

how attracted the public always are by Lady Butler's pictures. No. 26, by Miss Montalba, *A Venetian Ferry*, a sombre picture, strong and rich in colour, suggesting the Venice of the 15th Century more than the present day. We will turn away from Venice back to England, and look at No. 22, *Mangolds*, by Mr. David Murray, A.R.A. It is full of the charm of nature, the broad field of mangolds is brilliant, but not too vivid, and the softly clouded sky is full of light and air, a quiet English scene. There are two portraits by G. F. Watts, R.A., No. 18, *Lady Garvagh*, and No. 21, *P. H. Calderon*, R.A. Perhaps, of the two, the portrait of Mr. Calderon is the most excellent, but we should study carefully all works by Mr. Watts. There are many more pictures of interest in the large first Gallery (the only one we are considering this week), such as *The Setting Sun*, by Adrian Stokes, No. 4; *Sunny Thames*, No. 14, by the late Frederick Walker, A.R.A., hardly one of his best; *The Phantom Ship*, by W. L. Wyllie, A.R.A.; and *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, by Alma Tadema, R.A.

## A Book of the Week.

### "LETTERS OF COUNTESS GRANVILLE."

THE Honourable F. Leveson-Gower has edited these clever and vivacious notes with great judgment and tact. Lady Harriet Cavendish was the youngest daughter of the fifth Duke of Devonshire, and her mother was the lovely Duchess who was painted by Gainsborough. In 1809, Lady Harriet married the first Lord Granville, an able diplomatist who was made Ambassador to Russia, at the early age of thirty-one, by Mr. Pitt. These letters are mostly addressed to her sister, Lady Georgina Morpeth. The earlier and later years of Lady Granville's married life were divided between society in London and visits to the country houses of relations and friends. In 1824, Lord Granville represented England at the Hague, and was twice Ambassador in Paris.

The two volumes of letters before us throw much amusing, but also significant, gossip upon the political and social affairs of that time. Lady Granville, of course, mixed freely in the best society of her time, and she was a universal favourite with her contemporaries. Her letters were dashed off without premeditation for the benefit and amusement of the sister who remained through life her closest friend. The charm of these letters consists in the freely expressed opinions of a clever and shrewd woman, who yet brought kindly comprehension and sympathy to her judgment of character, and much natural fun into her humorous descriptions of the life and society of her time. In 1812, she writes of Lord Byron:—

"I have made acquaintance with him. He is agreeable, but I feel no wish for any further intimacy. His countenance is fine when it is in repose, but the moment it is in play, suspicious, malignant, and consequently repulsive. His manner is either remarkably gracious and conciliatory, with a tinge of affectation, or irritable and impetuous, and then, I am afraid, perfectly natural."

\* "Letters of Harriet Countess Granville, 1810-1845," Edited by her Son, the Hon. F. Leveson-Gower. Two volumes. (Longmans & Co.)

When the sad death of Princess Charlotte cast a sudden gloom over the country, and all the nation was full of sympathy and sorrow, Lady Granville wrote:—

"We are all heart-sick at this terrible event. Poor Princess Charlotte! I have seen a letter from Lord Melville to Lord Harrowby. Something in the position of the child was wrong, I believe, but from some of the symptoms it is supposed an inflammation within must have taken place. She became restless and agitated. They gave her brandy. She then said, 'If you leave me alone I shall be well,' turned about two or three times, and died."

In the early part of this century, when Lady Granville first entered Parisian society as the wife of the English Ambassador, writing freely to her sister, she expresses thus, sarcastically, her opinion of the French people among whom she found herself:—

"French people are—what shall I say?—what I don't like as most comprehensive. They now show themselves to me at their best, for they are extremely civil and *prevenants*, but there is a *fonds* of ill-breeding and insolence, conceit and pretension *qui se fait jour*, through all their countenances, manners, and attentions. Let me say that I believe that the exquisite set into which it is my good fortune to be admitted, is the worst specimen of the kind. Their conversation is all upon dress, the opera, Talma. There is not as much mind as would fill a peashell. They are pedantic and frivolous, with the most *outré* considerations of rank."

Many distinguished personages are written about in these letters. Canning, Brougham, Grey, Melbourne, Durham, Palmerston, John Russell, Wellington, and many others, are described at their ease, in social moods, gossiping, and discussing upon the questions of the hour. There is a most amusing description of Lady Holland which I must quote, though it is only one among many allusions to the famous Whig Salon:—

"Dined at Holland House, Lord Holland is uncommonly well, and I think his crutches are more a habit than a necessity. So thinks my Lady. 'Put away your nasty crutches, Lord Holland, you look as if you were in prison.' 'Oh! dear woman, pray let me have them; I like to have them near me.' 'Impossible; Mary, take away your papa's crutches.'"

Lady Granville, at one period, detested Talleyrand. She describes him at a brilliant evening party as "crawling like a lizard on a wall"; but later, the wily diplomatist evidently succeeded in overcoming the lady's aversion, for she writes:—

"Talleyrand paid me a long visit on Wednesday morning. I never knew before the power of his charms. It is difficult and painful to believe that he is not the very best man in the world—so gentle, so kind, so simple, and so grand. One forgets the past life—the present look."

This is amusing and delightfully human, but not surprising when one remembers Talleyrand's marvellous—one might add, heartless—power over his contemporaries.

With the remembrance of the recent political crisis consequent upon Mr. Gladstone's resignation in one's mind, I trust that I be excused for giving one more quotation from these interesting letters:—

"*March 10th, 1845.* Everybody asks why Gladstone is out, and I refer you to yesterday's *Times*. Granville says no one can give a satisfactory answer. I said ten thousand reasons appear to me to explain it. What difficulty he

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