The Eustace Diamonds

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VOLUME 1

Chapter 1. Lizzie Greystock

It was admitted by all her friends, and also by her enemies,—who were in truth the more numerous and active body of the two,—that Lizzie Greystock had done very well with herself. We will tell the story of Lizzie Greystock from the beginning, but we will not dwell over it at great length, as we might do if we loved her. She was the only child of old Admiral Greystock, who in the latter years of his life was much perplexed by the possession of a daughter. The admiral was a man who liked whist, wine,—and wickedness in general we may perhaps say, and whose ambition it was to live every day of his life up to the end of it. People say that he succeeded, and that the whist, wine, and wickedness were there, at the side even of his dying bed. He had no particular fortune, and yet his daughter, when she was little more than a child, went about everywhere with jewels on her fingers, and red gems hanging round her neck, and yellow gems pendent from her ears, and white gems shining in her black hair. She was hardly nineteen when her father died and she was taken home by that dreadful old termagant, her aunt, Lady Linlithgow. Lizzie would have sooner gone to any other friend or relative, had there been any other friend or relative to take her possessed of a house in town. Her uncle, Dean Greystock, of Bobsborough, would have had her, and a more good-natured old soul than the dean's wife did not exist,—and there were three pleasant, good-tempered girls in the deanery, who had made various little efforts at friendship with their cousin Lizzie; but Lizzie had higher ideas for herself than life in the deanery at Bobsborough. She hated Lady Linlithgow. During her father's lifetime, when she hoped to be able to settle herself before his death, she was not in the habit of concealing her hatred for Lady Linlithgow. Lady Linlithgow was not indeed amiable or easily managed. But when the admiral died, Lizzie did not hesitate for a moment in going to the old "vulturess," as she was in the habit of calling the countess in her occasional correspondence with the girls at Bobsborough.

The admiral died greatly in debt;—so much so that it was a marvel how tradesmen had trusted him. There was literally nothing left for anybody,—and Messrs. Harter and Benjamin of Old Bond Street condescended to call at Lady Linlithgow's house in Brook Street, and to beg that the jewels supplied during the last twelve months might be returned. Lizzie protested that there were no jewels,—nothing to signify, nothing worth restoring. Lady Linlithgow had seen the diamonds, and demanded an explanation. They had been "parted with," by the admiral's orders,—so said Lizzie,—for the payment of other debts. Of this Lady Linlithgow did not believe a word, but she could not get at any exact truth. At that moment the jewels were in very truth pawned for money which had

been necessary for Lizzie's needs. Certain things must be paid for,—one's own maid for instance; and one must have some money in one's pocket for railway-trains and little knick-knacks which cannot be had on credit. Lizzie when she was nineteen knew how to do without money as well as most girls; but there were calls which she could not withstand, debts which even she must pay.

She did not, however, drop her acquaintance with Messrs. Harter and Benjamin. Before her father had been dead eight months, she was closeted with Mr. Benjamin, transacting a little business with him. She had come to him, she told him, the moment she was of age, and was willing to make herself responsible for the debt, signing any bill, note, or document which the firm might demand from her, to that effect. Of course she had nothing of her own, and never would have anything. That Mr. Benjamin knew. As for payment of the debt by Lady Linlithgow, who for a countess was as poor as Job, Mr. Benjamin, she was quite sure, did not expect anything of the kind. But— Then Lizzie paused, and Mr. Benjamin, with the sweetest and wittiest of smiles, suggested that perhaps Miss Greystock was going to be married. Lizzie, with a pretty maiden blush, admitted that such a catastrophe was probable. She had been asked in marriage by Sir Florian Eustace. Now Mr. Benjamin knew, as all the world knew, that Sir Florian Eustace was a very rich man indeed; a man in no degree embarrassed, and who could pay any amount of jewellers' bills for which claim might be made upon him. Well; what did Miss Greystock want? Mr. Benjamin did not suppose that Miss Greystock was actuated simply by a desire to have her old bills paid by her future husband. Miss Greystock wanted a loan sufficient to take the jewels out of pawn. She would then make herself responsible for the full amount due. Mr. Benjamin said that he would make a few inquiries. "But you won't betray me," said Lizzie, "for the match might be off." Mr. Benjamin promised to be more than cautious.

There was not so much of falsehood as might have been expected in the statement which Lizzie Greystock made to the jeweller. It was not true that she was of age, and therefore no future husband would be legally liable for any debt which she might then contract. And it was not true that Sir Florian Eustace had asked her in marriage. Those two little blemishes in her statement must be admitted. But it was true that Sir Florian was at her feet, and that by a proper use of her various charms,—the pawned jewels included,—she might bring him to an offer. Mr. Benjamin made his inquiries, and acceded to the proposal. He did not tell Miss Greystock that she had lied to him in that matter of her age, though he had discovered the lie. Sir Florian would no doubt pay the bill for his wife without any arguments as to the legality of the claim. From such information as Mr. Benjamin could acquire he thought that there would be a marriage, and that the speculation was on the whole in his favour. Lizzie recovered her jewels and Mr. Benjamin was in possession

of a promissory note purporting to have been executed by a person who was no longer a minor. The jeweller was ultimately successful in his views,—and so was the lady.

Lady Linlithgow saw the jewels come back, one by one, ring added to ring on the little taper fingers, the rubies for the neck, and the pendent yellow earrings. Though Lizzie was in mourning for her father, still these things were allowed to be visible. The countess was not the woman to see them without inquiry, and she inquired vigorously. She threatened, stormed, and protested. She attempted even a raid upon the young lady's jewel-box. But she was not successful. Lizzie snapped and snarled and held her own,—for at that time the match with Sir Florian was near its accomplishment, and the countess understood too well the value of such a disposition of her niece to risk it at the moment by any open rupture. The little house in Brook Street,—for the house was very small and very comfortless,—a house that had been squeezed in, as it were, between two others without any fitting space for it,—did not contain a happy family. One bedroom, and that the biggest, was appropriated to the Earl of Linlithgow, the son of the countess, a young man who passed perhaps five nights in town during the year. Other inmate there was none besides the aunt and the niece and the four servants,—of whom one was Lizzie's own maid. Why should such a countess have troubled herself with the custody of such a niece? Simply because the countess regarded it as a duty. Lady Linlithgow was worldly, stingy, ill-tempered, selfish, and mean. Lady Linlithgow would cheat a butcher out of a mutton-chop, or a cook out of a month's wages, if she could do so with some slant of legal wind in her favour. She would tell any number of lies to carry a point in what she believed to be social success. It was said of her that she cheated at cards. In back-biting, no venomous old woman between Bond Street and Park Lane could beat her,—or, more wonderful still, no venomous old man at the clubs. But nevertheless she recognised certain duties,—and performed them, though she hated them. She went to church, not merely that people might see her there,—as to which in truth she cared nothing,—but because she thought it was right. And she took in Lizzie Greystock, whom she hated almost as much as she did sermons, because the admiral's wife had been her sister, and she recognised a duty. But, having thus bound herself to Lizzie,—who was a beauty,—of course it became the first object of her life to get rid of Lizzie by a marriage. And, though she would have liked to think that Lizzie would be tormented all her days, though she thoroughly believed that Lizzie deserved to be tormented, she set her heart upon a splendid match. She would at any rate be able to throw it daily in her niece's teeth that the splendour was of her doing. Now a marriage with Sir Florian Eustace would be very splendid, and therefore she was unable to go into the matter of the

jewels with that rigour which in other circumstances she would certainly have displayed.

The match with Sir Florian Eustace,—for a match it came to be,—was certainly very splendid. Sir Florian was a young man about eight-and-twenty, very handsome, of immense wealth, quite unencumbered, moving in the best circles, popular, so far prudent that he never risked his fortune on the turf or in gambling-houses, with the reputation of a gallant soldier, and a most devoted lover. There were two facts concerning him which might, or might not, be taken as objections. He was vicious, and—he was dying. When a friend, intending to be kind, hinted the latter circumstance to Lady Linlithgow, the countess blinked and winked and nodded, and then swore that she had procured medical advice on the subject. Medical advice declared that Sir Florian was not more likely to die than another man,—if only he would get married; all of which statement on her ladyship's part was a lie. When the same friend hinted the same thing to Lizzie herself, Lizzie resolved that she would have her revenge upon that friend. At any rate the courtship went on.

We have said that Sir Florian was vicious;—but he was not altogether a bad man, nor was he vicious in the common sense of the word. He was one who denied himself no pleasure, let the cost be what it might in health, pocket, or morals. Of sin or wickedness he had probably no distinct idea. In virtue, as an attribute of the world around him, he had no belief. Of honour he thought very much, and had conceived a somewhat noble idea that because much had been given to him much was demanded of him. He was haughty, polite,—and very generous. There was almost a nobility even about his vices. And he had a special gallantry of which it is hard to say whether it is or is not to be admired. They told him that he was like to die,—very like to die, if he did not change his manner of living. Would he go to Algiers for a period? Certainly not. He would do no such thing. If he died, there was his brother John left to succeed him. And the fear of death never cast a cloud over that grandly beautiful brow. They had all been short-lived,—the Eustaces. Consumption had swept a hecatomb of victims from the family. But still they were grand people, and never were afraid of death. And then Sir Florian fell in love. Discussing this matter with his brother, who was perhaps his only intimate friend, he declared that if the girl he loved would give herself to him, he would make what atonement he could to her for his own early death by a princely settlement. John Eustace, who was somewhat nearly concerned in the matter, raised no objection to this proposal. There was ever something grand about these Eustaces. Sir Florian was a grand gentleman; but surely he must have been dull of intellect, slow of discernment, blear-eyed in his ways about the town, when he took Lizzie Greystock,—of all the women whom he could find in the world,—to be the purest, the truest, and the noblest. It

has been said of Sir Florian that he did not believe in virtue. He freely expressed disbelief in the virtue of women around him,—in the virtue of women of all ranks. But he believed in his mother and sisters as though they were heaven-born; and he was one who could believe in his wife as though she were the queen of heaven. He did believe in Lizzie Greystock, thinking that intellect, purity, truth, and beauty, each perfect in its degree, were combined in her. The intellect and beauty were there;—but, for the purity and truth—; how could it have been that such a one as Sir Florian Eustace should have been so blind!

Sir Florian was not, indeed, a clever man; but he believed himself to be a fool. And believing himself to be a fool, he desired, nay, painfully longed, for some of those results of cleverness which might, he thought, come to him, from contact with a clever woman. Lizzie read poetry well, and she read verses to him,—sitting very near to him, almost in the dark, with a shaded lamp throwing its light on her book. He was astonished to find how sweet a thing was poetry. By himself he could never read a line, but as it came from her lips it seemed to charm him. It was a new pleasure, and one which, though he had ridiculed it, he had so often coveted! And then she told him of such wondrous thoughts,—such wondrous joys in the world which would come from thinking! He was proud, I have said, and haughty; but he was essentially modest and humble in his self-estimation. How divine was this creature, whose voice to him was as that of a goddess!

Then he spoke out to her, with his face a little turned from her. Would she be his wife? But, before she answered him, let her listen to him. They had told him that an early death must probably be his fate. He did not himself feel that it must be so. Sometimes he was ill,—very ill; but often he was well. If she would run the risk with him he would endeavour to make her such recompense as might come from his wealth. The speech he made was somewhat long, and as he made it he hardly looked into her face.

But it was necessary to him that he should be made to know by some signal from her how it was going with her feelings. As he spoke of his danger, there came a gurgling little trill of wailing from her throat, a soft, almost musical sound of woe, which seemed to add an unaccustomed eloquence to his words. When he spoke of his own hope the sound was somewhat changed, but it was still continued. When he alluded to the disposition of his fortune, she was at his feet. "Not that," she said, "not that!" He lifted her, and with his arm round her waist he tried to tell her what it would be his duty to do for her. She escaped from his arm and would not listen to him. But,—but—! When he began to talk of love again, she stood with her forehead bowed against his bosom. Of course the engagement was then a thing accomplished.

But still the cup might slip from her lips. Her father was now dead but ten months, and what answer could she make when the common

pressing petition for an early marriage was poured into her ear? This was in July, and it would never do that he should be left, unmarried, to the rigour of another winter. She looked into his face and knew that she had cause for fear. Oh, heavens! if all these golden hopes should fall to the ground, and she should come to be known only as the girl who had been engaged to the late Sir Florian! But he himself pressed the marriage on the same ground. "They tell me," he said, "that I had better get a little south by the beginning of October. I won't go alone. You know what I mean;—eh, Lizzie?" Of course she married him in September.

They spent a honeymoon of six weeks at a place he had in Scotland, and the first blow came upon him as they passed through London, back from Scotland, on their way to Italy. Messrs. Harter and Benjamin sent in their little bill, which amounted to something over £400, and other little bills were sent in. Sir Florian was a man by whom such bills would certainly be paid, but by whom they would not be paid without his understanding much and conceiving more as to their cause and nature. How much he really did understand she was never quite aware;—but she did know that he detected her in a positive falsehood. She might certainly have managed the matter better than she did; and had she admitted everything there might probably have been but few words about it. She did not, however, understand the nature of the note she had signed, and thought that simply new bills would be presented by the jewellers to her husband. She gave a false account of the transaction, and the lie was detected. I do not know that she cared very much. As she was utterly devoid of true tenderness, so also was she devoid of conscience. They went abroad, however; and by the time the winter was half over in Naples, he knew what his wife was;—and before the end of the spring he was dead.

She had so far played her game well, and had won her stakes. What regrets, what remorse she suffered when she knew that he was going from her,—and then knew that he was gone, who can say? As man is never strong enough to take unmixed delight in good, so may we presume also that he cannot be quite so weak as to find perfect satisfaction in evil. There must have been qualms as she looked at his dying face, soured with the disappointment she had brought upon him, and listened to the harsh querulous voice that was no longer eager in the expressions of love. There must have been some pang when she reflected that the cruel wrong which she had inflicted on him had probably hurried him to his grave. As a widow, in the first solemnity of her widowhood, she was wretched and would see no one. Then she returned to England and shut herself up in a small house at Brighton. Lady Linlithgow offered to go to her, but she begged that she might be left to herself. For a few short months the awe arising from the rapidity with which it had all occurred did afflict her. Twelve months since she

had hardly known the man who was to be her husband. Now she was a widow,—a widow very richly endowed,—and she bore beneath her bosom the fruit of her husband's love.
But, even in these early days, friends and enemies did not hesitate to say that Lizzie Greystock had done very well with herself; for it was known by all concerned that in the settlements made she had been treated with unwonted generosity.

Chapter 2. Lady Eustace

There were circumstances in her position which made it impossible that Lizzie Greystock,—or Lady Eustace, as we must now call her,—should be left altogether to herself in the modest widow's retreat which she had found at Brighton. It was then April, and it was known that if all things went well with her, she would be a mother before the summer was over. On what the Fates might ordain in this matter immense interests were dependent. If a son should be born he would inherit everything, subject, of course, to his mother's settlement. If a daughter, to her would belong the great personal wealth which Sir Florian had owned at the time of his death. Should there be no son, John Eustace, the brother, would inherit the estates in Yorkshire which had been the backbone of the Eustace wealth. Should no child be born, John Eustace would inherit everything that had not been settled upon or left to the widow. Sir Florian had made a settlement immediately before his marriage, and a will immediately afterwards. Of what he had done then, nothing had been altered in those sad Italian days. The settlement had been very generous. The whole property in Scotland was to belong to Lizzie for her life,—and after her death was to go to a second son, if such second son there should be. By the will money was left to her, more than would be needed for any possible temporary emergency. When she knew how it was all arranged,—as far as she did know it,—she was aware that she was a rich woman. For so clever a woman she was infinitely ignorant as to the possession and value of money and land and income,—though, perhaps, not more ignorant than are most young girls under twenty-one. As for the Scotch property,—she thought that it was her own, for ever, because there could not now be a second son,—and yet was not quite sure whether it would be her own at all if she had no son. Concerning that sum of money left to her, she did not know whether it was to come out of the Scotch property or be given to her separately,—and whether it was to come annually or to come only once. She had received, while still in Naples, a letter from the family lawyer, giving her such details of the will as it was necessary that she should know, and now she longed to ask questions, to have her belongings made plain to her, and to realise her wealth. She had brilliant prospects; and yet, through it all, there was a sense of loneliness that nearly killed her. Would it not have been much better if her husband had lived, and still worshipped her, and still allowed her to read poetry to him? But she had read no poetry to him after that affair of Messrs. Harter and Benjamin. The reader has, or will have, but little to do with these days, and may be hurried on through the twelve, or even twenty-four months which followed the death of poor Sir Florian. The question of the heirship, however, was very grave, and early in the month of May Lady Eustace

was visited by her husband's uncle, Bishop Eustace, of Bobsborough. The bishop had been the younger brother of Sir Florian's father,—was at this time a man about fifty, very active and very popular,—and was one who stood high in the world, even among bishops. He suggested to his niece-in-law that it was very expedient that, during her coming hour of trial, she should not absent herself from her husband's family, and at last persuaded her to take up her residence at the palace at Bobsborough till such time as the event should be over. Lady Eustace was taken to the palace, and in due time a son was born. John, who was now the uncle of the heir, came down, and, with the frankest good humour, declared that he would devote himself to the little head of the family. He had been left as guardian, and the management of the great family estates was to be in his hands. Lizzie had read no poetry to him, and he had never liked her, and the bishop did not like her, and the ladies of the bishop's family disliked her very much, and it was thought by them that the dean's people,—the Dean of Bobsborough was Lizzie's uncle,—were not very fond of Lizzie since Lizzie had so raised herself in the world as to want no assistance from them. But still they were bound to do their duty by her as the widow of the late and the mother of the present baronet. And they did not find much cause of complaining as to Lizzie's conduct in these days. In that matter of the great family diamond necklace,—which certainly should not have been taken to Naples at all, and as to which the jeweller had told the lawyer and the lawyer had told John Eustace that it certainly should not now be detained among the widow's own private property,—the bishop strongly recommended that nothing should be said at present. The mistake, if there was a mistake, could be remedied at any time. And nothing in those very early days was said about the great Eustace necklace, which afterwards became so famous. Why Lizzie should have been so generally disliked by the Eustaces, it might be hard to explain. While she remained at the palace she was very discreet,—and perhaps demure. It may be said they disliked her expressed determination to cut her aunt, Lady Linlithgow;—for they knew that Lady Linlithgow had been, at any rate, a friend to Lizzie Greystock. There are people who can be wise within a certain margin, but beyond that commit great imprudences. Lady Eustace submitted herself to the palace people for that period of her prostration, but she could not hold her tongue as to her future intentions. She would, too, now and then ask of Mrs. Eustace, and even of her daughter, an eager, anxious question about her own property. "She is dying to handle her money," said Mrs. Eustace to the bishop. "She is only like the rest of the world in that," said the bishop. "If she would be really open, I wouldn't mind it," said Mrs. Eustace. None of them liked her,—and she did not like them.

She remained at the palace for six months, and at the end of that time she went to her own place in Scotland. Mrs. Eustace had strongly

advised her to ask her aunt, Lady Linlithgow, to accompany her, but in refusing to do this, Lizzie was quite firm. She had endured Lady Linlithgow for that year between her father's death and her marriage; she was now beginning to dare to hope for the enjoyment of the good things which she had won, and the presence of the dowager-countess,—"the vulturess,"—was certainly not one of these good things. In what her enjoyment was to consist, she had not as yet quite formed a definite conclusion. She liked jewels. She liked admiration. She liked the power of being arrogant to those around her. And she liked good things to eat. But there were other matters that were also dear to her. She did like music,—though it may be doubted whether she would ever play it or even listen to it alone. She did like reading, and especially the reading of poetry,—though even in this she was false and pretentious, skipping, pretending to have read, lying about books, and making up her market of literature for outside admiration at the easiest possible cost of trouble. And she had some dream of being in love, and would take delight even in building castles in the air, which she would people with friends and lovers whom she would make happy with the most open-hearted benevolence. She had theoretical ideas of life which were not bad,—but in practice, she had gained her objects, and she was in a hurry to have liberty to enjoy them.

There was considerable anxiety in the palace in reference to the future mode of life of Lady Eustace. Had it not been for that baby-heir, of course there would have been no cause for interference; but the rights of that baby were so serious and important that it was almost impossible not to interfere. The mother, however, gave some little signs that she did not intend to submit to much interference, and there was no real reason why she should not be as free as air. But did she really intend to go down to Portray Castle all alone;—that is, with her baby and nurses? This was ended by an arrangement, in accordance with which she was accompanied by her eldest cousin, Ellinor Greystock, a lady who was just ten years her senior. There could hardly be a better woman than Ellinor Greystock,—or a more good-humoured, kindly being. After many debates in the deanery and in the palace,—for there was much friendship between the two ecclesiastical establishments,—the offer was made and the advice given. Ellinor had accepted the martyrdom on the understanding that if the advice were accepted she was to remain at Portray Castle for three months. After a long discussion between Lady Eustace and the bishop's wife the offer was accepted, and the two ladies went to Scotland together.

During those three months the widow still bided her time. Of her future ideas of life she said not a word to her companion. Of her infant she said very little. She would talk of books,—choosing such books as her cousin did not read; and she would interlard her conversation with much Italian, because her cousin did not know the language. There was a

carriage kept by the widow, and they had themselves driven out together. Of real companionship there was none. Lizzie was biding her time, and at the end of the three months Miss Greystock thankfully, and, indeed, of necessity, returned to Bobsborough. "I've done no good," she said to her mother, "and have been very uncomfortable." "My dear," said her mother, "we have disposed of three months out of a two years' period of danger. In two years from Sir Florian's death she will be married again."

When this was said Lizzie had been a widow nearly a year, and had bided her time upon the whole discreetly. Some foolish letters she had written,—chiefly to the lawyer about her money and property; and some foolish things she had said,—as when she told Ellinor Greystock that the Portray property was her own for ever, to do what she liked with it. The sum of money left to her by her husband had by that time been paid into her own hands, and she had opened a banker's account. The revenues from the Scotch estate,—some £4,000 a year,—were clearly her own for life. The family diamond-necklace was still in her possession, and no answer had been given by her to a postscript to a lawyer's letter in which a little advice had been given respecting it. At the end of another year, when she had just reached the age of twenty-two, and had completed her second year of widowhood, she was still Lady Eustace, thus contradicting the prophecy made by the dean's wife. It was then spring, and she had a house of her own in London. She had broken openly with Lady Linlithgow. She had opposed, though not absolutely refused, all overtures of brotherly care from John Eustace. She had declined a further invitation, both for herself and for her child, to the palace. And she had positively asserted her intention of keeping the diamonds. Her late husband, she said, had given the diamonds to her. As they were supposed to be worth £10,000, and were really family diamonds, the matter was felt by all concerned to be one of much importance. And she was oppressed by a heavy load of ignorance, which became serious from the isolation of her position. She had learned to draw cheques, but she had no other correct notion as to business. She knew nothing as to spending money, saving it, or investing it. Though she was clever, sharp, and greedy, she had no idea what her money would do, and what it would not; and there was no one whom she would trust to tell her. She had a young cousin, a barrister,—a son of the dean's, whom she perhaps liked better than any other of her relations,—but she declined advice even from her friend the barrister. She would have no dealings on her own behalf with the old family solicitor of the Eustaces,—the gentleman who had now applied very formally for the restitution of the diamonds; but had appointed other solicitors to act for her. Messrs. Mowbray and Mopus were of opinion that as the diamonds had been given into her hands by her husband without any terms as to their surrender, no one could claim them. Of the manner in which the

diamonds had been placed in her hands, no one knew more than she chose to tell.

But when she started with her house in town,—a modest little house in Mount Street, near the park,—just two years after her husband's death, she had a large circle of acquaintances. The Eustace people, and the Greystock people, and even the Linlithgow people, did not entirely turn their backs on her. The countess, indeed, was very venomous, as she well might be; but then the countess was known for her venom. The dean and his family were still anxious that she should be encouraged to discreet living, and, though they feared many things, thought that they had no ground for open complaint. The Eustace people were forbearing, and hoped the best. "D–––– the necklace!" John Eustace had said, and the bishop unfortunately had heard him say it! "John," said the prelate, "whatever is to become of the bauble, you might express your opinion in more sensible language." "I beg your lordship's pardon," said John, "I only mean to say that I think we shouldn't trouble ourselves about a few stones." But the family lawyer, Mr. Camperdown, would by no means take this view of the matter. It was, however, generally thought that the young widow opened her campaign more prudently than had been expected.

And now as so much has been said of the character and fortune and special circumstances of Lizzie Greystock, who became Lady Eustace as a bride, and Lady Eustace as a widow and a mother, all within the space of twelve months, it may be as well to give some description of her person and habits, such as they were at the period in which our story is supposed to have its commencement. It must be understood in the first place that she was very lovely;—much more so, indeed, now than when she had fascinated Sir Florian. She was small, but taller than she looked to be,—for her form was perfectly symmetrical. Her feet and hands might have been taken as models by a sculptor. Her figure was lithe, and soft, and slim, and slender. If it had a fault it was this,—that it had in it too much of movement. There were some who said that she was almost snake-like in her rapid bendings and the almost too easy gestures of her body; for she was much given to action, and to the expression of her thought by the motion of her limbs. She might certainly have made her way as an actress, had fortune called upon her to earn her bread in that fashion. And her voice would have suited the stage. It was powerful when she called upon it for power; but, at the same time, flexible and capable of much pretence at feeling. She could bring it to a whisper that would almost melt your heart with tenderness,—as she had melted Sir Florian's, when she sat near to him reading poetry; and then she could raise it to a pitch of indignant wrath befitting a Lady Macbeth when her husband ventured to rebuke her. And her ear was quite correct in modulating these tones. She knew,—and it must have been by instinct, for her culture in such matters was small,—how to use her voice so that

neither its tenderness nor its wrath should be misapplied. There were pieces in verse that she could read,—things not wondrously good in themselves,—so that she would ravish you; and she would so look at you as she did it that you would hardly dare either to avert your eyes or to return her gaze. Sir Florian had not known whether to do the one thing or the other, and had therefore seized her in his arms. Her face was oval,—somewhat longer than an oval,—with little in it, perhaps nothing in it, of that brilliancy of colour which we call complexion. And yet the shades of her countenance were ever changing between the softest and most transparent white, and the richest, mellowest shades of brown. It was only when she simulated anger,—she was almost incapable of real anger,—that she would succeed in calling the thinnest streak of pink from her heart, to show that there was blood running in her veins. Her hair, which was nearly black,—but in truth with more of softness and of lustre than ever belong to hair that is really black,—she wore bound tight round her perfect forehead, with one long love-lock hanging over her shoulder. The form of her head was so good that she could dare to carry it without a chignon, or any adventitious adjuncts from an artiste's shop. Very bitter was she in consequence when speaking of the head-gear of other women. Her chin was perfect in its round, not over long,—as is the case with so many such faces, utterly spoiling the symmetry of the countenance. But it lacked a dimple, and therefore lacked feminine tenderness. Her mouth was perhaps faulty in being too small, or, at least, her lips were too thin. There was wanting from the mouth that expression of eager-speaking truthfulness which full lips will often convey. Her teeth were without flaw or blemish, even, small, white, and delicate; but perhaps they were shown too often. Her nose was small, but struck many as the prettiest feature of her face, so exquisite was the moulding of it, and so eloquent and so graceful the slight inflations of the transparent nostrils.

Her eyes, in which she herself thought that the lustre of her beauty lay, were blue and clear, bright as cerulean waters. They were long large eyes,—but very dangerous. To those who knew how to read a face, there was danger plainly written in them. Poor Sir Florian had not known. But, in truth, the charm of her face did not lie in her eyes. This was felt by many even who could not read the book fluently. They were too expressive, too loud in their demands for attention, and they lacked tenderness.

How few there are among women, few perhaps also among men, who know that the sweetest, softest, tenderest, truest eyes which a woman can carry in her head are green in colour! Lizzie's eyes were not tender,—neither were they true. But they were surmounted by the most wonderfully pencilled eyebrows that ever nature unassisted planted on a woman's face.

We have said that she was clever. We must add that she had in truth studied much. She spoke French, understood Italian, and read German. She played well on the harp, and moderately well on the piano. She sang, at least in good taste and in tune.
Of things to be learned by reading she knew much, having really taken diligent trouble with herself. She had learned much poetry by heart, and could apply it. She forgot nothing, listened to everything, understood quickly, and was desirous to show not only as a beauty but as a wit. There were men at this time who declared that she was simply the cleverest and the handsomest woman in England. As an independent young woman she was perhaps one of the richest.

Chapter 3. Lucy Morris

Although the first two chapters of this new history have been devoted to the fortunes and personal attributes of Lady Eustace, the historian begs his readers not to believe that that opulent and aristocratic Becky Sharp is to assume the dignity of heroine in the forthcoming pages. That there shall be any heroine the historian will not take upon himself to assert; but if there be a heroine, that heroine shall not be Lady Eustace. Poor Lizzie Greystock!—as men double her own age, and who had known her as a forward, capricious, spoilt child in her father's lifetime, would still call her. She did so many things, made so many efforts, caused so much suffering to others, and suffered so much herself throughout the scenes with which we are about to deal, that the story can hardly be told without giving her that prominence of place which has been assigned to her in the last two chapters.

Nor does the chronicler dare to put forward Lucy Morris as a heroine. The real heroine, if it be found possible to arrange her drapery for her becomingly, and to put that part which she enacted into properly heroic words, shall stalk in among us at some considerably later period of the narrative, when the writer shall have accustomed himself to the flow of words, and have worked himself up to a state of mind fit for the reception of noble acting and noble speaking. In the meantime, let it be understood that poor little Lucy Morris was a governess in the house of old Lady Fawn, when our beautiful young widow established herself in Mount Street.

Lady Eustace and Lucy Morris had known each other for many years,—had indeed been children together,—there having been some old family friendship between the Greystocks and the Morrises. When the admiral's wife was living, Lucy had, as a little girl of eight or nine, been her guest. She had often been a guest at the deanery. When Lady Eustace had gone down to the bishop's palace at Bobsborough, in order that an heir to the Eustaces might be born under an auspicious roof, Lucy Morris was with the Greystocks. Lucy, who was a year younger than Lizzie, had at that time been an orphan for the last four years. She too had been left penniless, but no such brilliant future awaited her as that which Lizzie had earned for herself. There was no countess-aunt to take her into her London house. The dean and the dean's wife and the dean's daughters had been her best friends, but they were not friends on whom she could be dependent. They were in no way connected with her by blood. Therefore, at the age of eighteen, she had gone out to be a child's governess. Then old Lady Fawn had heard of her virtues,—Lady Fawn, who had seven unmarried daughters running down from seven-and-twenty to thirteen, and Lucy Morris had been hired to teach English,

French, German, and something of music to the two youngest Miss Fawns.

During that visit at the deanery, when the heir of the Eustaces was being born, Lucy was undergoing a sort of probation for the Fawn establishment. The proposed engagement with Lady Fawn was thought to be a great thing for her. Lady Fawn was known as a miracle of Virtue, Benevolence, and Persistency. Every good quality that she possessed was so marked as to be worthy of being expressed with a capital. But her virtues were of that extraordinarily high character that there was no weakness in them,—no getting over them, no perverting them with follies or even exaggerations. When she heard of the excellencies of Miss Morris from the dean's wife, and then, after minutest investigation, learned the exact qualities of the young lady, she expressed herself willing to take Lucy into her house on special conditions. She must be able to teach music up to a certain point. "Then it's all over," said Lucy to the dean with her pretty smile,—that smile which caused all the old and middle-aged men to fall in love with her. "It's not over at all," said the dean. "You've got four months. Our organist is about as good a teacher as there is in England. You are clever and quick, and he shall teach you." So Lucy went to Bobsborough, and was afterwards accepted by Lady Fawn.

While she was at the deanery there sprung up a renewed friendship between her and Lizzie. It was, indeed, chiefly a one-sided friendship; for Lucy, who was quick and unconsciously capable of reading that book to which we alluded in a previous chapter, was somewhat afraid of the rich widow. And when Lizzie talked to her of their old childish days, and quoted poetry, and spoke of things romantic,—as she was much given to do,—Lucy felt that the metal did not ring true. And then Lizzie had an ugly habit of abusing all her other friends behind their backs. Now Lucy did not like to hear the Greystocks abused, and would say so. "That's all very well, you little minx," Lizzie would say playfully, "but you know that they are all asses!" Lucy by no means thought that the Greystocks were asses, and was very strongly of opinion that one of them was as far removed from being an ass as any human being she had ever known. This one was Frank Greystock, the barrister. Of Frank Greystock some special—but, let it be hoped, very short—description must be given by-and-by. For the present it will be sufficient to declare that, during that short Easter holiday which he spent at his father's house in Bobsborough, he found Lucy Morris to be a most agreeable companion.

"Remember her position," said Mrs. Dean to her son.

"Her position! Well;—and what is her position mother?"

"You know what I mean, Frank. She is as sweet a girl as ever lived, and a perfect lady. But with a governess, unless you mean to marry her, you should be more careful than with another girl, because you may do her such a world of mischief."

"I don't see that at all."
"If Lady Fawn knew that she had an admirer, Lady Fawn would not let her come into her house."
"Then Lady Fawn is an idiot. If a girl be admirable, of course she will be admired. Who can hinder it?"
"You know what I mean, Frank."
"Yes—I do; well. I don't suppose I can afford to marry Lucy Morris. At any rate, mother, I will never say a word to raise a hope in her,—if it would be a hope—"
"Of course it would be a hope."
"I don't know that at all. But I will never say any such word to her,—unless I make up my mind that I can afford to marry her."
"Oh, Frank, it would be impossible!" said Mrs. Dean.
Mrs. Dean was a very good woman, but she had aspirations in the direction of filthy lucre on behalf of her children, or at least on behalf of this special child, and she did think it would be very nice if Frank would marry an heiress. This, however, was a long time ago, nearly two years ago; and many grave things had got themselves transacted since Lucy's visit to the deanery. She had become quite an old and an accustomed member of Lady Fawn's family. The youngest Fawn girl was not yet fifteen, and it was understood that Lucy was to remain with the Fawns for some quite indefinite time to come. Lady Fawn's eldest daughter, Mrs. Hittaway, had a family of her own, having been married ten or twelve years, and it was quite probable that Lucy might be transferred. Lady Fawn fully appreciated her treasure, and was, and ever had been, conscientiously anxious to make Lucy's life happy. But she thought that a governess should not be desirous of marrying, at any rate till a somewhat advanced period of life. A governess, if she were given to falling in love, could hardly perform her duties in life. No doubt, not to be a governess, but a young lady free from the embarrassing necessity of earning bread, free to have a lover and a husband, would be upon the whole nicer. So it is nicer to be born to £10,000 a year than to have to wish for £500. Lady Fawn could talk excellent sense on this subject by the hour, and always admitted that much was due to a governess who knew her place and did her duty. She was very fond of Lucy Morris, and treated her dependent with affectionate consideration;—but she did not approve of visits from Mr. Frank Greystock. Lucy, blushing up to the eyes, had once declared that she desired to have no personal visitors at Lady Fawn's house; but that, as regarded her own friendships, the matter was one for her own bosom. "Dear Miss Morris," Lady Fawn had said, "we understand each other so perfectly, and you are so good, that I am quite sure everything will be as it ought to be." Lady Fawn lived down at Richmond all the year through, in a large old-fashioned house with a large old-fashioned garden, called Fawn Court. After that speech of hers to Lucy, Frank Greystock did not call again at Fawn Court for

many months, and it is possible that her ladyship had said a word also to him. But Lady Eustace, with her pretty little pair of grey ponies, would sometimes drive down to Richmond to see her "dear little old friend" Lucy, and her visits were allowed. Lady Fawn had expressed an opinion among her daughters that she did not see any harm in Lady Eustace. She thought that she rather liked Lady Eustace. But then Lady Fawn hated Lady Linlithgow as only two old women can hate each other;—and she had not heard the story of the diamond necklace.

Lucy Morris certainly was a treasure,—a treasure though no heroine. She was a sweetly social, genial little human being whose presence in the house was ever felt to be like sunshine. She was never forward, but never bashful. She was always open to familiar intercourse without ever putting herself forward. There was no man or woman with whom she would not so talk as to make the man or woman feel that the conversation was remarkably pleasant,—and she could do the same with any child. She was an active, mindful, bright, energetic little thing to whom no work ever came amiss. She had catalogued the library,—which had been collected by the late Lord Fawn with peculiar reference to the Christian theology of the third and fourth centuries. She had planned the new flower-garden,—though Lady Fawn thought that she had done that herself. She had been invaluable during Clara Fawn's long illness. She knew every rule at croquet, and could play piquet. When the girls got up charades they had to acknowledge that everything depended on Miss Morris. They were good-natured, plain, unattractive girls, who spoke of her to her face as one who could easily do anything to which she might put her hand. Lady Fawn did really love her. Lord Fawn, the eldest son, a young man of about thirty-five, a Peer of Parliament and an Under-Secretary of State,—very prudent and very diligent,—of whom his mother and sisters stood in great awe, consulted her frequently and made no secret of his friendship. The mother knew her awful son well, and was afraid of nothing wrong in that direction. Lord Fawn had suffered a disappointment in love, but he had consoled himself with blue-books, and mastered his passion by incessant attendance at the India Board. The lady he had loved had been rich, and Lord Fawn was poor; but nevertheless he had mastered his passion. There was no fear that his feelings towards the governess would become too warm;—nor was it likely that Miss Morris should encounter danger in regard to him. It was quite an understood thing in the family that Lord Fawn must marry money.

Lucy Morris was indeed a treasure. No brighter face ever looked into another to seek sympathy there, either in mirth or woe. There was a gleam in her eyes that was almost magnetic, so sure was she to obtain by it that community of interest which she desired,—though it were but for a moment. Lord Fawn was pompous, slow, dull, and careful; but even he had given way to it at once. Lady Fawn, too, was very careful, but she

had owned to herself long since that she could not bear to look forward to any permanent severance. Of course Lucy would be made over to the Hittaways, whose mother lived in Warwick Square, and whose father was Chairman of the Board of Civil Appeals. The Hittaways were the only grandchildren with whom Lady Fawn had as yet been blessed, and of course Lucy must go to the Hittaways.

She was but a little thing;—and it cannot be said of her, as of Lady Eustace, that she was a beauty. The charm of her face consisted in the peculiar, watery brightness of her eyes,—in the corners of which it would always seem that a diamond of a tear was lurking whenever any matter of excitement was afoot. Her light-brown hair was soft and smooth and pretty. As hair it was very well, but it had no speciality. Her mouth was somewhat large, but full of ever-varying expression. Her forehead was low and broad, with prominent temples, on which it was her habit to clasp tightly her little outstretched fingers as she sat listening to you. Of listeners she was the very best, for she would always be saying a word or two, just to help you,—the best word that could be spoken, and then again she would be hanging on your lips. There are listeners who show by their mode of listening that they listen as a duty,—not because they are interested. Lucy Morris was not such a one. She would take up your subject, whatever it was, and make it her own. There was forward just then a question as to whether the Sawab of Mygawb should have twenty millions of rupees paid to him and be placed upon a throne, or whether he should be kept in prison all his life. The British world generally could not be made to interest itself about the Sawab, but Lucy positively mastered the subject, and almost got Lord Fawn into a difficulty by persuading him to stand up against his chief on behalf of the injured prince.

What else can be said of her face or personal appearance that will interest a reader? When she smiled, there was the daintiest little dimple on her cheek. And when she laughed, that little nose, which was not as well-shaped a nose as it might have been, would almost change its shape and cock itself up in its mirth. Her hands were very thin and long, and so were her feet,—by no means models as were those of her friend Lady Eustace. She was a little, thin, quick, graceful creature, whom it was impossible that you should see without wishing to have near you. A most unselfish little creature she was, but one who had a well-formed idea of her own identity. She was quite resolved to be somebody among her fellow-creatures,—not somebody in the way of marrying a lord or a rich man, or somebody in the way of being a beauty, or somebody as a wit; but somebody as having a purpose and a use in life. She was the humblest little thing in the world in regard to any possible putting of herself forward or needful putting of herself back; and yet, to herself, nobody was her superior. What she had was her own, whether it was the old grey silk dress which she had bought with the money she had

earned, or the wit which nature had given her. And Lord Fawn's title was his own, and Lady Fawn's rank her own. She coveted no man's possessions,—and no woman's; but she was minded to hold by her own. Of present advantages or disadvantages,—whether she had the one or suffered from the other,—she thought not at all. It was her fault that she had nothing of feminine vanity. But no man or woman was ever more anxious to be effective, to persuade, to obtain belief, sympathy, and co-operation;—not for any result personal to herself, but because, by obtaining these things, she could be effective in the object then before her, be it what it might.

One other thing may be told of her. She had given her heart,—for good and all, as she owned to herself,—to Frank Greystock. She had owned to herself that it was so, and had owned to herself that nothing could come of it. Frank was becoming a man of mark,—but was becoming a man of mark without much money. Of all men he was the last who could afford to marry a governess. And then, moreover, he had never said a word to make her think that he loved her. He had called on her once or twice at Fawn Court,—as why should he not? Seeing that there had been friendship between the families for so many years, who could complain of that? Lady Fawn, however, had—not complained, but just said a word. A word in season, how good is it? Lucy did not much regard the word spoken to herself; but when she reflected that a word must also have been spoken to Mr. Greystock,—otherwise how should it have been that he never came again?—that she did not like.

In herself she regarded this passion of hers as a healthy man regards the loss of a leg or an arm. It is a great nuisance, a loss that maims the whole life,—a misfortune to be much regretted. But because a leg is gone, everything is not gone. A man with a wooden leg may stump about through much action, and may enjoy the keenest pleasures of humanity. He has his eyes left to him, and his ears, and his intellect. He will not break his heart for the loss of that leg. And so it was with Lucy Morris. She would still stump about and be very active. Eyes, ears, and intellect were left to her. Looking at her position, she told herself that a happy love could hardly have been her lot in life. Lady Fawn, she thought, was right. A governess should make up her mind to do without a lover. She had given away her heart, and yet she would do without a lover. When, on one dull, dark afternoon, as she was thinking of all this, Lord Fawn suddenly put into her hands a cruelly long printed document respecting the Sawab, she went to work upon it immediately. As she read it, she could not refrain from thinking how wonderfully Frank Greystock would plead the cause of the Indian prince, if the privilege of pleading it could be given to him.

The spring had come round, with May and the London butterflies, at the time at which our story begins, and during six months Frank Greystock had not been at Fawn Court.

Then one day Lady Eustace came down with her ponies, and her footman, and a new dear friend of hers, Miss Macnulty. While Miss Macnulty was being honoured by Lady Fawn, Lizzie had retreated to a corner with her old dear friend Lucy Morris.
It was pretty to see how so wealthy and fashionable a woman as Lady Eustace could show so much friendship to a governess. "Have you seen Frank, lately?" said Lady Eustace, referring to her cousin the barrister.
"Not for ever so long," said Lucy, with her cheeriest smile.
"He is not going to prove a false knight?" asked Lady Eustace, in her lowest whisper.
"I don't know that Mr. Greystock is much given to knighthood at all," said Lucy,—"unless it is to being made Sir Francis by his party."
"Nonsense, my dear; as if I didn't know. I suppose Lady Fawn has been interfering—like an old cat as she is."
"She is not an old cat, Lizzie! and I won't hear her called so. If you think so, you shouldn't come here. And she hasn't interfered. That is, she has done nothing that she ought not to have done."
"Then she has interfered," said Lady Eustace, as she got up and walked across the room, with a sweet smile to the old cat.

Chapter 4. Frank Greystock

Frank Greystock the barrister was the only son of the Dean of Bobsborough. Now the dean had a family of daughters,—not quite so numerous indeed as that of Lady Fawn, for there were only three of them,—and was by no means a rich man. Unless a dean have a private fortune, or has chanced to draw the happy lot of Durham in the lottery of deans, he can hardly be wealthy. At Bobsborough the dean was endowed with a large, rambling, picturesque, uncomfortable house, and with £1,500 a year. In regard to personal property it may be asserted of all the Greystocks that they never had any. They were a family of which the males would surely come to be deans and admirals, and the females would certainly find husbands. And they lived on the good things of the world, and mixed with wealthy people. But they never had any money. The Eustaces always had money, and the Bishop of Bobsborough was wealthy. The dean was a man very different from his brother the admiral, who had never paid anybody anything. The dean did pay; but he was a little slow in his payments, and money with him was never very plentiful. In these circumstances it became very expedient that Frank Greystock should earn his bread early in life.

Nevertheless, he had chosen a profession which is not often lucrative at first. He had been called to the Bar, and had gone,—and was still going,—the circuit in which lies the cathedral city of Bobsborough. Bobsborough is not much of a town, and was honoured with the judges' visits only every other circuit. Frank began pretty well, getting some little work in London, and perhaps nearly enough to pay the cost of his circuit out of the county in which the cathedral was situated. But he began life after that impecunious fashion for which the Greystocks have been noted. Tailors, robemakers, and booksellers gave him trust, and did believe that they would get their money. And any persistent tradesman did get it. He did not actually hoist the black flag of impecuniosity, and proclaim his intention of preying generally upon the retail dealers, as his uncle the admiral had done. But he became known as a young man with whom money was "tight." All this had been going on for three or four years before he had met Lucy Morris at the deanery. He was then eight-and-twenty, and had been four years called. He was thirty when old Lady Fawn hinted to him that he had better not pay any more visits at Fawn Court.

But things had much altered with him of late. At the time of that visit to the deanery he had made a sudden start in his profession. The Corporation of the City of London had brought an action against the Bank of England with reference to certain alleged encroachments, of which action, considerable as it was in all its interests, no further notice need be taken here than is given by the statement that a great deal of

money in this cause had found its way among the lawyers. Some of it penetrated into the pocket of Frank Greystock; but he earned more than money, better than money, out of that affair. It was attributed to him by the attorneys that the Bank of England was saved from the necessity of reconstructing all its bullion-cellars, and he had made his character for industry. In the year after that the Bobsborough people were rather driven into a corner in search of a clever young Conservative candidate for the borough, and Frank Greystock was invited to stand. It was not thought that there was much chance of success, and the dean was against it. But Frank liked the honour and glory of the contest, and so did Frank's mother. Frank Greystock stood, and at the time in which he was warned away from Fawn Court had been nearly a year in Parliament. "Of course it does interfere with one's business," he had said to his father, "but then it brings one business also. A man with a seat in Parliament who shows that he means work will always get nearly as much work as he can do." Such was Frank's exposition to his father. It may perhaps not be found to hold water in all cases. Mrs. Dean was of course delighted with her son's success, and so were the girls. Women like to feel that the young men belonging to them are doing something in the world, so that a reflected glory may be theirs. It was pleasant to talk of Frank as member for the city. Brothers do not always care much for a brother's success, but a sister is generally sympathetic. If Frank would only marry money, there was nothing he might not achieve. That he would live to sit on the woolsack was now almost a certainty to the dear old lady. But in order that he might sit there comfortably it was necessary that he should at least abstain from marrying a poor wife. For there was fear at the deanery also in regard to Lucy Morris.

"That notion of marrying money as you call it," Frank said to his second sister Margaret, "is the most disgusting idea in the world."

"It is as easy to love a girl who has something as one who has nothing," said Margaret.

"No,—it is not; because the girls with money are scarce, and those without it are plentiful,—an argument of which I don't suppose you see the force." Then Margaret for the moment was snubbed and retired.

"Indeed, Frank, I think Lady Fawn was right," said the mother.

"And I think she was quite wrong. If there be anything in it, it won't be expelled by Lady Fawn's interference. Do you think I should allow Lady Fawn to tell me not to choose such or such a woman for my wife?"

"It's the habit of seeing her, my dear. Nobody loves Lucy Morris better than I do. We all like her. But, dear Frank, would it do for you to make her your wife?"

Frank Greystock was silent for a moment, and then he answered his mother's question. "I am not quite sure whether it would or would not. But I do think this—that if I were bold enough to marry now, and to trust all to the future, and could get Lucy to be my wife, I should be

doing a great thing. I doubt, however, whether I have the courage." All of which made the dean's wife uneasy.

The reader, who has read so far, will perhaps think that Frank Greystock was in love with Lucy as Lucy was in love with him. But such was not exactly the case. To be in love, as an absolute, well-marked, acknowledged fact, is the condition of a woman more frequently and more readily than of a man. Such is not the common theory on the matter, as it is the man's business to speak, and the woman's business to be reticent. And the woman is presumed to have kept her heart free from any load of love, till she may accept the burthen with an assurance that it shall become a joy and a comfort to her. But such presumptions, though they may be very useful for the regulation of conduct, may not be always true. It comes more within the scope of a woman's mind, than that of a man's, to think closely and decide sharply on such a matter. With a man it is often chance that settles the question for him. He resolves to propose to a woman, or proposes without resolving, because she is close to him. Frank Greystock ridiculed the idea of Lady Fawn's interference in so high a matter as his love,—or abstinence from love. Nevertheless, had he been made a welcome guest at Fawn Court, he would undoubtedly have told his love to Lucy Morris. He was not a welcome guest, but had been banished; and, as a consequence of that banishment, he had formed no resolution in regard to Lucy, and did not absolutely know whether she was necessary to him or not. But Lucy Morris knew all about it.

Moreover, it frequently happens with men that they fail to analyse these things, and do not make out for themselves any clear definition of what their feelings are or what they mean. We hear that a man has behaved badly to a girl, when the behaviour of which he has been guilty has resulted simply from want of thought. He has found a certain companionship to be agreeable to him, and he has accepted the pleasure without inquiry. Some vague idea has floated across his brain that the world is wrong in supposing that such friendship cannot exist without marriage, or question of marriage. It is simply friendship. And yet were his friend to tell him that she intended to give herself in marriage elsewhere, he would suffer all the pangs of jealousy, and would imagine himself to be horribly ill-treated! To have such a friend,—a friend whom he cannot or will not make his wife,—is no injury to him. To him it is simply a delight, an excitement in life, a thing to be known to himself only and not talked of to others, a source of pride and inward exultation. It is a joy to think of when he wakes, and a consolation in his little troubles. It dispels the weariness of life, and makes a green spot of holiday within his daily work. It is, indeed, death to her;—but he does not know it. Frank Greystock did think that he could not marry Lucy Morris without making an imprudent plunge into deep water, and yet he felt that Lady Fawn was an ill-natured old woman for hinting to him

that he had better not, for the present, continue his visits to Fawn Court. "Of course you understand me, Mr. Greystock," she had said, meaning to be civil. "When Miss Morris has left us,—should she ever leave us,—I should be most happy to see you." "What on earth would take me to Fawn Court, if Lucy were not there!" he said to himself,—not choosing to appreciate Lady Fawn's civility.

Frank Greystock was at this time nearly thirty years old. He was a good-looking, but not strikingly handsome man; thin, of moderate height, with sharp grey eyes, a face clean shorn with the exception of a small whisker, with wiry, strong dark hair, which was already beginning to show a tinge of grey;—the very opposite in appearance to his late friend Sir Florian Eustace. He was quick, ready-witted, self-reliant, and not over scrupulous in the outward things of the world. He was desirous of doing his duty to others, but he was specially desirous that others should do their duty to him. He intended to get on in the world, and believed that happiness was to be achieved by success. He was certainly made for the profession which he had adopted. His father, looking to certain morsels of Church patronage which occasionally came in his way, and to the fact that he and the bishop were on most friendly terms, had wished his son to take orders. But Frank had known himself and his own qualities too well to follow his father's advice. He had chosen to be a barrister, and now, at thirty, he was in Parliament.

He had been asked to stand for Bobsborough in the Conservative interest, and as a Conservative he had been returned. Those who invited him knew probably but little of his own political beliefs or feelings,—did not, probably, know whether he had any. His father was a fine old Tory of the ancient school, who thought that things were going from bad to worse, but was able to live happily in spite of his anticipations. The dean was one of those old-world politicians,—we meet them every day, and they are generally pleasant people,—who enjoy the politics of the side to which they belong without any special belief in them. If pressed hard they will almost own that their so-called convictions are prejudices. But not for worlds would they be rid of them. When two or three of them meet together, they are as freemasons, who are bound by a pleasant bond which separates them from the outer world. They feel among themselves that everything that is being done is bad,—even though that everything is done by their own party. It was bad to interfere with Charles, bad to endure Cromwell, bad to banish James, bad to put up with William. The House of Hanover was bad. All interference with prerogative has been bad. The Reform bill was very bad. Encroachment on the estates of the bishops was bad. Emancipation of Roman Catholics was the worst of all. Abolition of corn-laws, church-rates, and oaths and tests were all bad. The meddling with the Universities has been grievous. The treatment of the Irish Church has been Satanic. The overhauling of schools is most injurious to English education. Education

bills and Irish land bills were all bad. Every step taken has been bad. And yet to them old England is of all countries in the world the best to live in, and is not at all the less comfortable because of the changes that have been made. These people are ready to grumble at every boon conferred on them, and yet to enjoy every boon. They know, too, their privileges, and, after a fashion, understand their position. It is picturesque, and it pleases them. To have been always in the right and yet always on the losing side; always being ruined, always under persecution from a wild spirit of republican-demagogism,—and yet never to lose anything, not even position or public esteem, is pleasant enough. A huge, living, daily increasing grievance that does one no palpable harm, is the happiest possession that a man can have. There is a large body of such men in England, and, personally, they are the very salt of the nation. He who said that all Conservatives are stupid did not know them. Stupid Conservatives there may be,—and there certainly are very stupid Radicals. The well-educated, widely-read Conservative, who is well assured that all good things are gradually being brought to an end by the voice of the people, is generally the pleasantest man to be met. But he is a Buddhist, possessing a religious creed which is altogether dark and mysterious to the outer world. Those who watch the ways of the advanced Buddhist hardly know whether the man does believe himself in his hidden god, but men perceive that he is respectable, self-satisfied, and a man of note. It is of course from the society of such that Conservative candidates are to be sought; but, alas, it is hard to indoctrinate young minds with the old belief, since new theories of life have become so rife!

Nevertheless Frank Greystock, when he was invited to stand for Bobsborough in the Conservative interest, had not for a moment allowed any political heterodoxy on his own part to stand in the way of his advancement. It may, perhaps, be the case that a barrister is less likely to be influenced by personal convictions in taking his side in politics than any other man who devotes himself to public affairs. No slur on the profession is intended by this suggestion. A busy, clever, useful man, who has been at work all his life, finds that his own progress towards success demands from him that he shall become a politician. The highest work of a lawyer can only be reached through political struggle. As a large-minded man of the world, peculiarly conversant with the fact that every question has two sides, and that as much may often be said on one side as on the other, he has probably not become violent in his feelings as a political partisan. Thus he sees that there is an opening here or an opening there, and the offence in either case is not great to him. With Frank Greystock the matter was very easy. There certainly was no apostasy. He had now and again attacked his father's ultra-Toryism, and rebuked his mother and sisters when they spoke of Gladstone as Apollyon, and called John Bright the Abomination of