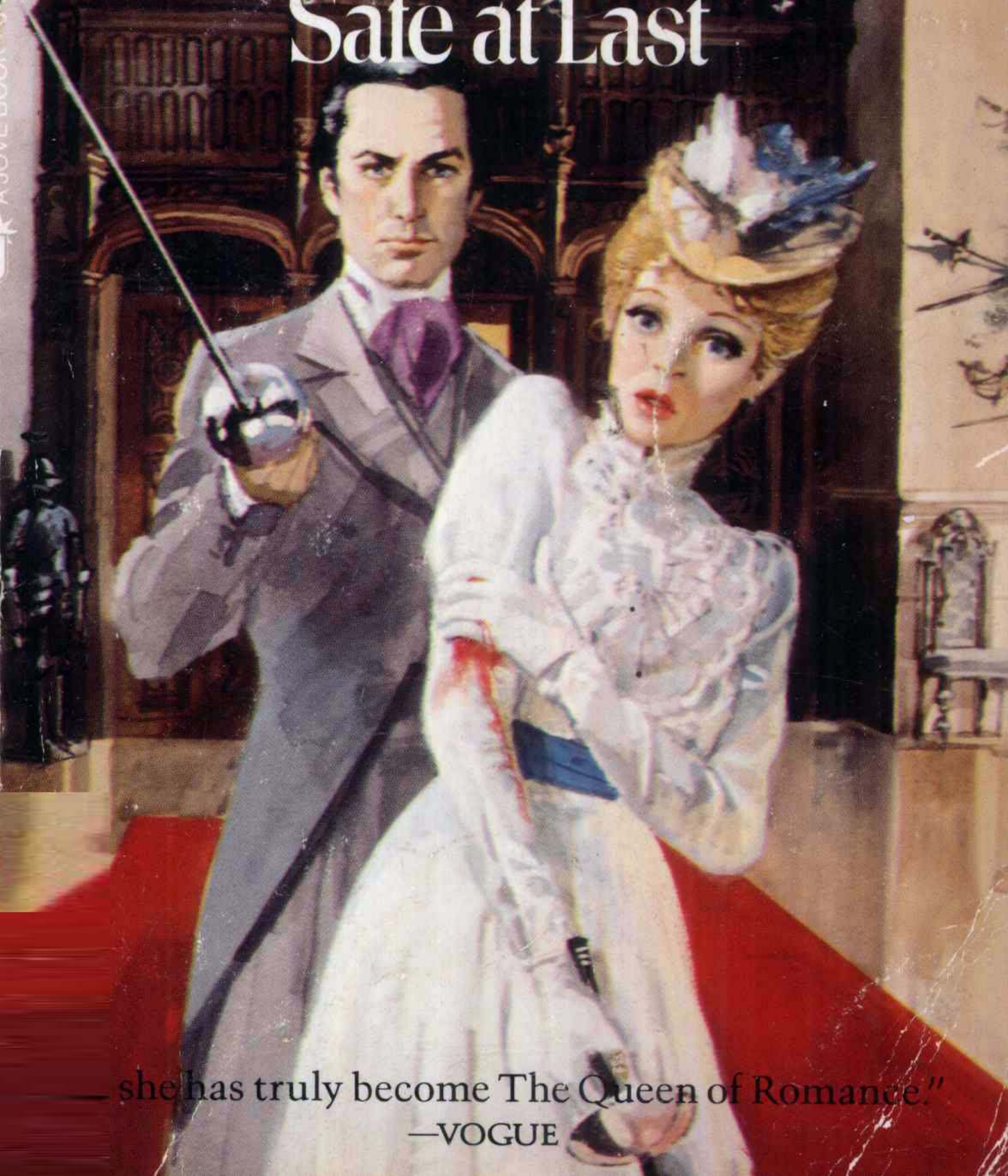


A NEW CAMFIELD NOVEL OF LOVE #31

# BARBARA CARTLAND

Safe at Last



— she has truly become The Queen of Romance! —

—VOGUE

A NEW CAMFIELD NOVEL OF LOVE BY

# BARBARA CARTLAND

Safe at Last



A JOVE BOOK



## **SAFE AT LAST**

**A Jove Book/published by arrangement with  
the author**

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## SAFE AT LAST

To Lord Kirkly's surprise, he saw the colour rise in Otila's pale cheeks as she said:

"I was thinking of a somewhat different disguise . . ."

"What is that?"

There was a pause before she said in a low voice a little hesitatingly:

"That . . . I should travel as . . . your wife!"

Lord Kirkly stared at her.

"You must see it is the only possible solution."

The way she spoke made Lord Kirkly think that this seemed not unreasonable.

And yet he knew that if Otila's disguise was penetrated, it would cause an even greater scandal than anything he had been involved in before.

He rose to his feet, saying as he did so:

"It is impossible! An impossible idea and one I would not entertain for a moment."

### *A Camfield Novel of Love by Barbara Cartland*

---

*"Barbara Cartland's novels are all distinguished by their intelligence, good sense, and good nature . . ."*

ROMANTIC TIMES

*"... who could give better advice . . . than the world's most famous romance novelist, Barbara Cartland?"*

—THE STAR

Camfield Place,  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire,  
England

Dearest Reader,

Camfield Novels of Love mark a very exciting era of my books with Jove. They have already published nearly two hundred of my titles since they became my first publisher in America, and now all my original paperback romances in the future will be published exclusively by them.

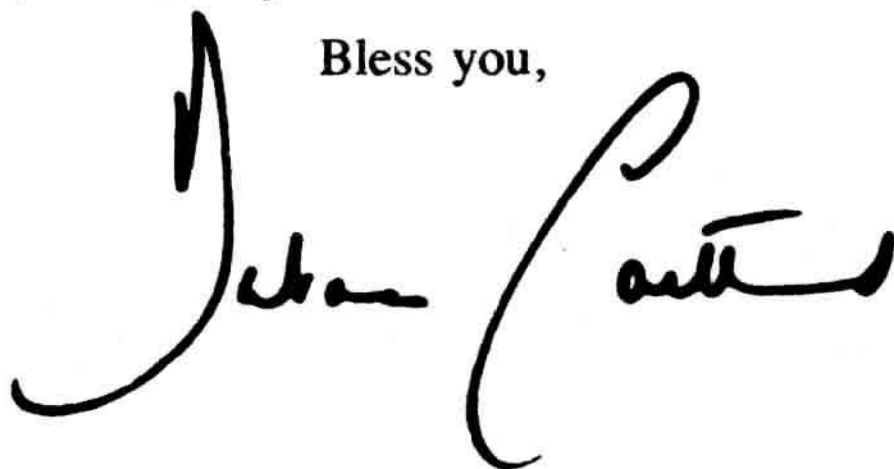
As you already know, Camfield Place in Hertfordshire is my home, which originally existed in 1275, but was rebuilt in 1867 by the grandfather of Beatrix Potter.

It was here in this lovely house, with the best view in the county, that she wrote *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Mr. McGregor's garden is exactly as she described it. The door in the wall that the fat little rabbit could not squeeze underneath and the goldfish pool where the white cat sat twitching its tail are still there.

I had Camfield Place blessed when I came here in 1950 and was so happy with my husband until he died, and now with my children and grandchildren, that I know the atmosphere is filled with love and we have all been very lucky.

It is easy here to write of love and I know you will enjoy the Camfield Novels of Love. Their plots are definitely exciting and the covers very romantic. They come to you, like all my books, with love.

Bless you,

A large, elegant handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Beatrix Potter'.

## CAMFIELD NOVELS OF LOVE

*by Barbara Cartland*

THE POOR GOVERNESS  
WINGED VICTORY  
LUCKY IN LOVE  
LOVE AND THE MARQUIS  
A MIRACLE IN MUSIC  
LIGHT OF THE GODS  
BRIDE TO A BRIGAND  
LOVE COMES WEST  
A WITCH'S SPELL  
SECRETS  
THE STORMS OF LOVE

MOONLIGHT ON THE  
SPHINX  
WHITE LILAC  
REVENGE OF THE HEART  
THE ISLAND OF LOVE  
THERESA AND A TIGER  
LOVE IS HEAVEN  
MIRACLE FOR A  
MADONNA  
A VERY UNUSUAL WIFE  
THE PERIL AND THE  
PRINCE

ALONE AND AFRAID  
TEMPTATION OF A  
TEACHER  
ROYAL PUNISHMENT  
THE DEVILISH DECEPTION  
PARADISE FOUND  
LOVE IS A GAMBLE  
A VICTORY FOR LOVE  
LOOK WITH LOVE  
NEVER FORGET LOVE  
HELGA IN HIDING  
SAFE AT LAST

### *Other books by Barbara Cartland*

THE ADVENTURER  
AGAIN THIS RAPTURE  
BARBARA CARTLAND'S  
BOOK OF BEAUTY  
AND HEALTH  
BLUE HEATHER  
BROKEN BARRIERS  
THE CAPTIVE HEART  
THE COIN OF LOVE  
THE COMPLACENT WIFE  
COUNT THE STARS  
DANCE ON MY HEART  
DESIRE OF THE HEART  
DESPERATE DEFIANCE  
THE DREAM WITHIN  
A DUEL OF HEARTS  
ELIZABETHAN LOVER  
THE ENCHANTING EVIL  
ESCAPE FROM PASSION  
FOR ALL ETERNITY  
THE GOLDEN GONDOLA  
A HALO FOR THE DEVIL  
A HAZARD OF HEARTS  
A HEART IS BROKEN  
THE HIDDEN EVIL  
THE HIDDEN HEART  
THE HORIZONS OF LOVE  
IN THE ARMS OF LOVE

THE IRRESISTIBLE BUCK  
THE KISS OF PARIS  
THE KISS OF THE DEVIL  
A KISS OF SILK  
THE KNAVE OF HEARTS  
THE LEAPING FLAME  
A LIGHT TO THE HEART  
LIGHTS OF LOVE  
THE LITTLE PRETENDER  
LOST ENCHANTMENT  
LOST LOVE  
LOVE AT FORTY  
LOVE FORBIDDEN  
LOVE IN HIDING  
LOVE IN PITY  
LOVE IS DANGEROUS  
LOVE IS MINE  
LOVE IS THE ENEMY  
LOVE ME FOREVER  
LOVE TO THE RESCUE  
LOVE UNDER FIRE  
THE MAGIC OF HONEY  
METTERNICH: THE  
PASSIONATE  
DIPLOMAT  
MONEY, MAGIC AND  
MARRIAGE  
NO HEART IS FREE

THE ODISIOUS DUKE  
OPEN WINGS  
OUT OF REACH  
THE PRICE IS LOVE  
A RAINBOW TO HEAVEN  
THE RELUCTANT BRIDE  
THE SCANDALOUS LIFE  
OF KING CAROL  
THE SECRET FEAR  
THE SMUGGLED HEART  
A SONG OF LOVE  
STARS IN MY HEART  
STOLEN HALO  
SWEET ADVENTURE  
SWEET ENCHANTRESS  
SWEET PUNISHMENT  
THEFT OF A HEART  
THE THIEF OF LOVE  
THIS TIME IT'S LOVE  
TOUCH A STAR  
TOWARDS THE STARS  
THE UNKNOWN HEART  
WE DANCED ALL NIGHT  
WHERE IS LOVE?  
THE WINGS OF ECSTASY  
THE WINGS OF LOVE  
WINGS ON MY HEART  
WOMAN, THE ENIGMA

## **Author's Note**

**FENCING** is one of the Arts with a fascinating history going back to the traditions of chivalry. Swords existed since the very beginning of civilisation and the basic movements of fencing have been used by generations of swordsmen.

The foil has been used since the seventeenth century, but fencing has become a modern athletic sport. In Great Britain a renewal of interest began in the middle of the nineteenth century and the Amateur Fencing Association was founded in 1902.

Passports at the end of the last century were printed in copper plate writing and the name of the individual was written in by hand. As there was a large space left for this, it was quite easy for Lord Kirkly to add a wife to his own particulars. The passport which was surmounted by the Royal Coat of Arms was then signed personally by the Foreign Secretary, in this case, the Marquess of Salisbury.

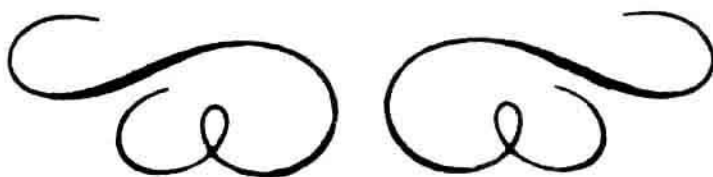
# Safe at Last



# BARBARA CARTLAND



Called after her own  
beloved Camfield Place,  
each Camfield novel of love  
by Barbara Cartland  
is a thrilling, never-before published  
love story by the greatest romance  
writer of all time.



April '86...HAUNTED  
May '86...CROWNED WITH LOVE  
June '86...ESCAPE  
July '86...THE DEVIL DEFEATED

From the covers of Barbara Cartland novels—  
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## *chapter one*

# 1891

**"THIS will do."**

**"I hope you will be comfortable, Milord, and if there is anything you require, please ask for it."**

**The Receptionist bowed politely, and when Lord Kirkly did not answer moved quietly from the Sitting-Room of the Suite, closing the door behind him.**

**Alone, Lord Kirkly walked across the room to stand staring out of the window, not seeing the sunshine on the tall grey houses of Paris, or the chestnut trees coming into bloom, but thinking with a dark fury of how badly he had been deceived.**

**When he thought of how much he had spent on Lisette Forche, he felt like striking himself for his stupidity.**

An extremely generous man, and he could afford to be, at the same time Lord Kirkly expected value for money and fidelity from his mistress.

He had swept Lissette Forche away from her other admirers, installed her in an extremely expensive and attractive house near the Champs-Élysées, and bought her diamonds that were the envy of every Courtesan in Paris.

In addition to this, he had actually become extremely attached to her because she was so feminine, so appealing, and very experienced when beguiling and amusing the man who was keeping her.

It was always understood that when one of the famous, astronomically expensive Courtesans of Paris was under the protection of a man who paid all her bills and adorned her with jewels, she was faithful to him for as long as the liaison lasted.

It was one of the recognised rules of the game, and it had never struck Lord Kirkly that there was any likelihood of Lissette being the exception.

He had, however, been obliged to leave Paris temporarily and return to England for a three-day visit, partly in order to attend to various matters concerning his estate in Buckinghamshire, but also to have an audience with Her Majesty, who wished him to accept a position at Court.

It was something he would have preferred to avoid, but he found it impossible to refuse the awesome Queen Victoria, who frightened everybody, including her own son.

But she had always had a *penchant* for handsome men, which made her more affable than she usually was on such occasions.



Indeed, when she rebuked him, as he had foreseen she would, for his past behaviour, which had caused a great deal of comment, she did so more kindly and, incredible though it seemed, more sympathetically than Lord Kirkly or anyone else might have expected.

It was inevitable, since he had caused a great deal of gossip if not a scandal in social circles, that his behaviour should have reached the Queen's ears.

"She knows everything!" one of her Prime Ministers once said, and it certainly seemed to be true.

"We are really very angry with you, Lord Kirkly," she had said in what strangely enough was still a girlish voice.

It was ominous that she was using the Royal "we," but her tone was not so censorious as he had expected.

When he replied:

"I hope not, Ma'am," and smiled at her beguilingly, it was obvious that Her Majesty was weakening.

"I hope in future you will take up the hereditary duties which your father and your grandfather performed, and we shall hear no more of such escapades that, to say the least of it, are reprehensible in a man of your position and age."

Because there was nothing he could say to this, Lord Kirkly merely bowed his head, and after a perceptible pause, in which he knew he was supposed to repent his sins, the Queen went on to speak of other matters.

It was, however, a great relief to know that when he left the Palace he was free to return to Paris and to Lissette.

It was his own fault that he had got into so much trouble for enjoying a very fiery *affaire de coeur* in

London rather than on the Continent a few months before, prompting his self-exile.

It was also unfortunate that the lady in question was the exceedingly attractive wife of the Italian Ambassador, who had announced his grievances and his jealousy of Lord Kirkly to all and sundry.

"In future," Lord Kirkly told himself, "I will confine myself to women without husbands and will certainly avoid foreigners who talk too much. I will also if possible enjoy them in a City which caters for such delights, which London has never been able to do properly."

He doubted, however, when he was forced to spend the greater part of his time in England, that he would be able always to observe such a convenient and prudent set of rules.

But for the moment, at any rate, his interest was entirely centred on Lisette, whom he found even more fascinating than the dark-eyed Italian who had roused him to the point where he had become careless.

At least, he thought with satisfaction as the train carried him back to Paris a day earlier than he expected, Lisette did not have a husband and he would not be facing the threat of an illicit duel taking place at dawn, or, in the case of the Italian Ambassador, an international incident.

He was so delighted to be returning to Paris that he decided he would take Lisette to the Rue de la Paix as soon as she was dressed, and buy her a necklace which he knew she had coveted and which they had seen the previous week in the window of Cartier's.

She would thank him in her own wonderful fash-

ion, and he would be amply repaid for what he had expended on her by the sensations of desire that she would arouse in him.

Of all the Courtesans he might have chosen, he knew that Lissette was outstanding and without peer in her own class.

She was French, but since her family originally came from Normandy she had the fair hair and blue eyes that were characteristic of that part of France.

She had also more self-control and was therefore more subtly exciting than many of her rivals.

Lord Kirkly looked forward to a long liaison with her which would delight them both and to which there was no foreseeable end.

He even thought that he might persuade her to come to London when he was forced to return to his own country, and was considering finding her a house in St. John's Wood or in Chelsea, which would be as pleasant as, if not superior to, the house he had taken for her in Paris.

The Express which connected with the cross-Channel Steamer got him into the Gare du Nord at the uncomfortable hour of six-thirty in the morning.

Lord Kirkly having been helped into his clothes by his valet looked forward to a bath as soon as he arrived, after which there would be no hurry to dress again until very much later in the morning.

As he drove through the streets that were comparatively empty, he was thinking of how surprised Lissette would be to see him and how beautiful she would look in the morning light.

Because her skin was fair even without the powder,

the rouge, and the lip-salve which were the tools of her trade, she still had the bloom of youth that was very attractive.

He always found it rather appealing after the more exotic ecstasies of their love-making.

The carriage drew up outside the small house ornamented at the front with bushes of lilac and syringa that were just coming into bloom.

The front door was open because, as Lord Kirkly could see, one of the servants had been scrubbing the doorstep, but had obviously been disturbed.

Avoiding a pail of soapy water, he stepped into the Hall, threw down his travelling-cape and hat, and walked quickly up the narrow staircase.

Lisette's bedroom faced onto a small garden at the back of the house which was quiet, and the window received the first rays of the sun.

There was a smile on Lord Kirkly's rather hard lips as he planned to wake her with a kiss, then hear her cry of delight because he was back sooner than she had expected.

But as he put out his hand towards the door, before he could touch the handle he heard a voice inside the room speaking French.

To his astonishment, it was a man's voice, and as he stood transfixed and unable to move, he heard Lisette say:

"Must you go, Pierre? I cannot bear you to leave me!"

"I know," a man replied, "but if I linger any longer, I shall be late on parade and be heavily reprimanded by my Colonel."



There was a little pause, and Lord Kirkly thought the two people inside the room were kissing each other before Lissette said:

“We still have tonight. You will come to me for dinner?”

“Of course! You know that I will be with you as soon as it is possible to get away, and I shall be counting the hours until I can hold you once again like this.”

They were obviously kissing again, and now, as if Lord Kirkly suddenly came back to life, he was aware not only of what was happening, but who was the intruder in his bed making love to his mistress.

Just for a moment he contemplated throwing open the door and denouncing Lissette for her infidelity and using physical violence on her lover.

Then a very English side of his nature, which disliked scenes and dramas of any sort and felt that to show jealousy was beneath his condescension, made him hesitate.

Swiftly he turned back the way he had come, went down the stairs and out through the front door to where to his relief the vehicle which had brought him from the station had not yet driven away.

In fact, his valet, who had sat on the box with the coachman, was just setting the last of his luggage down on the step.

“Put that back,” Lord Kirkly commanded, “and quickly!”

Bates, his valet, who had been with him for many years, gave him one startled glance, then obeyed without comment.