

fire so vigorously that the preacher was fain to conclude, for he would scarce hear himself speak.

On entering the house we find ourselves in a handsome hall, hung with pictures, and from thence we pass into a long low gallery, overlooking the flat park, the sluggish river, and the conventional bridge. The gallery was papered all over with exquisite engravings—a fancy of the Duke's. The Duchess was sitting in a small room beyond; she was the gentlest lady I ever knew, yet gentle with a dignity all her own. Her face was pale and sad, and slightly scarred with small-pox. She had a pensive, tender look, that made one love her even before her sweet manner had settled that matter altogether. No creature could approach her without feeling her influence. Her friendliness to her country neighbours was unfailing. At a great diplomatic reception at Apsley House, a somewhat rustic old squire led her, at her own desire, among her brilliant guests.

"Really, madam," said he at length, "I am unworthy of the honour you are conferring on me."

"Nonsense," said the Duchess, "everyone takes you for the Hanoverian Ambassador; so hold your tongue, and do not undeceive them."

When we entered the boudoir, a great album and a case of drawing materials lay before her, and we found that she was finishing a collection of sketches illustrative of the history of Charles V. Now this was a work naturally suggested by her surroundings, for in the dining-room hard by hung many splendid portraits of that period. A Velasquez presented to the Duke by the King of Spain from his own gallery at Madrid, a sedate Margaret, Governess of the low countries, and replice of the well-known portraits of Philip le Beau, and Jeanne la Folle. Did the Duchess, I wonder, ever compare the adoring love she bore her absent hero, to the passion that turned this royal lady's brain? Perhaps in the course of her solitary life (for she was often alone) some vague sympathy may have grown up in her heart for the plaintive, anxious face looking out of that tarnished frame!

Luncheon over, a meal of unexampled magnificence to my young imagination, the Duchess proposed a walk. A basket was brought to her full of bread, to feed the Duke's favourite

charger, Copenhagen, on whose back he sat for fifteen hours during the battle of Waterloo. Poor Duchess! she found an outlet for her wifely, womanly love, in the daily feeding of this old horse, now turned out luxuriously to live and die in a paddock close by the garden. On through the shrubberies we walked—I a mere child, bearing the basket, and trotting by the Duchess' side—while my mother followed in silent fear of my untamed garrulity. By-and-by she heard with horror the following remark from her "*enfant terrible*."

"This is a beautiful place, Duchess, and these are beautiful gardens; but if the Duke had not fought well on Copenhagen's back at Waterloo, you would never have had them, you know!"

"No," replied she, "we should not have had them; neither would *you* have had your place, for the French and Bonaparte would have had it all."

The last time I saw this gentle lady was shortly before her death. She was lying on a sofa, ill with her last illness; and soon after that she was taken up to town to die. Before leaving Strathfieldsaye she addressed a pencilled note (being too weak to hold a pen) to my mother, asking after her "dear little girl," to whom she sent her "best love." Such was the wife of the great Duke, a domestic saint, too modest and too refined to fill the large frame his glory had made for her! All this time I had never seen the Duke.

Some three or four years afterwards it chanced that I was staying in a house to which he came one day, accompanied by lovely Mrs. Arbuthnot and Lady Stanhope, and the then Lady Salisbury, (*née* Gascoigne) to see a collection of pictures which he much admired. I was then a long gawky girl in short petticoats, and sat half hidden behind the sofas, terribly ashamed of my legs. No one noticed me. I ran home presently to tell my mother that I had seen the great Duke; and she piqued, mother-like, that her cub had been overlooked, sent him message to say the girl he had met that day, had been much loved by his Duchess. Her memory had now become very dear to him, and all she had loved he valued. A few days after the great hero came trotting down our park avenue in his own decided way, and after being received by my mother, specially begged to see me. Bold enough now, I advanced, held out