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A. MARTIN,  
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# THE COMMERCIAL.

PUBLISHED TRI-WEEKLY, BY THOMAS LORING.  
VOL. 2. WILMINGTON, TUESDAY MORNING MAY 4, 1847. NO. 21.

ROWLEY, ASHBURNER & CO.  
General Commission Merchants,  
Nos. 5 & 6, South Wharves,  
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We are prepared to make liberal advances on shipments of Naval Stores, &c., consigned to us for sale.  
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January 18. 128-ly.

## THE BRIDAL.

BY MISS CLARISSA SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.  
The Honorable Mrs. Berkeley had remained a widow twenty years, being left by her husband with an infant son, and her pecuniary affairs in great disorder. Having been nominated the guardian of her son, she had but one desire on earth, and that was to bring him up nobly, and by economy and strict attention, to re-establish him in that fortune, which the unwise speculations and foolish pleasure of two three generations, had most cruelly abridged. Thanks to her skill, perseverance, and good sense, at the end of twenty years, the fortunes of the young Theodore presented the most satisfactory result, and reached even beyond its original income. His estates were disencumbered of their ruinous mortgages, and old properties, sold at a low price in the moment of necessity, were re-bought, and added to the princely demenses of the young heir; in fine, twenty years sufficed to cure the improvidence of a whole century, and Mrs. Berkeley awaited with somewhat of impatience for the majority of her son, in order to place in his hands the fortune which she had received ruinously embarrassed, more ample, solid, and secure, than it had ever before been.

The shades of evening had enveloped the surrounding objects in gloom, and Mrs. Berkeley was seated in a gorgeous and well-lighted apartment in the neighborhood of Hyde Park, her chair placed before a blazing fire, and her little feet idly resting upon the edge of the fender in a half thoughtful, half pensive attitude. At a little distance from her sat an old gentleman, whose appearance announced the fact of his having seen at least sixty winters, and who was plunged in a visible comfort in the soft amplitude of an easy chair.

"At length he broke silence, and said, 'And where is dear Theodore?'"

"He is out," replied Mrs. Berkeley, with a sigh.

"Is he at the theatre, or at the club?"

"Oh, no; at least I think not."

The accent with which these last words were pronounced, aroused the attention of the Honorable Mr. Rolson.—He looked inquiringly at his old friend, and discovered a contraction between her eye-brows, and a constrained smile upon her lips.

"I see you are anxious about Theodore?"

"A mother always feels anxiety about her child," said Mrs. Berkeley, in an evasive tone. "A mother's attachment is so exclusive, that she dreads the possibility of her son loving any other but herself."

"But," said Mr. Rolson, "you must allow me to remark, with all the interest of an old friend, that there appears in your manner a more positive cause of anxiety. Has Theodore neglected his studies?"

"Oh, no; he is most steady and studious."

"So I thought. Theodore is good, handsome, and generous, but yet he might be opposed to your views, or perhaps may wish to embrace a career not agreeable to you."

"Oh, no," said the fond mother; "he has not made known any project in that way. Indeed, I believe his mind is yet undecided on that point."

"Well, my dear Mrs. Berkeley, I cannot conceive with the ancient and honorable name which you bear, and the eight thousand a-year income that you possess, that you can for a moment think of making a lawyer of your son."

Mrs. Berkeley smiled without replying, and her old friend continued:—

"Your plans have hitherto been so sagely considered, and so admirably successful, that one is disposed to approve beforehand any proposition you advance knowing well that sound sense dictates your actions: therefore, tell me, why do you think of making Theodore professional? Has he contracted debts?"

"Oh, I perceive you do not know him," said Mrs. Berkeley; "his principle is in keeping with his generosity, and that is saying enough. But I see, my dear sir,

that confidence is due to our old friendship, and therefore I shall be explicit. Theodore loves, and loves in defiance of my wishes, and it shall never receive my approbation.

"Well I am sorry for that; but I suppose that Theodore's love is light, and will pass away."

"Pardon me, I have no such hopes.—As he has not scattered and wasted his affections upon a thousand different objects—as he has lived a retired and even strict life, so has he brought to this love a purity of attachment, deep-rooted and ineffable, which he will uphold with a strength of character not hitherto called forth. I know him: he will not yield, nor shall I either yield to him.—This attachment poisons my existence."

"And who is the object of his love?"

"A young girl, an orphan, named Victorine Harley; he met her at the house of Mrs. Bruce, with whose daughter she was upon the most friendly terms, having been a school companion. She lives alone, upon the interest of a small sum, to which she adds the proceeds of her industry in embroidery. They say that she is sensible, virtuous, and retiring; I wish to thank her so, but you know me sufficiently well to believe me when I tell you, that Miss Harley never shall with my consent bear the ancient and distinguished name of Berkeley. Yes, my friend, a great name is an obligation, and we have a right to transmit it pure and uncorrupted as we have received it."

"These are what are called in the nineteenth century absurd prejudices," said Mr. Rolson, shaking his head.

"That may be," said Mrs. Berkeley; "but the nineteenth century is not in my mind the model of a century. I am a firm believer in the influence of an elevated position, it gives elegance, tact, and good taste; it preserves and upholds the ideas and habits."

"Many examples taken from what our forefathers would call the third estate, militate against your notions. There are in our days many a merchant's daughter, who could rival in grace and elegance, both of mind and manners, a Duchess."

Mrs. Berkeley shrugged her shoulders, and Mr. Rolson continued:—

"And does Theodore wish to marry Miss Harley?"

"He has told me so himself," replied Mrs. Berkeley. "I have stated to him my objections on his head; he appeared grief stricken, but still did not yield.—Such is the state of affairs at present."

"How long is it since this has occurred?"

"Two months. We continue to live as formerly, at least to all appearance, but we have each become more reserved. My son is twenty years of age, he only has to wait until he is one-and-twenty, when he can make me a low bow, and marry without my consent."

In uttering these words, a tear glistened in the eyes of Mrs. Berkeley. Mr. Rolson appeared more serious than usual, and said:

"This is a bad business, indeed.—My dear friend, would you wish that I should speak to Theodore?"

"It would be useless; I know him so well."

"And this young girl, is she beautiful?"

"They say she is. But it matters but little if she were otherwise, as she has caught his fancy."

"'Tis a serious business this management of children. Thank God, I have provided against all embarrassment of the sort, by never marrying."

CHAPTER II.  
As Mrs. Berkeley had truly said, her domestic life was completely embittered, yet no change was perceptible on the surface; the candor the mutual support, the intimacy of affection which reads the very thoughts, the confiding devotion which unveils its most secret wishes, no longer existed; the habits remained the same, the tender attachment which bound the mother to the son and the son to the mother, had not been impaired; but the complete sympathy, the heart, exposed to heart, had altogether ceased, and each succeeding day appeared but to add to the sadness of Mrs. Berkeley, and to the melancholy of her beloved son, but both yielding to the influence of the same characteristic, firmness, remained immovably fixed, one to his enthusiastic attachment of twenty, and the other to her aristocratic principles of fifty. At times a tender word, a look, a grasp of the hand, appeared like a return of days gone by; they looked inquiringly at each

other, but both appeared determined to make no further concession. Then the coldness returned—silence and estrangement resumed its empire, and the frozen mantle of sorrow fell more heavily than heretofore on their hearts.

Theodore appeared more and more absorbed; he would remain for hours together seated opposite the fire, plunged in his own gloomy reflections. His mother, forgetful of her offended dignity, would look upon him with tearful compassion, and utter a few incoherent, but consoling expressions; but to this silent testimony of a tenderness which nothing could subdue, he would reply by a sickly and cold smile, and the mother, in the bitterness of her grief, would exclaim:

"I can do nothing for him—I cannot even console my poor boy."

One morning she softly entered the drawing-room, and found herself near her son, without his at all perceiving her presence. Theodore was seated upon an ottoman; he held a letter rumpled between his hands, his head was half buried in the cushions, and he was weeping.

"Theodore!" cried Mrs. Berkeley.

"Mother," said he, raising and handing her the letter which he held in his hand, "read, and now, perhaps, you will rejoice."

Mrs. Berkeley mechanically held out her hand and took the letter, steadily looking at her son, whose noble countenance was convulsed with emotion, and said:

"Theodore, my dear boy, what is the matter with you?"

Theodore replied not but turned aside in order to hide his emotion. Mrs. Berkeley opened the letter, which was written in a neat and elegant female hand, and reads as follows:—

"Dear Sir,

"I am now about repeating for the last time, what I have so often before expressed; which is, that I shall never be yours without the consent of your family, and may God preserve me, above all things, from being a subject of discord between you and your mother. In order to avoid the possibility of this, I shall leave London, never again to return to it. Forget me, and learn to be happy in the consciousness of doing your duty."

"VICTORINE HARLEY."

Mrs. Berkeley read and re-read this letter, the pure and honest tone of which touched her heart, in spite of her aristocratic predilections. She reflected for some time in silence, when turning the letter, her eyes suddenly encountered the seal, which was a shield, richly emblazoned, and most remarkable for its elegant composition. Mrs. Berkeley, at sight of it, turned deadly pale, and bringing the seal nearer to her eyes, as if she was deceived by the first glance, an exclamation of surprise burst from her.—Turning to her son, and pointing to the letter, she demanded:

"Whose seal is this?"

Theodore, astonished in his turn, replied that it was the arms of Miss Harley's mother, who was of noble descent.

"What was the name of her mother; do you know, my son?"

The young man appeared to reflect for a moment.

"They were a family in Berkshire. Oh! I remember, Lascelles was her name."

Mrs. Berkeley raised her eyes to heaven in deep emotion.

"Just providence of God I thank you," said she. "Theodore, make no resolves—take not a single step until I see you again. But be of good cheer.—Adieu!"

CHAPTER III.  
In another hour, Mrs. Berkeley was ascending the stairs of a house in Mortimer-street, where she stopped on the second floor, and knocked at the door, which was quickly answered by an old servant.

"Miss Harley?" said Mrs. Berkeley, inquiringly.

"Yes, ma'am. Will you walk in? Miss Victorine is inside."

Mrs. Berkeley walked into a small room, where a trunk and several boxes piled one over another, announced an intended journey. From this apartment she was introduced into a little drawing-room, modestly furnished, and found herself in the presence of a young girl of strikingly beautiful appearance who, seated in the recess of a window, was actively employed in a delicate piece of embroidery.

"Is it Miss Harley I have the honor of addressing?" said Mrs. Berkeley.

"Yes, madam," replied the young girl gracefully, although timidly curtseying.

"Will you allow me a few minutes conversation with you, Miss Harley! My name is Berkeley."

At this name a deep color covered the cheeks and brow of Victorine; she appeared greatly agitated, although the tone of her visitor was full of affability and sweetness. She offered Mrs. Berkeley a chair, but remained standing herself, appearing to await in silence the dreaded communication.

"I am," commenced Mrs. Berkeley, "about to put a few questions to you, which may appear the effect of curiosity; but be assured, notwithstanding, that they are dictated by the most lively and sincere interest in your welfare."

Victorine bowed, and Mrs. Berkeley continued:—

"Your mother's name, I understand, was Lascelles; that was descended from a family of that name residing in Berkshire?"

"It is madam, my mother's family had occupied a distinguished rank in the country. Ruined by law, they were obliged to retire into obscurity, and my mother, poor, and an orphan, was obliged to seek the protection of some relatives in a distant country. It was there that she became acquainted with my father. He possessed some property, which his own industry had increased; he saw my mother, loved her, and obtained her in marriage. They enjoyed a few short years of love and happiness; but they both died; both young, and far away from our native country. Thus, you see me alone, alone in this cold world."

Mrs. Berkeley appearing to take so deep an interest in this simple recital, and fixing upon the girl an attentive and admiring look, served both to encourage and astonish her.

At length Mrs. Berkeley demanded if she was the only offspring of her mother's marriage.

Victorine replied that she was, and continued her recital.

"My parents sent me to school in France, and the period of my return had arrived, when I received the terrible news that my father, my mother, my only friends, my guides, my protectors, were no more. They no longer anticipated with joy the return of their child, they no longer counted the days that must intervene before I was restored to their arms. I was alone in the world, and I resolved to remain in France; and having obtained permission of the guardian whom my father had placed over me, I never quitted the house where I was educated until my seventeenth year when my instructress wishing to visit London, took me along with her. Alas her days were counted, and I was soon doomed to lose my only friend, whom I had long considered to look upon as a mother. She left her trusty old servant to protect me, and 'tis thus you see me living alone.—But pardon these details, madam, your kindness has made me too bold."

"Victorine," said Mrs. Berkeley, taking her hand, "regret not your confidence, it is God has been the means of bringing us together, you that I have sought for so long a time. My dear child, have you never heard your mother mention the name which I bear?"

"No, madam, never."

"Then you are ignorant of the history of your family. Your ancestors, Victorine, and those of my husband, were mortal enemies, and for centuries their deadly rivalry caused blood to flow more than once. Feudal wars succeeded court intrigues, and each party was more intent upon the ruin of his enemy than upon his own personal advantage. At length towards the middle of the last century, these long continued quarrels ended in an interminable law suit, in which Lord Granby, the grandfather of my husband, was the conqueror, and your ancestor, Victorine, was thus despoiled of his inheritance, deprived of his rights, and was reduced to the greatest misery upon the very lands that had formerly called him master. This utter and complete ruin extinguished the deadly hatred of my family."

"If right was at his side, madam," interrupted Victorine with mildness.

"No, Child. My grandfather, to ascertain his cause, had neither right or equity, but justice was tampered with, and I blush to tell you that the decree which ruined your ancestor, was purchased with gold by the ancestors of my son.—Such is the conviction of my mind, which I have acquired in my long guardianship, being obliged to study the amount of fortune which I was called upon to remodel. This piece of iniquity, of which the house of Lascelles was the vic-

tim, was then first revealed to me, and anxious to sift the truth, painful as it was, I sought for all the proofs, and even submitted them to the opinion of a first-rate lawyer, whose opinion fortified my own. Yes, the fortune of my child was acquired by an evident fraud, and a wilful perversion of the truth. Wealth, thus empoisoned, is bitterness to me; and the pleasure which riches confer, always called to my mind the despoiled family, hurled from their rank in society, robbed of their fortune, and I do not exaggerate in saying, that our luxury and opulence seemed stricken by an anathema. Filled with these thoughts, I made for several years the most minute search in order to discover the descendants of the Lascelles. My exertions were fruitless, as I lost all traces of your mother. The invisible hand of Providence, which disposes of all things for his wise purpose, has brought us together; after twenty years of vain research, I find in you the lawful descendant of the last Lascelles; and it is to you that I am about making restitution of the property of which your ancestors were deprived by a flagrant act of justice. Accept what is yours in justice, and forgive us for keeping possession of it so long."

"Take from you your fortune and that of your son? Never, madam," said Victorine, with enthusiasm.

"My son will agree with me. Besides, sufficient remains for an honorable subsistence, and the steady and useful education which I have given him will lead the way to certain prosperity. Do not prevent us, therefore, from satisfying our conscience by repairing, though somewhat tardily, the injustice done to your ancestors. You may accept without fear, Victorine, that which we offer with joy."

"Protect me, heaven," cried Victorine. "My gratitude, my most profound gratitude, madam, shall be yours for my life, but do not exact from me that an offer so generous and noble, should be repaid by a base and sordid acceptance. No, madam, the law has decided, and I shall recognise its decree."

"And are you rich, Victorine?"

"No, madam, but my fortune is sufficient for my desires, and that is all I wish for. But the direst poverty would not induce me to deviate from my resolution. Never, never shall I forget your generous offer. It is the only remembrance that I wish to carry with me into that solitude to which I am about retiring."

"You are about quitting London, Victorine?"

"Yes, madam, it is necessary that I should do so," said the young girl, whilst a half-smothered sigh escaped her, the blood rushed tumultuously to her temples, and her large and tearful eyes sought the ground. All at once she felt her hand pressed between those of Mrs. Berkeley, who, drawing her gently to her, said in a low voice:

"This fortune, which you reject, will you not consent to receive from a mother, from a husband? Victorine, will you be my daughter?"

Victorine could not reply; leaning upon the hands of Mrs. Berkeley, her face was completely concealed by the flowing ringlets of her raven hair, a slight trembling alone revealing the emotion of her heart.

"Speak my child. Say yes."

"Mother!" cried Victorine, falling upon her knees, and raising her beautiful face, which was bathed in tears.

"My son is not now displeasing to you?" whispered Mrs. Berkeley.

"Mother, I have long loved him," sobbed Victorine.

"Bless you for that word, my dear child. And now," said Mrs. Berkeley, zealously, "after five centuries of quarrelling, peace is at length proclaimed."

CHAPTER IV.  
A month after the events before related an elegant and numerous assemblage were gathered together in one of the finest houses in Belgrave Square, whilst the lawyer was reading the settlement which was drawn up on the occasion of the marriage of the Honorable Theodore Ferdinand Berkeley and Victorine Theresa Harley, and many looks filled with discreet surprise were exchanged upon the announcement of the grand and magnificent advantages which the marriage contract assured to the bride.

Victorine, modest, graceful and beautiful in her bridal array, was seated beside Mrs. Berkeley, who looked upon her with deep tenderness, an object of admiration and attention to all. Her eyes were occasionally raised, and encountered those of Theodore, who sought and saw but her alone. He was in the full possession of happiness—happiness as complete as it was unexpected. His love, his filial affection, and his bright prospects of futurity, united in squandering for him one of those hours so rarely heard in the bosom of life, and which leaves behind a remembrance at once sad and soothing—like filled with enchantment and regret.