

and a pension of £6,000 a year, and who had sat and dined with him at Lady Hamilton's table two short months before his death at Trafalgar, declined to assist her with even the loan of a few pounds, and found it convenient to plead in excuse all sorts of scruples on the ground of morality, which would have been more real and more to be respected had they existed in the days of Lady Hamilton's prosperity. Her pecuniary difficulties, therefore, forced her to sell Merton, which she quitted with many a pang, to die a few years later

children of a sister, Lady Hamilton at the head of the table and Mother Cadogan at the bottom. He looks remarkably well and full of spirits. . . . Lady Hamilton has improved and added to the house and the place extremely well, without his knowing she was about it. He found it already done. She is a clever being, after all."

The sort of life led by Nelson whilst he was an inmate of the house of the Hamiltons at Merton may be gathered from another letter of the same individual, under date March 22nd, 1802 :—"I



LORD NELSON AND LADY HAMILTON.

in poverty at Calais. Such is the gratitude of great people, and, indeed, of the world at large!

By this remark it is not intended to justify in the slightest degree the relations of Lady Hamilton with Lord Nelson; but certainly it was cruelty and mockery of the reverend gentleman, who profited so largely by his brother's death, to disown in her poverty the lady at whose table he had been so willing to sit as a guest. To prove this fact it is necessary only to quote the following extract from a letter addressed to his wife by Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards first Earl of Minto, August 26th, 1805 :—"I went to Merton on Saturday, and found Nelson just sitting down to dinner, surrounded by a family party of his brother the Dean, Mrs. Nelson, their children, and the

went to Lord Nelson's on Saturday to dinner, and returned to-day in the forenoon. The whole establishment and way of life such as to make me angry as well as melancholy. . . . She [Lady Hamilton] and Sir William, and the whole set of them, are living with him at his expense. She is in high looks, but more immense than ever. She goes on cramming Nelson with towelfulls of flattery, which he goes on taking as quietly as a child does pap. The love she makes him is not only ridiculous, but disgusting; not only the rooms, but the whole house, staircase and all, is covered with nothing but pictures of her and of him, of all sizes and sorts, and representations of his naval action, coats of arms, pieces of plate in his honour, the flagstaff of 'L'Orient,' &c."