

**THE STERLEY'S OF  
OAKLAND PARK  
A REGENCY NOVEL**

**BY SAREJESS**

**A regency classic the story of an English  
regency family**

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**CHAPTER ONE**

The Sterley's of Oakland Park in the county of Surrey had for a long time been genteel nobility the first Sterley to rise to the nobility was Sir John having been in the service of Queen Elizabeth of blessed memory. Having served his country well he had been knighted and invested with lands, Queen Elizabeth always a grudging giver of favor's had at first wished to bestow only a small portion of land upon this nobleman. However in the end better judgment prevailed and a sizable grand was made to Sir John the descendent of Sir John had played there part in making England what it was at the time of our narrative. For this, they were most amply rewarded.

They had added through out successive generations to these lands. thus at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Oakland Park had attached to it a number of farms which paid rents annually in arrears bringing a certain measure of security and a sense of wealth. The current sir Thomas was a man of quite disposition who after a lifetime of service to the crown had returned to contemplate the beauty of country life. Sir Thomas has always been fond of birds and thus he spent his days in quite contemplation of the birds of Southern England of which he was making a study, in the hopes of some time soon having a publication done at his expense. It was not that sir Thomas sought fame for he was already quite well known and had riches enough for the needs of his family and for the next generation when they arrived.

Sir Thomas had served the previous government well both in parliament and as a captain in that, service of which Nelson was a great example. Sir Thomas had only retired to the country once it became apparent that the King would not recover, thus Sir Thomas had taken the time to think it better to retire from politics, as he had no wish to serve in a government over which the prince Regent held sway.

In his younger day, he had been an officer in the Royal navy a part of the service for which he still held a great fondness in his heart. He read with keen interest the gazettes to see who had been mentioned and if perchance a son of a near by

neighbor had received a distinction of merit in the gazette. Sir Thomas would take to writing a letter or two to the relatives and even some time to the gentleman in question wishing them a heart congratulations and an invitation to call upon him at Oakland Park when they should again be in the county.

Of the people that Sir Thomas loved most dearly were of course his wife of many years Ann who had been born Lady Moorcroft (Her Father Lord Moorcroft now an ancient relic who had served in the government of George II had of late passed away thus the family was still in a time of mourning.) Then there daughters Lydia, Mary Sophia Elizabeth, and of course Mary, the youngest of his daughters his sons who brought him great pride were in order of age Thomas, John, William, and finally James who was but a babe in arms. Sir Thomas and Lady Ann had for more then a generation planed the arrival of there children in accordance with the dedication of an admiral of the service as he planed his Battle plan in the same spirit as the great sea Lord of Blessed memory Lord Horatio Nelson.. Thus over a period of two and twenty years Lady Ann had brought forth in due season a little bundle of joy

To say that Sir Thomas was a doting father would have been an understatement for of an evening he could be found on his hands and knees playing with the younger children. He even on occasion took a lively interest in the doings of his older children Thomas his son was a young man of the world who was of a melancholic disposition and prone to moodiness. In which state he would take up his pen and retire to his room where he would compose sonnets and the like some of which he would on occasion read to the family for an evening's entertainment.

The somberness of the younger Thomas did in no way have an effect on the younger sons of the house who would spend there days in Boxing Boating on the river and riding some times even enjoying a hearty game of cricket.

The daughters of the house where an altogether lively group who loved attending assemblies and dancing was always a favorite pastime. Indeed Lay Ann had mad sure that all her daughter could play the harpsichord and of late the urgency of

Lady Ann to procure a piano Forte for the house had been made known to Sir Thomas.

“My dear is the harpsichord broken?” he had enquired of her when she made the wish for a pianoforte to him. “No Tom it is all the rage and is played in all the best houses in London we simple must have one” she replied growing impatient with his reluctance to produce the desired instrument.

“Indeed my love and how much do you suppose such an extravagance would cost?” he asked her with a pained expression “Oh I am not sure but what is the matter you have never been so obstinate before when it came to the purchase of an instrument” she replied

“Indeed we have recently had the man in to tune the harpsichord and what of the new fiddle I bought John but a twelve month ago?” he asked her

“Sir you know that John plays well and he has never neglected the art of music think sir how the instrument would enhance your standing in the county should it be known that you have one of the newest instruments” Lady Ann said.

“That is a good point my dear he said with a smile let me consider it and when I have found the right conclusion I will let you know” Sir Thomas said.

“In the mean time pray tell me what are the young ladies up to this evening for I believe there is to be a assemble in the village and I have yet to shave and dress for I should very much like to wait upon some of our neighbors at the assembly” he concluded

“Why sir one would think that you of all people would dismiss out of hand any frivolity with assemblies for you have grown quite in your later years what now this sudden interest in assembles and balls Pray sir what bedbug have you in your hat” said Lady Ann

## CHAPTER TWO

The sound of music filled the air and the hall was lit with the light of a thousand candles for tonight was the first of the assemblies to be held in Notheringay. Sir Thomas found himself seated next to an old acquiesce Mr. Charles Parker who had served under Sir George Rodney in the early days of there service to King and country “Charles do you remember how crisp the night was?” asked Sir Thomas “Indeed I do sir replied Mr. Parker taking a pull at his pipe. “Indeed I do,” he said releasing a vast cloud of smoke from his mouth much to the annoyance of Sir Thomas. It was not that Sir Thomas was against the habit of smoking he felt every one was free to live there lives as best suited them but what he did object to was the fact that the smoke had been expelled in his direction.

“Ah yes I remember well how we fought that battle under the moon light a singular even if I might say so Sir Thomas” said Mr. Parker “and our ship our faithful Montague is already and old war horse now. I would not be surprised that when next we hear of her she will have been broken up or a sheer hulk” said Sir Thomas “I fancy the lower deck crews would not look back at her with such an air of nostalgia,” said Mr. Parker. “Indeed I fancy Don de Lángara will also look back at that battle with an air of discontent,” replied Sir Thomas

I have an occasion to be in London next week on a matter of some small busyness I trust that you and your good lady will find an occasion to call on Lady Ann. For I fancy there might be some what of a disruption while I am away in town,” said Sir Thomas. “I am sure my Emily would be delighted to spend an afternoon in the company of your good lady,” replied Mr. Parker.

“Pray tell how are those bright young sons of yours?” asked Sir Thomas who had it mind to arrange a marriage between the elder son and his daughter Lydia. “George has recently returned from Oxford and is taking the business of my rents in hand quite nicely it relieves me to have some time upon my hands to be at leisure,” replied Mr Parker. “Indeed a bright young man” said Sir Thomas as the object of there discourse weaved his way down the line of dancers his hand firmly on that of Lydia. “And what of Peter?” Asked Sir Thomas “Peter is bound for the service this coming fortnight Monday” replied

Mr Parker; I have managed to buy him a commission in the 52 foot. “Indeed a strange choice replied Sir Thomas raising an eyebrow. It was I am afraid the best that can be got at present, he is no horseman unfortunately I would have liked to get him a commission in the guards but he refused to hear of it preferring to be among the men as he put it” continued Mr Parker.

Just then Lady Ann returned to her seat she had been dancing with your Lord Kilgrew “Dear husband remind me later to impart to you a certain knowledge that has of recent been rewarded me” she said “Indeed it must be of some importance that you would not speak before our dear and old friend Mr. Parker”. “No sir it is some what of a private nature and is fit only for the ear of a husband “she replied sharply. Just then Mrs. Parker joined their company having spent the last round on the arm of an officer of the rifles. “Hot work but most invigorating said” she

The music begun again and the two couples sat watching the young people of their respective houses dance a new dance which had recently been introduced to the country some thing called a waltz. I perceive that this new fad of a dance does not hold much in it “said Lady Ann with a frown on her broad face for she was watching with some manner of displeasure the figure of her daughter Lydia and young Peter Parker, who to her mind seemed a little too closely embraced in each others arms.

“Ann let them be we were once young don’t you recall? Said Sir Thomas

Later that night Sir Thomas before retiring for the night spent a few moments writing in his great day journal, this had long been his practice for he was a fastidious man who would not allow a day to pass lest he make a few pre-functionary notes on the events of the day.

Of late, the mood of his eldest son had been somewhat of a concern to him as Tom was showing more and more signs of becoming more caught up in a world of his own with little sense of the realities of life. Sir Thomas considered buying him a commission in the Kings own regiment of guards for

surely the life of a guards captain would be one which would fully occupy the full four and twenty hours of the day. Thus leaving little time for Tom to occupy himself with less fruitful pursuits. Further, more Thomas with the right training could rise in the world and the thought of this delighted Sir Thomas. As sir, Thomas said his prayers and snuffed out the candle the thought of his son in a uniform of the guards made his lot content and he was at peace with the world.

In the distance an owl hooted but by the time the sound was recognized by the sleepy Sir Thomas he was beginning to slip into the arms of Morphus

### CHAPTER THREE

There comes a certain time in a young gentleman's life when he begins to contemplate marriage. Thomas Sterley had woken early and had spent almost an hour in front of the mirror dressing; while he dressed, he had been contemplating this very subject "For he reasoned that as a member of the aristocracy he should play his part in the furtherance of his family's good name. Thus, he had concluded that he should find himself a wife. However as he contemplated this he began to find that his options were some what limited, Not been a man with an abundance of bravery for he very much the romantic could write about men dieing on battle fields. However, he felt no compunction to do this himself. He had dismissed out of hand the idea that he might rise through the services in any military fashion. The church he found did not offer to him the sort of life, which he expected as the elder son of a large and noble family. Thus Thomas began to meditate on the matter of finding a woman of noble birth who in due season would bring forth heirs and in the meanwhile be his companion and soul mate. For Thomas reasoned that any lady of a noble house should be of fair dispersion and have a fortune or at the very least be of independent means. Of course, a dowry would be most welcome.

For to his way of thinking Thomas wanted a young woman who would be his fair Juliet to his Romeo and who would not find it unpleasant to accompany him to the continent. Italy would be a good place to start for Thomas had heard of late that Lord Byron had spent some time in Italy and found that Rome had been a city worth visiting.

He furthermore bethought that Rome would be a good and respectable place to begin his own serious writings in romantic poetry. for he had already put down in his note book the beginning s of a poem which showed promise of which he had not yet begun to read to the family lest they mock him for his romantic notions for until now most of his writing had been half in Jest and half serious.

Now as he tied the final knot of his cravat he began to wonder what his Mamma, would have to say if she knew of his idea of finding a wife. Of course, like any good and noble lady she would be overjoyed that he had finally begun to grow up. For



as she put it for Lady Ann had for quite some time berated her first born son to do exactly that.

Of his father, he was more than a little concerned that the old gentleman might take offence and buy him a commission in the guards or some other frightful regiment. Thus, Thomas reasoned that before the morning was out to have a few words in the privacy of the drawing room with his Mamma to forestall any plan that his Papa might have in mind for sending him to the war front.

It was a little after 11 o'clock that the chance came for Lady Ann was arranging flowers in a vase when Thomas came upon her “

“Mamma I would like your opinion upon a matter of the heart” he said “Oh Tom what is it now another verse that you cannot find an ending to?” she enquired with a pained look upon her face. For the dear woman was used to the young man asking advice in fact many of his verses had shown a little of her talent not that the good lady would ever have made it known for she kept a diary in which she wrote much and which she never showed to any one least of all her husband. Whom she considered would take affront at some of her more forward thinking writing. For on occasion, the heroines of her short stories would be swept of their feet by young knights while the young ladies in her stories would invariably be that class of woman who had a heaving bosom, which grew, flushed as her cheeks when confronted by the hero of the story.

“No Mamma, I have decided that it is time that I take a wife and I need your help deciding on who the fortunate young woman will be” he said ““Oh Tom you must not jest so with me for a moment I thought that you might just be serious” said Lady Ann.

“Indeed Mamma I am most serious otherwise I would not have sort you out to ask for your assistance” replied the young man now blushing and loosening the necktie from his neck as his anxiety grew.

“Tom this is wonderful news” said Lady Ann rising from her place at the table and coming over to take him by the hand

“pray tell who the young lady shall be? She inquired of him. “I have not yet set my mind upon any particular lady as the thought only occurred to me this very morning,” he said.

“I see,” said Lady Ann as she once more took a seat at the table and took up her pen “I shall have to write to a number of our relatives and hear which of these daughters are of marriageable age” she said. “Mamma please do and may I make so bold as to ask only those of a clear disposition further more they should have a large dowry” the young man said. “Very well Tom leave me to think” she said it worried her to find that the whole matter on which her first born son had sort her out was not really a matter of the heart but more a matter of economics. For it was true that most people in her class married with a fortune in mind she was more inclined to the romantic nature of the event. She would however apply her mind and considerable thought to the matter at hand.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Lady Ann sat for a few moments gathering her thoughts rising from her seat she took the manuscript upon which she had been working and locked it away. Taking up writing paper, she returned to her seat. Taking up her quill...

The content of the missive was one upon which she took a few more moments to contemplate before she began writing

The letter she was about to write was to a distant cousin Lady Sarah Fitz-Gibbon who's husband a peer of the realm styled Lord Fitz-Gibbon held estates in the north of England.

The ancestral home been near York Lord Fitz-Gibbon was of an ancient and honorable lineage having an ancestor who had served well in the parliament of King Henry in the time of the reformation.

For his pains and troubles, the gentleman had been well rewarded with lands, which had formally belonged to a Benedictine house.

My dear Sarah,  
I hope that you are well and in good health she began thereafter, she continued in this vain discussing the health of various members of her family the weather and other local incidents, which she considered her cousin Lady Sarah Fitz-Gibbon, might find of interest

Coming to the point of her missive, she enquired after the well-being of Lady Sarah's daughter Arabella who she had last seen some three years earlier at her coming out.

"You must bring Arabella to visit us at Oakland Park I am sure the children would love to have there cousin here. Sir Thomas is away in London at present and is not expected back for a few more weeks, thus it would be a grand occasion should you and Arabella be here when he returned.

Young Tom has been asking particularly about Arabella, as you will recall they were very close when last the visited.

So pray dear Lady Sarah do come and visit us at your  
convince she wrote these words thereafter she closed the  
missive with the usual graces.

Sealing the letter she had but to wait for the next time that  
there arose an occasion to visit the village and to post the  
letter. However, after a few moments of contemplation she  
called for a servant who took the letter directly to The Bell the  
inn in the village from whence the coach would depart at three  
O'clock in the afternoon

At midday, the family found themselves round the table  
partaking in that meal of the day, which brings much, thought  
for contemplation in the later hours of the afternoon for there  
was a quantity of food, which made the table groan.

Lady Ann having said grace watched as her family descended  
on the unsuspecting food hot steaming plates of mutton, pork,  
and beef graced the table.  
The gravy tray been passed around as each member dug in and  
began to eat. The sons of there neighbor Mr Parker were  
present having spent part of the previous day and the night at  
Oakland's.

George Now seated next to Lady Ann's dearest daughter  
Lydia seemed very much taken by her and it was with a  
fervent expectation that the two young people would in due  
course be betrothed.

The thought gave Lady Ann a sense of contentment with the  
world for the Parkers though not of the aristocracy had to there  
credit.  
The fact that they were one of the wealthiest families in  
England owing to some wise investment s of Mr Parker's  
father. Who had first made his fortune as a merchant many  
year previously. To Lady Ann's way of thinking it would not  
be long before the Parkers would rise to the peerage for Mr  
Parker had been busy in government for some small time, his  
ideas of reform gained from the study of Wilberforce had lead  
him to the conclusion that much could be gained from reform  
in government.

Lady Ann ever forward thinking had not considered at this time the implications for people of a certain class unto which she herself belonged of radical reform. Of course, she knew that radical reform carried to far could be dangerous one had but to look a short distance across the channel to see the result of this dangerous action.

Of course, things had a way of righting themselves she reasoned for had not Bonny made himself the emperor of France once the initial troubles had been settled.

In the mean time, Thursday week would be the next assembly and there would as was the custom of the ladies of the house be much preparing for this even. I hope that by then Sir Thomas would have sent word as to when he was to be expected back from London.

“I have written to Lady Fitz-Gibbon asking her to visit with us and to bring her daughter Lady Arabella for a few weeks” said Lady Ann. “Oh Mamma that is a nice thing I can hardly remember when last they spent time here,” said Mary. Who was the only daughter of the house to show any real interest in her relatives. For the young lady had collected a book of relatives from the earliest times of the family’s existence in that part of the county.

After the midday meal the daughters of the house and there guests found occasion to spend some time in the garden, for it was there custom to spend lazy afternoon’s near the lake watching the water fowl. Thomas retired to his fathers study to do some writing while John descended once more on the garden to take up a spade and rake for this son of the house of Sterley loved gardening more then any thing in the world.

## CHAPTER FIVE

The sound of a busy London street drifted upward to the ears of the men sitting in the study Of the Earl of Waterford Lord Lieutenant of the tower of London and Gentleman of the privy seal. For a moment before he began to speak Sir Thomas listened to the sounds of horse and carriage passing by the house in Grosvenor Square

Sir Thomas had recently arrived in town and had as a matter of urgency requested an interview with the Earl on a matter of mutual business.

“I am lead to understand that there might be the possibility of certain commons in the Royal dragoons,” said Sir Thomas.

“Indeed there are a certain number available to worthy members of a certain good families for a not inconsiderable consideration,” replied the earl of Waterford.

“I would be most interested my lord to know what such a commission would cost say a lieutenancy or a captaincy,” said Sir Thomas

“I am not exactly sure Sir Thomas but I would be able to find out from the commander of the dragoons he owes me a certain service.” Said the earl “May I enquire for whom you require the post? He continued. “

“My boy Tom is of a moody nature who spends to much time writing poetry and prose I have half a mind to by him a commission and give him a chance to get out in the world don’t you know” said Sir Thomas as he raised a snifter of Brandy to his lip’s

“Ah I have just the right command for a young lad like that,” said the earl. Give me a few days to arrange it, fear not Sir Thomas your troubles are at an end for a certain consideration. Of course I am sure I we will be able to make available to your young man a command which is ideally suited to his nature and complement” he continued.

“I see that Sir Grenville has been mentioned in the latest dispatches,” said Sir Thomas by way of reference to the earl’s

second son who had been leading quite a charmed life under Lord Wellesley. "Ah yes Grenville he is a wonderful boy going into the army was the best thing I could ever have arranged for him of course, he fought and screamed against it he wanted to go into the theater of all things. What a member of the nobility in the theater have you ever heard of such an idea" said the earl "I blame his mother of course always encouraging him to act

"I fear that it was seeing his uncle of Shadberry in the company of the prince regent that put such a notion in his head. As you know John Shadberry has always followed the fashion of Priddy and as a result this has rubbed off on Grenville but I knew the army would make a man of him" ended the earl.

"It says here that he performed with the utmost bravery when leading a contingent of the rifles whilst withdrawing from an open position," said Sir Thomas

"Indeed the lad seems to have found his place in the service," replied the Earl. Who held a glass before his rather large red nose savoring the flavor of the illicit cognac recently seized by a very alert captain on a revenue cutter in the channel on dark evening.

"Pray Sir Thomas I am confounded sir that you would want your lad in the Army for I believe that you are a navel man yourself?" said the Earl

"Indeed my lord is correct I fought at Cape St Vincent the first battle of course, yes I meditated upon the Navy for my son. However since Nelson was killed there has not been much of a chance of honors at sea. With most of the war effort going on land" replied Sir Thomas.

"Exactly sir you are correct in that assumption for the glory now days is not at sea but on the many fronts on the continent don't you know said the earl as he swallowed the cognac

"My service to the crown during my years at sea also taught me one thing that some men will never make good sailors poor Thomas cannot even get out on the lake without becoming green about the gills. Thus I am forced to turn once more

landward,” said Sir Thomas with a sigh as the thought of his son becoming a great navel captain disappeared from his mind.

“Indeed sir Thomas you have my sympathy but we have time to consider this matter latter tonight I have a little celebration of my own. I would like you to attend as my guest for my daughter Virginia is to marry captain Sir Benjamin Witling and they are to announce there betrothal tonight. It would be my pleasure sir if you would attend,” said the Earl “Of course straight afterward I am sending her back to Waterford for the season is to hot here for her,” the earl. “Quite unfitting that a young lady should be in London quite un-chaperoned you might be surprised to know that the countess is not fond of traveling and has not left Waterford these twenty years,” he continued

“My Lord is to kind I await this occasion with much pleasure pray my lord at what time will the event begin?” enquired Sir Thomas “ “We shall dine at nine” replied the earl as he showed Sir Thomas to the door.

Outside the great house of the Earl Sir Thomas stopped to consider what he had achieved. For by mere accident it had come about that his grace the earl had known some of the history of his service to the crown. This had helped him in his efforts to secure a commission for young Tom. It seemed however, to Sir Thomas there must be some thing amiss with her ladyship of Waterford for he could not imagine any one not traveling for such an extended period as the earl had mentioned.

Lady Ann would be pleased with what he had managed he planed to write to her as soon as he arrived at the hotel where he was staying. London had under gone much change since his last visit he was beginning to think that he would lose his way some day while out walking. Like the country squire he was he set out with his walking stick in hand to walk the mile to the hotel taking in as he went all the new houses that were been built, they said that it was due to the wishes of the prince regent that this was been done.



## CHAPTER SIX

“Isn’t our Tom a fine strong man?” asked Lady Ann “I dare say he is said Lady Sarah as she eyed the young man in question who had shortly before taken up a position besides her daughter. “I do so hope Sir Thomas well be home some time soon’ said Lady Ann as she picked at the piece of embroidery upon which she had already expended quite a number of hours.

“Ill warrant that he is quite caught up in some busyness in town and has little thought for us,” she continued. “Come Ann I am sure that you know your good husband far better than that,” said Lady Sarah as she closed the book which she was reading

“Lydia dear will you ring the bell for some tea please” said Lady Ann as she took up the fan and begun to wave it about “these autumn days are so hot one wonders if we will have much of a winter at all” she said.

“Mary bring your work here let me have a look at how you are doing” said Lady Ann. “Oh Mamma it is alright I have been very careful to keep with in the lines’ replied. Mary as she rose from the chair upon which she was sitting bringing with her the material upon which she had spent most of the morning.

“I think we should have a ball soon yes we shall what a wonderful ball it will be, Lydia dear play some music” said Lady Ann “Yes Mamma replied the young lady in question as she crossed to the Harpsichord and begun to play.

“John, JOHN” shouted Lady Ann to attract her son’s attention which was been occupied by copy of the latest agricultural gazette.

“Sorry Mamma this is so fascinating what is it you want dearest Mamma said the young man as he came to stand besides his mother.

““Your fiddle boy fetch your fiddle accompany your sister” she said “Hurry boy” she said “Oh tom do stop you have quite captured the attention of Arabella give Mary a chance to take a turn about the room with her dear cousin “ said Lady Ann Obediently Mary crossed the room and took up the arm of her cousin and began walking about the room admiring the paintings of Mr Russell.

“I am so glad you came to stay with us dear cousin life is so provincial here that any distraction is a new adventure” said

Mary "I love been here it is so restful. at home of course papa is always busy and of course the troubles at the mines have been causing poor dear sweet papa so many late nights" said Arabella "I hope that Papa will be able to join us soon" she continued

"Mamma here is the post coach come to the door with a letter from Papa," cried Sophia who had just come in with the letter. "Come child let me see what your Papa has written" said Lady Ann taking the letter and breaking the seal.

"Dear Wife,

I am glad to report that business is well in hand, I should be able to return home the week after next as I have been waiting upon the Earl of Waterford who has some influence in the service.

Pray do not be alarmed I do not intend to leave you to fight I do however have some news to impart to you in regard to our son Thomas who has been much on my mind of late.

I had occasion to attend a grand ball the other night at the town house in Lester squire at the home of his grace the Earl of Waterford. There I met many men of influence and hope to give you a happy report shortly.

Also present was the Prince Regent who was kind enough to speak with me for a moment what a splendid prince he is stout and strong truly a good dresser and a wonderful patron of the arts.

I also learned from his gracious lady that there daughter Virginia is to have her coming out next season at the same time as our Sophia pray kiss the children for me

Your husband

Thomas Sterley

"What a delightful bit of news" said lady Ann shall we have some more tea my dear Sarah she said as she refilled Lady Sarah's cup. "Indeed it seems that we will be alone for a few more weeks left to our own devices," said Lady Sarah

"I think that we will have that ball Tuesday week I shall begin at once there is so much to be done, Lydia and Mary you will have to help. Tom go to the village and see if you can find Mr Smith and ask him if he will arrange the village players for Tuesday week if he is agreeable should he think otherwise pray inform him that it is my wish and I will not be gain said

in this matter. Hurry now Tom take one of the horses and be quick,” said Lady Ann

“My dear Ann you should take a moment to breath” said Lady Sarah “Arabella and I are here we to shall help and the ball will be a wonderful thing. pray consider your health and take a moment for yourself” the good lay continued for she had hosted many ball sand knew that these things should not be rushed at but taken at a leisurely trot

Mean while let us rejoin Sir Thomas in London

“May I say this is a splendid bottle of port your lordship,” said Sir Thomas “Ah Sir Thomas your flattery of my cellar brings me much pleasure” said the Earl of Waterford who was busy poring himself another glass of the aforementioned port.

Pray do tell me my lord what news of the matter on which I first approached you?” enquired Sir Thomas “Indeed matters progress well I have spoken to the master of the household cavalry and I do indeed have some news which will give you pleasure” said the Earl

“A captaincy can be gained for the sum of seven thousand pounds paid in advance of course,” he continued. “Sir Thomas considered this particular but of information with great unease for seven thousand pounds was not a matter to be trifled with and he would need to speak to his steward to see if such funds were indeed available. For he knew that the annual return on rents for the lands adjoining Oakland Park brought a return of 5 thousand pounds. In fact, Sir Thomas never knew how much money he had in his accounts and the great chest in his bedchamber at Oakland. However, he felt certain that if he worked sparingly he would find that he did indeed have enough money to by the captaincy and have enough to see Oakland Park's upkeep threw to the next term of rents.

“Rumor has it that the prince regent is planning on a new round of building” said Sir Thomas “Ah yes I believe he has some plans for a few rows of mews houses for worth families” replied the Earl.

“Tell me Sir Thomas have you ever visited Ireland?” Asked the Earl “my lord unfortunately I have never visited the Irish

counties however I was once in Dublin when our ship stopped for repairs” he replied.

“A strange and moody race full of rebellion the Irish I will be leaving next week for the Irish counties on matters of Crown and country business.” Replied the Earl moodily, for the earl liked London in all the world best the fact that he had to on occasion visit his lands in Ireland distressed him he would have gladly given it up had it not brought to him a vast amount of money

“I am lead to understand my lord that Ireland is one of the greenest countries in the world. Of the people I not much, although the few that served under me at ST Vincent were the best fighting men in the world bar the Scots who beat everybody else without trouble.

The hunting is good I have occasion to hunt on my estates quite often and have always found the grouse to be some of the best, Poachers however are a problem I had occasion to hang a few last time I was there. Always the same defense have to feed the family no money and so forth. I say hang them and be dammed rouges and scoundrels” the earl continued

“You have my sympathy we have some poachers but never any thing that warrant’s hanging. At Oakland Park, we have some deer that is always a pleasure I have yet to find a poacher who is bold enough to take a deer from Oakland Park. The keepers are very strict and seldom do I have occasion to punish any one. Usually if they are caught, it is small game and I usually let them of with a warning. They can keep the game Oakland Park is well stocked and one would not like to set a precinct for taking bigger game” said Sir Thomas

## CHAPTER SEVEN

“What a wit the anonymous young lady is who wrote this book its title is Emma,” said Lydia laying aside the book which she had been reading “Indeed” said Lady Ann with a fained interest. “Pray tell dear what has the young lady to say in her latest literary offering,” asked Lady Sarah “The young lady has captured exactly life in the counties,” replied Lydia.

“I have often found some amusement in the writings of Mrs. Burney you will of course remember her earlier works” said Lady Ann. “Of course the young lady who ever she is writes in a style some what akin to that of Mrs. Burney replied Lady Ann.

“I have often wondered at women who have taken up the pen so to say it is not quite the thing for a young lady to do,” said Mary who was conscious of the social standing of the genteel nobility.

“Oh Mary you do say the strangest things I wonder if the young lady is at all a young lady she is no doubt she must be quite forty if a day” replied her mother.

“When I am older I will write said Sophia who was not quite fifteen. “I think I will write of far away places, of strange people, of the Lords and ladies of foreign parts, just the think to keep ones interest,” she concluded

“You most certainly shall not my dear you will be a good wife, mother and keep your home in order when you are married to a fine gentleman of the county replied Lady Sarah.

“Dear Aunt Sarah we are living at a time when things are so much changed one wonders what people ever did before” Said Sophia

“Stuff of nonsense said Lady Sarah it is a woman’s place to keep a good home it is quite one thing to be a spinster with no prospects living on your wits and the patronage of others and quite another thing to be a respectable member of the aristocracy” said Lady Sarah.

“Take dear Arabella she knows her place I have instructed her in all the things she needs to know about the household. She knows how to order the meals from the cook and what to do in the event of any occasion. She my dear will make a grand lady I am quite sure that it won't be long before the young bucks will be beating a path to the proverbial door for her hand in marriage” Lady Sarah concluded.

“Really Ann I am surprised at you r daughters I would have expected them to be most content to be economic with there flights of fancy,” said Lady Sarah.

“Sarah you need not worry on account of my girls they are like flowers in a garden they are a little wild I must confess but with a bit of trimming they should do splendidly” replied Lady Ann

Just then, John entered the drawing room “Mamma, Mamma a letter from papa” he said as he crossed the room and handed the letter to Lady Ann.

“More news from London I do so hope he is coming soon,” she said as she broke the seal of the letter. For a few moments she remained silent as she read the letter. Then swaying she handed the letter to Lydia who had come to stand besides her mother.

‘Dear Ann,

I had the good fortune to dine in the company of the prince regent last evening at Windsor. It is indeed a splendid house if somewhat in the fashion of the last season.

His highness Prince George, I must tell you has grown quite plump of late. I also had occasion to speak with my lord the Earl of Wellington who tells me that the war effort is going quite splendidly he is a wonderful man who knows every tactic that old Bonny has will come to naught

I have some thing to impart you of great significance my lord the earl of Waterford has invited me to his county seat for some game hunting for a few weeks I will be leaving on Monday next.

My Lord the Earls sons will be at home and so will his daughter Lady Virginia who will be coming out next season. She is somewhat of the same age as our Mary

To this end, I want you to send Thomas, John and Mary to town on the next available coach, as I want then to come with me I have spoken to his Lordship and he is quite agreeable to this end.

Your Loving husband  
Thomas

“I wonder at Sir Thomas what does he think of us that he stays so long away and the matter of the business which he went to London must be concluded quite some time ago,” said Lady Ann

‘Lydia ring the bell for some tea dear,’ said Lady Sarah as she took the hand of Lady Ann” dearest cousin I spoke harshly earlier. Pray for give me your daughters are quite splendid creatures it is the hotness of the weather that made me reply so sharply... Pray be content that Sir Thomas is doing every thing in his power to forward the interests of the family. These things take time the right connections have to be made and nurtured.

‘It is indeed a wonderful occasion that Lady Virginia and Mary will meet and get to know each other only good can come of such a connection his Lordship is of course one of the most significant magnets in Ireland today’ said Lady Ann drying her tears at the occasion of missing her husband.

“Here is the tea,” said Sophia as the butler placed the tray on the table closing with the table Sophia began to stir the tea began pouring tea. For her Mamma as she knew best in the entire house that her Mamma preferred strong dark tea with a touch of milk and a little sugar

“Mamma there is a hack approaching the house said John who was standing at the window “Who can it be I am quite distraught and have no desire for new company right now” said Lady Ann.

“I believe it to be Mr and Mrs. Holder” said John “Now that is welcome I have not spoken to Mrs. Holder in quite while and she has the most delightful recipe for sweetmeats” said Lady Ann. brightening at the news of the arrival of her old friend from the village.

“Tom you will please take an interest in what Mr Holder tells you and be as civil as you can you know how disagreeable that man can be” said Lady Ann “Yes Mamma I think I might show him the gun room he has always shown an interest in the gun’s said Tom.

The couple of middle years entered the withdrawing room after been announced curtsies, bows were exchanged, and the company fell to talking of the recent events in the village and more broadly in the county.

Mr Holder who’s family was of ancient and noble lineage had very much come down in the world because of unfortunate events in the previous reign. Thus for Mr Holder it was quite easy to hold a grudge having to look on as others more industrious in there efforts made a name and a place in the world.

“Mr Holder would you accompany me to the gun room I have some thing to show you” said Tom. “Indeed young Tom that would be my pleasure said the man placing his empty cup on the tray following the younger man out of the room.

“Pray tell me Elizabeth what new recipe have you to share with us Lydia pray write down what Mrs. Holder says” said Lady Ann “I have a recipe for Pork lion chops done in the Catalina style” replied Elizabeth Holder.

“Indeed pray tell how did you by this recipe?” asked Lady Sarah I have a cousin who served under my Lord the Earl of Wellington. Who whilst in Spain took an interest in what was going in to the cooking pot” Replied Elizabeth Holder with a laugh.” Never much of a fighting man our cousin Cedric but quite a cook he of course service the earl as his personal cook said Elizabeth Holder



“Well what a splendid gun this is said William Holder as he handled the weapon which had last seen service in the reign of Charles I of blessed memory a flintlock pistol with fine engraving. “My father has always held that this particular weapon was used by one of our more illustrious ancestors Sir James Sterley who was on the side of the King,” said Thomas.

“here is fathers sword the one he used while in service eat ST Vincent he has quite retired the old thing it takes a place of honor here in the gun room. May I offer you a glass of port?” asked Thomas as he picked up the decanter

“That would be most welcome said William Holder who was eyeing the ancient weapon with envious eyes wondering how long the money from the sale of the weapon would keep him in the necessities of life.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Castel WATERFORD the home of the William 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Waterford was an old building which had been done up in the previous reign. Thus it possessed all of the modern convinces. Very much against the wishes of the previous earl, the new water closet had been installed in a number of rooms. The original castle had been built many centuries earlier and had come into the possession of the Earl's family in the reign of queen Elizabeth of blessed memory having spent a vast fortune the 5<sup>th</sup> earl had made the stately home as comfortable as possible for its inhabitants. So much so that the current Earl of not forced on occasion to leave it would have spent the entire year here hunting and fishing. For the great park presented enough deer great birds and other varieties of game to keep the earl happy. Content for a very long time of the fishing His Lordship had led Sir Thomas to understand that nowhere else would one find Salmon and trout of such multitudes that would make a man gasp to see so many and of such great size.

It was to this retreat that Sir Thomas found himself in the company of his lordship now preceded. His children Tom, John Mary and Sophia had recently joined Sir Thomas in London taking passage on a yacht that the Earl had at his disposal for official duties they set sail from London for Ireland on a brisk Autumn day in 1813.

"T'is indeed wonderful to be once more at sea" said Sir Thomas who stood beside his father upon the pop deck. I fancy papa that you enjoy sailing far better then I do "replied Tom whose knuckles showed white from clasping on the taft rail. "Tom a man if he is to make his way in life must endure all types of displeasures and temperaments if he is to gain his fortune and a name for himself. My son mark well my words for one day you will realize that they are most probably the most valuable thing I will have ever given you" said Sir Thomas. "Indeed Sir you have always given me good advice and I count it as advice worth keeping" said Tom "Papa do come and see there are some great ships coming over the horizon I wonder if the Victory is among them said John who was standing on the other side of the deck surveying the ocean to the south.

“Splendid I see there are a number of ships of the Line” said Sir Thomas who had lifted a glass to his eye. “I do not see the Victory amount them but there is the Xenophon see she fly’s the flag of Sir Howe Parker Admiral of the red,” said Sir Thomas. “Now when I was a young man not much older then you John I was serving aboard ship of the line there is none quite as splendid as ship of the line. However I must confess that life aboard a frigate is much more to my liking for the ship is close and one gets to know ones men intimately,” said Sir Thomas.

Virginia Lady Waterford put aside the brush and pellet the canvas before her portrayed the scène of the sea and cliffs, which extended from Castel Waterford. Brushing aside a stray hair, which had fallen across her face once more, began to concentrate on the canvas

Virginia had a fair complexion like most of her ancestors she took great pride in her complexion the great care she took with her hands was noticeable by there softness her roses and peaches complexion betrayed years of care. She was not a person who had ever had to work hard a day in her life for when she required something she had but to ask her governess. Who would in due season produce the required item.

It pleased her to know that shortly her father would once more be at home; for she loved her dear papa immensely of course, her mother seldom left the castle and really traveled more then a day’s journey from the great house. For her ladyship had a fear of been caught away from home in a wild and dangerous country... These fears could be traced back to an incident in her ladyship’s youth when traveling in Europe she had been caught in a great thunderstorm, which had resulted in a present fear of nature.

Her ladyship was of that race of people who had come over two centuries earlier from Scotland having been settled for generations her family had weathered the various fortunes of the land of Ireland. Thus, she was always suspicious of her compatriots of low birth fearing that they wished to do her an injury or a mischief.

Of course the fact that her husband had a propensity for hanging quite a number of the Irish. Nevertheless, Lady Virginia was content to spend her days in roaming the cliffs and downs with her governess, enjoying the wilds of nature of which her mother was so much afraid. It was remarkable that an individual who loved nature and love for the good of the people in the village such as lady Virginia was want to do. Could have sprung from the loins if the unlikely couple that were her parents.

For in the company of Lady Virginia the people of county Waterford tended to be themselves allowing her to gain a closer look at the way they really lived. Whilst when his Lordship was present they would show the greatest respect, a respect born out of fear for it was well known that his lordship the earl was quick to anger and one could if not extremely careful find oneself on the gallows or bound for the convict isle.

“Lady Virginia took up the brush and pellet once more and began to paint “Pray mistress Borden how long do you think it might be before papa will be her?” she asked longingly.

“My lady I have no way of knowing as you know it has been some days now since the last letter from his Lordship” said the governess. “Papa says he is bringing some guests Sir Thomas Sterley and some of his children I do hope there are some young ladies in the party” said Virginia.

“I am sure there might be some young ladies in the party,” replied the governess “Indeed that would be such a pleasure to have some new company here. some one who has been to London, I was so long last in London that I have quite forgotten how it was, mayhap the young ladies of the party will have some new dresses and news of the latest fashions in the capital” replied Virginia

## CHAPTER NINE

Sir Thomas had occasion to rise early on the morning cartoons arrival at after his arrival at Waterford Castel. It was not His intention to two Disturb his lordship the Earl indeed his lordship was not Home to be disturbed. Upon rising sir, Thomas was informed of his lordships departure for Waterford Town.

Sir Thomas was surprised to find with his breakfast tray a note from his Lordship,  
“Dear Sir Thomas I have been called away to Waterford town. I have therefore decided to leave you in the capable hands of Colin Murphy my senior Grounds man.

Please avail yourself of the services of the man in question, as he is knowledgeable on all facts related to the study of ornithology in this part of Ireland. The Avery is at your disposal if you should wish to study the avian spices in close proximity. However I fear that this might not be ideal to your pursuit of studying the spices in there natural surroundings. I should warn you that it is advisable to keep at hand a swordstick or a strong club when going about on the estates as of late, there has been some discontent in the county and there might be those of the republican persuasion in the district. However, fear not my dear sir Thomas the liberties of my home are at your disposal  
Sincerely  
William Waterford

“Indeed a most happy communication thought Sir Thomas as he cracked open a boiled egg. Sir Thomas had long had it in mind to see the birds of another country as how they concurred or differed from the ornithology of his home county. It would act as an annexure to his own notes on the Ornithology of greater Southern England.

At 9 o'clock the grounds man Colin Murphy made his appearance at the great hall where Sir Thomas was in the company of Lady Waterford, and her daughter. “Sir Thomas I would warn you not to go to far from the house having not been in this country long. You might find that the population has a disposition to be insolent,” said Lady Waterford

'Fear not my dear Lady Waterford I have taken a good club with me as suggested by his lordship. I foresee no problems in this regard, having been a navel man I believe I should be able to handle any thing that we may chance upon.'" Said Sir Thomas as he put on his hat and left with Colin Murphy.

There first port of call was the grand Avery, which had been established by the previous Earl of Waterford who had a great love of nature. Indeed the previous Earl had been a great friend of Sir Joseph Banks who had seen Captain Cook on his way to parts foreign.

The diligence of his lordships man Colin Murphy was of great help to Sir Thomas for the man could imitate the calls of many of the various birds in the aver. These birds came when he called and would settle close by while he feed them bits of bread and seed. Sir Thomas settled in the mean time to sketching these birds as they ate taking great interest in every little detail of the birds dress and nature of conduct.

"Pray Mr Murphy are you native to these parts?" asked Sir Thomas "Aye I am Waterford born and bred" replied Colin "have you had occasion to travel at all in parts foreign?" asked the nobleman "Aye Sir I served with Sir John Moore at La Corenue there we buried him" replied the Irishman.

"Ah yes Sir John a noble leader brave and stout of valor" said Sir Thomas, "That he was Sir indeed he truly knew how to lead men" replied the Irishman. "I fear that we only see his kind once or twice a generation," said Sir Thomas "Aye Sir I believe that Lord Nelson was one of those fortunate few who could lead men and did not flinch in the face of battle" said Colin Murphy

"His Lordship the marquis of Wellington I believe is another cut from the same cloth" said Sir Thomas. "I believe that if it was not for great men like them just mentioned old England might already be in Old Bonny's icy grip," said Colin.

"Ah what an England that would be?" said Sir Thomas "there would be republicans all over the House of Lords and many heads would roll he continued.

“That would be a very sorry day indeed I would imagine” replied Colin “You seem like a knowledgeable man Mr. Murphy pray tell have you any education?” asked Sir Thomas. “Indeed Sir I have the best education that any Irishman of my rank could have, I was schooled at the hedge row schools by priests who did there task at great peril to there life and limb” replied Colin Murphy.

“Indeed those in power in England are loathed to give Ireland a measure of independence” replied Sir Thomas “Aye sir it is a sad fact of life that many in Ireland today fear they will never know any other rule but that of old England” replied Colin.

“Tell me Mr Murphy are you of the Catholic faith?” asked Sir Thomas “No Sir I must confess that it has been a number of generations since my family has foresworn the faith of Rome” replied Colin

“I fear that those of the Church of Rome in Ireland will have a hard time of getting the franchise here,” said Sir Thomas. “I believe it will be a very long time before old Irelands troubles are at an end” replied Colin Murphy “How is it that you came to be discharged from the kings service” asked Sir Thomas. “Well it was bound to happen I was of the 52<sup>nd</sup> foot fighting hard at the retreat in Portugal when a mortar took part of me hand from me” said Colin. Sir Thomas noticed that noticed for the first time that Colin was missing several finger son one hand the fact had been obscured from him by the fact that Colin had been wearing a half glove which covered the stumps of three fingers.

“Most interesting we must have more speech later but right now I would like to see what his Lordships estates holds in regard to wild birds can you show me?” asked Sir Thomas “Please step this way sir” said Colin as he lead Sir Thomas off to the edge of the woods

Lady Virginia and Sophia were taking a turn round the gardens “I am so glad you came it has been very dull of late and I was hoping that Papa might send for me to come to London,” said Virginia.

“London is over rated in my opinion said Sophia Since I have come out it has been rounds of balls and visits and so many of the people one is expected to make ones obedience’s are so pretentious that it becomes a bore” said Sophia

“I found London to be so busy one can hardly know where one is expected to visit next and the balls. Well I love them I love to dance you see and all those young officers in there bright uniforms well what more can a young lady ask for other than her appointment book be filled for the evening,” replied Virginia. A little annoyed at Sophia for her lack of social grace in speak her mind on the subject.

“Mary will be coming out next season I believe it is to be your season to?” asked Sophia like one who has known the pleasure of ones first season and knows that there is more to life then the matters upon woman of a certain rank are expected to hold..

“Yes it will be my first season Papa has promised to make Mamma go to London although she hardly ever goes out she spends her days in the Library or in the drawing room. She seldom if ever goes very far from the castle the most we can expect from her I am afraid to say is a day visit to Waterford town, However Papa has promised to make her go up to London when the season starts.” Said Virginia  
Shortly there after they were joined by Tom and John who had been enjoying the fishing and had now found occasion to join them “I fancy we shall have trout for dinner,” said Virginia.  
“Oh yes indeed trout is just the thing we caught a number just now and have taken them to the kitchen cook took them directly replied” John.

“I fancy that Virginia is jesting at your expense,” said Sophia to her younger brother, “Not at all Sophia I merely mention that trout when fresh makes a wonderful dinner. Do you not have trout in your pond at Oakland Park?” asked Virginia.

“If truth be told we do not fish over much at Oakland Park there is too much to do and seldom do we find the time,” said Tom who had been walking silently along the side of the embankment.



“Tom do read a few lines for us from your book,” said Virginia as the party settled under a great oak tree, I would but this is a book by an anonymous young lady of a genteel family who has been writing for a few seasons, her latest creation” said Tom. “Please do read for us I have heard that this young lady has a way with words.” Said Virginia “Tom opened the book and begun to read...

“Do you see here Sir Thomas it is as I suspected a snare set to trap his lordships game Ill warrant the poacher is close by” said Colin Murphy as he looked around the thicket “Most interesting do you think they will come back soon?” said Sir Thomas. “It has been known to happen,” said Colin Mayhap we can set a while and see I am sure there are some birds around that will keep your interest busy while we wait,” said Colin Murphy.

Settling in a comfortable position a short distance from the snare the two men set about there own pursuits. Sir Thomas had spotted a species if bird which he had not seen before and fell to drawing it, while Colin Murphy sat on a stump drawing on a clay pipe the sent of cherry root tobacco drifted heavenward with the aroma hanging about the air. “Not an unpleasant smell thought Sir Thomas who as a rule generally despised the smoking of tobacco.

Thus while the Sterley’s busied themselves on the estate of My Lord Earl of Waterford the nobleman in question found himself very busy in the court of Waterford town for the previous week a felon of renown had been caught in the act of robbery. This felon a dangerous rouge had it was claimed by the defense been going about his lawful busyness earning a living at the local inn. Where he was employed as a stable hand now a certain gentleman of noble birth happened to be passing through the town and chanced upon the inn. Been late in the day he had stopped for the night.

The following morning as the nobleman was paying his bill the villainous felon had come upon him and the innkeeper it fell upon his ears that the noble man would be traveling upon the high road from the ton in the direction of the next village. This information the stable hand had relayed to a fellow of low birth who earned his living by highway robbery.

However, this time the villains had chanced upon a member of the nobility who carried about his person a brace of pistols and a sword. Upon being confronted by the highwayman the noble gentleman responded bravely and fired one of his numerous pistols blowing off the arm of the villain. Who made good his escape however later a deathbed confession made by the villain implicated the stable hand of the inn. Thus before the Earl this day stood one Joseph O Flarety some time stable hand and the accused.

On a brief summing up of the evidence, his Lordship sentenced the said O' Flarty to hanging.

“Well with all business now suspended for the day William Earl Waterford turned once more his mind to the pursuit of happiness and home.

## CHAPTER TEN

“My dear wife if his lordship had not made himself so unconscionably unpleasant over the matter of Colin Murphy the grounds man I think we might very well have stayed longer at Waterford” said Sir Thomas.. “Indeed husband I fear from what you have told me his lordship will not be counted as one of our friends... For I believe that this man Murphy although wrong in certain of his doings had the right to be treated fairly in a court of law.” Replied Lady Ann “Most definitely I fear that all hopes of advancement for young Tom must be now at an end from that quarter “replied Sir Thomas as he lifted a glass of Madera to his lips.

“Pray dearest husband is there any thing of this occasion that you have not imparted to me?” asked Lady Ann. “If truth be told the matter is simple Colin Murphy a veteran of the wars returned to Ireland. Found employment in the service of his lordship, however, during the time that Murphy spent abroad he found himself drawn to certain republican notions, which he well disguised. Returning to Ireland, he discovered a number of men of like intellect together they formed a sort of a club, which met weekly in the homes of one of the members of the group.

Now his lordship had also in his service another man a fellow a rogue of the lowest type, whose occupation it was to spy on and in close quarters on the other members of staff in service to his lordship. To find those of his lordships household who might be passing on information to the republicans in greater Ireland. To this end this fellow one Smyth had been watching Murphy for some time.” He paused for a moment before continuing his narration

“I had occasion to speak with Murphy and found him to be a descent fellow with a vast knowledge of the events which trouble Ireland. Well to be more to the point this man Smyth he had been watching Murphy for some time then on the first day of our visit his lordship was called away to Waterford town on a matter for the crown, it was while he was yet there that Smyth made known to his lordship the doings of Murphy.

I remember well that evening when his lordship returned it was quite light and we were talking on matters pertaining to

the following day when his lordships coach arrive din the stable yard.

His lordship was in a fine lather I can tell you he hardly saw Tom and I he came out of the coach saw Murphy and accosted him most violently. abused him soundly before calling for two stable hands to hold the man down stripped to the shirt sleeves his Lordship began to beat the poor man with a riding crop which was close at hand the abuse the poor man suffered I imagine is not unknown in many houses of people of rank. However I have never had occasions to treat my fellow man like that” taking a sip of the wine at his side he continued

“Well I dare say it would have gone on for much longer had not I tried to come to the defense of the poor man, it was at this time that his lordship turned on me and called me a busy fuss pot. Telling me that I knew nothing of the dangers of republicanism that was at the heart of Ireland’s trouble and the cause of many of the problems that he was constantly beset by.

“Why Sir if you had but been in the court at Waterford town this day you would have seen how one treats these riff raff that they understand a moment of compassion on your part and they take it for weakness” he continued. “In the mean while the two stable hands had fell to beating the poor Murphy in furtherance of his lordships pleasure. Thomas and John intervned on the behalf of Murphy and the beating stopped his Lordship was wild with rage and swore that Murphy would not spend another moment in his service and discharged him there and then with out pay for the last quarter.”

This you see my dear there was nothing other then I could do but later find out where the man was living and bring him back here to Oakland Park I am sure he will serve us better then he served his Lordship.” Sir Thomas concluded

‘Oh dear a fine how do you do indeed” said Lady Ann I trust that he is now recovered the cottage which you have put him in is not well suited for the poor man and his brood of children how many dose he have I think I counted ten when I was near the cottage last evening” she continued

“All told I believe the man has eleven children all of them cared for and taught by his wife who I am lead to believe was taught to read and write by Murphy himself.” Replied Sir Thomas

“And of your leaving of Waterford how did that come about I hope it was not acrimonious?” asked Lady Ann

“We stayed but a few days after the events just related then made our obedience’s fanning a forgotten social engagement here at Oakland. I might add that her ladyship is of the same cloth as which his lordship is it’s surprising that his daughter the fair lady Virginia is not of that cloth for she is believe it or not my dear renown for her good works among the poor in Waterford.” Said Sir Thomas

“So any social occasion where his lordship the Earl or her ladyship are present I take it will not be one that we will be attending” said Lady Ann

“Indeed I will not suffer to be in the same room as that odious man” replied Sir Thomas “As for her ladyship she hardly ever leaves the castle I believe that she has a dreaded fear of been found among the Irish of low birth thus keeps close to the walls of that old house” said Sir Thomas

“I shall write to his Lordship the Earl of Bathurst in regard a station for young Tom before very long,” said Sir Thomas. “Indeed Sir I will tell you that it was Tom’s idea to have Lady Sarah and Arabella come to Oakland, then when you called on the children to come and join you it was a great disappointment. I have been at my wits end not knowing how to entertain them while you were away but now that you are back we can continue planning the ball we had originally intended to have here this past week,” said Lady Ann “That is most refreshing I in the mean time am going to do a little writing in my study he said rising from the chair upon which he had been seated. It was the morning after his arrival back at Oakland and there was much to do much to peruse in the investigation of his estates. While Lady Ann continued to dress for it was yet early only a quarter after eight and she was hoping to be in the withdrawing room at 10 o’clock to meet once again with the

delightful lady Sarah Arabella she was sure would be glad of the news that her cousin's had returned.

In his bedchamber, Tom sat quill in hand thinking upon the next sentence he would write for he and Virginia of Waterford had become friends in the short time that they had spent together. In her, he had found a fellow writer of poetry and artist for her landscapes were some of the best he had ever seen... Of course, it would never do for a lady to publish or paint publicly but as a pastime, it was some thing she could do to amuse herself. Tom thought this splendid his current difficulty lay in the fact that he was writing a poetic verse about her, and was finding it confounding difficult to express upon the paper before him the words that exactly showed his feelings for the lady in question.

"Lydia dear do play some thing upon the harpsichord" said Lady Ann "It is very unusual that Lady Sarah has not yet risen have you seen Arabella this morning Mary dear?" Asked Lady Ann "Yes Mamma she and John are taking a turn in the grounds" replied Mary "John what could John possibly know that could be of interest to Arabella?" said Lady Ann. "I think he is showing her the new plantings Mamma you know the ones he did this summer," said Mary "Indeed I had no idea that Arabella had an interest in gardening if I had known sooner I might have found much to amuse her out of doors" said Lady Ann

"Oh yes Mamma she has quite a garden at home or so I am lead to understand," replied Sophia who had just entered the room.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

“My dear Lady Virginia,  
I give you greetings from Surry and particularly Oakland Park  
I have no doubt that what passed between our fathers will soon  
pass. There after we might once more find ourselves enjoying  
the pleasure of each other’s company Sophia and Mary send  
there send there fondest wishes

“I would that I could present to you a line of verse to show my  
fondest esteem for your person

In Irelands troubled world  
A fair English rose does grow  
Like Elizabeth of old renown  
For her beauty the fair  
Lady Virginia of Waterford  
My heart has sold

It is but a poor verse but one that my expression of joy at our  
meeting has brought to my heart,

It would in effect be most fortuitous for us if the current  
unpleasantness regarding Murphy had not occurred in Pap’s  
presence for papa is most serious in his regard for the rights of  
the lower classes having never forgotten the men that served  
under him when as a young man he fought at Saint Vincent’s  
Isle. Thus, I fear that he will not be moved to a view more  
conservative for he has a great respect for the man Murphy  
despite his republicanism.

This I am sure is the reason the Prince regent and his family  
seldom if ever condescend to be seen to be doing our family a  
service for Papa’s views are well known his politics are those  
of Wilberforce. Perchance you have heard your father speak of  
my papa in terms that are not very much to his liking  
Pray give when talking to your dear lady mother my fondest  
regards.

With Sincere affection  
Thomas Sterley

Sealing the letter Tom bethought himself as to how to get it into the mails with out its nature or content becoming known to his father thus he decided to walk to the village inn to find the next mail coach leaving for London.

“My Dearest Tom,  
Your verse is well read and I thank you for it, I am of a mind to disclose to you the nature of the disposition I am placed under for when your letter came Papa was at home and wanted to know from whom it came. The county has been full of the news that the fellow Murphy and his whole family have left taken they say by some gentleman of wealth to work at his estate in England. Due to the time of this remarkable advent, Papa could draw no other conclusion then it was your father who had spirited away the Murphy family. Indeed Papawas profoundly sorry for it for he had in mind certain plans which have now come to naught for which I am heartily glad for though he be my papa he can at times be filled with a spirit of malicious anger which frightens me.

Of late, I have been painting the falling leaves of autumn soon Christmas will be here and my brothers will be home, what a joy it will be to see the both of them once again for we have been parted three full years. Can it be so long? I was but a child when they left for the war now they will be returning to find me almost a woman awaiting the advent of next season’s gala balls.

How splendid they look in there uniforms I have a portrait of them, which I often contemplate.

I fear dearest Tom that this must be adieu for my Papa will find it very much against his desire should I correspond with any one from your family until the passing of time has healed the wounds done by the occasion of the beating of Colin Murphy

With Sincere affection  
Virginia Bromley  
Lady Waterford

Virginia laid aside the quill and studied for a moment the words upon the page she hoped that Tom would not take



offence at the manner of her writing. for it was the desire of her heart that they would one day be friends of Tom's sister she had liked Sophia the most for she was more grown up then Mary who was closer to her own age.

Sir Thomas sat with quill in hand contemplating the phrase that he would like to use to the esteemed noble to whom he was about to write in regard to his son Tom

“My dear Sir Benjamin,  
I am writing to you to enquire if you will be disposed to a meeting with me when next I will be in London. I am of the opinion that we might be of some mutual service to each other.

My Son Thomas is in need of employment as he is a youth of some experience in letters I was wondering if perhaps there might be occasion with in the foreign office for him to be of some service to the crown.

However, I should be in London three weeks hence and will call upon you at your convenience

Sincerely  
Thomas Sterley esquire

Sealing the letter Sir Thomas rose from his writing desk and proceeded down stairs to the drawing room where great changes were under way for tonight would be the ball for which his wife had long planed.

Here he found James a lad of five seated in a chair most seriously studying a chocolate pudding. “Lad if your Mamma finds you here with that pudding you will receive a lashing I am sure” he said to the child. “Mary gave it me” the child said his face covered with pudding.

“Well then we will have to speak with her shall we?” said Sir Thomas as he picked up his son and carried him to the kitchen.

“Mary Murphy a lean woman was standing over the fire stirring a pot “Mary pray take the lad and keep him out of harms way until he has completed his pudding then find his nurse the house is not a safe place for an untended boy” he concluded Mary Murphy curtsied and took the child. Mrs. Murphy with a brood of eight of her own and three

stepchildren knew well the ways of children and knew how to treat them. Sir Thomas left the lad happily applying himself to the remains of the pudding before walking out onto the vast steps of Oakland's front steps.

"No Sophia don't put the flowers there they will spoil in the heat bring them here and place them upon the sideboard" said Lady Ann. "A most singular occasion" said Lady Sarah entering the withdrawing room. Lady Ann was not sure to whom the woman was addressing and thus remain silent for a moment "Indeed an occasion for celebration" said the voice of Mr Parker. "Good day" said Mr Parker as he entered behind Lady Sarah into the room Lady Ann curtsied "Good day Mr Parker is it Sir Thomas you are wanting?" she asked "Of a certainty it is" replied Mr Parker "I have some urgent news to impart to him" replied the gentleman "I believe he is in the grounds or at the Avery" replied Lady Ann "The marquis of Wellington has once more thrashed old Bonny I believe he is the greatest military man England has ever had" continued Mr Parker.

"Then sir pray hurry make hast and find Sir Thomas for I am sure he will have dispatches to write on this occasion to all the officers involved pray in what theater of the war did this grand occasion take place?" Lady Ann asked as an after thought "Why You're Ladyship In Spain of course" said Mr Parker surprised at the ignorance that some woman have of the fighting fronts of the greatest war England had ever fought. From the desk of the honorable Benjamin Bathurst

To Sir Thomas Sterley,  
Dear Sir, I shall have at my disposal next week an half an hour on Wednesday morning at half past eleven in which you may avail yourself of my time.

Please beware that I make no promise of employment for your son however, I will be interested to hear what you have to say in this regard?

Yours Sincerely

B Bathurst

"Lydia was dancing with Peter Parker "They seem so much like brother and sister," said Lady Ann "They are of like age," said Emily Parker who was sitting at the side of Lady Ann.

“Indeed they make a handsome couple,” said Sir Thomas over hearing the remarks of his wife and Mrs. Parker. I see that Thomas and Arabella are well disposed to each other said Lady Sarah as she watched her daughter and Tom dancing. The music was of the sort that made every one want to dance even old married couples of advanced age seemed to be tapping along the rhythm as the young folks danced.

“Madam would you do me the honor of dancing the next round with me?” asked Mr Parker of Lady Ann. “Indeed I will Mr Parker pray have you imparted the good news of which you spoke earlier to Sir Thomas? She asked. “I of a certainty have Lady Ann he was most pleased to hear of it said Mr Parker as they once more drew near in the dance.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

“Mamma come quickly, it seems as if George has come to visit” said Mary as she looked out the window below in the yard George Parker was handing the reins of his mount to a groom.

“It would seem that he might have some business with Lydia,” said Lady Ann “Indeed Mamma you have no way of knowing that?” Replied Mary “I do indeed know this I have had a note from him this very morning requesting a moment with Lydia” said Lady Ann

“Go and find Lydia,” said Lady Ann”

George Parker entered the drawing room after been announced by the butler.

“Good day Lady Ann I trust this morning finds you well? Said George Parker, Good day George I am in the best of health pray how is your dear Mamma I should pay you Mamma a visit shortly.” Said Lady Ann

“Mamma and papa are exceedingly well and send there regards,” said George the sound of excited female voices could be heard in the hall Lydia, Sophia and Mary entered the drawing room.

“Why George we seldom see you of late I quite believe that your father keeps you quite busy with his rents and business,” said Lydia. “All affairs are in hand my dear Lydia,” said George. “Pray Lady Ann I beg that you would excuse me if I took Lydia for a round in the garden” said George “Indeed young Mr. Parker you may Sophia, Mary pray come with me to the kitchen I fancy we will need to address cook” said Lady Ann.

“Oh Mamma must we would rather go with George and Lydia” answered Mary “No my dear child there are things that I believe George will want to talk to Lydia about that are not for your ears” said Lady Ann sternly.

A while later George and Lydia were making there rounds in the garden, they chanced to stop under one of the great oaks that stood in front of the house. “Lydia I have some thing of importance to impart to you of the greatest significance and a matter of how I feel about you” Said George. “Pray George

please speak plainly tell me what you have on your mind” said Lydia. “Madam I have long been one of your most ardent admirers, I have long held the hope within my heart, that one day that you would do me the very great honor of becoming my wife,” said George. “

“George, I can only consent if you speak to Papa I would be very happy to marry you to become your wife but I cannot do it with out the blessings of my father” said Lydia

“Lydia I will this instant speak to your papa for I have long held the idea that he and my father have had this marriage in mind. for they are old friends with the estates of my father coming to me one day I will be able to care for you in the manner in which you are accustomed” said George.

Turning now once more to the house the two young people proceeded at an advanced pace for they were in a hurry to have George speak with Sir Thomas. Unknown to them Sir Thomas and Lady Ann watched from the window of the study. A look of profound pleasure rested upon their brows for they were well aware of the mission upon which George had set out that morning to accomplish at Oakland Park... “You had better return to the drawing room lest the young people become alarmed and think some thing is amiss,” said Sir Thomas. “Yes my dear husband,” said Lady Ann” You will of course remember to be stern at first with young George?” said the good lady...

“Indeed madam I am well aware of the attitude of a prospective father-in-law are, I would ask that you make haste and take up your former occupation in the withdrawing room,” said Sir Thomas.

It was not long before George Parker was closeted with Sir Thomas in the drawing room the females of the household whispered softly to each other of the events that had transpired in the garden between Lydia and George Park. Lydia in the mean time found herself in a highly agitated state of nerves for she imagined on occasion she heard the voice of her father then George voice could be heard raised in some thing, which did not sound like pleasant communication.

Shortly the door of the study was flung open, George Parker stepped out for a moment he took hold of the hand of Lydia then letting go walked off to the withdrawing room.

Lydia hurried into the study looking up from his desk Sir Thomas addressed his eldest daughter. "Well my girl I hope you will be happy if you love him then remember. That he will always turn to you for advice and comfort. Now go to him before your Mamma smothers him in caresses for I am sure that this is a happy occasion for which she has long been waiting," he concluded.

"Dearest lovable Papa I give you my thanks," said Lydia before leaving the study. From the drawing room, the sound of happy voices could be heard. "Pray Sophia fetch your Papa from the study for he should be here to celebrate this good news," said Lady Ann.

"Mary send one of the servants to find Tom and John so they might also share in this happy occasion," she continued.

"So George you are to be our son-in-law pray that when things go ill with you that you will always remember that you can speak plainly without fear of retribution. for I know my daughter and I am sure that there will be occasions when you will want the advice of a mother-in-law" said Lady Ann. "My dear wife do not scare the boy so you will have him running home to his parents err long. If you continue in this vain," said Sir Thomas.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

My Dear Ann you must try this chicken it is the most flavorsome bird I have ever tasted” said Lady Sarah. “Yes I dare say that cook has out done herself this evening,” said Lady Ann

“Ill warrant that you had some thing to do with the flavor for did I not see you in the kitchen earlier today?” asked Lady Sarah. “It was but a sham to get Sophia and Mary away from George and Lydia while he proposed” said Lady Ann. “Ah yes it is indeed a good day when ones eldest daughter is made a marriage proposal from such an agreeable young gentleman.

Sir Thomas entering the dinning room remarked, “We just got the lambs of the higher pasture the weather is bound to turn cold this night,” he said as he seated himself at the table. “Indeed there is a bracing of the elements,” said Lady Sarah as she dug into another helping of potatoes.

“One wonders what we would do with out the humble potatoes said Sir Thomas as he helped himself to a serving of the same. “I have more then a passing fancy for that vegetable” said Lady Sarah as sweat bead began appearing upon her forehead. “The French of course will eat all manner of things but I prefer the humble boiled potatoes of old England over any foreign concoction,” said Sir Thomas

“I believe that I have never dinned so well in all my life Ann your cook has really out done herself this evening,” said Lady Sarah. “Sarah you talk as if you are starved pray have we not always made sure there is enough upon the table have I stopped you from eating any thing” asked Lady Ann. Some what concerned at the strange behavior of Lady Sarah who at that instant had broken off a piece of bread and was mopping the last of her mashed potato. With butter into her mouth “My dear Ann I merely mention this in passing as this evenings meal is uncommon in its wonderful flavor and aroma” said Lady Sarah.

After dinner, the company returned to the drawing room where a great fire had been build in the fireplace. it was around this warmth that the Sterley’s and there guests George Parker Lady Sarah and Arabella gathered for it was one of

those evenings which comes at the end of an English autumn which all men long for hearth and home.

A while later Lady Sarah said, "I am exceedingly tired I will bid you all a good night" as she rose taking a candle to light her way. Her good night was greeted by various members of the assembled company wishing her a good nights rest. "Till the morrow dear Sarah" said Lady Ann. At ten o'clock Lady Ann and Sir Thomas retired to there bed chamber the wind blew with out as a tempest began to build.

Later in the night Arabella woke Lady Ann "Come quickly my dear Aunt for Mamma is in some distress I fear for her she seems most ill," said the young woman as lady Ann pulled on a gown for the night was cold and there was frost upon the windowpane.

Upon arriving at the bedchamber, the Fitz-Gibbon's shared Ann took in immediately that some thing of a serious nature had occurred for her dear cousin lay upon the bed her color gone deadly grey her breathing labouredly. "I must wake Sir Thomas immediately" said Lady Ann "Dear Arabella pray go and wake Lydia and bid her come this instant to watch with you over your dear Mamma" said Lady Ann.

Upon been awakened and made aware of his guests distress Sir Thomas roused Tom and together father and son rode to Notheringay to fetch doctor Booth away from his slumber and contentment in the arms of morpius

Doctor Booth leaned once more over Lady Sarah took her pulse shook his head and laid her hand down. Taking up a mirror he placed it before the patents nose for a full minute he remain in this position then his hand he closed her eyes. I fear Lady Sarah is no more a sudden change in temperature a shock of sorts a sudden stopping of the heart I believe has taken her from this world. If her constitution had been stronger she might have lived but the sudden change in weather and a heavy meal of sorts has put her beyond our help." He concluded.

"The sobbing that burst from Arabella was like a fountain which had long been bottled up for as a child she had been in



the most fortunate position of been doted upon by both her parents. Lady Sarah who had known what it was like to be ignored as a child had devoted a large amount of time to the bringing up of her daughter. thus her sudden passing was felt more acutely by Arabella then would normally have been the case Lady Ann came to the young woman embraced he and led her away saying as she did “ There, there poor child she is quite in a state of nerves. Lydia dear bring some brandy for her” she shall spend the rest of the night in my chamber” Ann concluded

The first snow was upon the ground Sophia lifted the hem of her dress as she moved across the steps in front of the house, it had been only a few short hours since Lady Sarah Fitz-Gibbon had passed away yet so much had already happened since then. Lord Charles Fitz-Gibbon had arrived this morning Papa had greeted the nobleman with as much tenderness as one would expect on such a sad occasion.

Arabella was with her father now both giving a measure of comfort to each other at

The distance to the estate of Lord Fitz-Gibbon been great it was decided to lay the mortal remains of Lady Sarah to rest in the vault of the Notheringay Church in the tomb of Sterley family. This was done that it might not distress Arabella and Charles Fits-Gibbon who had been very close to his lately departed wife.

The snow began to fall as the parson intoned the words from the Book of Common Prayer when His Lordship and Arabella left the church the snow was thick upon the ground. The wheels of the carriage leaving long tell tale signs in the earth as it moved off. Sir Thomas and Lady Ann followed in there own carriage back to Oakland park the two carriages went the occupants of both silent in there reflection at the sorry and speed at which one of there number had been snatched away.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

“I trust that I can leave Arabella in your care Ann” said Lord Charles Fitz-Gibbon “Of late there is much to keep me busy in the north and I will have little time to comfort her as you know Sarah and Arabella were exceptionally close” he continued. “It would indeed be a pleasure to care for her Charles” said Lady Ann. “I know this is a trying time for you and for dear sweet Arabella it must simply be the worst but have no fear cousin I will take very good care of her” she ended.

“May I offer you a glass of brandy” enquired Sir Thomas of Lord Charles “Capital idea sir capital” said his lordship as he took the offered glass. The two men stood watching the weather outside from the large bay window that was a feature of the study. The ground was already covered with snow it seemed as if it might snow again Sir Thomas had tried to make his guest stay another day. However, Lord Charles pleaded urgent business and could not delay for he would have to return to his estates to put Lady Sarah’s affairs in order. The death of his wife had come as a shock to every one including him for he had always believed that Sarah had been of a very robust nature. Seldom sickened but he knew of old that when indeed she did sicken it was usually of a serious nature for Lady Sarah had loved the outdoors and could not bear to be abed unless she was exceptionally ill or in childbirth.

Sir Charles took leave of his daughter and Oakland Park on a dreary wet morning in October. Now the inhabitants of Oakland Park returned to their various occupations Sir Thomas to his study where he once more took up his pen and continued his work on his study of the bird life of Southern England. Lady Ann and her daughters found themselves once more in the withdrawing room stitching various objects of needlework. For it was the season when the house was fully occupied with preparations for the Yuletide and thus much work was to be done.

The young men of the family found themselves busying themselves with games of cards, reading and writing for it was a slow time of the year for them Young Tom begun once more to write verse for he had in mind a number of things he wished to share with the family on certain winter evenings.

John found his time occupied by the study and cataloging of various seeds for next spring's plantings.

"Arabella dear do take some tea with me" said Lady Ann who was doing her best to relive the sadness that beset the heart of her young relative. "Lydia pray play an air for us the air is so oppressive I fear that winter has come to stay for quite a long spell and needs to be dispersed with a country air, Mary please accompany your sister you have such a fine voice" said Lady Ann.

While Lydia played lady Ann began to consider the forthcoming nuptials of her daughter and George Parker, she began to plan in detail the wedding for according to her the wedding should take place in the spring when the first blossoms began to show.

Lydia stopped playing the last strains of the music lingering for a moment "Mamma I believe that it will be the grandest wedding that Notheringay has seen in a long time" she said. "Yes my dear in a while we will begin to stitch your wedding robes I think that we know enough to make it quite a dress one that will make the county gasp at your beauty" said Lady Ann. "Oh Mamma you do say the strangest things" laughed Lydia who considered herself quite plain. "Oh do I indeed daughter pray are you not one of the prettiest of the Sterley's? Asked Lady Ann. "If you say so Mamma" said Lydia quite giving in to her mother for she had learned a long time ago that to gainsay her mother was a battle that she would not and could not win.

"Sir Thomas entered the drawing room and poured a cup of tea, I believe that it will get a lot colder before the day ends," he said. "Dearest husband you do have a way of putting a damper on our every occasion" said Lady Ann

"Do I my dear?" he asked a little taken aback for he had always considered himself a rather lighthearted person.

The light of a number of candles burned brightly in the dinning room of Oakland Park the inhabitants of Oakland Park and there guests the Parkers where sitting down to dinner upon

the table was a number of dishes of the smell of roast pork and beef filled the room

Sir Thomas said Grace there after the company fell to a various attack upon the various dishes. "I would like to know what profound course has set your cook to make such fine dishes said Emily Parker.

"Ah the cooking of Mrs. Murphy she is the best cook we have ever had recently come over with her whole family at Thomas's insistence" said Lady Ann. "Why Sir Thomas I had no idea that you had such feelings for the Irish poor" said Mr Parker. "Indeed I do not know much of the Irish poor but of Mr Murphy I know a great deal," said Sir Thomas.

"I wonder sir if you had occasion while in Ireland to do any hunting?" asked Mr Parker "I did not have much occasion to hunt on the estates of my Lord of Waterford" said Sir Thomas. "Murphy is now one of my best servants I have gained two pearls of great price in the Murphy's," said Sir Thomas.

"Pray pass the gravy Lydia dear," said Lady Ann who was busy addressing a vast lump of steaming beef and roast potatoes. "Taking a bit of a piece of roast pork Sir Thomas contemplated a heap of green peas. "I wonder where she learned to cook for surely the Irish did not have a great deal in the way of food to feed themselves," said Sir Thomas. "I believe she spent a number of years in service to the Earl of Waterford," said Lady Ann.

"I think before to long we will have to start planning the wedding my dear Emily" said Lady Ann. "That it seems is the only thing my dear wife has been thinking of these past few days' said Sir Thomas. "Have no fear Sir Thomas for Emily has been confounding me with all her suggestions. I am right glad that we have this occasion to visit for they can now lie along side like two old warship and have a battle of it," said Mr Parker.

"Oh William how else is a mother to behave when her first born son is to be married?" asked Emily Parker off her husband. "I quite agree said Lady Ann the first marriage is always the most important for it is the one which counts all

further marriages in a house are judged on the first one, to marry well is a young lady's highest priority" she continued.

Dinner now at an end the woman with drew to one of the warmer chambers of the house while Sir Thomas and Mr Parker went into the study to draw a pipe or two. "Well William I believe we will soon be calling one another brother-in-law" said Sir Thomas. "It would appear so I have decided to settle three thousand pounds on George annually," said Mr Parker. "That is a most generous annuity indeed I will of course settle a generous dowry on Lydia and a thousand pounds on the first born child of there union" said Sir Thomas.

"I think that three thousand should be enough for them to start with find a house of there own, it has come to my attention that Morton Grange is vacant I will look into it and see if the grange will make a suitable home for them" said William Parker. "Yes it is tragic how that house became available," remarked Sir Thomas who was thinking of the former owner Lord John Morton who for his sins had tried but failed to keep a wife. "I do not think that poor Lord John could have done any thing else after Elizabeth deserted him" said Mr Parker.

The story of Morton Grange was a curiosity for Lord John Morton had returned from India after many years in the service of the Honorable East India Company. Taken a young wife the marriage from all accounts was not a happy one for the young woman in question had been brought up in India and by all accounts was given to wild and reckless behavior. The previous year in the spring of 1812, she had commenced a liaison with an officer of the continental army. Abandoning Lord John in a moment of madness Elizabeth had fled to be with her continental nobleman. Lord John an old veteran of love and war seeming no future for himself at the grange and having contemplated getting his wife back came to a decision there after he wrote a note and then shot himself after consuming a vast amount of brandy. Thus, once the executor of the Morton family had settled the estate of Lord John they had put up the grange for sale for Lord John was the last of his line. It had remained untaken since it had been closed this was the house that the future parents of the happy couple began to think of a suitable home for there respective children.

“George will you read for us?” asked Lady Ann “ It would give me pleasure to do so dearest Lady Ann” said George Parker “Please George you must begin to call me Mamma for what would the parson think if on your wedding day you addressed me as Lady Ann? Come my boy from now on I am your Mamma Lydia you will address Aunt Emily no longer as aunt but as Mamma do I make myself clear?” said Lady Ann. “Yes Mamma” Lydia for it had been the young woman’s intention to do exactly as her mother had specified. Having come to this conclusion some time earlier in the afternoon but until this very moment had not yet found occasion to address Mrs. Parker directly.

“Tom please so good as to go and find your father and Mr Parker pray that I beg to inform them that they should not tarry overlong in the study with those despicable pipes. Return directly and be of good company to us,” said Lady Ann “Tom rose from his occupation and proceeded to the study to deliver the message. Returned and resumed his seat next to Arabella for they had of late become engaged in a discussion on various matters of poetry and the new work by a young lady of genteel birth, which they were currently reading.

For Thomas held there was no greater writer then Sir Walter Scott while Arabella contended that the young lady of genteel was one of the best literary lights of the current age. Tom confessed that he did enjoy somewhat the work of the anonymous young lady of genteel birth but if one wished to read seriously then the works of Sir Walter were exactly the right thing.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

It was one of those fine spring days when the buds of plants are awakening from their deep winter slumber. The church at Notheringay was surrounded by vehicles of all shapes and sizes. For today George Parker esquire of the county of Surry is to be wed to his long time sweetheart Lydia Sterley spinster of this parish.

James Thomas who has his living of this parish a somber man of middle years is addressing the couple before him. "Do you George William Parker take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife? To have and to hold to cherish in good times and in ill times?" inquired the parson. "I do" replied the groom "do you Lydia Ann Sterley take this man to be your lawfully husband to have and to hold. To cherish and love in good time and in ill times?" he then enquired of the young bride before him. Lydia dressed in a white dress with a gay abandon of lace work hesitated a moment before answering then loudly declared, "I do"

By the power vested in me by the Church of England and the Crown I declare you husband and wife you may kiss the bride" said the minister. Thus said George turned and kissed his bride to loud applause from the gathered congregation.

Momentarily the register will be signed I would ask that those of you who wish to give your congratulations to this delightful couple wait at the door" said the minister.

"Oh Emily what a wonderful wedding do you not think that Lydia made a beautiful bride" asked Lady Ann of her new sister-in-law. "I do believe they are a handsome couple seldom have we at Notheringay seen such a fine display of affection between a bride and a groom" replied Emily Parker her heart swelling with pride on seeing her eldest son well married.

The happy couple stepped out of the church to be greeted by applause and some very well meaning words by their assembled relatives. Peter Parker who had stood as the best man looked splendid in his uniform. Thoughts of war were far from his mind as there was talk of peace in the air every one was exceedingly glad of this. For Napoleon on Elba was a bear caged at last...

Directly the company adjourned to Oakland Park for the wedding feast, For Sir Thomas and Mr Parker had spared no expense to make this a nuptial feast which would be well remembered for many a year.

The music was playing the first set as the newly weds took to the floor once more to be greeted by loud applause for it was a happy occasion where in all the assembled company now joined a dancing and feasting until late in the night.

The happy couple took there leave of the party at nine o'clock in the evening when it was still quite light. Heading for there wedding holiday for the house Morton Grange was not quite in readiness for occupation and thus Sir Thomas on the insistence of his dear wife had sent the happy couple of to the mid Lothian's in Scotland to spend a few weeks with a dear friend of many years standing.

"William I think we have done our duty well in this regard" said Sir Thomas, "I believe that directly the happy couple leaves for there wedding holiday. We should retire to my study and express our appreciation for this happy event by sampling a few bottles of whiskey which I have recently recived from Scotland"

Missive  
Musselberg  
Mid Lothian's  
Scotland  
23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1814  
Dearest Mamma,

Scotland is a wonderful place, we visited the home of Sir Walter what a splendid house it is, I highly recommend it. Our first night in Scotland we spent at an inn run by a most interesting man by the Name of Samuel Ferreira I believe a descendent of one of the Spanish who was wreaked here in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Mr Ferreira was very knowledgeable of the war of 1745 and took some time to explain to George the actions. A bit boring for me but George found it of interest.



Mamma I do not want to alarm you but I must tell you that I have been a little indisposed of late with a very bad case of nerves in the morning so much so that I am unable to breakfast only taking a little black tea. I do not know if it is the air, which disagrees, or the rich food, which our gracious host puts before us, I have been quite unable to keep any thing down in the morning other then the formally mentioned tea. I hope I have not caught some thing for that would quite ruin our planed excursion to Edinburgh, which we have been planning for later this week.

I must tell you my dear Mamma the Scots are such somber people seldom have I seen people who smile as rarely as our northern neighbors do. On our first evening here, we had for dinner that most strange dish that is beloved of the Scots Haggis I cannot say I care for it. It really is not to my tastes while George embraces all things Scots he has even gone so far as to buy a kilt and looks quite magnificent when dressed. We find a great many Englishmen go about in search of Scotland enquiring if these or that place be the spot on which a Scot of ancient memory once had his dwelling or if this were the place where Burns the poet of the Scots may have chanced to spend an afternoon whiling away an afternoon composing verse.

I have done every thing exactly as you instructed me George was very gentle and knows just how to treat a lady. I believe that I will never have occasion to doubt in my dear George who is simply the best husband a woman could ever have found.

Your loving daughter  
Lydia Parker

Oakland Park  
30<sup>th</sup> April 1814

Dearest Lydia,  
I am glad to have word of you at last; I am glad that Scotland agrees with you. I would beg to inform you my dear that the symptoms you describe are to your father and me of the best news for the foretell of an addition to the family. I give you our congratulations on the news of your forthcoming childbirth.

“Pray Lydia dear take some sugar water in the morning this will help with the morning sickness. Be not afraid dear child for when you return to Morton I will come, see you well settled, and help with the arrival of the dear child. Please convey my sincere felicitations’ to George.

Life here at Oakland’s continues we have had another visit from that unpleasant Mr Holder who it seems has heard there are great opportunities for persons of all classes to make there fortunes in Africa. Well I wish him well although I would be loathed to loose the services of his good wife for, as you know she is simply the best baker in the county.

Papa is overjoyed with the news of your current condition and has all manner of plans to set up a trust for the child. Dearest Lydia pray do not let George overtax you with walks and trips for a woman in your condition should be abed as much as is possible. Indeed, it is not good for the child to be moved around to much by to much walking about of its mother therefore I beg you to rest as much as possible. As for Haggis, I quite agree for there are certain things Scots that should be reserved for the Scots and the devil alone.

Your dear papa has left this morning to oversee certain work at Morton in preparing the house for your homecoming. Your Mamma Parker sends her deepest and sincere love and best wishes for I have just this morning shared the news of your communication with her to her great delight.

The grange is a nice house with the renovations that Lord John made to them will make it one of the most modern houses in the county, my dear you should count yourself very fortunate that papa was able to make such a good purchase of the house. I foresee that that house will one day hold many happy hours for you and George and pray god that there will be many children to fill its many rooms

I trust that we will hear from you err long and that your homecoming will not be overlong in arriving for your sisters are most anxious to be once more in your company. I should mention that Arabella and Tom are becoming quite good friends and are always in each other’s company. I fancy

that before to long we might have occasion to have another  
wedding here at Oakland.

Your Loving mother  
Ann Sterley

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“Dear Mamma I am exceeding glad that you have come to Morton,” said Lydia “Pray take some tea before we explore the house,” she continued. “Dear Lydia it is excessively warm I would gladly forego the tea for a glass of chilled Mulberry wine,” said Lady Ann

“Morton is a grand home Mamma I am happy that Papawas able to secure it for us,” said Lydia “Your father communicated to me that the house cost ten thousand pounds I hope that you will be so kind as to make your expressions of thanks well known to him,” replied Lady Ann

“Oh Mamma I will make every endeavor to do exactly that next time I see him” said Lydia “Pray how are the rest of the family,” she enquired. “Life continues at Oakland it is the lambing season and Papa is busy most of the day with the farmland,” replied Lady Ann

An adjournment to a half an hour later when Lady Ann Lydia and George are upstairs in the rooms “This is the room where we would like to make a nursery for the children” said Lydia. “It is a passing fancy chamber tell me was this not formally a larger chamber?” asked Lady Ann who had previously visited the house when in the ownership of Lord John.

“It was madam I believe it was the chamber where poor unfortunate Lord John expired” said George, “Oh no this will not do imagine if the ghost of Lord John was to make an appearance and scare the poor child witless” said Lady Ann “Oh Mamma how can you say such a thing, indeed I have always thought of you as a most sensible person not taken to flights of fancy” said Lydia.

“Lydia I will not be gainsaid in this fashion I am reminded of certain events that occurred at Moorcroft Hall when I was a child” said Lady Ann “Old Moorcroft Hall I have not thought of Moorcroft in many a year” said Lydia who was considering the last visit that the family had made there some five years earlier for the funeral of her maternal Grand Mamma.

“Mamma pray how can any thing that occurred at Moorcroft have any bearing on Morton?” she asked

“When I was nine or ten there was an unhappy occasion when a visitor accidentally shot himself in one of the gun rooms ever since then there has been a clod chill in that room no servant would be found near that room after five o’clock PM if it could be helped” replied Lady Ann.

“It took a bishop and a bevy of parsons to lay the ghost of the unfortunate guest who it seemed would lift up the skirt of any female who chanced to be in that part of the house after five o’clock” said Lady Ann “I remember that your grand Mamma was one evening unfortunate enough to be in that part of the house when the very incident of which I have just spoken happened to her. She if memory serves correctly came away vowing never to enter that part of the house again if father did not that instant get some one to lay the ghost of the lusty ghost,” said Lady Ann

“Really Mamma I doubt that the shade of Lord John would have any evil intent to us after all he and papa were the best of friends,” said Lydia.

“You are mistaken in your assumption that the shade of Lord John would not wish to do evil for he was a man grievously wronged and this I fear will make him the most dangerous of all ghosts at Morton,” said Lady Ann

“What do you suggest we do madam?” asked George who had stood a little apart from his mother-in-law whilst she had related the events just told with a amused smile which as she told the story the expression upon his countenance had changed from amusement to more serious consideration. For George Parker had no wish that his first-born should in any way be harmed by persons of this world or the next. “George I would consider it most fortunate if you would consent to have the child’s room moved further away from this corner of the house if you so wish I am sure that the reverend Thomas would consent hold a service to lay the shade of Lord John and any other errant spirit that might chance to be with in the grange,” said Lady Ann

“I believe we can be accommodating of that,” said George for he had considered that he might if needs prevail be obliged to sleep in the chamber himself to set at rest the fears of his

mother in law, for he was quite fond of her. For indeed he held her in the greatest respect as the mother of the woman he loved the most in the entire world.

‘Thus it was that the following afternoon that most reverend of gentlemen James Thomas of the parish of Notheringay found his way to Morton to conduct the service for the spirit of the late Lord Jon Morton. He had as a matter of course taken advantage of reading up on the matter at hand thus as to be able to better conduct himself should he be confronted by the angry ghost Lord John. It was not that he was fearful but a certain caution prevailed upon his spirit to treat with care in areas where Angels fear to tread.

After dinning with the family the most reverend gentleman and George entered the chamber a fire had been lit, the chamber been made comfortably warm for the night. At the door Lydia bid George, a good night and success at laying the ghost then retired to bed. Leaving the town gentleman to there own devices George had upon him a pack of playing cards which he begun to play patents with, while the minter indulge himself in reading from Foxes book of Martyrs for it had long been the most esteemed gentleman’s pursuit to read from such books on the lives of the saints as to bring himself and indeed his flock to a better understanding of the works of perfection that were amply displayed in the lives of the saints.

As the night grew on the fire began to burn low the men pulled there coats closer for even tho’ it was an exceptionally warm evening the chamber possessed an air of doom and indeed a chill which was uncommon for that time of year.

“At eleven o’clock when the candles were at there lowest there came a soft sigh from one corner of the room a breeze which upon its breath contained all the putrid air of hell in its most diabolical form. George who had almost slipped into a slumber was awakened by the reverend gentleman tugging at his sleeve.

“The two men watched in fascination as from the corner a mist began to appear at first unclear but thickening as the minutes drew on until from the mists the spectral form of Lord John appeared.

“Rising the reverend gentleman his bible in hand commanded the specter “to stand fast in the name of the Lord.” To whom do I have the honor of addressing enquired the minister “Alas you have me at a disadvantage” said the specter “for in life I was Lord John but now I am but a lost soul who died unshriven.” The specter said as he struggled to break free from the bond under which the words of the minister had placed him “Pray poor soul what can be done to loosen you from your condition and send you to your rest?” enquired the Minister.

“I fear that I am lost for all eternity and there is but small hope for peace for me,” replied the spirit. “What then can we do to prevent you from coming again into this the home that you once knew?” asked reverend Thomas.

“The sprinkling of holy water and the anointing of the doorposts of every room in the house will lay the spirits that they cannot come again,” said the unfortunate ghost of the grange.

“Will it bring some measure of peace for you?” asked George, I fear not for I am doomed to places in Hades the pain of which you will not imagine but it will solve the problem of the grange I have no doubt said the Spirit

“Is there naught that we can do for you sir spirit?” asked the minister who had a feeling of great sadness at the plight of the unfortunate specters condition. “There is but one thing that will stop my visits and that is to pray that I have peace over my grave as for the grange cast out all evil in the name of Jesus anoint the posts and all evil will flee” said the specter.

“Pray for me no more” for there is naught that will redeem me from my eternal damnation said the spirit as he began to fade.

Directly the reverend minister took up a vial of olive oil and cast it into the fading mist into which the specter was dissolving. Hurriedly he began to sprinkle holy water and anoint the doors posts of the room with oil in the name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost and amen and amen. There after he proceeded with George lighting the way with a dark lantern

to every room and chamber in the grange anointing like wise as before described the posts. When they had finished the sun was rising it was five o'clock in the morning before there work was done.

Returning to the dinning room George poured for them a glass of pour and considered what had passed in the night. "For a moment he considered telling all to Lydia and Lady Ann but he dismissed this as he knew that it would add substance to there fear thus swearing the reverend gentleman to secrecy he concluded that should they be asked they would say that nothing of significance passed and they had slept well in the chamber.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

September 1<sup>st</sup> 1814  
Sir Benjamin Bathurst,  
Foreign office  
London  
To Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surry

My dear Sir Thomas,  
Please be advised that there now exists a position of clerkship  
to Sir Charles Somerset at the Cape of Good Hope.  
The financial returns on this commission is five hundred  
pounds annually

Of significance I am aware that such a post although not  
exactly suited is the best I can provide at this time. I am lead  
to understand that such a post can inevitably lead to rapid  
advancement to more suited posts as time and season progress.  
Should you wish for this post to be reserved for your son  
Thomas, please reply in the affirmative by return of post

Your obedient servant  
B Bathurst Esquire

September 5<sup>th</sup> 1814  
Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surry  
To Sir Benjamin Bathurst  
Foreign Office  
London

Dear Sir Benjamin,  
In reply to yours of the first instant, I would be exceeding glad  
should it be in your power to hold the position of Clerkship at  
the Cape of Good Hope for my son.

We are very glad for the opportunity provided and I am sure  
that Tom will do his utmost to present the best possible  
outcome in the post.

If I might prevail upon you for one more favor I would be exceeding glad if you could find the chance to forward to me any details you might have at your disposal that might be of revenant's to life in the colony in preparation of Tom going to the same.

Your humble servant

Thomas Sterley.

September 13<sup>th</sup> 1814  
Sir Benjamin Bathurst,  
Foreign office  
London  
To Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surry

Sir,

I would beg to inform you that as a matter of urgency that your son make himself available for an interview at the foreign office at his earlier convince. It is the custom of his Lordship to have one of his officers newly returned from the colony interview all prospective candidates for positions in the government at the Cape before leaving. If I might prevail upon you to have you, r son Thomas call on me Tuesday next at ten o'clock in the morning. I will make every attempt to present young Tom to the officer in question.

The object of the interview I believe is to rule out any unworthy candidates thus I have no fear that young Tom will. In a very short time, find a place in his Lordships household at Cape Town.

I remain

Your obedient servant  
B Bathurst Esquire

September 17<sup>th</sup> 1814  
Sir Thomas Sterley

Oakland Park  
Surry  
To Sir Benjamin Bathurst  
Foreign Office  
London

Dear Sir Benjamin,

Yours of the thirteenth instant, I am delighted to inform you that Tom and I will be in London on the date specified. If I might prevail upon you to afford me the opportunity of calling on you on the Monday morning prior to the day of the interview. I have some thing of importance that I wish to impart to you. Upon that occasion, I furthermore give you my thanks for all your endeavors upon the behalf of my son in the procurement of the post at Cape Town

Your humble servant  
Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surry

It was a fine summer morning when Sir Thomas bethought himself of finally informing young Tom of the results of his efforts on his part to secure him a commission in the service of the crown the conversation did not go well with tom doing most of the listening while the young man listened with growing worry upon his countenance

“Tom I would have you ready to depart with me for London the day after tomorrow,” said Sir Thomas “I fear that the girls will have to fend for themselves while we are away,” said Tom in an effort to find some way of averting the inevitable “Your Mamma will be back in a few days so there is no occasion to be alarmed,” said Sir Thomas

“Pray papa what is of such importance that we have to leave Oakland’s in such haste? Asked Tom ““A matter of great importance and advancement my boy for I have secured an interview for you with a certain officer of the colonial service. I believe it will be a great step forward in the right direction for you my lad. As it is past time that you should be thinking of a career of sorts,” said Sir Thomas. “Furthermore it is of the utmost importance that you begin to take an active interest in

the advancement of the family's fortune. I see no better way of doing this than serving old England in any capacity which might present itself, this I believe is a marvelous occasion to do so," said Sir Thomas.

"This news was greeted with stunned silence for Tom had not even begun to consider a career for he had always assumed that as the elder son he would follow in his father's footsteps and become master of Oakland Park. Now to be cruelly disillusioned of this hope was not to be considered lightly for it made him weak at the knees to consider a career where he might actually have to labor at some task.

Moreover, what of the relationship that he had begun with his dear cousin Arabella for had this not been the prime objective in getting his Mamma to invite her to Oakland? Tom found himself in a most distressed condition for it seemed to him that his father had unbeknown to him unhorsed him of his intention to marry Arabella and to live upon the continent.

For this indeed was the case Tom felt that he had an urgent need to speak with his Mamma for it dawned on him that his father had gone about this piece of industry with malicious intent.

He resolved to ride out this very afternoon to Morton to speak with Lady Ann for he felt sure that she would find a way to derail the efforts of his father. He made haste to saddle a horse leaving Oakland shortly after the mid day meal in the hope of reaching Morton before night fall.

The countryside through which he road on that fine summer afternoon he paid scarce attention to for his thoughts dwelt upon the travesty that had befallen him. Gone were the thoughts of Italy and romantic poetry for now he began to realize that certain forces were at play, which he had previously been unaware of. He knew not how it had come to pass that his father had embarked upon these adventures which he believed would be to his disadvantage, indeed he had always had a close relationship with his father and could not understand what had occasioned such a rash action.

To him Africa was a wild place with few inhabitants furthermore; he had heard that the Dutch who inhabited the colony were of a most dour nature not given to friendship with England. If memory served him correctly, slavery was still practiced at the Cape, some thing, which he abhorrent immensely what made the latest revelations more insufferable to him was his father, had been a friend of Wilberforce the great politician whose actions had brought to an end slavery in England. In the course of his travels through the county, he thought of many things in this regard for what would become of his hopes of marriage to Arabella Fitz-Gibbon. True he had liked her not very much in the beginning but since the passing of her mother, he had grown to like her a great deal. For after the demise of Lady Sarah she had come out of her shell she laughed at his jests she was a companion of which could be said that her mind was sharp seldom had he met some one of her character who quite understood him. Now all of this was at great peril because of the actions of his father.

Arriving in the late afternoon at Morton he was greeted by George who happened to be outdoors “I give you good day Tom how is every one at Oakland?” asked George. “Every one is in the best of health,” replied Tom with little civility for he was not in the mood to be of good society to his brother-in-law “Pray George where might I find Mamma?” “I believe that she might be in the upstairs library with Lydia,” said George. Tom found his way to the library and indeed there he found his mother with her hand upon his sisters enlarged belly “Tom welcome come feel for it seems that the child with in has begun to kick” said Lady Ann. “I assume that means the nature of the child is well?” asked Tom. “Indeed it is a fortunate sign for it means that the child is strong” said Lady Ann “Pray what brings you to Morton for I see by your countenance that some thing is amiss?” she said

“Indeed Mamma father has imparted to me some very ill-conceived news concerning my future life,” replied Tom as he flung himself in to a chair.” Really Tom if you are to behave this badly every time you recived bad news it is no wonder your papa grows upset with you. How pray is dear Arabella? Asked Lady Ann. “She is well I had occasion to share some verse with her but this morning before papa affronted me with the news that I am to go to Africa,” he replied “Oh Mamma

what am I to do he sobbed I am to loose Arabella for a career in Africa," he continued.

"There now Tom I will have a word with your papa when I return next week I am sure we will be able to find some way in which all of us can be content" said Lady Ann "dry your tears lad it is not seemly for a man to cry in company" she continued.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Come sir a gentleman does not behave in this fashion” said Sir Thomas. “I wonder at you husband do you not see that young tom is distressed at the thought of leaving hearth and home for parts foreign” said Lady Ann “Madam I am acutely aware of what ails my son” replied Sir Thomas flushed at been addressed in this fashion by his wife.

“It might be of concern to you sir to know that our son is distressed at the possibility of leaving one who is dear to him for the wilds of Africa, never more to see the woman of whom he is deeply affectionate” replied Lady Ann.

“Indeed madam I was unaware of this encumbrance” replied Sir Thomas “I beg that you inform me this instant of the circumstances of this development” he replied. “Dear husband it might please you to know that since the untimely demises of dear Sarah Tom has become has given his heart to Arabella and had hopes of a nuptial with the sweet girl. That is of course until you decided otherwise,” replied Lady Ann.

“Well we shall have to see what we can do in that direction” said Sir Thomas “madam how is it come about that you knew of these actions while you did not inform me at your earliest convenience?” he asked of his wife.

“Truth be told dear husband this was the object of the visit of the visit of our dear Sarah and Arabella so that they might better become acquainted” she replied

“Tom would you be so kind as to bring Arabella hither as I would know what she thinks of this” said Sir Thomas. Once Tom had left the chamber his shoulders sunken low a sad countenance upon his brow for he was of the opinion that his father would tolerate no oppression to his will feared greatly the forthcoming conversation between the woman he loved and his father.

“Ann had you but informed me of this development sooner I might have endeavored to put in Lord Fits-Gibbon’s mind the idea of such a union been most fortuitous to both our families. For I can see the good of it yet you have left me nay indeed deserted me entirely with out a mast on this occasion” Sir

Thomas said. Using as was his usage of old a navel term describing the direst of situations.

“Thomas I must beg you to compose yourself for you are quite in a rage and this will reflect badly on the mind of young Arabella” said Lady Ann “I will not believe this is not a conception of the boys mind to escape from doing his duty” said Sir Thomas. “I will have it from the girl before long and the truth will out,” he continued.

“Sir you mistake yourself Tom is a good lad and will do his duty both to his family and to the girl,” said Lady Ann “Indeed madam it is a ill construed plan that you and the boy have hatched for you knew of my labors on his part to secure an occasion for him for advancement. Yet you have fought against me in every direction in this matter,” said Sir Thomas

“Husband age has made you obstinate for if you will cast your mind back and reflect a certain young navel officer with poor prospects once approached my father for my hand and who was it that convinced him?” she asked. “True Ann your father was sour and would not accept a navel man for his daughter but for other reasons then the ones you now put forward for Tom,” said Sir Thomas

“I believe the reasons to be the same for was it not for love that you married? How so then young Tom who would not be parted with the girl for no other cause then love” replied Lady Ann growing angry at what she perceived as her husbands stubbornness.

“there came to the door of the chamber a light knock” flinging open the door Sir Thomas was confronted by Arabella “ah Arabella pray enter for Lady Ann and I would have at the truth of certain remarks that have passed this day” said Sir Thomas.

“Arabella made her obedience’s upon entering and sat upon a chair waiting her fine golden hair reflecting the sunlight which spilled into the chamber from the open window.

”Arabella I would beg to inform you that you have done nothing that could ever change our feelings of love and devotion to your person and that of your dear father” said Sir



Thomas. "I am right glad to hear this Uncle Thomas for I feared that I had done some thing to anger you and that would have caused me great distress," said the young woman

"Now Arabella tell me plainly if this is true Tom has informed me that you are fond of him and would have him ask your dear papa for your hand?" said Sir Thomas

"Tom has been a good friend o me in the late sadness that has filled my heart indeed he has been of great comfort since dear Mamma left us," replied Arabella. "Quite so and such is the duty of a loyal cousin to stand by and support ones family in such sad times," said Sir Thomas.

"However I must ask you do you have any deep affection in your heart for Tom?" asked Sir Thomas "Uncle I must confess that there are feelings mutual that have passé between us Tom informed me of his deepest love for me and I have reciprocated by telling him that I love him too" said Arabella. "There you have it the truth is out as you would not believe our son you have heard in now from the girl," said Lady Ann. "I am aware now of the circumstance of this affair," said Sir Thomas now convinced of the depth of the love of the couple. Throwing himself into a chair, he contemplated for a moment a bird sang in the garden the voice of the small creature filling the room bringing him once more to his reason. For he could not remain in a state of agitation when a bird brought forth such a song of merriment.

Rising he rung the bell which brought one of the servants' into the chamber "Pray ask young master Tom to join us directly," said Sir Thomas. Departing the chamber the servant hurried on his way to find Tom.

"Now my dear it might be wise to write to your father and inform him of your feelings for Tom for I shall certainly have occasion once I have finished my task in London to proceed Northward with Tom to speak with your father on this matter. Pray take a moment to consider what you would write to your papa and when you have done so hand me your letter for I shall deliver it directly we meet him" Said Sir Thomas.

“Entering the chamber now Tom came with fear and trepidation for he knew not what way the weather yard had turned for or against him. Thus, he was anxious to know if Arabella would consent to be his wife or nay if he was to wander in African a stranger in a forbidding land.

“I have bethought” me self said Sir Thomas “and see an occasion where with all our hopes and desires might at one stroke be met” he continued, “Pray tell all” said Lady Ann now anxious to have an end to the argument. “It is simple my dear wife for if these to young people would marry before going to Africa it would be a pleasurable thing for Tom to serve away with a wife in Africa thus he will gain valuable experience and one hopes preferment more hastily then a young unmarried officer with little prospects. Yes indeed I will see Lord Fits-Gibbon directly we leave London and see what arrangement can be made in regard dowry and the like,” said Sir Thomas

“Why husband I have always wondered what I saw in you and yet you make it plan you are most fortunate in your foresight for you have of an instant made all things fit rightly and properly together” said Lady Ann.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

“More tea my dear Lady St Vincent?” asked Lady Ann proffering the tea pot in the direction of Martha St Vincent. “No thank you Lady Ann I have been drinking far too many cups of tea of late,” said Lady St Vincent. It has been quite some time since I last visited the counties life in Town keeps one so busy that one seldom finds time to even consider a holiday in the counties,” said Lady St Vincent. “However since the peace John has found that he has much time for reflection and thus we are come at last to my dear nephew’s house,” said Lady St Vincent nodding in the direction of William Parker.

“Dear William and Emily have been so kind to us one hardly ever experiences such pleasant company in society now a days” said Lady St Vincent. “Quite so” said his Lordship the Earl of St Vincent. They had come into the counties to visit with there relatives. Lady Ann upon hearing of there presents in the home of there brother-in law Parker had set out at once to make the esteemed couples acquaintance for she viewed it as a great privilege to meet the famed Earl who had done so much for England in the field of navel warfare.

She was certain that Sir Thomas would be most put out by the fact that he was currently away and would not have the occasion to meet the St Vincent’s. “Do you plan to stay long in the county asked Lady Ann?” “A fortnight maybe,” replied Lady Martha. “My dear husband will be so put out for not been here to have met you. However a matter of family business will delay him in London I should imagine,” said Lady Ann “That is a pity for I am sure that my husband and he would have much to speak about been old sea dogs,” said Lady Martha “ quite so” remarked the Earl as he took another sip of tea from the delicate china cup.

“Sir Thomas on one occasion related to me on his lordships wit in the House of Lords when been questioned, some thing about the French coming” said Lady Ann. “Madam I can only assume it was the remark I made in the year 01, I do not say, my Lords that the French will not come. I say only they will not come by sea” said the earl.

“The very thing Sir Thomas said of you my Lord indeed a very sharp wit you have sir,” said Lady Ann “Will you step out with me sister-in-law? Asked Emily now growing aware that the earl whose countenance had been till this very moment one of fond remembrance exceedingly dark. For Emily parker perceived that the presence of Lady Ann was not to the liking of the old sea dog and as such she would not want it said that her husbands relative was been prevailed upon far more then polite society allowed.

“Yes shall we walk the maze for a spell?” asked Lady Ann linking her arm into that of her hostess. “I think I will obliged to join you” said Lady Martha who did not fancy the company of the gentlemen for she knew of old that men when in company prefer the females of society to amuse themselves with out making it an obligation of the men to keep them company when they speak of the hunt and guns and such other things that are in mans domain.

“It has been a fine summer uncommonly hot” said Lady Ann as they strolled in the maze. I should imagine that when winter comes we will long for these fine days,” remarked Emily.

“Sir Thomas of course is a man for all seasons, he can be found in the Avery at all hours of the day and night inspecting his birds” said Lady Ann. “does your husband collect birds? Asked Lady St Vincent lighting upon a subject for whom she had an interest in fact a very deep love for her husband had brought her a parrot on one of his trips from foreign parts. “Yes dear Lady he is exceeding fond of birds he plans to publish a book on the avian life of southern England before to long” replied Lady Ann. “That is the most remarkable thing for I am a great admirer of birds in there natural state, I have often watched the birds as they have flown south for the winter” remarked Lady Martha

The ladies wandered trough the garden enjoying the late summer afternoon until it was time for Lady Ann to depart. “You must come again soon sister-in-law” said Emily “Yes that I will,” said Lady Ann as she mounted the hack that had brought her. For she had a new and certain fondness for her new relatives the Parkers more over the chance of missing out on the pleasant company of Lady St Vincent was some thing

she could not bear to forego, for while in the maze the woman had found much of common interest. Lady Ann's inquisitive mind seeking out those aspects of the life of her new friend made her exceedingly happy.

Missive

TO  
Sir Thomas Sterley,  
Picardy Hotel  
London  
From  
Lady Ann Sterley,  
Oakland Park  
Surrey  
September 1814

Dearest Husband I have the pleasure of informing you that yesterday I had the great honor of taking tea with the Earl and Lady St Vincent at the home of William Parker. It came as a pleasant surprise to me to discover that William is the nephew of Lady St Vincent. The Earl and his good wife had come into the county to visit with there relative sand had occasion to stop at the Parkers for a fortnight. I beg to inform you that should the matter of Tom be ended in good time you might take measures to hasten your return for as I informed his lordship you are an old sea dog and you would have much to speak about

Your loving wife  
Ann

## CHAPTER TWENTY

“Well my dear it is settled “Lord Charles is very receptive to the idea of a match between our Tom and Arabella” said Sir Thomas as he warmed his backside over the fire. “This is most fortuitous news, we shall have to start preparations at once” said Lady Ann. “The meeting at fleet street went exceedingly well I even managed to call upon Lord Hood who you will remember my dear is an old friend of the navy,” remarked Sir Thomas. “This news of Tom and Arabella we shall have to publicize,” said Lady Ann “Pray how long before the will have to leave for the colony?” asked Lady Ann “Sir Benjamin gave me to understand that it would be three months hence thus my dear we have at least two months in which to make and prepare for the wedding. Lord Charles has said he will consider a dowry of twenty thousand pounds for young Arabella,” said Sir Thomas. “That dear husband is the least he could do after leaving the poor child in our care for such an extended season. One contemplate son the fact that he has hardly seen his daughter for almost a year” remarked Lady Ann crossly for she was unaccustomed to such parental neglect in her immediate family. “I am given to understand that Lord Charles is to be married again with in the year,” said Sir Thomas.

“Sir you never cease to amaze me with your knowledge and facts pray what and who is the lady who is the object of his affections?” she asked. “It is I believe a lady of your acquaintance or at least some one you knew in your youth now a woman of most sober habits Miriam Lady Fortescue you will of course remember her from an occasion when she spent a season at Moorcroft Hall,” said Sir Thomas

“Sir I liked her not then and I know I will no like her now a pugnacious child if memory serves,” replied Lady Ann who it seemed was growing agitated in the extreme with each bit of news her husband imparted to her concerning Lord Charles for had her beloved Cousin Sarah not been a good wife true they had been long separated because of the constraints of Lord Charles’s occupation in the House of Lords but lately departed Sarah’s memory deserved a better recognition then to be replace with in the year by a new mistress in the Fitz-Gibbon household.

“Indeed had her husband struck her with a poker she would not have been as surprised as she now was by the news of the impending nuptials of Lord Charles and Lady Fortescue.

“Pray dear husband is Arabella aware of these macerations of her papa?” asked Lady Ann “Lord Charles informs me that he has long since communicated his feelings of affection to the lady in question as she was a companion of dear Sarah,” replied Sir Thomas as he moved away from the fire which although hot upon his backside was not as hot as the interrogation that his wife was subjecting him to.

“I fancy that he has told a miss truth for if he had communicated such to Arabella she would of a certainty have informed me,” said Lady Ann “It is guilt Sir that makes Lord Charles to offer such a large dowry for I can see no other reason for he has neglected his daughter for company of another woman,” she remarked

“Dear sweet Ann peace, peace I beg you there is naught that we can do about Lord Charles, but for Arabella we can do much, pray content yourself with this knowledge we can make her one of us welcome her into the family love and cherish her as a daughter and a sister all the days of our lives. Fear not madam for already these past months the dear sweet child has found a place in the hearts of every one of us. She will be a good wife to Tom a wonderful daughter to us both and eventually a mother to our grand children Pray do not distress yourself madam. For I fear you will suffer the most frightful indigestion for you eat when you are upset and you take not recognition of your health, I beg you be at peace and think on the wonderful life that awaits the happy couple of whom we are so fond,” said Sir Thomas.

“As usual you are right, one cannot however believe that a man would be as insensitive as to remarry when his wife has been in the tomb less than a year,” said Lady Ann as she poured herself a glass of Elderberry wine. The occasions upon which she took strong drink were few and far between however on this occasion it seemed to her that she needed to have a little fortification with in before she faced young Arabella with the news that she was to be married. It was not as if the matter had not been discussed while Sir Thomas and

young Tom were away however it was not at that time known as a certainty now that matters had come to a head the date of the impending nuptials would have to be agreed upon. Further more Lady Ann was troubled by little sleep of late as she was worried for Lydia who had grown uncommon big in the last month Lady Ann began to believe that the child when born might not be one but to by the size of Lydia's belly. This was of great concern to her as Lydia was of a slight build and would if not helped correctly suffer greatly in childbirth.

Young Tom in the mean while had gone to find his dearest Arabella and impart to her the news that they were to be married there after they would depart to the Cape of Good Hope to take up the appointment which Sir Benjamin Bathurst had procured for Tom as an aid to Lord Charles Somerset.



## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

“Lady St Vincent told me of a certainty that when next we are in London that we must call upon her and his Lordship” said Lady Ann. “It is indeed gratifying that you made there acquaintance” replied Sir Thomas once more warming his hands over the fire.

“It came as a most welcome news to hear that they had come into the county, and to find out that they were staying with the Parkers, at Leaton well that made me decided to call upon the Parkers and make known your achievements to his lordship,” said Lady Ann

“Pray was his lordship the earl well disposed to your calling?” asked Sir Thomas growing concerned that his wife had committed another social mistake by forcing her presence upon the unsuspecting peer.

“Indeed he was most interested to hear of your part in the late wars” remarked Lady Ann Mr Parker talked at great length of your fine quality as a seaman and leader of men,” she continued. “That is most gratifying I shall call upon The Parkers directly do you perchance know if the ST Vincent’s have left the county?” asked Sir Thomas.

“I have hopes that they still might be at Leaton I have seen the new library there Mr. Parker has done a wonderful job of buying the very best of current books indeed if Lydia was with me she should have asked to see the anonymous young lady of genteel birth collections. Although I fancy it is not a very big collection,” said Lady Ann.

“William Parker has funds aplenty to apply to the extravagances to make his home one of the best in the county” remarked Sir Thomas. “How came it that brother in law Parker came by his fortune?” asked Lady Ann.

“There is a tale in the making a self made man is our brother in Law Parker,” said Sir Thomas. “For when I knew him many years since in the navy he was but a lowly midshipman without many prospects but he married well, speculated in Sugar in the West Indies and made a fortune,” said Sir Thomas.

“You of course know that Emily’s family are extremely wealthy having made there money in the America’s some thing to do with the slave trade,” said Sir Thomas. “It changes nothing dear Emily is one of the sweetest people I know I do not believe for a moment that she was ever personally involved in that despicable trade of poor unfortunates who through no fault of there own were stolen and sold as so much of a commodity,” replied Lady Ann.

“Madam I did not insinuate that sister in law Parker was a slave trader I mentioned but the fact that her family had in former times been the proprietors of a number of slaver vessels” said Sir Thomas exasperated with his wife obstinacy.

“If the St Vincent’s be at Leaton I feel inclined to go hither with you husband” said Lady Ann changing the subject lest her husband grow angry with her. “They are such a pleasant couple one would think that they had many friends in society,” she continued.

“Nelson was and remains popular among all class of seamen but I am assured that his lordship the earl is greatly liked by many officers” said Sir Thomas. “husband he has an earldom for thanks I am sufficiently happy to know that he has done his duty to England and that he has been adequately rewarded for his part,” said Lady Ann fearing that once more her husband would fall into a state of melancholia la when considering how little he had achieved in relation to others who had served.

“Pray dear wife did you speak with Arabella on the occasion of the forthcoming nuptials?” asked Sir Thomas. “I have she was delighted to hear it but I have an idea that Tom broke the news to her before she spoke with me for she was sufficiently unsurprised as to inform of such” remarked Lady Ann. Indignant at the fact that her first born had taken it upon himself to inform the young woman of the situation.

“Lord Charles was suitably impressed with our Tom calling him my boy and giving him to understand that he could call upon him at any time for fatherly advice should it be needed,” said Sir Thomas. “I fear that I became quite indignant at the

fact but as he is of superior rank I forbore his inclination to be kind to Tom and kept my peace,” said Sir Thomas.

“That insufferable man I am still quite in a state of distress on the matter of which we spoke earlier in regard to Lord Charles,” said Lady Ann.

“Arabella will as his heir inherit a substantial fortune of him,” said Sir Thomas “That I think sir is the only redeeming feature of the man,” said Lady Ann her face flushed. For she would not tolerate the man to stay even one hour in Oakland. For she was of the opinion that he had betrayed a sacred trust. Classing him as cut from the same cloth as that rouse the Earl of Waterford of whom they had heard much of a distressing nature.

Tom and Arabella found themselves wandering the garden while the aforementioned conversations between Lady Ann and Sir Thomas took place. They chanced upon William who was industriously digging a ditch with a few workmen “Greetings brother” said Tom. “Pray what are you doing if I might make my self so bold as to ask,” enquired Tom.

“There is a certain type of grass that grows upon the banks which is of its nature more succulent and sort after by birds now I plan to make this ditch a type of bank for papa’s enjoyment for I perceive that of late he has developed a shortness of breath and a limp. I would not have him wandering far from the house unattended in search of his birds thus I bring the birds closer,” said William

“That is most thoughtful I did not notice but I shall take heed to make his life a little more comfortable” remarked Thomas.

## CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

The nuptials of Thomas and Arabella been completed in the first week of October arrangements were then put in order for there going to the Cape of Good Hope.

It had been arranged that they would take the coach to town accompanied by Sir Thomas and Lady Ann. Lord John and Lady Miriam would follow from Morton the following afternoon. Due to Lady Ann strictly forbidding Lord John and the new Lady Fit-Gibbon from staying at Oakland sir Thomas had pleaded to many guests in his house thus his Lordship and Lady Fits-Gibbon had been put up at Morton quite comfortably enjoying there stay there for a number of weeks while calling upon the inhabitants of Oakland no more then social occasions justified.

Thus on Thursday morning the newly married couple set out in the coach for London in the hope of arriving early to call upon some society friends whom they had not seen in a while.

“The coach rumbled along the road towards London within Lady Ann was addressing her new Daughter in law. “Now remember my dear that you should always allow Tom to do his scribbling for this is one of his quirks and should you choose to disallow this he can be the most unpleasant fellow” “Indeed Mamma I have hopes of making Tom the happiest man alive, for he has certainly made me the happiest of woman” observed Arabella.

“Now Tom you will remember to write frequently for I have an expectation that you will inform us all of the events and society at the Cape” said Lady Ann.

“As circumstances allow Mamma I will endeavor to keep you fully informed” remarked Tom. “Son I hesitate to ask knowing that Lord Charles will I am sure keep you occupied for a large amount of the time you are there. However if you can find the time please observe for me the ornithology of the Cape and write to me in the most descriptive detail of there habits and the appearance” said Sir Thomas.

“I shall endeavor by all possible means to apply in this accord” replied Tom. Who was content to comply with his father wishes, for if it had not been for his papa he would not now be married to the handsomest woman he knew.

For when he considered how much his parents had done for him in regard to there efforts to find him a position in the world, and a woman with whom he could share his life he was content for he was the happiest person he knew of. True it had not been his intent to depart for the Colony but the advantages as his father had explained to him would offset the small disadvantage of not going to Italy for he considered that he could write equally well in the Cape as in Italy.

“I have sent a letter to Lady Barnard you will recall she was at the Cape for a number of years and has an extensive knowledge of the customs of the place” said Lady Ann. “A most fortuitous connection for it is always good to know the custom of parts foreign” said Sir Thomas.

“I was indeed fortunate in making her acquaintance when she returned from Africa, at that time she had much to say on the occasion of the place” remarked Lady Ann.

Arriving in London the Sterley’s made themselves comfortable in a house which they had previously hired in Oxford street. After spending the first evening at home they setout the next morning to find out all they could from some one who knew the place far better then any one they knew Lady Anne Barnard lived in a house of moderate size she had been in former times the hostess for the late [Earl Macartney](#). Who has been some time governor of the Cape of Good Hope.

“Upon been shown into the drawing room they were met by the lady herself who’s vibrancy and allure of respectable society seldom found in London. Delighted Sir Thomas and Lady Ann for Ann Sterley had given to understand that a trust of quite some responsibility had been placed upon the shoulders of her eldest son. Lady Barnard made much of the young couple congratulating them on there resent union remarking upon her marriage to her late husband Sir Andrew. For Lady Barnard it was indeed a rare pleasure to be called upon to impart her knowledge of the Cape to the young couple for she had been made aware of the circumstances of the

young couple's mission to the Cape. Further more she was aware of Young Tom's desire to be a writer of romance. This had captured her imagination; indeed as the visit progressed she would take every occasion to advance Tom's aspirations to write much to the discomfort of Sir Thomas.

When the question of Lord Charles arose it became apparent that the dear Lady did not think much of the nobleman for she was privy through private communications with longstanding friends at Cape Town of certain directions given and actions taken by the governor and these did not endower her with any measure of trust in his ability to govern that place fairly.

The old woman spoke at length of her experiences at the Cape giving young Arabella to understand that although the Dutch at the Cape might at first seem to be a dour lot with no redeeming features one has to grow to know them over an extended period before one realizes that they are warm and friendly delighting in the simple pleasures of doing things well and working hard. For as Lady Barnard put it "there is no cozier spot then in the Dutch kitchen where woman are at work" She further more placed Arabella under an obligation to write to her of her own experiences in the Cape thus the visit at an end Lady Anne Barnard rose and crossed to her writing table drawing from a compartment a hand full of letters she presented them to Arabella and said "My dear I have tried to make your introduction to Cape society a little more easy thus I give to some letters of introduction to some of the foremost residents of that place" Arabella made her curtsy and thanked the lady profoundly. While Lady Ann Sterley remarked on the there longstanding friendship and hoped to see Lady Barnard soon for it had been far to long since she had last been down to the country. Lady Barnard accepted the invitation and said that she would try to be at Oakland with in the next few months thus saying the Sterley's took there leave of Lady Ann Barnard.

Having left the home of this delightful relic and proceeded at almost one o'clock pm to there rented home to await the arrival of his Lordship who was calling to wish his daughter a safe journey for he was in great haste to make a return home before embarking on his delayed wedding holiday.

Upon their return they had scarce time to prepare before Lord Charles and Lady Miriam arrived to bid Arabella and Tom Godspeed on their journey to the Cape. The visit was a very formal one with Lady Ann maintaining a frosty silence all the whilst Lord Charles was in the house, while Sir Thomas tried his best to make every one pleasantly comfortable. He could quite understand his wife's attitude to Lord Fitz-Gibbon but he did so wish that she would make it a little less obvious.

The following morning Tom and Arabella went on board HMS Ocean which was moored in the port of London in readiness to sail with the turn of the tides.

Sir Thomas and Lady Ann bid their son and new daughter a tearful good bye they remained long on the dock watching as the ship slowly made its way down river, a tear wetting the corner of their respective eyes.

Missive  
Thomas Sterley  
Gibraltar  
Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland  
Surrey  
15<sup>th</sup> October 1814

Dearest Papa,  
We have reached Gibraltar we had hopes of making better speed but Captain Braithwaite has said we must proceed with caution for it has been spread abroad that Napoleon has escaped Elba as to the veracity of this statement I cannot tell. You might remember the good captain as he I believe served under your command aboard HMS Sovereign as a midshipman. He holds his current command due to the efforts of Lord Nelson under whom he served at the Nile.

Captain Braithwaite was kind enough to relate to the assembled company of your kindness and understanding of your care for the men under your command. This was greeted with great approval by the assembled company many of whom are old hands at the Cape.

Captain Braithwaite sends his warmest felicitations and was pleased to find us in his company we have dined with him on a

number of occasions and I find him to be the most intelligent of men with a vast knowledge of the sea and sea lore.

Pray papa I beg you that on the instant of the birth of my nephew that you write and inform us for we are most affectionate of our sister Lydia  
Give Mamma our affections and my love to all the family at Oakland

Your obedient son

Thomas Sterley



## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

Dear husband do sit down and stop pacing so for I cannot read this letter I have recived from dear Arabella,” remarked Lady Ann. “I fear I shall not sit down madam for I to have recived a letter of the greatest importance from Tom,” said Sir Thomas

Indeed I believe the nature of Tom’s communication will be in a similar vein to that I have of Arabella,” replied Lady Ann

Missive  
Arabella Sterley,  
Cape Town,  
Cape of Good Hope  
3<sup>rd</sup> December 1814

To: Lady Ann Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Nothingay  
Surrey  
England

Dearest Mamma,  
Having arrived here but a short while ago I felt it proper to write and advise you that the Cape is one of the grandest places in the entire world. The mountain when so disposed puts on its table cloth of cloud and is the most splendid thing to observe.

We have found a little house in Long Market street one of the best streets in the colony and here we have set up a home in the most domestic bliss. With the help of one of our Dutch neighbors Mrs. Viljoen a matronly woman of many years. We managed to find the most delightful cook and a number of house servants.

Last evening we had the very great honor of dining with his lordship the governor Lord Charles is an indifferent and difficult man who delights in the rule of law for in his household every thing is done to an order and prescription that I have seldom seen.

I fear that Tom will soon run afoul of his lordships temper if he dose not trim his sails and obey to the letter any and every instruction that his lordship issues. I am right now in a highly agitated state of nerves as Tom has been summoned to attend his lordship the messenger came early with a note that Tom was to come on a matter of the greatest urgency.

Dear Mamma please allow me to put your fears to rest on our behalf for Tom has just returned and imparted to me the following news his lordship has signaled out Tom for a mission of the greatest importance. I had feared that he would fall under his lordships displeasure after a certain incident concerning a gravy boat last evening during dinner however Lord Charles has found Tom to be exactly the type of person he needs for an excursion into the interior of the country. The mission is to take several months and I fear that I will be all alone while Tom goes into the interior to map with a certain Captain Barrow a number of places which have previously been explored but not properly mapped or detailed.

The purpose of this excursion is to find suitable habitations for a number of new settler parties which Lord Charles is trying to get the government to agree to send to the Cape.

This is the best news for it means a rapid advancement for Tom, I have just this instant recived a note to call upon her ladyship thus I close this letter one of the hippest people at the Cape

My love to all at Oakland's please give my deepest love to Lydia and George and if the letter arrives after the blessed event of the birth of there first child.  
Your Loving daughter  
Arabella

Missive  
Thomas Sterley  
Cape Town,  
Cape of Good Hope  
3<sup>rd</sup> December 1814

To: Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Nothingay  
Surrey  
England  
Dear papa,

While we were at Gibraltar we hear that the French were out and that Napoleon had escaped which put us in great fear. We proceeded from Gibraltar with caution in the expectation of meeting a new French fleet bent on war in this we were fortunate enough to find none. However as we closed on the coasts of Africa we chanced one morning to have to beat to quarters for the foretops men had sighted a sail of unknown origin the men with the spy glass told us that she was a Barbary pirate out from her base in Algeria thus we readied ourselves in the event of battle and ran before the Wind Captain Braithwaite not wanting to expose the ladies and children on board to the sights of heated battle. For this we gave him our appreciation. However the ship began gaining and we were forced to stand ready to sell our lives dearly. It was at 2 o'clock PM that the vessel came in range and to our great surprise found ourselves in the company of a privateer under the command of James Aubrey you will of course remember captain Aubrey for the hot work he did when he cut out the French man of war "Le Emperor" at Marseille it seems that he was also under the impression that Napoleon was out. We continue din his company for a number of days before he began to inspect some of the North African ports thus we continued to the Cape.

Upon our arrival we were reliably informed that the story of the French been out was a falsehood spread by those who would sooner see us once more at war to suit there own pockets then to see us at peace. A fast sloop had overtaken us while on the way to the Cape with the fortunate news that the emperor is still tucked up safely in Elba with little prospect of him getting of that island.

I had occasion this very morning to attended Lord Charles who has imparted to me a mission of the utmost importance concerning inspection of an area known as the Zuurviold (Sour

field) for settlement by prospective people of farming quality from England. As this is a mission close to Lord Charles's heart I would ask that you do not spread it abroad until such time as it has been officially confirmed. There is a great depletion of persons in the area in question. I am reliably informed by Lord Charles and a number of those people in the office of the governor that it is one of the best parts of the interior for settlement. The fact that there is an occasional disruption by the natives is of no concern for our superior fire power keeps them in obedience of our rule.

Thus in a weeks time I shall begin my exploration of the African interior I am of the opinion that it will give me much time upon which to work upon a new book of verse which I have lately begun.

Your obedient son  
Thomas Sterley

"Pray dear husband who is this captain Aubrey of whom Tom speaks?" asked Lady Ann. "You will recall my dear that it was in the year 12 when the America's declared war on England. That we first heard of a dashing young commander who by ruse extracted the frigate John from a very precarious position in New York harbor" said Sir Thomas. "Indeed I recall that at the time you said it was a hot piece of work," replied Lady Ann.

"Quite so well the dashing young officer was none other than Captain James Aubrey I believe he has some connection to the earl of Waterford a nephew of sorts I think," said Sir Thomas.

"really husband his lordship if ever thing you have communicated to me is true is the most insufferable tyrant in the whole of Ireland I am surprised that you could have any thing good to say about a relative of his" remarked Lady Ann.

"It is remarkable that some one from his lordships family can be of such a daring nature I have heard that he styles his actions on those of Lord Nelson you will recall my dear that the men used to follow the gallant Nelson in to the very heat of battle with out a care as if they were going to church. Well captain Aubrey is very much the same if I am not mistaken he

is currently seeking out enemies of England in a captured Barbary vessel and ere long the gazettes will be full of his exploits," said Sir Thomas.

"Is he not the same captain Auberry of HMS Surprise?" Asked William Parker who had been sitting listening intently to the conversation. "I do not think so for Captain James Aubrey is a young man of but four and twenty, whilst Captain Aubrey of whom you speak is a man of some seniority," remarked Sir Thomas.

"At this rate dear husband one can say that the service is full of Aubrey's, said Lady Ann thinking herself quite a wit. "The gentlemen looked at each other for a moment before the idea of what Lady Ann had said struck them. Sir Thomas was unable to contain his mirth and begun to shake in response to the jest that his wife had just made. "Indeed madam you are quite in form this afternoon.

"It is indeed gratifying to know that Lord Charles thinks so highly of your son that he sends him on a mission of such importance," remarked Emily Parker. Who did not understand the wit of Lady Ann but was trying to be good company and have some thing to say. "Yes it is most fortuitous that his lordship has the good sense to see the quality of young Tom, said Lady Ann.

"It is of some concern to me that he is been sent in to the country on such a mission has there not been a war of some sort in the region? Of late asked Mr Parker. "I fear that you have greatly underestimated our Tom, sir for he is well equipped to face any adventure which might chance upon his way," replied Sir Thomas.

"Come now brother-in law Sterley surly you can see that my concern is well founded and is in the best interests of young Tom" remarked Mr Parker. "Quite so, I had not thought of it until you mentioned it I trust that the expedition to the interior will be well armed and ready for any occasion" said Sir Thomas.

Missive

Lady Ann Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey

Mrs. Arabella Sterley  
Long Market Square  
Cape Town  
Cape of Good Hope

Dearest Arabella,

I am writing this instant having just returned from Morton to let you know that our Lydia has been delivered of her first born a handsome boy who lit the world know that he had arrived by screaming the moment he arrive din this world. He is the most delightful child with a head of red hair. Which is most surprising to us for neither the Parkers nor we have any relation who is of that color.

Papa is the happiest man in the world happy to know he is at last a grand papa, indeed the moment the message came that Lydia was confined we took the coach and rode to Morton we found George in a high state of nerves upon our arrival. Not knowing what to do with himself at one instant wishing to rush in and assist in the next fearing for dear Lydia. Papa took him in hand and retired with him to the library where they had brandy and cigars. It was most fortunate for it was not an easy birth and after five hours Lydia was all but spent one final push and the young lad came into the world. Announcing his arrival in the most dissatisfying way by yelling the roof of the house.

Of course Papa and George upon hearing the noise rushed up stairs and entered the room much too soon for the mid-wife's liking but as you can imagine they were most anxious to make the acquaintance of the new heir to Morton.

Pray when Tom returns please give him my warmest affections and ask him to write for brother-in-law Parker is most anxious to hear the good news of his return.

Yours Mamma

Mrs. Arabella Sterley  
Long Market Square  
Cape Town  
Cape of Good Hope  
Lady Ann Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey

Dearest Mamma,

In reply to yours I will start by congratulating you and Papa and indeed the whole family on the birth of Lydia's baby. It has been three months now since Tom set out for the interior. I must confess that I did not ever think I would miss him as much as I do. I have had occasion to go about in society with hardly ever a chaperone, for the ladies at the Cape there is not much which can be said. They spend there days much as we spent ours at Oakland's. For Cape Town is very provincial and all the talk is of sheep and horses. The evenings here would have been very long had I not made the acquaintance of a woman of some quality from Ireland. Mrs. Aitcheson whose husband is a general merchant here in the town. She is the most delightful woman who speaks highly of her part of Ireland of course. She has taught me a great many things about life at the Cape which I did not know. Indeed for a woman of humble birth she is remarkable in her knowledge I can only surmise that this knowledge comes from a life time of observation.

Pray give my warmest regards to the whole family at Oakland  
Yours truly,  
Arabella Sterley

## CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

It was a fine evening the windows were open a slight breeze was blowing the assembled company were gathered in the drawing room. The Cape at this time of the year was uncommonly warm the company of gentleman and ladies had taken the opportunity to loosen the proverbial belt. As they relaxed enjoying the fine evening "I hold certain reservations about a number of officials in the colonies government" remarked Alexander Aitcheson in a slight Scots accent. "I would be happy sir if you would advise me," replied Tom. "I have it from a certain doctor who's name shall go unmentioned that there was an occasion where upon there was a duel fought much to his lordships displeasure," said Mr Aitcheson. "I believe I have heard some talk of an insult upon one of the officers of his lordships staff, resulting gin the duel by a certain medical doctor," said Tom. "It is a matter of record that lord Charles has a number of spies who are quick to hurry to the castle with any news that might provoke dissatisfaction among the population," said Mr Aitcheson. "I think we are all aware of the notoriety of Oliver the spy" remarked Mrs. Aitcheson who had been following the conversation from a distance. "I wonder that people can be so unpopular, remarked Arabella who like the rest of the colony was aware of the person known as Oliver the spy the fact that no one knew who this person of infamy did not stop the society from wondering who he or she was for Oliver was notorious for hiding his person under various disguises.

"His lordship has always been most attentive toward me and has always listened even going so far as to add his own comments, upon the matters of my resent travels into the eastern half of the colony" said Tom

"pray Tom tell us of some of the places you saw in your journey" said Ann Aitcheson "for I hear that some of the country is very reminiscent of England" she continued.

"It is a vast country indeed I was much taken by the vast forests and plains upon which great herds of antelope roam, we chanced upon a region where a great forest extended for many days ride here the most magnificent of beasts roamed content in there occupation of feeding for the elephant is a wonderful thing to behold," said Tom the waters of the



streams is the clearest in all the land sweet the fragrance of Africa fills ones nose with expectation” he continued.

“my dear madam you might have heard that the existent of the colony is reminiscent of England it is true that there are some places that have a certain reminiscence but far more of the country is new and unexplored we went much further then we were instructed and came at last into the kingdom of the Zulu’s a fearsome race bent on expansion of there territory. Had it not been for the murder of there king Sharka a few seasons back I believe they might even now be much closer then they now are. For there King chanced upon a new method of warfare unbeknown to those primitive tribes who fell before them.” There current King a lazy fellow of large proportions is content to count the cattle in his kraal. Thus danger has been averted for I was surprised to find a mission station in quite close to the Homestead of the king where young woman of the tribe go to be schooled and taught the glorious gospel of repentance and the love of Christ” said Tom

It is always pleasing to find that there are those who are about the Lords business” remarked Mrs. Aitcheson.

“I have never held with the London missionary Society gives the natives too many airs and graces” remarked Mr Aitcheson. “ I am surprised at you sir for I would have thought that as a Scot you would of all people have been more forward thinking in this regard” said Arabella.

“Then madam I am afraid I will have to remove that disillusion from your mind” replied Alexander Aitcheson. “Arabella dear my husband has been in the colony for a number of years and knows best how these things work pray consider this matter at an end,” said Ann Aitcheson. For the good woman feared she knew to well her husbands contempt for those who believed they knew best how to treat the natives. She had a long time ago learned that what ever her personal beliefs that Alexander Aitcheson son of a ancient Scots house was not to be persuaded in his beliefs that you could take the native out of the bush but not the bush out of the native.

“I think sir you are mistaken in your assumption that all natives are bad,” said Tom for in my travels I had a number in my company and they seemed to be the happiest of people with joy upon their countenance and greeted each task with vigor,” he continued.

“Then young Tom you have been singularly fortunate for I have in my service a rouse who is like many of his fellows a vagabond who only works under the most serious supervision and is one of the laziest persons on the face of the earth” replied Alexander Aitcheson.

“Sir I wonder at your description it is like saying all Scots see but money and are concerned about nothing else” said Arabella crossly. “My dear lady let me tell you that when I first came to the colony I was like you ready to believe the best of all people but I was soon relieved of my good intentions when on the very day of my landing rouse by relived me of my purse. When caught he was dead drunk in a wine shop,” replied Mr Aitcheson. I was surprised to learn that he was a free man and not one of those poor wretches that they sell upon the block in the square,” he continued

When brought before the magistrate what pray was his excuse?” asked Mr Aitcheson “I will tell you he wanted money to show his friends that he was a gentleman of means. This been said on my account” he ended.

I believe you have been singular in your bad luck in connection with regard to the natives” said Tom now anxious to put an end to the heated debate “ furthermore let us put aside this matter till we have been in the colony a while longer so that we might properly form our opinions’, he ended.

## CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

Cape of Good Hope

20<sup>th</sup> February 1815

From

Thomas Sterley

To

Sir Thomas Sterley

Oakland Park Surrey

England

Dearest Papa,

Having recently returned from the eastern part of the country I must advise you that it was a most significant journey it is a wild place with many strange creatures the great antelope roam freely upon the plains while the elephants of which there are a great number prefer to forage in the forests.

I am sending you a few specimens of the bird life as you requested in particular I would draw your attention to the stuffed ibis which is known here as a Ha did a for its distinctive call. These creatures are indeed the most numerous of all ornithological which I have yet observed in my travels.

Of life at the Cape there is not much to say unless one counts the occasional arrivals from England or India, this very morning arrived here Captain J Aubrey you will recall I wrote to you previously of this officer. It appears that the reason for the captain been aboard a Barbary pirate was to entrap a number of similar vessels. However he chanced upon a French brig which was making its way from the Cape under the impression that old Bonny was out when the same opened fire Captain Aubrey very cleverly pretended surrender upon the approach of the Frenchman he lead a party aboard the Frenchman it was I believe a heated battle for in the course of the occurrence a number of first rate officers and men under the command of the good captain fell never the less notwithstanding the fact the Frenchman was taken. It was this vessel which captain Aubrey then brought back to the Cape.

"I was present when Captain Aubrey and the governor met it was to say a most formal meeting, the governor not been pleased to be placed under an obligation to the dashing captain. Arabella is quite taken by the Captain and has

prevailed upon me to ask him to dine with us before he sets out once more for home shores.

I have had occasion to witness a number of incidents under which his lordship has proven to be a very hard man, this I fear will be his downfall for indeed I have on occasion trembled with anger at some of the remarks made by his lordship. On other occasions I have overheard his lordship speaking ill of worthy officers who have displeased him some of the time the reason be exceedingly small yet his lordship takes it as a personal affront and would sooner treat these officers and gentlemen with a slight then speak openly of what irks him.

The disadvantage of Lord Charles's character was first brought to my attention by a gentleman of the colony one Mr Alexander Aitcheson. Who I believe is related to that family of Musselburg in the Midlothian's who some time previously have done some service to the crown. I was reliable informed that his lordship has sent about the colony a number of Spies who's greatest delight is reporting secretly to his lordship on all matters continuing in the colony. As you may imagine this has lead to no end of problems for the officers of the colony having there every step questioned and then confirming it by the word of paid spies. There is a saying of the most infamous of the spies we no not his real name thus he goes about in popular imagination and society as Oliver the spy.

Thus I am certain that as soon as I am able to find advancement out of the colony I will jump at the chance even if it means going further away to India for here life is uncommon hard under Lord Charles.

Your obedient son  
Thomas

From  
Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
England

To  
Thomas Sterley

Cape Town

Dear Tom,

In reply to yours of the 20th instant it is with growing concern I read your words had I but known of the reputation of Lord Charles I would as a matter of course have declined the commission. However that been said it is best that you pursue to the best of your abilities every opportunity that presents itself for the good of your reputation and the good name of the family. I fear Lord Charles is a great man with many important social connections and it would but a trifle to him to spoil your reputation with innuendo and slander. Please sir remember that you have brothers who will soon need to find commissions and as we are of noble house with little to signify us from the countless other small houses I would ask that you try by all means possible to appease Lord Charles. To be honest sir I would advise you to have a care and consider you r family before you act in a way which would bring shame to the name of Sterley.

I have spoken with Lord Hood of the navy in connection with Captain Aubrey he imparted to me that the captain is bound for great things, it would be a good connection to make by all means invite him to dine and offer him every consideration at your disposal.

Give our warmest regards to dear Arabella

Yours affectionately  
Thomas Sterley

“Sir Thomas sealed the letter and sat for a moment considering what he would do next upon the table before him sat the ibis which Tom had sent him it was a most handsome peace. Some thing that he could cherish and display to its best advantage. He was pleased with the bird for he considered it his singular fortune to posses such a wonderful gift. He was sure that there were very few persons of quality in the whole of England who had such a thin gin there possession.

It was a cold winter morning the crack in the window blew cold air into the chamber Sir Thomas rose and used the poker to build the fire up

## CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

“It is a certainty we the Corsican rouge has escaped Elba” said Sir Thomas “I cannot say it is unexpected” remarked William Parker. “There have been expecting some thing of the sort for a while now,” said Sir Thomas “No doubt we will soon once more be at war” said Mr Parker. “If I was a younger man I would volunteer for a command at an instant,” said Sir Thomas. “Dear husband you surprise me for did you not swear you would never take another recommend whilst the Prince regent ruled?” enquired Lady Ann. “Indeed I said that I would never serve in a government with him at the head, this dose not necessarily follow that I would not serve in the navy, he concluded.

I fear dear husband that you have taken leave of your senses for to serve in the navy would be the same as serving the Prince regent” replied Lady Ann.

“Have no fear on my account madam for I have no intention of going off to fight old Bonny, I am aware that there are quite sufficient men of rank who are more adapt at this sort of warfare than I,” he replied. “What say you brother-in-Law Parker shall we adjourn to the gun room and try a snifter of brandy?” he asked of his neighbor.

“That sir is a splendid thought I have often wondered at your ability to procure at short notice the nectar of the god’s,” remarked Mr Parker as he rose from his seat by the fire and walked out of the room.

“It is but an easy commodity if you know the right revenue officers in Nothingay for they have a great store of the stuff set aside for worthies who can pay for it,” said Sir Thomas following him out of the room.

“More tea Emily,” enquired Lady Ann as she lifted the tea pot from the tray.” Thank you sister-in-law that would be nice,” said Mrs. Parker “I believe the lad will be christened next Sunday he is a wonderful child, William is quite taken by our grandson,” remarked Emily Parker. It seems that he is to be named George William after his father and grand father,” she continued. “I am aware of it Thomas was quite upset that he did not receive a passing reference in the naming but I believe we settled the matter when George promised that the next child will be given my husbands name,” said Lady Ann.

The naming of children can be very troubling for it brings the whole family out every one has some thing to say” remarked Emily Parker. “Pray how is young Peter we have not seen much of him these resent months I assume he will return to his regiment now with Bonaparte been free?” said Lady Ann.

“I fear we will not be able to stop him for he is indeed singularly of the opinion that weather it be peace or war he will remain an officer in his regiment a military career is his lot in life,” said Mrs. Parker.

“It is best to leave these men to there own devises for if we interfere to much they will shortly be in the kitchen disrupting the whole household thus if they will play at soldering then let them do it for as long as they so desire,” said Lady Ann who like her companion had experienced life once there husbands had returned from war.

“I have invited Lydia and George to call on us here at Oakland once they have settled the matter of the child’s christening” said Lady Ann. That is quite a wonderful bit of news,” said Emily Parker for it meant that now she would have not so far to go to see her grand child. “Pray how long will they stay?” she asked. “One is never certain with George for he is not one to leave his estate over long on any excursion but I expect that Lydia will stay for three weeks,” said Lady Ann

In the gun room a conversation of another kind was taking place for the old sea dogs were content to sip there brandy and speak of war.

“I think Sir that you are quite mistaken Wellington will not allow himself to be caught again with his draws down he will fight he will bring Bonny to his knees,” said Sir Thomas upon a remark that William Parker had made about the services of war not been in a state of readiness to fight the French.

“I beg to your indulgence Sir Thomas pray remember these twenty years we have been at war most of the men in the service have never known peace and what little they have known of peace will not make them ready for another long and protracted war,” said William Parker

“Have a care sir you speak of England’s greatest asset for with out stout hearts of old England the Corsican tyrant would have long since ruled from London,” replied Sir Thomas growing hot with fighting spirit.

“If you will recall sir,” said Mr Parker when we first went to war none of us believed that the war would continue for such a long time, we further more when it became apparent did not shrink from our duty. I only implied that those regiments that have returned from the continent are not in readiness to proceed to the continent. The Army sir is not like the Navy where you can press men at a moments notice” said Mr Parker

“I beg your pardon brother-in-Law Parker for I did not get your point however I see the truth of your remark plainly now, said Sir Thomas “Pray Sir do not hold it against me, for an old fighting man it is passing difficult to imagine a regiment not in readiness, but mayhap you are right” said Sir Thomas.

“I am not a man to hold grudges Sir pray put your min at rest Sir Thomas for some one had to play the devil’s reprehensive” said William Parker.

‘Quite so, quite so,’ said Sir Thomas “More brandy William” he asked of Mr Parker



## CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

“It has seems that that most fortunate of gentlemen Captain James Aubrey has been mentioned in the gazette” said Sir Thomas as he laid aside the broadsheet which his attention had been fixed upon. “I was wondering when you would invite the captain to Oakland’s” remarked Lady Ann her attention upon the piece of needlework before her. “It is the best news for young Aubrey for he is given command of Redoubtable a first rate ship of the line I am most impressed with his cool head in the resent action” said Sir Thomas.

“Then sir you must make haste for we have daughters in the house who might find the dashing young captain to there liking indeed a proposal of marriage might even come of an invitation to stay” said Lady Ann

“Pray dear wife which of our daughters do you have in mind for the brave Captain Aubrey?” enquired Sir Thomas. “Why husband have you not noticed that your favorite daughter Sophia is of a marriageable age?” asked Lady Ann. “Sophia is but a child admittedly forward for her age but still just a child,” said Sir Thomas defensively. Laughing Lady Ann said “Sir you are very much mistaken for she is out in society and has grown a great deal you see her as a child because you have always counted her as your favorite,” “It is true that it seems like just the other day when I first took her upon my knee and played with her,” said Sir Thomas. “It is time sir that she was married,” said Lady Ann.

“Of course you are right Ann I will write to the good captain and hear weather he is able to come to Oakland’s,” said Sir Thomas.

“Missive

From  
Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey  
1 April 1815

To Captain James Aubrey RN  
HMS Redoubtable  
Portsmouth

England

Dear Captain Aubrey,

My most heartfelt congratulations upon your recent appointment to Redoubtable, I have followed with the greatest attention your activities since hearing from my son Tom at the Cape of an incident south of Gibraltar.

I would be exceedingly pleased if you find occasion to come to Oakland Park for a visit. I am aware Sir that you might not at this time be able to do this as a result of the war, However when the occasion arises please be aware that the inhabitants of Oakland would not be displeased at your coming.

My wife imparted to me that when you come all efforts will be made to have a number of balls, assemblies and the like so that you might get to know the families of quality that live around our town of Notheringay which has a number of ancient family seats.

Pray sir I would ask that you inform me by return of post when it will be convenient for you. That all may be put in readiness for your visit

Your obedient servant  
Thomas Sterley

From: Captain James Aubrey RN  
HMS Redoubtable  
Portsmouth  
England

To: Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey

Sir in reply to yours of the first instant  
I would find it a most happy occasion to call upon you at Oakland Park however I must plead duty before pleasure. If it is not too much trouble I would find it very gratifying to visit Oakland upon the completion of my current duty. Which I foresee will take a number of weeks before I will be able to

consider joining to Oakland. I have not before been to your part of England but I hope to rectify this grievous oversight with in a short period

I remain  
Your humble servant  
Capt James Aubrey.

“There we have it my dear it is as I suspected Captain Aubrey is delayed by his loyalty to the Crown,” remarked Sir Thomas as he handed the letter he had just been reading to his wife.

“I suspect that err long we shall see the good captain here at Oakland’s” he continued “he has a fine hand as ever I saw,” remarked Lady Ann as she studied the letter. “It is a fair hand I grant you,” said Sir Thomas “However he is unable at this time thus we will have to forego the pleasure of the captains company until such times that the matter of war is concluded,” remarked Sir Thomas.

“Husband I have never stood against you in any matter of importance since you have retired from government. I can but mark one observation plan to you which has irked me greatly,” said Lady Ann “Pray dear wife speak your mind let the matter which irks you come forth for how else are we to set to rights that which is wrong,” said Sir Thomas.

“Your reasons for leaving the service of your country are no doubt sound but they have brought upon us a whole host of other in convinces which would be but a matter of academics if they were not of such importance that they affect our standing in society,” said Lady Ann.

“I take it that you are referring to the fact that because I hold no seat in government I do not have every lackey or servant of the crown come hither and do my bidding when I so desire?” asked Sir Thomas.

“You are correct in your assumption Sir for had you still retained your seat the good captain would immediately have found the occasion to come when you wrote to him,” she replied

“Madam you are mistaken for you will some day realize that men of the service have there duty to do first social occasions if they are not in the first instance a matter of diplomatic engagement will always suffer to come second to duty,” said Sir Thomas

“I am of the opinion sir that if you had remand in parliament you would have still had a greater influence and ability to advance the cause of your family to an even greater advantage then is our current state,” said Lady Ann

## CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

It was a fine summer evening when Captain Aubrey arrived at Oakland's his coming was not altogether unexpected, for Sir Thomas and Lady Ann had been in a high state of agitation for more then a week since receiving a letter from the gentleman in question.

The week prior to his arrival had been quite a busy one with a great many things occupying the minds of the residence of Oakland. Lady Ann had been in a state of excitement in getting a new wardrobe for Sophia that she might be shown to her best advantage. Old Tilley from Notheringay was to be got in to stay for the duration of the good captains visit too dress Sophia's hair.

"Sir Thomas on the other hand found the time to do a bit of writing on the account of the birdlife of which he was so fond. In the hopes that he might find a fellow enthusiast in the person of the young Captain.

"We hope that your journey here was a comfortable one," said Sir Thomas as Captain Aubrey climbed from the coach. "It was passing tolerable replied the young navel officer with a smile. William will show you to your chamber pray avail yourself of every comfort that is at hand," said Sir Thomas. "I thank you for that Sir Thomas for it has been extraordinary long day" remarked the captain as she hoisted his sea chest upon his shoulder much to the amazement of Sir Thomas who was about to instruct a servant to take the chest. It was an uncommon thing for a gentleman to carry his own baggage when invited to a house of a nobleman thus it seemed to Sir Thomas that he had been offended but had he known the nature of the young sea officer he would have been surprised to find although he was of a ancient and noble line he was a man with out any pretensions. This gave him an uncommon advantage over men of quality for he deemed himself to be a leader of man he must as a matter of course get his proverbial hands dirty.

At dinner he was made to sit next to Sophia who was dressed in a new pink dress with her hair done to perfection by the faithful Tilley. The conversation dwelt on the maters of common interest Sir Thomas spoke at great length about his

service to the crown whilst in the navy to which the young Captain listened with great intent. Indeed so much so that Lady Ann was forced to protest Sir Thomas usage of the good captain's time.

"Really husband you have hardly given the captain time to make the acquaintance of Sophia who is looking quite ravishing don't you think captain Aubrey" she said "I have seldom had the pleasure of such good company, miss Sophia you will allow me to say that I find that pink dress a most delightful shade," said the young captain as she lifted a glass of cherry to his lips. "Why captain Aubrey you make me blush this is but a simple dress which Mamma has recently improved upon never the less I thank you for your complement" said Sophia.

"Did you know captain that our Sophia plays the pianoforte exceedingly well do you play?" Asked Lady Ann "Indeed I had the singular honor of playing upon the organ at Great Wisham before I joined I was of course meant for the church but circumstances decreed otherwise," said Aubrey. "That is a great pity for the church, remarked Sir Thomas. "I imagine that your new command is quite a large vessel?" said William "Indeed it is a ship of a hundred guns and a great many crew," replied Aubrey.

"It was most fortunate that you fell in with HMS Ocean when you did was it not" remarked Mary as she bit into a piece of bread. "Indeed it was very fortuitous for me for had I not we would not later have taken as prize the Spaniard," replied Captain Aubrey.

"Do you mean to say you know all the names of the crew aboard your ship?" asked James who had not thus far taken any part in the conversation. Turning to the boy the assembled party thought they saw in his eyes a far away look of wonder and excitement for surely he of all the children of Sir Thomas was meant for the navy.

"Aye lad that is about the size of it for a sea captain and moreover a captain in the royal navy must know the name of every man who serves aboard his ship. For in battle ones life might very well depend on the service of one of those fine

fellows who serves under your command,” said Captain Aubrey.

“When I am grown I shall be a captain in the royal navy,” said the lad as he returned his attention to a piece of mutton, which rested sublimely on his plate amongst a mountain of mashed potatoes.

“Pray tell captain have you any plans for what you will do when the war is finally finished?” asked Lady Ann. “I have not given it much thought I will one day leave the sea I imagine return to the old family seat at Great Wisham,” he said.

“What sort of place is Great Wisham?” asked Sir Thomas. “It is much like any other country estate, large house, town balls assemblies farmers that sort of thing and then of course there is the castle build by the Normans a great monument of a place we seldom have guests to the castle it is by far one of the coldest castles I all of Europe” said Aubrey

“If we live din a castle I am sure we would have the grandest time making the place habitable and cozy” remarked Mary. “Do you have hunting there” enquired Sir Thomas. “We have deer and some fowl in the great forest, Old Wisham how long since I have been there,” remarked the captain as if lost in thought. Nevertheless, a moment later he began tot tell a tale of pirates and gunfire which kept the room enraptured for a good while. When dinner was finally over every one was tired for they had stayed overlong at dinner listening to the stories of the sea, while the moon rose.

### CHAPTER THIRTY

"I have taken the waters at Bath," said Lydia, "it is the most remarkable thing," "It seems my dear that Bath has done wonders for your complexion," remarked Lady Ann. "George of course did not like it he found the waters not to his liking," said Lydia. As she handed the infant to her mother "He has put on a pound or two," said Lady Ann as she bounced the child upon her knee.

"Mamma who is the young navel officer who I see with Papa in the gun room?" asked Lydia. "That dear Lydia is our brave guest Captain Aubrey I imagine he and papa are checking the dueling pistols," said Lady Ann. "Pray why would they be checking the dueling pistols? Asked Lydia.

"It seems an officer of the rifles who is living in the village thinks his honor was defamed the other night by a passing remark young Aubrey made. Thus the gentlemen will be meeting at sunset to settle the matter," said Lady Ann. "I detest dueling it is barbaric," replied Lydia.

"If a gentleman's honor has been impinged my dear there is nothing for it but to have his honor restored by means of a duel," remarked Lady Ann. "I pray that they have the good sense to fire high," said Lydia. "That is indeed my hope" replied Lady Ann.

"I have no desire to see either of the officers wounded," said Lady Ann "but you know what gentlemen are like and I would remind you that in society there is no other way to restore ones honor," said Lady Ann

"So what is it to be a duel to the death or first blood?" asked Lydia "I believe it is first blood," said Lady Ann. "Who will stand as the captains second in this matter?" asked Lydia. "Captain Aubrey came to here at our invitation and papa feels it only fair that he stand as his second in this matter" said Lady Ann. "really Mamma doesn't papa have the good sense to know that he should not partake in these matters for I have always though that dueling is the prerogative of younger men, Papa should consider his duty to you, to his family first," said Lydia



“My dear daughter it is incumbent upon your dear papa as a good host to stand as the captain's second in this matter,” said Lady Ann “There will be no stopping it I am afraid for the other officer is a proud and haughty man of a good family,” remarked Lady Ann

George Parker entered the drawing room came over and kissed his wife upon the cheek “George you must help papa,” said Lydia in a high state of nerves “for he has promised to stand as second for captain Aubrey and I am not entirely sure that he has not taken leave of his senses,” said Lydia.

“Aubrey is a good man and I do not think papa has taken leave of his senses I have offered my services to stand as a second to him and he has accepted my offer with a great deal of gratitude,” said George. “Oh no not you to George what is to become of us with you and papa dueling what will poor Mamma do if papa is killed?” asked Lydia “what is to become of our poor child growing up in this world with out a father and grand papa?” she continued.

“Lydia behave like a lady this matter is not a duel to the death I am sure that once the gentlemen have agreed on the rules honor will be satisfied and all will be as it should be” said Lady Ann.

“George glanced towards Lady Ann with a look of understanding and gratitude for Lady Ann knew how best to handle her daughter.

“I must be away for a short while to arrange this matter with the officers of the rifles” said George. “I shall return directly for papa has said we shall try a snifter of a new cognac he has recently got,” he continued before leaving the room.

“Well now this is a fine mess,” we are in said Lydia as she dried her tears,” My dear Lydia you have naught to fear for seldom do the gentlemen fire to kill at most one of them shall be slightly wounded,” said Lady Ann. “shall we ring for tea?” she enquire of Lydia. “I have a fancy for some thing stronger do you have any Madera in the house?” she asked

'I am sure that we do I shall have one of the maids bring it directly tell me how was Bath I have on occasion prevailed upon your father to take the waters but he is most strongly against the waters of Bath," Said Lady Ann.

"It is a town with much to recommend it I had occasion to see in the high street Miss Austen, you have no doubt heard us speak of her she is a writer of remarkable stories, which she reads of an evening to her family" said Lydia

"I have read one of her books I would not be surprised if she will one day be the foremost lady writer in England," said Lady Ann. "however I am much more fond of the writings of Mrs. Burney," said Lady Ann.

"Pray tell what sort of woman is miss Austen in appearance?" enquired lady Ann. "She is not over handsome however she has a fair complexion she is of medium height and carries herself with a great deal of grace," said Lydia once more warming to the subject of her favorite writer.

"She is singularly fortunate in that she can follow an occupation which brings her joy and allows her to do the things she loves best," said Lydia.

"I have always wanted to write," said Lady Ann. "But Mamma I have seen you doing the very thing I have observed you writing for hours on end when papa is not home," replied Lydia. "I take it you mean my scribbling they are nothing much just random bits of nonsense which take my fancy," said Lady Ann

## CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

The sun was on the verge of setting the two coaches stood in the clearing, the assembled officers and gentlemen stood discussing the rules of engagement.

“Gentlemen the following will apply,” said George Parker to his left stood three officers of the rifles the insulted officer lieutenant David Davis listened intently for he knew that what was to follow was of great importance.

“The lieutenant and the captain are to take twenty paces; each will have the opportunity of firing twice more if the first shots do not find there mark.” George continued. “As arranged first blood will settle the debit of honor, are we clear upon this?” he asked the voices of the assembled men assented to the correctness of the rules. There after the second of lieutenant Davis approached Captain Aubrey. “Are you willing to accede that you were wrong in this matter,” he asked. “I am afraid I cannot withdraw my statement for it is true,” replied Aubrey.

“To your places gentlemen” said George, the two duelists began to remove there coats and prepare for what must surly follow. Sir Thomas and the second from the lieutenant’s party checked the pistols before offering first choice of weapons to the rifles officer. He chose with great care the pistol, although both were a matching pair having been made in London in the year 1780. Returning Sir Thomas offered the remaining pistol to Captain Aubrey, who lifted it lightly in his hand testing the weight before moving into the place designated. The early evening mists were rolling in with fine dew beginning to make its presents felt upon the leaves of the surrounding forest. The field of honor had been chosen for its obscurity the fact that it was in the great forest of Oakland made it ideal for the current purpose.

The second for the army officer lifted his handkerchief and waited but a moment before the men began to mark there paces. Both men it seemed took there paces with a leisurely pace. Turning they faced each other lieutenant Davis waited but a moment took aim the clearing was filled with the sound of the shot a cloud of grey gun smoke filling the air, a number of nesting inhabitants of the forest rose to the air in confusion as the sound of the shot reverberated. In moment it appeared

that, the officer had missed his mark for Captain Aubrey stood uninjured now waiting his turn.

Measuring well his aim, he fired high the cloud of smoke rising like an offering to the deity of honor. Immediately the seconds inspected the pistols and reloaded them returning them to the protagonists.

One more lieutenant Davis took aim and fired this time the fire brought down a branch, James Aubrey once again took his time to aim he had no wish to harm his opponent for it was not in his nature to hurt an officer when it was not in a matter of war thus when he fired the shot was wide and clipped one of the great oaks.

For the third time the men loaded, the weapons before returning them to the combatants Davis took aim and fired. This time the ball found its mark wounding Aubrey in the arm. "Gentlemen I thank you honor has been satisfied" remarked the officer of the rifles as he closed with Aubrey now to shake his opponents hand. For during the duel the young man had become aware of certain truths and he considered Aubrey a worth opponent. Furthermore, the young man had become aware that life was too short to be lost over a trifle. Sir Thomas and George wrapped a sheet around the young navel officer's arm and lead him off towards the coach. While the driver collected the pistols and deposited them in the hold all at the rear of the coach in a few moments the clearing was deserted for the officers of the rifles had also made there departure.

It fell to Lady Ann and her daughters to tend the young captain as he recovered from the wound of honor, at first it did not seem if he would make a full recovery for he fell into a fever of the most vigor which kept the woman of the house busy at all hours cooling his brow. Poor Sophia was his constant companion as he tossed and turned in the bed the doctor

Came on the very first evening after the duel to clean the wound and remove the ball, which had lodged itself in the captain's upper arm. Upon surveying the wound, he had shaken his head and mentioned some thing about the habits of young gentlemen been foolish in the extreme.

Where as when the bandage was removed for, dressing the following morning the captain had thought nothing of it saying he had recived far more serious wounds while at sea.

However, the weather been warm he had fallen into the aforementioned fever, which brought on hallucinations of the most frightful kind for his dreams were filled with the enemy ships over powering his vessel. At times, he would cry out at others he would slump back into the bed unconscious of his surroundings the fever raged for three days during which Lady Ann, Lydia and Sophia tended to him. On the morning of the fourth day, he awoke early to find Lady Ann asleep in the chair next to his bed. Sophia was reading by the fire. Speaking softly for the first time he asked Sophia for a glass of water. Moreover, bid her not to wake her mother for he knew that what must have passed had taken a lot from the woman sleeping in the chair.

There on a quite morning as the sun rose the two young people sat and talked softly of there dreams and hopes. James Aubrey was gladdened to find in Sophia a young woman who was not in the least expectant of making a great noise in society. but preferred living quietly in the country, she spoke of her love for her sisters of the tender love she felt for the animals which had come injured to the back door where the under gardener might have wrung the neck of a young chick. However, she had taken the bird and brought it to its adulthood much to the satisfaction of her papa. For in itself it was but a little thing but to win the praise of her papa was a big thing. She was fond of her papa for she found in her father a friend be it many years her senior but a friend with whom she could express her deepest fears and hopes. She wondered at herself been so forward with the young man in the bed for she had never before spoken thus with any one let alone a member of the opposite sex.

It was at a quarter after seven when Lady Ann awoke from her slumber her first reaction was to check to see if her patient was any better. to her delight she discovered the captain and Sophia upon the balcony in close company speaking as friends of old do, this suited her desire to make the good captain her son in law thus she withdrew with out letting them know that she had seen them.

## CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

It was one of those rainy evenings toward the middle of the year of 1815 the Sterley's and there assembled guests were gathered in the library it been the warmest room in the house. Upon a side table, lay the post a number of dispatches lay open upon the table. The Parkers senior and junior had come to dinner and had been detained by the unusual downpour of rain. Thus, they would be staying the night, been unable to return to there respective homes due to the condition of the roads as it had been raining for more then three days. There venturing to Oakland's had it not been previously arranged would have been forgone. However, as the needs of polite society demanded there presents they had made the journey to the house during a brief respite in the rain.

Sophia's joy at finding a person of like intelligence in the company of James Aubrey was only surpass at the joy that was about to great the house with news that Sir Thomas was about to impart.

"You will be pleased to know my dear" he said to Lady Ann, "that I have some most remarkable news to give you," "Pray continue husband do not keep us all in suspense" she replied as she stitched a particularly difficult flower upon the cloth.

"You will be delighted to hear that I am promoted to the rank of vice admiral of the blue in recognition of past services to the crown," he said. "Congratulation Sir I am most pleased to hear this," said Captain Aubrey as he crossed the room to shake the hand of Sir Thomas.

"That is most fortuities news husband, advancement is always welcome," said Lady Ann. "That is not all for Lord Hood has written me on a matter of urgency in regard to this promotion and has requested that I once more take up my seat in the house to deal with matter of urgency. It seems my dear you are to have your wish for I have conceded to the request thus shortly I will be leaving for London," said Sir Thomas to the expressions of joy this news was greeted with by the assembled company. "I am very glad for your promotion brother in law, a most singular honor upon your part," said William Parker. "I thank you William it is most welcome, Ann I am sure will be the most content with this news ," said Sir

Thomas “indeed husband I am very happy with the outcome of the situation, it is the most welcome news that we have had in a long time here at Oakland,” the lady in question said.

“As soon as the rain stops I will be going to London to speak with Lord Hood, it is fortunate that the house in London has been made ready for us on the occasion of Mary’s coming out,” said Sir Thomas. “Indeed we will be able to combine matter of business with pleasure,” said Lady Ann who was exceedingly happy as she bounced her grandson upon her knee.

“I see that Lord Bromley the son of the Earl of Waterford has been mentioned in the latest dispatches he has been promoted a colonel in the king’s own regiment,” said Sir Thomas as he scrutinized the documents in his hand. “What an insufferable man the Earl is I wonder sir that his son is not of the same type of man as his father,” said Lady Ann

Have a care Madam the officer who you so maliciously speak is a relative of our guest Captain Aubrey” said Sir Thomas “I beg to inform you sir that I am not in the least offended Lady Ann has chosen to make her sentiments clear for this I cannot blame her,” said Captain Aubrey. “Never the less I have found Lord Peter to be a good friend of old we had occasion to spend a summer together. I think it was 03 in Paris, but I fear that my cousin and I have not been close since then the war has kept us busy. Of my uncle of Waterford I cannot say much for we have never been close,” remarked Captain Aubrey

“I will say that it was not my intent to return to government but as I have been pressed by both the navy and my good wife I have no option,” said Sir Thomas. “I have always considered it my duty and a matter of honor to serve England in any capacity that comes to hand,” remarked Aubrey.

“Sir when I left the house it was a matter of honor I find that at the time I was some what foolish for I had previously had occasion to cross the prince regent fearing that I would fall by the wayside in his efforts to extract a vengeance. I withdrew from the house. However I now have it on a good authority that this was not the case and I have no concerns now returning to the house,” even if it is not in the same capacity as my former occupation” said Sir Thomas.

“Thus we will be adjourning to London I trust captain Aubrey you will join us at our house in London,” said Lady Ann. “It will be my pleasure to spend time with your family in London” replied the captain

Two days later the Sterley’s left Oakland’s in three coaches the roads having dried over the previous day. The family enjoying a lit meal of jellied ells and fresh bread at a roadside inn as they journeyed London ward. The company that arrive din London was one which was filled with expectant hopes and desires for Sophia it was of great comfort to know that she would not so soon be parted from James Aubrey. Lady Ann’s happiness at going to London was a mixed one for it allowed her to renew social connections, which she had of late been unable to maintain. This pleasure was also combined with the upcoming coming out of her youngest daughter Mary who was now turning fifteen.



### CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

The house was filled to capacity it seemed that every member was present and each had some thing to say the voices of the gathered assembly filled the place with argument and counter argument. When it came time for Sir Thomas to speak there came upon the house s subjugation of voices as he began to speak.

“Lords gentlemen and subjects of the realm t has fallen upon me to give you this day the state of the navy,” he said

“Ill warrant the accounting is of an old nature,” said a gentleman loudly who stood a little to the left of Captain Aubrey in the open gallery. “It is with great pleasure that I tell you that there has been a reduction in the size of the fleet, resulting my Lords in a reduction of five and twenty thousand pounds,” said Sir Thomas. This news was greeted with a display of applause for it seemed that the cause of the navy was indeed good. Sir Thomas continued in this manner for some time. To captain Aubrey who stood in the public gallery there seemed a number of nobles there assembled who did not take the presence of Sir Thomas as a personal affront. For it became apparent to members that the Earl of Watford and a few others had not much confidence nor trust in Sir Thomas’s words thou, he spoke with great wit and conviction. The number did not in any way acknowledge the words with applause or rapping upon the floor with there feet as others did.

Sir Thomas spoke for a full three-quarters of an hour upon completion he said “My Lords Peers of the realm, assembly men I thank you,” before taking his seat. Taking his seat the house resounding with the clapping of hands for he had indeed presented to the house a sound and concise speech on the condition of the navy for the year 15.

The earl of Waterford rose and begun to speak “I thank previous speaker for his words upon the subject of which he is no doubt made himself master. However there is a matter of duty and loyalty to the crown upon which I would like Sir Thomas to address,” he said the formerly quieted gentlemen who had retained there silence now began to shout, “Hear, hear,” “order, order in the house,” said the speaker of the house.

“My Lords gentleman when in former times during the late wars Sir Thomas saw it fit to regain his seat. Ostensibly on the excuse of family matters, now I tell you my Lords I doubt it not that it was family matter. The question is which family for I have it upon good authority that he resigned for he would not serve under any government over which the most sovereign Prince George was head,” he said. “Now it comes as a great surprise to me that today I find Sir Thomas come among us, yet the his highness the prince regent is still our head? I can only but wonder at what other promises Sir Thomas has made which he will find that he will break,” he continued. The house erupted in a roar of voices those defending Sir Thomas and those agreeing with the Earl. “Order, order in the house shouted the speaker rapping with his gravel. Largely ignored by the gathered parliamentarians as they continued to shout insults at each other. “It seems my Lord the Earl of Waterford is indeed hit upon a truth,” said the officer who now stood near Captain Aubrey. I believe my lord the earl to be correct in his assumption that Sir Thomas is cowardly,” he said to a lady who seemed vaguely familiar to Captain Aubrey. “Sir you presume too much, Sir Thomas is an honorable man who has returned to the benches at the request of the admiralty, and threw no wish of his own other then to serve his country,” said Aubrey. “He is a coward,” replied the man taking his glove from his hand captain Aubrey slapped the man in the face with it and said. “my card my seconds will await you at your convenience,” The officer took the card and bowed at your service sir as he extended his hand with his card, my seconds will call upon you” he said.

“James, James Aubrey” said the young woman “do you not remember me Virginia Bromley we spent a summer together at Great Witham do you not recall it?” She asked.

“Indeed I do madam I am however surprised to find you in the company of this gentleman who finds it an amusement to insult my friend Sir Thomas,” said Aubrey

“You may be surprised to know that the gentleman that you have just challenged is Sir Benjamin Witling my fiancé the best swordsman in England” she remarked sharply. “Then I have been singularly misfortunate as to have to defend my

friend against my uncle of Waterford and this gentleman at the same instant” said the captain as he bowed before turning his back and leaving the assembly.

The captain retired to the house Oxford Street where he found the woman of the Sterley family reading themselves for an evening of light entertainment at the theater. He had scarce been in doors half an hour before Sir Thomas returned.

“Sir I fear I have put you under an obligation of honor much to my discontent,” said Sir Thomas “I am happy to oblige that young popinjay needs to be taken down a peg or to,” said the captain.

“Pray inform us gentlemen what has transpired that you are in such a lather?” asked Lady Ann. “It seems that the Earl of Waterford has taken an exception in the house to the speech and character of your good husband,” said the young officer.

“It is indeed a matter of honor upon which we now have to proceed I fear,” said Sir Thomas to his wife. “Oh no Tom not another duel wont you ever come to your senses,” she asked.

“It was not I who demanded it my love,” said the old navy officer now it is a matter of two duels in as many days I fear for young Aubrey has challenged Sir Benjamin Witling who is reputed to be the best swords man in England,” said Sir Thomas.

“I have an engagement of honor to which will take place the day after tomorrow if you will do me the service of been my second Captain Aubrey I would be most pleased,” said Sir Thomas

“Sir I would consider it an honor, should I survive the field of honor tomorrow morning I will of a certainty act as your second,” said the officer. “It is singularly unfortunate that I have now put you in to disrepute with your family,” said Sir Thomas.

“Sir I consider it an honor and a pleasure to be associated with you and your family, indeed if this matter had not come into

our quarter I was going to ask you and Lady Ann for the hand of your fair Sophia, in marriage” said Aubrey.

“Captain Aubrey for my part you have my blessing if you want lady Ann’s blessing you have but to ask,” said the old man “What say you Ann shall we give our daughter in marriage to this fine young officer?” he enquired of his wife.

“Captain Aubrey you catch me at a moment that I would be glad to say yes but I fear that until such time as you give up dueling I am compelled to say no,” said Lady Ann. “Then I shall give it up two days hence once I have given my services to your husband,” said the captain.

“Capital well spoken lad,” said Sir Thomas shall we sample a snifter of brandy?” he asked the young officer.

## CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

It was a misty on the morning of the duel between Captain Aubrey and Sir Benjamin Witling a quiet corner of Hampstead heath had been chosen as the field of honor the sun was just touching the horizon when the coaches carrying Captain and Sir Thomas first arrived. Sir Benjamin and his seconds were already waiting for them.

A second of Sir Benjamin approached captain Aubrey with a set of swords allowing him first chose of weapons. Weighing each weapon in his hand he made his choose and stepped back taking but a moment he assumed the position. For dueling, the terms of the duel had been settled the previous evening when the seconds had met to discuss them. It had been agreed that the duel would be to the death, as Sir Benjamin believed that his honor had so been offended by the rash behavior by Captain Aubrey in challenging him to the duel over his remarks about Sir Thomas that nothing but a duel to the death would suffice.

This on a morning when the dew dripped from the trees he now found himself facing Sir Benjamin intent on the restoration of honor. Sir Thomas for his part would have allowed the insult to pass fearing that the young captain might suffer harm on his account he had pleaded with the captain to find some way of withdrawing from the duel. Never the less, James Aubrey was instant that there was nothing. For it but to teach Sir Benjamin a lesson in manners and if the lesson cost Sir Benjamin his life then so be it. For James Aubrey was entirely in a rage having been involved previously in hot action when taking a number of ships a prize he was content that he would be able to come comfortably away from the duel even if Sir Benjamin had the notoriety of been the best swordsman in England.

On guard cried Sir Benjamin as he came forward ready to do his worst the blades crossed and for a moment it seemed as if Sir Benjamin had the captain at a disadvantage. However, Aubrey parried the blow and began to advance Sir Benjamin retreating under the ferocious attack repeatedly the two combatants moved thus retreat and advance neither giving an advantage nor receiving it.

At one point the blades met captain Aubrey stumbled and fell to his knees, Sir Benjamin immediately believing he had an advantage fought on now with much more vigor. His blade wounding Captain Aubrey in the arm, Aubrey continued the duel upon his knees fighting back the vicious attack of his opponent he was soon able to regain his feet and then began to advance a look of intense concentration upon his countenance. For he began to detect that although Sir Benjamin might be the best swordsmen he had not the stamina to continue over long for it was apparent that Sir Benjamin was tiring. He had come to the duel after a long night of drinking and had assumed that he would quickly and easily dispatch the navel officer to his eternal rest. where as Aubrey had retired at a quarter after nine and had slept soundly waking only when called upon at four o'clock in the morning thus the two unequal combatants continued the clash of swords echoing for quite some distance. This began to alert the residence of the heath that there was a matter of honor been settled.

The matter ended quite suddenly when Sir Benjamin rushed forward and was beaten back by aggravated swordplay by the good captain as he stepped back he found himself almost spent and now against a tree. There was a moment when Captain Aubrey would have considered the matter settled but Sir Benjamin in a moment of supreme stupidity cried out coward sir you could not complete the work. With blood now freely flowing from captain Aubrey's arm he gave one last thrust, which found its mark in the chest of the nobleman. Who slowly began to sink to the ground for a moment there was a lingering look of utter surprise upon his face before the light began to leave his eyes. Quickly the seconds hurried forward lifting the wounded man to his feet and carrying him off to the coach returning one of Sir Benjamin's seconds shook the hand of Captain Aubrey and Sir Thomas before departing with the swords.

Captain Aubrey in the mean time had found a resting spot under an old scared oak here he sat regaining his breath. "Well fought sir," said Sir Thomas. "I hope the doctors are able to save him," was all James Aubrey said before rising and walking to the coach.

The streets of London were already busy with early morning traffic carts and carriages filling the roads with people going and coming to their places. After having his arm treated by Lady Ann Captain Aubrey and the Sterley's begun their breakfast of pheasant, bread and port. They began to think of what they would do for it was not to be long before the news and the outcome of the duel became public knowledge.

"I am sure that his lordship the Earl of Waterford will be most put out at losing a second for his duel tomorrow," said Lady Ann. "It would seem that he will call upon one of his sons to act in Sir Benjamin's stead," replied Sir Thomas. Later in the morning, the news was spread abroad that Sir Benjamin had died of his wounds and would be buried the following day. At St Marylebone, church yards. It was also rumored that the Earl was extremely angry at the loss of a second and a prospective son in law for it would have been a good family connection. It was further said that Lady Virginia was deeply grieved having taken to her bed in a fit of uncontrollable weeping for the loss of her fiancé "Well there we have it," said Sir Thomas. "It seems that his lordship of Waterford is not a man to be trifled with," said Captain Aubrey.

### CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

Sir Thomas entered the dining room in his hand he held a letter, "The most extraordinary thing," he said. "Come dear husband do not keep us in suspense pray tell us what this news is," said Lady Ann. "It is a note from Waterford I am unsure as how to proceed for it has a bearing of great significance on our current situation" he replied. "Sir you are beginning to try our patents please be so good as to tell us or let us read for ourselves what that despicable man has written," his wife said. He handed her the letter before taking his place at the head of the table.

Lady Ann began to read her countenance changing as she read from one of idle interest to the greatest concern

"Missive  
To: Sir Thomas Sterley  
The Mews  
Mayfair,  
London

Sir,  
I regret to inform you that due to the unfortunate incident involving Sir Benjamin Witling I am unable to wait upon you tomorrow as agreed. I would consider it a mark of favor if we put aside this matter until a more fortuitous occasion. Think not that I have withdrawn from settling this matter on any account of cowardly feelings on my part for I am quite ready to settle this matter this instant. However rather because I have the greatest difficulty in obtaining the services of a second to stand for me in this matter I would also beg your indulgence in this matter as It is incumbent upon me to arrange the last officers for the unfortunate Sir Benjamin Witling

Yours regrettably

William Bromley  
Earl Waterford

"It would seem that the man cannot find any one who will stand for him. This is I dare say is what happens when hot heads have cooled and men realize that the point of honor



upon which they have previously felt so intent has come to see reason,” said Lady Ann

“For my part I believe him to be too cowardly to admit that he is at fault and seeks to find an occasion to extract himself from an obligation” said Captain Aubrey who was being nursed by Sophia. The good captain had not even been able to eat his soup without her help for she was most attentive feeding him from a spoon.

“Indeed it would seem if the earl has had some time to reflect and has decided to retreat from the field of battle,” said Sir Thomas.

“Sir I would have a word with you in private after dinner upon a certain matter which lies deeply upon my heart,” said Captain Aubrey. “I have no objection to your speaking with me at any point,” replied Sir Thomas.

The conversation turned then to matters of society, of the latest fashions current in London. John and William had taken the morning to go to their tailors to have new suits of clothes made for them. While the ladies of the house were content to take tea with Lady Ann Barnard at her home in the afternoon Sophia had pleaded that she must stay at home and tend to poor Captain Aubrey who had not been displeased with the chance to spend an afternoon in her pleasant company.

Thus after dinner Sir Thomas and James Aubrey repaired to the little study, which the old gentleman considered his most private domain while in town.

“I have a certain feeling that I am aware of what you are about to ask me,” said Sir Thomas once they had helped themselves to a snifter of old France cognac.

“It would make me the happiest person in the world sir, if you would consider me as a prospective husband for your Sophia, for she has found a place in my heart which no other could fill,” said the captain

“I was sure that it would come to this may I ask have you spoken with my daughter about your feelings,” asked Sir Thomas. “I have sir and it was a pleasurable discussion for she

indicated to me that she would if you agreed do me the honor of becoming my wife,” replied the captain. “Allow me to be the first to congratulate you for I give my consent with out hesitancy for I know that you will do your best by her,” said Sir Thomas.

Opening the door Sir Thomas called “Sophia, Ann pray please to come here for I have the best news to give you,” he said. The sound of female steps approaching the door could be heard come in my dear,” said Sir Thomas as he held open the door for his wife and child to enter.

“My dear daughter the captain has made plain to me certain feelings which he has lead me to believe are reciprocal, if this be true and I am sure the good captain will not lie on this account. Allow me to say that I wish you a long and happy life as husband and wife,” said Sir Thomas

“Papa thank you thank you” said Sophia as she flung her arms around her father. “Well it seems there is to be a wedding,” Lady Ann with a smile upon her face

congratulations my dear captain,” said Lady Ann. “Madam I would be obliged if you would call me James,” said Aubrey. “Indeed I shall for you are to be my son in law err long,” said Lady Ann.

The following Saturday the Sterley’s made there way to St. George’s, Hanover square where the happy couple we united in holy matrimony. Much to the joy of the gathered congregation who had come to hear of there wedding through the steadfast and unceasing efforts of Lady Ann who had done much in the preceding week to let every one in the Sterley social circle know of the impending marriage. Upon there leaving the church the bells begun to toll a flock of pigeon’s affrighted rose from the bell tower. As if in blessing of the newly wed couples union.

## CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

The air was heavy with expectation for this evening there was to be a ball at the house in the Mews. The lights of hundreds of candles filled the ballroom. The coaches with liveried servants stood outside the door of the town house of Sir Thomas Sterley. Mary having overcome the first hurdle of been accepted in to society was more at ease at home than she had been at the ridged Almack's ball a few evenings earlier. In truth, it could be said that she had behaved impeccably and with great grace so much so in fact that Lady Jersey had commented on how well she danced.

The other patronesses had also been very much taken with her and had marked her out for special favor when she again appeared at Almack's. Never the less tonight was her night and she was of a mind to enjoy her self. Sir Thomas had bought the house in the Mews Mayfair shortly before the season had started it had taken a great deal of work but the house was eventually ready one week before the opening of Parliament.

The previous afternoon at the request of the prince regent Sir Thomas and his new son in law captain Aubrey had gone to the Naval club of which Sir Thomas had recently been accepted as a member. Membership of the club the exclusive domain of senior naval officers had for years been an object of Sir Thomas's desire. Now as a new member, he had been called upon to invite as his guest for the afternoon captain Aubrey who under normal circumstances would not have been admitted to the club until he had reached a very senior rank in the service. The reason for his invitation was a desire upon his highness the prince regent to meet with the naval captain who had done so well in the late wars.

The dinner to which the gathered naval officers had sat down to had been to say the least a splendid affair of five courses. Captain Aubrey seated at the very low end of the table as custom demanded had been repeatedly questioned and complemented by the senior officers in regard to his activities while at sea. Later the Prince regent had questioned him most closely on the duel in which Sir Benjamin had fallen, for at one time Sir Benjamin had been a favorite of the Prince however the nobleman had fallen out with the regent on some

known business. There after the men had talked generally of the present seasons society when the matter of the Earl of Waterford had come up in the course of the evening Sir Thomas had been required much to his distaste to give account of the letter he recived from the Earl. The conversation ended on this matter with certain of the naval gentleman in great mirth at the Earls audacity in finding a way to escape his obligation in the matter of honor.

The Prince regent it seemed was taking note of what was been said with great interest his overlarge body suffering under the attack of the heat of the great fire that burned in the fire place upon leaving the club late in the evening after many toasts to the good captain. Moreover, Sir Thomas for his part in the valiant action on the field of honor. They had taken a chaise and four to the house in the Mews where Lady Ann and her daughters awaited there return anxiously. For they were aware of the honor bestowed upon the young captain by the regent and the navel club, James Aubrey had in his possession as he returned that night a number of cards of some of the foremost names in the naval circle. Who had expressed a wish that he and his good wife call upon them when the season was over at there country estates.

However, this evening was Mary's evening the house was already crowded with guests as the first couples took to the floor. An officer of the Cavalry took it upon himself to ask Mary for the first dance Arthur Batenfield session of an old Scottish family. Mary found much to her liking for he was an excellent dancer the new waltz was of the first dances to take place upon this evening, which the young officer danced well having learned first hand of the new dance the evening before Waterloo. When the Duke of Wellington and his men had been at a ball not to many miles from the following days action. Thus, the officer had danced with Belgium ladies on the evening and gone out to face the guns the following day.

The older gentlemen and ladies found themselves partaking of a light supper, which had been prepared in the dinning room; the young ladies and bucks would partake later. The night was young and the floor open the assembled company found great joy in dancing the night away.

“I am most happy to say that every thing seems to be as it should be,” said Sir Thomas to an old acquaintance. “I find that these sort of things do have a way of turning out well,” said the acquaintance. Lady Ann coming over to join her husband on the side of the great ball room said Sir I believe that our youngest may have found the gentleman who best suits her” “Indeed Ann I think that mayhap we need to give her a little more time for she is young and if needs be. Needs to dance with a few more gentlemen before she can make a decision upon the matter,” replied her husband.

“My wife you see believes in love at first sight, while I like to take the time to see how a man will progress in the world. For before one hitches ones coach to a horse one must be sure that the horse is able to pull the coach, so to with a gentleman I like to see what are his prospects before I give him my daughter’s hand,” said Sir Thomas

“Quite so, quite so, remarked his acquaintance.

## CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

The carriages stood at the door servants rushed here and there loading the baggage for the Sterley's were returning to the country. The season been over the last social calls of the season made the last farewells for the next nine months.

Now old Bonaparte locked up safe after these many years now safely halfway across the world on St Helena Island. Britain and the world now safe at last from his greedy grasp.

Captain Aubrey returning to his command while young Sophia was to return with her parents to Oakland Park. Mary now dressed in the best stood upon the step watching the activities in the street. Although she had not found a husband she was content for she knew that a number of connections had been made it would not be long before the young men of well-connected families began visiting Oakland's.

She had been particularly impressed by the handsome young lieutenant of the Kings household cavalry who seemed very nice if somewhat nervous in her company.

"Well lass are you ready?" asked Sir Thomas. "Oh papa I am always ready to go home she said like an old soldier after another successful campaign. "Ah there you are," said Lady Ann stepping out of the house. "Pray Mary fetch my fan," she said. The reason for her desiring her daughter to step in side was the fact that the old woman found it unseemly that a young lady should be upon the steps while it was quite all right for the master of the house to be on the step. However, she was of the opinion that she must this instant have a word or two to say to her husband. "Tom please step inside as I would have some thing of significance to say to you," she said.

Stepping in side Sir Thomas was hurriedly followed by his wife Dear wife what is this matter of significance that you would speak upon," Sir Thomas asked." What a fudge is going about town," she said "Indeed pray enlighten me," said Sir Thomas "Well I have it of the countess of Devon that the Earl of Waterford has been heard to say that you are a coward for not taking up sooner the matter of honor for he claims he wrote to you requesting a meeting to resolve this and you

refused begging his pardon and extending an apology,” said Lady Ann. Laughing Sir Thomas said well Ill be dumfounded the Earl is such an old rouge to lie lake that, I shall write to him this instant and request that our second meet to set the place and time when I can wait upon him,” said Sir Thomas. Drying the tears of mirth from his eyes for he had come to expect that the earl would find some way to turn the tables upon him.

Returning Mary handed her mother the fan “So me girl are you to become a tenant for life?” Asked Sir Thomas. Oh no not yet papa for I have not settled upon the right man yet,” she remarked. “ That is most gratifying there has been to much of a haste with your sisters to rush into the matrimonial bed of late I would appreciate it my dear if you take your time and choose the best of the Ton before settling upon the one that takes your fancy,” said Sir Thomas.

“Tom you will turn our girl into an old bluestocking if ever you don’t take care,” said Lady Ann

“Ann you do have the way of saying the strangest thing upon my word,” said Sir Thomas. Mary no longer able to keep a straight face burst into laughter as she had been listening to her parents banter like a young love struck couple. I n fact it was this very way that made the younger generation of Sterley’s love there parents so dearly for they had not the pretensions of other families, which they knew.

“Annie come here” said Lady Ann pray go to the young men and tell them we are waiting for it is time for us to go,” she continued the maid curtsied and left the three Sterley’s. Who now seemed a little eat odds for the servants were beginning to cover the furnishings with dust cloths. It is a strange to imagine what it is like to stand in a house that is dressed for desertion.

“Mamma Annie says you sent for us” said William “Indeed I did the chaise and four is standing at the door pray find your seats,” said Lady Ann to her two older sons while the ever faithful Annie brought up the rear with young James.

“Well my dear we are for the country” said Sir Thomas. “Aye indeed we are,” replied Lady Ann as they took one last look around the house, which they had come to love so dearly. For it was a happy house where they had seen many a happy evening the balls the calls now the house stood silent. “Well my dear time to leave,” said Sir Thomas. Taking his wife’s hand they left the house Sir Thomas stopped briefly to give final instructions to the senior house servants before stepping down to the carriage which stood ready to depart.

““Sophia dear dry your tears,” said Lady Ann “Oh mamma I miss James so much already and it has only been two days,” said Sophia. “My dear the frequent departures of ones husband is some thing that you will have to get used to. I am afraid for it is one of those things with which we woman must learn to live,” said Lady Ann.

“Mamma how can you be so hard?” Sophia asked “My dear you forget that I have had many years to get used to it I missed your papa when we were first married but what can one do but try and make the best of it,” said Lady Ann. “I will try and be as brave as you always are,” said Sophia.



## CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

There arrived towards the middle of December when the country roads and fields were covered with a light dusty dressing of snow at Oakland park a parcel and letter addressed to Lady Ann. This was as a result of a secret visit she had undertaken during the early months of the season to a certain Mr. Paterson publisher of Amen corner London although she had left strict instruction that the ever attentive Mr. Paterson was only to contact her directly only in case of extreme necessity she was not displeased to hear from the worth craftsman for it had been six months since the first visit and she had quite given up of ever hearing from Mr. Paterson..

Missive

Madam,

I have great pleasure in sending you ten copies of the first imprint of the work which you saw me upon during your visit to London.

If it pleases your ladyship next time you are in town to call directly and at your earliest convince at my place of business

Your obedient servant

James Paterson  
Publisher

Upon opening the package Lady Ann was pleased to see that the volumes mentioned in the missive were indeed of a fine quality opening the cover of the first book she was delighted to read the words on the front face the title of which was

THE PEER

BY A LADY OF QUALITY

Dedicated to one who has been the most loyal and diligent of friends and constant companions for upward of five and twenty years.

To the noblest gentleman Sir Thomas Sterley, I humbly dedicate this small work of fiction in the hope that this small

work might bring to the noble gentleman many hours of pleasure and joy from a most ardent admirer.

Lady Ann begun to turn the pages of the small volume every page bringing an expression of delight to her countenance as she viewed the printed words. Just then the object of the dedication happened to step through the door.

“I perceive my dear that you have some thing of significance to tell me for your expression betrays amusement and joy,” said Sir Thomas. “Indeed good husband I have some thing to show you I know that you have been busy these many years writing a volume on the birds, it brings you great joy and I have found in the odd occasion time to write a small volume of romance which I have dedicated to you,” she said as she put into his hands the small book.

Opening the volume Sir Thomas was surprised to see the dedication, as he read a smile began to crease his lips. “pon rep my dear you are the most surprising of creatures,” said he taking her in his arms he kissed her most heartily upon the lips.

“Pray this works of fiction what is its nature?” he asked as he stepped away from his wife. “It is but a short fiction of romance concerning a peer of some 50 years who after many years finds love and affection of a young noble woman, a brave man a soldier in the late wars who has done his duty to the country and is now retired into the country,” she replied “It sounds some what familiar” remarked Sir Thomas as he leafed through the pages. “I will own that it has a certain sense of fact from true life,” she replied.

“I see a case of size has arrived from Tom which must need your attention,” said Lady Ann. “I have not heard of it pray where is it?” Sir Thomas enquired. “When it arrived I had it moved into the library for I thought it must be some thing of significance,” she replied.

“I shall have to go and see, pray excuse me my dear,” he said.

“Upon entering the library Sir Thomas was met by the sight of a six foot tall box which in size looked very much like a large oversized coffin taking a poker he gently began to pry open the box.

He was much taken by the content of the box for it contained a stuffed ostrich with full plumage. The sight of which made sir Thomas’s heartbeat with sheer delight with in the box he found a letter which he opened with great expectations.

Missive

From: Thomas Sterley Esquire  
Cape Town  
Cape of Good Hope

18 June 1815

To: Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey  
England

Dearest Papa,

I have recently returned from a trip into the interior of this vast country having seen many new and wonderful things. One scarce knows where to begin to give account for here there are great herds of animals which roam across planes for half a day with never an end in sight. I have sent you this ostrich which I bagged while out hunting. There is an excellent dresser of game here who did me the service of setting the animal for preservation. I do so hope that this object will bring you many hours of joy and pleasure.

I have also the honor to inform you sir that you will shortly be a grandpapa again as Arabella is with child. Which I expect will arrive in due season. We have with the help of dear Mrs. Aitcheson of whom Arabella has previously written found a midwife who will be available for the confinement. Pray give our sincere affections to all at Oakland Park

Your obedient son

Tom

After placing the bird with a little difficulty in the best position to display its qualities Sir Thomas bestirred himself to write to his eldest son

Missive

From: Sir Thomas Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey  
England

To: Thomas Sterley Esquire  
16 December 1815  
Cape Town  
Cape of Good Hope

Dear Tom,

In reply to your last I must inform you that events of the greatest significant's have occurred Sophia has been well wed to Captain Aubrey of who you first wrote when you went to the Colony. Mary has had her coming out which was a great occasion. I believe that it wont be long before there are a number of gentleman callers coming to here to pay there respects.

Mamma has had a volume published which I believe will meet with singular success for I have just this morning come to hear of it. Most surprising to find that she had done this I am sure that she will write to you before to long and tell you all about it.

I have almost completed my volume on the birds of Southern England and have high hopes of its success, when I take it to Amen corner when next I am in London on business.

My most hearty congratulations on the forthcoming arrival of the addition to your little household I am sure your Mamma will be most sad to hear that she will not be there for the birth. For she and Lady Sarah were companions of a most close nature for most of there lives I am sure that when you return to Oakland's your mamma will lavish many a fondness upon the child and Arabella of course.

Pray give Arabella our sincere affections

Your papa

Thos Sterley.

Missive

From: Lady Ann Sterley  
Oakland Park  
Surrey  
England

To: Thomas Sterley Esquire  
16 December 1815  
Cape Town  
Cape of Good Hope

Dear Tom,

Have just this moment sat down to write to you about the wonderful news as you are know I have for many years been writing in my books. When we were last in London I took one of my writings to a publisher in the town. Who agreed to look at it. Much to my delight in the post today I recived a letter from the good man. Who has published the volume with a short dedication to your dear papa. Who I must confess to it in good stride that I had published before him. I am sending one of the volumes I recived with this letter.

Mary has become quite social having this last fortnight three gentleman callers who have visited. Papa informs me that Arabella is in the family way. What can I say upon this happy occurrence? It is with regret that I wipe a tear from my eye to think her dear mamma will not be here to see the happy arrival. When you come home we will make a happy occasion of the child and spoil him or her as the case maybe with many affectionate kisses and pinches.

My affectionate greetings to Arabella  
Your Mamma  
Ann Sterley

### CHAPTER THIRTY NINE

A chaise and for had stopped in the drive, sir Thomas stopped what he had been doing and walked across the short distance towards the chaise. A young man dressed in the height of fashion was alighting from the vehicle. Bowing and tipping his hat the young man greeted Sir Thomas with expressions of joy at his finally been at Oakland and been able to reacquaint himself with his old school friend Tom.

“Why sir young Tom you will not find at home” said Sir Thomas. “Pon my word I hope he will be home soon as it is rather a matter of great significant that brings me to see him” replied the young man. “Indeed Sir Tom is in Africa and not expected home any time soon,” said Sir Thomas

“I find then my trip has been for nothing and I was so depending on him been here,” said the young man. “Pray Sir I know it is not the custom of young men to go about unannounced but you have arrived here quite unexpectedly had you made your coming known to us we would have of course warned you that your call was a fools errand” said Sir Thomas. “I do beg your pardon Sir Thomas I am Harry Watson and I am just back from the late wars not having been in England I am afraid I had quite forgotten my manners I did send a letter when I stopped in town did you not receive it?” asked the young man.

“I have certainly recived no communication of any sort,” replied the old man. But maybe I can be of service to you in what connection was it that you wanted to see young Tom?” enquired Sir Thomas. ‘Ah it is a matter of the heart for I have been having a nick of a time trying to write a love sonnet to a certain lady of my acquaintance. I don’t seem to get it right, I remembered that Tom was rather good with verse when we were at Oxford, so I thought I might avail myself of his service,” said Harry.

“Well let me see I was quite good with verse in my youth, pray Harry set inside and make yourself at home while I get quill and paper,” said Sir Thomas. as he showed the young man to the library, Lady Ann and the remaining children had set out just that morning to pay a call upon the residents of Morton Grange. They were not expected back until later in the

week.

Once Sir Thomas returned they fell to talking over the matter of the sonnet which young Harry wanted to address to Juniata a Spanish noble woman whose acquaintance he had made while at Waterloo.

Thus Sir Thomas began to write

To the fair Juniata a sonnet of the most profound affections for young Harry had made it known to Sir Thomas that he was deeply in love. With the Spanish lady and wanted to wed her none other would do no blushing Bony lass of heaving bosom would do but only the dark eyed Spanish lady of noble birth who had plucked upon his heart strings with an unforgiving grace. So much so that poor Harry was unable to sleep or eat, upon hearing this Sir Thomas called for a kitchen servant to “bring immediately a glass of warm milk and some of the fruit cake which Lady Ann was so fond for the young gentleman lest he faint from hunger.” Harry great fully accepted these ministrations as Sir Thomas continued to scribble. Upon completion of the light reparse Sir Thomas lead the young man to a bed chamber and bid him lay down and be at ease. For it would take a while for the completion of the sonnet could be affected without his company thus once his unexpected guest had laid down Sir Thomas returned to the library and continued to write. For his inspiration he took his great love for his wife and thought of the many ways in which she had pleased him throughout the years. To these feelings he now added suitable words which after a half an hour had reached three or four pages. Sir Thomas had a fine and distinctive hand indeed when a note went to the village it was easy to tell if the note had been written by Sir Thomas for his penmanship was renowned for its clarity and elegance. So much so that in the open school in the village all young students were taught to emulate the hand of Sir Thomas as best they could.

Upon completion of the opus Magnus Sir Thomas laid it aside sat for a moment and then as an after thought took up the quill once more and wrote a note to the young gentleman. The content of the note was that when he rise from his rest he should copy the verses in his own hand and send the copied

verse to the lady of his desire. This done he took the note and the sonnet to the chamber where the young man was fast asleep placing them on the table he closed the door and returned to the task which he had been about when his guest had arrived.

Later in the day Harry rose found the note and did as was directed. On completion he destroyed the note however thinking the draft of the sonnet written by Sir Thomas so fair he left it upon the table thinking that maybe Sir Thomas might wish to keep it as a remembrance for it was evident to the young man that it was indeed a rare work of both penmanship and artistic beauty. Thus contrary to Sir Thomas's instruction the sonnet lay open for any one who chanced upon it. The young man left the chamber to go down stairs to meet with his genial host. To offer him his sincere gratitude and appreciation of the great favor Sir Thomas had done for him, for a great burden had been lifted from the young man's shoulders.

“Sir Thomas accepted these expressions of gratitude with good grace and bid his guest to stay the night to which the young man agreed...

Had Sir Thomas but known that his favor for an old friend of his son's was to cause him such agonies of temperament and the disruption of his peaceful domestic life, he would most probably not have undertaken the task which he had for the young Harry.



## CHAPTER FORTY

“I am without a doubt the best savory’s maker that I know do you not think?” asked Mrs James. “Indeed my wife is a dab hand at the making of sweet meat,” said the clergyman. “You must try my pigeon pie, said Mrs. James as she lifted the silver cover from the dish upon which lay a plump bird in a layer of congealed grave. “It looks wonderful I shall have a piece,” said Sophia.

The reverend gentleman’s guests sat down to eat captain Aubrey having decided to forego the offered pigeon as he had heard much of Mrs. James’s custard pudding which was to be served later. In the mean time he contented himself with a glass of port.

“I have seldom seen a dish with an aroma of such fragrance, said Sophia “pray do tell me Mrs. James what is this fragrance for I have not come across it before?” asked Sophia as she placed the first forkful in her mouth.

“It is a Calcutta curry from India some what different to the fair we are used to, bit wholesome and good for a cold,” said Mrs. James. Sophia it seemed had grown quite flushed tears creased the corners of her eyes and a sweat broke upon her forehead.

“I fear that I am unwell” she gasped, taking a sip of water from a glass near at hand. “Oh dear what is amiss Mrs. Aubrey you are quite red with exertion you must lay down I fear” said Mrs. James rising from her seat.

“Yes if I lay down I will recover,” said Sophia “Yes step this way there is a room where you can rest,” said Mrs. James “Later you can finish your dinner. I am quite surprised for just a moment ago you were quite well could it be that you have a little bundle to deliver?” asked Mrs. James. For she was a woman wise to the world and knew that young woman of Sophia’s age did with in a year after marriage bring forth bundles of joy. It gave her great pride that when in years to come the Captain would speak of the announcement of the arrival of there first born would be due to her.

The ladies having left the room the to gentlemen were left quite alone with nothing much to say the reverend gentleman eyed the plate upon which Sophia had been feasting and then looked knowingly towards the captain. "I fear that the pigeon will be quite spoilt," said the clergyman. Captain Aubrey perceiving that the older gentleman would show no mercy knew where his duty lay. Saying bravely "Well there is nothing for it I shall have to dispose of the bird and moved Sophia's plate to his and begun to eat the dish.

The first bit of the dish had but a small effect upon the brave seaman for he had previously eaten curry while on active service in the Indies however he began to taste a certain discrepancy. It was at this moment that Mrs. James returned and took once more her seat. "I trust the pigeon is to your liking?" she enquired of the captain "Indeed a fragrant dish one of the best I have ever tasted," the captain gasped as a sweat began to break from his forehead. "Pray what is its construction?" he asked of the woman.

"It must be soaked in the curry powder for a day and a half before certain other elements are added then boiled in a soup of water and oil," replied the lady. This was indeed a surprise to the good navy man for he had never heard of the dish been prepared like this and he knew his curries.

"Remarkable quite remarkable" said the captain reaching for the glass of sherry, he had learned his lesson previously and knew better than to poor Sophia to drink water for water it seemed only increased the pain one felt with in ones mouth after eating a curry. To the captain it seemed that the poor pigeon having died had been subjected to the cruelest of fates having fallen into the hands of a woman who believed herself to be the best cook in the world. but was in fact a dangerous weapon indeed if the good woman had ever been a cook in the armies of Wellington or the navy of Nelson she would have been the most formidable weapon in Bonaparte's grand army.

Never the less to preserve the duty placed upon him by society he continued to eat the poor bird for it would have been considered most offensive if he had not. As the newest member of Sir Thomas's family it was incumbent upon him that he make a good impression upon the clergyman and his

wife for the most reverend gentleman had always been most obliging to the Sterley's when called upon to be of service to the family.

For it was well known that he had been instrumental of ridding Morton of the ghost of poor Lord John. To have in any way offended him in any way even to the extent of his wife's efforts in the culinary field would it seemed be an insult to the good people of Notheringay.

Thus on he soldered through the battlefield that was the dish much to the delight of the reverend gentleman's wife who continued to make remarks and receive high praise from the brave captain.

After the mean Sophia had quite recovered while her brave husband refused the proffered custard pie saying the curried pigeon was quit enough for him. Shortly thereafter the Aubrey's took there leave of the clergyman and his wife who stood upon the front step of the rectory enjoying the view as the coach made its departure the good woman waving to Sophia remarked "That what an excellent gentleman the captain was and what good taste he had. for she had seen that he had indeed emptied the plate, it was a pity that he had not seen his way clear to a slice of custard pie. However it was to be expected these naval sorts are seldom big eaters" this all said to her good husband who ever mindful of his wife's desire to impress upon there guests the skill with which she employed herself in the kitchen made him smile.

## CHAPTER FORTY ONE

Lady Ann entered the library for a moment she stood looking at the Ostrich a strange bird its eyes seemed to follow her every move. Who ever had done the job of mounting it had done a wonderful job she thought.

Her eyes drifted across the room looking for any sign that might betray the occupancy of her husband there was none, as she turned to leave her eyes dwelt for a moment on the small table near the door. A poem of some sort she thought, she picked it up and began to read "Dearest Juanita long have I admired you from afar.... "Could it be? Sir Thomas had taken a lover? How could this be? She wondered. She cast her mind back to the last season in town could it be that her husband had found a woman of loose morals of whom Sir Thomas had taken advantage? No it could not be more likely the hussy had marked Sir Thomas for an easy target of her charms but surely her husband was passed calf-love  
Was he not? Had he not found an Incognita?

Just like a man to fall for the charms of a hussy had Sir Thomas taken mistresses? Had he found a light-skirt? For a moment, Lady Ann considered consigning the poem to the fire but then she dismissed this idea she did not want to give Sir Thomas any advanced knowledge that she knew what he was about.

Of one thing she was certain she would have her revenge for she was not a woman to be trifled with. her many years as a wife and mother had taught her one thing if there situation changed then one would adapt and apply ones mind to the new situation. Now a new situation was presenting itself and she would be ready for it she would not be bested by a woman of low class, no she would not be made a cake of by any one.

Sir Thomas entered the drawing room coming across the room he placed his hand upon the chair upon which Lady Ann sat leaning forward he tried to plant a kiss upon her cheek but lady Ann moved just then and he ended up kissing the air.

"Ann what is amiss?" He asked "Amiss dear husband pray what can be amiss everything is as it should be pray what do

you mean sir?' she asked "I am quite sure I do not know what you mean" she continued.

"Ann my love you seem distressed what has occurred that has made you so cold towards me?" he asked. "Sir I am quite sure that your imagination is once more at play for nothing is amiss save that you have not had your dinner and it is quite cold by now," she said dismissively. For she meant to make her husband suffer for the long years that they had been companions had taught her every thing there was to know about his nature she knew that should peace not be restored before bed time. He would be quite unable to sleep and would pace the bed chamber until he would fall into a restless sleep which would come in the small hours of the morning.

"I take it then your call at Morton was a pleasant one," said Sir Thomas giving up for the moment trying to please his wife. "Indeed husband it was one of the most pleasant calls I have ever made," she said.

"Pray tell how our grandson is?" he asked "The lad is well and grown big like his papa he is sure to do well in the world,' she said coldly.

It always came as a surprise to Sir Thomas how an woman of longstanding acquaintance could make even good news sound so formidable like the speaker in the house announcing the butchers bill for the last quarter he mused. As the saying went the apple falls not far from the tree for Sir Thomas had in mind a number of occasions when he had seen his own female children behave in the same fashion that Lady Ann now was?

Leaving Lady Ann Sir Thomas went about his daily tasks bemused by the fact that he could not fathom what had occasioned his wife to take such a set against him. Had he not always done his duty by her did he not show the measure of his affection for her by telling her on as many occasions that he still loved her even though they were now grown to that time of life when one should be comfortable with each other?

"True he had not always been at home but this was due to his service to crown and country a man should always do his duty to crown and country first before considering his own needs

was the motto he had been brought up to believe in and he thought that his wife knew this. but there must be some new occasion for this strange behavior of the woman who had been his devoted companion, what can it be he mused as he began cutting some flowers. Maybe if I bring some flowers into the house and present them to her she might change her mind and forgive me for what ever slight I have afforded her he thought.

From a window on the upstairs Lady Ann observed her husband she was angry extremely angry did he think that she would not find out, did he indeed think that a kiss would save him? And now what was the silly man up to cutting her roses did he not understand that they had taken a long time to grow that much care had gone into there breeding?

At the entrance to Oakland Park a messenger hurried through the gate he had been sent with a letter of the greatest urgency from Ireland his master had instructed him to hand it to no one but Sir Thomas Sterley of Oakland Park. Then to wait for a reply from Sir Thomas, The livery of the messenger denoted a great house an old and ancient line one which the Sterley's had seen before not many months earlier.

For the Earl of Waterford had in the months since the challenge to Sir Thomas's honor grown brave enough because of distance in time and space now to wish to settle the matter of honor. At the same moment another coach was making its way to Oakland containing Young Harry Watson with some very agreeable news.

## CHAPTER FORTY TWO

“Remarkable” said Sir Thomas as he waved a letter in his hand. “It would seem that his lordship the Earl of Waterford has decided that he needs to settle the matter of honor at the earliest convince,” he continued “Indeed husband I would have thought that you would be most pleased at this communication,” said Lady Ann.

“I will answer his letter directly I will also have to ask James to act as my second,” said Sir Thomas. “Pray why does that man in the Earls livery wait?” asked Lady Ann. “He has instruction from his lordship to wait for a reply, his lordship will be in Town till the end of next week and will be able to wait upon me on any day the following week. I will write to him this instant I think Friday fortnight will be suitable,” said Sir Thomas.

“As you will sir you know best,” said Lady Ann Sir Thomas left the drawing room to go and write the letter to the Earl of Waterford. Lady Ann pondered for a moment then taking from a draw in the bureau inn and paper, she began to write a letter of her own

Your Lordship,

I have thought long upon a certain matter and beg your indulgence... she began. Sir Thomas in the meanwhile had been writing his own letter when he returned he found Lady Ann gone and the messenger seated in the kitchen eating a small meal. Handing the letter over he watched as the man finished his meal and left.

“Sir Thomas and Lady Ann were in the drawing room he writing again she contemplation with a knowing smile some great matters which was playing upon her mind.

“Missive

To Captain James Aubrey  
Great Witham  
Surrey

From Sir Thomas Sterley

Oakland Park  
Surrey

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 1816

Dear James,

I fear that I must call upon you to stand once more as my second in the matter of his lordship the Earl of Waterford. I have given him to understand that Friday fortnight would be a suitable time for him to wait upon me here at Oakland's I believe that every thing can be arranged with the greatest circumspection. I think that we can arrange for doctor Barry of Notheringay to attend the field of honor and render any service, which matters might arise from the settlement of the debit of honor.

I await your replay by return of post

Your obedient Servant  
Thomas Sterley

Missive  
From Sophia Aubrey  
Great Wisham  
Surrey

Dearest Papa,

I have just this moment come away from James's bedside the doctor is hopeful for his recovery after eating some thing the other day while visiting the Reverend and Mrs. James.

I fear that James has begged me to write and express his most sincerely regrets that he is quite unable to wait upon you as a second in the matter between yourself and the Earl of Waterford.

The doctor has forbidden him from rising from his bed until he is completely recovered

James has expressed his sorrow for been unable to be of service to you and begs that you will not consider this as a slight for he is quite unwell. The doctor has bleed him and is hopeful for his recovery however he has stated that it will take time



Your Loving daughter  
Sophia

“Remarkable, most remarkable I was not even aware that James was feeling poorly,” said Sir Thomas. “I have not heard of it what is amiss,” asked Lady Ann. It seems that some malady has affected James and he has taken to his bed,” said Sir Thomas.

A servant entered and announced a visitor “Mr Watson” said the servant. “Pray let him step in” said Sir Thomas his countenance lightening for here was an occasion to ask of the young man a service.

“Good day Sir Thomas I trust that you are well?” said Harry Watson “Indeed I am quite well and I hope that you have had a good result to your efforts?” asked Sir Thomas. “Indeed I have the most wonderful news the fair lady was much impressed and has expressed a wish that I call upon her and her father at an early convenience.

“I am exceedingly glad for it” said Sir Thomas pray may I ask a service of you?” enquired Sir Thomas. “I would be glad to be of service to you in any way that suits you Sir,” said Harry.

“Pray step this way,” said Sir Thomas as he lead the younger man away to the library to discuss the matter of acting as his second.

“Lady Ann had of late been very cold towards her husband the letter in his hand had startled her much. She was not a woman to be trifled with and had already set in motion the beginnings of a plan which if truth be told would have frightened Sir Thomas so much that he would have fretted and not slept a wink. For Lady Ann would have her revenge she was a woman scorned she who was of an old and noble family would not let any man least of all her husband tread upon her heart. For she had loved him through many trials and tribulations, she had eaten humble pie and had always as the good book instructed a wife to be a meek and obedient wife. However, this latest insult was some thing she could not bear.

It was not that she had not had the opportunity to be unfaithful to him indeed in her youth and as a newly wed wife of a naval officer. Of course there had been many opportunities for her to have a dalliance but she had risen above every attempt at conquest from the males of the species. For she considered such dalliances unseemly her honor meant much to her even though there had been times when she had been very lonely while her husband had been away at sea. Lady Ann's temperament was not suited for unfaithfulness, thus she was unable to understand the latest infidelities of her husband for had she always tried to be most accommodating to what ever he desired?

### CHAPTER FORTY THREE

The sound of a coach stopping outside the Grosverner Square home of the Earl of Waterford could be heard; his Lordship laid aside the volume he had been reading. His expected guest had arrived wishing to impress his guest he rose and crossed to a small table upon which to Snifters stood ready a decanter of the finest crystal stood filled to the brim with the nectar of amber. Only the finest French cognac would do for his guest who was one of the foremost persons of quality and style. For his royal guest was none other then His highness Prince Fredrick the duke of York.

The knock that came to the door was expected his lordships butler announced the presence of his most esteemed guest.

The prince once he entered the room smiled for he was delighted once more to find at home his friend of former days with a snifter proffered towards him “Glad to see your highness is well” remarked the Earl. “Indeed most well and most happy to have received your note,” replied the prince taking a seat.

“So there is to be a duel?” said the prince, “I find that too many gentlemen of the lower nobility seem to find there honor offended and demanding satisfaction. When there better put them in there place” he continued.

“It seems your highness that Sir Thomas is an out and out rogue had he but heard correctly my question in the house was a fair one,” remarked the earl as he raised the snifter to his lips.

“I have never had occasion to have any dealings with the man before what occasioned this attack?” asked the Prince. For he had not been in the house upon the day in question and had only heard of the matter second hand.

Highness the details are not difficult to follow pray allow me to enlighten you about two seasons ago he approached me to make advances on the behalf of his son for a commission; well I tried and added to the commission a small fee of three thousand pounds which he was unwilling or unable to pay. I then was obliged to invite him to my country seat for a little

sport, while there he became involved in a domestic matter of a scalawag and rouge that was agitating for Catholic emancipation and for the lower order. His intervention was most unseemly the end result of which was the servant who had caused all the problems was taken away from my service by Sir Thomas I lost a damned fine cook to boot in the event,” said the Earl. “Dammed inconsiderate and quite ungentlemanly of Sir Thomas I would say,” said the Prince.

“This is most unseemly how a man with a title can behave in such an unfashionable way,” enquired the prince. “This letter I received from Lady Ann his wife with the reply to my letter asking for a settlement of the matter of honor most extraordinary indeed the contents makes me wonder what domestic upheaval has occasioned his lady to write asking me an avowed enemy for a favor,” said the Earl

Taking the letter the prince began to read, the concern upon his countenance growing with each new sentence that he read. “William my friend there is but one thing that you can do in this matter,” remarked the Prince

“Indeed I see it plainly I have been placed under an obligation by Lady Ann not only to settle the old matter but allow her to play her part in this new matter a ladies honor has been impinged and Sir Thomas must pay for his dalliances’ with the Spanish woman who ever she is” said the Earl.

“I have always wanted to defend a ladies honor well it seems that I am to have my chance this confounded fellow Sir Thomas I believe is a great favorite among a number of naval gentlemen,” said The Prince. “Indeed Highness he has always been an agitator and one of those who seeks to better the lower order with promises of a better life, said the Earl “I believe he had some part to play when the navy mutinied at the Nore. He been one of the few officers whose men did not send him ashore. Thus his roll was pivotal in bringing to an end the troubles in the navy the men look to him for leadership I have heard” said the Prince. “Indeed he has some qualities but he is also quite ungentlemanly,” replied the Earl. “William one has got to give him credit for his achievements, however I believe that one should never gain say ones betters in any matter of importance,” remarked the Prince. “As for your request I will

be happy to stand as one of your seconds in this matter of honor” said the prince. Highness for this I am most happy, remarked the Earl as he refilled the snifter in the Dukes hand. “I dare say Sir Thomas has all the marks of a mushroom,” said the duke. “Indeed I would not be surprised if he was one,” replied the Earl

Sir Thomas was addressing the members of his household all were listening with the greatest concern for the house was to receive a number of visitors of the best society.

“Although there exists a measure of animosity between the Earl of Waterford, I would remind you that this house had always extended a hand of hospitality to all guests. I warn you now and take note each and ever one of you that the Earl and his company are to be treated with the greatest respect and civility, he said

“These people of quality will be here as my guests and I expect that each and every one of you will do your utmost to make them at ease,” he continued. I want the best rooms in the house aired the bed linen changed and fresh, Ill not tolerate any discrepancy, is this understood?” there was a mumble of assent from the gathered servants and household member’s. “Pray Ruth,” said Sir Thomas “heed my words for upon you rests the greatest work for you are to prepare the chambers for his Lordship the Earl and another for his highness the Duke of York. Make sure that when you have completed your supervision of the staff that you inform me that I might check that all is in order for there coming,” said Sir Thomas. “I would be most displeased should any thing not be as it should be Ruth I therefore require of you that you do you utmost to make these chambers as comfortable as possible,” said Sir Thomas. “Yes master I will do my very best to please you may I ask am I to prepare the addition chamber for Lady Virginia or will Elizabeth be doing that?” Asked the maid “Not to worry about that Elizabeth has that well in hand replied Sir Thomas.

#### CHAPTER FORTY FOUR

The conveyances of the Duke of York and the Earl of Waterford were early upon the road on Wednesday morning, the gentlemen who frequented the vehicles as they made their way along the roads of Surrey were in a gay mood. For to them an outing to the country was just what they wished for. The duke was happy to have as his companion on the journey Virginia Lady Waterford, who had somewhat recovered from the loss of her betrothed. However her deepest wish now was to see some one pay for the death of the unfortunate young man for her it was not a matter of honor but a deep personal loss.

To the Earl it was a wound which he could bear for he had considered the connections that the young man could bring to his family and the position in society to which his daughter could have risen now the search for a suitable young man had to begin again from the start.

They arrived shortly before eleven to be greeted by the entire household of Oakland Park the greetings between His highness the Earl of Waterford and Sir Thomas were to say the least cold. Sir Thomas to his credit went out of his way to be the genial host, when the party had been settled in their chambers to every one's great satisfaction. The gentlemen enquired after any occasion for hunting to which Sir Thomas had great pleasure in obliging showing the Duke the gun room where the duke selected not without consideration a weapon which much pleased Sir Thomas.

Thereafter the gentlemen proceeded to the ground in search of deer and fowl. Returning late in the afternoon they deposited the bag for preparation by the kitchen servants. His lordship and the Earl of Waterford made much of Lady Ann his highness saying he had seldom met a woman with so much wit. While Sir Thomas found himself sitting ignored by his house guests.

The following morning Sir Thomas was out early to put in place things for the events of the following morning he did not have much occasion to worry as to what his difficult guests were up to. He was of the mind that his wife would keep them entertained. He found much to keep him occupied during the

day returning in the evening from Notheringay he spent a little time in there company before retiring to bed.

Rising early he was happy to see that Harry Watson had arrived during the night they made there breakfast on the remains of a cold chicken which had been left for this purpose. Upon enquiring as to the location of Lady Ann, he was informed that she has left half an hour earlier with the duke and the Earl. Sir Thomas was much put out at this news for he had wanted to wish her good day before setting out to the field of honor.

Sir Thomas and Harry made there way to the clearing in the wood which had previously been selected here he found the carriage of the Earl the nobleman and the prince were smoking a pipe while waiting for the arrival of Sir Thomas. The terms of the duel having previously been arranged there was now nothing more to do then the combatants and the seconds take the field of honor.

Sir Thomas was much surprised when Lady Ann stepped from the carriage and took the place of the second for his lordship. "Sir I must protest at this unseemly arrangement," said Sir Thomas.

"Indeed sir I am under an obligation to Lady Ann for she requested that she stand as my second," replied the Earl. "Very well then but I find it unbecoming," said Sir Thomas.

Taking there places the two noblemen began to pace away from each other at twenty paces they turned the Earl was the first to fire the shot going wide. Now in the silence of morning the sounds of bird song been hear the clearing silent Sir Thomas took his time he planed to fire high as he had no wish to wound the Earl. His only wish was that the matter was at an end just as he was about to fire a deer broke from the trees to his left startling him. He fired low. A terrible cry rang around the clearing as the Earl sunk to the ground his breeches, which had formally been white, were now covered in red blood. Sir Thomas dropped his pistol and hurried forward as did the Duke Lady Ann and Doctor Barry whom Sir Thomas had required to be present to render any assistance to who ever was wounded.

“The Earl lay upon the ground moaning in great agony “Harry Watson remarked in a frightened voice “It seems Sir Thomas that you have shot away his lordships unmentionables,” “Clear the way man” said doctor Barry as he begun to administer Brandy to the stricken man. “Pray help me to lift him to the carriage we must get him to the house” said the doctor Harry been the youngest man helped the doctor lift the Earl into the carriage which rushed off towards the house the Duke Lady Ann and Sir Thomas left to walk back to the house at there leisure. “Ann may I ask why you consented to be the Earl’s second” asked Sir Thomas. “Sir it is because you have a hussy to whom you write love sonnets” remarked Lady Ann crossly. “Indeed madam you are mistaken for I begin to see a great mistake has occurred here” said Sir Thomas;’ Pray husband who then is Juanita?

““She is as far as I am aware the lady in whom my young companion is affianced and deeply smitten he asked me to write a few line s which he could copy to woo her” replied Sir Thomas.

“Then I am at fault Tom for I found the note and bethought that you had found a place in your heart for another in the place of me” replied Lady Ann quietly.

“Most unusual indeed I have never heard of it” said the duke who began to see the humor of the whole situation and began to laugh.

“Your Highness I fear that it is not kind to laugh at the condition of the poor Earl who is now stricken in the worst sort of way,” remarked Lady Ann seriously.

“I fear that his gaying pistol will be of no further use to him” said Fredrick duke of York “But let us hear what the doctor can do” said he as they mounted the front steps of the house. They had not long to wait the doctor reported that the Earl was resting quietly and would recover but as Fredrick duke of York had said his lordship would no longer frequent with his former vigor those less sociably acceptable places of entertainment in town for Sir Thomas’s shot had quite carried away his lordships weapon of choice..

In the mean while Lady Virginia had become reacquainted with William they were later in the day to be discovered in the garden making dove eyes at each other.



In the days that followed the duke and Sir Thomas became firm friends the Earl having lost that instrument which is most precious to men became quite a different man. When pressed upon to give his daughter in marriage to William the son of his former foe he gave it gladly knowing that he could not have been bested by any better shot in England. Lady Ann continued to write and Sir Thomas did eventually submit for publication his manuscript on the birds of Southern England, which was published with a short dedication to his highness the duke of York it received great acclaim. There dear readers we must until another time bid our friends and foes from this story farewell and Adieu until such time as the fates determine we once again meet them, but who can say when that may be?

DEDICATED TO MY GRAND PARENTS AND MY  
MOTHER WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MY  
INSPIRATION