

BEYOND THE STRIFE OF TONGUES

BY GEORGE A. GORDON

I

THE strife of tongues should be distinguished from the confusion of tongues. The confusion of tongues signifies the absence of all ascertainable meaning from human speech, while the strife of tongues signifies the conflict of meanings — a conflict that may be pushed, by debate, to victory on the one side or the other. Babel is hopeless from the start. Meribah admits of readjustments and reconciliations.

Ecclesiastical debates in the interest of religion justly appear to intelligent laymen as tedious, if not trivial. Carlyle's description is not without point in its humorous exaggeration, when he regards these disputes as quarrels over 'Hebrew old clothes,' and 'miserable Semitic Anti-Semitic street riots.' Not less severe is the opinion of the great Gregory Nazianzen, to whom the debaters, on one high occasion, seemed 'cranes and geese.' To a mind concerned with the really fundamental issues of faith and despair, the Oxford Movement must appear as strangely superficial. As if the Eternal Spirit were funded in any church, — Jewish, Apostolic, Greek, Roman, Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, — and not in the life of humanity; as if the presence of God in the life of the race could be denied without canceling the affirmation of that presence in the Church. The earth is not based on the mountain, but the mountain on the earth. Humanity does not rest on the Church, but the Church on humani-

ty; and when the Church fails to carry to their highest expression the spiritual forces resident in humanity, it becomes merely an extinct volcano.

In these days, among ourselves, certain writers and speakers hotly affirm as fundamentals what no reasonable man can believe — the absence of error from the books of the Old and New Testaments, the necessity of expiation in order to be forgiven, the dependence of the future life for man upon reunion with the body vacated at death, and the return of Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh, no longer as Saviour but as Judge. One may sympathize deeply with the zeal of these persons, even praise their passionate desire to vindicate what they believe to be true, and yet hold that the ideas cited are not only wanting in the character of fundamentals, but that they are simple foolishness.

There is, however, a debate as old as the awakened intellect, between those who believe in God, and those who are unable so to believe; between thinkers who hold that man's being is of the same substance with that of the Absolute Soul, and those who refuse thus to affirm; between writers who find in the human personality universal significance and, therefore, permanent worth, and those who cannot share this vision; between those who cherish the hope of the ultimate triumph of good over evil, and those who can discover no grounds for this expectation. Such were the

debates in which Plato and Democritus took different sides, Athanasius and Arius, Kant and Hume; and in poetic form, Virgil and Lucretius, Dante and Leopardi, Wordsworth and Swinburne, Emerson and the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*. To live where one may hear the thunder of this debate, is to gain one of the best disciplines in intellect and moral passion anywhere to be found. To stand outside this debate, to be indifferent to it, to have no part in it, to care not at all which side waxes or wanes, gives signs of winning or losing, is to be outside the central movement of the rational and moral life of mankind.

Christianity began in controversy. 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies.' The teaching of Jesus was, from first to last, in the teeth of opposition: it was a subtle and victorious debate with the mind of his age and nation. The letters of Paul are, again, largely controversial. Is the Master's Gospel a mere local interest, a lake, or an ocean whose tides visit all shores, whose waters serve the world? Our age would never have heard of this Jew, but for his great and triumphant debate. Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, Greek and Roman theologians, Schoolmen and Reformers, all the great spirits in our American history, from Edwards to Channing and onward, have shared in this contention. Christianity is largely an evolution through debate. The witticism of the pacifist scholar is the simple truth: 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.' As the cultivated land of the world has been won from Nature in her wild estate by toil and trouble, so these fruitful and peaceful fields of religious faith have been reclaimed by the aggressive mind of man. Where the religious mind is unanimous to-day,

this unanimity has been achieved largely by discussion; as was our Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States, which, although to-day accepted by all good citizens as something forever settled, came into existence through the keenest and most impassioned debate. Our sure religious possessions were at first matters of doubt and protest, and only after much violent controversy did they win their way to general assent. There is, therefore, hope with reference to the debates that still divide thoughtful men. There remaineth much land to be possessed, and who shall limit the size of that tract of religious truth which may be finally secured for the spirit of man through the sincere and scientific conflict of intellect with intellect?

There are debaters who have done their work so well that it does not need to be done again. In the eighteenth century, those who believed in a God of nature, but who refused to believe in Christianity, were forever silenced by Butler's great argument. There is nothing that can be said against the reality of the God and Father of Jesus that may not be said with vastly greater force against the God and Father of nature, as understood by Butler's antagonists. Out of that controversy came something still greater — the sense of the crudity of the whole issue. The conception of God was revised, and the sphere of his presence enlarged. That old debate has swung out into something immeasurably more significant. The universe, nature and humanity both, is the expression of the Absolute Spirit, and all reality is ultimately to be measured by the degree in which the Eternal Soul is present in any and all of its expressions. In less than two centuries the old debate has become vastly greater, vastly richer in rewards, immediate and prospective.

Within the memory of the older generation, another great debate has come to fruitful issue. The collision between science and religion, from the middle of the nineteenth century onward for a period of more than thirty years, was fierce and constant. As the controversy went on, both parties to it became deeper in thought and wiser. Science loomed larger, and its spirit became less dogmatic, more receptive. The sense of ultimate mystery was faced in science as surely, as completely, as in religion. Religious thinkers became hospitable toward science, looked to it for light, received from it new ideas as to the greatness of the universe. They were not slow to discover new possibilities for faith in the teachings of science, and new hopes for mankind. Tennyson's use of evolution, in *In Memoriam* and other poems, will serve as an example. At length science came to see that its first duty is to deal with facts, and that religion is the sovereign fact in the life of mankind. A new brotherhood has since arisen between scientific men and religious teachers, full of promise for the future.

The conspicuous field of religious debate to-day is history. The attempt is to recover ancient environments, and to set the persons and the records about them that have survived in those recovered environments, and then to look at those persons and events in what would appear to be the original and unfailing light. It may well be doubted whether that which takes all time to develop can be understood by its initial history; whether, indeed, the original environment is recoverable, and whether modern eyes could see what ancient eyes beheld in it. Is it possible to see the world of Isaiah as he saw it, the world of Jesus as He saw and felt it, the world of any ancient race as it appeared to that race, and again as it appeared to ancient men of genius?

After a lifetime of study, who is there who would dare affirm that he saw Greece, and the universe of the Greeks, exactly as Plato and Aristotle saw them? These thinkers record and interpret an amazing human experience; and students to-day are able to see, to a certain extent, that rational experience; but that any scholar will ever see the world of Plato and Aristotle as these thinkers beheld it, is past belief. Too many things are wanting for that achievement, above all, the transcendent genius of these men.

This applies with singular force to books upon origins in general, to those that deal with the origins of the Old Testament in particular, and, in a still more urgent way, to those that deal with the origins of the New Testament. Much error may be cleared away, some new knowledge may be gained; but a new batch of opinions is not necessarily knowledge. Besides, that ancient world has largely forever vanished, and cannot by any modern device be brought wholly back. Much has hitherto been believed about that ancient world without historic warrant; all that is written to-day against traditional belief is not science; and, after research and candor have done their utmost, this old world will still remain overhung with mystery. All sorts of contemporary assumptions, prejudices, conceits, disturb the vision of the discerning eye; above all, the genius is wanting of the men who made their experience and their universe of everlasting moment to mankind. Still, much may be done here by scientific scholarship and discussion, even if the ideal cannot be attained.

Such is the concession made to the necessity and fruitfulness of worthy debate. The burden of this essay may now be defined: it is, that the chief interest of religion is in the region that lies beyond the strife of tongues. It is

now asserted that there is for religion a truth beyond reasonable doubt, a goodness beyond dispute, and a hope for humanity whose light no moods of uncertainty or despair can quench, or even dim.

II

What is that transcendent and unassailable Truth? our doubting Pilate may ask — willing enough, in this case, to wait for an answer. Can it be the idea of the Supreme Being, the thought of God as the sovereign object of worship? It is this idea, this thought. It is at once admitted that round the conception of God of the speculative thinker rages the fiercest form of the ageless strife of tongues. Is He One, or Several in One — a bare unit, or a Society in Himself? Is He to be known through human personality, or through some abstraction of that personality — force, mind, matter; is his best name 'it,' or 'all,' or 'the unknown'? What is there here that can possibly lie beyond dispute?

God may be known, assuredly known, as the ideal strength of men morally in earnest over the passionate pursuit of righteousness. Let the distressed speculative thinker become a moral idealist; let him set for himself a mark 'above the howling senses' ebb and flow'; let him demand of himself the progressive realization of the Christian ideal of manhood, likeness to a perfect Character, and he will profoundly feel the need of help. Let him call upon teacher, friend, society, history: help will answer his call, but he will become aware of a further need. Let him call upon the Infinite, and open his whole being to whatever response may come. In the power out of the universe that enables him progressively to realize his moral ideal, God, as the ideal strength of men, enters and, in the moral process, always strenuous, sometimes

critical, even tremendous, declares his reality. The ship at anchor in the harbor may know nothing of the engine that sleeps at its heart. When this ship is at sea, met by gales, struck by terrible waves; and when, in spite of wind and wave, she keeps on her way, how can she help knowing the power by which she prevails? In Judah God is known; in the tempestuous environment through which the moral idealist moves upon his goal. For such men God is not a mere speculation or poetic dream, nor is He a mere working hypothesis: He is known in the adverse hurricanes of passion as victorious moral power, as Eternal Reality, in whose declared sympathy the personal soul struggles, survives, and thrives.

It would seem that a morally potent Deity can be found only by morally earnest men; moral inertia would appear to take one out of the stream of reality. It is doubtful if any man ever found himself except as he became a moral idealist, except in so far as he thus came to himself. If Fichte was not misguided; if Matthew Arnold was not mistaken; if there is in the universe an Eternal Power not of ourselves that makes for righteousness, it would seem that the trade winds and the tide of his spirit are to be found only in the path of moral struggle. A God who does nothing cannot be known; a morally indifferent Deity would not be worth knowing; a Deity who is the maker of men in the tragic movement of their existence, the creator of character, the self-revealer in the moral victory that allures the brave, is one whose presence and sympathy may be attested by the witness of immediate experience; the experience carried in the phrase, 'the peace of God that passeth understanding,' could never come from a Deity who is only the essential head of a system of ideas, nor from a hypothetical Deity, nor from any sort of a Su-

preme Being outside the clear and peaceful possession of the human soul.

There is the vision of Jesus of Nazareth. The records of his career are under severe and fierce scrutiny to-day, and many things hitherto accepted as settled are now in debate. While this discussion is under way among scholars, can there be, for laymen, anything in the vision of Jesus that is sure? There is his humanity, the moving image of the Eternal humanity, the one supremely authentic witness of what lies behind him in the Universe that brought him forth. There is, too, his knowledge of men: He knew what was in man, his high capacity no less than the depth of his need; his aptitude to take the Eternal Rectitude as his ideal, because in his rational and moral being he is kindred to the Infinite Soul. Jesus' knowledge of his kind is a sort of X-ray of the inmost nature, the hidden depths of the spirit; and this X-ray shows a world seriously afflicted, indeed, but wholly curable and full of hope. With those competent to judge, so much may be said to stand outside reasonable question; and it may be added that, next to the consciousness of a moral Deity in the courses of life, this sure insight concerning Jesus is the most precious possession of mankind. All beliefs about Jesus other than this central insight, all controversies about Him, all opposing philosophies of his person, are things on the circumference of human concern.

The reality, the richness, the elevation, and the splendor of the humanity of Jesus, is that toward which the eyes of the serious world look with hope, so far as they look to anything; He is the world's pillar of cloud by day, its pillar of fire by night, its screen from the blinding glare of sensuality, its prophet in the mystery of its pilgrimage.

Can religion be socially effective without a church? And if we confess

the social necessity of the church, must we not at this point bid farewell to the expectation of an unanimous public mind? Do not most men, educated and free in their thought, rest in the conviction that two thirds or more of what all the churches believe is the product of a crude imagination? Think for a moment of the claims put forth by this church and that — claims and pretensions which are preposterous to every sane intellect outside the circle of ecclesiastical delusion; and then ask where one may find, in this heap of ecclesiastical opinion, anything universally clear and sound? Skillful special pleading may be able to impose upon the simple; for the acute mind, it is vain.

Someone called upon Robert Hall, the great English preacher of the first half of the nineteenth century, and said, 'I have heard the most remarkable sermon of my life, and from an Anglican minister. He said, "The Catholics have a church, but no religion; the Wesleyans have a religion but no church; the Anglicans have both a religion and a church."'

Hall replied, 'You did not think what that preacher said was true, did you?'

The answer was, 'No; but it was so well said that it was almost as good as if it had been true.'

The idea of the Christian Church, properly conceived, should indeed be a self-evident necessity. The Church is simply the assembly of like-minded men and women; and this like-mindedness may be extremely simple and, at the same time, completely adequate. It need cover no more than the faith and service, the essential faith and service of Jesus. What is the essential faith of Jesus, freed from antique forms, and delivered to us in the idiom of this generation? That the Universe in which we live is of infinite compas-

sion toward human beings, and is ready with the fullness of its benignity to help them to attain, and to be, their best. Or, as a highly honored friend of the writer, no longer living, — one passionately in earnest in a morally listless world and not really given to profanity, — expressed it: 'This Universe is full of pity for every damned sinner in it, and is intent upon making him, inside and out, a gentleman.'

So much for the essential faith of Jesus. His service would, at its highest, seem to be to join the Eternal in his compassionate purpose to lift man to his best. Faith in a compassionate and redemptive Universe; passionate, availing sympathy, on man's part, with this mood and movement of the Infinite, would, it should appear, provide all essential grounds of union for the General Assembly of believers which, as here conceived, is the Christian Church. Ritual, whether rich or severe; modes of worship, whether predominantly of the mind or of emotion; the proportion of expression in teaching, music, and prayer; the form of social service into which the awakened energy of this General Assembly shall run, are, all of them, matters of detail; still more so are the questions as to the orders of the ministry. The sovereign fact is faith in the mood and will of the Eternal toward capable and needy human beings, and passionate co-operative sympathy with what the Universe longs to see brought to pass. The overgrowth of ecclesiasticism, so vastly dear to multitudes of emotional, but largely unmoral, men and women, is a sort of penumbra, and in reality implies an eclipse of faith, the obscuration of the luminous substance of all high insight.

What about the destiny of the individual? When Plato and Paul, Butler and Kant, have reasoned, and the spiritists have told their tales of

wonder, is there anything upon the question of destiny, one way or another, beyond reasonable doubt? It must be repeated that much is possible, even probable, and therefore a proper object of belief, which is still open to dispute. Brave minds have always been ready to take risks when the causes seemed to them to justify this venture. Our question is not whether, with J. S. Mill, representing the negative mood of his time, the future is open to hope, and whether, if it should be for our good, existence after death is likely to be granted; but whether any clear and sure word can be said upon the subject.

Anterior to the fact, it is less likely that we should exist at all, than that, existing, we should continue to exist; and, again, it is less likely that our sacred family circle should be drawn than that, having been drawn, it should be redrawn in the invisible. Before existence, there is absolutely no ground of expectation; after existence is a fact, there is the whole propulsive power of this fact upon the future. We exist against all the probabilities of the case. We have met, although separated by the diameter of the world and the universe; and this fact makes it more likely that we shall go on, and go on together, than that we should ever have been, and been together. Here Emerson's word strikes one as clear and sure: —

'T is not within the force of fate,
The fate-conjoined to separate.

There is, of course, no such thing as destruction of energy. That which constitutes the force of a human being, whatever it may be, must persist, operate, and in some way count in the sum total of things. Shelley's 'Cloud' sings for itself, and for the force that constitutes man, a strictly scientific song: —

I am the daughter of earth and water,
 And the nursling of the sky;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores,
 I change, but I cannot die.

Since, of the force that constitutes the human being, there can be no destruction, it seems not too much risk to assume, with Matthew Arnold, that this force still works, 'Conscious or not of the past.'

Many words of trustworthy insight may be built upon this foundation. The saying of Socrates has stood the test of time: 'No evil can happen to a good man, living or dead.' We join with this the insight of another great prophet: 'Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' Render this in the idiom of our day, and we have the clear and sure conclusion: We belong to this Universe; whether we live, therefore, or die, our being is in its being. To these many would add Emerson's line, —

Lost in God, in Godhead found.

Men are children of the Universe, form of its form, mind of its mind. Forth from the Eternal we come; while here, by virtue of mind, we may be communicants in the fellowship of the Eternal, passing many high moments each day in dialogue, articulate or mute, with the Universal Mind; and when for us the pageant of space and time dissolves 'like the baseless fabric of this vision,' we enter, in one form or another, the Eternal, to abide there. Man was ever a wanderer, ever an adventurer.

He was born in a ship on the breast of the river of Time.

Time is the stream of his experience, of the history of his race; and when it bears him to the point whence reach him 'scents of the Infinite sea,' he is reminded of the Eternity from which he dates, and of that in which he finds his home.

So much seems clear and sure, and we are seeking here only for what may be conceded to lie beyond debate. Reverence in the presence of the mystery of the Universe is justified in its lofty affirmation: —

The Eternal is thy dwelling-place,
 And underneath are the everlasting arms.

III

Since questions of the intellect cover but a part of man's life, we are led to ask if there is a goodness, solace, satisfaction, beyond reasonable doubt? This is, in reality, the question considered with analytic power so great and sure by Aristotle, in the first book of his *Ethics*. Man's satisfactions are in his ends; these ends are of ascending worth; the worthiest end is an activity of the mind in the line of its highest excellence; the highest excellence of the mind is the vision of what is real and true; man's supreme blessedness in this Universe is as a beholding intellect, thus imitating, as far as possible, the Eternal Thinker upon whom all worlds depend.

Human ends, and the activities inseparable from them, are the main sources of the goodness of life. About the question which end is highest, there may be much dispute; about the worth of ends for human beings, there will be no dispute. Nor will there be any objection to the statement that certain activities are in themselves ends, like sight, thought, sympathy, love. It is usual to rate low the legitimate satisfactions of sense; yet this is a mistake. Color, sound, and form represent worlds of beauty, which in nature and in art appeal with happy power to all normal persons; and the extent to which our life is enriched and exalted through the legitimate use of the senses is surely immeasurable. Milton's great lamentation, one of the

most pathetic, both in its personal and in its representative aspect, in English literature, reminds us of what we owe in the way of satisfaction to the senses, by describing the bereavement that follows the loss of one: —

Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me; from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank.

We pass to the satisfactions of family life, which are the mainspring of the world's industry, and the source of much of our interest in the history, fortune, and hope of the world. Burns here puts his finger upon the great key in the organ of the common heart of man: —

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies;
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies.
Ye ken yersel' my heart right proud is —
I need na vaunt.
But I'll sned besoms, thraw saugh woodies
Before they want.

And in this same poem occur lines that admit of no dispute over the satisfaction they describe for normal human beings: —

To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife, —
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

What we owe to our causes in the way of satisfaction is beyond estimate. Doctor Hale's powerful story lays life open to the heart here — *The Man Without A Country*; existence has for him shrunk to a painful as well as to a guilty thing; and we have only to extend this bereavement and speak of 'The Man Without Humanity,' to know how the best things that we can experience are given through devotion to these various groups to which we are related, from our own fireside to the

uttermost bounds of our human world.

All this leads up to the ultimate and infinite goodness. There is Plato's ideal, to be like God as far as man can, and joy evermore in the light of that ideal. There is Paul's solace, in a world of contradiction, as he looks, not upon the things which are seen, but upon the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. There is Marcus Aurelius and his solace, as he fights the battles of a falling Empire, writing his journal, meant for no eye but his own: 'O Universe . . . Dear City of God'; and Augustine's blessedness; 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we are restless till we repose in Thee.' Nor must we fail to add Dante's immortal line, a refrain from the Highest, and one which the humblest human being may sing: —

His will is our peace.

Earlier than all these voices is another, in whose piety and victory one notes the supreme consolation of a whole ancient and forgotten world: —

Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth:
But God is the strength of my heart,
And my portion forever.

True religion is life's great transfiguration; and, as in that recorded in the Gospels, there are no debates in it — only the common passion, voiced by the leader, Here let us build and abide forever. That may not be; there is a duty to be done, a sorrow to be relieved at the foot of the mountain; but it nevertheless points to a region forever beyond the strife of tongues.

The case for the social hope that cannot be blown out may be stated in a single sentence. The man who has won his battle against folly and passion, and who has found power that

enables him, in terms of self-respect, to live and move in the light of his moral ideal, will find it impossible to deny to other men over the wide world the hope of a similar victory. The only person who is justified in his despair of mankind, is he who, in his own life, is a morally humiliated and defeated soul. The personal defeat may well forbid the hope of the social victory; the personal triumph, in everyone who is not a wretched Pharisee, should lift high the hope for society. Social despair, therefore, is much more significant as a symptom for the despairing person, than it is for the object of that despair; indeed, it cancels the personal victory. It is the moral vitality, the sense of a personal victory, which must throw its light over the universal struggle, which one hears in Browning's last great bugle-call: one who

'Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph.'

Christianity, as the religion of moral hope for the world, rose up out of the moral life of men who had won their fight against sin. The New Testament has been called the book of hope; it is such: first, because it is the record of morally triumphant men and women; and second, because it enshrines a faith in the possibility of a similar triumph for every human being.

There is a hope that inheres in all morally victorious human character; the hope that men may do good, benefit others, avert sorrow, cancel suffering, promote rational happiness, create and diffuse moral enthusiasm, defy wickedness, confederate to beat down and more and more overcome all forms of evil and wrong. For an enlightened and morally vital person, there is no such thing as an invincible wrong, an absolutely incurable evil. Those that seem such turn out to be blessings in

disguise, as Plato saw when he wrote, 'All things work together for good to the man who is dear to God'; and as the Christian Apostle sang in a similar strain: 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'

Endless vexation and turmoil are not the necessary lot of the religious mind. The enduring debates between what is true and false, essential and unessential, fundamental and trivial, may claim part of a wise man's time, but only part. Some grains of gold there must be in the immense heaps of opposing opinions; and one should come to them, as the Highest came, 'whose fan is in his hand,' to winnow the wheat from the chaff. Much may be left to the winnowing wings of time. Toward this side of the Christian religion, and all other religions under debate, one may live with a hospitable, an expectant mind; a mind, too, of utmost respect for those who sail where two or more seas meet. All honor to such scholars and thinkers; brave mariners are they, and they may, likely enough, bring back at length stores of treasure for the General Assembly, whose life is justly lived elsewhere.

There was a time, so we are told, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The social hope at its highest is that this primeval song may be sung again in celebration of the ultimate and universal triumph of good over evil. The tradition is great, the hope is sublime; the one takes on authenticity for the past, the other high possibility for the future; as the ancient celestial hymn, the mightiest as it is the oldest of all Victor records, repeats itself, morning, noon, and evening, from the human spirit that has conquered sin, and that knows, in terms of life, the Absolute Soul as moral power and triumphant joy.

‘THE TWO AND NELSON’¹

BY E. BARRINGTON

A violent scene is said to have occurred between the two women. — SICHIEL.

A FEW years ago I wandered through a little country churchyard in Devon, far away across the sea. It was an afternoon of golden silence, a very small breeze bringing the scents of clover and buttercups from the meadows about the ancient church, to lay them before the dim altar. So still it was, that life might well be in love with death and envy the dream of those quiet sleepers. And, even as I thought this, I saw a tomb beneath the trees, where the grass grew rank and luxuriant — a tomb old and forgotten, the lettering half filled with the close-coined gold of a little lichen, the shadows of the elmboughs coming and going upon it very softly. And this was the inscription: —

FRANCES, VISCOUNTESS NELSON
DUCHESS OF BRONTË

As I read, the deathless thunder of the guns of Trafalgar broke upon me in those thunderous names, and I beheld ships locked in death grips on the far-off coast of Spain, and a dying man, already more spirit than body, who whispered in agony to his friend: —

‘Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton.’ And again: ‘I leave her as a legacy to my country.’

But never a word of the woman who lay at my feet. And through the tolling

of the great guns in my ears, I thought this: —

‘In life this woman was scarcely less silent than in death; and because she would not speak, the world has called her harsh and cold; and as in life her lovely rival flung her from the throne, so it is also in death; and the fair face that wins all hearts from the canvas of Romney shows like a strong sun, in whose rays the wan moon of this woman’s memory perishes. Her silence is eternal.’

The peace of the quiet grave-place was broken. I sat by the grave, dreaming less of great empires and dynasties than of one woman; and the shadows moved and lengthened, and the thoughts sealed within her buried breast thrilled in my own, and I heard — through the muffled thunder of the guns — I heard!

Now this is what I ponder night and day, the reason why I was not only cast off, — for that is a common lot of women, — but why, being cast off, I might not suffer in peace and with the decency of pity, but all tongues must call me harsh and cold, that they may find excuse for a great man and a worthless woman. She put it about that he never loved me, and all the ardors of his soul and body were sealed until she came from the hands of many men to his; and at first this so stung my wounds that night after night I sat in the dark, my mind, like a wave that returns to break itself on a rock, resolving to overwhelm her with my wrongs, and again failing from the re-

¹ With the exception of that purporting to be written by Lady Nelson, the letters quoted in this story are authentic. — THE AUTHOR.