VARIOUS

BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, VOL. 71, NO. 438, APRIL 1852

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Содержание

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THE EARL OF DERBY

" – And marvelling went away
To muse on scene, and actor, each the other
Befitting gracefully. O, good my lord,
I would the Lieges had been there, to see
Such shining chivalry." —*The Royal Stranger.*

On Friday evening, the 27th February 1852, the House of Lords presented a magnificent and profoundly interesting spectacle. Vanishing daylight was being succeeded by that artificial illumination which gradually gave a new aspect to the gorgeous fabric, vivid with innumerable heraldic emblazonments, within which was about to be enacted a scene of vital concernment to the greatest empire upon earth. And the interest of that scene was centred in one individual, not yet within the House, and whose arrival all were awaiting with anxiety and expectation. A nobleman of ancient lineage, of chivalrous honour, of uncompromising character and commanding abilities, the acknowledged leader of the most powerful party in the country, and fresh from the presence of his Royal Mistress, who had cheerfully intrusted to him the direction of public affairs at a momentous crisis, was about to indicate the principles on which his policy would be based. He was to do this in the presence of fervent friends and fierce opponents; of persons representing all the great interests of the country, and professing to regard, and many sincerely, the very existence of those interests as in jeopardy; exponents of every shade of political opinion; the representatives of all the leading civilised nations of the earth, between some of the greatest of whom and ourselves, relations were at that moment delicate, and even precarious. Every syllable, moreover, that he was to utter, would, as it fell from his lips, be then and there exactly and irrevocably recorded, and within an hour or two flying far and wide on the wings of the lightning! to be instantly subjected to jealous scrutiny; exciting alike hopes and fears, reasonable and unreasonable, calling forth admiration, or provoking bitter censure; a single ambiguous or inconsiderate word destined to be disingenuously misrepresented, and become a spark to kindle revolutionary agitation. Everything, again, that he might utter, would come quickly under the anxious eye of the Queen, who had confided so implicitly in his discretion; and finally, what he was that evening to say, would forthwith become matter of historical record and reference.

Is it unreasonable to suppose that some such reflections as the foregoing might flit across the mind of an anxious statesman, on such an eventful evening – thoughts calculated to dispirit and disturb one of inferior mettle and capacity, but greatly to elevate and strengthen a superior intellect, trained to the conduct of affairs, conscious of the exigency, but also of being equal to it? We appeal, indeed, to all whose fortune it has been to make public addresses on very critical occasions, when miscarriage may not only be mischievous and dangerous, whether it is possible to overstate the anxiety with which such occasions are approached.

The Earl of Derby has just stepped into his carriage with a brother peer high in his confidence; and while they are driving down to the House, let us occupy the brief interval by glancing back at a somewhat similar scene in which the Earl figured exactly twelve months before. The scene is the

same to which he is now hastening – in one respect the person is changed – Baron Stanley has passed into the Earl of Derby; but are the PRINCIPLES, and is the MAN the same? Let us look at —

Lord Stanley in the House of Lords, on Friday, the 28th February 1851.

On that evening he made an elaborate statement in the presence of his brother Peers, but spoke from another part of the House, and in a capacity different from that in which he is now about to make his appearance. He stood on the Opposition side of the House, and in the character of a statesman come to announce, amidst the blank disappointment of his friends and supporters, the failure of all his efforts to comply with the wishes of his Sovereign, that he should form a new Ministry. Two other Peers had also, on the same evening, made statements in that House, and at the same moment two statesmen were making corresponding statements in the other House; all of them indicating a conjuncture of affairs, and a position of parties, altogether unexampled in the history of the country. Who can appreciate that week's anxiety to the Queen of this great country? A Queen, with an exact knowledge of her own august and transcendant relations and responsibilities to a free state, intimately acquainted with the characters and position of public men, sending for one of them after the other, to form a Ministry in accordance with their own political principles, but in vain; and at length compelled to command her late Ministers to resume, for a time, the reins which they had surrendered, that the country might not be without any Government at all, and at a moment fraught with very special national anxieties. Let us take the opportunity of saying, with proud satisfaction, that all the noblemen and gentlemen in question – Lord Stanley, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord John Russell, and Sir James Graham – acquitted themselves as became British statesmen, patriots, and loyal subjects; in a manner which excited universal approbation both at home and abroad: exhibiting a vivid and most instructive illustration of the strength and elasticity of our institutions, and the courage and discretion of both Queen and People. On that occasion, he with whom we have now to deal played his part nobly, and the manner in which he played it has become a matter of high importance; regard being had to his present position – to which his conduct then now affords a key – and bearing in mind that which is very dear to Englishmen, *the simplicity and truthfulness of his personal character, and the consistency of his political career*. Let us see, then, what were the precise circumstances under which he then made so conspicuous and memorable an appearance on the scene of public affairs; and what was the account which he thought proper to give of himself, and the principles on which he should have constructed his policy, had he succeeded in forming a Government. What he said in the House of Lords in February 1851, will throw a flood of light on his position in the House of Lords in February 1852.

We all recollect the special circumstances of anxiety and difficulty with which the last Session of Parliament opened, arising out of the newly balanced strength of parties in the House of Commons, the rickety condition of the Government, and the apprehended consequences of a vast influx of foreigners – many strongly tainted with revolutionary principles – on occasion of the Great Exhibition. Thus, when a Government ought to have been strongest, it was confessedly weakest! The Queen's Speech, whether wisely or not is now no province of ours to consider, contained matter calculated greatly to stimulate party contentions. The Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer excited universal dissatisfaction; Lord John Russell's famous letter on the Papal Aggression had excited a prodigious ferment in the public mind, and a just demand for immediate and stringent legislation, which, however, he immediately found almost insuperable difficulties in satisfying. It is said that his Cabinet became the scene of violent dissensions upon this subject, inevitably inducing feebleness and vacillation in action. Again, the Queen's Speech having solemnly recognised the existence of great distress among the agricultural interest, in bitter contradistinction to the prosperity of all other interests, as declared in the same Speech – Ministers, nevertheless, took no steps whatever to remedy or alleviate that distress; on which Mr Disraeli almost immediately brought forward his celebrated motion, "That it was the duty of Ministers to introduce without delay such measures as might be

effectual for relieving the ADMITTED agricultural distress." After a protracted debate, the whole strength of the Government being brought to bear against the motion, aided by the Peel party, (with the brilliant exception of Mr Gladstone, *who both spoke and voted in favour of the motion*,) a House of five hundred and forty-eight members negatived the motion, but by a majority of *fourteen* only! Thus Lord John Russell's Government, having volunteered an admission of great agricultural distress, deliberately resolved to afford it no redress whatever! This was on the 13th February 1851, only nine days after the opening of the session. A week afterwards, viz., on the 20th February, came on Mr Locke King's motion for an extension of the franchise. This motion, also, the Government *professed* to oppose; but here, in a House of only one hundred and forty-eight members, Ministers were *defeated* by a majority of forty-eight. Lord Stanley's friends in the House of Commons abstained from attending to oppose the motion; but he told the Queen, and in the House of Lords stated that he had done so, [1] that the reason why they did so, was "because they saw that her Majesty's Ministers were not honestly exercising their influence to defeat the motion." The truth of this statement was tacitly acknowledged by Ministers in both Houses! Immediately after their defeat, which they had clearly invited, Ministers tendered their resignation; the Queen sent for the Earl of Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and Lord John Russell; then for Lord Stanley; and on all declaring themselves unable to coalesce, or form an Administration, her Majesty, in great anxiety, sent for her venerable and illustrious adviser the Duke of Wellington; who wisely counselled her to continue Lord John Russell's Government in office, at all events for the present, and under the pressing circumstances of the time. This decision having been arrived at, Parliament reassembled on Friday the 28th February, anxious to hear an account of that busy and critical week's doings in Downing Street, St James's Square, and Buckingham Palace. We have here, however, to do with the House of Lords only. – It was almost as greatly crowded as on the corresponding day in the ensuing year; and though Lord Lansdowne and Lord Aberdeen had to address the House, Lord Stanley was he whom all were naturally most anxious to hear. He sate in his usual place, low down on the front seat of the Opposition side of the House, surrounded by a goodly muster of his friends; all of them exhibiting more or less anxiety. He was but little interrupted, and sate with folded arms, his hat coming, as usual, low down on his head, and almost entirely concealing a powerfully-developed forehead. He listened with close attention to Lord Lansdowne, who spoke briefly, temperately, and with extreme gravity of manner. The following sentence, delivered with much energy, elicited from Lord Stanley, unless we are mistaken, an emphatic "Hear, hear, hear: " —

"There is one sacrifice public men can never be called upon to make; because it is not only a sacrifice of themselves, but a sacrifice of the honour and dignity of the Crown; I mean, that involved in a prolonged attempt, under any circumstances, to carry on the public business of the country, without the promise of that amount of support, which is indispensable to all Governments, for the purpose of enabling them to maintain the honour of the Crown, and to maintain and promote the efficient carrying on of the public service." [2] Lord Aberdeen followed, and declared that it was the *Ecclesiastical Titles Bill* which alone had frustrated all efforts at combination between himself and his friends, and Lord John Russell. Then rose Lord Stanley, amidst general indications of increased interest, and spoke calmly and gravely. He gave a lucid account of the abortive negotiations in which he had been engaged, speaking with marked caution and exactness of phraseology, in all those passages describing his interviews and communications with the Queen. His speech consisted of two parts; – a narrative of what had passed during the week; and a declaration of intended policy. In two sentences, he disposed of two idle but sedulously disseminated rumours – that he had been coldly received by the Queen, and that she had withheld from him the power of dissolving Parliament. As to the former, "Nothing, my lords, could exceed the condescension and graciousness of manner, *and more than of manner*, with which any proposition from me has been listened to, with which any

[1] Hansard, (3d Series,) vol. cxiv., col. 1007.

[2] Hansard, (3d Series,) vol. cxiv., col. 998-9.

communication and advice which I felt it my duty to tender to her Majesty, has been received." As to the latter, "There is not the shadow of a foundation for the statement that her Majesty would not have given me the power of dissolving Parliament; and I am authorised by the Queen to say, that no one could be justified in saying, or holding out a belief, to the contrary." Such, then, was her Majesty's confidence in Lord Stanley, that even in the critical condition of the country at that time, she would have intrusted him with the great power of dissolving Parliament. And now what did this faithful and plain-speaking nobleman tell his Royal Mistress? Let him speak for himself; and what he then said to the Queen, it is now of supreme importance for us to know.

"My first statement to the Queen was, that, had I been a member of the House of Commons, I should have certainly supported the motion of Mr Disraeli.[3]… I stated that it would be impossible for me, as an honest man, to take office without a full determination to deal with that distress, and endeavour to apply to it, as a Minister, effective measures of relief." And yet again, with an explicitness defying all possibility of misapprehension – "I stated, that if I could so far forget myself as to sacrifice my honest convictions, the loss of honour which would be involved in such a course of procedure would make my services worse than valueless; … that I would not take office on any other condition than that of endeavouring, *bonâ fide*, to give effect to my own conviction, of the necessity of legislating for that class [the agricultural] of her Majesty's subjects: *but I did not bind myself to any specific measure.*" So much for Lord Stanley's explanation of what had passed between himself and the Queen. Now let us see the policy on which he would have acted with his Ministry; and he explained it with admirable straightforwardness, principally with reference to three great topics – the *Income Tax*, *Agricultural Distress*, and *Papal Aggression*. He began by saying, "I might, I think, have brought to a satisfactory issue two or three important questions, which appear to be the great stumbling-block of politicians at the present moment."

First, then, of the Income Tax. "Take it as you will, levy it as you please, this is a tax which is full of anomalies and inconveniences, pressing variously upon different classes of the community, with a complicated injustice which no modification can altogether remove." He declared his conviction in strong terms, that if the House of Commons had not implicitly relied on Sir Robert Peel's pledge that the Income Tax was to last for only three years, "it would not have consented to the imposition of it for an hour; … there was no man living who believed that it would." And he added, "I hold it to be an object, not only of vital importance, but one to which the faith of successive Ministers has been pledged, that the Income Tax should not be permitted to degenerate into a permanent tax."

Secondly, as to Agricultural Distress. "I hold it to be an admitted and undisputed fact, that the land is, at this moment, the only suffering interest; and that it is labouring under an amount of taxation, of various descriptions, far exceeding the amount which falls upon other classes of the community… By imposing a moderate duty on the imposition of foreign corn, you might raise a very considerable revenue for the country, while you would not materially raise the price to the consumer; but you would, by the acquisition of a duty of £1,500,000, or £2,000,000, enable the Government more rapidly to effect that object to which I have referred as of great advantage to the community at large —*the extinction of the Income Tax*… The relief of the finances of the country, and the removal of that pressure of taxation, would infinitely and immeasurably exceed in advantage any possible trifling alteration in the price of food – and trifling indeed it must be – which could touch the consumer."

We beg particular attention to the following passage: —

"I express my frank opinion, that the question of *Protection*, or, if you please, the question of the unrestricted import of provisions, is one which must be settled *by the country*, once, and for ever, whenever it is appealed to for its decision. Should the next general election prove that the sense of the country is in favour of a perfectly unrestricted import of all provisions, unaccompanied by those duties which in other countries are imposed for purposes of revenue, upon all articles, and which in

[3] On Agricultural Distress, *ante*, p. 389.

this country are imposed to a vast extent upon articles of prime necessity for consumption hardly inferior to *bread* itself, I, for one, and I believe the majority of your lordships and of Parliament, would respectfully bow to that expression of the sense of the country."

Lastly, As to Papal Aggression. Lord Stanley treated this question, which he solemnly pronounced to be "the most important of all important questions," in a spirit of resolute and comprehensive statesmanship. Sharing the universal indignation, at the impudent and dangerous attempt of the Pope upon the liberties of this country and the Queen's supreme authority, Lord Stanley denounced the petty legislation by which the Government proposed to meet it, as beneath contempt, and predicted precisely that which has come to pass. But what were his own views? And how would he have *acted* upon them? Let every Protestant in the Empire give ear.

"The real danger is this: The GRADUAL growth and encroachment of the power of the Pope, and of the prelates acting under his authority, in interfering with matters not purely and strictly religious, and in assuming to themselves powers, which if not in violation of the [letter of the] law of the land, are at variance with [the spirit of] that law.

"I conceive that there are grave questions depending upon the position of the Roman Catholics in this country, with regard to the rights of their own church, to the disposition of property, and the manner in which trust property is held for Roman Catholic purposes.

"I think it is a subject for inquiry, how religious houses of various descriptions are carried on in this country; and it is a grave question whether *all* religious houses should not be subjected to the power of visitation, in order that it may be ascertained that no persons are retained within them contrary to the law of the land.

"I should have recommended that, in both Houses of Parliament, inquiries should take place as to the actual relations in which the Roman Catholic subjects of the Queen stand towards the State, towards any foreign power, and towards their own priests and prelates. I would have advised that this subject should be fully investigated; the present anomalies of the law really exposed, and amendments suggested for the consideration of Parliament."

Such is a faint sketch of the leading portions of Lord Stanley's exposition of his views and intentions in February 1851; and whoever may take the trouble to read it *in extenso*, as it appears in Hansard, will heartily concur in an observation of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, made in the course of his address to the House of Commons on the same evening: "At the moment I am speaking," said Mr Disraeli, "Lord Stanley is explaining all the circumstances connected with that transaction [the attempt to form a Ministry.] And I will express my conviction, that when that statement shall have gone forth to the public, the character of my noble friend will stand, if possible, higher than ever."

Here, then, we have a sketch of Lord Stanley's political character on the 28th February 1851, under his own hand, unconsciously delineating features beaming with manly determination, noble frankness, and sagacious intellect; of a man who, on a signal occasion, proved himself true to his Queen, to his country, to himself, and to that Higher Power *by whom actions are weighed*,[4] and who rules the destinies of mankind. He must have foreseen, and known that everybody else foresaw, that he would inevitably, and very speedily, be called to the head of affairs. We do not think it possible to speak too highly of Lord Stanley's frankness as to his political opinions, on that all-important occasion. He might have wrapped himself up in what might have appeared a discreet reserve, resolving to watch the chapter of accidents, the progress of opinions and events, and *then* adapt himself to any position which he might be called by the Sovereign to occupy. He was aware, moreover, that the country knew his straightforwardness, and that he was a man of uncompromising determination. Why, then, did he volunteer, in the capacity of a defeated candidate for the highest office, so explicit a declaration of his political principles? Who cannot *now* give the answer? In order

[4] 1 Samuel, ii. 3.

that both the Queen and the country, both friends and opponents, might know exactly the course which he would pursue if placed in power; and he was distinctest on questions of the greatest moment, and on which it would have been easiest to raise a cry against him. That the country might have the opportunity of saying, whoever may come into power, *this* man shall not; whatever principles shall become dominant, *his* shall not, for they are those opposed to public opinion, and inconsistent with the common weal. Therefore Lord Stanley deliberately afforded to his opponents, even his most active and virulent, every opportunity they could desire for forming powerful combinations of parties, and eliciting an overpowering expression of the voice of the nation. His *trumpet* gave *no uncertain sound*. The enemy had ample notice, and might easily have baffled apprehended intrigue, and guarded against suspected surprise. But there has been, confessedly, neither intrigue nor surprise. Well, exactly twelve months have elapsed, during which the weakness of the existing Ministry became every month more apparent, and its speedy dissolution inevitable. What is the result?

The Earl of Derby in the House of Lords, on Friday the 27th February 1852.

He stood there with a very eventful year's better acquaintance between himself and the country, than when he had presented himself on the corresponding Friday of the preceding year. During that interval, the importance of which all political parties appreciated, more than one earnest effort was made, as privately as was practicable, to establish a basis of conjoint political action between three classes of the Liberal party, in opposition to a Protectionist policy; but it was found impracticable. And unless our means of information have misled us, it was plainly stated by a highly influential and clear-headed Liberal, to some who sought his advice, that he much doubted whether Free-Trade principles were making the way they ought to be making; and that the probable results of a formal appeal to the country upon the question was a matter requiring serious consideration, for that a great mass of prejudice on the subject yet existed in the country. But the Earl of Derby must by this time have reached the House of Lords.

It is just on the stroke of five o'clock, and we are standing at the bar of the House of Lords, under a grievous pressure of members of the House of Commons. What an exciting, what a splendid scene! The gentle strife between natural and artificial light has ceased, and brilliant jets reveal distinctly the spacious and noble proportions of the Lords' House. Look wherever you will, all is rich and mellow! And see those light graceful galleries half filled with fair female politicians, their gentle hearts beating with quite as keen feelings of rivalry – hopes, fears, and anxieties – as their noble lords, kinsmen, and friends beneath them! The strangers' gallery was packed with a far greater number than it could conveniently accommodate: and those highly important functionaries, the Reporters, seemed to have mustered in almost double strength. The throne end of the House was filled with peers' sons, ambassadors, and others. On the woolsack sate Lord Redesdale, as Deputy-Speaker, the new Lord Chancellor having not yet passed from Sir Edward Sugden into Lord St Leonards; while the late one, Lord Truro, sate, in plain clothes, on the Opposition side of the House, which was considerably more crowded with the ex-Ministry and their supporters, than the Ministerial side with their successors. There is the Marquis of Lansdowne, white-haired, and somewhat feeble in his gait, walking slowly down the House, till he takes his seat near that so recently occupied by the Earl of Derby. He looks depressed and anxious, but is calm and dignified, and apparently not disposed to conversation. Near to him are the Earl of Carlisle and Earl Grey – just above, but in a line with them, Lord Brougham and the Earl of Aberdeen: all these sit quietly enough, with an expectant air, in their places; while the younger folk, especially those just displaced from subordinate office, flit about among their friends, apparently in a state of concern and bewilderment! The cross benches are nearly filled. The Bishops' benches are occupied by only four or five Prelates, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London being of the number. Confronting the long line of the Opposition, sit many of the new Ministry and their friends, a goodly phalanx, generally wearing the appearance of excitement and resolution. At the corner of the second back bench is to be seen the striking figure of Lord Lyndhurst:

with folded arms, his commanding countenance, now exhibiting too many of the traces of age, shows that he is at this moment in profound thought. He seems disinclined to speak to anybody. We miss one great familiar figure, the white-haired Duke of Wellington; for he is gone to Strathfieldsaye, giving, this evening, his customary banquet to the Judges of Assize. The whole House is in a subdued buzz of conversation. A slight commotion at the further end attracts all eyes – and – enter the Earl of Derby, accompanied by a friend. He is dressed in a plain black surtout, with crape round his hat; and walks quietly to the place left vacant for him, on the front bench, and for the last five or six years occupied by the Marquis of Lansdowne, who now regards him with an expression of by no means eager hostility. On one side of the new Prime Minister sits the Duke of Northumberland, on the other are the Earls of Eglinton and Malmesbury. Lord Derby is in his fifty-third year, but looks nearly ten years younger. He is tall and well-proportioned; and his countenance displays dignity, frankness, and determination. Its distinguishing feature is the bright and piercing eye now glancing resolutely at the lowering array of the Opposition. On the table before him stand a decanter of water and a glass. As far as we can see, he has not brought with him a single note. He whispers for a moment to the Earl of Malmesbury, then rises, steps to the table, removes his hat, folds his arms, and a loud cry of "Hear! hear! hear!" issues from every quarter of the House, instantly hushed into deep silence – amidst which is heard a clear ringing voice speaking with beautiful distinctness of articulation, and very deliberately.

On that day week, and at that hour, he was pacing the pleasant grounds of Badminton, little dreaming that the electric wire, within a few hours, would be charged with two or three potent syllables addressed to himself, announcing the sudden fall of a Ministry, and summoning him to town, to form a new one! On Saturday evening he received a command to attend her Majesty on the ensuing day, when he presented to her Majesty "an outline of his Administration," – and, within three days' time, a list of all "those friends whom he had selected to discharge the principal offices of the Government." On the very day on which he was speaking, he and they had kissed hands on receiving the seals of office; and it is easy to imagine how every moment of the last five days must have been occupied with the harassing anxieties of forming an Administration. Yet there he stood, prepared to state, before that brilliant and imposing audience – before the whole country, and representatives of every civilised nation on earth, the policy on which he proposed to govern this vast empire! – An exposition which he well knew would require profound consideration to frame, so as to hit the happy mean between candour and statesmanlike reserve; to satisfy just expectation, and at the same time avoid alarming friends, or provoking captious enemies. Such a speech as the Earl of Derby delivered during the ensuing hour; so prudent in what was said, and omitted; so complete and comprehensive in its scheme and scope; so exact and felicitous in detail and expression – could not have been prepared, and delivered, as it was, by any man but one of great and practised powers, and consummate discretion. With no disposition whatever to flatter the Earl of Derby, and uninfluenced by any consideration except a rigorous regard for truth and justice, we declare our deliberate conviction that this speech alone showed its speaker fit to conduct the affairs of this country, at the grave crisis which undoubtedly exists. It is pervaded by an air of modesty, simplicity, frankness, resolution, discretion, and dignity, that is very lovely to the eyes of Englishmen. It is the speech of a Christian gentleman and statesman, and delineates a policy based upon Principle, as contradistinguished to Expediency. It exhibited a noble spirit, at once conciliatory, and uncompromising; and, in a word, immediately produced a prodigious effect upon the country. Had it been less able and satisfactory than it was, the consequences, as the speaker well knew, would have been immediately serious and prejudicial, to an extent beyond present calculation. As it is, the country, though in a very anxious and exacting humour, appeared to become at once assured and calm; and its pulse – the Funds – has ever since beat, not with feverish fluctuation, but with tranquil regularity. There is no gainsaying that fact, and it is a very pregnant one.

Standing with folded arms, his countenance and demeanour exhibiting a certain mixture of gravity and cheerfulness, – and speaking with the utmost deliberation and distinctness, the Earl of Derby thus began: they are his *ipsissima verba*: —

"My Lords, the place from which I have now the honour of addressing the House, at once not only affords a justification for my rising upon this occasion, but imposes upon me, as I conceive, the necessity of endeavouring to state, as shortly and as distinctly as I can, with as much frankness as may be in my power, and no more reserve than may be imposed by a due sense of my position, not only the motives which induced me to undertake the arduous duty which I thought myself bound not to decline; but also, as far as I can, an outline of the course which, having undertaken such a responsibility, I feel it incumbent on me to pursue."

– "O," whispered, at this point, a leading Liberal member of the House of Commons, to one beside him, "he's going to speak out;" and both listened to Lord Derby from that moment with unbroken silence and attention, and, when he had finished, looked at each other significantly, and for a few moments without uttering a word.

The Earl of Derby paused for a second or two, and directing a look of affectionate sincerity towards Lord Lansdowne, commenced that graceful, eloquent, well-weighed eulogy, which must long live in his memory.[5] The last sentence of it was as follows. It elicited universal cheering, and evidently affected Lord Lansdowne.

"My Lords, it must be an encouragement to future statesmen, that they should be able to point to his example; and see how, after a period of, I believe, nearly fifty years spent in the public service, a statesman can retire with the friendship, the warm and cordial friendship, of his political associates, with the cordial and sincere esteem of his political opponents, and with a character unblemished by a single stain on his political virtue or private honour!"

After a lucid statement of the circumstances under which he had been so suddenly and unexpectedly called to the helm of public affairs, the steps which he had taken to form a Government, and a frank avowal that he saw himself, for the present, environed with almost insuperable difficulties, arising principally out of the confused condition of parties in the House of Commons, he proceeded to indicate the principles on which he proposed to conduct the Government of the country. He commenced with his Foreign Policy, and there was perceptible a faint stir in the quarter where stood several ambassadors, and other members of the diplomatic body. As if anxious that all he said on this subject should be well understood by persons not perfectly familiar with the English language, he here spoke with even greater deliberation and distinctness than in any other part of his speech. He doubtless felt no little anxiety that his views of our foreign relations should be thoroughly appreciated by the representatives of foreign states, who would, of course, instantly, on quitting the House, forward accounts of what they had heard to their respective governments. One or two might have been seen taking a pencil note of particular expressions; and this might well be done; for he handled these critical topics with exquisite discretion and delicacy. His tone was cordially pacific, but also dignified and resolute. How would the Funds have fallen the next morning, had he here committed himself! The essence of what he said may be thus expressed – would that we had space to give, throughout, the speaker's own choice and nervous language! – The new Government cherished a profound anxiety to preserve the blessings of universal peace; and, said the Earl of Derby, "there is not one of my noble friends who will not consider that every effort should be made by the Government, with a view of averting *the remotest chance*," (the words in italics he uttered with marked emphasis,) "of incurring the miseries of war." Our demeanour towards foreign governments should be on all occasions frank and conciliatory; we should treat all nations alike, whether great or small, with due respect and consideration, equally in acts, in words, in conduct. Treaties should be observed with punctual fidelity,

[5] Lord Brougham said not long ago, in the hearing of the writer, "Lord Lansdowne is the very best leader of a deliberative assembly that was perhaps ever seen. In courtesy, temper, discretion, and business ability, he is, in my opinion, unequalled."

both as to letter and spirit. Every nation's independence should be held sacred, and on no pretence should we interfere with their internal and individual arrangements. Whatever form of government each thought proper to adopt, we had no right to manifest either sympathy or prejudice in respect of one more than another, "be it the most absolute despotism, limited monarchy, constitutional republic, or – if such a thing can be conceived to continue in existence – absolute Red Republicanism. That which is the choice of a nation, is that which it is the duty of the British Government to recognise." Whenever explanations, or redress, become unfortunately requisite, they should be asked for with temper and frankness, and offered in the same spirit.

Who sees not the significance of this, on adverting to various portions of the foreign policy of the late Government? Then Lord Derby approached very tender ground, treading cautiously, but firmly. It was the proud and ancient characteristic of this country, to afford a home to the homeless, inviolable shelter to the exile; but not to become a nursery for foreign traitors. It not only would not countenance, but would not tolerate, those whom it was hospitably sheltering from the storms of political adversity, intriguing and plotting here against their own governments. We should watch all such movements vigilantly, and apprise foreign governments of what was here hatching against them. Nay, such attempts constitute a high offence against our own laws, "to be visited with exemplary and condign punishment;" but, at the same time, those laws must never be strained, with a view of either conciliating the friendship, or averting the hostility, of foreign powers. All this was said in a noble spirit; and the opportune enunciation of such principles was like shedding oil on the troubled waters. It afterwards elicited from that discreet and experienced Foreign Minister, the Earl of Aberdeen, the following strong expression of concurrence. – "In that portion of my noble friend's speech in which he laid down the course of policy which he means to pursue towards Foreign Powers, I entirely concur. The noble Earl and myself have acted together for the last ten or twelve years, both in and out of office, in full concert and communication on that subject; and, so far as I am aware, there is not a shade of difference between us. In all that he has said on that subject, I fully concur." The Earl of Derby's sentiments on this subject have been since communicated to all Foreign Powers; and we suspect that there is not one of their representatives in this country that has not been ordered to communicate to him the warm satisfaction with which his pacific and honourable declarations have been received, and an increased desire to cultivate the most friendly relations with Great Britain.

As regards our own safety, and our means of repelling foreign aggression, and maintaining internal order and tranquillity, Lord Derby made the important and gratifying announcement, that both our army and navy are in a state of high efficiency, and adequate to all the multifarious calls upon them, arising out of our universally-extended empire. England herself dreams not of aggression in any quarter, or extended dominion, abundantly satisfied with what she possesses. She seeks only to protect her just rights and interests; and though in no wise apprehensive of aggression upon herself, but rather feeling assured of the continuance of peace, this latter consideration of itself justified, and even suggested, the propriety of *deliberately* organising our own energies, and making them so promptly and effectively available as to place this country beyond the reach of aggression from any quarter. There is, however, no necessity for any increased military force, regular or irregular; and the Earl of Derby concluded this part of his speech by one of the happiest strokes conceivable. Without saying it in words, he invited foreign countries to contemplate our own institutions, and the great strength and happiness which they confer upon us; at the same time affording a faint and delicate intimation of the strength which we can put forth on an adequate occasion! In a few graceful sentences he alluded to the memorable demonstration in London on the 10th of April 1848: "My lords, upon many memorable occasions, and upon none more than in the course of the last three or four years, the people of this country have shown, in a manner to excite the wonder and admiration of foreign powers, that the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom may be safely intrusted to the loyalty of the people of England. I believe, my lords, that it is not the ability of her rulers – I am sure that it is not the multitude of her forces – that keeps this country in a state of tranquillity and contentment;

but I must say that it is a due and frank appreciation, on the part of every class of her Majesty's subjects, of the inestimable value of those institutions under which they live, and a conviction that not merely the just prerogatives of the Crown, but the real liberties of the people, are best secured by these institutions!" We know not which most to admire, the perfect good taste, or the masterly tact and sagacity here displayed, in the expression of that which will be – perhaps has been – appreciated abroad, with many a royal sigh of acquiescence.

Such was Lord Derby's Foreign Policy. We have already stated that his speech was equally striking in what it said, and in what it did not say. Among other matters of this negative character, is one which seems to have hitherto attracted no public attention – Lord Derby's silence on the subject of our *Colonial* policy. His sentiments on that subject are perfectly well known, and he has himself, and recently, brought them prominently before the very assembly whom he was addressing. He is indeed peculiarly familiar with that great section of our national interests, and will doubtless give them much personal attention. Why did he, then, omit all allusion to our colonial policy on that memorable evening? Did he forget it? *There sate before him Earl Grey*, with a millstone of responsibility suspended from his neck, for a long series of colonial exploits, every one of them familiar to the Earl of Derby; who also knew, in common with everybody else, what was the last straw which had broken the camel's back – what was the real reason of the late Ministers' sudden retreat from office – to avoid the blighting exposure, in the House of Commons, of Earl Grey's Kaffir misdoings. With high judgment, and a generous forbearance, the Earl of Derby passed over the legitimate and tempting topic in blank silence – a silence, however, which may have been felt by the ex-colonial Minister as very ominous. Let *us*, however, seize the opportunity of touching, for an instant, only one part of this sore – we mean Earl Grey's last despatch to Sir Harry Smith; one of the most cruel and impudent documents that ever libelled the character of a state paper, or threatened to break a noble heart; a document that ought to be burned at the head of every regiment in the service; one which had been splendidly falsified by the triumphant veteran before it had come into his gallant hands, or been trodden into the dust under the foot of scornful and insulted soldier. Gallant veteran! what a reception awaits you on your return home, from your Queen and from your country, if indeed you live to tread the soil of old England again! You will be welcomed in Downing Street, whence your libeller has been expelled, and from which he is now for ever excluded.

Thus much for Lord Derby's *temporary* silence on Colonial policy.

Having concluded his observations on his Foreign, he approached our Domestic policy. Here he paused for a few moments; his manner showing a consciousness that he was entering on a topic of the last importance and difficulty – one fraught with absorbing interest, in the eyes of every one present, and with the fate of his newly-formed Administration.

"My Lords," he commenced, and in a very resolute manner, "I have now stated to your lordships the principles on which I think that our foreign policy should be regulated and conducted. I will not shrink, my lords, from dealing with questions of far greater difficulty. I will not shrink from speaking frankly upon the subject of our commercial and financial policy." It is impossible to describe the sudden silent manifestation of intense anxiety and interest excited by these words; rendered the more striking, from the loud cheering which had accompanied the preceding sentence, and which was suddenly succeeded by profound silence. It was at that interesting and exciting moment that we bethought ourselves of Lord Stanley in the House of Lords on that day twelvemonth. Our recollection of what he had then said, on the question which he was now approaching, was vividly distinct. We were certain that he would thoroughly identify Earl Derby of February 1852 with Lord Stanley of February 1851; but who could stifle a feeling of lively anxiety to learn the precise manner in which he proposed to deal with this great stumbling-block to the statesmen of this age? He began by referring to Sir Robert Peel's commercial policy in 1842, stating that he had cordially supported it.

But here let us pause; for this sudden ten years' retrospect awakens painful memories, and suggests a very painful contrast. Let us speak of the dead, the distinguished dead, in a spirit of

forbearance and charity. Nay, let us pay the homage due to a man of great political capacity and knowledge, and unsullied purity of personal character! – There is now lying before us, side by side with a reprint of Lord Derby's speech, a fellow reprint[6] of that delivered by the late Sir Robert Peel in 1841, and published, we believe, in a cheap form for extensive circulation, with that late right honourable baronet's sanction. It is the speech which he addressed to his constituents at Tamworth, on the 28th of June 1841, and was a most able and elaborate statement of his leading political opinions, on the occasion of the then pending general election which returned a glorious majority of ninety-one pledged to support the opinions so luminously expounded in that memorable speech. How it reads, by the light of 1852! Alas! the exultation with which he contemplated the great Conservative party, which, he said, "has been pleased to intrust your representative with its confidence! You may rely upon it that that party which has paid me the compliment of taking my advice, and following my counsel, are a united and compact party, among whom there does not exist the slightest difference of opinion in respect of the principles they support, and the cause they may desire to pursue. Gentlemen, *I hope I have not abused the confidence of that great party!*" And the proud appeal evoked "loud cheers." Alas! what is man? Again, how eloquently, and upon what grand considerations of morality and religion, he deprecated England's "running the risk of losing the benefit of its sacrifices for the abolition of slavery, and tarnishing for ever that glory, by admitting to the British markets, sugar, the produce of foreign slavery!" At length, said he, "I now come to the most important question of all, the introduction of foreign corn into this country." We beg earnest attention to what follows, for it bears directly and powerfully upon the same great question, and in the precise form in which it now stands before the country, and with which the Earl of Derby has to deal.

"When I look at the burdens the land is subject to in this country, I do not consider the fixed duty of eight shillings a quarter on corn from Poland, Russia, and Prussia, where no such burdens exist, a sufficient protection for it. (*Great cheering.*) Gentlemen," continued the eloquent and gifted speaker, warming with the enthusiasm which he had elicited, "it is certainly a very tempting thing in theory, to buy your corn at the cheapest market; but before you adopt that theory in practice, you must, as a matter of common justice, compare the burdens on the land in other countries, with the burdens on the land in this country. (*Cheers.*) The land in this country is most heavily burdened – you cannot conceal *that*. Look at the amount of the poor-rate levied, on land, as compared with that levied on the productive means of manufacturing industry. (*Cheering.*) Who pay the highway rates? – who pay the church-rates? – who pay the poor-rate? – who pay the tithes? I say, not perhaps altogether, but chiefly, the landed occupiers of this country. And, gentlemen, if corn be the product of other land not subject to those burdens, it surely would not be just to the land of this country, which bears them all, to admit such corn at a low duty!" Sir Robert Peel then quoted from a pamphlet which had just before been published by Mr M'Culloch, the following striking passage: – "Considering the vast importance of agriculture – that nearly half the population of the empire is dependent upon it, directly or indirectly, for employment, and the means of subsistence – a prudent statesman would pause before he gave his sanction to any measures, however sound in principle, or beneficial to the mercantile or manufacturing classes, which might endanger the prosperity of agriculture, or check the rapid spread of improvement." "Gentlemen," continued Sir Robert Peel, "I need not say that I fully concur with this sentiment; and I certainly think that a prudent statesman *would* pause before he meddled with it… I do think that if you disturb agriculture, and divert the employment of capital from the land, you may not increase your foreign trade, (for that is a thing to doubt, under existing circumstances,) *but will assuredly reduce the home trade, by reducing the means to meet the demand*, and thus permanently injure yourselves also." Towards the close of that most able address, he taunted Lord John Russell with having "made an appeal to public feeling, on account of cheap sugar and cheap bread. My firm belief is, that the people of this country have not at all responded to this cry!"

[6] "Tamworth Election. Speech of Sir Robert Peel." – Ollivier, Pall Mall, 1841.

Sir Robert was right, and Lord John was wrong. The country repudiated the "cry;" and, in spite of desperate exertions on the part of the Government, returned an overwhelming majority, pledged to the support of agricultural protection. Lord John was instantly swept away by it, and Sir Robert floated proudly into his place.

Let us, however, with a sigh over the past – a sigh over the dead – turn from the departed to the living statesman of 1852. Here again we lament being unable to adopt, except occasionally, the felicitous language in which the Earl of Derby expressed himself; but here follows the pith of what he said.

He had cordially concurred with Sir Robert Peel's revision of the customs duties in 1842, and in the policy of imposing duties on all the principal articles of import, not only for purposes of revenue, but also for that of levying duties, in a given proportion, to the extent to which the articles subjected to such duties admitted, or did not admit, of the expenditure of future British labour. "I thoroughly agreed in the principle understood to be there laid down as to the freest possible admission of all raw materials which formed the basis of our native industry. My lords, that system has been, to a certain extent, adopted since that period; and I cannot but think, that if we look to the whole of our financial system, there is ground for believing that it is open, in point of principle, and in point of practice, to considerable and useful revisions." Our present policy contrasts disadvantageously with that of America, which is lauded as a free-trade country, – "yet they avowedly levy high duties on those articles which compete with the produce of their own soil and industry; whereas we both admit such articles with perfect freedom, and load with inordinate taxation a certain small number of articles, entering, to an immense extent, into the necessary consumption of the masses of the community!"

"In my individual opinion, I can see no grounds why the single article of corn should be made a solitary exception to the general system of imposing duties on foreign imports… *I state this as my opinion*; but I think the question one which can be satisfactorily solved only by reference to the well-understood and clearly-expressed opinion of the intelligent portion of the community." This appears tolerably distinct, and is an echo of what the speaker had said in the same House twelve months previously. It failed, however, to convey any distinct meaning to the mind of Earl Grey, whose head was, doubtless, running on other matters – and who succeeded in afterwards eliciting from the Premier a still more explicit declaration. "What I meant to say was, that this was a question which ought to be settled, and could not be settled, except by the deliberate opinion of the large and intelligent communities in the country. And I stated, that neither with regard to that question, nor to the great and complicated question of finance, had I any intention of making a proposition to Parliament, *until public opinion should have been decidedly and emphatically expressed*… Any scheme for dealing with a system so vast and intricate as our financial policy, including within its range not only duties on foreign imports, but also the incidents and the pressure of local and domestic taxation, requires to be dealt with by a government strong in the confidence, not only of the country, but of Parliament, and able to carry, with the concurrence of Parliament and the country, measures adopted and matured with great deliberation, and with such care and foresight as it is impossible that any Administration could give to such a subject, called suddenly to deal with public affairs, at the commencement of a parliamentary session." These statements met with a very cordial reception from the House, which seemed to feel that nothing could be more just and reasonable, regard being had to the trying position in which the Earl and his Ministry found themselves, through no fault or procurement of their own. He proceeded to say, that he owned they were in a decided minority in the House of Commons; nay, further, that he was even by no means assured of being in a majority in the House of Lords – circumstances surely entitling them, he thought, to the forbearance of opponents, and even, occasionally, to the indulgence of friends. In the mean time, and till he was able to ascertain and act upon the decided opinion of the country and Parliament on the cardinal question of the day, the new Government had abundant work before it, and had prescribed to itself a temperate and moderate course of action, devoting all its energies to measures for improving the social condition and

adding to the comforts of the people, and especially simplifying and improving the administration of justice in the courts of law and equity. "I believe," said the Earl of Derby, with dignity, "that in acting thus, even as a minority in the House of Commons, we shall not uselessly or dishonourably conduct the public affairs; and, my lords, I must say, that if interrupted in such a course by a merely factious opposition, I have that confidence in the good sense of the country, that that faction will, at no distant period, recoil upon its authors." This passage produced a loud burst of cheering.

The new Government recognised the existence of a shameless system of bribery and corruption at parliamentary elections, which had greatly extended itself during the last twenty years, but which they were fixedly resolved to deal with effectually, and visit every one proved to be guilty of it with condign punishment. With reference to a measure which Lord John Russell had introduced during the present session into the House of Commons, "comprising a somewhat miscellaneous assortment of topics, and containing, as a leading feature, a large and extensive alteration of the elective system, and the electoral districts of the country," it was not the intention of the Government to proceed with it. He accompanied that intimation, however, with another, pointedly contrasting with the "finality" declaration of Lord John Russell. The Earl disclaimed altogether the opinion that the Reform Act of 1831 "was a perfect system, incapable of improvement." "I do not, my lords, for a moment pretend to say that the system of representation introduced in 1831 was a perfect system, or incapable of improvement. I think that there may have arisen, and will arise in the course of time, abuses requiring change, and evils demanding a remedy; but, my lords, I say, before you seek to apply a remedy – at all events, before you pledge yourself to a definite plan, and unsettle that which is, be quite sure that you know the course which you are about to pursue. Be satisfied that the evils which you mean to meet do exist; that the remedy which you propose to apply is not calculated to aggravate existing evils. And, my lords," continued the Earl of Derby, speaking with a kind of deferential emphasis, "if I were speaking in the presence of members of the other House of Parliament, I would entreat them seriously to consider the incalculable injury, not only to the monarchy of this country, but ultimately to the real and true liberties of the country, which may arise from constantly – from time to time – unsettling everything and settling nothing; rendering the country dissatisfied with that which is, without in the slightest degree removing the dissatisfaction of those who are prepared to go much further than any of your lordships could desire!.. If you will show or prove to us the existence of any substantial grievances, no men will be more ready than my colleagues and myself to endeavour to remove those grievances in the manner which we consider best calculated to insure that end, without endangering the constitution or the internal peace of the country." When the Earl of Derby uttered these weighty sentences, which were received with loud and earnest cries of "Hear! hear! hear!" many of which issued from the cross-benches, he was doubtless aware that Lord John Russell's absurd but mischievous new Reform Bill had alienated from him the countenance of some of his staunchest and most powerful, though silent supporters, whom the Earl of Derby's moderation and firmness of tone upon that topic had commensurately conciliated – a fact of which he received a decisive intimation that very evening.

The last topic of the Earl of Derby's speech was one of transcendent importance – the education of the people; and he dealt with it in a noble and exalted spirit. Our own convictions on this subject are profound and unalterable, and we are satisfied that they are shared with a very great majority of the people of England. This is a matter lying at the very root of the national safety and prosperity; and it is with unspeakable satisfaction that we transcribe the passage, that it may stand recorded in our own columns. It is worthy of being written in letters of gold, as the glory of Christian statesmanship.

"My Lords,[7] I believe, and I rejoice to believe, that the feelings of the community at large – that the convictions of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, have now come to this conclusion, that the

[7] Almost every other sentence of this paragraph was followed by loud cheering; but the Earl of Derby continued to speak with calmness and solemnity.

greater the amount of education which you are able to give, and the more widely it is spread among all classes of the community, the greater prospect there is of the tranquillity, the happiness, and well-being of the community. But, my lords, when I use the term *education*, let me not be misunderstood. By *education*, I do not mean the mere development of the mental faculties – the mere acquisition of temporal knowledge – the mere instruction – useful as, no doubt, that may be – which enables a man simply to improve his condition in life, gives him fresh tastes and fresh habits, and also the means of gratifying such improved tastes. Valuable as that instruction may be, when I speak of *education*, I speak of this, and of this alone, an education involving culture of the mind and culture of THE SOUL; laying the basis and foundation upon a knowledge of the Scripture, and revealed religion. My lords, I desire to look upon all those who are engaged in the work of spreading knowledge, even though they be of communions different from that of which I am a sincere and attached member, rather as fellow soldiers than as rivals, in the warfare against vice and ignorance. But I trust, my lords, I shall say nothing which can be offensive to those who differ with me, and belong to other communions, when I say that for the promotion of education and of religious knowledge, I rest mainly and chiefly upon the exertions, the able, the indefatigable and enlightened exertions, of the parochial clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland. My lords, I look upon that Church as the depository of what I believe to be the truth, and as an instrument of incalculable good here, and leading to still more incalculable good hereafter. I say, my lords, that it is not only the interest, but the duty of her Majesty's Government to uphold and maintain that Church in its integrity, not by penal enactments against those who dissent from her communion, or by violent abuse and invective against the religious faith of those whose errors we may deplore, but to whose consciences we have no right to dictate; but by steadfastly resisting all attempts at aggression against that Church, come from what quarter, and backed by what authority it may, and by lending every power of the Government to support and extend the influence of that Church, in its high and holy calling, with the view of diffusing throughout the length and breadth of the empire (and I speak not of this country alone) that knowledge which can be derived only from the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures."

By this passage of his speech, even had it stood alone, the Earl of Derby established a claim to the hearty confidence, the zealous and enthusiastic support, of every sincere member, lay and clerical, of the Church of England – nay, we go fearlessly much further, and say, of every sincere Christian in the empire, in the portentous times in which we live. And, indeed, we entertain no doubt whatever that this noble declaration has already produced great, though silent, effect, which will be made manifest when the time *for action* shall have arrived. While breathing a spirit of pure and ardent affection for the Church of England, this declaration is not disfigured by the faintest trace of bigotry, intolerance, or uncharitableness; and we thank God that such words are now going forth all over the world, as having been spoken, and on so great an occasion, by the Prime Minister of the Queen of England.

The concluding passage of Lord Derby's memorable exposition was very finely delivered; not with oratorical art, but in a manner which exactly befitted the affecting simplicity and solemnity of the matter. He spoke with a dignified manliness, which went to the heart of every one who heard him, friend or opponent, who had a heart that could be reached and influenced by anything worthy and great.

"My Lords, for my own part, when I look to the difficulties which surround my friends and myself, when I look to the various circumstances which must combine to give us a chance of successfully encountering the various difficulties which beset our path, I confess that I am, myself, appalled by the magnitude of the task which I have undertaken. But I believe, and know, that the destinies of nations are in the hands of an overruling Providence! I know that it is often the pleasure of that great Being to work out His own objects by weak and unworthy means. In His presence, I can solemnly aver,[8] that no motives of personal ambition have led me to aspire to that dangerous eminence

[8] We shall never forget the tone and the look with which this solemn asseveration was uttered.

on which the favour of my Sovereign has placed me. In the course of my duties, no considerations will sway me, except those which have led me to that eminence – the paramount considerations of public duty. And with this feeling in my mind, and with a deep conviction of the sincerity of my own motives, and trusting to the guidance and blessing of higher powers than my own, I venture to undertake a task from which I should otherwise have shrunk with apprehension of its dangers. And, my lords, be the period of my Administration longer or shorter, not only shall I have obtained the highest object of my personal ambition, but I shall have fulfilled one of the highest ends of human being, if, in the course of that Administration, I can in the slightest degree advance the great object of peace on earth, and good-will among men – if I can advance the social, moral, and religious improvement of my country, and at the same time contribute to the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions!" For nearly a minute after Lord Derby had resumed his seat, the House echoed with hearty cheering, which then subsided into a loud hum of conversation; amidst which – suddenly up jumped Earl Grey! and, apparently much to the surprise of the House, proceeded to address it. Without wishing to say or to insinuate anything offensive or discourteous, we cannot help observing that there is a great contrast between the two Earls, in countenance, demeanour, and style of speaking; and the advantage is not on the side of Earl Grey. On the present occasion, he was heated and querulous. He did not rise for the purpose of noticing Lord Derby's marked silence as to colonial policy, and eliciting some indication of his views on a subject in which the late Colonial Secretary might have been presumed to take special interest; but he rose exactly in the spirit of a Manchester Corn-law-Exchange agitator – for the purpose of endeavouring to entangle the new Minister in a corn-law discussion! He declared that he had been filled with '*consternation*' on hearing that which Lord Derby instantly rose to assure him had not been said! Notwithstanding Lord Derby explicitly repeated what he had said, Lord Grey proceeded to argue on his own repudiated version, though professing, amidst the laughter of the House, to have been "greatly relieved by the explanation!" Conceiving this to be rather too bad, the Earl of Derby rose a second time, and, in a tone of calm sarcasm, thus indicated to the House the course which his eager opponent seemed bent upon pursuing. "I have already, with the view of correcting the misapprehension of the noble Earl, stated what I believe I *did* say, and what I know I *meant* to say, and the noble Earl thereupon says he is relieved by my explanation. And then he gives a version of what he says he had understood me to say! – but what, I hope, I have satisfactorily explained to your lordships that I did *not* say; and upon that misunderstanding he is proceeding to argue, as if I had not already corrected his misapprehension!" Notwithstanding even this rebuke, delivered with a singularly expressive smile, Earl Grey returned to the charge, manifestly bent upon kindling, at the earliest possible moment, popular excitement, and "consternation" in sympathy with his own. Had he foreseen, however, what was to happen, he would probably not have risen that evening; for he called up a Peer sitting on one of the cross benches – no less a person than Earl Fitzwilliam, a powerful patron of the late Government. His appearance seemed to be welcomed with great complacency by Earl Grey and his friends; for who could doubt what Earl Fitzwilliam was about to say on the subject of a Protectionist Ministry? Of course he was going to denounce, as absurd and impracticable, their attempt to govern the country, and to predict, in comfortable terms, the immediate resumption of office by their predecessors. But alas! what blank surprise and mortification overspread their countenances – with the exception of the Marquis of Lansdowne – when the liberal Earl proceeded to administer a stern and forcible rebuke to Earl Grey for having risen to make such a speech as his, "after the ample, frank, and honourable manner in which the noble lord at the head of the Government had stated to the House the position in which he stood, and the circumstances under which he had been induced to undertake the great task of forming an Administration!.. I lament also, my lords, that the noble Earl, instead of taking a comprehensive view of the speech of the noble Earl [Derby,] had chosen to single out one particular topic, and that the most exciting of all… I do not think the noble Earl was entitled to animadvert as he has done, upon the speech of my noble friend." After briefly expressing his own well-known views on the subject

of corn-laws, and charging both the contending parties with entertaining and fostering delusions on the subject, he proceeded to declare "the great satisfaction with which he had heard one part of the speech of the noble Earl at the head of the Government – that in which he announced that he should not carry on the bill of the late Government for altering the Parliamentary representation, because, I believe," continued Earl Fitzwilliam, "it will not do for the Government to be continually tampering with constitutional rights. And with respect to the new Government, generally, I hope there will be no factious opposition to the measures which they intend to propose; and I think that the noble Earl has been unfairly called upon to make, within so very short a period, a farther declaration of the principles on which he intends to carry on the Government. I shall regret to see any sort of opposition which many persons out of doors will be disposed to characterise with the epithet —*factious*." The Marquis of Clanricarde upon this rushed to the rescue of his discomfited friend – to "protest against the censure which my noble friend has thought fit to pronounce upon the noble Earl near me;" but the feeling of the House was manifestly with Earl Fitzwilliam, who had suddenly given utterance, with admirable candour, to a great amount of that public opinion, which *has* so decisively pronounced, for itself, "out of doors." When Lord Clanricarde sate down, two grey-haired peers rose together, at the opposite end of the Opposition side of the House – the Earl of Aberdeen and Lord Brougham, but the latter readily gave way; on which Lord Aberdeen, who spoke with unusual earnestness, and very impressively, declared his determined adherence to the corn-law policy of the late Sir Robert Peel, and that he should oppose any attempt to re-impose duties, under the name of either protection or revenue. He proceeded then to say, and with emphatic cordiality of manner, that he entirely concurred in every other part of the Earl of Derby's speech, especially, as we have already seen, that relating to foreign policy. "I can assure my noble friend," said Lord Aberdeen, in conclusion, "that I am fully aware of the difficulties which he has to encounter; and he may rely on receiving from me, whenever it is in my power, a cordial and most sincere support" – an announcement giving evident satisfaction to the House. Lord Brougham then rose again, evidently in a very friendly spirit towards the Earl of Derby, to express his great gratification at finding that the multifarious public and private business before Parliament was not to be interrupted by "an early dissolution, which was out of the question;" and that the subject of the corn-laws must be postponed till after the general election. He had risen, however, to ask only one question – whether the measures for law amendment could not be at once proceeded with? The Earl of Derby rose with alacrity, to answer in the affirmative; adding, "I am sure that my noble and learned friend will agree with me, that when the Lord Chancellor [Lord St Leonards] takes his seat in this House, he will apply his vigorous powers of mind to the careful consideration of all those measures which have been recommended by the commissioners." How satisfactorily that pledge was redeemed on the very first night that Lord St Leonards presided in the House of Lords, viz., on the 12th March, our readers must be well aware. A more important speech than that which the new Lord Chancellor then delivered, has rarely been heard from any one of his predecessors; assuring the country that his vast practical knowledge of the subject should be forthwith honestly and zealously applied to the effecting a thorough radical reform in the courts, not only of Chancery, but of common law.

With the Earl of Derby's answer to Lord Brougham, the two hours' sitting of that eventful evening terminated, exactly one of those two hours having been occupied by the Earl of Derby.

No candid person who was present when the Earl delivered his speech, will hesitate to acknowledge that it produced a deep and most favourable impression. We ourselves know that the case was such with several able and determined members of the Liberal party in the House of Commons who stood at the Bar of the House of Lords; one of whom observed, "It is certainly a great speech, and likely to do Lord Derby service with the country." Mr Villiers, however, was also an auditor of the noble Earl; and might have been seen rushing from the House of Lords, and by-and-by in eager and excited conversation with that great statesman Mr Cobden; the result of which was that absurd notice of motion which, the crude product of their joint sagacity, the former gave that evening in the

House of Commons, doubtless expecting that it would produce a sensation. Such, however, was not the case: it was received with but faint indications of satisfaction by his own friends; has ludicrously failed to excite attention out of doors; and is already discarded by its astute originators! It bore upon it the glaring brand of Faction; and the country is in far too serious and stern a humour, knowing what it has at stake, to tolerate either trifling or trickery on the part of those who have too long falsified public opinion, and inflicted serious injury on several of the greatest public interests.

Lord Derby's speech was characterised throughout by consummate discretion, and displayed a profound appreciation of the sense and spirit of the country. That great country has received him cordially, and in the spirit in which he had advanced to it. His most sanguine opponents must acknowledge that matters have not hitherto gone as could have been desired, and seems certainly to have been expected, by themselves. The Funds *will* not go down! and yet Lord Derby has stood on the heights, with flag unfurled, ever since the 27th February 1852 – nay, ever since the 28th February 1851! He is pledged to nothing but Principles, and has wisely abstained from gratifying his factious enemies, by precipitately pledging himself to specific measures. But such he will in due time bring forward; and that they will be in strict accordance with his principles, the whole country is sure of, for it knows the firmness, honour, and consistency of his character and conduct. It also knows, and his enemies also well know, that they have to deal, in him, with a man not easily to be daunted, by even the loudest squeaks of the penny trumpets of the Manchester Anti-Corn-Law League gentry. They may rely upon it that they cannot terrify the Earl of Derby, however otherwise it may have been with one of his predecessors. They may depend upon it that he has had ample time and opportunity during the last year to ascertain the true sources of his strength and of his weakness; to mature a policy, based on settled principles; and select able men to carry it out. He has looked his dangers steadily in the face; and without affecting to underrate them, has declared his determination to encounter them with patient resolution. Our own belief is, that he possesses more extensive resources than his adversaries are at present aware of, and will use them prudently. One of these resources consists of the conviction prevalent among the vast majority of moderate men of intelligence, that if the Earl of Derby's Administration should fail to keep its place, the inevitable alternative is a fearful revolutionary struggle, which would shake our strongest institutions to their very foundations, and convulse society. We lament feeling constrained to express our strong belief, that Lord John Russell, conscious of having forfeited the confidence of some of his most important supporters, is prepared to throw himself unreservedly into the arms of those who, he knows, and cannot but know, will force him infinitely farther than in his own recently *declared* opinion he asserted, and in his conscience he believes to be consistent with the safety of the throne, and the preservation of the liberties of the country. We believe that hundreds of thousands in this country take this justly alarming view of his position and purposes; and are prepared to encounter with a resolute "no!" the inquiry, whether he shall return again to power with *seven spirits more wicked than himself*.[9]

We are writing far on in the first month of the new Administration, anxiously watching the signs of the times; and are totally at a loss to discover a single symptom of national dissatisfaction or disquietude, at the establishment of a thoroughly Conservative Administration. We have noticed, on the contrary, indications of a cheerful acquiescence in the new arrangements, a contemptuous indifference to the worn-out machinery of agitation, and a quiet determination to see fair play. How foolish, indeed, and dangerous would it be to act otherwise! The late Administration crumbled gradually to pieces before the eyes of the contemptuous country, which then looked about it, and deliberately substituted the present: and do Lord John Russell and his friends really suppose that this great enlightened country is going to blow down that new Administration like a child's house built of cards?

[9] If Lord John Russell should contrive to resume power, his cabinet would unquestionably include Messrs Villiers, Bright, Cobden, Hume, Fox, and probably Wilson. What would be the figure of the *Funds* the next morning?

We see, however, plainly one part of the tactics which are to be resorted to. They are based on a very natural, a perfectly intelligible, dread lest the new Ministry should be able to show the country that they understand, and can manage its affairs better than their rivals; and a suspicion that they have it in their power to go to the country, when the proper time arrives, with immense advantages, and a repetition of the result of the general election of 1841. The country, for instance, is groaning under the back-breaking pressure of the Tax upon Incomes, precariously derived from trades and professions; we know – the country knows, what is the Earl of Derby's present view of that iniquitous, that cruel, that abominable tax, which has broken many an honourable heart, and filled many a house with bitter privation, anxiety, and mortification. And why was it imposed? With what declared purpose? And has the solemnly-plighted faith been kept with the public? We have shown how Lord Derby would now answer these questions, because we have shown how he answered them in 1851. A glimpse of daylight lately broke in upon a clear-headed Liberal, as appears by the columns of that very consistent, but candid, advocate of Free Trade, the *Spectator*.[10] On the day after Lord Derby had delivered his speech in the House of Lords, there appeared conspicuously in that journal an ably-written letter, "*From a vigilant politician of the Liberal school*," who evidently stands high in the confidence of the editor. Let us hear this gentleman. – "Let us imagine that Lord Derby proposes a 5s. duty, together with a repeal of the Income Tax, as respects professions and trades. *The whole pill, so compounded, would be swallowed by a vast number of Free-Traders*, as well as by the bulk of the agricultural interest, glad to get anything at all in the shape of protection. There *is*[11] some little reaction of opinion about Free Trade… A 5s. duty would *not* make bread 'dear.'… I think it probable that a general election on the proposal of a 5s. duty, combined with the aforesaid modification of the Income Tax, would yield Lord Derby a majority in the House Of Commons." We are ourselves of this opinion; and believe that Lord John Russell and his friends are desperately apprehensive of the effect which may attend some such appeal to the country, and the substantial popularity which it may earn an honest and firm Government. We verily believe that great numbers of Lord John's friends, and he himself, would see with secret satisfaction the imposition of a fixed duty on foreign corn; but Lord Derby is assuredly not pledged to that particular measure; and in the most honourable manner has declared that nothing shall prevent him from submitting the great question *fairly* to the country itself, and carrying out its deliberate decision faithfully. What can mortal man – the most scrupulously conscientious of mankind – say, or do, more? That justice must be done to the suffering interests of agriculture, in some way or other, only the most blind and bigoted faction will deny, or those *whose craft is in danger*, and who are unconsciously exhibiting the extent of their selfish interest in upholding the existing system, by the large sums which they profess to have subscribed in order to stir up and keep alive agitation. The disgusting effrontery of a handful of Manchester manufacturers, in thus presuming to dictate to the country at large, is already widely appreciated, and will be more so; and Lord Derby can afford to despise it, while keeping a calm, a vigilant, a comprehensive superintendence over all the great national interests intrusted to his keeping by the Sovereign and the country.

It would be foolish to predict with confidence the result of the next general election; but if anything, appears tolerably clear, it is this – that those who are resolved to take the opinion of the country on a great national question, *deliberately*, are, *ipso facto*, infinitely better entitled to its confidence than those who would precipitate such an appeal. Very little that is said by a paid agitator, like Mr Cobden, is entitled to respect; but he involuntarily spoke the truth, and disclosed his inward quaking for the result, when the other day he publicly acknowledged the great difficulty of "keeping up the enthusiasm of the people beyond a few weeks!" Does this voluble declaimer suppose that such an admission of the truth is lost upon the great statesman now at the head of affairs?

[10] February 28, 1852.

[11] The Italics are those of the writer in the *Spectator*.

The Earl of Derby's Ministry may stand – the Earl of Derby's Ministry may fall; but the country feels that it will do either with honour, and that there will be no "paltering with it in a double sense." We believe that it will stand, numerous and serious as are the obstacles with which it has to contend; and we also believe, that the opinion is gaining ground among even the more clear-headed of its miscellaneous enemies, that it will not be so very easy to dislodge it from the position which it has now thoroughly occupied. All its honourable opponents recognise the fair spirit in which the Earl of Derby asserted his claims to the forbearance of foes, and the indulgence of friends, while endeavouring honestly to conduct public affairs at a moment when no one else offered, or seemed able, to do so. That forbearance, that indulgence, he is justly entitled to, and, to a great extent, will receive. We feel that we cannot go far wrong in trusting freely one who has never deceived or betrayed us, and whose whole personal and political character and conduct show that it is impossible he should ever do so. Let, then, both friends and enemies be at their ease for a while; an honourable country trusting implicitly, in a great conjuncture, to one of the most honourable of her sons. As long as he can retain the reins with safety and advantage to his gracious Mistress and the country, he will do so firmly and steadily, and not one moment longer. *But to whom will they have to be surrendered?* It is a fearful question. He is now nobly doing his duty to the country – towards the great party which is proud to see him, standing at the helm of the vessel of the State. Let them, in turn, do their duty towards him who has come forward so chivalrously at their bidding; and we say, with a swelling heart, —*On, Stanley! on!*

Every line of the foregoing pages was in type, before the length and breadth of the land was thrilling with delight inspired by the Earl of Derby's splendid reappearance on the scene of the two former triumphs celebrated in those pages; and if we had written after perusing the report of the noble Earl's speech on Monday evening the 15th of March, we should not have modified a single expression, or varied a hair's-breadth from the course which we had taken, after much deliberation concerning the position and prospects of the new Administration, except perhaps in two respects: – First, to note the rapidity with which the noble Earl is visibly satisfying all the conditions, moral and intellectual, of the highest responsible statesmanship; while his noble but unhappy predecessor is dwindling down into a mere baffled tactician and partisan. At the very moment that mere petty spite and virulence were exuding from the leader of an Opposition consisting of a suddenly-fused aggregate of incompatibilities, his noble successor was ascending to a still higher vantage-ground, and calmly unfurling afresh the glittering standard of conservative statesmanship. Calm, resolute, circumspect, the higher the altitude he has reached, and the more comprehensive the view he has taken, the stronger appears his position, the distincter his enemies' real weakness under the guise of apparent strength. It is now clear to our minds that Lord John Russell and his friends had calculated on prodigious effects springing from causes deemed by himself adequate to produce them, namely, an array of untried officials; and that confusion and "*consternation*" throughout the country which his friend Lord Grey had, to the very utmost of his little power, striven to excite, under the prospect of a suddenly-reversed commercial policy. *But it will not do.* Faction already "'gins pale its ineffectual fires" before patriotism; and the star of Stanley is unquestionably at this moment in the ascendant. Passing over Lord Derby's overpowering *ad hominem* argument to Lord John Russell, reminding him of the day when he was in Lord Derby's position, and held the language which he now denounces in his successor; and the quiet contempt with which the noble Earl disposes of the little worn-out tricks of agitators and demagogues, unable to do more than develop virulent pustules of local irritation in divers parts, without hurrying the pulse or corrupting the circulation of the general body politic, we come to the Premier's appeal to the state of the public Funds – a topic of confident congratulation in the preceding pages.[12] Lord Beaumont had made a piteous appeal to the new minister, on behalf of certain petitioners, complaining of the fearful consequences, apparent and apprehended, of the recent changes, and of uncertain policy. "Where," asks the cheerful Earl, speaking upwards of a

[12] *Ante*, p. 405.

fortnight after the delivery of his great speech – which we are more than ever satisfied ought to remain prominently under the eye of the country, for the guidance alike of candidates and electors in the approaching great struggle – "where are *the indications* of alarm, anxiety, and uncertainty? The public mind seems to be peaceable and content! Is there a more accurate barometer of public feeling than the public funds? Yet, will the noble lord point out a single moment, during the whole time the late Government was in office, when the Funds were so high, were so steady, and had a more decided tendency to advance, than they have at this moment, when, according to the noble Baron, the whole country is in a state of suspense and excitement?" *The Premier's bold challenge remained unanswered*– though Earl Grey, Lord Beaumont, and several other Peers, attempted to reply to other portions of his brilliant, overpowering, and spontaneous speech. But what said, on the ensuing afternoon, the City Article of that able, honourable, but truthful opponent of Protection, the *Sun* newspaper, which has done itself honour by its manly course during the recent crisis? While its leading article vied with the *Times* of that morning in splendid eulogy of Lord Derby's speech, and stern denunciation of the factiousness against which it had been fulminated, the dry money aspect of the question was thus faithfully indicated: "The English Funds have been very buoyant [Tuesday 16th March, 1852,] and the speech of Lord Derby has given pretty general satisfaction. *Consols have been 98⅛ for transfer, and 98⅛ to ¼ for account!*" And they have since steadily risen higher! Well might Lord Derby appeal to the beating of this "pulse," and well might discarded state doctors abstain from gainsaying the declaration of their rival!

The mention of Earl Grey's name reminds us of another coincidence between our own foregoing speculations, and the subsequent speech of Earl Derby. We noted pointedly his silence on the Colonial question – though in the provoking presence of Earl Grey. On the evening to which we are now referring, Earl Derby showed how nearly we had groped towards the truth of the case, by letting fall one or two sentences, like ominous drops of a coming storm, against which it would be prudent for Earl Grey to be looking out for shelter. Earl Derby was speaking of the presumed causes of the late Ministry's fall. "When the division on the Militia Bill had taken place, it was the ostensible cause; *the real cause may be different – and perhaps the noble Earl [Grey] whom I see taking notes, may be cognisant of the real cause!*" Let us hope that when the day of reckoning shall have arrived, that insulted and outraged veteran, Sir Harry Smith, will, amidst the indignant sympathy of the whole country, be alive and present, to witness Lord Derby's squaring of accounts with the late Colonial Secretary.

The whole of Earl Derby's second manifesto is pervaded by a mingled tone of moderation and resolution, eminently calculated to win the favour of those on whose *fiat* all ministers must depend – the enlightened public. Some days have elapsed since we penned the preceding pages of this article; and during that interval, having carefully watched the current of events, we declare that all our previous conclusions, not hastily arrived at, are confirmed – that the Earl of Derby will surmount his difficulties, and baffle his desperate, and, we regret being forced to say it, unscrupulous parliamentary opponents. His spirit is thoroughly English. As a people, we love courage, hate injustice, and despise trickery; and every day, every hour's experience shows that it is a vile combination of trickery and injustice with which the noble Premier has to deal. With one topic more, we close our article. The tactics of the Opposition, as far as developed on the evening of Monday the 15th March – especially in the House of Commons, where Sir James Graham, was to be seen publicly and eagerly bidding for revolutionary support – to our eye clearly indicate that their trump card is – a premature dissolution, and on one particular question, selected by themselves – and framed so as to admit of their war-cry being, as of old, "bread-tax – cheap bread!" It is evident, however, that here is a little reckoning without the host; who has a few words of serious import to say upon the matter. Earl Derby was at that precise moment announcing elsewhere, in resolute and well-weighed terms, that he will "go to the country," in his own way – and bring out broadly, for the decision of the country, two distinct entire systems of general policy, domestic and foreign, and the conduct and pretensions of the two classes

of men – himself and his opponents – concerned in working them out. We invite earnest attention to every word of the ensuing three paragraphs. As to the question concerning a *Duty on Foreign corn*, nothing can be more assuring to his friends, more decisive of waverers, and more embarrassing to enemies, than the following single sentence: —

"I shall leave it to the general concurrence of the country, without which I shall not bring forward that proposition (*loud and general cheering*); and I will not, by a bare majority, force on the country a measure against which a great proportion of the country shall have expressed an opinion." (*Here the cheering was renewed.*) That declaration alone takes the wind out of the sails of the enemy. As to being goaded into an immediate dissolution: —

"I say that the appeal to the country ought to be made as early as the great interests of the country will permit; but I say further – that, so far as I am individually concerned, no taunt, no challenge, no difficulties to which I may be subjected, no mortification to which I may be exposed, shall induce me to recommend to my Sovereign that the dissolution of Parliament, however anxious I may be for a decision, shall take place AN HOUR SOONER than those great and paramount interests render necessary." We wish that every member of the House of Commons had been bodily transported into the House of Lords, to observe, and meditate upon, the tone and air, indicative of inflexible purpose, with which this sentence was delivered.

It was, however, the last paragraph of his address, which, weightily worded, and magnificently delivered, carried away the whole House, and has produced a commensurate effect upon the public mind. "We are threatened with far more serious difficulties than opposition to the imposition of a five shilling, six shilling, or seven shilling duty on corn. It is a question whether the government of this country can be carried on, and on what principles, and through what medium; and when I shall appeal to the country, I shall do so on this ground – Will you, who desire well to all the interests of the country, place your confidence in, and give your support to a Government which, in the House of Lords, did not hesitate to take the post of danger, when the helmsman had left the helm? (*Great cheering.*) Will you support a Government which is against hostile attacks; which will maintain the peace of the world; which will uphold the Protestant institutions of the country; which will give strength, and increased power, to religious and moral education throughout the land; and which will exert itself, moreover, I will not hesitate to say, to oppose some barrier against the current, continually encroaching, of democratic influence, which would throw power *nominally*, into the hands of the masses, *practically*, into those of the demagogues who lead them? Will you resist a Government which desires to oppose that noxious and dangerous influence, and to maintain the prerogative of the Crown, the rights of your lordships' House, and the privileges of the other freely-elected and fairly-represented House of Parliament?

"These are the principles on which I shall make my appeal, on behalf of myself and colleagues; and in words which are placed in the mouths of the meanest felons in the dock, and which are not unworthy of the lips of a First Minister of the Crown, 'I elect that we shall be tried by God, and our country!'"

It is recorded by some of the Journals, that this noble appeal, with which the Earl of Derby sate down, was received "with tremendous cheering" – a reception it richly deserved: and a similar one it deserves, and will receive, and is receiving already, in every loyal and patriotic assemblage which may have an opportunity of considering it, throughout the nation. It contains the exact issue to be ere long decided by the country. A very solemn issue it is, fraught with momentous consequences, alike to Sovereign and subject – an issue of enormously larger proportions than those to which Lord Derby's enemies seek so eagerly to reduce it. This pregnant paragraph ought to be a kind of watchword during the coming fight. It shows a distinct perception by the speaker of a fact indicated by ourselves in the preceding pages – that Lord Derby's Government is separated from its predecessors, and its present newly-combined opponents, by a Great Gulf. That gulf is Revolution; and every moderate politician

and staunch lover of his country, without respect to Whig or Tory, Protectionist or Free-Trader, at this moment has that gulf yawning before his eyes.

We see a signal beauty and force in the Earl of Derby's concluding reference to a formula of our ancient criminal jurisprudence: and completing that reference, we fervently add – "*God send thee* a Good Deliverance!"

MY NOVEL; OR, VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE

BY PISISTRATUS CAXTON

BOOK X. CONTINUED. – CHAPTER X

The next morning Harley appeared at breakfast. He was in gay spirits, and conversed more freely with Violante than he had yet done. He seemed to amuse himself by attacking all she said, and provoking her to argument. Violante was naturally a very earnest person; whether grave or gay, she spoke with her heart on her lips, and her soul in her eyes. She did not yet comprehend the light vein of Harley's irony; so she grew picqued and chafed; and she was so lovely in anger; it so brightened her beauty and animated her words, that no wonder Harley thus maliciously teased her. But what, perhaps, she liked still less than the teasing – though she could not tell why – was the kind of familiarity that Harley assumed with her – a familiarity as if he had known her all her life – that of a good-humoured elder brother, or a bachelor uncle. To Helen, on the contrary, when he did not address her apart, his manner was more respectful. He did not call *her* by her Christian name, as he did Violante, but "Miss Digby," and softened his tone and inclined his head when he spoke to her. Nor did he presume to jest at the very few and brief sentences he drew from Helen; but rather listened to them with deference, and invariably honoured them with approval. After breakfast he asked Violante to play or sing; and when she frankly owned how little she had cultivated those accomplishments, he persuaded Helen to sit down to the piano, and stood by her side while she did so, turning over the leaves of her music-book with the ready devotion of an admiring amateur. Helen always played well, but less well than usual that day, for her generous nature felt abashed. It was as if she was showing off to mortify Violante. But Violante, on the other hand, was so passionately fond of music that she had no feeling left for the sense of her own inferiority. Yet she sighed when Helen rose, and Harley thanked her for the delight she had given him.

The day was fine. Lady Lansmere proposed to walk in the garden. While the ladies went up-stairs for their shawls and bonnets, Harley lighted his cigar, and stept from the window upon the lawn. Lady Lansmere joined him before the girls came out.

"Harley," said she, taking his arm, "what a charming companion you have introduced to us! I never met with any that both pleased and delighted me like this dear Violante. Most girls who possess some power of conversation, and who have dared to think for themselves, are so pedantic, or so masculine; but *she* is always so simple, and always still the girl. Ah, Harley!"

"Why that sigh, my dear mother?"

"I was thinking how exactly she would have suited you – how proud I should have been of such a daughter-in-law – and how happy you would have been with such a wife."

Harley started. "Tut," said he, peevishly, "she is a mere child; you forget my years."

"Why," said Lady Lansmere, surprised, "Helen is quite as young as Violante."

"In dates – yes. But Helen's character is so staid; – what it is now it will be ever; and Helen, from gratitude, respect, or pity, condescends to accept the ruins of my heart; – while this bright Italian has the soul of a Juliet, and would expect in a husband all the passion of a Romeo. Nay, mother, hush. Do you forget that I am engaged – and of my own free will and choice? Poor dear Helen! Apropos, have you spoken to my father, as you undertook to do?"

"Not yet. I must seize the right moment. You know that my lord requires management."

"My dear mother, that female notion of managing us, men, costs you, ladies, a great waste of time, and occasions us a great deal of sorrow. Men are easily managed by plain truth. *We* are brought up to respect it, strange as it may seem to you!"

Lady Lansmere smiled with the air of superior wisdom, and the experience of an accomplished wife. "Leave it to me, Harley; and rely on my lord's consent."

Harley knew that Lady Lansmere always succeeded in obtaining her way with his father; and he felt that the Earl might naturally be disappointed in such an alliance, and, without due propitiation, evince that disappointment in his manner to Helen. Harley was bound to save her from all chance of such humiliation. He did not wish her to think that she was not welcomed into his family; therefore he said, "I resign myself to your promise and your diplomacy. Meanwhile, as you love me, be kind to my betrothed."

"Am I not so?"

"Hem. Are you as kind as if she were the great heiress you believe Violante to be?"

"Is it," answered Lady Lansmere, evading the question – "is it because one is an heiress and the other is not that you make so marked a difference in your own manner to the two; treating Violante as a spoiled child, and Miss Digby as" —

"The destined wife of Lord L'Estrange, and the daughter-in-law of Lady Lansmere – yes."

The Countess suppressed an impatient exclamation that rose to her lips, for Harley's brow wore that serious aspect which it rarely assumed save when he was in those moods in which men must be soothed, not resisted. And after a pause he went on – "I am going to leave you to-day. I have engaged apartments at the Clarendon. I intend to gratify your wish, so often expressed, that I should enjoy what are called the pleasures of my rank, and the privileges of single-blessedness – celebrate my adieu to celibacy, and blaze once more, with the splendour of a setting sun, upon Hyde Park and May Fair."

"You are a positive enigma. Leave our house, just when you are betrothed to its inmate! Is that the natural conduct of a lover?"

"How can your woman eyes be so dull, and your woman heart so obtuse?" answered Harley, half-laughing, half-scolding. "Can you not guess that I wish that Helen and myself should both lose the association of mere ward and guardian; that the very familiarity of our intercourse under the same roof almost forbids us to be lovers; that we lose the joy to meet, and the pang to part. Don't you remember the story of the Frenchman, who for twenty years loved a lady, and never missed passing his evenings at her house. She became a widow. 'I wish you joy,' cried his friend; 'you may now marry the woman you have so long adored.' 'Alas,' said the poor Frenchman, profoundly dejected; 'and if so, where shall I spend my evenings?'"

Here Violante and Helen were seen in the garden, walking affectionately, arm in arm.

"I don't perceive the point of your witty, heartless anecdote," said Lady Lansmere, obstinately. "Settle that, however, with Miss Digby. But, to leave the very day after your friend's daughter comes as a guest! – what will *she* think of it?"

Lord L'Estrange looked steadfastly at his mother. "Does it matter much what she thinks of me? – of a man engaged to another; and old enough to be – "

"I wish to Heaven you would not talk of your age, Harley; it is a reflection upon mine; and I never saw you look so well nor so handsome." With that, she drew him on towards the young ladies; and, taking Helen's arm, asked her, aside, "if she knew that Lord L'Estrange had engaged rooms at the Clarendon; and if she understood why?" As, while she said this she moved on, Harley was left by Violante's side.

"You will be very dull here, I fear, my poor child," said he.

"Dull! But why *will* you call me child? Am I so very – very childlike?"

"Certainly, you are to me – a mere infant. Have I not seen you one; have I not held you in my arms?"

Violante. – "But that was a long time ago!"

Harley. – "True. But if years have not stood still for you, they have not been stationary for me. There is the same difference between us now that there was then. And, therefore, permit me still to call you child, and as child to treat you!"

Violante. – "I will do no such thing. Do you know that I always thought I was good-tempered till this morning."

Harley. – "And what undeceived you? Did you break your doll?"

Violante, (with an indignant flash from her dark eyes). – "There! – again! – you delight in provoking me!"

Harley. – "It *was* the doll, then. Don't cry; I will get you another."

Violante plucked her arm from him, and walked away towards the Countess in speechless scorn. Harley's brow contracted, in thought and in gloom. He stood still for a moment or so, and then joined the ladies.

"I am trespassing sadly on your morning; but I wait for a visiter whom I sent to before you were up. He is to be here at twelve. With your permission, I will dine with you to-morrow, and you will invite him to meet me."

"Certainly. And who is your friend? I guess – the young author?"

"Leonard Fairfield," cried Violante, who had conquered, or felt ashamed, of her short-lived anger.

"Fairfield!" repeated Lady Lansmere. "I thought, Harley, you said the name was Oran."

"He has assumed the latter name. He is the son of Mark Fairfield, who married an Avenel. Did you recognise no family likeness? – none in those eyes, – mother?" said Harley, sinking his voice into a whisper.

"No," answered the Countess, falteringly.

Harley, observing that Violante was now speaking to Helen about Leonard, and that neither was listening to him, resumed in the same low tone, "And his mother – Nora's sister – shrank from seeing me! That is the reason why I wished you not to call. She has not told the young man *why* she shrank from seeing me; nor have I explained it to him, as yet. Perhaps I never shall."

"Indeed, dearest Harley," said the Countess, with great gentleness, "I wish you too much to forget the folly – well, I will not say that word – the sorrows, of your boyhood, not to hope that you will rather strive against such painful memories than renew them by unnecessary confidence to any one; least of all to the relation of – "

"Enough! – don't name her; the very name pains me. And as to confidence, there are but two persons in the world to whom I ever bare the old wounds – yourself and Egerton. Let this pass. Ha! – a ring at the bell – that is he!"

CHAPTER XI

Leonard entered on the scene, and joined the party in the garden. The Countess, perhaps to please her son, was more than civil – she was markedly kind to him. She noticed him more attentively than she had hitherto done; and, with all her prejudices of birth, was struck to find the son of Mark Fairfield the carpenter so thoroughly the gentleman. He might not have the exact tone and phrase by which Convention stereotypes those born and schooled in a certain world; but the aristocrats of Nature can dispense with such trite minutiæ. And Leonard had lived, of late at least, in the best society that exists, for the polish of language and the refinement of manners, – the society in which the most graceful ideas are clothed in the most graceful forms – the society which really, though indirectly, gives the law to courts – the society of the most classic authors, in the various ages in which literature has flowered forth from civilisation. And if there was something in the exquisite sweetness of Leonard's voice, look, and manner, which the Countess acknowledged to attain that perfection in high breeding, which, under the name of "suavity," steals its way into the heart, so her interest in him

was aroused by a certain subdued melancholy which is rarely without distinction, and never without charm. He and Helen exchanged but few words. There was but one occasion in which they could have spoken apart, and Helen herself contrived to elude it. His face brightened at Lady Lansmere's cordial invitation, and he glanced at Helen as he accepted it; but her eye did not meet his own.

"And now," said Harley, whistling to Nero, whom his ward was silently caressing, "I must take Leonard away. Adieu! all of you, till to-morrow at dinner. Miss Violante, is the doll to have blue eyes or black?"

Violante turned her own black eyes in mute appeal to Lady Lansmere, and nestled to that lady's side as if in refuge from unworthy insult.

CHAPTER XII

"Let the carriage go to the Clarendon," said Harley to his servant; "I and Mr Oran will walk to town. Leonard, I think you would rejoice at an occasion to serve your old friends, Dr Riccabocca and his daughter?"

"Serve them! O yes." And there instantly returned to Leonard the recollection of Violante's words when, on leaving his quiet village he had sighed to part from all those he loved; and the little dark-eyed girl had said proudly, yet consolingly, "But to SERVE those you love!" He turned to L'Estrange with beaming inquisitive eyes.

"I said to our friend," resumed Harley, "that I would vouch for your honour as my own. I am about to prove my words, and to confide the secrets which your penetration has indeed divined; – our friend is not what he seems." Harley then briefly related to Leonard the particulars of the exile's history, the rank he had held in his native land, the manner in which, partly through the misrepresentations of a kinsman he had trusted, partly through the influence of a wife he had loved, he had been driven into schemes which he believed bounded to the emancipation of Italy from a foreign yoke by the united exertions of her best and bravest sons.

"A noble ambition," interrupted Leonard, manfully, "And pardon me, my lord, I should not have thought that you would speak of it in a tone that implies blame."

"The ambition in itself was noble," answered Harley. "But the cause to which it was devoted became defiled in its dark channel through Secret Societies. It is the misfortune of all miscellaneous political combinations, that with the purest motives of their more generous members are ever mixed the most sordid interests, and the fiercest passions of mean confederates. When those combinations act openly, and in daylight, under the eye of Public Opinion, the healthier elements usually prevail; where they are shrouded in mystery – where they are subjected to no censor in the discussion of the impartial and dispassionate – where chiefs working in the dark exact blind obedience, and every man who is at war with law is at once admitted as a friend of freedom – the history of the world tells us that patriotism soon passes away. Where all is in public, public virtue, by the natural sympathies of the common mind, and by the wholesome control of shame, is likely to obtain ascendancy; where all is in private, and shame is but for him who refuses the abnegation of his conscience, each man seeks the indulgence of his private vice. And hence, in Secret Societies, (from which may yet proceed great danger to all Europe,) we find but foul and hateful Eleusinia, affording pretexts to the ambition of the great, to the license of the penniless, to the passions of the revengeful, to the anarchy of the ignorant. In a word, the societies of these Italian Carbonari did but engender schemes in which the abler chiefs disguised new forms of despotism, and in which the revolutionary many looked forward to the overthrow of all the institutions that stand between Law and Chaos. Naturally, therefore," (added L'Estrange, dryly,) "when their schemes were detected, and the conspiracy foiled, it was for the silly honest men entrapped into the league to suffer – the leaders turned king's evidence, and the common mercenaries became – banditti." Harley then proceeded to state that it was just when the *soi-disant* Riccabocca had discovered the true nature and ulterior views of the conspirators he had joined, and

actually withdrawn from their councils, that he was denounced by the kinsman who had duped him into the enterprise, and who now profited by his treason. Harley next spoke of the packet despatched by Riccabocca's dying wife, as it was supposed, to Mrs Bertram; and of the hopes he founded on the contents of that packet, if discovered. He then referred to the design which had brought Peschiera to England – a design which that personage had avowed with such effrontery to his companions at Vienna, that he had publicly laid wagers on his success.

"But these men can know nothing of England – of the safety of English laws," said Leonard, naturally. "We take it for granted that Riccabocca, if I am still so to call him, refuses his consent to the marriage between his daughter and his foe. Where, then, the danger? This Count, even if Violante were not under your mother's roof, could not get an opportunity to see her. He could not attack the house and carry her off like a feudal baron in the middle ages."

"All this is very true," answered Harley. "Yet I have found through life that we cannot estimate danger by external circumstances, but by the character of those from whom it is threatened. This Count is a man of singular audacity, of no mean natural talents – talents practised in every art of duplicity and intrigue; one of those men whose boast it is that they succeed in whatever they undertake; and he is, here, urged on the one hand by all that can whet the avarice, and on the other, by all that can give invention to despair. Therefore, though I cannot guess what plan he may possibly adopt, I never doubt that some plan, formed with cunning and pursued with daring, will be embraced the moment he discovers Violante's retreat, unless, indeed, we can forestall all peril by the restoration of her father, and the detection of the fraud and falsehood to which Peschiera owes the fortune he appropriates. Thus, while we must prosecute to the utmost our inquiries for the missing documents, so it should be our care to possess ourselves, if possible, of such knowledge of the Count's machinations as may enable us to defeat them. Now, it was with satisfaction that I learned in Germany that Peschiera's sister was in London. I know enough both of his disposition and of the intimacy between himself and this lady, to make me think it probable he will seek to make her his instrument and accomplice, should he require one. Peschiera (as you may suppose by his audacious wager) is not one of those secret villains who would cut off their right hand if it could betray the knowledge of what was done by the left – rather one of those self-confident vaunting knaves, of high animal spirits, and conscience so obtuse that it clouds their intellect – who must have some one to whom they can boast of their abilities and confide their projects. And Peschiera has done all he can to render this poor woman so wholly dependent on him, as to be his slave and his tool. But I have learned certain traits in her character that show it to be impressionable to good, and with tendencies to honour. Peschiera had taken advantage of the admiration she excited, some years ago, in a rich young Englishman, to entice this admirer into gambling, and sought to make his sister both a decoy and an instrument in his designs of plunder. She did not encourage the addresses of our countryman, but she warned him of the snare laid for him, and entreated him to leave the place lest her brother should discover and punish her honesty. The Englishman told me this himself. In fine, my hope of detaching this poor lady from Peschiera's interests, and inducing her to forewarn us of his purpose, consists but in the innocent, and, I hope, laudable artifice, of redeeming herself – of appealing to, and calling into disused exercise, the better springs of her nature."

Leonard listened with admiration and some surprise to the singularly subtle and sagacious insight into character which Harley evinced in the brief clear strokes by which he had thus depicted Peschiera and Beatrice, and was struck by the boldness with which Harley rested a whole system of action upon a few deductions drawn from his reasonings on human motive and characteristic bias. Leonard had not expected to find so much practical acuteness in a man who, however accomplished, usually seemed indifferent, dreamy, and abstracted to the ordinary things of life. But Harley L'Estrange was one of those whose powers lie dormant till circumstance applies to them all they need for activity – the stimulant of a motive.

Harley resumed – "After a conversation I had with the lady last night, it occurred to me that in this part of our diplomacy you could render us essential service. Madame di Negra – such is the sister's name – has conceived an admiration for your genius, and a strong desire to know you personally. I have promised to present you to her; and I shall do so after a preliminary caution. The lady is very handsome, and very fascinating. It is possible that your heart and your senses may not be proof against her attractions."

"O, do not fear that!" exclaimed Leonard, with a tone of conviction so earnest that Harley smiled.

"Forewarned is not always forearmed against the might of Beauty, my dear Leonard; so I cannot at once accept your assurance. But listen to me: Watch yourself narrowly, and if you find that you are likely to be captivated, promise, on your honour, to retreat at once from the field. I have no right, for the sake of another, to expose you to danger; and Madame di Negra, whatever may be her good qualities, is the last person I should wish to see you in love with."

"In love with her! Impossible!"

"Impossible is a strong word," returned Harley; "still, I own fairly (and this belief alone warrants me in trusting you to her fascinations) that I do think, as far as one man can judge of another, that she is not the woman to attract you; and, if filled by one pure and generous object in your intercourse with her, you will see her with purged eyes. Still I claim your promise as one of honour."

"I give it," said Leonard positively. "But how can I serve Riccabocca? How aid in – "

"Thus," interrupted Harley. "The spell of your writings is, that, unconsciously to ourselves, they make us better and nobler. And your writings are but the impressions struck off from your mind. Your conversation, when you are roused, has the same effect. And as you grow more familiar with Madame di Negra, I wish you to speak of your boyhood, your youth. Describe the exile as you have seen him – so touching amidst his foibles, so grand amidst the petty privations of his fallen fortunes, so benevolent while poring over his hateful Machiavel, so stingless in his wisdom of the serpent, so playfully astute in his innocence of the dove – I leave the picture to your knowledge of humour and pathos. Describe Violante brooding over her Italian poets, and filled with dreams of her fatherland; describe her with all the flashes of her princely nature, shining forth through humble circumstance and obscure position; waken in your listener compassion, respect, admiration for her kindred exiles; – and I think our work is done. She will recognise evidently those whom her brother seeks. She will question you closely where you met with them – where they now are. Protect that secret: say at once that it is not your own. Against your descriptions and the feelings they excite, she will not be guarded as against mine. And there are other reasons why your influence over this woman of mixed nature may be more direct and effectual than my own."

"Nay, I cannot conceive that."

"Believe it, without asking me to explain," answered Harley.

For he did not judge it necessary to say to Leonard, "I am high-born and wealthy – you a peasant's son, and living by your exertions. This woman is ambitious and distressed. She might have projects on me that would counteract mine on her. You she would but listen to, and receive, through the sentiments of good or of poetical that are in her – you she would have no interest to subjugate, no motive to ensnare."

"And now," said Harley, turning the subject, "I have another object in view. This foolish sage friend of ours, in his bewilderment and fears, has sought to save Violante from one rogue by promising her hand to a man who, unless my instincts deceive me, I suspect much disposed to be another. Sacrifice such exuberance of life and spirit to that bloodless heart, to that cold and earthward intellect! By Heavens, it shall not be!"

"But whom can the exile possibly have seen of birth and fortunes to render him a fitting spouse for his daughter? Whom, my lord, except yourself?"

"Me!" exclaimed Harley, angrily, and changing colour. "I worthy of such a creature? I – with my habits! I – silken egotist that I am! And you, a poet, to form such an estimate of one who might be the queen of a poet's dream!"

"My lord, when we sate the other night round Riccabocca's hearth – when I heard her speak, and observed you listen, I said to myself, from such knowledge of human nature as comes, we know not how, to us poets – I said, 'Harley L'Estrange has looked long and wistfully on the heavens, and he now hears the murmur of the wings that can waft him towards them.' And then I sighed, for I thought how the world rules us all in spite of ourselves. And I said, 'What pity for both, that the exile's daughter is not the worldly equal of the peer's son!' And you too sighed, as I thus thought; and I fancied that, while you listened to the music of the wing, you felt the iron of the chain. But the exile's daughter *is* your equal in birth, and you are hers in heart and in soul."

"My poor Leonard, you rave," answered Harley, calmly. "And if Violante is not to be some young prince's bride, she should be some young poet's."

"Poet's! O, no!" said Leonard, with a gentle laugh. "Poets need repose where *they* love!"

Harley was struck by the answer, and mused over it in silence. "I comprehend," thought he; "it is a new light that dawns on me. What is needed by the man, whose whole life is one strain after glory – whose soul sinks, in fatigue, to the companionship of earth – is not the love of a nature like his own. He is right – it is repose! While I, it is true! Boy that he is, his intuitions are wiser than all my experience! It *is* excitement – energy – elevation, that Love should bestow on me. But I have chosen; and, at least, with Helen my life will be calm, and my hearth sacred. Let the rest sleep in the same grave as my youth."

"But," said Leonard, wishing kindly to arouse his noble friend from a reverie which he felt was mournful, though he did not divine its true cause – "but you have not yet told me the name of the Signora's suitor. May I know?"

"Probably one you never heard of. Randal Leslie – a placeman. You refused a place; – you were right."

"Randal Leslie? Heaven forbid!" cried Leonard, revealing his surprise at the name.

"Amen! But what do you know of him?"

Leonard related the story of Burley's pamphlet.

Harley seemed delighted to hear his suspicions of Randal confirmed. "The paltry pretender! – and yet I fancied that he might be formidable! However, we must dismiss him for the present; – we are approaching Madame di Negra's house. Prepare yourself, and remember your promise."

CHAPTER XIII

Some days have passed by. Leonard and Beatrice di Negra have already made friends. Harley is satisfied with his young friend's report. He himself has been actively occupied. He has sought, but hitherto in vain, all trace of Mrs Bertram; he has put that investigation into the hands of his lawyer, and his lawyer has not been more fortunate than himself. Moreover, Harley has blazed forth again in the London world, and promises again *de faire fureur*; but he has always found time to spend some hours in the twenty-four at his father's house. He has continued much the same tone with Violante, and she begins to accustom herself to it, and reply saucily. His calm courtship to Helen flows on in silence. Leonard, too, has been a frequent guest at the Lansmeres': all welcome and like him there. Peschiera has not evinced any sign of the deadly machinations ascribed to him. He goes less into the drawing-room world: he meets Lord L'Estrange there; and brilliant and handsome though Peschiera be, Lord L'Estrange, like Rob Roy Macgregor, is "on his native heath," and has the decided advantage over the foreigner. Peschiera, however, shines in the clubs, and plays high. Still scarcely an evening passes in which he and Baron Levy do not meet.

Audley Egerton has been intensely occupied with affairs. Only seen once by Harley. Harley then was about to deliver himself of his sentiments respecting Randal Leslie, and to communicate the story of Burley and the pamphlet. Egerton stopped him short.

"My dear Harley, don't try to set me against this young man. I wish to hear nothing in his disfavour. In the first place, it would not alter the line of conduct I mean to adopt with regard to him. He is my wife's kinsman; I charged myself with his career, as a wish of hers, and therefore as a duty to myself. In attaching him so young to my own fate, I drew him necessarily away from the professions in which his industry and talents (for he has both in no common degree) would have secured his fortunes; therefore, be he bad, be he good, I shall try to provide for him as I best can; and, moreover, cold as I am to him, and worldly though perhaps he be, I have somehow or other conceived an interest in him – a liking to him. He has been under my roof, he is dependent on me; he has been docile and prudent, and I am a lone childless man; therefore, spare him, since in so doing you spare me; and ah, Harley, I have so many cares on me *now*, that – "

"O, say no more, my dear, dear Audley," cried the generous friend; "how little people know you!"

Audley's hand trembled. Certainly his nerves began to show wear and tear.

Meanwhile, the object of this dialogue – the type of perverted intellect – of mind without heart – of knowledge which had no aim but power – was in a state of anxious perturbed gloom. He did not know whether wholly to believe Levy's assurance of his patron's ruin. He could not believe it when he saw that great house in Grosvenor Square, its hall crowded with lacqueys, its sideboard blazing with plate; when no dun was ever seen in the antechamber; when not a tradesman was ever known to call twice for a bill. He hinted to Levy the doubts all these phenomena suggested to him; but the Baron only smiled ominously and said —

"True, the tradesmen are always paid; but the *how* is the question! Randal, *mon cher*, you are too innocent. I have but two pieces of advice to suggest, in the shape of two proverbs – 'Wise rats run from a falling house,' and 'Make hay while the sun shines.' Apropos, Mr Avenel likes you greatly, and has been talking of the borough of Lansmere for you. He has contrived to get together a great interest there. Make much of him."

Randal had indeed been to Mrs Avenel's *soirée dansante*, and called twice and found her at home, and been very bland and civil, and admired the children. She had two, a boy and a girl, very like their father, with open faces as bold as brass. And as all this had won Mrs Avenel's good graces, so it had propitiated her husband's. Avenel was shrewd enough to see how clever Randal was. He called him "smart," and said "he would have got on in America," which was the highest praise Dick Avenel ever accorded to any man. But Dick himself looked a little care-worn; and this was the first year in which he had murmured at the bills of his wife's dressmaker, and said with an oath, that "there was such a thing as going *too* much ahead."

Randal had visited Dr Riccabocca, and found Violante flown. True to his promise to Harley, the Italian refused to say where, and suggested, as was agreed, that for the present it would be more prudent if Randal suspended his visits to himself. Leslie, not liking this proposition, attempted to make himself still necessary, by working on Riccabocca's fears as to that espionage on his retreat, which had been among the reasons that had hurried the sage into offering Randal Violante's hand. But Riccabocca had already learned that the fancied spy was but his neighbour Leonard; and, without so saying, he cleverly contrived to make the supposition of such espionage an additional reason for the cessation of Leslie's visits. Randal, then, in his own artful, quiet, roundabout way, had sought to find out if any communication had passed between L'Estrange and Riccabocca. Brooding over Harley's words to him, he suspected there had been such communication, with his usual penetrating astuteness. Riccabocca, here, was less on his guard, and rather parried the sidelong questions than denied their inferences.

Randal began already to surmise the truth. Where was it likely Violante should go but to the Lansmeres'? This confirmed his idea of Harley's pretensions to her hand. With such a rival what chance had he? Randal never doubted for a moment that the pupil of Machiavel would 'throw him over,' if such an alliance to his daughter really presented itself. The schemer at once discarded from his project all further aim on Violante: either she would be poor, and he would not have her; or she would be rich, and her father would give her to another. As his heart had never been touched by the fair Italian, so the moment her inheritance became more than doubtful, it gave him no pang to lose her; but he did feel very sore and resentful at the thought of being supplanted by Lord L'Estrange, the man who had insulted him.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.