctrinaire way Romilly was not adverse to the education of the poor, but I am not sure that the "strange whims" of the Princess, in actually caring for and educating poor children herself, would greatly have appealed to him.

Romilly now wrote out, for the Prince, Thurlow's opinion, and handed it to Colonel McMahon. He then went to Erskine, who was to be one of the Delicate

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Investigators, and it was agreed that a man named Lowten should be employed to make further inquiries. On December 30th Lowten called and said that Lord Moira and Colonel McMahon were eager that Romilly should see Lady Douglas. He did so, and was impressed by her coolness and self-possession and pleased with the manner in which she answered his questions. Mr. Lowten was now ordered to prepare the case against the Princess. He was Sir John Douglas's attorney and Romilly had gone to meet Lady Douglas at his chambers. That counsel should have allowed her adversary's attorney to collect evidence against the Princess of Wales, whilst she remained in ignorance of the charges against her, is discreditable to Romilly as representing the Crown.

The matter seems to have drifted on and there seems nothing more done officially until the end of May, when, on the 29th, the King was persuaded to grant a royal warrant directed to Lord Erskine, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer and Lord Ellenborough to inquire into the truth of Lady Douglas's allegations.

How any law officer reading Charlotte Douglas's deposition could have seriously put it forward as evidence of truth it is difficult to say. The excuse would be, one supposes, that an inquiry having been ordered, the Solicitor-General was bound to produce such materials as he had, though this ought not to have prevented him from seeking diligently for evidence, refuting or corroborating these statements by independent inquiry. The whole affair, however, was left in Lowten's hands, and Romilly, as Solicitor-General, put forward the witnesses supplied by Lowten on June 6th and 7th at Lord Grenville's house.

The four Lords of the Council had granted an order to bring before them six of Caroline's servants. The Duke of Kent attended upon her and stated the King's wish in the matter, and this seems to have been the first intimation that Caroline received of the plot that was



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hatching against her. She expressed her willingness that her servants should be examined if it was so desired.

From one in the afternoon until eleven at night on the second day of the examination the four Commissioners and the Solicitor-General proceeded with their secret examination of Lowten's witnesses. Lady Douglas had added to her deposition, but the main and only charge worthy of notice was that relating to the child. Sophia Austin, the mother, was one of the witnesses and eight of the Princess's servants.

It was a debacle for Lady Douglas, and as Romilly honestly enters in his diary, "The result of the examination was such as left a perfect conviction on my mind, and I believe on the minds of the four Lords, that the boy in question is the son of Sophia Austin; that he was born in Brownlow Street Hospital on the 11th of July, 1802, and was taken by the Princess into her house on the 15th of November in the same year and has ever since been under her protection. The evidence of all the servants of the Princess was very favourable to her Royal Highness and Lady Douglas's account was contradicted in many particulars."

The charge wholly collapsed, as Thurlow had foreseen it would. The efforts of Lord Moira and Lowten to make a case against Caroline failed utterly and hopelessly. The four Commissioners were at their wits' end what to do, for they began to realise that for Ministers to be mixed up with a dirty intrigue of the Prince of Wales against his wife, based on the rambling falsehoods of a spiteful and blackmailing woman, herself accessory to the evil doings alleged, would make them highly unpopular in the country and very contemptible in the eyes of their own party followers. Nothing is more disastrous to the reputation of a statesman than to allow himself to be fooled into putting his money on the wrong horse.

The honest thing to have done after the examination of the servants was to have reported at once that the

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depositions of Lady Douglas were untrue in substance and in fact. The difficulty here was that they represented the Prince, in a sense, though they were reporting to the King ; and a straightforward decision of that kind would be very displeasing to the Prince. They therefore proposed to adjourn the case and call a few more witnesses and obtain a few more depositions and see if anything turned up.

A discarded page named Cole gave evidence that the Princess had been too familiar with "Lawrence the painter" and Sir Sidney Smith, and Fanny Lloyd, a gossiping servant, spoke of her attentions to Captain Manby. Bidgood, a servant who had been with the Prince for twenty-five years and was then drafted into the Princess's household, swore that he had seen the Captain kiss the Princess when he went away and she was in tears. It must be remembered that her servants were chosen for her, and these statements were made first of all to Mr. Lowten, Douglas's solicitor, and were not cross-examined to, since no one charged with these matters was allowed to appear. The whole investigation was a very slipshod business. As an instance of the careless way in which the examinations were taken, the Investigators say that, "We accordingly first examined on oath the principal informants, Sir John Douglas and his wife, who both positively swore, the former to his having observed the fact of the pregnancy of her Royal Highness, and the latter to all the important particulars contained in her former declaration."

Now it is true that Sir John in the examinations in June, 1806, did swear "after the Princess had been sometime acquainted with them she appeared to deponent to be with child." But in the original statement in December, 1805, which both husband and wife signed, so far from pretending he had noticed anything of the sort, his wife says she knew all about Caroline's position but says : "I never told my husband her situation."

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Indeed, it goes further than this, for Lady Douglas pretends that she had kept Caroline's secret, and it was not until they had both been forbidden the house, and after repeated efforts to continue their acquaintance with the Princess they had been given to understand that she would see them no more, that, according to Lady Douglas "My husband now desired me to give him a full explanation of what her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales had confided to me and whether I had ever mentioned it. I gave him my solemn word of honour it had never passed my lips and I was only now going to utter it at his positive desire." This was evidently the first he had ever heard of it, for the statement goes on: "Sir John recollected all her whims and went over her whole conduct and he firmly believes her to be the mother of the reputed Deptford child." But in 1805 he does not say that he had any inkling of the matter before his wife spoke. Thus, in 1804, Sir John discusses the matter with his wife for the first time, and in 1805 signs his wife's statement to that effect and never discloses that he knew anything of Caroline's situation from personal knowledge. Yet in 1806, when he comes before the judges, he swears that he saw for himself that she was pregnant in 1802.

This of course was after his attorney, Lowten, had been working up the case, and so far from finding any evidence corroborating Lady Douglas's string of falsehoods, it must have been clear to his attorney's mind that the Austin case was a hopeless myth. It would, of course, look a little better if Colonel Douglas could be brought to depone that he had thought Caroline was pregnant in 1802, and I dare say his wife and his attorney must have talked the complacent husband into believing that he had been a very discerning fellow in 1802 and a kind-hearted man to keep his suspicions to himself. Still, what he swore was undoubtedly untrue in fact.

Charlotte Douglas was a deliberate perjurer, but her husband may have been a victim of auto-suggestion—or,

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as someone has called it—auto-attorney-suggestion—added to the desire for a peaceful and quiet life with a noisy and dangerous woman. But Romilly was not a very conscientious advocate to put Colonel Douglas before the Investigators as a clear witness to the alleged condition of Caroline in 1802. Indeed, to my mind, his real duty was to tell the judges that in his belief Lady Douglas was, as Thurlow said, unworthy of belief, and he should have pointed out to Colonel Douglas the inconsistency of his oath in 1806 with his signed statement of 1805. The Judges, too, Erskine and Ellenborough, must have noticed these things and should have asked the Colonel a few pertinent questions if they desired the King and the public to believe that their investigation was indeed an inquest of truth. But as Lord Campbell points out, we only get the result of the evidence, not questions and answers. I think the examinations were very perfunctory. No one could believe for a moment a word of Lady Douglas's statement. It was disproved by every credible witness that Caroline had ever had any child since her husband deserted her ; and it was conclusively proved that William Austin was the child of Sophia Austin, who herself gave evidence.

If they had so reported to the King, the wretched business might have ended, but these four men were the Prince's friends, and he would have been bitterly chagrined at such a result of this, his first conspiracy against his wife's happiness and good name. Some of the servants had retailed gossip about the Princess's levity with Sir Sidney Smith, Thomas Lawrence the painter, and Captain Manby, and Lowten had done his best to endeavour to make some show of a case against Caroline as to her relations with these gentlemen. The tribunal therefore thought right, without giving any of the slandered persons an opportunity of speaking in their defence, to add a rider to their direct and conclusive acquittal of the Princess of Wales on Lady Douglas's charge, by adopting the slanders of the servants in relation, at all events, to Captain Manby,

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and saying that these circumstances "must be credited until they shall receive some decisive contradiction, and if true are justly entitled to the most serious consideration."

The only way in which they could be contradicted was to have allowed the persons charged with offences to have heard what the charges were in detail, and then permitted them to cross-examine the witnesses and call evidence on their own behalf. By placing on record these suggestions of dishonour against Caroline, without hearing her cause, the investigators sinned against the ancient and cherished traditions of English justice.

In this country we have for long maintained that a citizen is to be deemed innocent until proved to be guilty. Even a political opponent is entitled to a hearing in open court, and in the dark days when treason was alleged against men and women obnoxious to the ruling powers, they were not condemned unheard, on charges never disclosed to them, by a tribunal seated behind locked doors, listening to evidence prepared by the private attorney of a perjured and spiteful enemy of the accused.

It is humiliating to think that English judges and English gentlemen should have put their names to a decree prepared in such an unworthy manner. As a judicial act it is a disgrace to the men responsible for it, and if you consider it merely as a political manœuvre it was a wicked wrong to a good woman, a foreigner entitled to the highest degree of protection from the Royal Family, the Government and the people of England who had invited her to come among them.

Even in their blind desire to help their friend the Prince, the Investigators should have foreseen that the King and his friends would be pleased to join issue with them and give their protection to Caroline, and that the people who hated the Prince and his ways would be sorry for the Princess and would naturally and rightly take her part. It was a cruel act to make Caroline's reputation a plaything for party politicians.

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The evil, however, was done and could not be undone. Up to this time, for ten years since she had been cast aside by her husband, Caroline, parted from her child, a lonely woman in a foreign country, had lived secluded at Montagu House, busying herself with her charities and the society of clever and light-hearted people who could minister to her tastes.

This blow, struck against her honour, roused the fighting spirit of the Brunswick in her. There were always politicians ready to make use of her troubles, and since they were fighting for themselves and their causes, and not for their client's cause, they led her into blunders and difficulties. From these time-servers we must honourably except George Canning, who, though he was not quixotic enough to ruin his own career in her service, refused at the expense of official place and a King's favour, to join in the final conspiracy of persecution that her husband planned for her destruction.

For the rest of her life Caroline was a lonely woman, fighting against the conspiracies of her husband, whose failure over the Delicate Investigation had only whetted his appetite for further adventures of a similar character.

## Chapter XIII : *Caroline's Triumph*

"Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,  
And we are grac'd with wreaths of victory.  
But in the midst of this bright-shining day,  
I spy a black, suspicious, threat'ning cloud."

*Third part of Henry VI, V. 3.*

CAROLINE'S trials and sorrows would have overwhelmed a less valorous and resolute woman. Whilst she was waiting to learn the decision of the secret inquisition that was discussing her conduct news came of the death of her father, who fell at the battle of Jena.

It may seem at first sight somewhat strange that Caroline should not have appealed to her much-loved father in these days of trouble. But she was a soldier's daughter, and even if there had been any possibility that in the turmoil of Europe he could have found time to understand and intervene in her domestic affairs, it was unlikely she would have invited him to do so, since she was fully of opinion that she and her advisers in England were capable of handling them successfully. Independence and the power of decision were qualities that some think aggravated Caroline's difficulties, but at least she possessed these qualities.

And in the autumn of 1806 the Duke of Brunswick, now aged seventy-one, was at the head of the Prussian army awaiting the attack of Napoleon's invading forces. This is not the place for descriptions of the battles of Jena and Auerstädt. On the night of October 13th, the old Duke, after a long conversation with his officers, retired at midnight and slept in uniform. He rose at three. He mounted his horse at five. He had propounded a scheme of battle which many good judges

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think might have given him the victory over Marshal Davoust, who should, according to the rules of the game, have been annihilated, but fortune decreed otherwise.

Charles, Duke of Brunswick, was a general of a type that was even then rapidly becoming a relic of the past. He was still the foreground figure beloved of the old artists, riding at the head of his advancing troops, waving his sword and prancing up to the cannon's mouth. I have often wondered, when looking at these strange pictures of battles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whether generals really behaved like that. The answer of history seems to be in the affirmative. Just as in our own day, old formations, antique weapons, out-of-date costumes and equipment, like ghosts of the past, haunt modern armies and hinder the activities of brave men, so it seems were battles lost in the past by the faithful observance of military etiquette. Had the Duke remained out of reach and directed the movements of his troops he might have won the battle or ridden away and fled in exile to England.

But no Brunswicker had ever fought in that fashion. So, when the Duke had sent his orderly officers on their missions, he placed himself at the head of the grenadiers of Hamstein and rode at their head into the thick of the fight to encourage them. A shot smashed across his face, breaking his nose, blinding both his eyes and knocking him off his horse on to a heap of stones.

With the help of a private soldier he mounted his horse again, and, covering his face with a handkerchief, rode along the lines of his advancing army. But at length, weak and exhausted, he was obliged to succumb and was carried on a litter away from the battle-field. With him the unity of command disappeared. The various generals were without a leader. The King of Prussia refused to command himself or to give the command to anyone else. General confusion ensued. The battle was lost.

They carried him over the Hartz to Brunswick. He



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would have stayed there if his friends would have allowed him to do so. "I have long known the French," he told his servants, "and better than you do. They will respect an old general wounded on the field of battle. The officers will give balls and go to the theatre; the soldiers will kiss the girls a little. Take care of the billets and see that they want nothing. I feel sure that there is a courier of the Emperor's on the road to know how I am."

There is something pathetic in the babblings of an old soldier about the forgotten chivalries of battle in a bygone age. Napoleon recognized no Duke of Brunswick, "The Prussian Monarchy is overthrown," he proclaimed, "and the State of Brunswick is in my possession." When they convinced the Duke that his remaining in the city would only aggravate the misfortunes of his subjects he told them to carry him away.

On October 29th he arrived at Ottensen. He was borne by ten men on a wretched litter. No officers directed their movements, no servants waited on their dying Prince. A small crowd of vagabonds and curious children crowded round the litter as it stopped at a wretched inn, and the sick man was carried into the house. Here he died on November 10th, and was buried in the churchyard of Ottensen.

How the old warrior's spirit would have been cheered in the Elysian Fields, could he have learned that his faithful Hussars, in honour of his memory, designed their famous black uniform with light blue facings, with its badge of a death's head and cross-bones of silver. The regiment was renowned throughout the world of war as "The Black Brunswickers" and to their ancient enemies the French as "Les Chasseurs de la Mort."

It was after this manner that Caroline's hero father met his doom, her mother fled to England and was kindly received by George III. Her elder brother died and the dukedom descended to her younger brother, Duke Frederick William. He too lived in exile for a time in England until,

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at the peace of Leipzig in 1813, his duchy was restored to him.

These happenings account for Caroline making no appeal to her family at the time of the Delicate Investigation. The decree had been signed by the four investigators on July 14th, 1806, but it was not until August 11th that Erskine sent a copy of it with the depositions to the Princess by one of his footmen. The very next day Caroline wrote a letter of protest to the King against the report and the discourteous manner of its delivery. She complains that she has not had any chance of making a defence and that the lords commissioners had never given her a hearing, and adds : " I can, in the face of the Almighty, assure your Majesty that your daughter in law is innocent, and her conduct unquestionable ; free from all the indecours and improprieties which are imputed to her at present by the lords commissioners, upon the evidence of persons who speak as falsely as Sir John and Lady Douglas themselves."

Caroline made it clear to the King, and through him to her husband and his friends in the ministry, that she was going to fight for her honour with the courage and tenacity of a Brunswicker. It is always repeated by those who accept the gossip of the Tadpoles and Tapers of Court circles that Caroline was a woman of indiscretion. That she was careless and informal among her friends and in her own household may be true enough. Her manners and customs were alien to ours and ours were stupid and incomprehensible to her. At times she did eccentric and impulsive things, but they were, as a rule, kindly actions. But once war was declared against her, she organized her forces with excellent skill and prudence. A foolish, tactless woman would have poured forth pages of vituperation and contempt on the heads of the Douglasses, and the Prince and the Commissioners. Caroline the woman would have enjoyed doing this, no doubt, and done it with zest and wit, making a far better show of her composition than Charlotte Douglas had done. But Caroline the Princess

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of Brunswick always held Caroline the woman by a tight rein when they rode forth to battle.

There were two good friends of hers with whom she had been in touch during these troublous times. John Scott, Lord Eldon, who had just laid down the Great Seal, and Spencer Perceval, the late Attorney-General, who lived near her at Blackheath. She was very fond of Eldon, who constantly dined at Montagu House, where he always sat at her right hand and, knowing his tastes, she would quietly fill his glass herself, which was of course a strange breach of English etiquette, but not necessarily tactless, for his lordship never forbade her, but suffered her gladly ; though he admits that she did it “ so frequently that he seldom left her house without feeling that he had exceeded the limits of discretion.” Campbell says that Eldon took up her cause to please the King, to thwart the Prince and, let us charitably suppose, with a disinterested desire to see her righted. How these lawyers love one another ! I see no reason to suppose that Eldon, any more than Walter Scott, was ready to defend Caroline merely from sordid motives. He believed her innocent, and knew she had been unjustly treated, and both he and his brother, William, were friends of hers. As decent gentlemen they would naturally endeavour to help a woman who was their friend, with good advice and counsel ; and as lawyers there was every reason why they should please the King by so doing.

The notion commonly expressed by contemporary writers, and historians who follow their words too methodically, that Spencer Perceval also took up Caroline’s cause merely for the purpose of scoring politically over all the talents in the new ministry, and that when he had gained his end he threw her aside, is a calumny. Spencer Perceval was a genuine, sincere and able friend. He was a man of piety and religion, his honour was undoubted and he was a courageous fighter in difficult causes. He believed in Caroline’s case and he helped her with ability and success.

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It is possible that he may have seen her letter of August 12th to the King, but he certainly drafted her letter of August 17th. In this she submits the points which she says her advisers have explained to her require consideration. She points out that the depositions left by Erskine's footman are not authenticated, that written declarations referred to are not sent to her, and she demands proper papers, the names of her accusers, the dates when the declarations were made, and pleads that in justice to herself she ought to receive these things speedily.

On August 20th Erskine sends his principal officer with more papers and promises of authentication of documents and apologies for the disrespectful footman. On the 24th his purse-bearer arrives with further promises of the declarations and other papers. No doubt it was known that Perceval and Eldon were retained for the Princess and that it would be inadvisable to treat them uncivilly.

It was not until early in September that Caroline obtained all the papers her advisers required, and on October 2nd they had prepared for her a long and sound defence ready for delivery to the King. As it was necessary for them to obtain depositions from Mr. Lawrence, the painter, Captain Manby and other witnesses whose testimony had been neglected by the investigators, the document they produced is a very prompt as well as efficient piece of work. The main credit of this seems to belong to Spencer Perceval. He was assisted by Eldon and also had the aid of Sir Thomas Plumer, afterwards Master of the Rolls, and Sir Vicary Gibbs, who had been Solicitor-General when Perceval was Attorney.

All these great men and learned lawyers were there to attack their brethren for the gross injustice they had done to an individual, and the unconstitutional proceedings by which they had disgraced their profession. They did their work admirably, and no one can read their long but

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thorough exposure of the plot against Caroline, its failure and her innocence, without some admiration for that much-abused profession, the law. The humour of it, to anyone who does not regard political principles as anything more than counters in a game, is that here were the patriot Whigs who preached freedom and justice practising Star Chamber methods to please a dissolute prince, who was persecuting an undefended woman ; whilst she was being worthily and honestly defended by their Tory opponents. But all these gentlemen were lawyers, and though lawyers are often ardent politicians, yet where equity and justice are at stake political principles are naught. Moreover, Erskine and Romilly had slipped, and their rivals, whose places they had taken, were full of the joy of publishing their indiscretions. Truly, as a witty lawyer once said, "there is more joy in the Temple over one judge who falls into error, than over ninety-nine judgments from which there is no appeal."

The Right Honourable George Rose, Pitt's devoted friend, was another of Caroline's adherents and took a great interest in seeing her righted and the Foxite lawyers exposed. There is an interesting letter about Caroline's memorial written by Vicary Gibbs, one of the authors, to Rose on September 28th. In this he says : "The Answer is finished, and I only wish that his Majesty may be prevailed upon to give his personal attention to it and form his own judgment upon the case. Perceval has done it incomparably.

" . . . It was impossible to avoid making strong observations upon the conduct of the Commissioners ; in truth, the justice of the conclusions which the Report adopts could not be effectually attacked without showing that they have been at least inattentive to many material facts which they either know or had the means of knowing. The greatest respect is observed towards them in expression and their oversights are always attributed to their constant occupation in the business of their respective offices."

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Nothing could be more gentlemanly and professional than this attitude. It is one which is often misunderstood and commented upon with distaste by the client. Even that great philosopher Pickwick was disturbed in mind by "the cold-blooded villainy" of Serjeant Buzfuz presuming to tell his counsel "that it was a fine morning." But it is one of the most beautiful traits of our profession that it permits us after hours to eat and drink as friends, and therefore it is peculiarly important that we should in court attribute the errors of our learned friends to anything rather than their incompetence or dishonesty.

And, after all, Caroline was only a client. But she was also an interesting personality and a friend to some of them, and they served her honestly and with chivalry. Montagu House and its society were pleasing to these lawyers and men of the world, they recognized that the King loved his niece and in his sane moments would be eager to do her right. Also her cause was just, the other fellows were wrong, it was good political business to exploit their blunder, and so it proved. But when folk complain that lawyers are mere hack pleaders, what do they expect? Does the surgeon who removes your appendix, or the accountant who prepares your deficit account in bankruptcy, or the artist who paints your portrait, lay flowers on your grave; and does any sensible man expect such folly from professional advisers?

And as regards Perceval, I think it is clear that throughout this business he played the part of a good friend as well as a sound adviser to his client. And so Caroline thought, for she never blamed him for deserting her cause; and had he lived he would, I think, like Canning, have stood by her to the end.

On October 3rd Perceval wrote to Rose from Northampton, telling him how he worked all Saturday with Gibbs and Plumer, and could not leave town until Sunday to get down to his constituents, but that the work was finished, signed by the Princess and sent to the King

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on October 2nd. And in this letter he sets out his reasons for dealing with the Princess's case in the way he did. "We were all satisfied," he writes, "at least so I thought I collected the general sentiment, that the report was so framed that she could not acquiesce under it in silence without admitting its truth ; and that, in fact, there was evidently so much disposition to be hostile to her manifested in the whole course of the proceeding, that, looking forward to a new reign, there could be no possible security for her being permitted to hold her rank or station in this country, but from the existence of a strong sentiment in her favour throughout the Kingdom ; and that, therefore, her letter to the King should be so prepared that if published it should have the effect of producing rather than checking that sentiment."

The wisdom and foresight of this statement is clear. Perceval saw the Prince's attack was purely hostile, that it had failed in any definite result, but owing to the Foxite tendencies of the Investigators they had cast a slur on Caroline that the Prince would revive later when his father was dead and his wife unprotected. Therefore, they must prepare her case thoroughly, state it clearly and without passion, and, if it was not received and admitted as the truth, be prepared to publish it and appeal to the public against the injustice of the Government.

The Princess desired Eldon to present her letter to the King, but he decided it must be sent to Erskine, to whom Plumer carried it. The Princess then intended to go away for a rest with Miss Cholmondeley, but a terrible accident occurred at Leatherhead, where her carriage was overturned, Miss Cholmondeley thrown against a tree and killed, and she herself seriously bruised. She returned home for medical attention and rest and to await anxiously the King's reply to her letter.

It was the cue of the Prince's friends to make delays and keep the King from seeing his niece. But in course of time the King read the memorial she had sent and was,

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I think, touched by the way she approached him. "In happier days of my life, before my spirit had been yet at all lowered by my misfortunes, I should have been disposed to have met such a charge with the contempt which, I trust by this time, your Majesty thinks due to it. I should have been disposed to have defied my enemies to the utmost, and to have scorned to answer to anything but a legal charge before a competent tribunal. But in my present misfortunes such force of mind is gone." She therefore explains that she has set out her case in detail "to endeavour to remove at the first possible opportunity any unfavourable impressions, to rescue myself from the dangers which the continuance of these suspicions might occasion, and to preserve to me your Majesty's good opinion, in whose kindness hitherto I have found infinite consolation and to whose justice under all the circumstances I can confidently appeal."

Had the King been himself in vigorous health, and had he had to advise him Ministers ready to do his will rather than the Prince's, Caroline would have been received at once. For the depositions of Captain Manby and Lawrence, the artist, were crushing denials of the servants' tattle to which Erskine and his colleagues had given such an attentive ear. Moreover, there were two depositions, attached to her letter, of the medical attendants of the Princess, Mr. Edmeades and Mr. Mills, who were partners.

It appears that Lowten had got from a domestic servant a statement that the Princess's doctor had told her that he thought the Princess was pregnant. That any sane attorney should believe such an obvious absurdity is strange. Lowten took the news to Lord Meira, and they sent for Mr. Edmeades, who came on May 20th. His deposition is most interesting. He was introduced to Mr. Conant, a magistrate, and being asked about Lady Douglas's suggestion of pregnancy at once rejected the possibility of such a thing. Then it was put to him that he had



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said something of such a condition to one of the servants. This he denied, "whereupon Lord Moira, in a very significant manner, with his hands behind him, his head over one shoulder, his eyes directed towards Mr. Edmeades, observed 'that he could not help thinking that there must be something in the deposition,' as if he did not give credit to what deponent had said."

Mr. Conant, the magistrate, now cautioned Mr. Edmeades to be on his guard and suggested that if the servant's story was true "it might be very unpleasant to deponent should it come under the consideration of the Privy Council." Mr. Edmeades said he thought the servant's statement was malicious and he would make oath it was a lie, and as Lord Moira and Mr. Conant could make nothing of him they let him go. He set down what had happened and placed it before the Princess at once. It was good she should know at the earliest the conspiracy going on against her.

They then sent for Mr. Mills, who was examined on June 14th, a date after all the commissioners were convinced that the Douglas charge had broken down. They then told him that "a domestic of Her Royal Highness had deposed that he, Mr. Mills, had declared that the Princess was pregnant. Mr. Mills immediately informed his Lordship with some warmth that such declaration was an infamous falsehood and that as his character was strongly attacked by it, it ought to be investigated." His anger frightened Lord Moira, who sent for the attorney Lowten, who tried to make out that it might be an innocent mistake. But this would not do for the indignant Mills, who repeated that "he never did think her pregnant, therefore could not say it, and that the deposition was an infamous falsehood. His Lordship then observed he perceived there must be a mistake, and that Mr. Edmeades was the person meant and whom he wished to see."

What an unhappy falsehood was this of Lord Moira's, for he had already seen Edmeades on May 20th; and

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what a strange deposition Lowten must have taken, that left it open for the domestic to swear that it was either Edmeades or Mills who had made the statement to her.

This evidence of the doctors obtained by Moira, the Prince's creature, seems to have been kept back from the Privy Council, and now it was displayed by Perceval it unmasked the conspiracy against Caroline, that was going on under the direction of Lord Moira and Lowten at Carlton House. Its publication was calculated to give Romilly and Erskine uneasy thoughts when they recognized how, if the public were allowed to hear the story, Mr. Gillray would rejoice to portray the Delicate Investigators as donkeys led by the nose by Charlotte Douglas's smart attorney, Mr. Lowten.

And when Romilly in November, 1806, read Caroline's letter he saw at once its great art and ability. He complained that it was not a "dignified defence of an injured and calumniated Princess, but it is a long, elaborate and artificial pleading of an advocate." True. But that was his fault. He tried to make her an injured defendant, and Perceval would not play his game and transformed the lady into a triumphant plaintiff, with an indictment against Romilly and Erskine and Ellenborough and the rest of the Prince's friends. Romilly was pained that the Princess did not demand a "further investigation of her conduct," and not a little annoyed that she should be asking for an investigation into his conduct. However, he saw the value of the statement of the case to Caroline, and he is lawyer enough to see how well it was done to attain its object. "It is manifestly intended to be at some time or other published; and it is likely, when published, to make a strong impression in favour of the Princess." And in this opinion honest Romilly was correct both in fact and foresight.

For the present, however, Caroline's letter remained under the consideration of His Majesty and his ministers, who were, no doubt, in touch with their friend the Prince.

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The position was even more delicate than the investigation. The main charge made against the Princess had miserably failed and the Investigators, by a clear and unanimous verdict, had acknowledged Charlotte Douglas to be the perjurer she undoubtedly was. The letter of Perceval and the depositions attached to it, if not conclusive in favour of Caroline on the matter of indiscretion, showed at least how the Investigators had arrived at their decision without any respect for the first principles of justice. They had said that the gossip of a servant was to be "credited until it received some decisive contradiction" and now the "decisive contradiction" was put on record in the form of affidavits made by Captain Manby, Thomas Lawrence and other witnesses who might have been called before the Investigators, they were in a difficulty how to proceed.

For many months during this investigation Caroline had been excluded from the society of her uncle the King. This was one of the objects which the Prince especially desired to effect. She, on her part, expected after her defence had gone before the King that he would receive her again. After waiting over two months and receiving no answer to her letter, she wrote again to His Majesty on December 8th, 1806, humbly entreating the King to see her. On January 28th, 1807, she receives a long and formal message from His Majesty through the Lord Chancellor, to the effect that "His Majesty is advised that it is no longer necessary for him to decline receiving the Princess into his presence." This message is also sent to "his dearly beloved son the Prince of Wales."

Caroline was recovering from an attack of measles. She wrote at once offering to come to Windsor in a week. His Majesty, who doubtless was already being dissuaded by the Prince from seeing Caroline, writes back that she must wait until he arrives in London, when he will receive her. Poor Caroline endeavours to possess her soul in patience, but her advisers are becoming uneasy at these

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delays and meditate striking a blow at the enemy, and for that purpose begin to prepare their ammunition. Perceval and Eldon started to print "The Book" at a private press; against the law of the land, perhaps, but it was necessary the work should be got ready secretly. For it was to be a full and detailed account of the Delicate Investigation, containing also Caroline's defence, with all the depositions and arguments prepared by Perceval; and the publication of this book was to be a signal for the Tories to rise and drive from office the iniquitous government responsible for such deeds.

Had the King kept his word and received Caroline, her generals would no doubt have stopped preparing for battle. But on February 10th the King sent word that the Prince of Wales was consulting his lawyers, and that therefore he must "suspend any further steps in the business" until the Prince had submitted further observations for his consideration.

Caroline wrote an indignant personal letter to the King, stating her grief at his decision, and saying that she would at once prepare a representation of reasons why she should not be asked "to await the result of some new proceeding to be suggested by the lawyers of the Prince of Wales." Perceval and Eldon hasten forward the printing of "The Book," and draft a further letter to the King. In this Caroline points out that for some time "the tales of infamy and discredit" which the inventive malice of Charlotte Douglas and other enemies have spread abroad have been allowed to injure her reputation. She refers to the fact that for years she has been surrounded by domestic spies and is now made the victim of a malign conspiracy which she detected and exposed. "I cannot but think of that detection with the liveliest gratitude as the special blessing of Providence, who, by confounding the machinations of my enemies, has enabled me to find in the very weapons which they have fabricated and sharpened for my destruction the sufficient guard to my

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innocence and the effectual means of my justification and defence."

She concludes by hoping that her "just request" to be received by the King may be granted "to avoid the painful disclosure to the world of all the circumstances of that injustice, and of those unmerited sufferings which these proceedings in the manner in which they have been conducted have brought upon me."

Caroline had burnt her boats and declared her intention, if the King will not act justly, to carry the warfare into the enemy's camp. The challenge is sent in duplicate to the King and his Lord Chancellor. His Majesty is known to be ailing, and his advisers have got themselves into a hopeless position by their obsequious compliance to the Prince's wishes. Caroline has been manœuvred, by her wrongs and their wrongdoing, into a first-class political grievance, the opposition have handled her case with rare skill, and once "The Book" is published, there is every prospect of a universal demand for the heads of Ellenborough and Erskine and the rest of the Prince's friends.

For three weeks Caroline and her advisers waited for an answer to her letter, but none came. "The Book" was now printed and ready. Caroline sends out a short ultimatum from Montagu House, on March 5th, 1807, in which she says: "Your Majesty, therefore, will not be surprised to find that the publication of the proceedings alluded to will not be withheld beyond Monday next." She is no longer "your submissive daughter-in-law," but "your most unhappy, and most injured daughter-in-law, subject and servant."

What would have happened, had it been necessary to publish "The Book," who can say? Looking at the unprotected condition of the Princess, the serious nature of the charge brought against her by Charlotte Douglas, the fact that it was being whispered abroad, and that this scandal would be continued unless her name was cleared, I am of opinion that Perceval and his friends gave her the



CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES

From the Mezzotint in the British Museum  
Engraved by W. Say from the portrait by Arthur William Devis



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only possible advice; and I am inclined to think that, had "The Book" been openly published in 1807, the slanders that the Prince and his friends continued to utter against Caroline would have been silenced once and for ever, and the further and greater conspiracy of 1820 could never have been engineered or carried into effect.

But Providence ordained otherwise, and by a series of political blunders the Ministry of All the Talents committed suicide. The way of it was conceived in the comic spirit. Old Thurlow, when, as Lord Chancellor, he took George III draft Bills which were to come before the House, used to say to the King : "It's all damned nonsense trying to make you understand them ; you had better consent to them at once." Grenville was more conscientious and sent the King drafts of everything for him to read himself. Now, whether the poor old man was too ill to understand or too blind to read these things, a draft Bill for Catholic Emancipation got passed by the King and introduced into the House. Immediately there was a storm of indignation and no one was more angry than the King himself. His Majesty called upon Lord Grenville to assure him that there should be no further move in such a business. Lord Grenville would make no such promise. The King asked him if his answer was final. Lord Grenville said, "Yes," and His Majesty replied : "Then, I must look about me."

And His Majesty did so with great eagerness and joy. The crisis seemed to improve his health. He became "firm and well again." The country, hearing the old war cry of "The Church in danger," rejoiced in the fall of "All the Talents." The Duke of Portland became Premier, Perceval Chancellor of the Exchequer and Eldon Lord Chancellor. Canning was Foreign Secretary. So there was now a Ministry of Caroline's friends and it was the Prince's turn to go into exile.

There was no longer any need to publish the Book as the old King, freed from the Prince's friends, was



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only too ready and willing to do Caroline justice. The Ministry lost no time in taking up the Princess's case and on April 22nd, 1807, a Minute of Council was signed by all the Ministers who by command of the King had deliberated over the affair of the Delicate Investigation.

They refuse to express any opinion about the procedure of their predecessors, but they are unanimous in their opinion not only of Caroline's innocence on the Douglas charge, but they add, "that all other particulars of conduct brought in accusation against her Royal Highness, to which the character of criminality can be ascribed, are satisfactorily contradicted, or rest upon evidence of such a nature, and which was given under such circumstances (this must refer to the coaching by Lord Moira and Lowten) as render it in the judgment of your Majesty's confidential servants, undeserving of credit."

This is signed by the Duke of Portland, Canning, Eldon and the other ministers, including—and this is worthy of remembrance—Castlereagh ; but Perceval, who had acted as her legal adviser, does not appear to have taken part in the Council. But that the Princess may have public acknowledgment of her victory, the King is advised, in a further minute, doubtless to his good pleasure, that the Princess's applications for apartments in some Royal Palace should be granted.

This was done and apartments were assigned to her in Kensington Palace. Under these circumstances, she was justified in accepting a ministerial withdrawal of charges which had been ministerially and not publicly made, and naturally Eldon, Perceval and the King, rejoiced that the matter could be ended without public scandal or attack upon the Prince for his conduct to his wife.

## Chapter XIV : *Caroline goes into Exile*

“Beyond the clouds, beyond the waves that roar,  
There may indeed, or may not be a shore,  
Where fields are green, and hands and hearts as true,  
The old forgotten semblance may renew,  
And offer exiles driven far o’er the salt sea foam  
Another home.”

Arthur Hugh Clough : *Songs in Absence*.

IN 1807, eleven years after her separation, Caroline was at last installed in apartments at Kensington Palace and received by the Queen at a Drawing-Room held in May. Of course, everyone in society knew that an attack had been made upon the Princess. Her husband and his friends spread their vile stories abroad, the Princess’s friends explained that they had courted public inquiry, that they had indeed prepared “The Book,” containing all the so-called evidence, and would have published it, had not the King and his Ministers absolved Caroline from blame and publicly received her with the honour due to a Princess of Wales.

At the Drawing-Room, at which Caroline appeared, Jonas Barrington, an Irish Barrister, was received. There was a tremendous crush and everyone was in Court dress and “frizzled peruke loaded with powder and pomatum.” Barrington was, he says, “wedged too tight to permit even a heaving sigh at my own imprisonment.” However he tells us that he saw the reception of the Princess of Wales by the Queen. Caroline wore mourning for her father ; her dress was decked with a multiplicity of black bugles and she entered leaning on the arm of the Duke of Cumberland. He describes her as “tottering to the throne,” which I think was most unlikely, but he admits that he “was not close, but a low buzz ran round the

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room that she had been received most kindly," from which phrase I gather that his account of the scene was more or less what lawyers call hearsay evidence.

And when she had passed the throne a circle was formed about her and numerous presentations were made to her by Sir William Scott, Eldon's brother, and others who wished to show their sympathy for her. Other eye-witnesses say that the Queen was "civil but stiff." She was certainly not over-pleased to have to receive Caroline. She had never loved her, or even treated her with courtesy or sympathy, since she first came to England.

But the policy of the Ministers was that the Princess should be received by the Court with the respect due to her rank. The King was pleased that this should be so, and the Queen had to obey her orders and doubtless played her part with reasonable outward courtesy.

On June 4th Caroline appeared again at Court on the King's birthday party. As she passed through the presence chamber and the other rooms, which were thronged with guests, she was received with the clapping of hands, an extraordinary mark of sympathy at such a gathering. It was on this occasion that she saw her husband for the last time before she went abroad. They met in one of the rooms, exchanged a few words, which no one heard, and went their ways. For the moment her triumph was complete, and had George III remained on the throne, there seems little doubt that her husband would have been prevented from any further experiments in persecution, and she would have continued to enjoy the domestic sort of existence that had satisfied her at Montagu House.

Caroline was now a woman of thirty-nine. With the exception of the Douglas perjury, and the servants' gossip that Lowten had scraped together when that charge had failed, there had never been any suggestion against her character from any honest source. It is an extraordinary but undoubted fact in her history that all the slanders

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against her are collected and launched into the world by her husband and his agents.

Nor do these agents disguise among themselves the objects they were paid to attain. The original depositions prepared by the attorney Lowten—a man who seems to have been employed, not only by the Prince, but by the Duke of York in his scandalous troubles with Mary Anne Clarke—are accurately docketed as examinations, “For the purpose of confirming the statement made by Lady Douglas,” not, it is to be noticed, for the purpose of inquiring into its truth. But in fact many of these witnesses did not relate to the Douglas case but were sought for, when that had broken down, to suggest slanders against Caroline in her relations with Thomas Lawrence, R.A., Captain Manby and others. We shall discover in later years that the methods of attacking Caroline by her husband and his friends never altered. They invented an accusation against her, or adopted any irresponsible slander made by others, and then spent money lavishly in an endeavour to find witnesses ready to swear to the facts they imagined to exist. When an attorney sets out to find a witness “for the purpose of confirming” another, his adventure may be consistent with honesty, but it cannot be described as an inquest of truth.

For the three years after she came to Kensington Caroline’s life was comparatively uneventful. She entertained and was entertained by many good and pleasant people, and many prejudiced and righteous ladies objected to her “levity,” the somewhat unceremonious way she went about and enjoyed herself, and especially disliked the Sunday parties she gave at Kensington Palace, which were against all precedent in Protestant England.

But in spite of these eccentricities it is clear that she was again received among good English men and women as a lady of unblemished character and reputation. It was known, of course, that slanders had been uttered against her, but even those who objected to

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her independent ways did not accept the truth of her husband's insinuations against her honour.

I have always thought that the friendship that grew up between Mary Berry and her sister Agnes and the Princess was sufficient proof that Caroline was a good woman. Mary was five years older than Caroline, being forty-six when in 1809 she met the Princess at an evening party at Mr. Hope's, the author of *Anastatius*. Caroline was godmother to one of his children. Mary and Agnes, though sensible women and not in any way prim, were certainly not the kind of ladies who were inclined to make a fuss about Princess Caroline; but as old friends of Horace Walpole, who had left them the house at little Strawberry Hill, where they lived, they were bound to meet her at some of the houses of literary men and women or their patrons, since, to a certain extent, both belonged to the same set. That Caroline desired the friendship of Mary and Agnes Berry is to her credit; that she attained to it is a testimonial to her worth.

On November 31st, Mary Berry saw Caroline and did not like her at all. She thought her "such an overdressed, bare-bosomed, painted-eyebrowed figure one never saw!" But the Princess asked Lady Sheffield to present Miss Berry, and though she shrugged at the suggestion when it was proposed, she had to put on a proper Court face and go through with it, and talked to her of their mutual friends the Lockes for a few moments, and then got away.

This first impression of good Miss Berry of Caroline's appearance, as set down in her diary, is not unfairly quoted by historians as matter against the Princess, and in as far as dress and exposure of physical beauty is an index to woman's character, it must be admitted that her evening dress, as a stern moralist once said, "left much to be desired." But that was the fashion of the day. The unfair thing seems to me that so many writers have been satisfied with that one extract from the diary. In this

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way Mary Berry's opinion of Caroline has been handed down parrot-wise as being adverse and contemptuous.

But if you pursue the affair further you will find that the Misses Berry became very friendly with Caroline. First impressions are not always the most just or the most lasting. They met her again at Lady Fordyce's, where she was surrounded by Sir William Scott, Monk Lewis and many other notabilities, and Mary notes that "the Princess very graciously bowed and smiled at us both, and luckily no more."

But on August 7th the Princess and Lady Charlotte Lindsay, her friend and attendant, called at Strawberry Hill. She had made up her mind that she liked these two quaint ladies and admired them for themselves and intended to know them. After seeing the house she has a half-hour talk and Mary says "she was in her best manner and her conversation is certainly uncommonly lively, odd and clever. Were she always to conduct herself as she did here to-day, she would merit the character of having not only a remarkably easy and gracious manner, but natural cleverness above any of her peers that I have seen." That was her own opinion formed by herself from observation, but she still quotes the hearsay of others about her want of sense and her indecorous exhibition of high spirits.

On Wednesday, November 29th, the Misses Berry spend the evening at Kensington and have a pleasant, social supper at midnight, after which Colonel Lindsay explains a model telegraph and they thoroughly enjoy the intellectual treat. About a week afterwards they dine again at the Palace. They enjoy the Princess's custom of sending the servants away and having dumb-waiters, and were not averse to another midnight supper before they came away about one in the morning.

From this time onward they became more friendly and intimate, and Caroline seems to have established herself in the Misses Berry's good graces. She writes a very

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kindly letter to Mary about the poor Lockes, who have lost a child, asking "my dear Miss Berry" to convey to them her message of sympathy, "trusting to your usual good nature, and our sentiments concerning them being so congenial." Miss Berry carries out her wishes and writes a very kind and friendly letter to report what she has done.

In 1811, when the unhappy King is failing in health and the Prince is again beginning to attack the security of the Princess, Miss Berry saw a great deal of Caroline. On May 20th, 1811, His Majesty was said to be in rather better health. He went out of the Castle at Windsor and mounted his horse and, accompanied by a hobby-groom with a leading rein, for he was quite blind, rode through the Little Park to the Great Park. "The bells rang. The troops fired a *feu de joie*. The King returned to the Castle within an hour." This was the last time he was seen by his subjects. A few days afterwards, Miss Berry had "a long and almost an affecting conversation" with Caroline who seemed, for the first time, to appreciate the loneliness and danger of her position, now that the support of the King was no longer behind her. But Mary Berry notes that she did not discuss herself and her own affairs so much, but "continues very good-natured to others."

King George III, whatever his merits or demerits as prince and ruler, was certainly a just man. Even at his weakest moments he had always stood firm for justice to his niece. There was something more than courtly compliment in Hyman Hurwitz's funeral dirge when the good King passed away.

"No age records a King so just,  
His virtues numerous as his days :  
The Lord Jehovah was his trust,  
And truth with mercy ruled his ways."

And now he was powerless to help her. She had no friend to protect her from her husband.

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Her mother, who had come to live in England when the Duke of Brunswick died, was a poor, feeble creature. On her arrival in England Caroline, who had gone into residence at Kensington, allowed the exiled Duchess to live at Montagu House, Blackheath. Later on George III found his sister some indifferent lodgings in New Street, Spring Gardens. There, amid filthy lamps on a side-board, and common chairs ranged along dingy walls, sat the aged Duchess, "a melancholy spectacle of decayed royalty." But the old lady had not lost her love of gossip, and held a little court of her own and discoursed of the days of her vanity to any who would attend to her.

Caroline called her mother's court "Dullification" and yawned when she went to visit her. When, in 1811, the Prince became Regent he invited the old lady to Carlton House. This was done with the intention of annoying his wife and perhaps of endeavouring to make an ally of the Duchess against his wife and daughter. The Duchess boasted to her daughter of her intention to accept the invitation, but Caroline was not in the least annoyed by her folly. Her brother Frederick William, who was Duke without a Duchy and now an exile in London, protested to his mother that to accept such an invitation was tantamount to an admission that the Prince was justified in his treatment of his wife. At first she refused to alter her determination, but at length gave way and on the day on which she should have gone to Carlton House made a party at her own apartments for her daughter Caroline.

Now that the Prince Regent was on the throne, for all practical purposes, and had cast off his Whig friends and surrounded himself with his father's old favourites, the lot of the Princess became every day more unbearable. Lord Eldon found that he must choose between his old friend the Princess and the Prince Regent and the Chancellorship; and he had no difficulty in finding that it was his duty to his country to number himself among the Prince's



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friends and desert Caroline. His brother, William Scott, remained faithful, and George Canning of course, but many friends of rank and station feared the resentment of the Regent and ceased to visit her. Eldon refused her invitations to dinner, and even Perceval, when he was Prime Minister to the Regent, no longer accepted them ; though no doubt he had the valid excuse of onerous duties. When he was assassinated in the House of Commons in 1812, Caroline lost one who had been a sincere friend and honest adviser, and she always recognised this in speaking of his memory.

Dr. Doran thinks that her friends were now, as he says, "persons of inferior birth and sometimes of indifferent reputation." I do not find authority for this. Miss Berry, who went to stay with her at Blackheath in May, 1812, a few days after Perceval's murder, found among those who dined with her, her old friends the Lockes, Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Humphry and Lady Davy and Thomas Campbell, the poet. And Campbell, like most of the good people who came within Caroline's circle, found her a very attractive personality. "To say what I think of her," he writes, "without being bribed by the smiles of royalty—she is certainly what you would call in Scotch a fine body ; not *fine* in the English sense of the word, but she is good-humoured, appears to be very kind-hearted, is very acute, naïve and entertaining ; the accent makes her, perhaps, comic. (This is also true of Scotsmen.) . . . I heard that she was coarse and indelicate. I have spent many hours with her and Lady Charlotte alone and I can safely say she showed us no symptoms of that vulgarity attributed to her." And this seems to be the truth, for all the accounts of her ill-behaviour and ill-manners come from scandal-mongers writing with malice or spreading slander either recklessly from hearsay or with direct intent to injure.

At this time the Princess Charlotte was visiting her mother. She was a lively young girl of sixteen, and Miss

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Berry considers that "with rouge she would be really striking," which looks as though Mary Berry was getting more used to the ways of the modern woman and her methods of adornment.

I think we may fairly say that for six years since the Douglas conspiracy, though no doubt the Prince continued to use his spies and collect information about his wife's movements, nothing is or could be alleged against her moral character. And for the moment the Prince turned his attention to a new method of persecution and began to attack Caroline through her affection for her daughter. The two were devoted to each other, and Charlotte had little love or respect for her father, who had treated her with indifference from the days of her childhood. The young lady was old enough to appreciate that she was the next heir to the throne. Neither she nor her mother was inclined to be submissive to the Regent.

Trouble had been brewing for some time, when towards the end of 1812 Caroline proposed to visit her daughter at Windsor, and was told that this could not be allowed as it would interrupt her studies. She accordingly went down to Windsor on Sunday, September 27th, this being a day when there were no studies, but she was denied admittance.

Charlotte, herself, showed some of the Brunswicker spirit on more than one occasion. When she was to attend her first Drawing-Room on January 18th, 1813, she was informed that the presentation was to be made by the Duchess of York, on which she astounded her grandmother by informing her that she would be presented by her mother or not at all, and she had her way. This act of rebellion enraged the Regent.

Neither the Princess Charlotte nor her mother showed any intention of being parted from each other without a struggle, and Caroline was convinced once again that she must assert her independence or her husband would take measures for her destruction.

## *Queen Caroline*

She was more than ever alone, for the year 1813 deprived her of the last of her relations. Her mother died in March and was carried from her miserable lodging to be buried in Westminster Abbey. About the same time, her brother, who had raised a new regiment of the Black Brunswickers, went to France to fight for his cousin George's country whilst Cousin George continued to persecute his sister at home. He did not return to England, and fell, as his father had done, at the head of his beloved regiment two years later at the Battle of Quatre Bras.

He was at the Duchess of Richmond's ball on June 15th, if Byron is to be trusted, and when the call to battle came :

“ Within a windowed niche of that high hall  
Sate Brunswick's fated Chieftain ; he did hear  
That sound the first amidst the festival,  
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear ;  
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,  
His heart more truly knew that peal too well  
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,  
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell ;  
He rushed into the field, and foremost fighting fell.”

They were a brave fighting race, these Brunswickers, and once roused to anger and revenge feared no enemy and no danger.

And after the fashion of her family, when it was clear that her husband meant mischief, Caroline rushed into the field with such supporters as she could rally round her. And one of her most famous warriors, a fine fighting man it is true, but a man who fought for victory in the cause that came to hand, rather than for the principles of truth and justice, was Henry Peter Brougham. It must always be remembered that Brougham was first introduced to Caroline in 1811 or thereabouts. He had been called to the Bar three years before and was only thirty-three, ten years younger than Caroline. He knew nothing of Caroline personally, and was only called in at her friends' advice to help her and the Princess Charlotte against the

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persecution of the Prince. His interest in the ladies was purely professional or, more strictly speaking, political. He had no sympathetic or chivalrous attachment to them, but they were pieces in the game of his life, and he moved them skilfully and honestly according to the rules of the game; except on those occasions when they confounded his tactics by moving themselves.

The Prince Regent was now virtually King. Whilst he flaunted his own amours in the face of the world, he took every opportunity to insult and bully his wife and daughter. The last straw that roused Caroline to action, was an order that the weekly meeting of mother and daughter was to be altered to a fortnightly visit under more rigorous conditions than formerly.

On January 12th, 1813, Caroline wrote a letter to her husband protesting against this decree. She pointed out that it was—what no doubt it was intended to be—an attack upon her own character. “There is a point,” she writes, “beyond which a guiltless woman cannot with safety carry her forbearance. If her honour is invaded the defence of her reputation is no longer a matter of choice; and it signifies not—whether the attack be made openly, manfully and directly—or by secret insinuation and by holding such conduct towards her as countenances all the suspicions that malice can suggest.”

The letter was sent to the Regent through Lord Liverpool and Lord Eldon. It was returned unopened. It was sent again with the same result. It was sent a third time to the Ministers with a demand that the contents should be made known to the Prince Regent. Lord Liverpool was now the Prime Minister. It must be remembered that when George III was King he, then Lord Hawkesbury, had with the other ministers signed the full and final acquittal of Caroline from all the charges made in the Delicate Investigation. But now he had been called to office by the Prince Regent.

The Tories had just been triumphant at the polls.

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He was the leader of a great party in office, called to that position by a Prince who had only just deserted his former friends and who might return to them if he was annoyed. One has to remember these somewhat contemptible affairs to understand why a politician at one period calls "Black !" and another time "Red !" although he seems to be backing the same colour.

This time the Princess got an answer. It was a formal affair to the effect that the letter of the Princess had been read to H.R.H., and "H.R.H. was not pleased to signify any commands upon it." The Princess thereupon sent the letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, and it was published in full. War was declared, and the Prince retaliated by a refusal to allow mother and daughter to meet at all for the present. His next move was to call a meeting of ministers to look once again at the depositions he and Lowten had collected six years ago. Having read them, two archbishops, and of course all the ministers, were agreed that the authority of the Regent and father to regulate the social intercourse between mother and daughter must be upheld, and the right of a father, however immoral, must be maintained.

It was then that Brougham took a hand in the game, scenting in the Princess's cause a very popular topic, or political "stunt" as we should call it to-day, with which to annoy the hateful Prince and his ministers, irritate the superior Whigs and prove that the Radicals—"the Mountain," as they called themselves—were the people's only friends.

Caroline's most important political friend at this time was good Mr. Samuel Whitbread. He was an entirely honest and enthusiastic supporter of the Princess, who had taken up her cause in the House of Commons, as many good Englishmen did, out of chivalry, a sense of justice, and a belief in her honour. Brougham found his friend Sam's probity rather tiresome on occasion. For Brougham was always the Compleat Advocate, and in

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this Caroline business the Radical Party was his client rather than the Princess. He sees that, if they go too deeply into the matter, they must condemn the original Commissioners, who went out of their way to please the Prince by censuring Caroline for "levity," after acquitting her of immorality. But if you rake this up, true you would "blacken Ellenborough," which is satisfactory, but you would also censure Erskine; and therefore it is dangerous, for "one can't help regretting anything which damages not *Grenville*, but the *whole Whigs*. This should always be avoided if possible." It is notable that Brougham with his clear insight saw at once that the "Delicate Investigation" was a blot on the scutcheon of the Whigs, and it could not be attacked without including Erskine in the condemnation. He was right.

The Princess had left Kensington and taken a town house in Connaught Place near the Edgware Road. She divided her time between London and Blackheath and still held her parties at Montagu House. It was from there she wrote her letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons complaining of the injustice of the latest secret report made against her, and winding up with the plea that she feared "no scrutiny, however strict, provided she is tried by impartial judges, known to the Constitution, and in the fair and open manner as the law of the land requires. Her only desire is that she may be either declared to be innocent or proved to be guilty." But this was not the intention of the Prince who, if he could not achieve the latter objective, was certainly not going to permit her former request.

The House of Commons discussed the letter, and Lord Castlereagh for the Government took the line that the Investigators had rightly acquitted the Princess and there the matter ended. Speeches and motions were made, and perhaps Mr. Stuart Wortley spoke the mind of the House when he said that the royal family seemed to be "wholly regardless of their own welfare and respectability. He

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would not have the Regent think his conduct will bear him harmless through these transactions," and he ended by declaring that if he had a sister in the same situation as Caroline he would say she was exceedingly ill-treated.

But in those days, as in these, the arguments and the justice of the case put forward in Parliament might be overwhelming, but the votes for or against the motion were not in the least swayed by such matters; the lobbying and the personal and political schemes and offers of place and position, carrying more weight than the eloquence. Speeches in Parliament are like music at a banquet, pleasant and encouraging, but not intended to interfere with the common human appetite for the good things in this world.

There were more debates. The public echoed the spirit of the speeches made by Sam Whitbread and his honest friends. The Prince was hissed and hooted from Temple Bar to the Mansion House. The City presented the Princess with an address of congratulation on what Caroline referred to as "the happy annihilation of a conspiracy against my honour and my life." She had appealed from the Star Chamber to the people, and her appeal was allowed.

Whenever she appeared in public the people cheered her and waved their hats. When she went to the opera, the theatre or Vauxhall it was the same. Mr. Whitbread used to try and stage these appearances for her, but Caroline was never a person who liked being stage-managed, nor was Sam, to be candid, a very tactful producer. One thing, however, stood out as a result of the publicity given to her affairs: the English people were not going to allow either Caroline or Charlotte, her daughter and their future sovereign, to be bullied by the Regent.

There was a pretty scene one morning, soon after Caroline had been forbidden to go to Warwick House, her daughter's establishment. Caroline was driving down Constitution Hill when Charlotte was passing along Piccadilly towards Hyde Park. The Princess called on

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her coachman to wheel about, and they flew after Charlotte's carriage, which they overtook in Hyde Park near the Bridge. Their royal highnesses, through the windows of their carriages, embraced affectionately and held an animated, cheerful conversation, to the delight of the on-lookers. It seems to have been an unrehearsed incident and just a piece of Caroline's "levity," but the story went out into the world, and the joy of it found an echo in the hearts of English mothers and their daughters.

It may, of course, have been planned, for Brougham tells Creevey about this time that "young P. (his name for Charlotte) contrived to send her mother a letter of 28 pages and to receive from her the *Morning Chronicle* with all the articles about herself." Brougham was already being consulted by "young P.," and was stirring her up to rebel against her father. But he cared no more for her real interests than he did for Caroline's. "As for little P. in general," he says, "it is a long chapter. . . . My principle is—take her along with you as far as you both go the same road." What a sane, wise politician young Henry Peter was, even at this time of life. No wild enthusiasms disturbing his judgment; just policy! policy! all the time.

And that is why he would have nothing to do with Sam's idea of a Bill to declare the Princess innocent of these charges which the Regent kept raking up to injure her. Sam had courage and honesty, invaluable but insufficient attributes. As Brougham warns Creevey: "Sam has NO HEAD! Depend upon it, he has not." Had such a Bill been put forward, it would probably have been accepted, and it would have made impossible the final conspiracy which the Prince launched against his wife when she became Queen.

The year 1814 was one of great political and popular excitement, which for the moment put the wrongs of Caroline into the shade. After the abdication of Napoleon and his retirement to Elba, and the restoration of



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Louis XVIII to the throne of France, several royalties visited London in the summer. There were Drawing-Rooms and other social functions, and Caroline expected her rank and position to be recognised and that the royal persons would visit her. The Prince informed Queen Charlotte that he would attend her Drawing-Rooms, but he had "a fixed and unalterable determination not to meet the Princess of Wales upon any occasion, either public or private." This was of course bound to make trouble. Brougham advised her to go to the opera just "to show that she does not skulk." Sam arranges this, but he finds Caroline "sadly low, poor Body, and no wonder."

However, when she got to the opera there was a great reception awaiting her, though with much tact and sense, against the promptings of her lady attendants, she would not rise and make a curtsy, but left the Prince Regent to "take the call," and laughingly said to Lady Campbell: "My dear, Punch's wife is nobody when Punch is present." But in the street, mobs followed her carriage, crying out: "The Princess of Wales for ever!" until she begged of them to go home to their beds and let her pass. The refusal of an invitation to the Drawing-Rooms roused a correspondence between Queen Charlotte and the Princess, and this was ultimately referred to the House of Commons; but no good came of the discussion, since in matters of Court etiquette the Regent and the Queen were absolute.

Then came a more serious contretemps, in which the Princess Charlotte played a striking part, and it was this that led to Caroline's fixed determination to leave England, where it was clear her husband would never let her live in peace and where her presence seemed only detrimental to her daughter's happiness.

The Regent was jealous of his daughter's position. She was heir to the throne, and knew it, and her uncles were inclined to take her part to some extent, if her father's conduct was too overbearing. Also, "little P." had Mr. Brougham to advise her. The Regent had proposed the

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Prince of Orange as a husband for the young lady, his hope and intention being that Charlotte on her marriage would be taken over to Holland to live, so that she could not be the centre of a party here against his interests. This, on his part, was natural enough, but Charlotte had no intention of going into exile. Moreover, it leaked out that the Prince of Orange had promised the Regent that he would not receive Caroline or allow her to reside in his country.

The Princess Charlotte, however, was persuaded to enter into an engagement with the Prince of Orange, being of opinion that if a marriage of convenience was to be her portion, "no one could be found so unexceptionable as the Prince of Orange." When, however, he came over in the summer of 1814 to settle the official preliminaries of the matter he found the young lady by no means so amenable as he expected. She had written twice to the Prince to inform him that when they were married she was not to be obliged to leave England against her will. His answers were unsatisfactory, so she asked her father to send her a draft of the marriage treaty.

The Regent came and railed at her in his coarse way, the Duke of York came to try and persuade her to obedience, and government lawyers were sent to talk to her learnedly about her legal position. To all of these the girl replied that, as she was heir to the throne, it was important she should have her own way, and she must see the treaty. The Prince of Orange came over, and to him she reiterated her intention of guarding her liberty to visit her native land if she desired to do so. Lord Liverpool was now called in to see her, but she would not listen to him, and at last, after much difficulty, a treaty was drafted in which her right to revisit England "at her own pleasure" was arrived at.

The Regent had been furious with his daughter for her conduct, and in his selfish, tactless way sought to punish her, as he had his wife, by excluding her from the

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festivities when the allied sovereigns paid their visit to England. The Prince of Orange, who was afraid of the Regent, and not too ardently devoted to his lady love, did not take her side in the business, and this exasperated her. The public got wind of the matter. They cheered her at the opera, they ran after her carriage in the streets, and Brougham and his friends were more convinced than ever of her value as an ally in the campaign against the hated Regent.

The end of the unfortunate courtship came about in a very commonplace manner. Charlotte wanted the Prince to ride with her in the riding-house. The Prince started objections. She reproached him. Annoyed by her vehemence, he refused her request. She lost her temper. He left with an intimation that he would return when she had recovered her temper. She did not recover it, as far as the Prince of Orange was concerned, but sat down and wrote him a dignified letter breaking off the engagement. This was on June 14th, 1814.

Creevey, writing to his wife a week afterwards, says that the business "arises from the profound resources of old Brougham," who has been in touch with Caroline and her daughter. A copy of her letter is in Sam's possession, and "Whitbread has formal authority from young Prinny to state that the marriage is broken off," and that the reason for the breaking of the engagement is her love for her country and her mother. This, Creevey thinks, will be a "new game for Master Prinny"; and the men of "The Mountain" chuckle with delight as they prepare a new cauldron of domestic turmoil for the Regent, without caring much how it will serve the real interests of Caroline and her daughter.

The other side were not idle. Lord Castlereagh proposed a motion to increase Caroline's allowance from £35,000 to £50,000 a year in the hope of persuading her to leave England. The Regent takes his own disciplinary measures with his rebellious daughter. On July 16th,

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1814, he secures Cranbourne Lodge, in Windsor Forest, as a residence for her, and nominates new ladies-in-waiting for her and takes them with him to Warwick House, where he informs her that her establishment there was dismissed and she is at once to repair with her new ladies to Windsor.

Charlotte had the Brunswick spirit in her. She is pale but self-possessed. In respectful tones, she requests permission to say farewell to her old staff and prepare for her journey. The Prince is happy that there were no scenes and no hysterics. He commends her obedience and drives off to Carlton House to dress for dinner. No sooner is he gone than "little P." is off, too. She jumps into a hackney coach and is driven off by Mr. Higgins, the owner, to Connaught Place, where he is surprised to hear the lady, whom he thought to be a maid taking her evening out, inquire of the page that opens the door if her mother was at home. "No, your Royal Highness," says the boy, "the Princess of Wales is at Blackheath." Charlotte however has attained sanctuary. The royal charioteer, Higgins, receives an honorarium of three guineas and a request to hold his tongue about the matter, and drives away in amazement.

A messenger was sent to Blackheath for Caroline, and another for Mr. Brougham, and a third for Miss Mercer Elphinstone, a bosom friend of Charlotte. Brougham arrives first, and then the others, and Charlotte announces to them her fixed intention to leave her father's care and place herself under the protection of her mother.

Presently the Archbishop of Canterbury arrives, also in a hackney coach, but the page notifies to him that he cannot be admitted, and he sits outside waiting events. Then Lord Chancellor Eldon arrives, also in a similar conveyance, also the Duke of Sussex, and the Duke of York, and other notabilities. Brougham was bound to advise her that the law was against her, and that the Regent was within his rights in bestowing her in Cranbourne

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Lodge. Lord Eldon seems to have treated her to what Jeffreys used to call a "rough lick of the tongue," but she only "kicked and bounced," and refused to listen to him. At last her mother and Lady Charlotte Lindsay, to whom Charlotte was much attached, pointed out how powerless they were to keep her ; and convinced that the law and the Regent were too many for her, she consented to return to Warwick House. A royal carriage was sent for her, and at four or five in the morning Charlotte returned to her cage. The next day she drove to Cranbourne Lodge. With the rest of the short life of Charlotte, her happy marriage to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and her tragic death, when :

" In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,  
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy  
Death hushed that pang for ever,"

we are not concerned.

These are matters of history, which had merely a political effect on Caroline's story, inasmuch as they left the Princess a more lonely and defenceless victim of the Regent's spite.

Caroline had already determined both for her own peace of mind, and in the real interests of her daughter, not to continue the hopeless and useless struggle against the Regent and his ministry. She went her own way in deciding what she would do. Whitbread she regarded as an honest friend and, much to his delight, she told him she intended to refuse any addition to her income above the £35,000 ; and he was pleased to be able to announce her decision of relinquishing £15,000 to a grateful House. The rapacity of her husband and his brothers was notorious, and the modesty of her demands was highly appreciated by the Commons.

But she did not take the advice of either Whitbread or Brougham about leaving the country. She consulted George Canning, who advised her to go. He was a Tory,

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but not of the ministry, and fully understood and perhaps explained to her the way in which Brougham and his friends were exploiting her unhappy position. Her view, as she wrote to Mr. Whitbread in a long and gracious letter of thanks for his honest service, was that she was "solicitous to depart at once for it is pitiable to see a child rendered on all occasions a source of dispute between her parents." For as long as five or six months at a time she had not been allowed to see her daughter, and I should suppose that Canning would appreciate to the full the danger to both Caroline and Charlotte of being dragged at the heels of an ambitious and not over-scrupulous political party. She ends by assuring Mr. Whitbread of her lively gratitude and perfect esteem, but she does not seem to have sent any message to young Mr. Brougham, who, in his article in the *Edinburgh* in 1838, records that, worn out with ill-usage, Caroline, "in an evil hour and contrary to the strong advice and in spite of the anxious remonstrances of her advisers, Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Brougham, quitted the country and devoted herself to foreign travel."

For my part I doubt if, at this date, Brougham was much taken into her confidence, though his friend Sam certainly was. For on August 9th, 1814, the very day when Caroline arrived at Worthing to embark on her voyage to the Continent, Brougham wrote a choleric note to Creevey about the business, saying: "By God, Sam is incurable—all this devilry of Canning, etc., and Mrs. P. (as he always called Caroline) bolting, etc., is owing to his damned conceit in making her give up the £15,000—*of himself*, without saying a word to anyone."

Brougham never had any affection or regard for Caroline, and though it would be absurd to construe such a letter too elaborately, it merely shows that in his estimation Mrs. P. was one of those foolish, exasperating clients who break away from a sporting lawsuit just when it looks most promising.

## Chapter XV : *Caroline's Odyssey*

“ Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me ;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me ;  
All I ask, the heaven above  
And the road below me.”

Robert Louis Stevenson.

CAROLINE having made up her mind to go abroad wasted no time in carrying out her plans. It is often said that her English suite deserted her in disgust at her behaviour, but her English suite were friends who agreed to accompany her without any arrangement to stay with her for more than a few weeks or months, and nearly all of them stayed on longer than they had originally intended. That she could expect even the most devoted friends to follow her into exile, and thereby gain for themselves and their families the hatred of the Regent and the malice of his ministers and agents, was absurd. Indeed, she had not invited them to more than a temporary absence from home ; though she had never concealed her own intention of making an extensive tour of Europe and the Near East.

These intentions she put in writing to Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, in a letter of July 25th, 1814. “ The Princess of Wales has resolved to return to Brunswick, her native country. She may afterwards travel into Italy and Greece, where she may probably be able to select an agreeable abode and live in it for some years.”

The whole business was arranged hurriedly, for that was Caroline's way. Having determined what she would do she did it without delay. And on August 9th, the

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Princess arrived at Worthing, where the *Jason* frigate, which was to carry her to Hamburg, was anchored.

As soon as it was known that the Princess was leaving the country, hundreds of people flocked to Worthing to see her off and wish her God-speed. So great were the crowds that she drove to Lancing Harbour to avoid them, and, with her two ladies-in-waiting, Lady Charlotte Lindsay and Lady Elizabeth Forbes, and young Austin, the adopted boy, who accompanied her everywhere, was taken on board the frigate by Captain King, who had arrived there in his barge to meet her.

The rest of the suite embarked from Worthing. They were: Mr. St. Leger and Sir William Gell, her two chamberlains; Dr. Holland, her physician; an old and very faithful servant, Mr. Sicard; and her messenger, Mr. Hieronymous. It is said that Captain Hesse, her equerry, and the Hon. Keppel Craven, her third chamberlain, who was then in Paris, joined her at Brunswick.

On the 16th she landed at Hamburg, and was received with great respect. She travelled at first under the name of the Countess of Wolfenbüttel, and later as the Countess of Cornwall. Her travels have been described in many books. Caroline was intelligently interested in places and their history. The invitation she had given to Sir William Gell to accompany her was doubtless not only on account of her friendship for him but also because he himself was a traveller and a writer of books. Byron and others poked fun at "topographical Gell," as he was called, and declared that he topographised and typographised King Priam's dominions in three days. But though it is probable Gell had a good opinion of himself, yet he was not only a diligent traveller and accomplished scholar—he was a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge—but he had studied at the Royal Academy Schools and was able to illustrate his travel-books with his own sketches. He was a kind-hearted, entertaining man, and a great friend of Keppel Craven. Both of them remained faithful to the Queen



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to the last, and Gell attended her daily during the proceedings at the House of Lords. If he had not been disabled by gout and unfit to travel, he would have been with her on her eastern voyage, and it would have been difficult to have maintained the slanderous stories that were told of her at that period. He retired to live in Naples with his dear friend Craven, to whom he bequeathed all his letters and papers and other property.

Richard Keppel Craven was the third son of Lord Craven. His mother had separated from her husband and lived abroad, taking her child, a lad of three, with a promise to return him to his father when he was eight. This she did not do, but placed him at Harrow in an assumed name. The deceit however was discovered, and young Craven went out into the world in his proper name. On her husband's death, Elizabeth Lady Craven, who was a daughter of the Earl of Berkeley, married the Margrave of Anspach, and in 1792 they settled in London at Brandenburg House, Hammersmith, which later on Caroline rented.

Both these two were comparatively young men. Gell was thirty-seven and Keppel thirty-five. It seems remarkable that no scandal was invented against either of them by the Italian spies, following the example of the English spies, who had suggested immorality against Lord Hood, Captain Manby, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. But the reason for that is, I think, not far to seek. It was brought home to Lord Moira and the King's friends, at the time of the so-called Delicate Investigation, that serious lawyers like Erskine and Romilly, when they found themselves up against flimsy slanders, which if encouraged might end in the prosecution of innocent men for high treason, were not for a moment going to take any responsibility or give their sanction to any proceedings that might endanger the lives or liberties of respectable Englishmen through the evidence of hired perjurers.

There seems no other reason why the kind of stories

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invented against Caroline and Pergami could not have been told with the same effect against Caroline and Gell, who had been much in her company in England and was now travelling with her abroad.

Caroline first paid a short visit to Brunswick and then went to stay in Switzerland, until about the end of September, when she stopped for a while at Geneva where the Empress Marie Louise was staying. Signor Clerici has unearthed from the archives of the French Foreign Office an anonymous piece of espionage from Geneva, September 13th, 1814, which reports that here "is Marie Louise astonishingly lovely and gay; I can't think of anything that would depress her; and then the Princess of Wales, who has just installed herself in the next suite with her sensibility and her extravagance. Who amongst us could have guessed, a couple of years since, that at one and the same time the Empress of France and the Princess of Wales would have been in a little Swiss inn?"

This is interesting because in after years it was said by the King's friends the Princess shocked the Swiss with her behaviour. On the contrary, she gave entertainments—of a lavish character perhaps—and saw the sights and spent her money royally, as she did throughout her tour, and the local people naturally rejoiced over her visit. Indeed, until the King's spies began to spread evil reports, nothing worse is said of the Princess in honest narratives, but that she was open and free in her hospitality and liked people about her to enjoy themselves *sans façon*.

The worst that seems truly reported against the poor lady, is that at Lausanne she found a little ball was going on at a house opposite her inn, and asked for an invitation, and went and danced "a Savoyard dance with a nobody." But that kind of adventure was very characteristic of Caroline. One thing we do learn from these busy, curious reporters, which is also characteristic of the Princess. She became very friendly with Carlo Sismondi, the historian, and went walks with him, and the anonymous

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French spy certainly scented an affair of the heart in this. But not even the Milan Commission, even in their worst dreams, thought of citing the great Sismondi as a further and better co-respondent than Pergami.

In October the Princess was at Milan, where she was received with great enthusiasm. Among other people whom she received was an artist, Guiseppe Bossi, a fashionable painter, and she visited his studio and he made some drawings for a portrait. When she left Milan there was some difference between Sir William Gell and Bossi about the latter's remuneration. To the artist's disgrace he accepted money from Ompteda to spy on the Princess, but discovered nothing.

It was at Milan that she took into her service Bartolomeo Pergami. Why in the Bill of Pains and Penalties he was described as "Pergami *alias* Bergami," and always alluded to by the latter name, which is incorrect, I cannot say. I think the use of the *alias* was employed with intent to degrade, and to make Pergami appear to be a doubtful character. It was necessary for her to have a courier or major-domo with knowledge of Italy and Italian to manage the business details of her travelling.

Caroline met General Pino whilst she was at Milan and consulted him about a trustworthy courier. He suggested Pergami, and General Bellegard, then Governor of Milan, gave him an excellent recommendation. M. le Baron Bartolomeo Pergami had served under Colonel Pino in the campaigns of 1812, 1813 and 1814. He had been Napoleon's equerry when he went to Moscow, and had been offered the captaincy of a regiment by Joachim Murat, then King of Naples. He came of a respectable family, and his father was a man of property.

The appointment was made by the Hon. Keppel Craven, the chamberlain to the Princess, as described in his evidence. He applied to the Marchese Ghisleri, Grand Chamberlain to the Emperor of Austria, who strongly recommended Pergami, whose family he had

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known for a long time. He expressed a hope that Bartolomeo might be advanced in the Princess's service.

From Milan they went on to Rome, and there the Princess was received by King Joachim Murat and his Queen with great courtesy and many fêtes and banquets were given in her honour. This was in January, 1815, and from this point we can begin to trace the history of the conspiracy against Caroline's peace and honour which continued without abatement until the death of King George III in 1820.

What seems to have happened was this. The Regent directed the Hanoverian Minister, Count Munster, to set to work secretly and to employ some reliable spy to watch Caroline's movements. He was to report to the Regent if he could find any evidence that she was behaving improperly or had any lovers.

It is constantly asserted that Caroline's "levity" exhibited itself so strongly on the Continent that it became necessary in 1818 for the Regent to appoint the Milan Commission to investigate and obtain evidence of her doings. It is quite untrue. But for the continuous efforts of the Regent's spies little or nothing would have been heard of her doings. The so-called extraordinary, eccentric or evil behaviour of the Princess originated almost entirely from secret reports sent from Hanover to the Regent and circulated by his friends.

The whole story of Caroline's adultery with Baron Pergami was the clever invention of Count Munster's hired spy, Baron Friederich Ompteda, who was at this time Hanoverian envoy accredited to the Pontifical Court. This creature was well chosen, as he was a man whose family was known to Caroline of Brunswick, and as soon as she arrived in Rome he was received by her as a countryman and friend. The idea that an Ompteda could be a spy in her husband's service never entered Caroline's head ; and, indeed, why should it ? The name was a household word to Caroline. There was Thierry Henri Louis, Baron

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von Ompteda, who had been a judge and was delegate to Ratisbon, representing Great Britain and the Duchy of Brunswick in 1783. Also the hero soldier, Christian Friederich William, Baron von Ompteda, who, like Caroline's father and brother, had died fighting against Napoleon. His memoirs were translated into English by one John Hill, M.A., in 1892. Baron Christian was a good man and a distinguished soldier. He fell at Waterloo. The Prince of Orange ordered him to make a useless attack. As acting Brigadier-General he made his protest, but the order being repeated he led his few remaining troops to final destruction, and was last seen in the midmost throng of the enemy's infantry and cavalry when he sank from his horse and vanished.

Baron Friederich Ompteda, who paid his respects to Caroline and was kindly entertained by her, was sent to Rome by Count Munster, the Hanoverian minister and a son of Caroline's old governess. Baron Friederich was a cousin of the soldier, Colonel Christian, so that there was every reason why Caroline should receive him as a gentleman of position and a countryman. What she may, or may not, have known, was that he had disgraced himself in the eyes of his family and his country, by taking service with Jerome Napoleon when he became King of Westphalia. Jerome had made him ambassador at Vienna, and it was said that he deeply felt the disgrace that he carried about with him, for he was naturally regarded with distrust by his fellow-citizens. Still, he was a man of ability, and when George asked Count Munster to help him in spying on his wife, Baron Friederich was obviously the type of man to employ, for he was not in a position to refuse to do any dirty work that the minister ordered him to do. He seems to have entered upon his task *con amore*, and his methods were to introduce himself into the household of the Princess and endeavour to bribe her servants to come forward with testimony of her infamy. He was a hard-working but unsuccessful scoundrel and,

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like all spies, lied as freely to his employers as he did about his victim. It is quite clear from the letters in the Record Office which I have printed in the Appendix, that both Castlereagh and Lord Charles Stewart, his brother, our ambassador in Vienna, had their doubts of his value ; but so keen was their employer, the Regent, to carry out his programme of degrading his wife, that Ompteda undoubtedly remained in the pay of this country as a spy on a member of our royal family, until his death in 1819. Whether he earned his pay is another story.

According to Lord Stewart, he must have begun his espionage as early as the end of 1814, for Stewart writes to Castlereagh on March 23rd, 1816 : " O. has now been above a year and a half employed." But he had failed to produce, up to then, a single deposition or signature.

Munster's instructions to Ompteda were " to locate himself as close as possible to the Princess with the object of accumulating such evidence of her doings as can be brought up against her in Court." As early as January 20th, 1815, Ompteda begins writing scandalous suggestions, gathered from servants, against Caroline, and before he can possibly have known anything about the matter, he seems to have cast the good-looking Pergami, who has just entered the service of the Princess, as the paramour of the drama he intends to create.

As I have said, the impression of contemporary writers seems to be that Caroline's adventures were common gossip throughout the Continent, and that these rumours reached England and became so much talked of that it was right and necessary to send a commission to examine into them, and that this body, the Milan Commission, which was under the authority of Sir John Leach, and went abroad in 1818, was the first official body set in motion against Caroline.

But this is quite incorrect. The Regent was determined to try and make a case against his wife when she

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first left England. Munster and Ompteda and a host of Austrian and Italian spies were set to work at once. Sir John Leach, who owed his post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the Regent, and who was said to aspire to the Woolsack, did not come into the matter until three years later.

As early as January 24th, 1815, we find Ompteda describing Pergami as a "sort of Apollo, of a superb and commanding appearance more than six feet tall; his physical beauty attracts all eyes." This is the man the spies were to watch for all they were worth, and for five years money was poured out of the Secret Service fund to make a case against Caroline and Pergami. It is utterly untrue that scandals arose and rumours spread from Caroline's own household. The spies were planted upon her by Ompteda. Guiseppe Sacchi, her equerry; Guiseppe Rastelli, her coachman, and even some of the guests at her banquets, were paid spies of her husband to report what they could find that would be of any use in a court of justice, and to spread rumours abroad against Caroline in the towns where she stayed. Although, before she left Naples, her friend and guest, Baron Ompteda, was already coupling her name with Pergami's in the reports that he sent to his masters, yet Caroline at that time never suspected that such villainy was going forward.

And her view of her new servant is expressed in a very sensible and domestic letter to Miss Berry, written on March 23rd, 1815. It occurs in a long, chatty letter about her everyday life. She is on board H.M.S. *Clorinda* near the "Lion's Den," as she calls the island of Elba, and the ship is at anchor. At least she thinks so, but little Austin runs in to tell her there is a fair wind for Leghorn, where they will sleep to-night. So Caroline continues to write her news to "dear Berrina." Old Sicard, her faithful German servant, has gone to England on money business, but she adds: "I have Napoleon's courier with me, which is quite a treasure to me, faithful

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and prudent. I shall keep him. Sicard is quite delighted with him. He is a Milanais and has been in Russia with him (Napoleon, not Sicard) ; he is now doing the business of Sicard in his absence. I have received three very comfortable letters from my daughter, and heaven grant that I may see her soon again."

Napoleon's courier was Pergami, the man Ompteda had described, but, of course, at this time Caroline knew nothing of the conspiracy by which she was surrounded, or the instruments of Ompteda who were being planted into her service. Napoleon's courier was a very valuable major-domo and a far more useful person to arrange the business of her travels than any Englishman could have been. That was why he was employed.

Pergami was marked down by Ompteda as a probable paramour directly he entered Caroline's service, and he began to spy on him and collect his dossier at once. It would be interesting to know what this campaign of calumny cost the taxpayers. The expenses of the Milan Commission alone exceeded £30,000. But this was only the cost of garnering the harvest which Ompteda and his agents had sown and cultivated for at least three years before. That a great deal of money had been squandered in subornation is clear. Lord George Bentinck, who was Canning's private secretary, told Greville that when Canning was in the Foreign Office they found dispatches and copies of correspondence between Lord Castlereagh and Lord Stewart, brother of Lord Castlereagh and ambassador at Vienna. He became a very active enemy of the Princess and was, no doubt, chosen on that account to be a working colleague of the Milan Commission. We read, in the evidence at the trial, of witnesses being kept in idleness and financed by Lord Stewart.

" These dispatches," says Greville, " were very curious, and more particularly so after Castlereagh's attack last year on Canning for misappropriating the secret service money, for they gave an account of his own employment



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of the secret service money in getting Italian witnesses for the Queen's Trial." And Lord Stewart, in one of his letters, speaks of the anxiety in the office, when some dispatches were lost by treachery of a messenger, as they were written expressly "to throw dust in the eyes of the Parliament."

By these peeps behind the scenes we learn something of the conspiracy that continued against the peace of Caroline. There was no cessation of the Regent's activities. He had started with the Douglas perjuries in 1806. He had discovered how with Lord Moira, Colonel McMahon and Lowten the attorney, he could rake enough together to obtain some result against his victim in a closed tribunal of his political friends.

In looking through some papers in the Record Office, I came across certain letters passing between Lord Castlereagh and Lord Stewart, his brother, which I think must be a portion of the secret and confidential dispatches which Greville refers to. They do not seem to have been published previously, and as they are conclusive on the subject of the organized conspiracy started by the Regent against his wife, almost as soon as she went abroad, I have printed them at length in an Appendix (see p. 329).

The first in order of date is from Castlereagh to Stewart, January 21st, 1816. This is over a year since Ompteda had been set to work. Up to now the business had been in the hands of Count Munster, and Stewart had no official cognizance of what was going on. However, now Castlereagh writes: "I observe by your last private letter that Baron O. has opened himself to you. Of course he has taken the necessary precautions in doing so, as any countenance of the British Ambassador, by stripping him of the mark of his former disgrace, would deprive him of his future means of being of use."

He then continues to set out what the Regent wants, and clearly at present, had not received. Ompteda

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“ought to secure the presence of some unexceptionable evidences who could testify that they had ocular demonstration. English witnesses to be preferred ; and should such an attempt be made, it is material (lest it should fail) that it be so made as not to implicate you or any other person in the Prince Regent's service.”

The Regent apparently was becoming impatient. He wanted “unqualified proofs” and therefore Ompteda must be pressed to deliver the goods and “the proofs must be direct and unequivocal and the evidence such, with respect to the parties to be examined, as would preclude their testimony from being run down and discredited.”

Then follows what I take to be a disgraceful suggestion for an English minister to make to an English ambassador even at the request of the Regent. “There is another most important object, short of Divorce, viz.—to accumulate such a body of evidence as may at any time enable the Prince Regent to justify himself for refusing to receive the Princess in this country, or to admit her to the enjoyment of any of those Honorary Distinctions, to which his wife, if received into his Court and family, would be entitled.” This seems to me to be a direct intimation to Ompteda that if there is no real evidence of Caroline's guilt obtainable, he is to send along any false or exaggerated testimony of hired spies and servants that can be bought for money. It is curious to see in the sequel how literally this suggestion was acted upon.

From one of Stewart's letters it appears that Castlereagh had hinted at a plan the Regent had in mind of getting the Hanoverian minister to make another “Delicate Investigation” and rake up the former evidence about the child Austin ; the truth about which seems unknown to Stewart. But he writes with contempt of such a proceeding : “It appears to my ignorant mind, a little harking back, to take up the mystery of the boy's birth which could have been investigated many years ago (it must be remembered

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the facts and the judges' decision had never been officially published), and which is now almost forgotten." He thinks this stale stuff "would neither interest the public mind nor be construed into any other proceeding than one of malice and management with a Hanoverian government." He desires the case to be stripped of "all questionable and ancient malice . . . . If Hanover is to inquire let her inquire about new facts and not have the Appearance of being humbugged into old and almost Obsolete Histories."

This sane and energetic protest seems to have been effective, for the idea was dropped. Stewart had no great belief in "Mr. O." He calls attention to his "general hearsay statements" and warns Castlereagh to observe the difference between these and "particular facts recorded and signed to" and to call the Law Officers' attention to the matter.

We learn from these letters that the artist Bossi has been set on as a spy, and an ex-Director of the Theatres of Como and Varese, a man of doubtful character named Zanchò, has written some letters which come to nothing ; but with 8,000 or 10,000 francs for expenses Zanchò promises Lord Stewart wonderful revelations. But the best news Stewart sends is on February 28th, 1816, when he says that "Ompteda has completely established himself as an inmate and friend at Villa d'Este, Caroline's villa at Como." He had not then heard apparently that Caroline had gone to the East.

The effect of these letters seems to show that after a year and a half of the most intimate spying into Caroline's life and conduct they have found absolutely nothing to proceed upon, and the Regent is so disgusted that he is thinking of raking up the ten-year-old slander of Charlotte Douglas and appealing from Erskine and Ellenborough to a Hanoverian tribunal of his own appointment.

The end of Ompteda's utility to the Regent—but, as often happens with state employés, not the end of his emoluments and service—came about in this way. When

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the Princess returned to the Villa d'Este at Como, on October 21st, 1816, it seems that then, for the first time, she learned that she was surrounded by spies, who were under the pay and direction of Baron d'Ompteda. At that time he had not successfully suborned all the Italian witnesses who were afterwards King's evidence. The staff that Caroline had left at the Villa were loyal—with one exception, a man named Maurice Credé, a German who yielded to temptation. He undertook to introduce the Baron into the Princess's apartments by means of false keys.

The plot was discovered by Pergami ; it was also discovered that Credé was carrying on an intrigue with a German girl called Annette, one of the maids, and on account of this breach of discipline he was dismissed in November, 1816. On November 3rd, 1816, the wretched man writes to Chevalier Tomassia, one of Caroline's gentlemen, asking to be allowed to return, in which he says among other things : " I must then confess that I merit my disgrace since I suffered myself to be seduced by a certain Baron M. d'Ompteda to betray the best of mistresses and the most generous of Princesses.

" It is about a year ago (November, 1815, when the Princess was just going to Sicily) or about a month before the departure of the Princess, that this baron was to take all possible steps, through the intervention of a certain Ambrose Cesati, who came to Como, to discover the place where my mistress slept, and to endeavour to procure false keys of her apartment. I persisted for some time in refusing to have any concern in this plot, but at length the Baron's threats, who told me I was a ruined man if I did not listen to him, together with the money he offered me from time to time, corrupted me and I was weak enough to accept the commission although fully persuaded that there was no foundation whatever for the Baron's infamous suspicions." And then the poor wretch makes an appeal to be allowed " to return to the path of

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honour." And from what I read of Caroline she would have liked to give him another chance if her advisers had allowed her to do so, for there never was a lady of more Christian charity towards those who sinned against her, than Caroline of Brunswick. Some say that she reinstated him, others that forgiveness was forbidden to her and that later on the wretch went on the dole of the Milan Commission.

Caroline reported the incident of the stolen keys to Count Saurau, the minister at Vienna, who at once banished Baron d'Ompfeda from the Empire, and Lieutenant Hownam, the Princess's gentleman, challenged the rascal to a duel, but the Baron named Switzerland as "a convenient place" and was not seen again in Milan.

But that he continued spying on Caroline, and was in the pay of the Regent until his end, we learn from letters passing between him at Rome and Chevalier Bischì, Director of the Police at Pesaro, where the Princess had a villa and was much beloved. The Chevalier was asked to pass letters from Louise Demont into the Princess's household, but he refused to do the Baron's dirty work.

Let this be said, that Baron Ompteda was faithful unto the last, for when he died in Rome, Hercule, Cardinal Gonsalvi, writes to His Excellency the Count Munster, Minister of State and of the Cabinet of His Britannic Majesty King of Hanover, that the lamented Ompteda "carried with him" (where is not stated) "the regrets of the Holy Father, mine and those of the whole capital. . . . He served his royal Highness the Prince Regent with unerring zeal and fidelity : and your Excellency will have an opportunity of seeing, by the packet which he sealed with his own hands a few moments ere he expired that he proved it even to the last moments of his existence."

He was a futile and expensive spy and had been at the business so long that like many another human fool he began to fancy he was of use in the world. It must be

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supposed that his last depositions were some of Louise Demont's fictions and that these falsehoods were really believed in by Ompteda, if only for the reason that they were acceptable to the great ones of the earth who employed him. When one reads of these powerful statesmen plotting and spending thousands of pounds to crush one homeless and unprotected woman, one begins to think, with John Wesley, that the hand of Providence still hinders the destruction of the widow and the fatherless, for it seems little short of a miracle that the Regent's plot failed to succeed.

It may seem that undue space is given to Ompteda. But in considering whether it is reasonable to conclude that the evidence put forward against Caroline is not only perjured, but that the perjury was suborned and paid for by certain conspirators, one must trace the business to its origin. It is clear from Castlereagh's and Stewart's letters that at the time they were written in 1816, Caroline had been spied upon for nearly two years and at the end of that time nothing of any value as evidence against her had been obtained. It must be noted that up to this time the money bags had not been opened. It was like a Parliamentary election ; there had been many vague promises but no one was going to the poll until the terms were agreed. The witnesses, like the old-fashioned electors, were waiting "for the donkey to walk," and that event did not happen until in 1818 Sir John Leach's agents with £30,000 in their pockets appeared upon the scene.

We must now return to the business of Caroline's travels in the East. It was necessary for her to take a staff of servants, and to arrange for a suite of Italian ladies and gentlemen to replace those friends who had accompanied her from England at short notice and much personal inconvenience. It was quite impossible for her to expect English men and women to leave their homes and go into exile with her. It is probable that Sir William

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Gell might have gone with her to the East but for ill-health. It seems a pity that he could not have done so as his presence would have saved her from many slanders that were spread about.

Pergami was of the greatest value to her, and being a linguist, and a man accustomed to be intrusted with state dispatches of importance and to conduct business affairs, there was every reason from Caroline's point of view that she should advance the man to the confidential post of chamberlain. It was not a matter of "levity" but common sense. For similar reasons she took into her service as lady-in-waiting his sister, Countess Oldi, a staid and respectable lady who continued in her service after she returned to England. Dr. Mochetti, an author and physician of high character and position, took the place of Dr. Holland, and Lieutenant Robert Hownam joined her from England as private secretary. Count Schiavoni, a wealthy noble of Cremona, and other Italians, were from time to time members of her suite, and Schiavoni was one of those who came to England with her. One must not forget another member of the Pergami family, his little daughter Vittorina, who delighted Caroline, as all children did, and was made a great pet of throughout the voyage.

It would be impossible to describe the Princess's travels at length. She had purchased the Villa d'Este at Como in 1815, and intended to return there at the end of her tour. Louise Demont, the perjured witness at her trial, who accompanied her to the East, gives a very pleasant account of the tour in a journal which she kept to amuse her relations on her return. They left the Villa d'Este on November 12th, 1815, and sailed from Genoa on the 17th in the *Leviathan*, an English ship of line. This took them to Sicily. Here she spent a considerable time, and Signor Clerici, who has diligently studied all the newspapers and records of her visit, seems surprised that during her stay at Messina she did not "give way to any of those follies which are recorded about her stay in

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Switzerland." What he does not grasp is that every single account of "levity" or evil doing recorded of Caroline comes from a tainted source ; it is either second-hand rumour or the direct testimony of paid spies and informers. Here in Sicily she was free of these pests—there was no Ompteda—and the people found her the same charming personality that had won the hearts of her friends and neighbours in Blackheath.

From Messina she went on the *Clorinde* to Syracuse with Captain Pechell, and afterwards she hired a polacre, owned and commanded by Captain Vincenzo Barguilo, which was chartered for her by Lieutenant Flynn and christened the *Royal Charlotte*. In this vessel she went to Tunis, Malta, Athens, Constantinople and the Holy Land, and returned home to Como in September, 1816. The idea that this trip was an idle pleasure jaunt is of course foolish. It was a serious and arduous tour, made to please the taste that Caroline had always shown for seeing the beauties and interesting places of the world. That it was managed and arranged by Pergami with great skill, and that Caroline faced the discomforts, and even dangers incident to travel in the East in those days, is equally clear. Louise Demont was very terrified at their excursions among the islands of the Archipelago, which were rumoured to be infested with pirates, but notes that "Her Royal Highness who, as I have observed, is highly courageous, was not terrified by these recitals and, thanks to God, we escaped all the threatened dangers." After reading this pleasant little account of the tour and Caroline's kindness to Louise, and then her eulogies of her mistress in her letter to her sister, Mariette, as late as February 8th, 1818, it is impossible for me to doubt that she fell a victim to Ompteda's wiles and Sir John Leach's Fortunatus purse. Brougham was able to convince even Eldon that she was a liar. If he had only had copies of Castlereagh's and Stewart's letters he might have convinced some of the King's friends that all these discharged



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servants were hired to bear false witness in the same fashion as Louise Demont.

When Caroline returned to the Villa d'Este in September, 1816, we know that Baron Ompteda had been at work with Maurice Cr   , who had been left in charge of the Villa and obtained false keys of the house. Pergami had discovered this in his quiet, efficient way, and when the Princess gave a home-coming f  te Ompteda was not invited. He asked for an appointment and was invited to a reception at which many Italian ladies and gentlemen were present. Caroline, who treated the creature and his villainy with light contempt, took the opportunity in the face of all her friends of presenting him with a chamberlain's key of office of huge dimensions and congratulated him on his recent appointment as Chamberlain at the Court of Hanover. Then, Clerici tells us, turning on her heel, she ordered a lackey to give the Baron a single cup of coffee, "un' unica tazza di caff  ," and so to dismiss him. The significance of the key and the *unica tazza* were not lost on Ompteda, and he slunk out of the house and was not heard of again.

It was a sad home-coming, and after a time the Villa d'Este and its propinquity to Milan, and the continued persecution and bribery of her servants by Colonel Browne, an employ   of Ompteda, and afterwards one of the Milan Commission, and the activities of an attorney spy named Vimercati, engaged at a huge salary as a receiver of local gossip and perjury, made the place extremely unpleasant to her. So she left Como, and to the regret of her friends and neighbours, sold the Villa and moved away to Pesaro, on the Adriatic, where she lived very happily for some years. She was in constant correspondence with friends in England, but the Regent and his ministers treated her with contempt. The news of the death of her daughter, for instance, reached her by accident, and the same insulting neglect was practised when her uncle, George III, died, and she became Queen Consort of England.

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It was as contemptible as it was stupid, to try and prejudge the Queen in the eyes of the people by hearsay slanders and open insults, and it was certainly the last way of making a peace with a woman like Caroline of Brunswick. Caroline had considered carefully what steps she would take in the event of her becoming Queen, and her treatment by her husband had convinced her sense of honour that there was only one course open to her. She must return to England at once when the occasion arose and demand her rights.

## Chapter XVI: *The Queen Comes Home*

“On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!  
Tramp, tramp o’er pebble, and splash, splash through puddle;  
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!”

Byron: *Don Juan*, canto X, 71.

THE value of slander as a munition of war is that it is inexpensive. Like an infectious disease it finds eager human carriers and spreads itself through the land among susceptible human beings, whose temperature rises with enthusiasm at the call of the microbe. Once start a palatable slander and it spreads itself.

Caroline had been well aware for many years of the bribery of her servants and the falsehoods that had long been broadcast against her, and had resolved when the time came to return to England and face her accusers. When she set her face for home we find a characteristic letter from Lady Charleville to Lady Morgan, of February, 1820, saying: “the report of all travellers who have any knowledge of the Princess”—a pretty periphrasis for hearsay slander—warns us that “our honest and virtuous daughters” must be protected against poor Caroline.

In April of the same year Lady Morgan herself is in Rome. Caroline arrives on her way north. All the English ladies are cackling on a subject almost as enthralling as dressmaking or millinery—ought we to visit her? “When lo!” writes Lady Morgan to Lady Clarke, “she refused to see any of them and leads the most retired life! We met her one day driving out in a state truly royal; I never saw her so splendid.” Lord and Lady Leitrim were honoured with an invitation to tea. “Lady Leitrim told me her manner was perfect and altogether she was a most

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improved woman. The Baron (Pergami) attended her at tea, but merely as a chamberlain, and was not introduced. Before you receive this, if accounts be true, her Majesty will be in England."

The good ladies are terribly puzzled by these contradictory accounts. But what is manifestly clear is that George III is dead and George IV is on the throne, and that if their honest and virtuous daughters want to attend royal Drawing-Rooms it is well that their loyal fathers and mothers should not do anything that might displease His Majesty. The social position was very puzzling. The King was obsessed with the idea of obtaining a divorce, but many people said he could not obtain a divorce; and if the Queen had to be recognized, it might be very inconvenient hereafter, not to have shown her courtesy when opportunity offered.

And if society was troubled with the situation that would arise when the Queen came home, politicians were equally annoyed at having to face such an unpleasing problem. The right solution would have been to give Her Majesty a palace and, subject to the continued separation, allow her to play her ceremonial part. But the King hated and feared her. He was unpopular. She was regarded with affection throughout the country. He had made up his mind to obtain a divorce. He was as obstinate and determined as a mule about it. He had spent years plotting and conspiring to obtain evidence for it. He had spent thousands on his plans. They must be carried out.

The political situation seemed to the King to render this possible. The Tories, with Lord Liverpool as Prime Minister, were still in power. But Canning had joined the ministry again, and younger and more enlightened men like Peel and Huskisson were a new force to the party. The Whigs were still wandering in the desert. Since the death of Princess Charlotte they had lost heart. All but one. Brougham had never given up hope of

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defeating the Tories, and upon the death of George III his busy, active mind at once began to speculate on the value of Queen Caroline and her wrongs to the radical cause in general and Henry Brougham in particular.

Brougham has been blamed for his treatment of Caroline, and she has been thought ungrateful to her advocate for his great services in the Trial. But the position of the parties seems to have been misunderstood. Brougham had never been a friend of Caroline. He was a politician and had sought out Caroline and Charlotte, because their grievances against the Regent had political value to himself and his friends. Caroline had lost her personal friends and advisers, and was in want of a lawyer of power and position. Eldon had deserted her to take service with the enemy, and Perceval was dead. She had no friend of the lawyer type to call to her side.

She never accepted Brougham as anything but a hired lawyer and even then distrusted him, for she was a woman of insight and intelligence. He disliked his client heartily, and cared nothing for her wrongs, but having made up his mind to undertake her case he fought it splendidly. There is nothing wrong or unusual in the situation. If you hire a taxicab you are not expected to make a friend of the driver, nor is he called upon to interest himself in your personal affairs after he has set you down at your destination.

Brougham had been in correspondence with Caroline and, hearing from the Duke of Sussex that George III was sinking, had sent off, by the Queen's courier Sicard, his appointment as Attorney-General and Denman's as Solicitor-General, for Her Majesty to sign. The position of Queen's Attorney-General was important to Brougham, for Eldon, who hated him very cordially, would not give him a silk gown, and although he had a large practice he was only a member of the junior Bar. As Queen's Attorney he had a silk gown as of right, with precedence and professional advancement.

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Now Brougham was wroth with Eldon for refusing to call him within the Bar. The new King was pressing his Ministers to proceed with a divorce. His Majesty's own health was precarious, and had he died and the Duke of York come to the throne, then Caroline as a political asset would have had no value. Under these circumstances there is some evidence that Brougham let it be known that if the Government would give him a silk gown, he would not accept the position of Queen's Attorney-General.

Theodore Hook put the popular verdict against him into rude verse :

“The fellow's a hack politician  
A tailor in all but ambition  
Who offered to bilk  
For a gown of black silk  
The Queen—and her whole opposition.”

*John Bull*, a supporter of the Government, sneeringly observed that “the ministers might do worse than tip Mr. Harry the siller.” But the matter does not rest upon political squibs and newspaper gossip. Mr. Aspinall, in his recent masterly account of “Lord Brougham and the Whig Party,” quotes from an interesting correspondence between Lord Liverpool and Canning, in which the latter claims that the Cabinet should overrule the Lord Chancellor. “Did any case ever arise,” asks Canning, “in which the giving or withholding a silk gown might be the risk or safety of the Government? And when such a case arrives, does it not entirely change the nature of the discretion to be exercised, and make that which before was matter of department, matter of State?” This interesting constitutional problem was never settled. Eldon had his own way. Brougham did not get silk.

When the King produced to his Ministers the results of his Milan Commission they were not impressed with the value of the evidence. They warned him that if he

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moved in the matter, the defence to any proceedings for divorce would be recriminatory, and the Queen's lawyers would reopen the story of His Majesty's profligate life, a course that might have serious results for the monarchy.

By the middle of February the King was persuaded to listen to reason. Brougham was told that if the Queen came to England a Bill in Parliament would be introduced against her, but if she would remain abroad and accept a pension of £50,000 a year all would be well. If this settlement had been accompanied by a silk gown, it looks as though it might have been placed before the Queen in a favourable light. For the present, however, Brougham seems to have kept the matter to himself.

The Ministers on several occasions threatened to resign rather than take any steps against the Queen ; but at last, in a weak moment, they acquiesced in allowing the King to omit the Queen's name from the Liturgy. This seems to have been decided upon as early as February 12th. As soon as this news reached Caroline she decided that it amounted to a judgment against her personally, and that the only course consistent with her honour was to return to England and demand that any charges made against her should be tried before a public tribunal in open court.

The Queen was in Rome in January, 1820, having travelled there from Marseilles. Her husband's policy was to use the Hanoverian ministers attached to the foreign Courts to persuade the officials of the country to treat his wife with discourtesy. She had been driven out of France by the rudeness of the servants of the Bourbon Government, and now she arrived in Rome she found that the Papal authorities were resolved to please the new King of England by withdrawing from Queen Caroline the guard of honour and other official courtesies that a few years ago had been accorded to the Princess of Wales.

She had heard at Leghorn of her uncle's death from Sicard, who had been to England to acquaint Brougham

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with the spying in her household and the inquiries that were being made in Milan from discharged servants and others. When she found that the Roman officials were instructed not to accept her status, and that her name had been removed from the Liturgy, she wrote to England and announced her intention to return to face her enemies.

Since 1817 she had retained her villa at Pesaro, on the Adriatic, south of Ravenna. She went there to collect her papers and arrange her affairs, and then proceeded to Milan. She now sent couriers to England announcing her return and calling upon Brougham to meet her at Geneva, set out *via* Turin across Mont Cenis, and reached Geneva early in May. Brougham was too busy to leave London and go to Geneva. Had he done so, and offered her the settlement that he had negotiated behind her back, he might have persuaded her to accept it. But though he had presented his appointment in open court as Queen's Attorney, and Lord Eldon had received it, saying, "he would consult no views and regard no considerations in the matter, except such as were purely professional," yet Brougham had not apparently made up his mind what use he should make of the Queen's wrongs, and for the present contented himself with asking her to come nearer to England whilst he went circuit to be out of the way. Caroline now made up her mind to proceed to St. Omer, near Calais, and sent word to Brougham to meet her there whilst she set out at once for Dijon.

Brougham, no doubt, considered that the Queen would be guided entirely by his advice, and that no other counsel would be asked but his. Here, like many clever people, he erred in over-estimating his own significance. It is often a failing of the great. There was Lord Randolph Churchill, who "forgot Goschen," and others known to history. Brougham had failed to remember Alderman Wood.

Caroline, however, who had as large a sense of her own independence and as great a belief in her judgment



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as Brougham himself, had by no means forgotten her old and faithful friend. Just as she had consulted with Canning on the subject of leaving England, and not deigned to discuss the matter with her lawyer, so at this moment she was in correspondence with another true friend and champion, Alderman Sir Matthew Wood. He had been the friend and follower of Samuel Whitbread and had always been a stalwart believer in Caroline's integrity. He was her loyal supporter not only for political reasons but because he believed in the justice of her cause and hated the cruelty and tyranny with which she was treated.

Matthew Wood was a sterling character. Denman recognized his sagacity and energy, and above all his "acquaintance with the character of the English people," a human subject unknown to Brougham. Brougham treated him as of no importance and nicknamed him "Absolute Wisdom"; but Caroline had the instinct to know he was faithful, and that at this juncture of her troubled affairs the support of one honest friend was worth many battalions of political mercenaries.

Wood was a very remarkable citizen. His father was a serge-maker in Tiverton, Devonshire, and though he was able to send his son to the famous Blundell's School, Matthew had to make his own way in the world, and came to London, did well as a druggist and in a hop merchant's business, and made money out of copper mines in Cornwall. He was interested in corporation work and became Lord Mayor in 1815-16, and then Member for the City. He was a consistent radical and supporter of the Whigs, and no doubt of more value to the causes he supported than his political colleague, Mr. Brougham.

Alderman Wood must have seen in the newspapers, and heard in the City, the rumours that were going round that Brougham was being squared by the Ministers and that Caroline's interests were going to be thrown over. He believed firmly in her honour, and it was against his creed to bargain about sacred things. The Queen's real

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friends must be true to the woman's cause. If the foul stories spread abroad about her were true then there was nothing to fight for ; but for his own part he did not believe a word of them ; he knew George IV was a liar, a profligate, and had for years been persecuting his wife, and as this class of thing was hateful to his honest nature, he wrote to Caroline that he would attend her in France, and set out on May 10th from Dover.

It happened that when the Queen reached Geneva a young son of Wood, then about eighteen, was studying languages there, and at his father's command waited on the Queen and was received into her service and travelled with her. He had a good knowledge of French and Italian, and as she intended to part with her chamberlain, Pergami, and had got rid of most of her Italian servants, young William Page Wood was of considerable use to her. He, too, became a convinced believer in her innocence, and went to Italy in the summer to collect evidence in her case. In 1824 Brougham and Denman proposed him for Lincoln's Inn, and he is remembered by lawyers as a learned, sound and industrious lawyer, and under the title of Lord Hatherley is known to the world as Lord Chancellor in Gladstone's administration of 1868.

Young Page Wood was not the kind of man who would readily mistake a coarse, indelicate, vulgar woman for anything but what she was. He was a studious and religious man, but high-spirited, and having lived abroad for two years had seen more of the world than most of his contemporaries. His account of Caroline, as he met her at this crisis in her life, is interesting to anyone who is seeking for knowledge of the human being, rather than for material on which to base the justification of political actions.

Sir Matthew's son joined the Queen at Geneva early in May. From here she sent a courier to England to announce her intention of returning to the country. He was intercepted by Lord Charles Stewart, now ambassador

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in Paris, who said he would look after the letters, and sent the courier back again.

Caroline, therefore, sent Chevalier Vassali, a gentleman of her household, who came to London and saw Brougham and Denman, and on his return she moved forward to meet her friends near the French coast. There was never an intention in the Queen's mind of taking any other course than to return to England and meet her enemies and defend her honour. There was certainly delay, for her movements were impeded by serious illness, and she was under the hands of the doctors at Turin and Geneva where she was incapacitated by rheumatism and sciatica. But as soon as they would allow her to travel she was on her way again.

On her arrival at Dijon a special courier went forward to Mr. Brougham appointing him to be at St. Omer, and Caroline followed the same evening to Montbard. Here she was delighted to meet Alderman Wood and Lady Anne Hamilton, who had met him at Calais. Lady Anne was a true friend. She had been Caroline's lady-in-waiting in England. Now, in the Queen's time of adversity, she joined her mistress again, remained with her throughout her trial, nursed her in her last illness, and attended her to her last resting-place at Brunswick. They all went forward the next day and were at Villeneuve le Roi on May 29th.

From here Caroline sent a short and peremptory letter to the Earl of Liverpool, saying she intended to arrive in London on Saturday, June 3rd, asking for yachts to be ready for her at Calais, mentioning that she had been delayed by indisposition and expressing her hope that His Majesty had recovered from his recent illness. This was signed "Caroline, Queen of England."

It must be remembered that Brougham had never divulged to her the settlement he had been negotiating, but had he done so I cannot believe Caroline would have listened to it. Nevertheless, he ought to have gone to

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Geneva with it, if he really wished her to entertain the proposition. Brougham neither cared for Caroline nor appreciated her character, and one finds among historians and writers of memoirs discussions as to whether it was Brougham or Wood who influenced her in coming to England. It was neither. Caroline decided it for herself, as she had always done in the tangled affairs of her life. When she reached Villeneuve and found that Alderman Wood approved of her decision she was naturally pleased. She, no doubt, expected that he would approve her resolution, having been in correspondence with him, and his son had doubtless had messages from him. Meeting with Wood put new heart into her resolve, as he was a man of affairs and could arrange for her travelling. But Wood was not her adviser in the matter of coming to London. In great affairs Caroline made up her own mind, leaving the details and management to the best instruments she could obtain.

The Queen travelled by Melun to Abbéville, avoiding Paris. There was always the fear the King might ask the French authorities to hinder her journey. She had had trouble about passports in Italy. The French ambassador at Rome refused to sign her papers, and the English consul had feared to do so at first. Leaving Abbéville they had difficulties with post-horses, but here Alderman Wood and his son, who spoke French well, were valuable allies, and overcoming all difficulties the cavalcade duly reached St. Omer. There were no less than five carriages, so that the need of relays of horses and consequent delays on the road were nothing surprising, and may have been accidental. Alderman Wood and Count Vassali travelled in a calash with three horses. The Queen and Lady Hamilton had a yellow-bodied post-chariot adorned with the royal arms. A large English travelling carriage of similar colour and apparel was for the Queen's three maidservants; and there were two more calashes for young Austin, Mr. Wood, Pergami and

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the other gentlemen of the household. This is the manner in which Caroline always travelled ; and in Italy Pergami had been invaluable as equerry and steward, but here in France it was well for her that the alderman had taken charge.

Brougham had started for St. Omer on June 3rd with Lord Hutchinson, who was an unofficial representative of the Cabinet. The idea seems to have been that Brougham would persuade Caroline to accept £50,000 a year and exile. It really seems as if Brougham had not, up to this time, finally resolved to fight the Queen's cause.

On Saturday afternoon, June 3rd, Brougham, with his brother and Lord Hutchinson, and Caroline's faithful Mr. Sicard on the box of the chaise, arrived at St. Omer. Brougham had an audience with the Queen and informed her that Lord Hutchinson had, in a spirit of sincere friendship towards both the King and Queen, some proposals to make with the approval of the Ministers.

It seems clear that Caroline, having heard what they were or at all events what Brougham said they were, at once with much good sense "commanded Mr. Brougham to request Lord Hutchinson to communicate any such proposition as soon as possible in writing."

This was a wise course. Count Vassali, on Sunday morning, June 4th, took Brougham's letter to Lord Hutchinson. At two o'clock Brougham wrote again, giving his Lordship until five o'clock for a reply. This, too, was at "the Queen's command." Within a few minutes of the hour appointed, a long letter arrived, putting forward the terms, but saying that he was not in possession of any specific form of words, but could only detail for the Queen's information "the substance of many conversations held with Lord Liverpool."

It was obvious that the Ministry would not put any offer to the Queen in black and white. If they believed a tithe of the testimony Ompteda and the King's spies and agents had raked together they could not honestly offer

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an abandoned woman a State pension of £50,000 a year. And if she refused it, and there was no evidence in writing as to what it amounted to, then it was of course easy to disavow Hutchinson and declare the suggestion had come from herself.

Hutchinson says, I think truly, that Brougham had no influence over Caroline at this time. As he puts it, her "violence and determination subdued him, and that he failed in making the slightest impression upon her." If Caroline really "subdued" Brougham, she did a very doughty deed. But Brougham was in a nasty corner. He had failed to come to his client and advise her. He had left her to make her own decision. It was made for better or worse, and he was probably, at the time, as Mr. Atlay thinks, on the point of resigning his office as her Attorney-General.

There was no love lost between Caroline and her attorney. The old Marchioness Sacraty, a dear friend of Caroline, who came to England to give evidence for her if it was wanted, told Crabb Robinson her opinion of *Monsieur Brog-gam*; he was a "*grand coquin*," but that was because he had told the Marchioness that if the Queen is guilty I cannot make her innocent: "*C'étoit un traître ce Monsieur Brog-gam*." But for Monsieur Denman the dear old lady had naught but praise: "*O, c'étoit un ange, ce Monsieur Denman. Il n'a jamais douté de l'innocence de la Reine*." This was just a woman's prejudice. It was uttered ten years after the trial, and the Marchioness was merely one of the women who believed Caroline to be innocent, and could not understand how her advocate could plead a cause he did not believe in. Crabb says that Brougham told him in the King's Bench Coffee House: "I have never thought it material to ask myself whether the Queen were an adulteress or not, but I am quite sure she is guilty or mad."

Personally, I do not believe Brougham ever said such a thing, but at the St. Omer time, there is no doubt that

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he had heard, as everyone had, the slanders that the King's friends were spreading abroad, and that he was in two minds about fighting the case and had played with the idea of a settlement.

That Caroline, with her mind made up about returning to England and Alderman Wood ready to take her there, was not inclined to trouble much at the moment about her attorney's advice, is obvious.

She was busy with farewells and superintending the arrangements for her journey. Pergami and Vassali, who had arranged to leave the Princess when they had placed her in the hands of her English friends, bade her a respectful farewell. There had been a slight money dispute between Pergami and his mistress but this was amicably adjusted and both gentlemen kissed hands on their departure and received her thanks.

Brougham was received for a few moments and read to her Lord Hutchinson's letter. She declared it was offensive, and at six o'clock on June 4th he at once sat down and wrote to Hutchinson that the Queen commanded him to say "that it is quite impossible for her Majesty to listen to such a proposition."

Hutchinson wrote again to Brougham, who, by letter, earnestly implored the Queen to wait until Hutchinson could receive further instructions. He also asked if Caroline cared to put forward other proposals. But it was too late. The arrangements had been made. Caroline was in no mood to bargain with her enemies and here I think she was right. Whether guilty or innocent it was good tactics to face the music. To a woman knowing she was innocent an open trial before an honest jury was her one chance of justice. She knew there would be perjury to listen to, but she did not then know the type of tribunal that would listen to it. Nevertheless, she was clear in her mind that she must go and, leaving Brougham and Lord Hutchinson at St. Omer, she arrived at Calais and at ten or eleven at night she stepped on

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board the *Prince Leopold*, which the Alderman had hired to carry her to England. Up to the last moment she had feared being stopped upon the road, but now she was on English soil. The Alderman went to the Hotel Bourbon to write dispatches to their friends in London, and these were sent away without any police authority, by a boat in waiting that slipped out of the harbour in the dark.

The tide did not serve until early morning and the wind was adverse until about eleven, when a south breeze carried them rapidly across the Channel and once again Caroline saw the white cliffs of the land and the people to whom she had come for justice.



## Chapter XVII: *No Surrender*

“Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,  
Rifle my coffers—but my name—my deeds,  
Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre !  
Pass sentence on me, if you will ; from Kings  
Lo ! I appeal to time !”

Bulwer Lytton : *Richelieu*, IV, i.

THE people of Dover were early abroad to greet their Queen. When the royal standard, flying at the mast-head of the *Prince Leopold*, was seen by glasses from the cliffs, the people flocked to the harbour to see her arrive.

Colonel Monroe at the Castle was without instructions and, like a wise officer, obeyed the regulations, which decreed that it was his duty to fire a royal salute whenever a royal personage landed at Dover. So at about a quarter to one when the packet came into the roads the guns boomed. Her Majesty would not wait until they could get into harbour, but entering a wherry was rowed to the shore and at one o'clock safely landed in England.

The popular enthusiasm was unbounded, a reception was held at Wright's Hotel and the Queen received an address of welcome. It was after six before she entered her carriage which was drawn by willing hands out of the town accompanied by a crowd of people with flags and music. On arrival at Canterbury one hundred flambeaux lighted the entrance to the city and the bearers preceded her to her hotel, the people again taking the horses from the carriage and men, women and children crying, “Long live Queen Caroline,” following in her train.

Nor was her popularity, and the desire to show her kindness and offer her protection, merely the instinct of a rabble mob. The whole of the great middle class of

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England were Queen's men. They knew enough of the story of the past, and had heard sufficient rumours about Milan Commissions and other secret enterprises, to scent a new conspiracy against the Princess who had been driven from England by her husband, and their Queen who had returned to them in spite of his threats. Their instinct rejoiced at the courage of the woman ; they detested the tyranny of the man.

The corporation of Canterbury at their House of Burghmote had met in haste and unanimously voted an address to the Queen which was presented ceremoniously by a deputation of the Mayor, Aldermen, Councillors and Town Clerk in their robes.

The next day, which was Tuesday, June 6th, the journey to London was a similar royal triumph. The cavalry officers stationed at Canterbury rode with Her Majesty to Sittingbourne. At Gravesend, Northfleet and Dartford there was wild enthusiasm and again the horses were replaced by the people, who insisted on taking her carriage through their towns. The scenes at Greenwich and Blackheath, where Caroline and her kindness to all sorts and conditions of people were well remembered, were even more extraordinary in their display of loyalty and delight at her return than anything yet seen. By this time a great body of horsemen had formed a voluntary bodyguard for the Queen and some rode in advance to herald her coming. It is to be doubted if since the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth so hearty and loving a welcome had ever been given to a lady of the royal house. Certainly the English people rose to the occasion and expressed, without doubt or hesitation, their belief in the Queen's innocence, their knowledge of the cruel persecution she had undergone, and their repugnance that such things should be done by the King's Ministers.

Arrived in London, Her Majesty proceeded to Alderman Wood's house in South Audley Street, where the people refused to go away until she had appeared to them

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at the balcony. Royal people apparently never tire. Caroline had been in bad health and undergone fatigues of travel and exciting adventure that might have broken down a weaker woman. But if the Queen's friends must allow that their heroine was on occasion rash and indiscreet, and careless of the opinion of others, her enemies should acknowledge her power of decision and action, and her courage and strength of purpose in seeing things through. Her enemies may boast that their persecution broke her heart and killed her, but they can never claim that they conquered her. She died victorious.

And throughout this campaign, from the moment she decided to come to England and fight in her own cause, she was her own field-marshal. True, she had to employ, as every leader of an army has, generals and colonels to obey her orders, but like her brave father, and indeed with greater success, she spoke the word of command and rode at the head of the troops.

Brougham would have had her negotiate in St. Omer, and, if she went to London, travel secretly and without rousing popular excitement. These tactics were useless to Caroline. They were also unsound, but Brougham with all his ability could never get verdicts from the Northern circuit juries. To do that, as I have seen with my own eyes, you must not appear too clever and, at least, you must be thought to be honest. A counsel need never fear the effect upon a jury of a rival advocate who does not believe in his heart that his client ought to have a verdict. For if he does not believe it his unbelief will appear to the jury and become their unbelief. Brougham belonged to that class of advocates who magnify the difficulties of their case to exalt the stature of their own achievement, but he probably already believed more in Caroline's case than he cared to express.

Caroline, who was now, it must be remembered, a woman of fifty-two, and must have been fairly weary after

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her journey, received Mr. Denman, who was her Solicitor-General, and informed him that she had left Brougham at St. Omer. Denman was able to tell her the first move of the enemy and she learned that the King had sent a message to the House of Lords communicating to them "certain papers relative to the conduct of Her Majesty since her departure from that country which His Majesty recommends to the immediate and serious attention of this house." These papers had been laid on the table in a Green Bag, a receptacle which became famous in the history of Caroline's case. At the same time Lord Castlereagh appeared at the Bar of the House of Commons with another message from the King and another Green Bag which the Speaker asked him to bring forward, and the message was read and the bag placed on the table.

It appears that Alderman Wood must have sent across a copy of Lord Hutchinson's letter, which was in the paper that morning, and Mr. G. Bennet, M.P., wanted to know if it was a fact that the Ministers had, without consent of Parliament, offered the Queen of Great Britain a bribe of £50,000 a year out of the pockets of the people to divest herself of the title which she holds by the same right as the King does his title. Brougham was already back in his place and complained of the publication of what had transpired at St. Omer and said he had nothing to do with the disclosures.

These were the first shots in the campaign. How clearly right was Caroline not to listen to negotiations at St. Omer. Her rapid decision and descent upon London had brought the enemy, not into the open as yet, for the first Government proposal was to have secret committees to examine the contents of the Green Bags, but into a position from which it would be very difficult for them to escape from being decoyed out of their secret places. Caroline demanded a trial in open court, before a competent tribunal, on specific charges ; or divorce proceedings taken against her according to the existing law of the

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land. This latter demand was perhaps unkindly and embarrassing, for of course the immoral life of her husband put it out of his power to gain a verdict against his wife for immorality, and this was a condition precedent in those days to a Bill of Divorce. What steps then were the King's unfortunate Ministers to take? A very present help in time of ministerial trouble is a committee, and a committee of the House of Lords was appointed to consider the contents of the Green Bag.

The history of the Milan Commission which, with the assistance of Baron Ompteda and the secret police of foreign nations and unlimited English money, had filled the Green Bags with depositions against Caroline, is a very disgraceful affair. The Milan Commission was appointed in 1818. It was headed by Sir John Leach, Chancellor of the Duchy, Mr. Cooke, K.C., Colonel Browne who is said to have been a cavalry officer, and Mr. Allen Powell, a solicitor. He it was who was ultimately found to be instructing counsel for the prosecution in the House of Lords, and had to be called by the Attorney-General to account for the disappearance of one of the perjurers, a man named Rastelli. In the origin, therefore, the Commission seems to have been the King's private adventure to purchase and put in form for use in England, the material already collected by Ompteda.

"The Leech, the Gadfly and the Rat," as Shelley calls them in *Œdipus Tyrannus*, set out to do their lucrative job for "Swellfoot the Tyrant" much in the spirit of the poet's libellous but entertaining burlesque. It is really unfair, even for a poet and a genius, to describe a time-serving lawyer doing a dirty job for Swellfoot as

" My Leech—a leech  
Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,  
Capaciously expatiative, which make  
His little body like a red balloon,  
As full of blood as that of hydrogen,  
Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks  
And clings and pulls——"



*AVOLUPTUARY under the horrors of Digestion.*

Cartoon by James Gillray of  
His Royal Highness, George, Prince of Wales



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This of course is mere poetry, but Brougham's prose character of the man is much the same. It was written years after in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1838. Sir John Leach is described as a man of moderate learning and low origin, singularly ignorant of the world and having "no kind of familiarity with the rules or practice of evidence in the Courts of Common Law." Leach had not even the qualification of Thomas Lowten, the attorney who prepared the evidence in the first Delicate Investigation. He, at all events, had been used to this kind of work, as he had been employed by the Duke of York when he got into trouble over his connection with Mary Anne Clarke. "Yet by industry and some art of gaining favour, by making himself useful to the powerful and wealthy, little scrupulous how much he risked in any way to serve them, Leach had struggled with the defects of a man with a late adoption into the rank he afterwards affected ; and he had arrived at extensive practice. . . . The ridicule which he threw around his conduct in society, by his childish devotion to the pursuits of fashionable life, in which neither his early habits nor his turn of mind fitted him to excel, was another result derived from the same want of sound judgment. But its worst fruit was that unhesitating and overweening confidence in his own opinion, which exceeded that of any other man and perpetually led both himself and his clients astray." Brougham's description of him is highly coloured but Romilly and others give similar accounts of the man.

For the King of England to place such a man at the head of an inquiry into his wife's conduct in foreign countries, a matter which, if undertaken at all, should have been in the hands of a skilled and honest lawyer of high character, proves how lost George was to all sense of propriety in his insane desire to persecute his wife. The King's Counsel, whose practice was in bankruptcy and who had never heard a witness in his life, and the cavalry colonel who was a creature of Ompteda's but otherwise



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had no qualification for the task he had undertaken, set out on their travels, with the attorney and the cash, to Milan ; and it had been strange indeed if they had not brought home sufficient depositions to fill a couple of Green Bags.

For as Brougham wisely says in the same review : “ It is the first impression (among foreigners) always arising from any work undertaken by English hands, and paid for by English money, that an inexhaustible fund is employed and with boundless profusion ; and a thirst for gold is straightway excited which no extravagance of liberality can slake. The knowledge that a Board was sitting to collect evidence against the Queen immediately gave such testimony a high value in the market of Italian perjury ; and happy was the individual who had ever been in her house or admitted to her presence.”

At a cost of £30,000 these strange investigators collected the most mangy set of witnesses that ever disgraced the witness-box. One doubts whether any counsel would have dared to place them there, if they had had to face an honest English judge and a British jury. Even in a political assembly like the House of Lords, with the King's brothers and his friends and courtiers pledged to believe all they said, they made a disappointing show and were the laughing-stock of the country. Couriers that pried into carriages where the travellers were asleep, sailors who supposed that travellers were prone to gratify their animal appetites in rough weather on the public deck, lying waiting women ready to repay charity and kindness with treachery that brought in more substantial remuneration, chambermaids at common inns, pimps, and lechers of either sex “ whose prurient glances could penetrate through the keyholes of rooms where the rat shared with the bug the silence of the deserted place—these were,” says Brougham, “ the performers whose exploits the Commissioners chronicled, whose narratives they collected, and whose exhibition upon the great stage of

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the first tribunal of all the earth they sedulously and zealously prepared by frequent rehearsal."

It is only fair to Sir John Leach to say that he did not personally go to Italy and take an active part in the immediate dirty work of bribery and subornation that was the chief duty of the Milan Commissioners. This was done by Colonel Browne, the former employé of Ompteda, and an Italian attorney named Vimercati.

The Commission investigated nothing and discovered nothing. It took over the Ompteda options on the witnesses already collected, and arranged the pensions and bribes to be paid to these wretched creatures until their services could be made use of. Heavy fees were promised to them, and in some cases, as early as 1818, they were given a pension and employment, which continued for two years until they were brought to England. The procedure seems to have been to give them a handsome and continuous dole by way of retainer, coupled with the promise of a big lump sum when they had safely delivered the goods.

It was probably to young Page Wood that Brougham was indebted for much of the material which enabled him to unmask the gross perjury and subornation that were the fruits of the Milan Commission. But much of what he discovered could not be used in the House of Lords owing to the technical rules of evidence, and the scope of work and instructions of Ompteda were only guessed at, the secret of his employment by Ministers being carefully guarded.

When Page Wood arrived with the Queen in England he had no intention of returning to the Continent. He had been away from home for some time and wished to visit his friends. Among others, the Duchess of Kent sent for him to inquire about her son, who had been his companion in Switzerland, and he had the honour of being introduced to the Princess Victoria, then a year old, and was allowed to kiss her hand. Years afterwards he kissed hands again, when she gave him the Great Seal.

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Whilst he was in London he saw a good deal of Queen Caroline and she was interested in him, as she was in all young people, and invited him to join Chevalier Vassali and Mr. Henry, who had been a judge in Demerara, on the Continent, and interview witnesses who would give evidence for her. He at once offered his services as interpreter until a regular interpreter could be sent out, and he stayed from July to October in Italy visiting Milan, Vienna, Venice, Trieste, Ravenna, Pesaro and Rome, collecting material about the nature of the witnesses in the pay of the Milan Commission. Considering the time at their disposal it is wonderful how much these gentlemen learned to the discredit of the Crown witnesses, and they collected many depositions of faithful servants of the Queen, whose honesty had been proof against the English money bags and the lavish offers of Colonel Browne and Vimercati.

At Pesaro, Page Wood spent some time with Pergami and also with Marquis Antaldi and the Ercolanis of Bologna, families of as great honour and respectability as any in England. Everywhere he found that Caroline was highly esteemed as a generous and pleasant neighbour and one against whose right conduct no word could be fairly spoken. She lived at Pesaro for at least two years and was regarded there by rich and poor much as she had been at Montagu House, Blackheath, in earlier days.

In 1863 Mr. Foss, the author of *Judges of England*, asked Vice-Chancellor Wood, as he then was, to write an autobiographical account of his career. In this he sets down his still enduring belief, that from the evidence he obtained in Italy, as well as that actually given in the House of Lords, and from his own observation of Caroline, with whose friendship he was honoured until her death, and from whom he received many letters, he was satisfied of her innocence of the crimes laid to her charge.

“She was,” he writes, “very careless of appearances, or even may be said to have courted observation, as in

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the famous instance when it was alleged that William Austin was her son. She was devotedly attached and most warm in her kindness to all young people ; but all I saw satisfied me that she was not guilty of anything beyond imprudence."

He speaks with indignation of the shameful manner in which the prosecution was conducted, and gives instances of the way in which the Queen's witnesses were threatened and hindered by the Austrian Government and the King's witnesses were speeded on their way to England.

Among the Vizard papers are a great many letters showing the lavish way bribes were offered to Italian servants of the Queen to give evidence against her. Rastelli was an active agent hunting people up and taking them to Vimercati, the lawyer, and so was a man who calls himself Gaetano Sachi, not perhaps the Guiseppe Sacchi who was called as a witness, but a man of equally bad character dismissed at some time from the Queen's service. Some letters were obtained, written to his wife in Milan by this rascal Sachi, from Vienna, where he was living on the perjury dole under Austrian protection. On December 25th, 1818, Sachi writes to Signora Sachi, hoping she is receiving the same pension as Majocchi's wife, who has two francs a day. On February 22nd, 1819, he tells his wife : " I shall return to Milan very happy, and in the future we may not be obliged to work. So that we shall pass our days happy, and after that I shall be satisfied to die and leave you happy and comfortable." And that his dear wife may be assured he is thriving, he says " that the waistcoats I had at Milan are all too small and I have a double chin." He sends his spouse two sequins, and among other things she is to buy a wax taper of six ounces, to be lighted at the shrine of his protecting saint, and to have Masses said, and to buy a pigeon and some wine to drink his health. He fears it will be a long time ere he can return, but " we must have patience because it is for our welfare." The Major (probably Colonel Browne)

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has written "to increase a florin a day, so that we are now well off."

On April 10th, 1819, he sends more money for Masses, but only suggests a three-ounce candle for his protectress. He says: "I have spent for myself more than 150 florins because I wish to make a good appearance." His wife is evidently suspicious about him, and he assures her, "with regard to what you write to me that I shall never return, you are foolish, and you ought to know that we are warranted by the government." This must mean the Austrian Government, I think, with whom Lord Charles Stewart, our ambassador, was working. "Be easy," he continues, "and know that in a short time I leave, and I will write where you ought to answer me."

Later on he writes that he has been ill and that Negri, one of his companions, is a rogue. There is a letter from Negri to Gaetano's wife saying that her husband "does now worse than he did when he was in the service of the Princess," and is wasting his "good fortune here at Vienna" with disreputable women, and "has become a great blasphemer against the Holy religion," and drives about in hackney coaches all day. Certainly there was no money for Masses, and not even a three-ounce candle was ordered in Sachi's last letter to his wife.

There are letters of witnesses who wrote to the Queen that they had refused bribes. They were all to the same effect, namely, that if they would testify against the Princess their fortunes would be made. Angelo Dragoni, in October, 1819, the Princess's former *Homme d'Affaires*, writes that he has been offered £4,000 "to engage me in the number of the rascally party that is against your Royal Highness."

Of course, these letters were not evidence, and Gaetano Sachi was not called. But what huge sums of money must have been poured out and promised to this herd of rascally pensioners collected in Vienna, only two or three of whom did the King's advocates dare to put into

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the witness-box, though a large number were brought to England and kept here at the public expense during the proceedings in the House of Lords.

While Page Wood was away on his mission the country was in a state of the greatest excitement at the return of the Queen. The King's friends continued their slanders, but the great body of the people welcomed her back to the country, firmly believing in her innocence and desiring that justice should be shown to her. At the same time many moderate and sensible people hoped that some arrangement could be arrived at in the interests of the country which would make it unnecessary to have any public proceedings of the nature of a trial. What the country wanted at the moment was peace and quiet.

The attitude of even those who did not believe her innocent was this : " Suppose all to be true which her enemies allege—we care not ; she was ill-used ; she was persecuted ; she was turned out of her husband's house ; she was denied the rights of a wife as well as of a mother ; she was condemned to live the life of the widow and the childless, that he who should have been her comforter might live the life of an adulterous libertine ; and she shall not be trampled down and destroyed to satiate his vengeance or humour his caprice."

As Sir Francis Burdett said in the House of Commons : " He believed the Green Bag to be as false as it was filthy," and at the conclusion of his speech he assured the House that any investigation of its contents would be " fruitless, even for the purpose of those for whom it might be instituted. If Her Majesty was as deeply dyed in guilt as her bitterest enemies asserted, the people out of doors, if she were convicted on Green Bag information, would believe her to be white as snow." This peroration was received with loud and tumultuous cheers.

Caroline meanwhile showed herself reasonable and sensible enough, and though no doubt Alderman Wood advised her against any parley, both Brougham and Denman

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persuaded her, very reluctantly it is true, to agree to some further negotiation, which took place between them, as her legal advisers, and Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington. The Queen insisted that any agreement put before her must contain a full recognition of her royal status as Queen, a promise of her proper introduction to foreign courts if she travelled, and the restoration of her name in the Liturgy. As to money and emoluments, she was ready as heretofore to accept what Parliament thought right. It was over the point about the Liturgy, which had been devised by the King personally, with the sanction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that these negotiations broke down. The ministers had suggested that the Liturgy omission was no matter, since the Queen was included in the general prayer for the Royal Family. To this Denman wittily demurred, saying in the House, "that if Her Majesty was included in any general supplication, it was in the prayer for all that are desolate and oppressed." To the Queen as well as to the King the matter was one of substance, and Castlereagh and the Duke could not persuade the King to move. As Castlereagh said to Denman : "You might as well try and move Carlton House." The Liturgy question ended the negotiations.

One of the last appearances of the good William Wilberforce in the House of Commons was on Thursday, June 22nd, when he moved the House to address the Queen, asking her not to insist on the restoration of her name in the Prayer Book. This he did for public peace, as personally he approved of her attitude. His motion was made merely in the national interests, as the King's treatment of Caroline was raising great anger among the people. It was carried by a majority of 267.

Brougham and Denman thought it best they should not present the address, and Wilberforce and three other members were appointed to carry it to the Queen. There was intense excitement in London when this news became known.

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But before coming to a final decision on a matter of this importance, Caroline listened to her advisers but reserved her judgment. No one knew beforehand what her decision was going to be on this occasion or how she would receive the House of Commons address, or what answer she would make to it.

On Saturday, June 24th, 1820, the deputation waited upon her at Alderman Wood's house in Portman Street at one o'clock, and before that hour the whole of Portman Street was filled from the square to Oxford Street. There were many carriages with ladies and noblemen and gentlemen on horseback, mingling in a huge crowd of London citizens eager to hear her answer. The whole country was waiting with anxiety to learn what she would do.

That Brougham advised her to consent is probable, just as it is certain that Alderman Wood strongly urged her to refuse. Cobbett wrote her letters urging her "not to be induced to accept any compromise," and assuring her of popular support if she rejected the address. That was true, no doubt, but what could the people do in a struggle with Swellfoot the Tyrant?

Wilberforce, when the address was first mooted, received a warm expostulatory note from the Queen. Then, he says, Brougham wrote on the Queen's behalf, "She will accede to your Address, I pledge myself." He had not the least right to do so, and he seems to have been grateful to Wilberforce afterward for not giving him away, saying it was "a political forbearance which I never knew equalled." Forbearance was not Brougham's long suit and he doubtless envied the possession of it in the hand of a colleague.

But Denman puts it beyond doubt that no one knew on the Saturday morning what the Queen was going to do. He himself took the view that the Queen should reject the offer of mediation. In his view the manly course for the House of Commons would have been for them to have addressed not the Queen but the King, and in a firm but earnest and respectful prayer, asked that



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he would rescind the Order in Council for expunging the Queen's name from the Liturgy.

As Brougham and Denman drove to Portman Street the latter says they discussed the situation, each hoping that his view would prevail. "We found the Queen, however, determined to decline the mediation. She had prepared a written answer to that effect, composed, I believe, by a Miss Grimiani, who was much with her. It did not appear to us quite proper in point of style, and each of us produced one which we had prepared according to our respective calculations, Brougham's acquiescing, mine rejecting. From these we framed that which was delivered and which I was in the act of writing out when the deputation arrived."

I have traced this matter out with some care, for so many writers portray Caroline as an irresponsible woman swayed by this adviser or the other ; whereas it seems to me that in all the important affairs of her life, as far as her environment would allow her, she had a strong regal instinct for having her own way, and a capacity for decision which many judges and statesmen might envy.

From the first the popular verdict was against the interference of the House of Commons. The people had expected and hoped that the House would be as ready to champion the cause of the Queen, as it was feared the House of Lords would be prepared to bow to the will of the King. His Majesty and his brothers and friends had canvassed the House, as they did when the Seymour case was before the Lords, and York and Clarence had made up their mind to sit and vote as their brother wished. The Duke of Sussex, with a better sense of what was right and reasonable, asked leave of the House to absent himself on the ground of consanguinity.

When his letter was read his brother York growled out in a surly tone : "*I have much stronger ground for asking leave of absence than the Duke of Sussex, and yet I should be ashamed not to be present and do my duty.*"

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When the House was called upon to reply to the request of the Duke of Sussex, the House granted it without a dissentient voice. "Pretty well, this, for the Duke of York's observation!" says Mr. Creevey, but the Duke of York paid no heed to the silent hint of his peers. He and Clarence were there as two solid votes for the King.

The people therefore looked to the House of Commons to show their intention of supporting the Queen, and when Wilberforce and his colleagues in full Court dress drove up to Alderman Wood's house they were received with loud shouts of "No address!" They passed in, however, and were received in state by Her Majesty, attended by Lady Anne Hamilton, with Brougham and Denman in full robes. Mr. Brougham formally introduced the members to the Queen and they knelt and kissed Her Majesty's hand. Mr. Wilberforce then read to the Queen the resolution of the House, upon which the Queen handed to Mr. Brougham her reply, which he read. The members then made obeisance and retired. Brougham attended the deputation to the door to assure them that the mob should treat them civilly. They drove away in safety, and when the people understood that their mission had been unsuccessful and the Queen refused to surrender her rights there were loud huzzas and applause and calls for the Queen.

The deputation returned and reported their failure to the House, which sat on Saturday specially to receive them, and it was now clear to everyone that the Bill would proceed, unless the King could be persuaded to forgo his efforts to divorce his Queen and to make her hateful in the eyes of the world by publishing the slanders his agents had collected in Italy.

It must not be supposed that Lord Liverpool and the King's ministers and lawyers had not made strenuous efforts to bring the King to reason. Short of resigning office, they had really worked hard to explain to His Majesty the folly and injustice of his actions. They were

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all of opinion that a Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen, founded on the purchased evidence they had seen, was hardly likely to pass the House of Lords, and could scarcely hope to survive in the Commons.

Brougham told the ministers in the House of Commons that they might safely refuse to carry the Bill through, because if the King should venture to dismiss them, as he threatened to do, he would have to take them back again, since the Whigs would not take office on the only terms the King would insist upon—the persecution of his wife. Perhaps Lord Liverpool was not so certain of Brougham's sincerity. Perhaps he feared the shadow of political death. Perhaps he merely preferred place to right action. But there was one minister who worked with heart and soul to save his friends from disgrace, and when he failed went forth into the wilderness and denied himself the light of the King's countenance that he might possess his soul in peace. This was George Canning.

As early as February, 1820, the King endeavoured to get from the ministers and law officers their opinion of the Green Bag of evidence obtained by the Milan Commission. He seems to have been under the impression that he could prosecute Caroline for high treason or alternatively and preferably proceed against her for a divorce. Canning was one of the ministers. They told the King very directly that a proceeding for high treason was "out of the question." As to divorce proceedings, they were equally impossible without first proceeding in the Ecclesiastical Court, and without a record of a verdict of damages in a court of common law, since "Divorce bills rest, therefore, upon some previous judicial decision." In spite of this ruling they did, as we shall see, attempt to obtain for the King a divorce by illegal and unconstitutional methods.

But they did explain to His Majesty in very clear terms that "any private individual circumstanced in his domestic relations as your Majesty has been, with respect

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to the Princess, as to separation, correspondence and other particulars, could not expect to obtain a divorce according to the established usage of Parliament."

Shortly they meant to tell the King that as he was a notorious adulterer, the law of England and its Courts and Parliament could not, according to our Constitution and laws, give him what he wanted.

Canning concurred in this long minute but he would not agree to removing the Queen's name from the Liturgy, if there was any contemplation of any penal process following. He based his opinion on the sound ground that "the person to be accused could not without injustice have been divested before trial of any of the privileges of her present situation." The King received the minute with "some surprise," and much regret. The law officers and ministers repeated their advice, and Canning offered his resignation. The King and Lord Liverpool begged him not to resign at such a crisis. As late as July 5th, Canning wrote to Lord Liverpool, "as a bystander and *amicus curiæ*," pointing out the folly of including a divorce in the Bill of Penalties against the Queen. It was illegal, "it will change the nature of the proceeding from national to personal," and once the case was made a personal one of *King v. Queen*, "I doubt," he said, "whether even in the House of Lords you can defend the Bill successfully ; but in the House of Commons I am confident you cannot."

The Government were obdurate, though Canning's forecast of what must happen if they proceeded with their unconstitutional plans proved true. In August, Canning, somewhat after the manner of Pilate, washed his hands of the whole affair and retired abroad. He wished to resign then and there, but at his friends' earnest request, and the King's command, he did not openly desert the ministry at the moment.

All attempts at compromise were now at an end. The exclusion of her name from the Liturgy was from the

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first the point which Caroline absolutely refused to agree to. The King showed some cleverness and knowledge of her character when he insisted upon this insult and degradation of his wife. It was a cynical but clever move, too, to declare that it was a matter of import to the State, which his royal duty could not permit him to abrogate. He had succeeded in goading Caroline into a position where her only hope of safety was defiance, and, despite the anxiety of his advisers and the detestation of all honest people at his conduct, the man rejoiced among his panders and paramours that at last he was going to ruin the peace and honour of his wife.

## Chapter XVIII : *The Bill of Pains and Penalties*

“ In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence’s gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft ’tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law.”

*Hamlet*, III, 3.

ON Wednesday, July 5th, 1820, Lord Liverpool introduced his Bill of Pains and Penalties, which was an Act with two objects: To deprive Her Majesty of her rights and Privileges as Queen Consort, and to dissolve the marriage between His Majesty and Caroline.

The proceedings that took place in the House of Lords are matters of general history. They are often referred to as the Trial of Queen Caroline. They were not a trial in any legal sense, nor, indeed, was Caroline charged with any criminal offence. The House of Lords was not a court of morals. The friends of the Duke of York, in the affair of Mary Anne Clarke, had recently saved His Royal Highness in the House of Commons from public disgrace by enforcing that doctrine. The Bill was wholly unconstitutional and illegal, and the law officers of the Crown had hinted as much.

As early as January 17th, 1820, twelve days before the death of George III, Sir Christopher Robinson, the King’s Advocate, a great ecclesiastical lawyer, Robert Gifford, the Attorney-General, and John Singleton Copley (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst), Solicitor-General, had given the Prince Regent a reasoned opinion of the legal position of Caroline, assuming the evidence of the Milan Commission to be worthy of belief. The opinion is fairly expressed ; but the fact that it was obtained shows that

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now the King was dying the Regent was already preparing the destruction of his wife. The original of this careful opinion is in the Record Office.

With regard to high treason, Caroline had clearly not committed high treason. Under 25 Edward III. stat. 5, cap. 2, it was high treason for a subject to violate the person of the wife of the King's son. But this statute could not apply to Pergami, who was an alien. Therefore, "as the act of violation be not treason in him, it seems to follow that her abetting that act will not be treason in her."

They seem to consider, therefore, that it would be wrong to propose a Bill of Attainder which would inflict Pains and Penalties for an act which was not treasonable under the law of England.

They then consider the possibility of a private suit for divorce. This, of course, was impossible because of the notorious character of the Regent, which, if the ordinary law prevailed, disentitled him to divorce.

But they further consider that, this being a public matter, Parliament might be invited to pass a bill of divorce without the preliminary steps of obtaining a verdict in an action of *crim. con.*

It seems to me, reading this opinion and looking at the facts alleged against Caroline, that even if they were true, her husband, owing to his own misconduct, had no remedy open to him known to the law. At the same time, I believe if Parliament and the country could have been satisfied that the allegations against her were true, they would have made a precedent and passed an Act for Divorce as these lawyers suggested.

However, Lord Liverpool's Bill was twofold. It asked for Pains and Penalties for immorality and also for divorce. This duplication of irregular remedies proved disastrous. A plaintiff can never win an action if he asks his advocate to fight a collection of bad points. One bad point may be carried through if it is fought with

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earnestness before a sympathetic tribunal. The lawyers were right in suggesting that the Regent should try a divorce bill and nothing else.

Now, with regard to the evidence in the Green Bag, I agree that if anyone chooses to believe in Majocchi, Louise Demont, Rastelli and the rest of the discharged servants whose purchased testimony was placed before the House of Lords, there is no gainsaying his right to do so. Once you bring a mass of evidence of this character before a court and publish it, it will be read casually by many well-meaning folk, who will readily accept it if only for the enjoyment that their minds have received from its perusal. There are good people who still believe that Arthur Orton, the claimant, was Roger Tichborne. If Pigott had not unfortunately undergone cross-examination, and then destroyed himself, he would probably still be a holy name in Unionist circles. Even that grave and honest advocate, Sir Richard Webster, seemed to part with the ruffian with an accent of regret. For, when political passions are aroused in courts of justice, the best of us take sides with the witnesses who promise to help the cause we have at heart. Only this could account for Sir Richard Webster and his clients accepting and putting forward Pigott as a witness of truth. The same may certainly be said of the law officers of George IV, in calling Majocchi and Louise Demont in their proceedings against Caroline. It was politically necessary, as the King insisted on it being done ; he himself was only too ready to use perjury to injure his wife, as had been conclusively proved in the Charlotte Douglas affair.

In no case can the votes of the tribunal condemning Caroline influence a reasonable man. As a jury the Government supporters were a packed jury. They could nearly all of them have been challenged for favour, and few would have denied that they had long ago accepted the slanders that the King and his friends had for years spread abroad about the defendant. I agree that hatred of



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George IV and his ways would invite others to vote for Caroline. The fact is, the decision, on any issue in the case, was bound to be worthless unless it was practically unanimous. That is what his lawyers and ministers had laboured in vain to drive into the head of their fatuous master. Unless, they said, you can produce one witness of credit, who can give a rational account, proving beyond doubt the adultery of the Queen, all these hired assassins of her character, who have lived on her bounty, eaten her bread, and been discharged for misconduct, prove too much. Their foul reiteration of continued misconduct of which they were the only eye witnesses, has an artificial appearance, and, uncorroborated by persons of credit, is to the unbiased mind of little worth. Still, there it is for anyone to credit who chooses to do so.

The reader of modern novels would find nothing new or disconcerting about the filthy stories of the foreign perjurers. To the layman there can be no honest pleasure in wading through the two thousand crowded pages of Nightingale's report of the "trial." But a law student will find there several smart rallies of counsel over disputed points in the law of evidence, which are well worthy his attention ; the speeches of the counsel are good—Brougham's, in a way, a masterpiece—and the cross-examination of Louise Demont, by Williams, is an impressive lesson in that elusive branch of the craft of advocacy. Otherwise, even from the professional point of view, the reading of the case can only be described as a fetid and unenlightening *post-mortem*.

I have not myself drawn any information about the story of Caroline from her trial. All it amounts to is that, the plaintiff having failed to prove his case, the defendant was entitled to a verdict. I like Thackeray's sentimental, but not unreasonable, summing up in the matter : "As I read her trial in history," he writes, "I vote she is not guilty. I don't say it is an impartial verdict ; but as one reads her story the heart bleeds for the kindly,

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generous, outraged creature. If wrong there be, let it lie at his door who wickedly thrust her from it."

But this verdict is not sufficient for me, because I believe her to be innocent of the charge made against her, and even if I had my doubts, or disbelieved in her innocence, I should strive to remember, what few of the King's friends seem to do, that he did not dare to try her on any charge known to the law, or before any Court of Justice. He chose his tribunal, his method of proceeding failed to achieve success, and he withdrew in the middle of the proceedings to hinder his victim obtaining an absolute acquittal.

Viewed as a gladiatorial contest of lawyers, the affair in the House of Lords has its moments, though it is not the real thing, and has no more right to be called a trial than the hunting of a tame stag turned out of a cart among a rabble of Cockneys is entitled to be called sport. Still, Brougham was at his best. He was never a great verdict-getter, nor had he in this case a jury worth addressing. But he could bully the peers and frighten the King's friends, and what was to be done in this way he did with judgment, pluck and keen enjoyment. The teams were : For the Plaintiff—but who was the Plaintiff? No one knew ! Brougham declared it was the King in person. The Ministers were shy of accepting responsibility for the prosecution, but were ready to sit on the jury and vote for the Plaintiff. The counsel, for this nebulous Plaintiff, were Gifford and Copley, Attorney and Solicitor-General, James Parke, afterwards Lord Wensleydale, Sir Christopher Robinson, and Dr. Adams. For the Queen : Brougham, Denman, "Johnny" Williams, a friend of Denman, Tindal, afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Dr. Lushington, and Wilde. The last-named was Alderman Wood's suggestion. Wilde had been an attorney and was called to the Bar, and by hard work and push had made a great practice. He was of less than four years' standing, and both Denman and

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Brougham were disgusted when they were informed that the Queen of her own motion had retained Mr. Wilde. Caroline distrusted Brougham, not without reason. She wanted a counsel who believed in the truth of her case, and in Wilde she found such a man. Brougham and Denman had to admit that he was invaluable, and, before the case was over, used to tease their opponents by declaring that "their sixth man could walk round the counsel for the Bill." The Queen reposed every confidence in him, and owed much to his zeal and energy. She made him one of her executors. Though Wilde was looked down upon by the great aristocrats of the Bar, as having not yet freed himself from the attorney taint that offended their nostrils, yet, when he got to work among them, they were soon compelled to acknowledge the presence of a master. But Caroline in her loneliness leaned upon him, and felt, as clients do with some counsel, that in his hands, come what might, she was safe. For, as Mr. Atlay says in his "Life of Lord Truro," in *The Victorian Chancellors* : "He had the genuine gift of absorbing himself heart and soul in the affairs of those who retained him, of believing absolutely in the justice of their cause. On their behalf no drudgery was too great, no labour too exacting ; and there could be no mistake as to the eagerness, the anxiety, with which he watched every vicissitude of the cause. The client whose life, whose fortune, whose hope of happiness were at stake felt that every pang which racked him was shared by his advocate."

Among the Vizard Papers there is the letter of Lady Anne Hamilton to Mr. Vizard, of July 7th, commanding him to retain Mr. Wilde. From a draft of a letter in reply, of the same date—which I have printed in the Appendix—it appears that Her Majesty had also commanded her solicitor to retain Serjeant Lens and Mr. Scarlett.

Scarlett at that time was a senior and more important advocate than Brougham, having been called in 1791

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and taken silk in 1816. Moreover, he was always a better verdict-getter than Brougham. Tindal, who was Brougham's master in the law, as the greater man had read in his chambers, and who as a member of the Northern Circuit knew Scarlett's abilities, used to say that Scarlett had contrived a machine by the use of which he could make the judges nod their heads at his pleasure, but that Brougham got hold of it and, not knowing how to manage it, made the judges shake their heads instead of nodding them. Queen Caroline's idea of retaining Scarlett was not wanting in good sense.

Serjeant Lens, too, was a man of great eminence, and was the doyen of the English Bar, having been called in 1781. He had a great practice and was a man of sterling independence, so that at circuit dinners and lawyers' feasts a popular toast was : " Serjeant Lens and the independence of the Bar." If these eminent leaders had accepted the retainers that Vizard offered them, Brougham would for all practical purposes have been superseded. It is possible, of course, that their long experience and weighty influence might have had a greater effect on the Lords than the shock tactics of the younger man.

They were both " Queen's friends," and Scarlett upheld her cause in the House of Commons. The Serjeant asked to be excused on the ground that the King had offered him a retainer to appear for him, and this he had already refused on the ground of ill-health and domestic afflictions. His wife had died but three weeks ago. Scarlett's difficulty was that as King's Counsel he would have to ask and obtain a licence from the King to appear for the Queen. Furthermore, as a member of the House of Commons he doubted whether he ought to appear as counsel against any Bill at the Bar of the House of Lords. He asked, however, for a few days to consider the matter, but ultimately refused the retainer.

When the Queen heard of these refusals it appears that she was unwilling to appear at the House of Lords

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at all, and asked her solicitor to take her counsel's opinion as to whether it would not be advisable to let judgment go, as she expected it would go in the Lords, against her, and then make her appearance in the Commons.

There is a very sensible opinion among the Vizard Papers, adverse to this suggestion, by Brougham, William and Tindal, which I have also printed in the Appendix. The chief legal reason against such a course was that "the declining to appear at the bar of that House, where only the witnesses on the part of the accuser and the accused can be examined under the sanction of an oath, and the appealing to that House, where no such sanction can be had recourse to," would certainly prejudice Her Majesty's case.

This opinion was only given on July 20th and is dated from York, from which it appears that these negotiations for new counsel had been going on in Brougham's absence on circuit, and indeed he may never have heard of them. There is no doubt that at first Caroline had no more trust in Brougham than he had faith in her case. She is reported to have said that if her head was placed on Temple Bar it would be Brougham's fault. He had played a double part with her. According to Croker, the talk of Brooks's was that he had "acted most basely by her." Without concurring in their verdict, I think that in the circumstances Caroline had good excuse for treating him with suspicion. It was not at all unreasonable that she should attempt to retain the best and most experienced advocates at the Bar. It is often said that she was ungrateful to Brougham. But his services though valuable were strictly professional and not sympathetic. I am inclined to agree that the Queen was quite incapable—most clients are—of understanding the skill and power of her leader's advocacy. She much preferred the cadences of Denman's periods. But what evoked her woman's gratitude were the faith, loving-kindness and energy of

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both Dr. Lushington and Wilde, to whom she was deeply grateful unto the last.

It was strange that the proceedings taken to destroy her should have been presided over by Caroline's old friend Lord Eldon, but he had just been made Lord Chancellor for the third time "by the son of my greatest benefactor, who certainly has behaved with great kindness to me, though he had been taught heretofore to hate me." George IV knew "Old Bags," his familiar nickname for Eldon, in and out. It was important to him to have as Lord Chancellor the one living lawyer who knew the whole story of the Delicate Investigation, and the way in which Caroline had been persecuted there. Obviously he might have been a very powerful opponent, if he were left in the cold when the King formed the first Ministry of his reign. "Old Bags," with the bone of the Chancellorship snatched from him, would have found his teeth, and probably heard his conscience urging him to use them in the cause of justice to Caroline. But he had already made sacrifices to retain his job. He had concurred in the removal of the Queen's name from the Liturgy and swallowed the Divorce Bill. And though he was under no delusion about the unwisdom of the Bill of Pains and Penalties, he had agreed to see it through. As a matter of law he had always contended that the King could never have a divorce, and was of opinion that if recrimination was introduced by Brougham he would have difficulty in ruling it out of order. He discusses with his brother, Sir William Scott, various subterfuges to get rid of the difficulty. The best way out, he thinks, is to hold that the King was not the real Plaintiff. But then the King had sent down the Green Bag. It was very perplexing. But anyhow he was Lord Chancellor for the third time and must do his best. And throughout the course of the trial he was always ready to harangue the Lords on delicacy, mercy, judgment, law, morals, precedents, purity, adultery, divorce and state necessity.

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“And how I loved the Queen! and then I wept,  
With the pathos of my own eloquence,  
And every tear turned to a millstone.”

In the preliminary skirmishes about procedure, he played the rôle of party man with much vigour, making a peculiarly unrighteous speech against Erskine's motion that the Queen should have a list of witnesses and a proper specification of the charges against her. This was bad tactics, as well as a violation of the principles of English justice, for the man in the street believed, not unnaturally, that the Plaintiff, whoever he might be, feared that if the Queen knew the details of the charges against her she could easily disprove them.

Eldon's actual demeanour during the witness part of the proceedings, which is popularly called “the trial,” was dignified and outwardly impartial. After all he was Lord Chancellor, he had a judicial reputation to maintain, and what is more, he had the eye of Brougham upon him. Caroline never understood—how should she?—how much the King, the peers, and even the Lord Chancellor, feared Brougham. Even if Eldon had wished, and no one can suppose he did wish, to treat Caroline as Jeffreys treated Alice Lisle, or to depart from the judicial traditions of his office in any arbitrary way, he would not have dared to do so with Brougham ready to spring at him if he made a false step.

This was the situation at the beginning of August, when the opening of the case was fixed for the 17th. Caroline was still by no means content with Brougham and was certainly not going to be directed by him in her movements. He, on his part, was going to do his best to serve her, and was too eager for the applause and political power, that he could attain by championing her cause, to allow himself to break with such a critical and uneasy client. I doubt if he knew she had been trying to put leading counsel into the case, over his head, and certainly he was not a party to her writing a long

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letter to the King on August 7th, ten days before the trial.

In this letter she sets out the story of the persecution she and her daughter suffered at the hands of husband, father and King. She refers to the cruel position she was placed in by the Douglas case. Restrained from accusing her foes, out of regard to the character of the father of her beloved child, shunned by those who were her natural associates, living in obscurity where she was entitled to splendour, and accepting all this without complaint, she was, by way of final insult and humiliation, parted from her daughter.

She then enters her protest against a trial by Parliament, before packed benches of the King's friends, decries the injustice of refusing her the names of witnesses and details of the charges made. "No innocence," she writes, "can secure the accused if the judges and jurors are chosen by the accuser, and if I were tacitly to submit to a Tribunal of this description I should be instrumental in my own dishonour."

It is not a plea for mercy but a statement of her wrongs. She desired to record and recall to the King's notice the story of her persecution, and how at long last, "having left me nothing but my innocence, you would now by a mockery of justice, deprive me even of the reputation of possessing that. But since you would send me dishonoured to the grave I will resist the attempt with all the means that it shall please God to give me."

The letter was sent to the King, returned unopened, then sent to Lord Liverpool but received no reply, and though it was printed by Hone later in the year, does not seem, to my mind, to have received sufficient attention. I do not think Brougham knew of it, at the time it was written, but a draft of it was probably shown to him in October and is referred to by Creevey on October 12th, when he writes that Brougham "means, too, that the Queen shall bring down a statement of all her sufferings



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and of everything relating to the Royal Family from her arrival in England. It is now copying and she is to come down and deliver it to the Chancellor to be read before the Bill passes. Brougham says everything that has happened yet is absolutely nothing in effect compared with what this statement will do." It is certainly a clear narrative of her wrongs but it was never read in Court.

Why the idea was abandoned we do not know, but the letter which is printed in Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool* is a better statement of the Queen's real case against the Bill than any of the able speeches made by her counsel. Not that it would have had any effect on the King's majority vote, and at the date it was written and sent to the minister there could be no question of the Government withdrawing their Bill.

The carpenters and upholsterers were even then setting the scene for the show, and on August 16th, the day before the actual "trial," as we will call it for short, was to begin, Creevey came and had a look round the House of Lords and found everything was mighty convenient. The House of Commons had admission to the steps of the throne, "there is a fine chair for the Queen within the bar to be near her counsel and the two galleries." Two hundred and fifty peers are to attend, sixty being excused from age, infirmities, being abroad, or professing the Catholic faith. Bernard Howard, Duke of Norfolk, writing to Creevey about the Bill, asks: "Is there any atrocity the Lords are not ready to vote for? For my own part, if they do pass this horrible Bill, I shall no longer consider it a disgrace or a hardship to be excluded from a seat in their house; but on the contrary rejoice that I have not been implicated in so foul a crime."

Creevey heard that the Government were "stark, staring mad," at least so Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt told him, for they wanted to prevent him as Black Rod "from receiving the Queen to-morrow at the door as Queen, but that he will." From the first the King wanted to treat his

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wife as a culprit and the result of the votes he had been promised in the Lords as a *chose jugée*.

However, on the morning of August 17th, when the Queen arrived she was met by Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt and Mr. Brougham and escorted to a drawing-room prepared for her reception. With this she seemed gratified, and in her pleasant way said to Sir Thomas, "Here I am and here I will remain until the day of judgment."

When she entered the House, the Clerk was calling over the names of the peers, and as soon as they observed her, all the peers rose to receive her and she bowed to them as she took her seat. Throughout the proceedings the peers behaved with outward civility to the Queen. Her Majesty was attended by Lady Anne Hamilton and the Hon. Keppel Craven and Sir William Gell, both of her gentlemen appearing in full Court dress.

Gifford did not start opening his case until Friday, August 19th. It was not a very capable performance, as he was not a man who had much knowledge of foreign languages and manners, and the task of reciting the material collected by Ompteda, Colonel Browne and the rest, must have been uncongenial to any advocate, even if he could bring himself to believe in the class of stale and tainted testimony on which he was instructed to make serious charges. It is curious that all the charges seem to have ranged over the period of November, 1814, to the autumn of 1817, after which date I do not remember any evidence being adduced against Her Majesty, though it must be remembered Pergami had remained in the service of the Queen until he left her at Calais on her return to England. Also, the incidents spoken of occurred during her residence in Italy and during her really arduous and toilsome adventures in the Mediterranean, Syria and the Holy Land. If, as the prosecution alleged, Caroline was a love-sick fool in the hands of a handsome, scheming rascal, it seems unlikely that he would allow her to waste her money travelling about in discomfort to see strange

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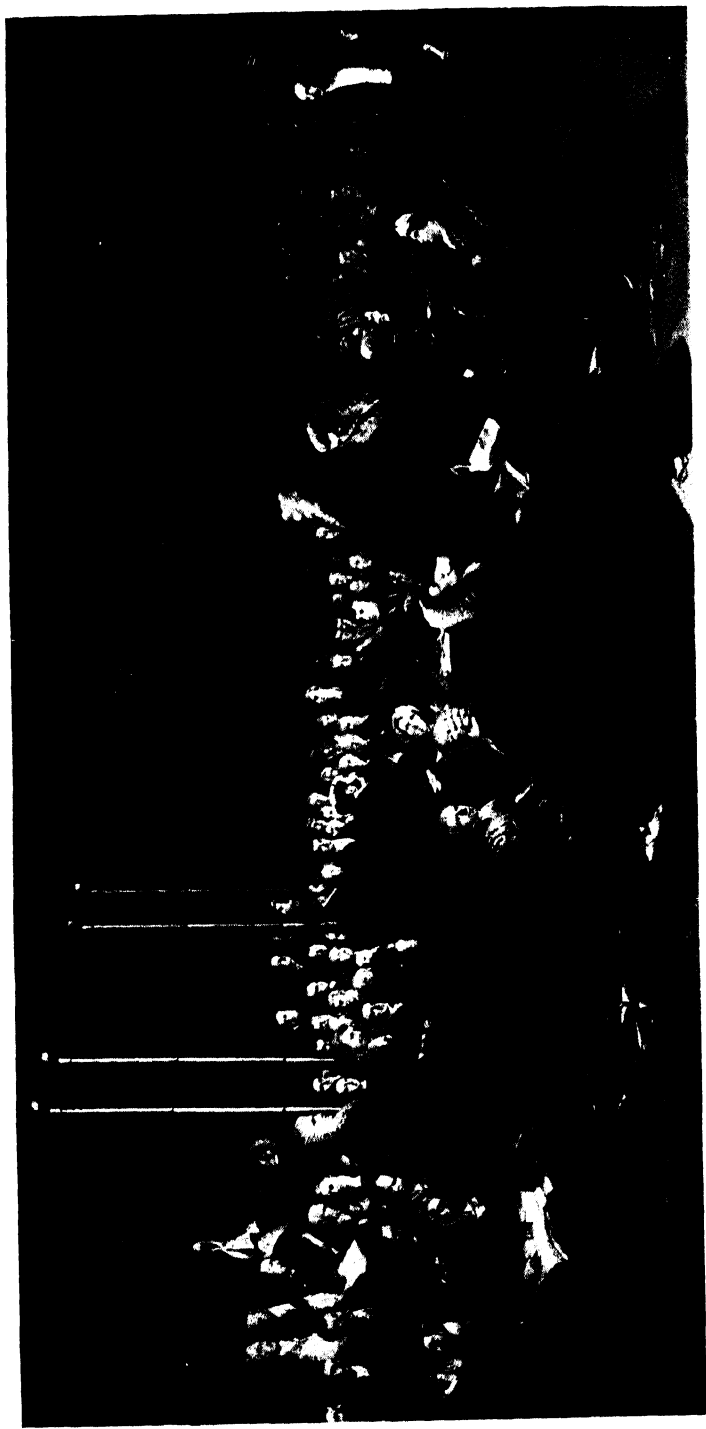
sights, or that she should desire to do so. It could not be suggested it was done for concealment, for the witnesses were always the same servants who travelled with her.

I fail to gather what the prosecution's theory was as to Caroline's conduct between 1817 and 1820. Had Caroline and Pergami soon tired of each other, and if so why did not they part? Did they continue to live together in a chaste and friendly fashion? We know that Ompteda and the Milan Commission had tried to find evidence against them after that date. Had they failed? Or is the real truth this : that Colonel Browne and his spies had found more Majocchis ready to repeat similar slanders about the last three years, but feared to make use of them, since it is so much easier to refute a perjury about something that happened yesterday, than to find evidence to contradict a circumstantial lie told about something that happened three years and more ago. However this may be, the fact remains that the King's lawyers deliberately limited their charges to acts committed between 1814, the year the Queen left England, and 1817, three years before Caroline returned ; and with equal deliberation refused their victim any notice of what the charges were.

If Theodore Majocchi could be believed, of course the case was proved. He was their star artist, and had been honoured by an introduction to His Gracious Majesty, at Carlton House, on the very day that George III was carried to his grave, so eager was the King to greet this rascal who was to rid him of his hated wife.

No doubt George accepted his story as gospel and his law officers were commanded to do likewise. But when Brougham got at him the case was altered. For in spite of having to cross-examine him through an interpreter, long before Brougham had finished with him, it was clear that he had come to tell a parrot-tale learned by rote. He would not venture away from the text of the part he





# THE TRIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE

From the oil painting in the National Portrait Gallery by Sir George Hayter, R.A.

Sir Robert Gifford, Sir J. S. Copley,

Theodore Maizechi, Spineti,

Doctor Lushington, Henry Brougham,

The Earl of Eldon, The Queen,

Earl Grey.

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had rehearsed, and if invited to do so, parrot-like called out "*Non mi ricordo !*"

Majocchi was an illiterate, stupid, ignorant man, but even clever scoundrels like Arthur Orton and Pigott, once they began to back up a simple falsehood by lying corroboration and imaginative remembrances, have fallen an easy prey to the skilful anatomist whose business in life it is to disembowel and dissect the carcasses of dead lies, that the living truth may be preserved. Sweet are the uses of cross-examination. It destroyed Majocchi and with him all chance of the Bill ever reaching the House of Commons.

Majocchi was a poor fish and gave little sport. Brougham gave him line enough and tried to tempt the liar into the open. But he was sulky, stupid, and had no memory of anything but the tale he had learned by heart. His only answer to Brougham's questions was a stolid refusal to understand the interpreter or a refuge in the parrot-cry, "*Non mi ricordo.*"

Towards the end of a long, weary endeavour to get him to relate some relevant facts other than the slanders he had detailed, Brougham, to use his own words, "felt secure, and then I poured question after question into him and got him to repeat his '*non mi ricordo*' as often as I chose."

Brougham practically finished his cross-examination of Majocchi on the third day of the trial, August 22nd, but he asked him a few final questions on the next morning, and then the peers began in their irrelevant way to put questions to him from different parts of the House.

This is the scene depicted by Sir George Hayter in his famous picture now in the National Portrait Gallery. He chose the morning when the peers intervened, as it enabled him to group the barristers, who were not actually employed, so that their faces might be seen. It is a vivid, graphic picture. Lord Grey is standing up checking Spinetti, the interpreter, Lord Falmouth leaning over the

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gallery to ask Majocchi a question, and Mr. Vizard finding a document in the Queen's chest of papers.

Sir George sat in the House and took a number of sketches, and the whole scene is accurately reproduced with the exception of the actual hall which, for the purpose of lighting and the arrangement of his characters, had to be modified artistically. Of its kind, the picture, which contains no less than 300 figures, has a real pictorial and historical interest and is a work of much care and industry. It was an excellent idea, too, that the artist chose the close of Majocchi's cross-examination, for that was a moment of triumph for the Queen.

For when Brougham sat down there was joy in the hearts of Caroline's friends, for all the King's Attorneys and Solicitors could not set the fellow on his legs again. Outside in the streets "*non mi ricordo*" was the song, and the cry, and the jest of the people. From that hour, the King's witnesses, which cost the country so many thousands of pounds, were known throughout the land as *non mi ricordos*, and had it been a case at *nisi prius* before a common jury the business was over. For Theodore Majocchi was, with the exception of Louise Demont perhaps, intended to be the most damaging witness against Caroline.

Brougham was on the verge of interesting material when he discovered that in 1817 after Majocchi left the Princess he went to Lord Stewart at Vienna, who kept him in the Embassy there, but whether as a postilion, lackey or private friend, Brougham could not get him to say. Had counsel had copies of Castlereagh's correspondence with Lord Stewart, which now lie in the Record Office, what a bomb-shell he could have dropped into the opposite camp.

And even the King's friends were ashamed of their *non mi ricordos*, who were a ragged, disreputable crowd, on whose word a discerning jury would hesitate to rely, unless there was circumstantial or reputable testimony of

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corroboration. Of the twenty-six witnesses all but four came from the south of the Alps, as Brougham reminded their Lordships, "from the country of Iago and Iachimo." Of the four remaining, Barbara Kress was a German chambermaid and Louise Demont was a Swiss; the other two were Captains Briggs and Pechell, English officers. The King's friends had boasted far and wide of the damning evidence that Leach had collected from British officers. Creevey speaks of meeting the Duke of Wellington at the Argyle Rooms, "who with his usual frankness came up to me and said, 'Well, Creevey; so you gave us a blast last night. Have you seen Leach since?' Then we talked about the approaching trial with the most perfect freedom, and upon my saying their foreign evidence would find very few believers in this country, he said: 'Ho! but we have a great many English witnesses—officers'; and this, I confess, was the thing that frightened me most."

Talk of this sort was going on all over London among the King's friends. But when the Green Bag was opened the only two English officers whose evidence was relevant were these two post-captains, who, as Mr. Atlay fairly says, "spoke only to the position of Pergami in the Princess of Wales's household, which was common ground, and to the rearrangement of the sleeping accommodation on board the *Leviathan*."

So that when they had come and gone the whole case rested on the *non mi recordos* and Louise Demont, the hirelings of Leach and Colonel Browne. A deal of time was wasted in objections to Brougham's cross-examination. The prosecution having refused to give him a list of witnesses to be called or particulars of the charges, he stood out for a right to recall witnesses and put further questions to them, and this seems to have been conceded. The efforts made by the King's friends—who, as mere lay judges, should have left the business to Eldon—to hamper the counsel for the defence by raising objections,



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and to assist the *non mi recordos* with friendly leading questions, prolonged the agony no doubt, but also gave Brougham welcome opportunities for showing his contempt for the members of the tribunal he was addressing. An amusing instance of the kind of thing that occurred was when Lord Buckingham, a friend of the King, put a question to a witness which, after three hours' discussion, had been rejected when put by Brougham. Buckingham thought the answer would damage the Queen and blurted out his question ; no one objecting, it was answered and, as Brougham had expected, the answer was entirely in the Queen's favour. Whereupon Brougham rose and said: "My Lords, I humbly request your lordships to accept my thanks for having permitted a member of your own House to put a question which only two hours ago, after great deliberation, you refused to me."

So much for Buckingham ! And so much for the House of Lords, and much triumph for *Bruffam*, who had given them a knock-down blow : but did he, by these clever interludes, gain votes for his client or merely score points for himself ?

It is said that his own view of his client's case was this : "At first he did not think it possible she *could* be innocent. But the more the case had opened the more had her innocence appeared, and now in his conscience he believed her guiltless." This is quite probable. He never knew Caroline the woman, or took any human interest in her. She was merely a troublesome client, useful to him politically ; but at the same time every client, to Brougham, was entitled to, and obtained, his best services ; for his famous principle was that it was an advocate's duty to know but one person in the world, and that person his client.

Had he been before an honest jury and an unbiased judge, it would have been poor advocacy to have treated them with the sarcasm and invective he employed towards the Lords ; but as it was, the effect of his conduct of the

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case was to frighten these hireling shepherds of the King's justice with the terror of the people's anger. From mere fear of judgment against themselves, one by one the King's friends dropped away from their allegiance ; and thus, through Brougham's advocacy, the impossibility of carrying the Bill became apparent.

In a very early passage in his speech he explained the reasons why the Princess had gone abroad, in words that must have sounded bitter to Eldon and others of those present, who, when Caroline was the beloved niece of George III, had sought and been honoured by her patronage. The charge against her, he said, was that she went to Italy and, instead of remaining in England and associating with peers and peeresses, made friends of foreigners. "Who are they," he asked, "that bring this charge? Others might blame her Majesty for going abroad—others might say that she had experienced the consequences of leaving this country and associating with foreigners, but it was not for their Lordships to make this charge. They were the very last persons who should fling this at the Queen ; for they who now presumed to sit as her judges were the very witnesses she must call to acquit her of this charge."

Then, with words which every peer in the House knew were addressed in particular to their President, Lord Eldon, in a passage of smooth narrative, he described the life of Caroline at Montagu House when Eldon, Perceval and their friends sat at her table.

"While Her Majesty," he continued, "resided in this country she courteously threw open her doors to the peers of England and their families. She graciously condescended to court their society, and as long as it suited certain purposes which were not hers—as long as she could be made subservient to the ambitious views of others—she did not court in vain. But when a change took place—when those interests were to be retained, which she had been made the instrument of grasping,

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when that lust of power and place to which she was doomed to fall a victim had been satisfied—then in vain did she open her doors to their lordships and their families ; then it was that those whom she had hitherto condescended to court—and it was no humiliation to court the first society in the world—abandoned her.”

Two considerations occur to one in reading this speech. First, that Brougham is, like many popular preachers, much in the position of Satan reproving sin. There is some truth in this ; though, as Caroline had never been more than a client to Brougham, his position was very different to Eldon’s. Secondly, you may say that reading the words of the speech you are not moved by it. That again is, I think, a very reasonable position. As Sir Fitzjames Stephen is credited with saying, eloquence of the past “ resembles nothing so much as mouldy wedding cake.”

But if you picture to yourself a House crowded from floor to galleries, listening with tense attention to each word that fell from the orator’s lips, knowing that he spoke not only his own thoughts, not merely matter to please the mob in Palace Yard, but the verdict of all the best citizens in the country, on the base way in which Caroline had been treated by the King and his subservient friends ; then you can recapture something of the anger and dismay of the majority of his hearers, and the joy in the hearts of the rest, that the truth of her cause should at last be openly spoken.

But to return to the evidence offered by the Prosecution. Majocchi, Sacchi, and Louise Demont were their star witnesses, and if Demont’s evidence could be accepted, there was, of course, a case against the Queen. Louise Demont was a Swiss and had been engaged by Lady Charlotte Bury when Caroline arrived at Geneva. She and Sacchi were dismissed in November, 1817, for misconduct.

During their travels Caroline had behaved with the greatest kindness to Louise, and when she was dismissed

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she pleaded hard to be taken back. Caroline would not do this, but she still retained her half-sister, Mariette Bron, in her service. Louise kept a manuscript journal of her travels which Mr. Gaston, the Queen's interpreter, obtained, translated and published in 1821. It is written in a sprightly way and gives a pleasant picture of Caroline's energy and interest in her adventures, and her kindness and consideration for her servants and companions. Needless to say, there is not the least hint in it of any improprieties of Pergami or the Princess.

Ompteda seems to have discovered Louise almost as soon as she was dismissed. Indeed, he may have approached her before, but now she had no home to go to, as her mother had married again, and she never took another situation, but remained in the pay of Ompteda or Colonel Browne or Mr. Powell, until the trial. She and Sacchi were among the first witnesses to arrive in England. Mr. Vizard discovered her whereabouts, and from a proof, among his papers, of her landlord, Mr. Broxholm, it appears that she arrived at his house, 23, Frith Street, Soho, on October 28th, 1819, and remained there until May, 1820. She passed under the name of Countess Colombière, but Broxholm thought her real name was Krous. She understood English well, and on occasion discussed the Queen's case, observing that the Princess was a very good woman and much injured and persecuted. She was often visited by Sacchi, a man named Krous, and Mr. Powell, the solicitor, and Mr. Broxholm, erroneously of course, imagined that as Mr. Powell provided the funds he had a personal and proprietary interest in his lady friend. She was not a mean lady, for her rent was £2 13s. od., and her weekly bill, including the rent, came to £6 or £7. Whilst she was at Frith Street she spent a deal of money on dress and bought jewels.

For three years she seems to have been in the pay of the King's agents, and it would be interesting to know what total sum this hired perjurer cost the taxpayers.

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She was not worth a cent to the prosecution when Mr. Williams had finished his cross-examination. Being much better educated, and having more native wit and imagination than that stolid ruffian Majocchi, she was able to answer back more pertly. And this was her undoing ; for, like most women witnesses with a good opinion of themselves, she was too expansive, and Williams was able to draw from her statements that could easily be shown to be untrue, so that counsel were able to contradict many of the suggestions made by this woman when they came to the defence. But the fatal thing was her admission that she had written letters to her sister in which she quoted passages from the journal she had kept. For in these letters it was discovered that she was endeavouring to get another sister into service of the woman she was now slandering, and in her letters she describes Caroline, as her friends knew her, as a charitable, good woman.

Several days were spent over this witness and Williams had a tough job to get the witness to admit her handwriting. The Attorney and Solicitor-General were continually interrupting with technical objections, and these were argued with great skill and at much length. But in the end Williams succeeds and we read how, in February, 1818, the woman who has told these foul stories of Caroline, had within a month or two of her dismissal written to her sister of her late mistress's " mildness, patience and charity," and how, when she tells her friends of the Princess and the persecution she has suffered, they " exclaim how unjust is the world to cause so much unhappiness to one who deserves it so little, and who is so worthy of being happy."

No one can reasonably believe that Louise Demont was not a suborned perjurer. And as Brougham fairly said, had she known that her letters to her sister had been preserved, and had the King's advisers known their contents, their Lordships would never have heard of her and she would have been shipped off again, as many

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other bribed witnesses had been, who were even less worthy of credit than those who were called.

On September 7th the Attorney-General, having the night before come to an end of all the evidence he had ready, and asked for an adjournment, now came forward stating that within the last half-hour he had received letters stating that the journey of the Lugano witnesses was unavoidably delayed, and that under such circumstances he should not persist in asking for time. "So," adds Mr. Creevey, "after this *infernal lie*, he said his case was closed."

Of course Mr. Attorney spoke on instructions, but it was very doubtful if, for any money, any more foreigners of the type already called were available, or thought to be worth bringing over by Mr. Powell, the King's Solicitor. The Solicitor-General now summed up and when he had finished then—as Creevey writes from the House—"Here's a breeze!" For all at once the drama becomes more popular and exciting. The continuous passing across the stage of *non mi ricordos*, interspersed with legal squabbles on the law of evidence, had become very wearisome. Lauderdale now moved that the Queen's counsel be asked to proceed, and then Lord Lonsdale said that before that question was put "it would be a great satisfaction to him and others to learn that the divorce part of the Bill was to be given up"; upon which Lord Liverpool said if it was the wish of the religious part of the House (probably a courteous reference to the Bishops) and of the community that this clause should be withdrawn, His Majesty had no personal wish in having it made a part of the Bill.

This was what caused the breeze, and Lord Liverpool's statement naturally astounded the House. Grey spoke in favour of the divorce part remaining, and Lord Donoughmore suggested that Lord Liverpool had given the King's consent without leave. This breezy debate was a matter altogether apart from the "trial." The next question in

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proceeding with the case was to inquire when and what Brougham proposed to do. Alderman Wood and the Queen wanted Brougham to go straight on with the case, but Brougham decided there must be an adjournment, and with the task of opening the Queen's defence and studying seventeen days' evidence it was obviously reasonable. So he decided, perhaps with malice towards his tribunal, to go on with the case in three weeks, on October 3rd, and, wrapping himself up in the rugs of his chaise, drove off to Brougham Castle to prepare his speech.

But the Lords were furious. It spoilt everything that made life in the autumn tolerable ; pheasant shooting, Newmarket, hunting—all would be spoilt.

But Caroline was delighted that her advocate was ready to go on so soon, and clapped her hands with joy when Brougham told her of it.

## Chapter XIX: *The Queen's Defence*

“Curb we their ardour ! Notes alone, to-day,  
The speech to-morrow and the Latin last :  
Such was the rule in Farinacci's time.”

Browning: *The Ring and the Book*, VIII, 146.

DURING the three weeks' adjournment the learned counsel went circuit to see what they could pick up. Brougham, Williams and Tindal were all on the Northern Circuit and so had opportunity of consultation together. Mr. Vizard and others of the Queen's friends kept them in touch with reports from abroad, and Denman wrote his views about the management of the case. Brougham had the highest opinion of Vizard's "honourable character and professional talents," and found him such a valuable associate in so delicate a case that "it led to my treating him as one of the counsel rather than the solicitor only." Counsel were very terrible fellows in those days, in their demeanour towards the members of the lower branch, so that Brougham's approbation of Vizard is praise indeed.

Dr. Doran seems rather shocked that Brougham, with Caroline's affairs on his mind, should find time to appear for an old lady at York Assizes who sued her neighbour for damages to her pig-sty and got a verdict of 40s. Brougham gave up all the circuit after York and returned to town in good time to be ready for October 3rd, and had certainly made himself an absolute master of the prosecutor's case against Caroline before he rose to address the House.

A trial or lawsuit is not unlike a drama ; and when the curtain falls, it is easy for the arm-chair critic to say that, if the advocate had staged it differently, the result



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would have been more successful. Brougham made one slip certainly. He pledged himself to call as a witness Louise Demont's half-sister, Mariette Bron. He never did call her, nor was it necessary he should. But as, when he rose to speak, he had not quite made up his mind whether they should call any witnesses, it was a blunder to mention Mariette.

Brougham is said to have been against calling witnesses. And had the case been a normal trial before a judge and jury that would have been the best course. The plaintiff's witnesses were shaken ; the more important ones, Majocchi, Louise Demont, Sacchi, Rastelli and the rest, had no doubt poured forth a lot of foul details, but that made it reasonably obvious that, if their evidence was true, something of this must have been observed by witnesses of reputation. Captain Pechell, who had a difference of opinion with Caroline about her arrangements on board his ship, spoke not a word against her, and Captain Briggs, who was three weeks with her on the *Leviathan*, at a time it was alleged she was insanely in love with Pergami, had no fault to find with her behaviour, so that if the Italians were speaking the truth, and her conduct was shameless, it was strange that these officers observed nothing improper whilst she and Pergami were constantly under their observation.

But the King's friends would have claimed, had she not called her witnesses, that the Queen's friends dare not say they believed in her innocence, and Caroline herself was eager her witnesses should be called. As the matter was wholly a political business, and not a trial of ascertained issues of fact, Brougham was, I think, wise in calling his witnesses, and using his sarcasm and invective for the purpose of carrying the war into the enemy's camp and frightening the King by threatening reprisals.

Mr. Atlay finds his speech "singularly unconvincing." He thinks he should have spent more time criticising the details of the evidence. I doubt it. The King's votes

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were not there to be lured from their allegiance by argument and logic. Moreover, Brougham was speaking to a larger audience outside the House. His themes were the history of the Princess, her wrongs, her persecutions, and the continuous conspiracy that the King and his agents had carried on against her peace and happiness for the last twenty years.

And within a few moments of rising to put forward the Queen's case, he gave his reasons for passing over the details of what had happened prior to 1814, and he told their Lordships in his bitterest tones that "he rejoiced that the most faithful discharge of his duty permitted him to take this course. But he could not do this without pausing for a moment to vindicate himself against an imputation, to which he might not unnaturally be exposed in consequence of the course which he pursued, and to assure their lordships that the cause of the Queen, as it appeared in evidence, did not require recrimination at present. The evidence against her Majesty, he felt, did not now call upon him to utter one whisper against the conduct of her illustrious consort, and he solemnly assured their lordships that but for that conviction his lips would not at that time be closed."

And Brougham continued by assuring them that he was only waiving his rights, and abstaining from the use of "materials which were unquestionably his own"; and if hereafter he felt it advisable to exercise his rights on behalf of his client, he would not "hesitate to resort to such a course and fearlessly perform his duty."

Now to my mind that was an argument far more likely to sink into the minds of the tribunal he was addressing, and gain the timid and the waverers to vote against the Bill, than any considerations of the weight of evidence or their duty to do justice to an injured woman. Honestly, to most of the men he was talking to, Caroline's personal interests were negligible, and as a master of tactics he

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rightly decided to put fear into their hearts and attack the prosecutor in his weakest spot.

What he intended was an open secret. If he chose to enter upon recrimination, the whole story of the ladies who had filled the place of the Princess of Wales would be pleasant reading for a new generation, and would be a defence to any legal claim for a divorce. But there was worse behind. Brougham knew of the Fitzherbert marriage and was prepared to prove it. The King had deserted the unhappy lady and still lied to his friends and denied the fact of the marriage, but Brougham said he could prove it. He had Henry Errington, her uncle, who had been present at her marriage, ready to come forward as a witness. If necessary he intended to impeach the King's title to the throne, by proving that he was married to a Roman Catholic ; and his argument would be that therefore he had, under the Act of Settlement, forfeited the crown, "as if he were naturally dead."

I am not saying that in law he would have succeeded in his contention. But if the Lords sent the Bill to the Commons, there was little doubt the point would have been raised, and the Legislature could not have balked an inquiry into the truth of the allegation of the Fitzherbert marriage and its legal effect. Now I do not agree with Mr. Atlay, for whose admirable history of the Victorian Chancellors I have the highest esteem, that such a course was one "which no view of an advocate's duty, however strained, could have justified in the eyes of posterity."

If Brougham believed, as I think he then did, and as certainly the other counsel did, in the fact of the Queen's innocence, there were no lengths, consistent with honesty, to which they should not have gone in quest of a verdict. It is often said that Brougham did not believe in her innocence, and phrases of his own may be supported in favour of this view. But as I read the case he began with a fear, natural in an advocate, that the prosecution must

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have strong evidence or would never have dared to open the case at all. Then, as the case went on, he unveiled the cloven hoof of subornation, and was gradually convinced that the whole business was, in the expressive modern phrase, a "frame up."

On a motion of want of confidence, made by Lord Tavistock, attacking the Government for their treatment of the Queen, Brougham, who wound up the debate on February 6th, 1821, referred to the common gossip of the day that his publicly expressed opinions about Caroline's conduct were not in fact his own conscientious convictions. He resented these persistent malevolent slanders, and, speaking with great earnestness, declared "that if instead of an advocate I had been sitting as a judge on another tribunal, I should have been found among the number of those who laying their hands upon their hearts conscientiously pronounced her Majesty 'Not Guilty.' For the truth of this assertion I desire to tender every pledge that may be most valued and most sacred. I wish to make it in every form which may be deemed most solemn and most binding ; and if I believe it not as I now advance it, I here imprecate on myself every curse which is most horrid and most penal."

The reporter in Hansard adds a note here : " It would be difficult to describe the earnest emphasis with which this asseveration was delivered, the deep interest with which it was listened to and the enthusiastic and general cheering by which it was greeted." And in my view he was equally convinced of his client's innocence when he made his great speech in the House of Lords, for by that time he had convinced himself that the Italian witnesses were hired perjurers ; and that the case against his client, such as it was, had been laboriously built up during the last six years by the King's agents ; who had been ransacking the Continent and spending large sums of money with the object, not of investigating the truth, but of persuading poor and, in most cases, illiterate people to swear to one

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fact that they had suggested to their minds. Brougham must have been convinced that all this had been done for a given object, namely, that the King might wreak his spite on his innocent wife and obtain from Parliament an illegal and unjust Bill of Divorce and penalties. Under these circumstances an advocate was clearly entitled—nay, more, it was his duty—to make use of any material to hand, that might enable him to defend his client's rights.

But Brougham's hint to the King's friends was sufficient. Outside, the whole country was indignant at the King's treatment of his wife. The City of London, the great middle class throughout the country, the soldiers and sailors, the workers in industrial centres, the yeomen and labourers in the villages, were all for the Queen. They did not believe she was guilty, but I agree they could not know, for they had not the means of knowledge, what the evidence against her was ; probably most of them did not care very much one way or another about her alleged guilt. What they did know, and did care about, was that the good name of the nation was being dragged into the gutter, by the persecution of an injured woman, whose kind-hearted works and ways, and patience in suffering, they had long appreciated. The King had been hated for his evil deeds when he was Prince, and when he was Regent, and that this unfaithful and cruel husband should be allowed by Parliament to torture a wife, who had never done him an injury, was driving the people of the country to a pitch of madness.

Brougham's speech is not to be weighed and found wanting in the scales in which we should test the work of an advocate in a normal court ; it was rather the warning of a prophet than the argument of an advocate.

When I call Brougham a prophet, it must be remembered that in many affairs that was his rôle in the world. He had prophetic moments. All his wonderful zeal and unpaid work for law reform shows that he had a deep

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sincerity in him when he was inspired with belief in the righteousness of his cause. He had a prophet's insight into the facts of life and could look through "the shows of things into things." He had no fear of the thing he was addressing, called in mockery a House of Lords. He was not a man to worship idols, preferring rather to tell them to their faces what, according to his lights, they seemed in truth to be, leaving them to digest the matter of his speech if they had sufficient vitality so to do. This seems to have been the disconcerting but quickening method of all those we call prophets.

And it is because of this quality in his peroration, that it is still remembered as one of the noblest passages of English eloquence. He delivered it at the Bar of the House in a tense atmosphere of silence, raising his opened palms above his head, as the Scots Presbyterian clergy do when they bless the congregation at the end of a service. It was spoken with great passion, but without a particle of rant, and when he sat down he had, to my mind, made the passing of the Bill impossible. For what answer had the King's friends in their timorous hearts to words like these : " My Lords, I pray you to pause. I do earnestly beseech you to take heed ! You are standing upon the brink of a precipice ; then beware ! It will go forth your judgment, if sentence shall go out against the Queen. But it will be the only judgment you ever pronounced, which, instead of reaching its object, will return and bound back upon those who gave it. Save the country, my Lords, from the horrors of this catastrophe ; save yourselves from this peril ; rescue that country of which you are the ornaments, but in which you can flourish no longer, when severed from the people, than the blossom when cut from the roots and the stem of the tree. Save that country that you may continue to adorn it ; save the Crown, which is in jeopardy, the aristocracy which is shaken ; save the altar which must stagger with the blow that rends its kindred throne. You have said, my Lords,

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you have willed—the Church and the King have willed—that the Queen should be deprived of its solemn service. She has instead of that solemnity the heartfelt prayers of the people. She wants no prayers of mine. But I do here pour forth my humble supplications at the throne of mercy, that that mercy may be poured down upon the people in a larger measure than the merits of their rulers may deserve and that your hearts may be turned to justice.”

It is objected that Brougham had never treated the Lords as “ornaments,” but it seems obvious that he intended them to understand that the tree of State could well do without many of the “blossoms” that then gaily adorned it. Also it is noted that the Peers “bitterly resented his warning,” which is probable. But that does not make his prophetic utterance of less value to his client, supposing it convinced them that if they entered on a war with the people of England it would end in their own destruction.

It was manifestly impossible that the Queen could bring contradictory evidence of statements which she had only heard for the first time in the House of Lords, made by people who, when they were not discharged servants, were unknown to her, and were speaking of matters that were alleged to have happened many years ago. It had been said, by the Queen’s slanderers, that she had shocked the society of Switzerland and Italy by her indecorum ; but the prosecutor had not called a single witness to prove it, nor indeed was it true.

Brougham put in the box a considerable number of highly respectable witnesses who had been either in her service accompanying her on her travels, or had met her in Continental society. So far from being boycotted by the people among whom she had lived, there is abundant evidence that she was as popular among the decent folk of Como and Pesaro, as she was among her friends at Blackheath. All the enmity and trouble she experienced on the Continent was inspired and promoted by the King’s



HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq., M.P.

LATER LORD BROUGHAM

From the Mezzotint in the British Museum of th  
Sketch by A. Wivell made in the House of Lord





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servants and spies and his own ambassadors. Even now, when she wrote over for witnesses to come and give evidence for her, the wires were pulled to hinder those she desired to come from obtaining passports to travel to England in time. Others were prohibited by the papal authorities from leaving the country, but the evidence they were ready to give exists and some of the depositions may be found in the Appendix to the second volume of John Wilks's *Memoirs of Caroline*.

Thus Andrea de Conti Mastai Ferretti, Bishop of Pesaro, attests that during the three years during which her Majesty lived at Pesaro "there was never the slightest report spread that could be injurious to the honour of Her Majesty ; it being on the contrary always well known that at the entertainments, the festas, and conversaciones, which were given by her Majesty, or which she condescended to appear at, her Majesty always preserved that dignified deportment which is inherent in a person of her august birth and high rank ; which, however, was still mingled with the utmost courtesy, politeness and urbanity." He goes on to say that in his pastoral duty he constantly received information about people in his diocese, and that he had never heard a whisper against the Princess's character, though had there been any scandal connected with her household "it certainly could not have remained concealed from our Court." Cardinal Albani, Marchese Antaldi, Gonfalonier (Mayor) of Pesaro, Father Ostinelli the Priest at Como, and many others, testified to the honour and esteem in which she was held by people of merit, probity and birth in the places where she lived, and all spoke of her generosity and benevolence to her poorer neighbours.

Cardinal Albani would have travelled to England, but his rank forbade him giving evidence in the House of Lords. Professor Tommasini, who was a man of the highest position in his profession, being Clinical Professor of Medicine in the University of Bologna, and one of the

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forty members of the Italian Academy, would have certainly given evidence ; but there were hindrances and delays put in his way, and he only arrived three days after the Bill had been withdrawn and the people were celebrating the Queen's victory. He had been consulted by the Princess in 1818, when Dr. Mochetti left her service, and had advised her and stayed with her at Pesaro. He was a man of widespread reputation on the Continent and a firm believer in Caroline, who had won his esteem. Though he was too late to give evidence, the Queen received him with every kindness, and he spent an interesting visit to England. His letters to his wife, his " dear Tognetta," show him to have been an affectionate husband, and that such a man should have troubled to come to England on a fool's errand seems improbable, or that Tognetta should have sent pleasant messages to Caroline if she was the character described by Sacchi and Rastelli and the rest, seems impossible. Caroline may have deceived all these good people, but it is asking one to believe a great deal when it is suggested that she duped all the reputable people she met and associated with, who say that they found her living the same kind of domestic life abroad that she had lived at Montagu House when Canning and Eldon were her friends. Even if they had seen nothing, how was it possible they had never heard a breath of the scandals that Ompteda had diligently collected, and the King's friends had been spreading in England ever since she left the country in 1814 ?

The evidence of Sir William Gell seems to me worthy of consideration. It must be remembered that the Attorney-General had, as from the materials before him he was bound to do, accepted the myth started by Ompteda, that Caroline fell in love with Pergami at first sight, and from the earliest behaved in a reckless and improper way in not concealing her affection for the man. It was agreed that he was hired at Milan and that within a few weeks they proceeded to Naples. **Here**, said the Attorney-

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General, Pergami was given a bedroom near the Princess's, and he sought to prove that on one occasion, on November 9th, she hurried home from the opera at an early hour in an agitated state of mind, to meet Pergami.

All this must have been an original falsehood of Ompteda, since at this time he was the one and only spy, and was visiting Caroline continually as a guest, but sending in his reports to Munster, who forwarded them to the Regent. Now the one witness to this incident seems to be Louise Demont, whose perjury was made manifest. When she first made the statement and what she was paid for it one cannot tell. It is quite true that Pergami was given a room not far from that of the Princess when they were at Naples. This was arranged by her old and faithful steward, Mr. Sicard. It was done by him without the knowledge of the Princess, and Sicard's evidence is very sensible and straightforward. He was asked to give his reason as *maitre d'affaires* for placing Pergami in this room, and he says: "The principal reason I had was that there was a glass door which went into the garden that was not safe, and therefore I thought it right that a servant or someone should sleep there—a male." One can see how this true incident would lead the imagination or invention of Ompteda to the opera story which Demont was to swear to.

It was fortunate for Caroline that the Attorney-General should open this incident as a first and foremost proof of her evil-doing, for there was no substance in it whatever. Gell remembered the opera on the night of November 9th, as well he might, "because I was very lame and had to stand behind Her Royal Highness the whole night, and it must have been at least twelve if not half-past twelve when we left the theatre." They went back in the state carriage, Gell in attendance. Keppel Craven was also in attendance, and he, too, was able to swear that Her Royal Highness and her suite remained until the end of the opera and the curtain dropped, which was about half-past

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twelve. The incident of an early return from the opera was therefore an invention, and poor Gell with his gout, to which he was a martyr all his life, may fairly be believed.

It was not for Caroline to prove her innocence ; but the suggestion that there was immoral intercourse going on at Naples under the eyes of Sir William Gell, Keppel Craven, Lady Charlotte Lindsay and others who occupied the house, is difficult to believe. What is more incomprehensible is that not until a year after Louise Demont was discharged from Caroline's service, at the end of 1817, was there anyone found able to substantiate the slanders that Ompteda had spread abroad as happening at Naples three or four years previously.

The way it came about is described in a letter written by Louise in February, 1818, to her sister, after she left the Princess's service, in which she speaks in affectionate terms of her late mistress and her kindness to both of them. She also tells her sister that she has received a letter of a strange character. " Judge of my astonishment when I broke the seal ; a proposal was made to me to set off for London under the false pretences of being a governess. I was promised a high protection and a most brilliant future in a short time. The letter was without signature ; but, to assure me of the truth of it, I was informed I might draw at the bankers for as much money as I wished." Sir John Leach was now in possession of the money bags, and of course Louise Demont, if she could be believed, was worth a lot of money. She never got another situation before the trial and lived at the expense of the Milan Commission until called as a witness.

She was a woman of better education and address than many, and tried hard to regain her place with Caroline, and she writes in November, 1817, begging for pity and that the Princess would " deign to restore me to her precious favour, which I have just unhappily lost by the most melancholy imprudence." If this cannot be, she asked for her sister Mariette to take her place and for

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another sister to come from Switzerland into her service. One feels sorry in a sense for Louise Demont, and doubtless the price was greater than thirty pieces of silver, and the blame for her treachery and deceit must be shared by Lord Castlereagh, Sir John Leach, Colonel Browne, and the rest of the Regent's allies, who were ready to pour out public money for any class of testimony that would vilify the Princess, even if it fell short of proof of any offence.

In the second volume of Mr. John Wilks's *Memoirs of Caroline*, a very interesting summary is made of the various charges against her, showing what was opened by the Attorney-General, how much less was proved, what was absolutely refuted, and what was discredited and unworthy of belief. Considering the short time given to the defence, the absence of charges or witnesses' names, and the hindrances put in the way of Caroline's witnesses reaching England in time to give evidence, I think her advisers did wonders. It is, of course, always open to anyone to believe people like Majocchi or Demont, and I dare say many of the peers, who had heard these stories for years in clubs and over dinner tables, thought they were proved by these people. They had promised to vote for the King on the strength of the slanders that had been spread abroad for years, and they were not going back on their word. But no man trained, and willing to use his training, to weigh the evidence given, can fail to come to a conclusion that the case for the prosecution was based upon a conspiracy to find evidence, and that, for the purpose of proving desired facts, perjury was suborned. That does not, of course, negative the possibility that guilt existed, but it does destroy any reasoned belief that guilt was proved.

If Brougham had possessed the facts known to-day, he might perhaps have compelled the prosecution to produce Colonel Browne, and Vimercati the Milanese advocate. These men were the actual suborners of the perjurers brought to England. We have seen from Lord Charles Stewart's letter that he was obtaining

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information in 1816 from Caroline's bankers. Possibly in those days bankers could not help themselves. But lawyers ought to maintain their privileged position, and for Vimercati to bribe his fellow-lawyer's clerk, Bonfiglio Omati, to steal Caroline's papers which were in the possession of his master, Advocate Codazzi, of Milan, who was professional agent for the Princess, seems to me to be what a certain dean once described in the press as "the scarlet limit," a satisfying phrase, the significance of which I cannot vouch for.

Omati was called, and after the usual wrangle to keep his evidence out—the matter was argued for more than a day—the damning fact was proved. The prosecution argued that Vimercati was not their agent. But, as Mr. Williams said, "the situation of Her Majesty would have been melancholy indeed, if when such a detestable conspiracy had been formed against her, and she was provided with evidence to establish its existence, she was not allowed to bring it home to acknowledged agents, because the testimony might be defective in tracing that authority to some undiscovered principal. She might not be able to show always from what pocket the money came, but she could show that it had been employed, and under its influence she was now suffering."

One wonders that the Lords did not insist upon having Colonel Browne and Vimercati sent for, in the face of the obvious perjury that was committed and the testimony given of the way evidence was collected. But the difficulty of many of the Whig peers was obvious. They cared nothing for Caroline personally, and though the King's methods of procedure may have been against their principles yet, as Mr. Creevey said: "Alas! my Lords Grey and Lansdowne and Holland were perfectly mute: they dared not criticise so roughly the measures of a man whom they hope so soon to call their master."

Bit by bit the conspiracy and perjury of the Italian witnesses began to be made manifest, until at last even

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the King's friends shook their heads over the value of such evidence, and fastened their attention to the arrangements made for Caroline when on board the polacre, who during some portion of the voyage slept without undressing under a tent or awning on deck to which Pergami had access. To anyone who understood the exigencies of travel, what was described was commonplace enough, and even Mr. Atlay thinks that "the entire want of propriety and of feminine delicacy which was so pronounced a feature in her character may here, I think, be prayed in her aid, coupled with that disregard of all consideration of privacy in sleeping arrangements, which even to-day is so common on the continent of Europe."

The evidence of Caroline's so-called want of propriety, which troubles many Englishmen, is largely derived from the scandalous *Memoirs of Charlotte Bury*, and is to me unconvincing ; but undoubtedly she was unconventional in her ways and, like many foreigners, treated all her servants with far greater consideration and courtesy than was at all consistent with English notions of the separate atmospheres of masters and servants. Some of the wickednesses alleged against her were that she sailed into their rooms when they were ill in bed and gave them medicine and even helped to mend their clothes. All her servants worshipped her, even some of the rascals who lied about her acknowledged her kindness. She was more than a mistress to them, and at her own houses and on her travels she was a companion. But she was their ruler.

The incidents of the tent on the polacre always seem to me more worthless than the rest of the stories. That it was reasonable in such a climate to sleep on deck under a tent may be granted, but that Caroline should choose the deck of a rolling vessel, surrounded by sailors, and in view of the man at the wheel, as a place for open endearments with Pergami, rather than a cabin, seems to me more eccentric than anything I have yet read of her doings.



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That Pergami should be in attendance, seeing that the tent was open to the foreign sailors, was very reasonable.

A great deal of money was spent on the owner-skipper and sailors of the polacre and, as Brougham was able to show, in spite of the objection of the Attorney-General to evidence tending to prove bribery and corruption, this foreign evidence from first to last was tainted with subornation. Whenever Brougham sought to find out where the money came from, he was cleverly headed off by the Crown lawyers and thwarted by Eldon. His revenge came in a curious way. Mr. Williams was asking an Italian witness, Giarolini, whether Rastelli, a Crown witness and factotum of Vimercati, had offered him bribes, when the usual objection was taken. It was suggested that Rastelli should be recalled to put a question to him about what was alleged. The drama then proceeds :

*Mr. Brougham* : I wish to know of my learned friend whether we can have access to Rastelli. Is he here ? Is he in this country ?

(No answer was made, and after a pause :)

*Mr. Brougham* : My Lords, I wish Rastelli to be called.

*The Attorney-General* : If my learned friend wishes to call Rastelli, he can call him.

*Mr. Brougham* : I wish to know if Rastelli is in the country, and if in the country, where he is.

(The Attorney-General murmured that wherever he was, if Brougham wanted him he must find him. This was a little too much even for Eldon.)

*The Lord Chancellor* : Mr. Attorney, is Rastelli here ?

*The Attorney-General* : No ! He is sent to Milan.

There was a sensation in the House. Rastelli was a witness who might have been prosecuted for perjury, and Brougham asked their Lordships what course was to be taken. " I say, my Lords, I wish to know whether I am to be obliged to go on with this Bill ? " As Creevey said, writing in the House at three o'clock : " Here's a breeze of the first order ! " Counsel withdrew, witnesses were

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turned out, and their Lordships fell to battle. Lord Holland protested that the subornation of perjury already proved was "absolutely monstrous." Even Lord Liverpool declared that sending Rastelli away was "highly culpable"; but the ministry knew nothing of it. So the question arose who had authorised it. Eldon said it was a "most ill-timed and ill-judged proceeding," and Lord Carnarvon said the only way out was to move "that this Bill be read a second time this six months," and this he did. The breeze became a storm, and almost a gale, and just before the adjournment John Allan Powell, the solicitor instructing the Attorney-General, was put in the box to explain how and why he sent Rastelli away.

The next day the witness was still in the box trying to explain that Rastelli had merely gone to Italy with messages, and was expected to return, which was, of course, a highly improbable eventuality. After much wrangling, the witness Powell being sent out and brought back that their Lordships might ask him questions, Eldon asked the Queen's counsel whether they had any question to put.

Brougham was on his feet at once. "My Lords, I wish to ask the witness one question: Who is your client or employer?"

Loud shouts of "Order, Order," arose from the King's friends. But Brougham went his way, pointing out that this was the first witness who had come forward who could answer this momentous question, and in a passage of fine sarcasm he demanded the name of the undiscovered client since, "If I am told who he is, I may then be able to trace his lineaments and at length to bring out the mighty secret who and what he is from his own mouth—if he have one."

Eldon began to find his allusion to "this shrouded, this mysterious being," very inconvenient, and interposed in the middle of a phrase to say the question could not be put.

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Nearly a day was spent over this further wrangle, but the hero of it was Brougham, and his significant question to Mr. Powell : " Who is your client or employer ? " was echoed through the country and repeated by thousands. It has never been officially answered to this day.

But though these things delighted Mr. Creevey and his set, exasperated the people and frightened the King's friends, they could not have much influence over the fate of the Bill. That was not going to be decided on points scored in speeches, or on the consideration of evidence, but by the canvassed voters for the King, who would vote solid. And though some of these might fail at the last moment from a sense of what was right, or a fear of what would happen in the country if injustice was done, yet from the first Caroline had started with an ascertained majority against her, and it was improbable that this could be much reduced by any efforts of her counsel.

The evidence, the advocacy, the summing up of the Lord Chancellor gave the business an outward appearance of an administration of justice, but, as Carlyle would have put it, in truth and fact the trial was a pickle-herring farce.

## Chapter XX: *Victory*

“ Did we think victory great ?

So it is—but now it seems to me, when it cannot be help'd, that  
defeat is great,

And that death and dismay are great.”

Walt Whitman : *Autumn Rivulets.*

CREEVEY, writing at two o'clock on the afternoon of October 24th from the House of Lords, says that, “ Denman begun to sum up and is now engaged in doing so.” Creevey had heard most of the case and his own summing up is not without value. “ Their mighty case, you see, therefore is now finished and a miracle no doubt it must appear, to after times, that all these charges of an adulterous intercourse which have been got up with so much secrecy—that begun six years ago and continued three years—that have had absolute power and money without end to support them, have been one by one demonstrably disproved by witnesses unimpeachable,” and he shrewdly asserts that the admitted fact of the Princess and Pergami sleeping on deck under an awning is now the sole foundation for the Bill.

Denman was an orator of the old school. His periods were prepared and delivered with theatrical effect. A judge of our own time has been known to prepare his best impromptu sayings. In Denman's day it was always done, and he had spent his Sundays in the library of Holland House in company with Dr. Parr arranging classical tags and allusions for the great occasion ! Denman, unlike Brougham, had never doubted Caroline's innocence. He believed her to be pure “ as unsunned snow.” He was outspoken in his defence and, in consequence, gained the lasting hatred and enmity of the King, who for many

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years refused to allow him the silk gown to which his professional status entitled him ; so that for a long time, though he was leading the Oxford Circuit, he was compelled to address the jury from without the Bar.

The passage in his speech which particularly offended the King was a reference to Nero which was by no means inappropriate. For scarcely had Octavia become the wife of Nero, when almost at once she became the object of his aversion. A mistress was received into her place, and before long she was banished from the dwelling of her husband. A conspiracy was set on foot against her honour, to impute to her a licentious amour, and her servants were induced, not by bribes but by torture, to depose to facts injurious to her reputation ; but the greater number persisted in faithfully maintaining her innocence.

There was nothing to be objected to in Denman's statement of this historical precedent for the King's methods of dealing with Caroline, but the King pretended that Denman had imputed to him some of the vices of Nero to which George was not addicted. The quotation that gave rise to this idea was uttered by Denman in the original Greek, because, as he said, he was unwilling to diminish its force and because, being less known, the coarseness would be less understood. It is an epigrammatic rebuke delivered by the tortured Pythias, a faithful maid-servant of Octavia, to the brutal Tigellinus, who was the head of Nero's Milan Commission.

The curious will find the line in *Dion Cassius*, book lxii, and the phraseology is certainly best veiled in the obscurity of a learned language ; but the effect of it was to compare the purity of Octavia with the foulness of Tigellinus. Denman never applied the words to the King, but specifically said : " To such suborners as Sacchi and Rastelli might Pythias's answer be applied." At the same time, to what purpose was it except to exhibit the orator's learning, that a Greek quotation of this nature should be uttered ? The ignorant and unlearned peers were sure to inquire

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of the bishops, or some other scholars, what it was all about, and repeat it to the King with advantages.

Denman's attack on the Duke of Clarence was well deserved. It was notorious that he had been busy among the peers, detailing slanders against Caroline, with which the King had supplied him. "Silly Billy," as the Duke was nicknamed, was not an ill-natured creature and had not, of course, the faintest notion of judicial decorum. He had taken up his brother's cause, and his idea of serving it was to whisper stories about Caroline to his brother peers "upon the highest authority." It is a form of mania still common among club bores, but in a judicial tribunal it merited open rebuke. What Denman said about the Duke of Clarence was well deserved, and is worth recalling.

"We have heard, and hear daily with alarm, that there are persons, and those not of the lowest condition, and not confined to the individuals connected with the public press—not even excluded from your august assembly, who are industriously circulating the most odious and atrocious calumnies against Her Majesty. Can this fact be? And yet can we live in the world in these times and not know it to be a fact? We know that if a juryman, upon such an occasion, should be found to possess any knowledge on the subject of inquiry, we should have a right to call him to the bar as a witness. 'Come forward,' we might say, 'and let us confront you with our evidence; let us see whether no explanation can be given of the fact you assert and no refutation effectually applied.' But to any man who could even be suspected of so base a practice as whispering calumnies to judges, distilling leperous venom into the ears of jurors, the Queen might well exclaim: 'Come forth, thou slanderer, and let me see thy face.'"

Mr. Rush, the American envoy, who was present, declares that the "denunciation was the more severe from the sarcasm with which it was done, and the turn of his eye from its object."

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But there was no necessity to name names or point out the wrongdoer ; and Denman went on to allude to the fact, the defence had discovered, of many of the peers having had " an opportunity of reading a vast variety of depositions against the conduct of the Queen," of witnesses not called before them. It was well publicly to expose such scandals, and Denman said, to those who had so forgotten their duty as jurors : " You, at all events, must vote for an acquittal."

Finally, with " a lapse that is almost incredible," according to Mr. Atlay's criticism, he concluded his peroration with a quotation from St. Mark. Seeing that he was addressing a rabble of pagan peers who had promised to vote for the King, and bishops by whom the principles of the Gospel were not to be defiled by everyday use, the peroration may be thought tactless. But it was not without pathos and beauty, and the audience that heard it did not take it amiss at the moment it was spoken. An honest jury of citizens would have been impressed by it. What Denman actually said, according to Nightingale's report of the Trial, was this :

" This is an inquiry, my Lords, unprecedented in the history of the world ; the down-sitting and uprising of this illustrious lady have been sedulously and anxiously watched: she uttered no word that had not to pass through this severe ordeal. Her daily looks have been remarked, and scarcely even her thoughts escaped the unparalleled and disgraceful assiduity of her malignant enemies. It is an inquisition also of a most solemn kind. I know nothing in the whole view of eternity which can even remotely resemble it ; but the great day when the secret of all hearts shall be disclosed !

" He who the sword of Heav'n will bear  
Should be as holy as severe."

And if your Lordships have been furnished with powers, which I might almost say scarcely Omniscience itself possesses, to arrive at the secrets of this lady, you will

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think that it is your duty to imitate the justice, beneficence and wisdom of that benignant Being who, not in a case like this where innocence is manifest, but where guilt was detected, and vice revealed, said: 'If no accuser can come forward to condemn thee, neither do I condemn thee : go and sin no more.' "

There was a deep hush and a pause of some moments before Mr. Brougham made an application about another matter, and as the words were delivered they were undoubtedly effective. The Queen herself took no umbrage at his language. It appears that when Denman had finished, he left the hall and went up to the Queen's sitting-room, and throwing off his wig rested on the sofa under the impression Her Majesty would not come there again. However, she did, and he jumped up and expressed his distress about the liberty he had taken. But Caroline had come to thank him, saying in ecstasy : " Mon Dieu ! what a beautiful speech." When he continued his apologies, she laughingly interrupted him, looking at the sofa and quoting the preamble of the Bill, said : " Indeed, Mr. Denman, it is a most unbecoming familiarity." From which we may infer that in spite of all her troubles her " levity " and sportive sense of humour never wholly deserted her.

But Denman never forgave himself for his error in tact, which was, of course, seized upon by the Queen's enemies ; and he said years afterwards that the remembrance of it gave him " some of the bitterest moments of my life." He explains how the idea was not in his original plan and came into his head after ten hours' speaking, but he admits that it was an indiscretion. For it gave rise to an epigram wittier than most of the foul things said about Caroline which rejoiced the King's friends and has enough salt in it to keep it from perishing.

" Gracious lady, we implore,  
Go away, and sin no more.  
And if that effort be too great,  
Go away, at any rate."



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Dr. Lushington followed on the same side with a well-reasoned appeal, not to the mercy but to the justice of the Court. Stephen Lushington was a staunch Churchman and learned ecclesiastical lawyer. He was a real friend to Caroline, and he and Wilde were named as executors of her will. Both, with their wives, personally attended her funeral to Brunswick. Much as I admire the work of Denman and Brougham, to my mind the calm, masterly summing up of Lushington is more convincing of the honour and innocence of Caroline than the more brilliant displays of his learned leaders.

For as he put it very forcibly, it was not his task to prove her innocence, and the prosecution had certainly failed to prove her guilt. How then, would the votes go? The King had for certain the Ministers, brother William and his friends, and all the Bishops, who remembered the Psalmist's warning about promotion, and regarded George IV in that matter as the vice-regent of Providence. All the ten Bishops voted solid for the second reading of the Bill. There was much excitement and prophecy as to what would happen. At Brooks's the majority was expected to reach at least forty. But after Eldon's speech the majority was placed as high as fifty, and it was said that doubtful Tories were coming back to the fold or, in Creevey's more picturesque words, "the cursed rats are said to have returned to their old quarters."

When Eldon came to deliver the first judgment he was indeed in a difficult position. As President of the tribunal he was bound to advise the House on the value of the evidence they had heard. If he had told them it was worthless he could not have remained on the Woolsack, and there he was determined to sit until the day of his doom or, in other words, as long as he could please his master. Then he cannot have forgotten his friendship with Caroline. Up to her leaving England, and especially in 1806, he had, with Perceval, championed her cause and declared her honour and innocence. But in a minor

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degree Castlereagh and the others had done the same. Bearing all this in mind, I am inclined to think that Eldon's performance was not unskilful. You could not expect "Old Bags" to jump upon the Woolsack and defy the King. But his speech, and it may be that in his heart he so desired, was a nail in the coffin of the Bill. It had all the outward appearance of a vindication of the prosecution, but, like Gibbon's famous Chapter XV in *Defence of Christianity*, there were latent elements in his argument that make one gravely doubt the sincerity of his advocacy.

Creevey thought it "a feeble argument for his own vote," but I confess it has all the appearance of being a candid and rational statement of his reasons for voting for the Bill, that might easily convince an uncritical audience that he really felt it right to do so. To begin with, Eldon agreed that the preamble of the Bill must be altered. The Divorce had to go. Even the faithful Bishops kicked at an illegal divorce, and with them would go some Tory Churchmen among the peers. Then without much reserve he jettisoned the Italian witnesses. Again the graphic Creevey reports from the House of Lords at the luncheon hour, "he abandoned Majocchi and Demont, and in truth all the filth of his own green bag and all the labours of the Milan Commission." There was nothing left but the incident of the awning or tent on the polacre.

Now I cannot but think this was a skilful move. The Italian evidence was worthless, in the first place, as being tainted with bribery and corruption, and secondly, since it had been contradicted by many reputable witnesses. To invite the peers to consider one case successfully proved ; and to wave away the rest of the evidence, not, of course, as false, but rather as surplusage, was a clever gesture.

Eldon was immediately followed by Erskine. He, too, had received much kindness from the King and had been one of the Delicate Investigators in 1806. He had heard the details of the earliest conspiracy against Caroline

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and expressed his view that it was founded on the perjury of Charlotte Douglas ; but he had put his hand to the rider of the secret tribunal accusing her of "levity." It was this transgression against the first principles of justice that now in his old age he had an opportunity to recall. And now he stood before them : "An hireless Priest before the insulted shrine."

This speech was to be Erskine's swan song. It is good that he ended his career as he began it, holding high the standard of justice and uttering an impassioned and eloquent appeal for independence in its administration. At no moment in his great career had he stooped to tune his speech to harmonize with the wishes of kings and ministers. He feared no political or legal persecution, for he had never been a slave of office. When he was the friend of Fox and Sheridan, the Prince of Wales had appointed him his Attorney-General, and he was grateful. He still claimed that he was a friend of the King though not one of the "King's friends," as the items of the King's vote were called. He lost his office as Attorney-General to the Prince, because he conceived it his duty, as an advocate, to defend Tom Paine, whose *Rights of Man* was a blasphemy in the eyes of his master. This courageous act caused his dismissal and for a while he was in exile. He had never seen Caroline, but once, before she entered the House of Lords.

This was the record of this great advocate as known to all the peers assembled. He was now a man of seventy and, as he told the lords when he rose to address them, "I am now drawing near to the close of a long life, and I must end it as I began it. If you strike out of it, my Lords, some efforts to secure the sacred privilege of impartial trial to the people of this country, and by example to spread it about the world, what would be left to me ? What else seated me here ? What else would there be to distinguish me from the most useless and insignificant among mankind ? Nothing—just nothing ! And shall

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I then consent to this suicide—this worse than suicide of the body, this destruction of what alone can remain to me after death—the good will of my countrymen?—**I DARE NOT DO THAT.**”

For there is no doubt that he was as firmly convinced of Caroline’s innocence in this case as he had been in the Douglas case. With the exception of Eldon, no one knew better, than Erskine did, the history of the foul conspiracy against the Princess, that the King had carried on for fourteen years before he dared to launch this Bill of Pains and Penalties. He started with great animation to pull the Government edifice to pieces and complimented Eldon on his sensible desertion of the Green Bag and its contents. But see what it involved ! The original case against the Queen had been put forward as an intercourse “carried on for a series of years. But now it seemed that this long intercourse—all those indecent and disgusting familiarities—were put out of the question, and the whole confined to what occurred on the deck of the polacre.” As to this he referred to the large bribes paid to the master of the vessel, who came over here to receive six thousand dollars, and asserted that in his view the evidence did not convey to him any impression of misconduct.

He was vigorously continuing his criticism of the evidence when suddenly his voice ceased. He seemed to be looking on the table in front of him at his notes. But he did not resume his speech. Some of the peers near him rose in alarm, and as they went towards him he fell forward senseless upon the table. Several called for water and to open the windows. But he did not recover consciousness. They carried him to an outer chamber. The House adjourned.

Fortunately he recovered from his seizure and the next day he was in his place but too shaken to speak. He listened to Earl Grey, however, with great attention and appreciation. But it was not until the day after that he

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was able to resume his address, when he said that after Earl Grey's destructive criticism he would put what he had to say in shorter form. He at once approached the real public duty of casting out this Bill, since, apart from all questions of individual guilt or innocence, the measure itself was founded on such "disgusting instances of fraud and perjury" that it was an insult to the House and its sense of justice to consider it. He put the affair before his fellow-peers without exaggeration or mitigation. He had not the evidence that we have to-day, of the extent and intricacy of the conspiracy, and the vast sums that had been spent, not to discover the truth but to confirm a theory of guilt and to spread slander and create an atmosphere poisonous to justice. Still, he could visualise, from what the Queen's counsel had been able to drag out of unwilling liars, protected by the highest official advocacy, the kind of thing that had been going on behind the scenes. And he describes it with accuracy. "A dark cloud," he says, "hangs over the very beginning of the prosecution; and when we find the accusation to have been hatched in secret, and to have been supported by all the power and influence of foreign governments—when we see that some of the witnesses have been thrust forward by force, and others by the same force have been kept back—and that the foulest subornation has been detected—what security could we have had for the truth of any part of the evidence, even if it had not been impeached by the palpable perjuries which have been exposed?" And having given instances of detected falsehood and subornation he continued with a prophecy of what mischief the Lords would be responsible for, if they continued this persecution upon such dishonourable testimony. "If I were in the Queen's situation and I were convicted of adultery by your Lordships on such evidence as this, I would cast your decision in your face, and appeal to the other House of Parliament—to the representatives of the people. The House of Commons cannot pass the Bill

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against their own conviction and against the national *nolle prosequi* which resounds from every quarter of the island."

When after an expression of loyal sentiments to his old patron the King, to whose happiness he would sacrifice everything but duty, he ended his speech with the words : "My principles I never have deserted and never will desert," the old man, exhausted but triumphant, sank down on the bench amidst loud cheers from all parts of the House. That his eloquence had influenced some of the waverers, not absolutely pledged to the King or in the service or power of the Ministry, seems very probable ; but perhaps more votes were actually gained by Earl Grey's less courageous and outspoken but more damaging examination of the case.

Grey cared nothing for Caroline personally, but being a high-minded and conscientious man was desirous to do his duty. Nevertheless, he wished so to word his speech that nothing in it should make it impossible for the King to invite himself and his friends to form a government. He had offended His Majesty in 1812, after Lord Moira's attempt to form a government, by referring in the House of Commons to Lady Hertford, then the reigning favourite, as "an unseen and pestilent secret influence which lurked behind the throne." As an honourable man and a lover of his country he had assured Lord Liverpool that if the Tories were dismissed for refusing to bring in a Divorce Bill he would not take their place. He did not desire to add to his offences against the King and exile himself for ever from the ministerial bench.

To Creevey and many other party men, Grey was an enigma. The high-souled Christian gentleman is always a thorn in the flesh to the man whose creed is your party right or wrong. Caroline, to Creevey, was merely a party asset, to be voted for on that account. Grey at first, I should say, was unconvinced about her innocence ; but as the evidence unfolded he became aware of the nature

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of the conspiracy against the Queen that was the origin of the Bill.

His speech—calm, argumentative and reasonable, though without the purple patches of Brougham, Erskine, and Denman—was probably even more effective in detaching uncertain voters from the King's side than any other that was delivered. He put, more forcibly than her own advocates, the incredible nature of the case of the prosecution. This depended, he said, on "the four principal witnesses who had been called against the Queen, Majocchi, Demont, Sacchi, and Rastelli—all four her discarded servants. Three of them, it appeared, were dismissed in November, 1817; Majocchi two months after that time. The proof of guilt adduced against Her Majesty was limited to the time during which they were in her service, and from the time when they left it, from 1817 down to the present period, there was not even an atom of improper conduct—there was not even a whisper of suspicion—there was not even an allegation of scandalous behaviour—there was not even a presumption of guilt, much less any direct proof of adultery. There was not an iota of charge against this unfortunate accused Queen which did not rest on the testimony of these four witnesses, all of whom had been dismissed from her service for some offence or other."

Now, this was, to my mind, one of the most powerful arguments in favour of Caroline's innocence. The perjurers were all people of bad or low character who had for three years been kept in employment or in pay by the Milan Commissioners. They were a legacy of Ompteda and his spies. There was not a single voluntary witness in the whole group, nor one of a later date than 1817.

And about the absurd evidence of Caroline having worn a classic fairy dress of an improper character, Lord Grey was scornfully convincing, when he advised their lordships to look "to the dress of some of their own wives and daughters, and they would find that their dresses, in

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the vagaries of modern fashions, had often led to much more shameful and indelicate exhibitions than that upon which, as a foundation, the whole fabric of this abominable conspiracy had been built."

In his peroration he "fairly avowed that in the outset his prejudices and feelings were unfavourable to the Queen." Like every other gentleman in good society, he had for years, at clubs and parties, listened to the slanders spread abroad by the King's friends, and had supposed that where the smoke was the fire had existed. "But as it now stood, looking at it, first as a question of guilt or innocence and next as a matter of political expedience, he was bound to declare that he could never lay down his head in tranquillity in future if he did not to his utmost resist the Bill. He must, therefore, give the only vote he could reconcile to his honour and judgment; and laying his hand upon his heart, with the deepest sense of the solemnity of the occasion, conscientiously and fearlessly before God pronounce—Not Guilty."

"Beautiful!—magnificent!" wrote Creevey, who was no friendly critic of the Earl. "All honour and right feeling, with the most powerful argument into the bargain. There is nothing approaching this damned fellow in the kingdom when he mounts his best horse." Creevey was right, and in so far as the Bill was not slain by its witnesses, Grey may be said to have killed it.

On November 6th the division took place; the figures were 123 to 95, a majority of only 28. The opinion was generally expressed that the Bill was doomed. Her Majesty, on Brougham's advice, signed a petition to be heard by counsel against the passage of the Bill, and as she wrote the words "*Carolina Regina*," said with a smile to her counsel: "There, *Regina* still, in spite of them." The next morning Lord Dacre presented a protest from the Queen, who declined to allow her counsel to appear in Committee, since "to her the details of the measure must be a matter of indifference." She complained of



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her prosecutors voting against her and also the conduct of those peers who voted after hearing the whole evidence for the charge and absenting themselves during her defence. She declared her innocence, and awaited "with unabated confidence the final result of this unparalleled investigation."

Lord Liverpool now endeavoured to fulfil his promise to the bishops of getting rid of the divorce clause in the preamble ; but the opposition, who desired to destroy the Bill, voted for the divorce clause which was carried by 129 to 62. The third reading was taken on November 10th, and the Government majority sank to nine.

Lord Dacre, as soon as the figures were announced, rose to move that the Queen might be heard by counsel against the passing of the Bill, when Lord Liverpool intervened and, referring to the state of public feeling against the measure, moved that the question that the Bill do pass be put on this day six months. The question was put from the Woolsack and carried *nemine contradicente*. The conspiracy was defeated. The conspirators had deserted their cause. The Bill was dead.

The Queen was in her room at the House of Lords. As soon as the action of Lord Liverpool was known, Brougham hastened to the Queen and saw her to her carriage that she might reach home before the news was all over the town. Lady Charlotte Lindsay found her gone when she ran to congratulate her friend and mistress. She writes to Miss Berry that before the Queen arrived home the news got out—"and an immense crowd of people followed her carriage, hanging about the wheels huzzaing and congratulating her with every demonstration of delight ; but there was no riot or attack of any sort upon the carriages of those Lords who had voted for the Bill. I went to the Queen's room to offer her my very sincere congratulations, but she was gone. I found there Mr. Denman, who was in as high a state of excitement as myself; this sympathy united us. We embraced, and,

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according to the good 'John Bull' notions of friendship, he invited me to dinner."

It was Mr. Vizard, her solicitor, who brought the news of the withdrawal of the Bill to the waiting mob in Palace Yard. As he came out on the leads above the piazza and shouted his message an echoing shout of joy rent the air. London went mad with delight, and never since, until our own Armistice Day, can the town have seen such strange sights. Charlotte Lindsay and Denman were not the only kind souls that embraced each other in sheer delight and excitement, when they knew that this foul conspiracy had failed. Every carriage and coach and car was commandeered and people drove east and west and north and across the river into Surrey and Kent carrying the glad tidings. It was the same in every town and village where the good news arrived, and that night there were illuminations all over the town, and on the next day, Saturday, more illuminations, and on the Monday the Mansion House, and every house in the City and surrounding suburbs, blazed with transparencies and strange devices of light and candles as the manner then was of expressing the joy of the nation.

Right up to Edinburgh and Newcastle, and indeed from Land's End to John o' Groats, in spite of the occasional frowns of time-serving magistrates and clergy, the people had their way. There were banquets, feasts given to the poor, addresses moved and seconded in town halls, bells rung, and these rejoicings were manifested, not only by the poorer classes, whose hearts had always been with the Princess in her troubles, but by all the great middle class of England, now growing in power and might and loathing with an honest hatred the King and ministers who had conspired to ruin and destroy their Queen, and had risked the purity of our administration of justice to gratify the King's wicked desires.

## Chapter XXI: *Postscript*

“A stately Cross each sad spot doth attest,  
Whereat the corpse of Elinor did rest,  
From Herdly fetch’d—her spouse so honoured her—  
To sleep with royal dust at Westminster.  
And if less pompous obsequies were thine,  
Duke Brunswick’s daughter, princely Caroline,  
Grudge not great ghost, nor count thy funeral losses  
Thou in thy life-time had’st thy share of crosses.”

Charles Lamb. 1827.

WHEN the fight was over it left the victress a broken woman. Caroline had defended her honour and defeated the King, his lawyers, and his Milanese mercenaries, but it had been done at the cost of her own life. Outwardly she went through the few months that remained to her with the same high spirits and royal fortitude. But it was clear that the King and his ministers intended to give her no peace, and the people who poured in addresses and messages of affection and good-will were powerless to help her.

There was probably never a more lonely, deserted, popular and beloved figure in our history than this poor Queen Caroline. She had given up the peace of her domestic household at Pesaro and returned to England to take her rightful place in the country. She was still Queen by the law of our land ; and Queen in the affections of the people, but they were weaponless against the King and the ministers. The conspiracy had succeeded, as Castlereagh, in his wisdom, saw that it might succeed. He understood from the first that they were unlikely to obtain any satisfactory proof of Caroline’s wrongdoing. He may, to please his master, have pretended to believe in the case or he may have really believed in it. But

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as he wrote in January, 1816, to his brother in Vienna, there is "another most important object short of divorce, viz., to accumulate such a body of evidence as may at any time enable the Regent to justify himself for refusing to receive the Princess in this country." This I think the Milan Commission achieved. It had accumulated by subornation, and at the cost of thousands of pounds, just such a body of testimony as would enable the Regent to justify himself in refusing to receive his wife. And although he dared not use it in a court of justice, he could continue to asperse her character with it, and repeat it with other stale slanders as long as she lived.

Soon after the Bill was withdrawn many ladies and gentlemen of position came to visit Caroline. Her son-in-law, Prince Leopold, and the Duke of Sussex had paid their respects earlier ; but when it became apparent that many ladies in society were visiting her, a newspaper called *John Bull* was started on December 17th for the loyal purpose of libelling anyone of position who showed kindness to the Queen. The paper was ably edited by that prince of lampooners, Theodore Hook. As a bankrupt, if not fraudulent, State servant it was useful to him to serve the ministers, and he did it with zest and enjoyment. As a muck-writer he had no equal. The great feature of the first number of *John Bull* was a libellous attack on each lady of position who had recently called at Brandenburgh House, with the threat of further scurrility if the offence was repeated. There was a list, too, of clergymen who had prayed for the Queen, and week by week similar threats and libellous abuse were poured upon anyone who dared to countenance the Queen of England. Many poor ladies, fearing that malicious and foul stories, of themselves or their husbands, would be printed by Hook in *John Bull*, thought it more prudent to stay away from the Queen's receptions. In the same way there were aspiring officers in the army or navy, and clergymen of the Church of England, who knew that if

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they showed any civility to the Queen it would close the gates of promotion against them as long as the King lived.

But the English are not a servile race, and there were a large number of sympathisers with Caroline who were not afraid to pay her court. For many weeks loyal addresses were received and answered, and on November 29th Her Majesty attended St. Paul's in state to give thanks for her deliverance, and was received at Temple Bar by the Corporation, and the streets were lined with crowds of sympathisers. The King could not shut the gates of the Cathedral against her, but the obsequious dean and chapter could, and did, refuse to allow Archdeacon Bathurst, or anyone else, to preach a sermon on the occasion.

In the same way every effort by the Queen to have her name reinstated in the Liturgy was countered by the King, his lawyers and his Ministers. Brougham and the Whigs did not take much interest in Caroline's aspirations about the Liturgy, or her desire to attend the Coronation, but as a political move they persuaded her to announce that unless her name was restored to the Prayer-Book she would not accept her allowance, a Bill for which was now passed. Nothing came of her refusal and, as she had debts to pay and could not live on nothing, she consented to receive the money voted to her without further consulting Brougham, very much to his discontent.

The Queen went to the theatres, and was present at a concert at the Mansion House in aid of a Lancastrian charity, and everywhere was received with marks of respect and affection. But when she wrote to the Ministers to ask what steps were being taken for her to be present at the Coronation, Lord Liverpool informed her that it was the King's prerogative to arrange the ceremonial of the Coronation and he did not intend to give any authority for her to be present.

Brougham now advised a memorial to the King claiming the right of the Queen to attend the ceremony. This was referred to the Privy Council and very ably argued by

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Brougham, but naturally with no chance of any favourable decision. The better opinion seems to be that the King ought to insist on his Queen being crowned and, constitutionally, his ministers should see it attended to, just as the King is bound to allow his own name to be used in a writ. If a writ were withheld when a subject has a right to it, owing to a King's personal interference, it is difficult to know, short of impeaching his ministers or starting a revolution, what could be done.

The Privy Council were, of course, obsequious to the King's wishes, and the Queen was informed that no arrangements would be made for her attendance, and that she would not be allowed to be present at the Coronation.

There, I think, it would have been better to let the matter rest. But Caroline determined to assert her rights by demanding access to the Abbey, and in a carriage and six, early on the morning of the 19th of July, accompanied by Lord and Lady Hood and Lady Anne Hamilton, she drove to Westminster, alighted at Westminster Hall, and asked for admission. The officer on guard was bound to refuse her. She applied at another entrance, the door of the Duchy of Lancaster, and then at a third entrance, and being refused at all of them drove away.

But though the King had no place for his wife, a prominent seat was given to Elizabeth, Lady Conyngham, the latest favourite, wittily described as the *Vice-Queen*, and Sir Charles Bagot says that whilst the King was at the altar, even during the Communion Service, he kept repeatedly kissing a ring he wore, given to him by that dear lady, and gazing at her affectionately.

Why Caroline should have made this excursion it is hard to say, for it could serve no useful purpose. It was said that Alderman Wood prompted it, but that seems unlikely, as he attended the Coronation himself and was criticized by some for doing so. It seems to have been the whim of a desolate woman, already stricken with illness, and intent to show the world by this gesture that she was

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still determined to demand her rights as Queen. Both Denman and Brougham advised her against the course she determined on, but the latter told her that if she did go she should insist upon entering the Abbey ; but on the first refusal she drew back and went to another entrance, where the Guards were already warned not to let her pass. As Brougham says, " She flinched—I verily believe for the first time in her life."

Although she gave a merry breakfast party to her friends on her return from Westminster, making a jest of her excursion and telling the company she had put on her jewels to demonstrate to the people that she had not sold them, yet she was already ill and in great pain, and taking opiates to enable her to appear in public in her natural health. She had made an appointment to visit Drury Lane theatre on the Monday, July 30th, and though she was now very ill she refused to disappoint the actors and the management. It was her last public appearance. She was in great pain during the performance, but would not leave the theatre until the play was over. On Tuesday she was somewhat better, but on Wednesday Dr. Holland announced that she was suffering from obstruction attended by inflammation, and on August 2nd two other doctors were called in and a bulletin confirming Dr. Holland's diagnosis was issued to the public.

On August 4th Brougham was setting out for York and saw Caroline in the afternoon. She spoke very calmly of her case, and when he told her of the satisfactory opinion her doctors had given him, she merely said, " Oh, no, my dear Mr. Brougham, I shall not recover ; and I am much better dead, for I be tired of this life." At Grantham the next day he wrote to Lord Grey about it, telling him that he had seen her " on Friday night, when she signed her will, and she *seemed* not to be very ill, and her voice and hand were as firm as I ever saw any person's. She said to me that she was quite sure she should die, but did not mind it. However, there was something made

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me believe she did not at all think so." To the last Brougham never understood Caroline.

There was not the least doubt in Caroline's mind that she had come to the threshold of her last earthly adventure, and she was ready to pass through the door without alarm. When Dr. Holland asked permission to consult with another doctor, Caroline, with her usual consideration for others, answered him with a smile : " My dear Doctor, do what you please. If it will be any relief to your mind to call in assistance, do so ; but do not do it for my sake, I have no wish to live ; I would rather die."

She spoke often to her loving friends around her, of her readiness for death and her gratitude to all who had been true to her, and her regret that she could never reward the kindness of her servants. She had ordered that she should be buried in her native land. " England," she said, " has certainly been to me a land of sorrow and persecution ; but I know how to love those faithful English, who have always sympathized with my sorrow and done all in their power to defeat the malice of my persecutors."

She spoke once of the Milan Commissioners, and their agents in this country, with some show of anger, but ended with the words, " They have destroyed me, but I forgive them. I die in peace with all mankind."

Shortly afterwards she sent for Mariette Bron to tell her that she was to assure her sister, Louise Demont, that she had forgiven her all the falsehoods she had spoken against her.

Her doctors, like Brougham, could not understand her calm methods of discussing with Mr. Wilde her arrangements for her funeral at Brunswick ; but she chided them, saying, " They think it agitates me to talk of death ; they are mistaken. To me, who have little pleasure in life, it is pleasing to contemplate my approaching death ; and why may I not speak what I feel ? "

Her wisdom and brave sense seemed to have returned



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again. She may have flinched from the King's guards at Westminster, but she did not flinch from the Angel of Death.

One of her last orders to Mr. Wilde was not to send any messenger to Italy, as someone had purposed, to seal up her papers for fear they might fall into the hands of her enemies. "And what if they do!" she exclaimed. "I have no papers they may not see. They can find nothing; because there is nothing, nor ever has been, to impeach my character." Certainly no authentic scrap of writing, either of hers or addressed to her, has ever been discovered tending to support the charges made against her.

Her last words, spoken to one of her women a few hours before her death, were: "The doctors do not understand my malady; it is here"—she laid her hand upon her heart—"but I will be silent; my lips will never make it known." She never spoke again, and at twenty-five minutes after ten at night, on August 7th, 1821, Caroline, Queen of England, passed peacefully away.

It seems strange that, even after she was dead, the King and his Ministers could not let her friends carry her body to Harwich, for embarkation to Brunswick, without interference and insult. The object of the Government was to hurry on the obsequies so that they might not interfere with the King's pleasures in Ireland, where he had gone on a visit, and they were anxious also not to allow the people of London to organize any demonstration of honour to the dead Queen.

There is a correspondence between Lady Hood and Lord Liverpool on the funeral arrangements, from which it appears that the last insults to Caroline's memory were not the result of the zeal of his Ministers, but were "the King's commands," and Lady Hood was informed that the arrangements made by the King would be communicated to the Executors and could not be discussed with the Queen's friends.

Henry Viscount Hood and Lady Hood had since the

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return of the Queen acted as Lord and Lady of the Bed Chamber. Henry Hood's father, Admiral Samuel Hood, the Governor of Greenwich, was an old friend of Caroline when she lived at Blackheath, and it was on a visit to Catherington, his place in Hampshire, that his son, then happily married and a man of sixty, had driven Caroline in a "buggy" or "whiskey" about the country lanes, and this was one of the foolish charges which the Delicate Investigators had sought to treat seriously. The incident had in no way interfered with the friendship between Lady Hood and Caroline, and the Viscountess was with her to the last.

The King's arrangements were that his undertaker was to have charge of the funeral, which was to start on Monday, August 13th, under the care of a guard of cavalry and not to enter the City, which was the direct route, but to make its way north of London and arrive in Harwich, a distance of eighty to ninety miles, in two days.

There was good sense in Lady Hood's protest and appeal. "Why," she asks, "is a guard of honour appointed to attend Her Majesty's funeral? I can venture to pronounce, if there are no soldiers there will not be any disposition to tumult; therefore I do most earnestly pray your lordship to give up the idea of Her Majesty's remains having any other guard than that of the people. . . . In their love she ever confided; and surely, my lord, you will not at this awful moment of her interment act so decidedly contrary to her inclination."

But the real need for the soldiers was soon discovered. The Ministers were intent on pleasing the King, unless indeed, as Lord Liverpool asserts, the King in Ireland had actually sent over his commands, and intended to insult the Queen's friends and the City and Corporation of London at the same time.

At a Court of Common Council held on Monday, August 13th, the Lord Mayor and Court appeared in

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deep mourning. After a tribute to the late Queen, a resolution was passed that in the event of the royal corpse passing through the City they would attend the funeral procession at Temple Bar, and accompany it until it left the City precincts. Later in the day the Sheriffs of London received a letter from Whitehall that the arrangements have been "completed and laid before the King and that it is not intended that the royal corpse should pass through the City."

The custom of insulting the corpse of an enemy is a very ancient and primitive human failing, but making use of such a corpse to insult a public body with whom the King's Ministers were in political disagreement, seems a refinement on primeval usage which gives King George and his Ministers a claim to distinction in Tory anthropology.

For as that good woman, Lady Jane Hood, had foreseen, the attempt to carry the corpse of England's Queen by a route displeasing to England's people, by way of carrying out the King's petty spite against his wife now she was dead, was such a peculiarly foul and contemptible business that it could only end in riot and perhaps bloodshed.

The Queen's executors, Dr. Lushington and Mr. Wilde, claimed their right to carry out their legal duty of burying the deceased. The Ministers refused to acknowledge their position. After much discussion, Dr. Lushington obtained from the Ministers their grudging assent to postponing the departure of the funeral until August 14th.

But to ensure that the funeral should go by the route ordered by the King and not through the City, the Ministers sent down Mr. Bailey, the official undertaker, with a squadron of cavalry and some Bow Street officers to carry out their programme.

Mr. Wilde handed Mr. Bailey a written protest, which was of course unheeded, and then Mr. Bailey informed the friends of the Queen that the route to be taken was

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through Hammersmith, and then to turn round by the Kensington Gravel Pits, gaining the Uxbridge Road ; thence by Bayswater to Tyburn Turnpike, down the Edgware Road and through Islington to Mile End and so to Romford, Chelmsford and on to Harwich.

Mr. Wilde declared he would not take that route. Mr. Bailey said his orders were imperative and nothing should prevent him doing his duty. The hearse and a squadron of the Oxford Blues stood in front of the house, and a few minutes after seven in the morning Mr. Bailey and his men started their business. The hearse was drawn by eight horses and was preceded by the soldiers and three carriages, and followed by no less than thirteen mourning coaches with the Queen's friends and servants.

The rain fell in torrents and would have scattered an ordinary mob very quickly ; but in spite of the continuous deluge, a huge crowd of horsemen and pedestrians collected at Hyde Park Corner. It had got out that the procession was not to go through the City, but up to eight o'clock no one knew which route it would take. This in itself angered the people, who had come in great numbers and braved the elements to pay a last token of respect to the Queen.

The trouble began at Kensington Gravel Pits. Some amateur military genius had foreseen that the procession might turn away at this spot, and had collected together a barricade of carts and waggon, which were hauled across the road and a trench was dug. Then, when the procession arrived, the mob called out "Through the City ! Through the City !" and every available cart was pulled into the blockade. For an hour and a half the procession was at a standstill, waiting, it is said, orders from Lord Liverpool. Mr. Bailey was a stalwart man and would not budge from his route without orders.

We may suppose orders came, for they moved slowly along Kensington Gore and Knightsbridge. Here a troop of Life Guards came to their aid and tried to force a

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passage up Park Lane, but a barricade was hastily thrown up and stopped them, so they turned into the Park and made for Cumberland Gate.

The horse and foot of the mob raced along Park Lane. The Guards galloped through the Park. Their objective was Cumberland Gate, where the Marble Arch now stands. The people got possession of the Gate and closed it to hinder the procession passing. The Guards received orders to force a way through and clear a passage. Pistols and carbines were fired and one man was killed and another seriously wounded. The crowd dispersed. Mr. Bailey had gained a victory and the hearse and procession proceeded along the Edgware Road.

Now the latest thing in Georgian town planning was the making of the New Road from Paddington to Islington. When the Guards had gained the victory at Cumberland Gate, the strategic leaders of the mob carried their forces along to the top of Portland Place and Regent's Park, and masses of people thronged the New Road, which was fifty feet wide and not as yet paved. At Tottenham Court Road the people determined on their last effort. A huge barricade was built of carts and waggons with the wheels taken off, and the top of it was crowded with human beings. Nothing but a massacre and a delay of hours could have carried the procession through. We may believe the hearts of the soldiers were not beating with pride at the task of being led to victory by Mr. Bailey the undertaker. It must be recorded that he had all the good qualities of a Civil Servant, he was faithful, tough, unyielding, true to the letter of his job, and utterly wanting in any human sympathy. One feels for his chagrin when the Captain of the Guards, with a good sense worthy of the highest praise, overruled the stupidity of his ministerial dossier, and carried the hearse and its followers down Tottenham Court Road and away to Temple Bar.

The people had won, and the crowds in the City, who had waited on roofs, at windows and in the streets since

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early morning, were rewarded for their patience and loyalty. It was nearly five o'clock when the procession left the City boundary at Whitechapel, and late at night when the coffin was placed in the church at Chelmsford, where it remained for the night.

On Wednesday they set out for Colchester, where they arrived at midnight, and Mr. Bailey endeavoured to force them to continue the journey to Harwich that night. Dr. Lushington protested, and produced a letter from Lord Liverpool, to the effect that the procession was to rest two nights on the way to Harwich. Mr. Bailey gave way. The coffin was placed in the church at Colchester. Dr. Lushington had provided a solid silver plate on which was inscribed "Deposited, Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England," with the dates of her birth and death. This was, after an altercation with Mr. Bailey and Sir G. Nayler (Clarenceux King-at-Arms), screwed on to the lid of the coffin under Dr. Lushington's instructions. During the night it disappeared.

Until the early part of this year it was not known exactly what had happened to it. But in *The Times*, February 15th, 1930, there is an interesting account of the affair and a photograph of the coffin plate. It appears that it was stolen by a retainer of Dr. Lushington, who kept it until 1847, when on his death-bed he sent for his master and returned it to him. It has remained with the family ever since.

The next day they reached Harwich and the coffin was placed in the *Glasgow* frigate for conveyance to Germany. It was not until Friday night, August 24th, that they reached Brunswick. Here the people received the remains of their countrywoman with every token of respect and affection. But even here it appeared that King George IV, King of England and Elector of Hanover, could still exhibit his consistent and ignoble meanness. The young Duke of Brunswick, Caroline's nephew, a minor under the guardianship of George IV, had been removed from the town.

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The officers of the Corporation were in attendance and accompanied the hearse with Lord and Lady Hood, Dr. and Mrs. Lushington, and Lady Anne Hamilton, and Alderman Wood. The funeral took place late at night on August 26th, 1821. A torchlight procession preceded the hearse to the church, together with an escort of 200 cavalry. The orders of the military were to allow only the coffin and mourners to enter the church and no funeral service was to be said. The coffin was carried to the mausoleum and set down, near to those of her father and brother, without any religious ceremony. But a German pastor, who was with them, kneeled down and uttered a prayer in praise of Caroline's patience and long-suffering and in pious hope for the rest of her soul. The people and soldiers who stood round wept silently as the minister murmured Amen.

At last the Lord had delivered Caroline from the fierceness of the oppressor, and guided her feet into the way of Peace.

## APPENDIX I

*Correspondence between Lord Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary, and his brother, Lord Charles Stewart, English Ambassador in Vienna, from the original letters in the Record Office.*

Lord Castlereagh, on February 6th, 1821, *Hansard*, col. 493, said, "he positively denied that up to the period of the Milan Commission, which was dated in March, 1818, although the parties did not go over until the August following, ministers had officially taken the least pains to collect testimony against Her Majesty. No Servant of the Crown had, up to that period, received instructions upon the subject; although undoubtedly they had transmitted communications forced upon them by the notoriety of the circumstances."

These letters show this statement was quite inaccurate. Lord Castlereagh, who had publicly signed, as minister, a statement of the Princess's honesty previous to her leaving England, mentions "Proofs the Prince already has." These he may have accepted on the Prince's word. They were never produced.

*Lord Castlereagh to Lord Stewart*  
*Most Private and Secret.*

Gray Farm.

21st January, 1816.

MY DEAREST CHARLES,

I inclose the copy of a letter which I have written to Sir Charles Stuart on the subject of Dr. Griffiths, who assumed the name of Marshall in this country. If I mistake not this Griffiths, when at Vienna, lived with Mad Zelinska (is this right?) who I have since heard was the fair incognita, who gave you a fête one night when we were at Vienna together. As this person was certainly an active spy, and is said to have been since arrested together with his papers by the Austrian Police, some of which it is alledged concerned the Princess of Wales, I wish to trace out every thing you can concerning him. Prince Metternich will, I have no doubt, give you every assistance and copies of any papers that may have been found upon the Doctor, who appears at one time to have been pretty busy in this country.

I also send you a private letter from Lord Sligo to the Prince Regent. You will easily be able to trace what foundation there is for the story to which it refers. I observe by your last private letter that Baron O has opened himself to you. Of course he has taken the necessary precautions



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in doing so, as any countenance of the British Ambassador, by stripping him of the mark of *his former Disgrace* ; would deprive him of his future means of being of use.

In any communication you may have with him, you should make him feel the importance of not risking an Explosion except upon sure grounds, and he ought to secure the presence of some unexceptionable evidences, who could testify that they had *ocular Demonstration*—English witnesses to be preferred—and should such an attempt be made, it is material (lest it should fail) that it be so made as not to implicate you or any other person in the Prince Regent's service.

You will keep in mind that there are two objects to be aimed at. The first and best would be such unqualified Proofs of what no person can morally doubt, as would for ever deliver the Prince Regent from the Scandal of having a Woman so lost to all Decency in the relation of his wife. To effect this, or to justify in prudence a proceeding for Divorce, the proofs must be direct, and unequivocal and the Evidence such with respect to the parties to be examined, as would preclude their testimony from being run down and discredited. We must always recollect that this proceeding, if to be taken, must ultimately be a Parliamentary one. Party would there soon give it the character of a Question not merely between the Prince and Princess—but between the Prince and Princess Charlotte, and a great deal of factious Intrigue and Unpleasantness might grow out of such a Case, especially if there were any disrepute which could be thrown upon the Proofs or if the evidence was merely circumstantial and not direct.

But there is another most important object short of Divorce, viz :—to accumulate such a Body of Evidence as may at any time enable the Prince Regent to justify himself for refusing to receive the Princess in this country, or to admit her to the enjoyment of any of those Honorary Distinctions, to which his Wife, if received into his Court and family, would be entitled.

The Idea of any Stipulation with such a Person is not to be thought of. The Prince would dishonour Himself by entering into terms with her, and there is no means by which Terms, if broken on her part, which would inevitably happen, whenever any mischievous purpose might be thereby served, could be enforced. The only prudent course is to augment and confirm the Proofs the Prince already has, and which when used defensively to justify his own fixed determination never to suffer so depraved a Character to approach his person, will bear His R. H<sup>st</sup> out triumphantly before all Man kind in such a Determination. I consider that this latter purpose is already in fact attained and that we may feel entire confidence that this woman, loaded as she is with Disgrace in the Eyes of the whole continent, will never presume to present herself again for factious support in England. It is the efficacy of the Means we are already in possession of to protect the Prince Regent against further personal annoyance, that ought to make

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us doubly cautious of embarking in any offensive Proceeding, except upon the dearest grounds of practical expediency, but as a legal Deliverance from such a Person would undoubtedly constitute the only result completely satisfactory in itself, subject to all the prudential considerations I have adverted to, it is an object never to be lost sight of. I need add no more to make you see your way clear, and to enable you to furnish me with every Information in your Power.

Ever yours most affect<sup>ly</sup>.

(signed) CASTLEREAGH.

*P.S.* As I expect by the first Mail to receive Sir Chs. Stuart's answer to my letter herewith sent, and as his reply may throw considerable light on the case of Griffiths and facilitate your Inquiries, I have thought it advisable to detain your Messenger, in the hope of sending you a copy.

C.

Milan. Feb<sup>y</sup>. 28th. 1816.

*Lord Stewart*

Private and Most Secret.

MY DEAR CASTLEREAGH,

I am sorry I cannot announce much progress in my Researches and Enquires on a particular Subject since I last wrote. The Fact is I am come pretty decidedly to a stand until I am empowered to go very largely and decidedly into the Business, not myself I mean, but such Instruments as I have no doubt the certainty of Reward will put in motion. With regard to exertions which I or these around me could use, the extreme circumspection and prudence we must adopt renders it a very difficult proceeding, and though I can report and lay hold of every thing that comes to me spontaneously or by chance still to bear the convincing testimonies out, where they be laid is a more arduous undertaking. The painter, whom I mentioned in my last, is returned, has been visited repeatedly by D J. and B. (has 2 gentlemen residing at Milan). They never gave their names or address, and notwithstanding every effort the Painter always denied himself and they never could gain admittance. It became necessary therefore to resort to another expedient and as Carlo Bossi had given without promise or reward all the Information in his power, I deem'd it wise to secure him by buying several of his pictures for 40£. We then commissioned him to sound Montecelli the other painter as to the causes of his return from Palermo, his reasons for speaking so ill of the P<sup>ss</sup> and to discover if he would open himself to persons who could adduce convincing proofs that they were hostile to the P<sup>ss</sup>. infamous proceedings. Montecelli gave Bossi several interviews from which little could be extracted. At last the former said, I tell you what, Bossi, if you could ever make your

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fortune by revealing everything in such a concern it would be a very dirty and very dishonourable Business. Bossi was directed to ask Montecelli's advice, as a friend, as to any thing he might divulge if he could gain great advantage by it. You will see by what I have stated that whether Montecelli wishes to regain his ground in the Establishment again or whether he is disinclined to trust Bossi, or lastly whether he is entirely impenetrable it is clear he is not to be got at by any mode we have as yet been able to apply. I have directed that C. Bossi may for the present assume the air of having adopted Montecelli's opinions. In the meantime he has written to the gardner's boy and cook at the Villa D'Este and they are expected here to finish the Carnival when we shall see if anything is to be done with them. Montecelli is reputed to be a clever fellow, witty, ingenious and an excellent companion. He generally played chess with H.R.H. and it is said in one of their games she remarked "All Kings were Rascals but the Prince Regent the greatest of all." There is little doubt this man could reveal a great deal and, as an Italian it is presumed he is to be got, but from his calibre it must be by some engagement of consequence. For example, it might be proposed to him to go to England to paint a House; *al Fresco*, if his engagements at Como have ceas'd or he might at once be offer'd a Sum of Money to put a person in the way of obtaining Information. It is possible Money might be entirely lost and the channels in which it is distributed, fail. But I doubt whether anything solid will be gain'd unless it is work'd out by this. And the excessive Fear of Assassination that there is here and there great party Bergami has secur'd, added to the use of H.R.H.'s purse makes the weapons we have to contend with very difficult. I have tried another interview with O—— who has seen Montecelli for the former is supposed by all but the Austrian Police to be in strict intimacy with the Pss. Montecelli told O—— that the Pss. had changed her plans, had quarrell'd with Cap<sup>tn</sup>. Pechell of the *Clorinde* about his usage of Bergami, had determin'd not to sail on his frigate, had applied for another which she could not obtain and that she had thoughts of hiring a Merchant Vessel to come back to Italy and meant to be at Como as soon as ever the Court left Milan. The Princess's banker here Marrietti equally corroborates the accounts of her return. I question'd O. as to the progress of his researches. It appears he has so completely established himself as an inmate and friend at Villa D'Este that by sounding or employing others who might be of service he ruins and compromises himself beyond redemption if discovered. He has acted far too ostentatiously as the friend of the Pss. not to be in a great Dilemma and I know he wishes he had not undertaken it. He wrote to Munster some time since proposing a plan of employing a man from Naples who has a place about the Court worth about 500*£* per Ann. which he would relinquish for a certainty of great advantage. This man could (he says) introduce himself as a friend of Murat's into the service of

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the Pss. Once in the family, by means of false keys and other measures, O—— avers that he will answer for this man's succeeding in the exposure, but O—— describes him as a sort of desperado. This measure you will also observe requires some responsibility in the direction. Another Idea is the Prefet of Como, who is a Bosom friend and could unfold more than anyone, and has been dismissed by the Austrian Govt., being of French principles. The Pss. promised to take him as a Sec<sup>y</sup>, into her Establishment if turn'd out by the Austrians. This having occurred he is waiting her provision at Como. What might not a better offer achieve with him.

This whole case is very singular—of the Notoriety and Publicity and Certainty of the Facts nobody is ignorant—and yet the proofs are so hard to be got at in the Tangible Shape we require. Surely the mass of accumulated Facts you have received will enable the Government to direct some Agent to act decidedly for the purpose of investigating these Details on the spot. What all Italy knows can not be denied for the purpose of a party question with a strong Government in the British Parliament supposing the affair to assume a parliamentary shape. One can hardly suppose a British people would be so lost to a sense of what they owe their own morals and their own characters as to endure from a person in the Pss. of Wales's situation such unparalleled misconduct. I think it very unfortunate that Mr. Larpent was gone before I came here. It would be a great advantage, if a person or persons were sent that they should know Italian as it would so much facilitate their proceedings and enquiries.

To sum up what I have stated in this long letter, my opinion is that the Discoverys with ample Proof are to be achieved but not by half measures. Much must be hazarded and even failure in some attempts anticipated.

I would engage O—— to pursue his plan as he has already laid his foundation, but this would not deter me from trying other means. O's dea from securing the Agent beforehand is less exposed to meet with rebuffs. To send Montecelli and Bossi to England might alarm the Pss. especially as there has been a difference, if not a rupture with the former and after all one does not exactly know *what* he could unfold. One thing is evident from the enquiries we have hitherto made that all those who can give information are mistrustful of each other and the Pss. is supposed to have people employ'd to tamper with those who can make Disclosures, to ascertain their fidelity, when in case of their betraying her, Summary Punishment would await them. At least so we are given to understand.

I have endeavour'd to lay the whole case before you and I shall act with caution and great circumspection until I receive your opinions.

I am ever, my Dst C

Yours most affect<sup>y</sup>.

S

## Queen Caroline

P.S. O—— informed me that he had reason to believe the Pss. had conceived a plan of seeing her Daughter as soon after her Marriage as possible and the latter was to be urged to make an arrangement to travel abroad and they were to endeavour to meet at some place in France. However improbable this may be, it is as well that you should know it in the possible event of Princess Charlotte ever leaving the Kingdom. I do not know O.'s authority for his surmises.

S.

R.O. *Reference*.—"Papers and Correspondence relating to Princess of Wales, 1806-16." H.O. Records.

Milan. March 23rd 1816.

*Lord Stewart & Inclosure.*

Received April 2nd.

*Private and most Secret.*

MY DEAREST CASTLEREAGH,

I am under some embarrassment at not having heard from you since the 21st of January and especially, as I am under the necessity of leaving this place, without having formed that *Noyau* here which seems to me every Day more necessary from the accumulated and corroborating testimonies of one sort or other, that are received.

I have already exposed to you, how little qualified I think Mr. O—— now is for prosecuting those researches to such extreme point as your letter of the 21st indicates as desirable *under certain bearings*, from my late informations (which I will detail presently), I conceive More than we are aware; and much more than has yet come to light might be accomplished if a train of proceeding was well laid, before the return of the Princess to Italy, but having no person in whom I can confide after my departure, or to whom I can give up that *project* of Action necessary here, it is possible, notwithstanding all my precaution that the Clue may be lost, and the thread of the Tale escape which it will be difficult to recover and reassume.

I well know the deep importance of this Question, and the deliberation it may require at home, but I regret that some person should not have been sent to me or some communication made by which my exertions might have been more beneficially directed in the prosecution of the Affair here, and the State in which I am obliged to leave it less uncertain.

In what I shall now address to you I cannot boast much, either of its being as direct and unequivocal as I should wish, or that the Source from which I have it, is as creditable as to make the testimony of *primary* Nature in point of consequence but at all events the Data will add to the circumstantial evidence already received and will tend to assist that accumulation which the second Object in your Letter points out, I mean the justification for refusing ever to receive Her Royal Highness in England again. When

## Appendix I

I found it was difficult without risk or compromising to attack the painter Montecelli as detailed in my former Letter, and when the painter Bossi became so indisposed from illness as to render any further exertion on his part hopeless, I recollected having made the acquaintance of the Director of the Theatres of Varese and Como, on my passage into Italy, and as he at that time, seemed pretty conversant with the proceedings of the Princess, I considered it might be of importance to find him out, in order to have him sounded.

My Aides de Camp (whom I have already mentioned to you as having aided me with much ability in this affair and with equal circumspection and secrecy) lost no time in discovering the person and they entered into communication with him, the result of which the inclosed letters will detail.

The general purport of them seems to be, in a few words, that the parties have been at a masqued Ball together *en masque*, supped together, were Arm in Arm together all night, and went home together.

Again that this same Director *saw* them on the Lake in a boat together at dusk, with their Arms round each others Waists.

That Columbi, another Individual has seen them walking alone, Arm in Arm, frequently in the Fields and high Roads.

That two Boatmen have taken them frequently on the lake alone in a covered Boat (that is) that they were under the Cover alone.

That a Perruquier has seen them alone on a Mountain called *Renuni* where they have remained for an hour together, and returned as they went, alone.

These are certainly only additional indiscretions but placed with all the other histories and followed, as I have reason to suspect they may be, with more positive facts, they cannot fail of adding to the Weight of proof that it is expedient to collect.

The Director of this Theatre has not a high character, whether his Evidence could be impeached in a Court of Law, for any misconduct, I know not, but you will observe he is exerting himself in different places where he is well known and if in the course of time various Witnesses to different points come forward, it is hardly possible that all such proof can be run down.

I should apprehend, in England that any individual could procure a Divorce from his Wife, if he could prove she had allowed a Butler or Footman to embrace or take liberties with Her, and when one considers the Individual thus acting might be (if things are not brought to light) the Queen of England, the whole case is one of the most momentous Nature and in proportion must be most deeply weighed in all its bearings before openly entered into by Ministers as a Government proceeding, but I equally feel from all I have heard in all Shapes and from all Sides on this Subject it would have been a dereliction of my duty not to have acted in it as I have

## Queen Caroline

done. It is impossible to write a more distinct and excellent View of the case than you have already done, but I again repeat that I cannot answer up to this period for *unexceptional evidences*, nor can I trace any *ocular demonstration* that can be secured, further than the indecent liberties which have been already laid open.

I see no prospect of English witnesses being procured, perhaps the next best would be the depositions of her two Swiss Maids, who are about her person, if they could be induced to a disclosure.

With regard to *disrepute* which might be thrown upon the proofs? You must call to your recollection the Princess has discarded every English Attendant, except one; (I believe Lieutenant Hownam is still with her—who or what he is, I know not). She has surrounded herself with Foreign Objects and Menials the most vile and notorious and is completely domiciliated in a strange country, or travelling in remote regions. Under such circumstances no Tribunal could look for English witnesses. The Difficulty of Evidences here, and particularly the difficulty of those who seek to discover them, is *first* that it exposes immediately, if discovered, the Party or Parties to assassination, and *secondly* it is hard to ascertain (where there is so much profligacy) where honest Character really exists, and where unprejudiced, uninfluenced, unbought *Evidence* can be found. I have already experienced that many persons say more than they can accomplish, when pressed on the point. Were it not for this the offers of the Director of the Theatre and his perfect conviction of being able in *a short time* to prove (if not to see) the very Facts would allure me to place considerable reliance upon him—but I am rather disposed upon the whole, after the most anxious reflection to consider the Affair not yet open, or ripe for any positive proceeding, but am confirmed more and more in my opinion, given in my Letter of the 29th of January that such facts have been disclosed, and (in my humble opinion) call upon the Prince Regent's government to send someone here to investigate what has come to light, and to push forward what remains to be discovered.

I consider this done in a *private* manner (even if discovered) could be easily defended by the Documents I have already placed in your possession and I certainly very much prefer, under the actual state of the case, a *secret* to any ostensible measure. The former affords particularly the great advantage, that it may be coupled with a close connexion with the Austrian Police, for which I have already laid the foundation.

I must however again remark to you here and urge you to press it strongly on Higher Authority, the absolute necessity of never breathing as to any assistance that Metternich might be disposed to afford. He assures me it would ruin him entirely, in his Situation, and completely destroy all his means of being of Service, as from that moment, he must cease to communicate with me, upon the point.

## Appendix I

I am led to this observation from hearing from him, that Munster has written it to O—— who had mentioned it to Metternich, from natural Motives of personal Fear defensible in his predicament, but certainly imprudently.

You will easily understand how anxious Metternich is to keep himself out of the Observation of all Germans, on such a Subject, which becomes *now* a political Question of Interest, since Princess Charlotte's Marriage and though he would be, as he has been, very open with me, and facilitate any Communications between his Police, and such English person as might be nominated, and come clear into this concern, I am convinced that he is not satisfied that Mr. O—— *under all his circumstances*, should talk to him on the Affair.

I mention this more for the purpose of *future caution* than that any after rebukes or faults should now be found, for it is at present unnecessary, and as Mr. O—— has done all in his power, although he has a little mistaken his *Line of Action*, by assuming too much the illustrious Traveller, and the intimate Friend, still he has brought a great deal forward, in Anecdote, if he can substantiate all. One should therefore use great Management, in keeping him in good humour, and tight to the collar, as far as possible, without committing him. The Alarm Munster gave him, that he was discovered by the Austrian Police, which he never dreamed of before, has made him excessively uneasy. He thinks now, in Society everyone suspects him, and in proportion as facts press forward, O—— fancies "He hears a voice in every Wind," and that a Stiletto or Dagger will finish him. As Assassinations have been very frequent lately, in the streets of Milan, our Friend feels it no Joke. With regard to his *proof* of all he has put upon paper, I am afraid it will be a little difficult to get at. Everything he states in his papers seems very satisfactory, but I have never seen Depositions or Signatures from him, and I am ignorant if he can produce the persons to swear even to the circumstances he details. He has now been above a year and a half employed and either his means are not adequate to force the Facts out, or the stile he has adopted defeats his own purposes, for in the few weeks I have been here, I have satisfied my own Mind that a person entering without Embarrassment with full power and with determination into the Affair would soon bring it to a more decisive bearing.

Since writing the fore-going part of this Letter, the Director of the Theatre has returned from an Expedition he made to the Isles de Boromeos. The Result of his enquiries you will see in the two annexed letters.

I have to observe on this, that the Declaration of the Aubergiste's Son, at Varese, seems the most outrageous Fait we have almost yet had. Of its being secured on Oath when necessary the Director is the pledge and answers I understand with his Life for it in such legal manner as may be necessary. But as this Director if he is put high and forced on the Game will naturally



## Queen Caroline

be shrewd enough to discover not only the object of it, but the person from whom the Instruction comes, and as high reward would afterwards be looked for, on a full consideration I have deemed it prudent, as we know where to find the Testimony not to stir it up farther until some insight arrives from England as to your delegation of some person or persons here. The Director in the course of his Conversation let out, that in fifteen Days he could have Depositions before Notaries from various persons, that would incontrovertibly establish the fact beyond all doubt, but for such purpose, he must have a credit of *Eight or Ten Thousand* francs, for all the Expenses he would have to incur, to draw on it as he might require.

A person established here as I have proposed might grant such authority, if the premises were promising, and I firmly believe this Director, who is enterprizing and shrewd to a degree, would make good his Word. But your own Judgement will point out how much my position exposes me, and those who are about me, whereas it would be a professional person's duty to act in every Way for his Object. We can only proceed to a certain extent from our Zeal and from our hope that it is an essential duty performing to our Country, however disagreeable, and with all the precaution and Management which is so essentially important for the Case itself the Business is difficult. For these reasons I shall not enter any more at large or take more responsibility than I have done until you *deign* to open your Mouth. You will not accuse me of not wishing to do enough, if you do not rebuke me for having meddled too far. I have only to add, that the painter Bossi on his Recovery from his Illness, has set out on another Voyage of Discovery to Como, to procure the Evidence of George the Cook and the Gardner's Boy, but is not yet returned.

It appears by recent Advices received from the Princess, by Messrs. Marrietti her Bankers, that she has again decided to prosecute her Voyage to Egypt, and not to return here, as was expected when I wrote last. She writes to her Bankers in the greatest Abuse of everything English in a letter of Six Sides, and complains particularly of the indignity of not having her Daughter's Marriage officially notified to her. She has written for a particular Doctor, who always attended her here, to be sent to her in Sicily and he has received Passports from the Governor under the pretence of making the journey as a Professor to write her History. Bartholomy Bergamo has been created, by her especial Exertions a *Chevalier de Malta*. She is as much in love with him as ever. Her Expedition is thought will be prolonged till August.

I have taken measures here, by means of signatures to place O——, or anyone else I may send, in communication with the Individuals at Milan, who are necessary in the prosecution of these researches.

Ever dearest C.

Yrs. most affectly.

## Appendix I

*Most Private and Secret.*

Vienna, May 11th, 1816.

*Most Private and Secret.*

MY DEAR CASTLEREAGH,

In reference to that part of your private letter of the 15th April upon a particular Subject I wish to say a few words.

The Idea you state to me, as now prevalent of a Hanoverian Enquiry and the whole concern being placed in the hands of the Lord Chancellor, and the Law Servants of the Crown, is unquestionably replete with that profound Legal Wisdom that has taken the determination. But it appears to my ignorant mind a little *harking back*, to take up the mystery of the Boy's birth, which could have been investigated many years ago, and which is now almost forgotten, rather than to recur to those recent and extraordinary Instances of depravity of conduct which makes all Italy ring, which are laid before the Prince Regent's Government from various different Data, and which it is as just to the party accused as to the accusers to bring to light. We have in military Law a prohibition against Charges preferred after a certain lapse of time. Surely an old and uninteresting History, from its being so often brought forward, would neither interest the publick mind nor be construed into any other proceeding than one of Malice and Management with a Hanoverian Government. Place before it new and extraordinary Data as all the late Information would afford, then you would disembarass the proceeding from all questionable and ancient Malice. I am no Lawyer and no Parliamentary Manager. All you say on the latter head is orthodox, but if Hanover is to enquire, let her enquire about new facts and not have the Appearance of being humbugged into old and almost Obsolete Histories. However, I have now said more than I ought, all I desire is to know how far it may be deemed expedient to keep up those sources of Information and continue the Intercourse with those People or others who might hereafter bring the recent Transactions more to light. and with whom my Enquiries have rested—pray consider this attentively. You will observe the difference of Mr. O——'s general Hearsay Statements and particular Facts recorded and signed to, and you or the Law Officers must judge of the importance and the Mode of keeping the Chain in action, or improving the Channel that has been laid. If I had a Choice where duty is concerned, I clearly had rather be extricated from following up these Affairs. But with Prince Metternich's means I must always be *a* *porter* of knowing much, and it is also advisable that those persons at Milan should not be decidedly lost sight of, or unemployed. You know all my Doubts as to Mr. O——'s power of continuing effectually the Enquiries and following up the proofs. The Hanoverian Government undertaking it, they must employ new or additional Instruments. No time should be lost in taking the necessary Steps, and some Decision should be positively come

## Queen Caroline

to, as to the Extent of Expenditure the Prince Regent's Government would risk. You will recollect now that I have not had the means of placing anyone in operation with the Austrian Police at Milan, or letting an Individual in to Communication with Count Saurau the Civil Governor on these points—Mr. O—— from various circumstances can never come into those relations.

I have not understood satisfactorily why you have repudiated my Idea of employing some professional Authority solely and entirely for the purpose in the place. One always sees when a person or persons are charged expressly with a particular Object, it is much sooner worked out than when the affairs are left to the Casual good Offices of those who may get at things by Chance. Whatever may be the mode of proceeding or final determination It will be unwise *in my humble opinion* if you forego those means of acquiring more knowledge, which Indifference or a new mode of Action might lose without the possibility of retrieving, to the Satisfaction in which they might be pushed now. This is all that has occurred to me as my duty to state, and perhaps if your Mind had not been more over-whelmed with Economy than it ever was, with the knowledge of obtaining Riches you would have given me your Views more in detail on this Subject.

Ever my dear Castlereagh  
most affectly. yours

STEWART, Lt. Gnl.

## APPENDIX II

From the original in the possession of Messrs. Leman, Chapman & Harrison, the successors of Mr. Vizard, the Queen's solicitor.

(i) Draft letter of Mr. Vizard to Lady Anne Hamilton, July 7th, 1820.

(ii) Opinion of Counsel on the Queen's proposal to abandon proceedings in the House of Lords, July 20th, 1820.

(i) *Letter of Mr. Vizard to Lady Anne Hamilton.*

S. I. F.

MADAM,

7th July, 1820.

I intreat your ladyship will do me the honour to inform Her Majesty that in obedience to her commands I have retained Mr. Wilde as one of Her Majesty's Counsel.

I also yesterday saw Mr. Serjeant Lens and Mr. Scarlett and offered them retainers for Her Majesty. They both begged me to express in the strongest and most respectful terms the high sense they entertain of the honor proposed to be conferred upon them and desired me to assure Her Majesty of their warmest wishes for the success of Her defence against the charges made.

Mr. Serjt. Lens feels himself however compelled to request he may be permitted to decline the honor intended him under circumstances which he trusts will plead his sufficient excuse. He had been some days since applied to attend the House of Lords as counsel for the King in support of the Bill, and he had excused himself from doing it on account of the delicate state of his health, and the severe domestic misfortune he has lately sustained, which render him wholly unequal to the exertion which the conduct of such a case would require of him. Your Ladyship will therefore see that having declined to Act for the King it would be impossible for him to accept a retainer against him. Mr. Scarlett feels great difficulty from the peculiar circumstances in which he is placed as to the course he should take. Holding as he does the rank of Kings Counsel, he is unable to appear against the King without a previous license being obtained from His Majesty, and he considers the present proceeding is one to which that rule applies. He feels also that being a member of the House of Commons he may be restrained from appearing as Counsel against any Bill at the Bar of the House of Lords. He hopes that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to allow him 2 or 3 days to consider before he give a decisive answer to the application.

## Queen Caroline

### (ii) *Counsel's Opinion.*

The point submitted to our consideration, is, whether it will be expedient, or advisable, for her Majesty not to appear and make any defence before the House of Lords but to reserve her defence for the Bar of the Commons House of Parliament. We deem it to be a question of the greatest possible importance, and in the highest Degree affecting the Interests of her Majesty, and which has also come upon us entirely without preparation.

Upon the best consideration, however, we can give to this most important question, we think it will not be expedient, nor advisable, for her Majesty to pursue the course above suggested. The refusal to appear and make defence at the bar of the House of Lords, is so completely at variance with the Tone and Language which have been hitherto maintained on the part of her Majesty with respect to the prosecution of the charges alleged against her, that we cannot but fear that it will be open to much mis-construction, and raise considerable prejudice against her case, in the minds of the Members of the two Houses of Parliament. And we fear still more, that the declining to appear at the bar of that House, where only, the witnesses on the part of the accuser, and the accused, can be examined under the Sanction of an Oath, and the appealing to that House, where no such Sanction can be had recourse to, will place her Majesty's case under much greater difficulties, than any advantage to be gained by declining a Trial in the House of Lords, can compensate.

Under these impressions, we think it our Duty to recommend to her Majesty, most earnestly, not to decline to appear and defend at the Bar of the House of Lords.

H. BROUGHAM.  
J. WILLIAMS.  
W. C. TINDAL.

YORK, 20th July, 1820.

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