I should fancy not," she added, blushing. "I am bound to own Lord Kew is not in the least eager, and I think if you were to tell him to wait for five years, he would be quite willing. Why should you be so very anxious?"

"Why, my dear? Because I think young ladies who want to go and work in the fields, should make hay while the sun shines; because I think it is high time that Kew should *ranger* himself; because I am sure he will make the best husband, and Ethel the prettiest Countess in England." And the old lady, seldom exhibiting any signs of affection, looked at her granddaughter very fondly. From her Ethel looked up into the glass, which very likely repeated on its shining face the truth her elder had just uttered. Shall we quarrel with the girl for that dazzling reflection; for owning that charming truth, and submitting to the conscious triumph? Give her her part of vanity, of youth, of desire to rule and be admired. Meanwhile Mr. Clive's drawings have been crackling in the fireplace at her feet, and the last spark of that combustion is twinkling out unheeded.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LADY KEW AT THE CONGRESS.

When Lady Kew heard that Mme. d'Ivry was at Baden, and was informed at once of the French lady's graciousness toward the Newcome family, and of her fury against Lord Kew, the old Countess gave a loose to that energetic temper with which nature had gifted her; a temper which she tied up sometimes and kept from barking and biting; but which, when unmuzzled, was an animal of whom all her ladyship's family had a just apprehension. Not one of them but in his or her time had been wounded, lacerated, tumbled over, or otherwise frightened or injured by this unruly brute. The cowards brought it sops and patted it; the prudent gave it a clear berth, and walked round so as not to meet it; but woe be to those of the family who had to bring the meal, and prepare the litter, and (to speak respectfully) share the kennel with Lady Kew's "Black Dog!" Surely a fine furious temper, if accompanied with a certain magnanimity and bravery which often go together with it, is one of the most precious and fortunate gifts with which a gentleman or lady can be endowed. A person always ready to fight is certain of the greatest consideration among his or her family circle. The lazy grow tired of contending with him; the timid coax and flatter him; and as almost everyone is timid or lazy, a bad-tempered man is sure to have his own way. It is he who commands, and all the others obey. If he is a gourmand, he has what he likes for dinner; and the tastes of all the rest are subservient to him. She—we playfully transfer the gender, as a bad temper is of both sexes—has the place which she likes best in the drawing room; nor do her parents, nor her brothers and sisters, venture to take her favorite chair. If she wants to go to a party, mamma will dress herself in spite of her headache; and papa, who hates those dreadful soirées, will go upstairs after dinner and put on his poor old white neckcloth, though he has been toiling at chambers all day, and must be there early in the morning—he will go out with her, we say, and stay for the cotillon. If the family are taking their tour in the summer, it is she who ordains whither they shall go, and when they shall stop. If he comes home late, the dinner is kept for him, and not one dares to say a word though ever so hungry. If he is in a good-humor, how everyone frisks about and is happy! How the servants jump up at his bell and run to wait upon him! How they sit up patiently, and how eagerly they rush out to fetch cabs in the rain! Whereas for you and me, who have the tempers of angels, and never were known to be angry or to complain, nobody cares whether we are pleased or not. Our wives go to the milliners' and send us the bill, and we pay it; our John finishes reading the newspaper before he answers our bell and brings it to us; our sons loll in the arm-chair which we should like; fill the house with their young men, and smoke in the dining room; our tailors fit us badly; our butchers give us the youngest mutton; our tradesmen dun us much more quickly than other people's, because they know we are good-natured; and our servants go out whenever they like, and openly have their friends to supper in the kitchen. When Lady Kew said *Sic volo, sic jubeo,* I promise you few persons of her ladyship's belongings stopped, before they did her biddings, to ask her reasons.

If, which very seldom happens, there are two such imperious and domineering spirits in a family, unpleasantries of course will arise from their contentions; or if, out of doors, the family Bajazet meets with some other violent Turk, dreadful battles

ensue, all the allies on either side are brought in, and the surrounding neighbors perforce engaged in the quarrel. This was unluckily the case in the present instance. Lady Kew, unaccustomed to have her will questioned at home, liked to impose it abroad. She judged the persons around her with great freedom of speech. Her opinions were quoted, as people's sayings will be; and if she made bitter speeches, depend on it they lost nothing in the carrying. She was furious against Mme. la Duchesse d'Ivry, and exploded in various companies whenever that lady's name was mentioned. "Why was she not with her husband? Why was the poor old Duke left to his gout, and this woman trailing through the country with her vagabond court of billiard-markers at her heels? She to call herself Mary Queen of Scots, forsooth!—well, she merited the title in some respects, though she had not murdered her husband as yet. Ah, I should like to be Queen Elizabeth if the Duchess is Queen of Scots!" said the old lady, shaking her old fist. And these sentiments being uttered in public, upon the Promenade, to mutual friends, of course the Duchess had the benefit of Lady Kew's remarks a few minutes after they were uttered; and her Grace, and the distinguished princes, counts, and noblemen in her court, designated as billiard-markers by the old Countess, returned the latter's compliments with pretty speeches of their own. Scandals were dug up respecting her ladyship, so old that one would have thought them forgotten these forty years—so old that they happened before most of the Newcomes now extant were born, and surely, therefore, are out of the province of this contemporary biography. Lady Kew was indignant with her daughter (there were some moments when any conduct of her friends did not meet her ladyship's approbation) even for the scant civility with which Lady Ann had received the Duchess' advances. "Leave a card upon her—yes, send a card by one of your footmen; but go in to see her, because she was at the window and saw you drive up! Are you mad, Ann? That was the very reason you should not have come out of your carriage. But you are so weak and good-natured that, if a highwayman stopped you, you would say, 'Thank you, sir,' as you gave him your purse; yes, and if Mrs. Macheath called on you afterward, you would return the visit!"

Even had these speeches been made about the Duchess, and some of them not addressed to her, things might have gone on pretty well. If we quarreled with all the people who abuse

us behind our backs, and began to tear their eyes out as soon as we set ours on them, what a life it would be, and when should we have any quiet? Backbiting is all fair in society! Abuse me and I will abuse you; but let us be friends when we meet. Have not we all entered a dozen rooms, and been sure, from the countenances of the amiable persons present, that they had been discussing our little peculiarities, perhaps as we were on the stairs? Was our visit, therefore, the less agreeable? Did we quarrel and say hard words to one another's faces? No—we wait until some of our dear friends take their leave, and then comes our turn. My back is at my neighbor's service; as soon as that is turned let him make what faces he thinks proper; but when we meet we grin and shake hands like well-bred folk, to whom clean linen is not more necessary than a clean sweet-looking countenance, and a nicely got-up smile, for company.

Here was Lady Kew's mistake. She wanted, for some reason, to drive Mme. d'Ivry out of Baden, and thought there were no better means of effecting this object than by using the high hand, and practicing those frowns upon the Duchess which had scared away so many other persons. But the Queen of Scots was resolute, too, and her band of courtiers fought stoutly round about her. Some of them could not pay their bills, and could not retreat; others had courage, and did not choose to fly. Instead of coaxing and soothing Mme. d'Ivry, Mme. de Kew thought by a brisk attack to rout and dislodge her. She began on almost the very first occasion when the ladies met. "I was so sorry to hear that M. le Duc was ill at Bagnères, Mme. la Duchesse," the old lady began on their very first meeting, after the usual salutations had taken place.

"Mme. la Comtesse is very kind to interest herself in M. d'Ivry's health. M. le Duc at his age is not disposed to travel. You, dear Miladi, are more happy in being always able to retain the *gout des voyages!*"

"I come to my family, my dear Duchess!"

"How charmed they must be to possess you! Miladi Ann, you must be inexpressibly consoled by the presence of a mother so tender! Permit me to present Mme. la Comtesse de la Cruchecassée to Mme. la Comtesse de Kew. Miladi is sister to that amiable Marquis of Steyne, whom you have know, Ambrosine! Mme. la Baronne de Schlangenbad, Miladi Kew. Do you not see the resemblance to Milor? These ladies have enjoyed the hospitalities—the splendors of

Gaunt House. They were of those famous routs of which the charming Mistress Crawley, *la semillante Becki*, made part! How sad the Hôtel de Gaunt must be under the present circumstances! Have you heard, Miladi, of the charming Mistress Becki? M. le Duc describes her as the most *spirituelle* Englishwoman he ever met." The Queen of Scots turns and whispers her lady of honor, and shrugs, and taps her forehead. Lady Kew knows that Mme. d'Ivry speaks of her nephew, the present Lord Steyne, who is not in his right mind. The Duchess looks round, and sees a friend in the distance whom she beckons. "Comtesse, you know already Monsieur the Captain Blackball? He makes the delight of our society!" A dreadful man with a large cigar, a florid waistcoat, and billiards written on his countenance, swaggers forward at the Duchess' summons. The Countess of Kew has not gained much by her attack. She has been presented to Cruchecassée and Schlangenbad. She sees herself on the eve of becoming the acquaintance of Captain Blackball.

"Permit me, Duchess, to choose my English friends at least for myself," says Lady Kew, drumming her foot.

"But, madam, assuredly! You do not love this good M. de Blackball? Eh! the English manners are droll, pardon me for saying so. It is wonderful how proud you are as a nation, and how ashamed you are of your compatriots!"

"There are some persons who are ashamed of nothing, Mme. la Duchesse," cries Lady Kew, losing her temper.

"Is that *gracieuseté* for me? How much goodness! This good M. de Blackball is not very well-bred; but, for an Englishman, he is not too bad. I have met with people who are more ill-bred than Englishmen in my travels."

"And they are?" said Lady Ann, who had been in vain endeavoring to put an end to this colloquy.

"Englishwomen, madam! I speak not for you—you are kind; you—you are too soft, dear Lady Ann, for a persecutor."

The counsels of the worldly woman who governed and directed that branch of the Newcome family of whom it is our business to speak now for a little while, bore other results than those which the elderly lady desired and foresaw. Who can foresee everything and always? Not the wisest among us. When his Majesty, Louis XIV., jockeyed his grandson on to the throne of Spain (founding thereby the present revered dynasty of that country), did he expect to peril his own, and bring all Europe about his royal ears? Could a late King

of France, eager for the advantageous establishment of one of his darling sons, and anxious to procure a beautiful Spanish princess, with a crown and kingdom in reversion, for the simple and obedient youth, ever suppose that the welfare of his whole august race and reign would be upset by that smart speculation? We take only the most noble examples to illustrate the conduct of such a noble old personage as her ladyship of Kew, who brought a prodigious deal of trouble upon some of the innocent members of her family whom, no doubt, she thought to better in life by her experienced guidance and undoubted worldly wisdom. We may be as deep as Jesuits, know the world ever so well, lay the best-ordered plans and the profoundest combinations, and, by a certain not unnatural turn of fate, we and our plans and combinations are sent flying before the wind. We may be as wise as Louis Philippe, that many-counseled Ulysses whom the respectable world admired so; and after years of patient scheming, and prodigies of skill, after coaxing, wheedling, doubling, bullying, wisdom, behold yet stronger powers interpose—and schemes, and skill, and violence are naught.

Frank and Ethel, Lady Kew's grandchildren, were both the obedient subjects of this ancient despot; this imperious old Louis XIV. in a black front and a cap and ribbon, this scheming old Louis Philippe in tabinet; but their blood was good and their tempers high; and for all her biting and driving, and the training of her *manège*, the generous young colts were hard to break. Ethel, at this time, was especially stubborn in training, rebellious to the whip, and wild under harness; and the way in which Lady Kew managed her won the admiration of her family; for it was a maxim among these folk that no one could manage Ethel but Lady Kew. Barnes said no one could manage his sister but his grandmother. He couldn't, that was certain. Mamma never tried, and, indeed, was so good-natured that, rather than ride the filly, she would put the saddle on her own back and let the filly ride her; no, there was no one but her ladyship capable of managing that girl, Barnes owned, who held Lady Kew in much respect and awe. "If the tightest hand were not kept on her, there's no knowing what she mightn't do," said her brother. "Ethel Newcome, by Jove, is capable of running away with the writing-master."

After poor Jack Belsize's mishap and departure, Barnes' own bride showed no spirit at all, save one of placid content-

ment. She came at call and instantly, and went through whatever paces her owner demanded of her. She laughed whenever need was, simpered and smiled when spoken to, danced whenever she was asked; drove out at Barnes' side in Kew's phaeton, and received him certainly not with warmth, but with politeness and welcome. It is difficult to describe the scorn with which her sister-in-law regarded her. The sight of the patient timid little thing chafed Ethel, who was always more haughty and flighty and bold when in Clara's presence than at any other time. Her ladyship's brother, Captain Lord Viscount Rooster, before mentioned, joined the family party at this interesting juncture. My Lord Rooster found himself surprised, delighted, subjugated by Miss Newcome, her wit and spirit. "By Jove, she is a plucky one," his lordship explained. "To dance with her is the best fun in life. How she pulls all the other girls to pieces, by Jove, and how splendidly she chaffs everybody! But," he added, with the shrewdness and sense of humor which distinguished the young officer, "I'd rather dance with her than marry her—by a doosid long score—I don't envy you that part of the business, Kew, my boy." Lord Kew did not set himself up as a person to be envied. He thought his cousin beautiful; and with his grandmother, that she would make a very handsome countess, and he thought the money which Lady Kew would give or leave to the young couple a very welcome addition to his means.

On the next night, when there was a ball at the rooms, Miss Ethel, who was ordinarily exceedingly simple in her attire, and dressed below the mark of the rest of the world, chose to appear in a toilet the very grandest and finest which she had ever assumed. Her clustering ringlets, her shining white shoulders, her splendid raiment (I believe, indeed, it was her court dress which the young lady assumed) astonished all beholders. She *écrasé'd* all other beauties by her appearance; so much so that Mme. d'Ivry's court could not but look, the men in admiration, the women in dislike, at this dazzling young creature. None of the countesses, duchesses, princesses, Russ, Spanish, Italian, were so fine or so handsome. There were some New York ladies at Baden, as there are everywhere else in Europe now. Not even these were more magnificent than Miss Ethel. General Jeremiah J. Bung's lady owned that Miss Newcome was fit to appear in any party in Fifth Avenue. She was the only well-dressed English girl Mrs. Bung had seen in Europe. A young German Durchlaucht deigned to explain to his aid-de-camp how very handsome he thought Miss Newcome. All our acquaintances were of one mind. Mr. Jones of England pronounced her stunning; the admirable Captain Blackball examined her points with the skill of an amateur, and described them with agreeable frankness. Lord Rooster was charmed as he surveyed her, and complimented his late companion in arms on the possession of such a paragon. Only Lord Kew was not delighted—nor did Miss Ethel mean that he should be. She looked as splendid as Cinderella in the prince's palace. But what need for all this splendor? this wonderful toilet? this dazzling neck and shoulders, whereof the brightness and beauty blinded the eyes of lookers-on? She was dressed as gaudily as an actress of the Variétés going to a supper at the Trois Frères. "It was Mlle. Mabille *en habit de cour*," Mme. d'Ivry remarked to Mme. Schlangenbad. Barnes, who with his bride-elect for a partner, made a vis-à-vis for his sister and the admiring Lord Rooster, was puzzled likewise by Ethel's countenance and appearance. Little Lady Clara looked like a little schoolgirl dancing before her.

One, two, three of the attendants of her Majesty the Queen of Scots were carried off in the course of the evening by the victorious young beauty, whose triumph had the effect which the headstrong girl perhaps herself anticipated, of mortifying the Duchesse d'Ivry, of exasperating old Lady Kew, and of annoying the young nobleman to whom Miss Ethel was engaged. The girl seemed to take a pleasure in defying all three; a something embittered her alike against her friends and her enemies. The old dowager chafed and vented her wrath upon Lady Ann and Barnes. Ethel kept the ball alive by herself almost, she refused to go home, declining hints and commands alike. She was engaged for ever so many dances more. Not dance with Count Punter? It would be rude to leave him after promising him. Not waltz with Captain Blackball? He was not a proper partner for her. Why then did Kew know him? Lord Kew walked and talked with Captain Blackball every day. Was she to be so proud as not to know Lord Kew's friends? She greeted the Captain with a most fascinating smile as he came up while the controversy was pending, and ended it by whirling round the room in his arms.

Mme. d'Ivry viewed with such pleasure as might be expected the defection of her adherents, and the triumph of her youth-

ful rival, who seemed to grow more beautiful with each waltz, so that the other dancers paused to look at her, the men breaking out in enthusiasm, the reluctant women being forced to join in the applause. Angry as she was, and knowing how Ethel's conduct angered her grandson, old Lady Kew could not help admiring the rebellious beauty, whose girlish spirit was more than a match for the imperious dowager's tough old resolution. As for Mr. Barnes' displeasure, the girl tossed her saucy head, shrugged her fair shoulders, and passed on with a scornful laugh. In a word, Miss Ethel conducted herself as a most reckless and intrepid young flirt, using her eyes with the most consummate effect, chattering with astounding gayety, prodigal of smiles, gracious thanks, and killing glances. What wicked spirit moved her? Perhaps had she known the mischief she was doing, she would have continued it still.

The sight of this willfulness and levity smote poor Lord Kew's heart with cruel pangs of mortification. The easy young nobleman had passed many a year of his life in all sorts of wild company. The *chaumière* knew him, and the balls of Parisian actresses, the *coulisses* of the opera at home and abroad. Those pretty heads of ladies whom nobody knows used to nod their shining ringlets at Kew, from private boxes at theaters, or dubious Park broughams. He had run the career of young men of pleasure, and laughed and feasted with jolly prodigals and their company. He was tired of it; perhaps he remembered an earlier and purer life, and was sighing to return to it. Living as he had done among the outcasts, his ideal of domestic virtue was high and pure. He chose to believe that good women were entirely good. Duplicity he could not understand; ill-temper shocked him; willfulness, he seemed to fancy, belonged only to the profane and wicked, not to good girls, with good mothers, in honest homes. Their nature was to love their families; to obey their parents; to tend their poor; to honor their husbands; to cherish their children. Ethel's laugh woke him up from one of those simple reveries, very likely, and then she swept round the ballroom rapidly to the brazen notes of the orchestra. He never offered to dance with her more than once in the evening; went away to play, and returned to find her still whirling to the music. Mme. d'Ivry remarked his tribulation and gloomy face, though she took no pleasure at his discomfiture, knowing that Ethel's behavior caused it.

In plays and novels, and I dare say in real life too, sometimes, when the wanton heroine chooses to exert her powers of fascination, and to flirt with Sir Henry or the Captain, the hero, in a pique, goes off and makes love to somebody else; both acknowledge their folly after a while and are reconciled, and the curtain drops, or the volume ends. But there are some people too noble and simple for these amorous scenes and smirking artifices. When Kew was pleased he laughed, when he was grieved he was silent. He did not deign to hide his grief or pleasure under disguises. His error, perhaps, was in forgetting that Ethel was very young; that her conduct was not design, so much as girlish mischief and high spirits; and that if young men have their frolics, sow their wild oats, and enjoy their pleasure, young women may be permitted sometimes their more harmless vagaries of gayety and sportive outbreaks of willful humor.

When she consented to go home at length, Lord Kew brought Miss Newcome's little white cloak for her (under the hood of which her glossy curls, her blushing cheeks, and bright eyes looked provokingly handsome), and encased her in this pretty garment without uttering one single word. She made him a saucy courtesy in return for this act of politeness, which salutation he received with a grave bow; and then he proceeded to cover up old Lady Kew, and to conduct her ladyship to her chariot. Miss Ethel chose to be displeased at her cousin's displeasure. What were balls made for but that people should dance? She a flirt? She displease Lord Kew? If she chose to dance, she would dance; she had no idea of his giving himself airs, besides it was such fun taking away the gentlemen of Mary Queen of Scots' court from her; such capital fun! So she went to bed, singing and performing wonderful *roulades* as she lighted her candle and retired to her room. She had had such a jolly evening! such famous fun, and, I dare say (but how shall a novelist penetrate these mysteries?) when her chamber door was closed, she scolded her maid and was as cross as two sticks. You see there come moments of sorrow after the most brilliant victories; and you conquer and rout the enemy utterly, and then regret that you fought.