

To Edward Bulwer Lytton

Monday [April 21st 1834]

When a person – can be so unmanly as to strike, and terrify a woman as often as you have done me; I cannot be surprized – at his having the meanness to deny, and misrepresent facts. – the “opprobrious” (!) language I used to you yesterday and which procured for me such a violent shaking – and a sprained wrist – I now repeat – I said your conduct was Abominable a word certainly harsh to the ear of a self constituted Demi-God – but very appropriate to a person whose temper 50 times a day places him below humanity. When you say that I have no love for you – you are quite right – how is it possible after all you have done to me that I should? I find that you are not to be purchased at any price – Narcissus¹ could bear nothing but the stream that reflected himself, how then must you hate to look upon your opposite in me from morning till night – you have had no mercy upon me – or even common humanity toward me – Why then should I longer have any foolish Weakness about you – especially as your character cannot be injured even your making me travel with your Paramour² after all that had passed – & I out of my senses for 3 days – at the end of it to make me a tool to a woman that you had not even the excuse of loving but all to gratify a heartless vanity – every feeling of mine was to be torn up by the roots – to lay as an offering at her feet – but this – could not injure you if it was known – any more than that pompous fool your eldest Brother could have his high character injured I suppose if his honorable conduct about my Marriage Settlement was known.³ – Destitute – friendless – and unprotected, as you and your family may think me – because I have neither father, Brother, or any other male relation to prevent them from insulting me – or you from breaking my heart – be it known to you and them, – that I am not quite so forlorn as they may deem – and in separating from you I can – and shall have the first legal advice in the Kingdom – which place me beyond the honor of your Brother’s guardianship and the tender mercies of your Family. – You have roused a lion in me which you cannot conquer therefore conduct it as you best may; and I hope at the next Lincoln Election the “impossibility of finding a blemish in your public or private! character” will insure you success – perhaps you may live to learn that a sincere – a devoted and a disinterested heart & soul – is not to be found every day and that they would have been worth retaining even at the sacrifice of Tyranny – Pride Temper – Selfishness – and Ingratitude

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1. In the mythology of Ancient Greece, the beautiful youth Narcissus falls in love with his own reflection in a pool of water, causing him to waste away. This is a punishment for his vanity and neglect of the devoted Echo, by the goddess Nemesis.

2. Mrs Robert Stanhope was a society beauty with whom EBL had been having an affair, which was public knowledge for about a year. Before embarking on a trip to Italy with his wife, EBL had assured RBL that he had ended the liaison; nevertheless he insisted that Mrs Stanhope and her husband accompany them on their tour of the Continent.
3. According to Louisa Devey, at the start of the marriage EBL had a capital of £6,000 out of which he decided to settle £1,000 on his wife. This barred dower and prevented her from gaining any benefit from her husband's succession to the Knebworth Estates. Even though RBL's relative Sir John Doyle had suggested that this was insufficient, EBL persuaded William, the sole surviving member of the settlement, to hand over to him the £1,000, originally intended for RBL.

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