

although she was at least fifty, inherited similar prepossessions. It was said that she had been a court beauty in her day, and even admired by a certain royal Duke; but however this may be, certain it is, that up to the present time she was still a spinster, and from her tart shrill voice, spare figure, nervous peculiarities and desperate partiality for an old medicine chest, was exceedingly likely to continue so. For ten monotonous years she had never been once separated from her brother, but clung so adhesively to him in all matters of taste, that even her features seemed to have acquired a resemblance, probably from an unconscious habit of imitation, as an affectionate wife is said in due course of time to grow so like her husband that even a naturalist would be puzzled to say which was which.

Most families have some standard joke, some little domestic witticism, which however dull without its own circle, is monstrously whimsical within. Now Mrs. Sarah—as her godfather and godmother had baptized her—was the subject of the Daubigny waggery, and a circumstance which had occurred in early life had been placed to her account, as a sort of capital, in the Bank of Momus, on which the proprietors never failed to draw whenever their own stock of jokes ran low. The circumstance was this: She was once seated with the late Lord —— in the stage box at Drury Lane, when a report spread throughout the theatre that Her Majesty was expected. The house was instantly in an uproar: heads were thrust forward into every nook and corner where it was possible for heads to thrust themselves, and the whole theatre, actors, musicians and all burst into an uproarious “God save the Queen.” At this instant the royal Duke, who has before been mentioned, happened to enter Mrs. Sarah’s box, and as all the world knows that a mob resolved to see a Queen are sure never to go away disappointed, so they now turned our virgin heroine into “her majesty,” (although she was at least a foot higher and took snuff.) and paid her all the honors of royalty. From this eventful evening the good lady was ever after dubbed “her majesty,” a name by which she was better known throughout the family than by her own maiden patronymic.

Within a stone’s throw of Dorney Court, lived an elderly gentleman named Pope. He was a bachelor of some standing—say fifty years—stiff, serious, and formal in demeanour, exceedingly safe in conversation, (having never been known to approach nearer to a joke, than just some piece of orthodox waggery at Xmas.) with hair nicely trimmed, voice deep and imposing, and countenance as grave as an old gate-post. For twenty years, from the time of his resigning his fellowship at St. John’s, up to the present