CLARISSA;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY:

COMPREHENDING THE

MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS

OF

PRIVATE LIFE;

AND

PARTICULARLY SHEWING THE DISTRESSES

THAT MAY ATTEND THE

MISCONDUCT

BOTH OF

PARENTS AND CHILDREN,

IN RELATION TO MARRIAGE.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH THE LAST CORRECTIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday morning, eight o'clock.

HER chamber door has not yet been opened. I must not expect she will breakfast with me. Nor dine with me, I doubt. A little silly soul, what troubles does she make to herself by her over-niceness!—All I have done to her, would have been looked upon as a *frolic* only, a *romping-bout*, and laughed off by nine parts in ten of the sex accordingly. The more she makes of it, the more painful to herself, as well as to me.

Why now, Jack, were it not better, upon *her own* notions, that she seemed not *so sensible* as she will make herself to be, if she is *very* angry?

But perhaps I am more afraid than I need. I believe I am. From her *over*-niceness arises my fear, more than from any extraordinary reason for resentment. Next time, she may count herself very happy, if she come off no worse.

The dear creature was so frightened, and so fa-

tigued last night, no wonder she lies it out this morning.

I hope she has had more rest than I have had. Soft and balmy, I hope, have been her slumbers, that she may meet me in tolerable temper. All sweetly blushing and confounded—I *know* how she will look!—But why should she, the *sufferer*, be ashamed, when I, the *trespasser*, am not?

But custom is a prodigious thing. The women are told how much their blushes heighten their graces. They practise for them therefore: blushes come as readily when they call for them, as their tears: aye, that's it! While we men, taking blushes for a sign of guilt or sheepishness, are equally studious to suppress them.

* * *

By my troth, Jack, I am half as much ashamed to see the women below, as my fair one can be to see me. I have not yet opened my door, that I may not be obtruded upon by them.

After all, what devils may one make of the sex! To what a height of—what shall I call it?—must those of it be arrived, who once loved a man with so much distinction, as both Polly and Sally loved me; and yet can have got so much above the pangs of jealousy, so much above the mortifying reflections that arise from dividing and sharing with new objects the affections of him they prefer to all others, as to wish for, and promote a competitorship in his love, and make their supreme delight consist in reducing others to their level!—For thou canst not imagine, how even Sally Martin rejoiced last night in the thought that the lady's hour was approaching.

Past ten o'clock.

I NEVER longed in my life for any thing with so

much impatience, as to see my charmer. She has been stirring, it seems, these two hours.

Dorcas just now tapped at her door, to take her morning commands.

She had none for her, was the answer.

She desired to know, if she would not breakfast?

A sullen and low-voiced *negative* received Dorcas.

I will go myself.

* * *

Three different times tapped I at the door; but had no answer.

Permit me, dearest creature, to inquire after your health. As you have not been seen to-day, I am impatient to know how you do.

Not a word of answer; but a deep sigh, even to sobbing.

Let me beg of you, madam, to accompany me up another pair of stairs—you'll rejoice to see what a happy escape we have all had.

A happy escape indeed, Jack!—For the fire had scorched the window-board, singed the hangings, and burnt through the slit-deal lining of the window-jambs.

No answer, madam!—Am I not worthy of one word?—Is it thus you keep your promise with me?—Shall I not have the favour of your company for two minutes [only for two minutes] in the dining-room?

Hem!—And a deep sigh!—were all the answer.

Answer me but how you do! Answer me but that you are well! Is this the forgiveness that was the condition of my obedience?

Then, in a faintish, but angry voice, Begone from my door!—Wretch! inhuman, barbarous, and all that is base and treacherous!—begone from my door! Nor tease thus a poor creature, entitled to protection, not outrage.

I see, madam, how you keep your word with me —*if* a sudden impulse, the effects of an unthought-of accident, cannot be forgiven—

O the dreadful weight of a father's curse, thus in the very letter of it———

And then her voice dying away in murmurs inarticulate, I looked through the key-hole, and saw her on her knees, her face, though not towards me, lifted up, as well as hands, and these folded, deprecating, I suppose, that gloomy tyrant's curse.

I could not help being moved.

My dearest life! admit me to your presence but for two minutes, and confirm your promised pardon; and may lightning blast me on the spot, if I offer any thing but my penitence, at a shrine so sacred! I will afterwards leave you for the whole day; and till to-morrow morning; and then attend you with writings, all ready to sign, a licence obtained, or if it cannot, a minister without one. This once believe me! When you see the reality of the danger that gave occasion for this your unhappy resentment, you will think less hardly of me. And let me beseech you to perform a promise on which I made a reliance not altogether ungenerous.

I cannot see you! Would to heaven I never had! If I write, that's all I can do.

Let your writing then, my dearest life, confirm your promise: and I will withdraw in expectation of it.

Past eleven o'clock.

She rung her bell for Dorcas; and, with her door in her hand, only half-opened, gave her a billet for me.

How did the dear creature look, Dorcas?

She was dressed. She turned her face quite from me; and sighed, as if her heart would break.

Sweet creature!—I kissed the wet wafer, and drew it from the paper with my breath.

These are the contents.—No inscriptive Sir! No Mr. Lovelace!

I CANNOT see you: nor will I, if I can help it. Words cannot express the anguish of my soul on your baseness and ingratitude.

If the circumstances of things are such, that I can have no way for reconciliation with those who would have been my natural protectors from such outrages, but through *you*, [the only inducement I can have to stay a moment longer in your knowledge] pen and ink must be, at present, the only means of communication between us.

Vilest of men and most detestable of plotters! how have I deserved from you the shocking indignities—but no more—only for your own sake, wish not, at least for a week to come, to see

The undeservedly injured and insulted

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

So thou seest, nothing could have stood me in stead, but this plot of Tomlinson and her uncle! To what a pretty pass, nevertheless, have I brought myself!—Had Cæsar been such a fool, he had never passed the Rubicon. But after he *had* passed it, had he re reated *re-infecta*, intimidated by a senatorial edict, what a pretty figure would he have made in history!—I might have known, that to attempt a robbery, and put a person in bodily fear, is as punishable as if the robbery had been actually committed.

But not to see her for a week!—Dear, pretty soul! how she anticipates me in every thing! The counsellor will have finished the writings to-day or to-morrow, at furthest: the licence with the parson,

or the parson without the licence, must be also procured within the next four-and-twenty hours; Pritchard is as good as ready with his indentures tripartite: Tomlinson is at hand with a favourable answer from her uncle—*yet not to see her for a week!* —Dear, sweet soul! her good angel is gone a journey: is truanting at least. But nevertheless, in thy week's time, or in much less, my charmer, I doubt not to complete my triumph!

But what vexes me of all things, is, that such an excellent creature should break her word:—fie, fie, upon her!—But nobody is absolutely perfect! *'Tis human to err, but not to persevere*—I hope my charmer cannot be inhuman!

LETTER II.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

King's Arms, Pall Mall, Thursday, two o'clock.

SEVERAL billets passed between us before I went out, by the *internuncioship* of Dorcas: for which reason mine are superscribed by her married name. —She would not open her door to receive them; lest I should be near it, I suppose. So Dorcas was forced to put them under the door (after copying them for thee); and thence to take the answers. Read them, if thou wilt, at this place.

TO MRS. LOVELACE.

INDEED, my dearest life, you carry this matter too far. What will the people below, who suppose us one as to the ceremony, think of so great a niceness? Liberties so innocent! the occasion so accidental!—You will expose *yourself* as well as *me*.—Hitherto they know nothing of what has passed.

And what indeed *has* passed, to occasion all this resentment?—I am sure, you will not, by a breach of your word of honour, give me reason to conclude that had I *not* obeyed you, I could have fared no worse.

Most sincerely do I repent the offence given to your delicacy—but must I, for so accidental an occurrence, be branded by such shocking names?—*Vilest of men*, and *most detestable of plotters*, are hard words!—From the pen of such a lady too.

If you step up another pair of stairs, you will be convinced, that, however *detestable* I may be to you, I am no *plotter* in this affair.

I must insist upon seeing you, in order to take your directions upon some of the subjects we talked of yesterday in the evening.

All that is *more than necessary is too much.* I claim your promised pardon, and wish to plead it on my knees.

I beg your presence in the dining-room for one quarter of an hour, and I will then leave you for the day, I am,

My dearest life,
your ever adoring and truly penitent,
LOVELACE.

TO MR. LOVELACE.

I WILL not see you. I cannot see you. I have no directions to give you. Let Providence decide for me as it pleases.

The more I reflect upon your vileness, your ungrateful, your barbarous vileness, the more I am exasperated against you.

You are the *last* person, whose judgment I will take upon what is or is not carried too far in matters of decency.

'Tis grievous to me to write, or even to *think* of

you at present. Urge me no more then. Once more, I will *not* see you. Nor care I, now you have made me vile to myself, what other people think of me.

TO MRS. LOVELACE.

AGAIN, madam, I remind you of your promise: and beg leave to say, I insist upon the performance of it.

Remember, dearest creature, that the fault of a blamable person cannot warrant a fault in one more perfect. *Overniceness* may be *underniceness!*

I cannot reproach myself with any thing that deserves this high resentment.

I own that the violence of my passion for you might have carried me beyond fit bounds—but that your commands and adjurations had power over me at *such* a moment, I humbly presume to say, deserves some consideration.

You enjoin me not to see you for a week. If I have not your pardon before Captain Tomlinson comes to town, what shall I say to *him?*

I beg once more your presence in the dining-room. By my soul, madam, I *must* see you.

I want to consult you about the licence, and other particulars of great importance. The people below think us married; and I cannot talk to you upon such subjects with the door between us.

For heaven's sake, favour me with your presence for a few minutes: and I will leave you for the day.

If I am to be forgiven, according to your promise, the earliest forgiveness will be most obliging, and will save great pain to yourself, as well as to

Your truly contrite and afflicted

LOVELACE.

TO MR. LOVELACE.

THE more you tease me, the worse it will be for you.

Time is wanted to consider whether I ever should think of you at all

At *present*, it is my sincere wish, that I may never more see your face.

All that can afford you the least shadow of favour from me, arises from the hoped-for reconciliation with my *real* friends, not my *Judas* protector.

I am careless at present of consequences. I hate myself: and who is it I have reason to value?—Not the man who could form a plot to disgrace his own hopes, as well as a poor friendless creature *(made friendless by himself)* by insults not to be thought of with patience.

TO MRS. LOVELACE.

MADAM,

I WILL go to the Commons, and proceed in every particular as if I had not the misfortune to be under your displeasure.

I must insist upon it, that however faulty my passion on so unexpected an incident, made me appear to a lady of your delicacy, yet my compliance with your entreaties at *such* a moment (as it gave you an instance of your power over me, which few men could have shown) ought, duly considered, to entitle me to the effects of that solemn promise which was the condition of my obedience.

I hope to find you in a kinder, and, I will say, *juster* disposition on my return. Whether I get the licence, or not, let me beg of you to make the *soon* you have been pleased to bid me hope for, to-mor-

row morning. This will reconcile every thing, and make me the happiest of men.

The settlements are ready to sign, or will be by night.

For heaven's sake, madam, do not carry your resentment into a displeasure so disproportionate to the offence. For that would be, to expose us both to the people below; and, what is of infinite more consequence to us, to Captain Tomlinson. Let us be able, I beseech you, madam, to assure him, on his next visit, that we are one.

As I have no hope to be permitted to dine with you, I shall not return till evening: and then, I presume to say, I *expect* (your *promise* authorizes me to use the word) to find you disposed to bless, by your consent for to-morrow,

Your adoring,

LOVELACE.

What pleasure did I propose to take, how to *enjoy* the sweet confusion in which I expected to find her, while all was so recent! But she *must*, she *shall*, see me on my return. It were better for *herself*, as well as for *me*, that she had not made *so much ado about nothing*. I must keep my anger alive, lest it sink into compassion. *Love* and *compassion*, be the provocation ever so great, are hard to be separated: while *anger* converts what would be *pity* without it, into *resentment*. Nothing can be lovely in a man's eye, with which he is thoroughly displeased.

I ordered Dorcas on putting the last billet under the door, and finding it taken up, to tell her, that I hoped an answer to it before I went out.

Her reply was verbal, *Tell him that I care not whither he goes, nor what he does.—And this*, re-urged by Dorcas, *was all she had to say to me.*

I looked through the key-hole at my going by her door, and saw her on her knees, at her bed's feet, her head and bosom on the bed, her arms extended, [*sweet creature, how I adore her!*] and in an agony she seemed to be, sobbing, as I heard at that distance, as if her heart would break—by my soul, Jack, I am a *pity*-ful fellow. Recollection is my enemy!—Divine excellence!—Happy with her for so many days together! Now so unhappy!—And for what?—But she is purity itself. And why, after all, should I thus torment—but I must not trust myself with myself, in the humour I am in.

* * *

Waiting here for Mowbray and Mallory, by whose aid I am to get the licence, I took papers out of my pocket, to divert myself; and thy last popt officiously the first into my hand. I gave it the honour of a re-perusal; and this revived the subject with me, with which I had resolved not to trust myself.

I remember, that the dear creature, in her torn answer to my proposals, says, *that condescension is not meanness.* She better knows how to make this out, than any mortal breathing. Condescension indeed *implies* dignity: and dignity ever *was* there in *her* condescension. Yet such a dignity as gave grace to the condescension; for there was no pride, no insult, no apparent superiority, indicated by it—this, Miss Howe confirms to be a part of her general character *.

I can tell her, how she might behave, to make me her own for ever. She knows she cannot fly me. She knows she must see me sooner or later; the sooner the more gracious.—I would allow her to resent [not because the liberties I took with her

* See Vol. IV. p. 65.

require resentment, were she not a CLARISSA; but as it becomes her particular niceness to resent]: but would she show more *love* than *abhorrence* of me in her resentment; would she *seem*, if it were *but* to *seem*, to believe the fire no device, and all that followed merely accidental; and descend, upon it, to tender expostulation, and upbraiding for the advantage I would have taken of her surprise; and would she, at last, be satisfied (as *well* she may) that it was attended with no further consequence; and place some generous confidence in my honour [*power loves to be trusted, Jack;*] I think I would put an end to all her trials, and pay her my vows at the altar.

Yet to have taken such bold steps, as with Tomlinson and her uncle.—To have made such a progress—O Belford, Belford, how have I puzzled myself, as well as her!—This cursed aversion to wedlock how has it entangled me!—What contradictions has it made me guilty of!

How pleasing to myself, to look back upon the happy days I gave her: though mine would doubtless have been more unmixedly so, could I have determined to lay aside my contrivances, and to be as sincere all the time, as she deserved that I should be!

If I find this humour hold but till to-morrow morning, [and it has now lasted two full hours, and I seem, methinks, to have pleasure in encouraging it] I will make thee a visit, I think, or get thee to come to me; and then will I—*consult thee upon it.*

But she will not trust me. She will not confide in my honour. Doubt, in this case, is defiance. She loves me not well enough to forgive me generously. *She is so greatly above me!* How can I forgive her for a merit so mortifying to my pride! She

thinks, she *knows*, she has *told* me, that she is above me. These words are still in my ears, 'Begone, Lovelace!—My soul is above thee, man!—Thou hast a proud heart to contend with!—My soul is above thee, man*!' Miss Howe thinks her above me too. Thou, even thou, my friend, my *intimate* friend and companion, art of the same opinion. Then I fear her as much as I love her.—How shall my pride bear these reflections? My wife (as I have so often said, because it so often recurs to my thoughts) to be so *much* my superior!—Myself to be considered but as the *second person* in my own family!—Canst thou teach me to bear such a reflection as this!—To tell me of my acquisition in her, and that she, with all her excellences, will be *mine* in full property, is a mistake—it cannot be so—for shall I not be *hers*; and not *my own*?—Will not every act of her duty (as I cannot deserve it) be a condescension, and a triumph over me?—And must I owe it merely to her *goodness* that she does not despise me?—To have her *condescend* to bear with my follies!—To wound me with an *eye of pity*!—A daughter of the Harlowes thus to excel the last, and as I have heretofore said, not the meanest of the Lovelaces†—forbid it!—

Yet forbid it not—for do I not now—do I not every moment—see her before me all over charms, and elegance and purity, as in the struggles of the past midnight? And in these struggles, heart, voice, eyes, hands, and sentiments, so greatly, so gloriously consistent with the character she has sustained from her cradle to the present hour?

But what advantages do I give *thee*?

Yet have I not *always* done her justice? Why then thy teasing impertinence?

* See Vol. IV. Letter xxxv.

† See Vol. III. p. 85.

However, I forgive thee, Jack—since (so much generous love am I capable of!) I had rather all the world should condemn *me*, than that *her* character should suffer the least impeachment.

The dear creature herself once told me, that there was a strange mixture in my mind *.

I have been called *Devil* and *Beelzebub*, between the two proud beauties: I must indeed be a Beelzebub, if I had not some tolerable qualities.

But as Miss Howe says, the *suffering time* of this excellent creature is her *shining time* †. Hitherto she has done nothing but shine.

She called me *villain*, Belford, within these few hours. And what is the sum of the present argument; but that had I *not* been a villain in her sense of the word, she had not been so much an *angel?*

O Jack, Jack! this midnight attempt has made me mad; has utterly undone me! How can the dear creature say, I have made her vile in her *own* eyes, when her behaviour under such a surprise, and her resentment under such circumstances, have so greatly exalted her in *mine?*

Whence, however, this strange rhapsody!—Is it owing to my being *here?* That I am not at *Sinclair's?* But if there be infection in that house, how has my *beloved* escaped it?

But no more in this strain!—I will see what her behaviour will be on my return—yet already do I begin to apprehend some little sinkings, some little retrogradations: for I have just now a doubt arisen, whether, for *her own* sake, I should wish her to forgive me *lightly*, or with *difficulty?*

* * *

I AM in a way to come at the wished-for licence.

* See Vol. III. Letter xxix. † See Vol. IV. p. 67.

I have now given every thing between my beloved and me a full consideration; and my puzzle is over. What has brought me to a speedier determination, is, that I think I have found out what she means by the *week's* distance at which she intends to hold me. It is, that she may have time to write to Miss Howe, to put in motion that cursed scheme of hers, and to take measures upon it which shall enable her to abandon and renounce me for ever. Now, Jack, *if I obtain not admission to her presence on my return;* but am refused with haughtiness; if her *week* be insisted upon (such prospects before her); I shall be confirmed in my conjecture; and it will be plain to me, that weak at best was that love, which could give place to punctilio, at a time when the all-reconciling ceremony, as she must think, waits her command:—then will I recollect all her perversenesses; then will I reperuse Miss Howe's letters, and the transcripts from other's of them; give way to my aversion to the life of shackles: and then shall she be mine in my own way.

But, after all, I am in hopes, that she will have better considered of every thing by the evening; that her threat of a *week's* distance was thrown out in the heat of passion; and that she will allow, that I have as much cause to quarrel with *her* for breach of her word, as she has with *me* for breach of the peace.

These lines of Rowe have got into my head; and I shall repeat them very devoutly all the way the chairmen shall poppet me towards her by-and-by.

> Teach me, some power, the happy art of speech,
> To dress my purpose up in gracious words;
> Such as may softly steal upon her soul,
> And never waken the tempestuous passions.

LETTER III.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday evening, June 8.

O for a curse to kill with! — Ruined! Undone! Outwitted! Tricked!—Zounds, man, the lady is gone off!—Absolutely gone off! Escaped!—

Thou knowest not, nor canst conceive, the pangs that wring my heart!—What can I do!—O Lord, O Lord, O Lord!

And thou, too, who hast endeavoured to weaken my hands, wilt but clap thy dragon's wings at the tidings!

Yet I must write, or I shall go distracted. Little less have I been these two hours; dispatching messengers to every stage, to every inn, to every waggon or coach, whether flying or creeping, and to every house with a bill up, for five miles round.

The little hypocrite, who knows not a soul in this town, [*I thought I was sure of her at any time*] such an unexperienced traitress; giving me hope too, in her first billet, that her expectation of the family-reconciliation would withold her from taking such a step as this—curse upon her contrivances!—I thought, that it was owing to her bashfulness, to her modesty, that, after a few innocent freedoms, she could not look me in the face; when, all the while, she was impudently [yes, I say, *impudently*, though she be Clarissa Harlowe] contriving to rob me of the dearest property I had ever purchased—purchased by a painful servitude of many months; fighting through the wild-beasts of her family for her, and combating with a windmill virtue, which hath cost me millions of perjuries only to attempt;

and which now, with its d—n'd air-fans, has tost me a mile and an half beyond hope!—And this, just as I had arrived within view of the consummation of all my wishes!

O devil of love! god of love no more—how have I deserved this of thee!—Never before the friend of frozen virtue!—*Powerless* demon, for powerless thou must be, if thou *meanest* not to frustrate my hopes; who shall henceforth kneel at thy altars!—May every enterprising heart abhor, despise, execrate, renounce thee, as I do!—But, O Belford, Belford, what signifies cursing now!

* * *

How she could effect this her wicked escape, is my astonishment; the whole sisterhood having charge of her:—for, as yet, I have not had patience enough to inquire into the particulars, nor to let a soul of them approach me.

Of this I am sure, *or I had not brought her hither;* there is not a creature belonging to this house, that could be *corrupted* either by *virtue* or *remorse:* the highest joy every infernal nymph of this worse than infernal habitation *could* have known, would have been to reduce this proud beauty to her own level.—And as to my villain, who also had charge of her, he is such a seasoned varlet, that he delights in mischief for the sake of it: no bribe could seduce him to betray his trust, were there but wickedness in it!—'Tis well, however, he was out of my way when the cursed news was imparted to me!—Gone, the villain! in quest of her: not to return, nor to see my face [so it seems he declared] till he has heard some tidings of her; and all the *out-of-place* varlets of his numerous acquaintance are summoned and employed in the same business.

To what purpose brought I this angel (angel I must yet call her) to this hellish house?—And was

I not meditating to do her deserved honour?—By my soul, Belford, I was resolved—but thou knowest what I had *conditionally* resolved—and now, who can tell into what hands she may have fallen!

I am mad, stark mad, by Jupiter, at the thoughts of this!—Unprovided, destitute, unacquainted—some villain, worse than myself, who adores her not as I adore her, may have seized her, and taken advantage of her distress!—Let me perish, Belford, if a whole hecatomb of *innocents*, as the little plagues are called, shall atone for the broken promise and wicked artifices of this *cruel creature!*

* * *

Going home, as I did, with resolutions favourable to her, judge thou of my distraction, when her escape was first hinted to me, although but in broken sentences. I knew not what I said, nor what I did. I wanted to kill somebody. I flew out of one room into another, while all avoided me but the veteran Betty Carberry, who broke the matter to me. I charged bribery and corruption, in my first fury, upon all; and threatened destruction to old and young, as they should come in my way.

Dorcas continues *locked up* from me: Sally and Polly have not yet dared to appear: the vile Sinclair——

But here comes the odious devil. She taps at the door, though that's only a jar, whining and snuffling, to try, I suppose, to coax me into temper.

* * *

What a helpless state, where a man can only execrate himself and others; the occasion of his rage remaining; the evil increasing upon reflection; time itself conspiring to deepen it!—O how I cursed her!

I have her now methinks, before me, blubbering —how odious does sorrow make an ugly face!— Thine, Jack, and this old bedlam's, in penitentials, instead of moving compassion, must evercome confirm hatred; while beauty in tears, is beauty heightened, and what my heart has ever delighted to see.—

'What excuse!—Confound you, and your cursed daughters, what excuse can you make?—Is she not gone!—Has she not escaped!—But before I am quite distracted, before I commit half an hundred murders, let me hear how it was.'——

* * *

I HAVE heard her story!—Art, d—ned, confounded, wicked, unpardonable art, in a woman of her character—but show me a woman, and I'll show thee a plotter!—This plaguy sex is *art* itself: every individual of it is a plotter by nature.

This is the substance of the old wretch's account.

She told me, 'That I had no sooner left the vile house, than Dorcas acquainted the Syren' [*do, Jack, let me call her names!—I beseech thee, Jack, to permit me to call her names!*] 'than Dorcas acquainted her lady with it; and that I had left word, that I was gone to Doctors' Commons, and should be heard of for some hours at the Horn there, if inquired after by the counsellor, or any body else: that afterwards I should be either at the Cocoa Tree, or King's Arms, and should not return till late. She then urged her to take some refreshment.

'She was in tears when Dorcas approached her; her saucy eyes swelled with weeping: she refused either to eat or drink: sighed as if her heart would break.'—False, devilish grief: *not the humble, silent,*

grief, that only deserves pity!—Contriving to ruin me, to despoil me of all that I held valuable, in the very midst of it.

'Nevertheless, being resolved not to see me for a week at least, she ordered her to bring up three or four French rolls, with a little butter, and a decanter of water; telling her, she would dispense with her attendance; and that should be all she would live upon in the interim. So artful creature! pretending to lay up for a week's siege.'—For, as to substantial food, she, no more than other angels—angels, said I—the devil take me if she shall be any more an angel!—For she is odious in my eyes; and I hate her mortally!——

But oh! Lovelace, thou liest!—She is all that is lovely! All that is excellent!

But *is* she, *can* she be gone!—O how Miss Howe will triumph!—But if that little fury receive her, fate shall make me rich amends; for then will I contrive to have them both.

I was looking back for connection—but the devil take connection: I have no business with it: the contrary best befits distraction, and that will soon be my lot!

'Dorcas consulted the old wretch about obeying her: O yes, by all means: for Mr. Lovelace knew how to come at her at any time: and directed a bottle of sherry to be added.

'This cheerful compliance so obliged her, that she was prevailed upon to go up, and look at the damage done by the fire; and seemed not only shocked at it, but, as they thought, satisfied it was no trick; as she owned she had at first apprehended it to be. All this made them secure; and they laughed in their sleeves, to think what a childish way of showing her resentment she had found

out; Sally throwing out her witticisms, that Mrs. Lovelace was right, however, *not to quarrel with her bread and butter.*'

Now this very childishness, as *they* imagined it, in such a genius, would have made *me* suspect either her head, after what had happened the night before; or her purpose, when the marriage was (so far as she knew) to be completed within the week in which she was resolved to secrete herself from me in the same house.

'She sent Will, with a letter to Wilson's, directed to Miss Howe, ordering him to inquire if there were not one for her there.

'He only pretended to go, and brought word here was none; and put her letter in his pocket for me.

'She then ordered him to carry another (which he gave him) to the Horn Tavern to me.—All this done without any seeming hurry: yet she appeared to be very solemn; and put her handkerchief frequently to her eyes.

'Will pretended to come to me with this letter. But though the dog had the sagacity to mistrust something on her sending him out a second time (and to *me*, whom she had refused to see); which he thought extraordinary; and mentioned his mistrusts to Sally, Polly, and Dorcas; yet they made light of his suspicions; Dorcas assuring them all, that her lady seemed more stupid with her grief, than active; and that she really believed she was a little turned in her head, and knew not what she did. But all of them depended upon her inexperience, her open temper, and upon her not making the least motion towards going out, or to have a coach or chair called, as sometimes she had done; and still more upon the preparations she had made for a week's siege, as I may call it.

'Will went out, pretending to bring the letter to me; but quickly returned; his heart still misgiving him, on recollecting my frequent cautions, that he was not to judge for himself, when he had *positive* orders; but if any doubt occurred, from circumstances I could not foresee, literally to follow them, as the only way to avoid blame.

'But it must have been in this little interval, that she escaped; for soon after his return, they made fast the street-door and hatch, the mother and the two nymphs taking a little turn into the garden; Dorcas going up stairs, and Will (to avoid being seen by his lady, or his voice heard) down into the kitchen.

'About half an hour after, Dorcas, who had planted herself where she could see her lady's door open, had the curiosity to go to look through the keyhole, having a misgiving, as she said, that her lady might offer some violence to herself, in the mood she had been in all day; and finding the key in the door, which was not very usual, she tapped at it three or four times, and having no answer, opened it, with Madam, madam, did you call?—Supposing her in her closet.

'Having no answer, she stept forward, and was astonished to find she was not there. She hastily ran into the dining-room, then into my apartments, searched every closet; dreading all the time to behold some sad catastrophe.

'Not finding her any where, she ran down to the old creature, and her nymphs, with a Have you seen my lady?—Then she's gone!—She's no where above!

'They were sure she could not be gone out.

'The whole house was in an uproar in an instant; some running up stairs, some down, from the upper

rooms to the lower; and all screaming, how should they look *me* in the face!

'Will cried out, he was a dead man: *he* blamed *them; they him;* and every one was an *accuser*, and an *excuser*, at the same time.

'When they had searched the whole house, and every closet in it, ten times over to no purpose, they took it into their heads to send to all the porters, chairmen, and hackney-coachmen, that had been near the house for two hours past to inquire if any of them saw such a young lady; describing her.

'This brought them some light: the only dawning for hope, that I can have, and which keeps me from absolute despair. One of the chairmen gave them this account: that he saw such a one come out of the house a little before four (in a great hurry, and as if frighted) with a little parcel tied up in a handkerchief, in her hand: that he took notice to his fellow, who plied her without her answering, that she was a fine young lady: that he'd warrant, she had either a bad husband, or very cross parents; for that her eyes seemed swelled with crying, upon which, a third fellow replied, that it might be a doe-escaped from mother *Damnable's* park. This Mrs. Sinclair told me with a curse, and a wish that she knew the saucy villain.—She thought truly, that, she *had a better reputation; so handsomely as she lived, and so justly as she paid every body for what she bought; her house visited by the best and civilest of gentlemen; and no noise or brawls ever heard, or known in it.*

'From these appearances, the fellow who gave this information, had the curiosity to follow her, unperceived. She often looked back. Every body who passed her, turned to look after her; passing their verdict upon her tears, her hurry, and her

charming person; till coming to a stand of coaches a coachman plied her; was accepted; alighted opened the coach door in a hurry, seeing *her* hurry; and in it she stumbled for haste, and, a the fellow believed, hurt her shin with the stumble.'

The devil take me, Belford, if my generous heart is not moved for her, notwithstanding her wicked deceit, to think what must be her reflections and apprehensions at the time.—A mind so delicate, heeding no cen-ures; yet, probably afraid of being laid hold of by a Lovelace in every one she saw! At the same time, not knowing to what dangers she was about to expose herself; nor of whom she could obtain shelter; a stranger to the town, and to all its ways, the afternoon far gone: but little money; and no clothes but those she had on!

It is impossible, in this little interval since last night, that Miss Howe's Townsend could be co operating.

But how she must abhor me, to run all these risks; how heartily must she detest me, for my freedoms of last night! O that I had given her greater reason for a resentment so violent!—As to her *virtue*, I am too much enraged to give her the merit due to that. To virtue it cannot be owing that she should fly from the charming prospects that were before her; but to malice, hatred, contempt, Harlowe-pride, (the worst of pride) and to all the deadly passions that ever reigned in a female breast—and if I can but recover her—but be still, be calm, be hushed, my stormy passions; for is it not Clarissa [*Harlowe* must I say?] that thus I rave against?

'The fellow heard her say, Drive fast! Very fast! Where, madam? To Holborn Bars, answered she; repeating, Drive very fast!—And up she

pulled both the windows: and he lost sight of the coach in a minute.

'Will, as soon as he had this intelligence, speeded away in hopes to trace her out; declaring, that he would never think of seeing me, till he had heard some tidings of his lady.'

And now, Belford, all my hope is, that this fellow (who attended us in our airing to Hampstead, to Highgate, to Muswell Hill, to Kentish Town) will hear of her at some one or other of those places. And on this I the rather build, as I remember she was once, after our return, very inquisitive about the stages, and their prices; praising the conveniency to passengers in their going off every hour; and this in Will's hearing, who was then in attendance. Woe be to the villain, if he recollect not this.

* * *

I HAVE been traversing her room, meditating, or taking up every thing she but touched or used: the glass she dressed at, I was ready to break, for not giving me the personal image it was wont to reflect, of *her*, whose idea is for ever present with me. I call for her, now in the tenderest, now in the most reproachful terms, as if within hearing: wanting *her*, I want my own soul, at least every thing dear to it. What a void in my heart! what a chilness in my blood, as if its circulation were arrested! From her room to my own; in the dining-room, and in and out of every place where I have seen the beloved of my heart, do I hurry; in none can I tarry; her lovely image in every one, in some lively attitude, rushing cruelly upon me, in differently remembered conversations.

But when in my first fury, at my return, I went up two pair of stairs, resolved to find the locked-up Dorcas, and beheld the vainly-burnt window board,

and recollected my baffled contrivances, baffled by my own weak folly, I thought my distraction completed; and down I ran as one frighted at a spectre, ready to howl for vexation; my head and my temples shooting with a violence I had never felt before, and my back aching as if the vertebræ were disjointed and falling in pieces.

But now that I have heard the mother's story, and contemplated the dawning hopes given by the chairman's information, I am a good deal easier, and can make cooler reflections. Most heartily pray I for Will's success, every four or five minutes. If I lose her, all my rage will return with redoubled fury. The disgrace to be thus outwitted by a novice, an infant in stratagem and contrivance, added to the violence of my passion for her, will either break my heart, or (what saves many an heart, in evils insupportable) turn my brain. What had I to do to go out a licence hunting, at least till I had seen her, and made up matters with her? And indeed, were it not the privilege of a principal to lay all his own faults upon his underlings, and never be to blame himself, I should be apt to reflect, that I am more in fault than any body. And as the sting of this reflection will sharpen upon me, if I recover her not, how shall I be able to bear it?

If ever—

Here Mr. Lovelace lays himself under a curse, too shocking to be repeated, if he revenge not himself upon the lady, should he once more get her into his hands.

* * *

I HAVE just now dismissed the sniveling toad Dorcas, who was introduced to me for my pardon by the whining mother. I gave her a kind of ne-

gative and ungracious forgiveness. Yet I shall as violently curse the two nymphs, by-and-by, for the consequences of my own folly: and this will be a good way too, to prevent their ridicule upon me, for losing so glorious an opportunity as I had last night, or rather this morning.

I have collected, from the result of the inquiries made of the chairman, and from Dorcas's observations before the cruel creature escaped, a description of her dress; and am resolved, if I cannot otherwise hear of her, to advertise her in the Gazette, as an eloped wife, both by her maiden and acknowledged name; for her elopement will soon be known by every *enemy*: why then should not my *friends* be made acquainted with it, from whose inquiries and informations I may expect some tidings of her?

'She had on a brown lustring night-gown, fresh, and looking like new, as every thing she wears does, whether new or not, from an elegance natural to her. A beaver hat, a black ribband about her neck, and blue knots on her breast. A quilted petticoat of carnation-coloured satin; a rose diamond ring, supposed on her finger; and in her whole person and appearance, as I shall express it, a dignity, as well as beauty, that commands the repeated attention of every one who sees her.'

The description of her person I shall take a little more pains about. My mind must be more at ease, before I can undertake that. And I shall threaten, 'that if, after a certain period given for her voluntary return, she be not heard of, I will prosecute any person who presumes to entertain, harbour, abet, or encourage her, with all the vengeance that an injured gentleman and husband may be warranted to take by law, or otherwise.'

* * *

Fresh cause of aggravation!—But for this scribbling vein, or I should still run mad.

Again going into her chamber, because it was hers, and sighing over the bed, and every piece of furniture in it, I cast my eye towards the drawers of the dressing glass, and saw peep out, as it were, in one of the half-drawn drawers, the corner of a letter. I snatched it out, and found it superscribed, by her, *To Mr. Lovelace.* The sight of it made my heart leap, and I trembled so, that I could hardly open the seal.

How does this d—n'd love unman me!—but nobody ever loved as I love!—It is even increased by her unworthy flight, and my disappointment. Ingrateful creature, to fly from a passion thus ardently flaming! which, like the palm, rises the more for being depressed and slighted.

I will not give thee a copy of this letter. I owe her not so much service.

But wouldst thou think, that this *haughty promise-breaker* could resolve as she does, absolutely and for ever to renounce me for what passed last night? That she could resolve to forego all her opening prospects of reconciliation; that reconciliation with a worthless family, on which she had set her whole heart?—Yet she does—she acquits me of all obligation to her, and herself of all expectations from me—and for what?—O that indeed I had given her real cause! D—n'd confounded niceness, prudery, affectation, or pretty ignorance, if not affectation!—By my soul, Belford, I told thee all—I was more indebted to her struggles, than to my own forwardness. I cannot support my own reflections upon a decency so ill-requited.—She could not, she would not have been so much a Harlowe in her resentment, had I deserved, as I *ought* to have done, her resentment. All she feared,

had then been over; and her own good sense, and even modesty, would have taught her to make the best of it.

But if ever again I get her into my hands, *art* and more *art*, and *compulsion* too, if she make it necessary [*and 'tis plain that nothing else will do*] shall she experience from the man whose fear *of* her has been above even his passion *for* her; and whose gentleness and forbearance she has thus *perfidiously* triumphed over. Well says the poet,

'Tis nobler like a lion to invade
When appetite directs, and seize my prey,
Than to wait tamely, like a begging dog,
Till dull consent throws out the scraps of love.

Thou knowest what I have so lately vowed—and yet at times [cruel creature, and ingrateful as cruel!] I can subscribe with too much truth to those lines of another poet:

She reigns more fully in my soul than ever;
She garrisons my breast, and mans against me
Ev'n my own rebel thoughts, with thousand graces,
Ten thousand charms, and new discover'd beauties!

LETTER IV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

A LETTER is put into my hands by Wilson himself—such a letter!

A letter from Miss Howe to her cruel friend!—

I made no scruple to open it.

It is a miracle that I fell not into fits at the reading of it; and at the thought of what *might* have been the consequence, had it come to the hands of *this Clarissa Harlowe*. Let my justly excited rage excuse my irreverence.

Collins, though not his day, brought it this afternoon to Wilson's, with a particular desire, that it might be sent with all speed to Miss Beaumont's lodgings, and given, if possible, into her own hands. He had before been here (at Mrs. Sinclair's) with intent to deliver it to the lady with his own hand; but was told [*too truly told!*] that she was abroad: but that they would give her any thing he should leave for her, the moment she returned. But he cared not to trust them with his business, and went away to Wilson's, (as I find by the description of him at both places) and there left the letter; but not till he had a second time called here, and found her not come in.

The letter [which I shall inclose; for it is too long to transcribe] will account to thee for *Collins's* coming hither.

O this devilish Miss Howe;—something must be resolved upon and done with that little fury!

* * *

Thou wilt see the margin of this cursed letter crowded with indices [☞]. I put them to mark the places which call for vengeance upon the vixen writer, or which require animadversion. Return thou it to me the moment thou hast perused it.

Read it here; and avoid trembling for me, if thou canst.

TO MISS LETITIA BEAUMONT.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Wednesday, June 7.

You will perhaps think, that I have been too long silent. But I had begun two letters at different times since my last, and written a great deal each time; and with spirit enough I ☞ assure you; incensed as I was against the abominable wretch you are with; particularly

on reading yours of the 21st of the past month *.

The *first* I intended to keep open till I could give you some account of my proceedings with Mrs. Townsend. It was some days before I saw her: and this intervenient space giving me time to re-peruse what I had written, I thought it proper to lay that aside, and to write in a style a little less fervent; for you would have blamed me, I know, for the freedom of some of my expressions [*execrations*, if you please]. And when I had gone a good way in the *second*, the change in your prospects, on his communicating to you Miss Montague's letter, and his better behaviour, occasioning a change in your mind, I laid that aside also. And in this uncertainty, thought I would wait to see the issue of affairs between you before I wrote again; believing that all would soon be decided one way or other.

I had still, perhaps, held this resolution [as every appearance, according to your letters, was more and more promising] had not the two passed days furnished me with intelligence which it highly imports you to know.

But I must stop here, and take a little walk, to try to keep down that just indignation which rises to my pen, when I am about to relate to you what I must communicate.

* * *

I AM not my own mistress enough — then my mother — always up and down — and watching as if I were writing to a fellow — but I will try if I can contain myself in tolerable bounds —

The women of the house where you are —

* See Vol. IV. Letter XXXIV.

O my dear—the women of the house—but you never thought highly of them—so it cannot be very surprising—nor would you have *staid* long with them had not the notion of removing to one of your own, made you less uneasy, and less curious about their characters, and behaviour. Yet I could *now* wish, that you had been less reserved among them—but I tear you—in short, my dear, you are certainly in a devilish house!—Be assured, that the woman is one of the vilest of women.—Nor does she go to you by her right name—very true!—her name is *not* Sinclair—nor is the street she lives in, Dover Street—did you never go out by yourself, and discharge the coach or chair, and return by another coach or chair? If you did [yet I don't remember that you ever wrote to me, that you did] you would never have found your way to the vile house, either by the woman's name, *Sinclair*, or by the street's name, mentioned by that Doleman in his letter about the lodgings *.

The wretch might indeed have held out these false lights a little more excusably, had the house been an honest house; and had he end only been to prevent mischief from your brother.—But this contrivance was anteceden as I think, to your brother's project: so that no excuse can be made for his intentions at the *time*—the man, whatever he may *now* intend, was certainly then, even *then*, a villain in his heart!

* * *

I AM excessively concerned, that I should be prevailed upon, between *your* over-niceness, on one hand, and my *mother's* positiveness, on

* Vol. III. Letters xxxiv, xxxv.

the other, to be satisfied without knowing how to direct to you at your lodgings. I think too, that the proposal that I should be put off to a *third-hand* knowledge, or rather veiled in a *first-hand* ignorance, came from him—and that it was only acquiesced in by you, as it was by me *, upon needless and weak considerations —because, truly, I might have it to say, if challenged, *that I knew not where to send to you!* — I am ashamed of myself! — Had this been at *first* excusable, it could not be a good reason for going on in the folly, when you had no liking to the house, and when he began to play tricks, and delay with you.— What! I was to mistrust myself, was I?—I was to allow it to be thought, that I could not keep my own secret?—But the house *to be taken at this time, and at that time*, led us both on—like fools, like tame fools, in a string.— Upon my life, my dear, this man is a vile, a contemptible villain — I must speak out!— How has he laughed in his sleeve at us both, I warrant, for I can't tell how long!

And yet who could have thought that a man of fortune, and some *reputation* [this Doleman, I mean; not your wretch, to be sure!]—formerly a rake indeed—[I inquired after him—long ago; and so was the easier satisfied]—but married to a woman of family—

* See Vol. III. Letter lii. Par. 12. and Letter liv. Par. 12. Where the reader will observe, that the proposal came from herself; which, as it was also mentioned by Mr. Lovelace, (towards the end of Letter lix. in Vol. III.) she may be presumed to have forgotten. So that Clarissa had a double inducement for acquiescing with the proposed method of carrying on the correspondence between Miss Howe and herself by Wilson's conveyance, and by the name of Lætitia Beaumont.

having had a palsy-blow — and one would think a penitent — should recommend such a house [why, my dear, he could not *inquire* it, but must find it to be bad] to such a man as Lovelace, to bring his future, nay, his *then* supposed, bride to?

* * *

I WRITE, perhaps, with too much violence to be clear. But I cannot help it. Yet I lay down my pen, and take it up every ten minutes, in order to write with some temper: my mother too in and out—what need I (she asks me) lock myself in, if I am only reading past correspondencies?—For that is my pre-tence, when she comes poking in with her face sharpened to an edge, as I may say, by curiosity that gives her more pain than plea-sure—Lord forgive me: but I believe I shall huff her next time she comes in.

* * *

Do *you* forgive me too, my dear. My mother *ought*; because she says, I am my father's girl; and because I am sure I am *hers*. I do not know what to do—I don't know what to write next—I have so much to write, yet have so little patience, and so little opportunity.

But I will tell you how I came by my intelligence. *That* being a *fact*, and requiring the less attention, I will try to account to you for *that*.

Thus then it came about—Miss Lardner (whom you have seen at her cousin Bid-dulph's) saw you at St. James's church on Sunday was fortnight. She kept you in her eye during the whole time; but could not once obtain the notice of yours, though she courtsied to you twice. She thought to pay

her compliments to you when the service was over; for she doubted not but you were married—and for an odd reason—*because you came to church by yourself.* Every eye (as usual, wherever you are, she said) was upon you; and this seeming to give you hurry, and you being nearer the door than she, you slid out, before she could get to you. But she ordered her servant to follow you till you were housed. This servant saw you step into a chair, which waited for you; and you ordered the men to carry you to the place where they took you up.

'The next day, Miss Lardner sent the same servant, out of mere curiosity, to make private inquiry whether Mr. Lovelace were, or were not, with you there. And this inquiry brought out, from *different* people, that the house was suspected to be one of those genteel wicked houses, which receive and accommodate *fashionable people* of both sexes.

'Miss Lardner, confounded at this strange intelligence, made further inquiry; enjoining secresy to the servant she had sent, as well as to the gentleman whom she employed: who had it confirmed from a rakish friend, who knew the house; and told him, that there were two houses; the one *in which all decent appearances were preserved, and guests rarely admitted;* the other, the receptacle of those who were absolutely engaged, and broken to the vile yoke.'

Say, my dear creature—say—shall I not execrate the wretch?—But words are weak—what can I say, that will suitably express my abhorrence of such a villain as he must have been, when he meditated to carry a Clarissa to such a place!

'Miss Lardner kept this to herself some days, not knowing what to do; for she loves you, and admires you of all women. At last, she revealed it, but in confidence, to Miss Biddulph, by letter. Miss Biddulph, in like confidence, being afraid it would *distract* me, were I to know it, communicated it to Miss Lloyd; and so, like a whispered scandal, it passed through several canals; and then it came to me. Which was not till last Monday.'

I thought I should have fainted upon this surprising communication. But rage taking place, it blew away the sudden illness. I be- sought Miss Lloyd to re-enjoin secresy to every one. I told her, that I would not for the world that my mother, or any of your family, should know it. And I instantly caused a trusty friend to make what inquiries he could about Tomlinson.

I had thoughts to have done it before I had this intelligence: but not imagining it to be needful, and little thinking that you could be in such a house, and as you were pleased with your changed prospects, I forbore. And the rather forbore, as the matter is so laid, that Mrs. Hodges is supposed to know nothing of the projected treaty of accommodation; but, on the contrary, that is was designed to be a secret to her, and to every body but immediate parties; and it was Mrs. Hodges that I had proposed to sound by a *second* hand.

Now, my dear, it is certain, without applying to that too-much favoured housekeeper, that there is not such a man within ten miles of your uncle. Very true! One *Tomkins* there is, about four miles off; but he is a day-labourer, and one *Thompson*, about five miles

distant the other way; but he is a parish schoolmaster, poor, and about seventy.

☞ A man, though but of 800l. a year, cannot come from one country to settle in another, but every body in both must know it, and talk of it.

☞ Mrs. Hodges may yet be sounded at a distance, if you will. Your uncle is an old man. Old men imagine themselves under obligation to their paramours, if younger than themselves, ☞ and seldom keep any thing from their knowledge. But if we suppose him to make a secret of the designed treaty, it is impossible, *before* that treaty was thought of, but she must have seen him, at least have *heard* your uncle speak praisefully of a man he is said to be so intimate with, let him have been ever so little a while in those parts.

☞ Yet, methinks, the story is so plausible: Tomlinson, as you describe him, is so good a man, and so much of a gentleman; the end to ☞ be answered by his being an impostor, so much *more than necessary* if Lovelace has villainy in ☞ his head; and as you are in such a house—your wretch's behaviour to him was so petulant and lordly; and Tomlinson's answer so full of spirit and circumstance; and then what ☞ he communicated to you of Mr. Hickman's application to your uncle, and of Mrs. Norton's to your mother [some of which particu- ☞ lars, I am satisfied, his vile agent Joseph Leman could not reveal to his viler employer]; his pressing on the marriage-day, in the name ☞ of your uncle, which it could not answer any *wicked* purpose for him to do; and what he writes of your uncle's proposal, to have it thought that you were married from the time

that you have lived in one house together; and that to be made to agree with the time of Mr. Hickman's visit to your uncle: the insisting on a trusty person's being present at the ceremony, at that uncle's nomination—*these things make me willing to try for a tolerable construction to be made of all;* though I am so much puzzled by what occurs on both sides of the question, that I cannot but abhor the devilish wretch, whose inventions and contrivances are for ever employing an inquisitive head, as mine is, without affording the means of absolute detection.

But this is what I am ready to conjecture that Tomlinson, specious as he is, is a machine of Lovelace; and that he is employed for some end, which has not yet been answered. This is certain, that not only Tomlinson but Mennell, who, I think, attended you more than once at this vile house, must know it to *be* a vile house.

What can you then think of Tomlinson's declaring himself in *favour* of it upon inquiry?

Lovelace too must know it to be so; if not before he brought you to it, soon after.

Perhaps the *company he found there,* may be the most probable way of accounting for his bearing with the house, and for his strange suspensions of marriage, when it was in his power to call such an angel of a woman his.—

O my dear, the man is a villain! the greatest of villains, in every light!—I am convinced that he is. And this Doleman must be another of his implements!

There are so many wretches who think *that* to be no sin, which is one of the greatest, and the most ingrateful of all sins, to ruin young

creatures of our sex who place their confidence in them; that the wonder is less than the shame, that people of figure, of *appearance* at least, are found to promote the horrid purposes of profligates of fortune and interest!

☞ But can I think [you will ask with indignant astonishment] that Lovelace can have designs upon your honour?

☞ That such designs he *has had*, if he *still* hold them not, I can have no doubt, now that I know the house he has brought you to, to be a vile one. This is a clue that has led me to account for all his behaviour to you ever since you have been in his hands.

Allow me a brief retrospection of it all.

We both know, that pride, revenge, and a delight to tread in unbeaten paths, are principal ingredients in the character of this finished libertine.

☞ He hates all your family, yourself excepted; and I have several times thought, that I have seen him stung and mortified that love has ☞ obliged him to kneel at your footstool, because you are a *Harlowe*. Yet is this wretch a savage in love. — Love that humanizes the fiercest spirits, has not been able to subdue ☞ his. His *pride*, and the credit which a few ☞ *plausible qualities*, sprinked among his *odious ones*, have given him, have secured him too good a reception from our eye-judging, our undistinguishing, our self-flattering, our too confiding sex, to make assiduity and obsequiousness, and a conquest of his unruly passions, any part of his study.

☞ He has some reason for his animosity to *all* the men, and to *one* woman of your family. He has always shown you, and his own family

too, that he prefers his pride to his interest. He is a declared marriage-hater: a notorious intriguer: full of his inventions; and glorying in them.—He never could draw you into declarations of love: nor till your *wise* relations persecuted you, as they did, to receive his addresses as a lover.—He knew, that you professedly disliked him for his immoralities: he could not therefore justly blame you for the coldness and indifference of your behaviour to him.

The prevention of mischief was your f[illegible] main view in the correspondence he drew [illegible] into. He ought not, then to have wonde[red] that you declared your preference of the *[illegible]gle life* to *any* matrimonial engagement. knew, that this was *always* your preferenc[e] and *that* before he tricked you away so ar[t]fully. What was his conduct to you afterwards, that you should of a sudden change it!

Thus was your whole behaviour regular, consistent, and dutiful to those to whom by birth you owed duty; and neither prudish, coquettish, nor tyrannical to him.

He had *agreed* to go on with you upon those your own terms, and to rely only on *his own merits* and *future reformation*, for your favour.

It was plain to me, indeed, to whom you communicated all that *you knew* of your own heart, though not all of it that *I found out*, that love had pretty early gained footing in it. And this you yourself would have discovered sooner than you did, had not his alarming, his unpolite, his rough conduct, kept it under.

I knew, by experience, that love is a fire that is not to be played with, without burning one's fingers: I knew it to be a dangerous thing for

two single persons of different sexes, to enter into familiarity and correspondence with each other; since, as to the latter, must not a person be capable of premeditated art, who can sit down to write, and not write from the heart?—And a woman to write her heart to a man practised in deceit, or even to a man of some character, what advantage does it give him over her?

☞ As this man's vanity had made him imagine, that no woman could be proof against love, when his address was honourable; no wonder that he struggled, like a lion held in toils, against a passion that he thought not returned. And how could you, *at first*, show a return in love, to so fierce a spirit, and who had seduced you away by vile artifices, but to the approval of those artifices?

☞ Hence, perhaps, it is not difficult to believe, that it became possible for such a wretch as this to give way to his old prejudices against marriage; and to that revenge which had always been a first passion with him.

This is the only way, I think, to account for his horrid views in bringing you to a vile house.

And now may not all the rest be naturally accounted for?—His delays—his teasing ways—his bringing you to bear with his lodging in the same house—his making you pass to the people of it, as his wife; *though restrictively* ☞ *so*, yet with hope, no doubt (vilest of villains as he is!) to take you at advantage—his bringing you into the company of his libertine companions: the attempt of imposing upon you that Miss Partington for a bedfellow, very probably his own invention for the worst of pur-

poses: his terrifying you at many different times: his obtruding himself upon you when you went out to church; no doubt to prevent your finding out what the people of the house were: the advantages he made of your brother's foolish project with Singleton.

See, my dear, how naturally all this follows from the discovery made by Miss Lardner. ☞ See how the monster, whom I thought, and so often called, a *fool*, comes out to have been all ☞ the time one of the greatest villains in the world!

But if this be so, what [it would be asked by an indifferent person] has hitherto saved you, Glorious creature!—What, morally speaking, but your watchfulness! What but that, and the majesty of your virtue; *the native dignity*, which, in a situation so very difficult, (friendless, destitute, passing for a wife, cast into the company of creatures accustomed to betray and ruin innocent hearts) has hitherto enabled you to baffle, over-awe, and confound, such a dangerous libertine as this; so habitually remorseless, as you have observed him to be; so very various in his temper; so inventive; so seconded, so supported, so instigated, too probably, as he has been!—That *native dignity*, that *heroism*, I will call it, which has, on all proper occasions, exerted itself in its *full* lustre, unmingled with that charming ☞ obligingness and condescending sweetness, which is evermore the *softener* of that dignity, when your mind is free and unapprehensive!

☞ Let me stop to admire, and to bless my beloved friend, who, unhappily for herself, at an age so tender, unacquainted as she was

with the world, and with the vile arts of libertines, having been called upon to sustain the hardest and most shocking trials, from persecuting relations on one hand, and from a villanous lover on the other, has been enabled to give such an illustrious example of fortitude and prudence, as never woman gave before her; and who, as I have heretofore observed *, has made a far greater figure in adversity, than she possibly could have made, had all her shining qualities been exerted in their full force and power, by the continuance of that prosperous run of fortune which attended her for eighteen years of life out of nineteen.

* * *

But now, my dear, do I apprehend, that you are in greater danger than ever yet you have been in; if you are not married in a week; and yet stay in this abominable house. For were you out of it, I own I should not be much afraid for you.

These are my thoughts, on the most deliberate consideration: 'That he is now convinced, that he has not been able to draw you off your guard: that therefore, if he can obtain no new advantage over you as he goes along, he is resolved to do you all the *poor justice* that it is in the power of such a wretch as he, to do you. He is the rather induced to this, as he sees, that all his own family have warmly engaged themselves in your cause: and that it is his *highest interest* to be just to you. Then the horrid wretch loves you (as well he may) above all women. I have no doubt of this; with *such* a love as such a wretch is ca-

* See Vol. IV. p. 67.

pable of: with *such* a love as Herod loved his Mariamne. He is now therefore, very probably, at last, in earnest.'

I took time for inquiries of different natures, as I knew by the train you are in, that whatever his designs are, they cannot ripen either for good or evil, till something shall result from this new device of his about Tomlinson and your uncle.

Device I have no doubt that it is, whatever this dark, this impenetrable spirit intends by it.

And yet I find it to be true, that Counsellor Williams (whom Mr. Hickman knows to be a man of eminence in his profession) has actually as good as finished the settlements: the two draughts of them have been made; one avowedly to be sent to one Captain Tomlinson, as the clerk says:—and I find that a licence has actually been more than once endeavoured to be obtained; and that difficulties have hitherto been made, equally to Lovelace's vexation and disappointment. My mother's proctor, who is very intimate with the proctor applied to by the wretch, has come at this information in confidence; and hints, that, as Mr. Lovelace is a man of high fortunes, these difficulties will probably be got over.

But here follow the causes of my apprehension of your danger; which I should not have had a thought of (since nothing *very* vile has yet been attempted) but on finding what a house you are in, and, on that discovery, laying together and ruminating on past occurrences.

'You are obliged, from the present favourable appearances, to give him your company whenever he requests it.—You are under a ne-

cessity of forgetting, or seeming to forget, past disobligations; and to receive his addresses as those of a betrothed lover.—You will incur the censure of prudery and affectation, even perhaps in your own apprehension, if you keep him at that distance which has hitherto been your security.—His sudden (and as suddenly recovered) illness has given him an opportunity to find out, that you love him. [*Alas, my dear, I knew you loved him!*] He is, as you relate, every hour more and more an encroacher upon it. He has seemed to change his nature, and is all love and gentleness. The wolf has put on the sheep's clothing; yet more than once has shown his teeth, and his hardly sheathed claws. The instance you have given of his freedom with your person *, which you could not but resent; and yet, as matters are circumstanced between you, could not but pass over, when Tomlinson's letter called you into his company †, show the advantage he has now over you; and also, that if he can obtain greater, he will.—And for this very reason (as I apprehend) it is, that Tomlinson is introduced; that is to say, to give you the greater security, and to be a mediator, if mortal offence be given you, by any villanous attempt.—The day seems not now to be so much in your power as it ought to be, since that now partly depends on your uncle, whose presence, at your own motion, he has wished on the occasion. A wish, were all real, very unlikely, I think, to be granted.'

* She means the freedom Mr. Lovelace took with her before the fire-plot. See Vol. IV. Letter liv. When Miss Howe wrote this letter, she could not know of that.

† See Vol. IV. Letter lv.

☞ And thus situated, should he offer greater freedoms, must you not forgive him?

I fear nothing (as I know who has said) that devil carnate or incarnate can fairly do against ☞ a virtue so established *.—But surprises, my dear, in such a house as that you are in, and in such circumstances as I have mentioned, ☞ I greatly fear!—The man, one, who has already trimphed over persons worthy of his alliance.

☞ What then have you to do, but to fly [this] house, this infernal house!—O that your h[eart] would let you fly the *man!*

☞ If you should be disposed so to do, [Mr.] Townsend shall be ready at your command. But if you meet with no impediments, no just causes of doubt, I think your reputation in the eye of the world, though not your happiness, is concerned, that you should be his—and yet I cannot bear, that these libertines ☞ should be rewarded for their villany with the best of the sex, when the worst of it are too good for them.

But if you meet with the least ground for suspicion; if he would detain you at the odious house, or wish you to stay, now you ☞ know what the people are; fly *him*, whatever your prospects are, as well as *them*.

In one of your next airings, if you have no ☞ other way, refuse to return with him. Name me for your intelligencer, that you are in a bad house, and if you think you cannot now break with him, seem rather to believe that he may not know it to be so; and that I do ☞ not believe he does: and yet this belief in us both must appear to be very gross.

* See Mrs. Norton's Letter, Vol. IV. p. 74.

But suppose you desire to go out of town for the air, this sultry weather, and insist upon it? You may plead your health for so doing. He dare not resist such a plea. Your brother's foolish scheme, I am told, is certainly given up; so you need not be afraid on that account.

If you do not fly the house upon reading of this, or some way or other get out of it, I shall judge of his power over you, by the little you will have over either him or yourself.

One of my informers has made slight inquiries concerning Mrs. Fretchville. Did he ever name to you the street or square she lived in? —I don't remember that you, in any of your's, mentioned the place of her abode to me. Strange, very strange, this, I think! No such person or house can be found, near any of the new streets or squares, where the lights I had from your letters led me to imagine her house might be—ask him, what street the house is in, if he has not told you? And let me know. If he make a difficulty of that circumstance, it will amount to a detection.—And yet, I think, you have enough without this.

I shall send this long letter by Collins, who changes his day to oblige me; and that he may try (now I know where you are) to get it into your own hands. If he cannot, he will leave it at Wilson's. As none of our letters by that conveyance have miscarried when you have been in more *apparently* disagreeable situations than you are in at present, I hope that this will go safe, if Collins should be obliged to leave it there.

I wrote a short letter to you in my first agi-

tations. It contained not above twenty lin
all full of fright, alarm, and execration.
being afraid that my vehemence would
much affect you, I thought it better to wa
little, as well for the reasons already hinted,
as to be able to give you as many particu,
as I could; and my thoughts upon all.
now, I think, taking to your aid other circu
stances, as they *have* offered, or *may* of
you will be sufficiently armed to resist all
machinations, be they what they will.

☞ One word more, command me up, if I
be of the least service or pleasure to you.
value not fame; I value not censure;
even life itself, I verily think, as I do y
honour, and your friendship—for, is not y
honour my honour? And is not your friend-
ship the pride of my life?

May heaven preserve you, my dearest crea-
ture, in honour and safety, is the prayer, the
hourly prayer, of

Your ever faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

Thursday morn. I have written all night.

TO MISS HOWE.

MY DEAREST CREATURE,

How you have shocked, confounded, surprised, astonished me, by your dreadful communication! —My *heart is too weak* to bear up against such a stroke as this! — When all hope was with me! When my prospects were so much mended!—But can there be such villany in men, as in this vile principal, and equally vile agent!

I am really ill—very ill—grief and surprise, I, *now* I will say, despair have overcome me!—I, all, you have laid down as conjecture, appears *me now* to be *more* than conjecture!

O that your mother would have the goodness to mit me the presence of the only comforter that afflicted, my half-broken heart, could be raised . But I charge you, think not of coming up thout her indulgent permission. I am too ill at present, my dear, to think of combating with this dreadful man; and flying from this horrid house! —*My bad writing will show you this.*—But my illness will be my present security, should he indeed have meditated villany.—Forgive, O forgive me, my dearest friend, the trouble I have given you! —All must soon—But why add I grief to grief, and trouble to trouble?—But I charge you, my beloved creature, not to think of coming up without your mother's leave, to the truly desolate and broken-spirited

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

WELL, Jack!—And what thinkest thou of this last letter? Miss Howe values not either *fame* or *censure;* and thinkest thou, that this letter will not bring the little fury up, though she could procure no other conveyance than her higgler's paniers, one for herself, the other for her maid? She knows whither to come now. Many a little villain have I punished for knowing more than I would have her know, and that by adding to her knowledge and experience. What thinkest thou, Belford, if, by getting hither this virago, and giving *cause* for a lamentable letter from her to the fair fugitive, I should be able to recover *her?* Would she not visit that friend in *her* distress, thinkest thou, whose intended visit to her in *hers* brought her into the con-

dition from which she herself had so perfidiously escaped?

Let me enjoy the thought!

Shall I send this letter?—Thou seest I have l room, if I fail in the exact imitation of so charmi a hand, to avoid too strict a scrutiny. Do they both deserve it of me? Seest thou not how t raving girl threatens her mother? Ought she r to be punished? And can I be a worse devil, villain, or monster, than she calls me in the long letter I inclose (and has called me in her former letters) were I to punish them both as my vengeance urges me to punish them? And when I have executed that my vengeance, how charmingly satisfied may they both go down into the country and keep house together, and have a much better reason than their pride could give them, for living the single life they have both seemed so fond of?

I will set about transcribing it this moment, I think. I can resolve afterwards. Yet what has poor Hickman done to deserve this of me!—But gloriously would it punish the mother (as well as daughter) for all her sordid avarice; and for her undutifulness to honest Mr. Howe, whose heart she actually broke. I am on tiptoe, Jack, to enter upon this project. Is not one country as good to me as another, if I should be obliged to take another tour upon it?

* * *

But I will not venture. Hickman is a good man, they tell me. I love a good man. I hope one of these days to be a good man myself. Besides, I have heard within this week something of this honest fellow that shows he has a soul; when I thought, if he had one that it lay a little of the deepest to emerge to notice, except on very extra-

ordinary occasions; and that then it presently sunk again into its *cellula adiposa*.—The man is a *plump man*.—Didst ever see him, Jack?

But the principal reason that withholds me [for 'tis a tempting project!] is, for fear of being utterly blown up, if I should not be quick enough with my letter, or if Miss Howe should deliberate on setting out, or try her mother's consent first; in which time a letter from my frighted beauty might reach her; for I have no doubt, wherever she has refuged, but her first work was to write to her vixen friend. I will therefore go on patiently; and take my revenge upon the little fury at my leisure.

But, in spite of my compassion for Hickman, whose better character is sometimes my envy, and who is one of those mortals that bring clumsiness into credit with the *mothers*, to the disgrace of us clever fellows, and often to our disappointment with the *daughters*; and who has been very busy in assisting these double-armed beauties against me; I swear by all the *Dii majores*, as well as *minores*, that I will have Miss Howe, if I cannot have her more exalted friend! And then, if there be as much flaming love between these girls as they pretend, what will my charmer profit by her escape?

And now, that I shall permit Miss Howe to reign a little longer, let me ask thee, if thou hast not, in the inclosed letter, a fresh instance, that a great many of my difficulties with her sister-toast are owing to this flighty girl?—'Tis true, that here was naturally a confounded sharp wintry air; and if a little cold water was thrown into the path, no wonder that it was instantly frozen; and that the poor honest traveller found it next to impossible to keep his way; one foot sliding back as fast as

the other advanced, to the endangering of his limbs or neck. But yet I think it impossible, that she should have baffled me as she has done (novice as she is, and never before from under her parents' wings) had she not been armed by a virago, who was formerly very near showing, that she could better advise than practise. But this, I believe, I have said more than once before.

I am loth to reproach *myself*, now the cruel creature has escaped me; for what would that do but add to my torment? since evils self-caused, and avoidable, admit not of palliation or comfort. And yet, if *thou* tellest me, that all *her* strength was owing to *my* weakness, and that I have been a cursed coward in this whole affair; why then, Jack, I may blush, and be vexed; but, by my soul, I cannot contradict thee.

But this, Belford, I hope—that if I can turn the poison of the inclosed letter into wholesome aliment; that is to say, if I can make use of it to my advantage; I shall have *thy* free consent to do it.

I am always careful to open covers cautiously, and to preserve seals entire. I will draw out from this cursed letter an alphabet. Nor was Nick Rowe ever half so diligent to learn Spanish, at the Quixote recommendation of a certain peer, as I will be to gain the mastery of this vixen's hand.

LETTER V.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday evening, June 8.

AFTER my last, so full of other hopes, the contents of this will surprise you. O my dearest friend, the man has at last proved himself to be a villain!

It was with the utmost difficulty last night, that I preserved myself from the vilest dishonour. He extorted from me a promise of forgiveness, and that I would see him next day, as if nothing had happened: but if it were possible to escape from a wretch, who, as I have too much reason to believe, formed a plot to fire the house, to frighten me, almost naked, into his arms, how could I see him next day?

I have escaped—Heaven be praised that I have!—And have now no other concern, than that I fly from the only hope that could have made such an husband tolerable to me; the reconciliation with my friends, so agreeably undertaken by my uncle.

All my present hope is, to find some reputable family, or person of my own sex, who is obliged to go beyond sea, or who lives abroad; I care not whither; but if I might choose, in some one of our American colonies—never to be heard of more by my relations, whom I have so grievously offended.

Nor let your generous heart be moved at what I write. If I can escape the dreadfullest part of my father's malediction (for the temporary part is already in a manner fulfilled, which makes me tremble in apprehension of the other) I shall think the wreck of my worldly fortunes a happy composition.

Neither is there need of the renewal of your so often tendered goodness to me: for I have with me rings and other valuables, that were sent me with my clothes, which will turn into money to answer all I can want, till providence shall be pleased to put me into some way to help myself, if, for my further punishment, my life is to be lengthened beyond my wishes.

Impute not this scheme, my beloved friend, either

to dejection on one hand, or to that romantic turn on the other, which we have supposed generally to obtain with our sex, from fifteen to twenty-two: for, be pleased to consider my unhappy situation, in the light in which it really must appear to every considerate person, who knows it. In the first place, the man, who has had the assurance to think me, and to endeavour to make me, his *property*, will hunt me from place to place, and search after me as a 'stray: and he knows he may do so with impunity; for whom have I to protect me from him?

Then as to my estate, the envied estate, which has been the original cause of all my misfortunes, it shall never be mine upon litigated terms. What is there in being enabled to boast, that I am worth more than *I can use*, or *wish to use?* And if my power is circumscribed, I shall not have that to answer for, which I should have, if I did not use it as I ought: which very few do. I shall have no husband, of whose interest I ought to be so regardful, as to prevent me doing *more* than justice to others, that I may not do *less* to him. If therefore my father will be pleased (as I shall presume, in proper time, to propose to him) to pay two annuities out of it, one to my dear Mrs. Norton, which may make her easy for the remainder of her life, as she is now growing into years; the other of 50*l. per annum*, to the same good woman for the use of *my poor*, as I have had the vanity to call a certain set of people, concerning whom she knows all my mind: that so as few as possible may suffer by the consequences of my error; God bless them, and give them heart's ease and content, with the rest!

Other reasons for my taking the step I have hinted at, are these:

This wicked man knows I have no friend in the world but you: your neighbourhood therefore would be the first he would seek for me in, were you to think it possible for me to be concealed in it: and in this case you might be subjected to inconveniences greater even than those which you have already sustained on my account.

From my cousin Morden, were he to come, I could not hope protection; since, by his letter to me, it is evident, that my brother has engaged him in his party: nor would I, by any means, subject so worthy a man to danger; as might be the case, from the violence of this ungovernable spirit.

These things considered, what better method can I take, than to go abroad to some one of the English colonies; where nobody but yourself shall know any thing of me; nor you, let me tell you, presently, nor till I am fixed, and (if it please God) in a course of living tolerably to my mind? For it is no small part of my concern, that my indiscretions have laid so heavy a tax upon you, my dear friend, to whom, once, I hoped to give more pleasure than pain.

I am at present at one Mrs. Moore's at Hampstead. My heart misgave me at coming to this village, because I had been here with him more than once: but the coach hither was so ready a conveniency, that I knew not what to do better. Then I shall stay here no longer than till I can receive your answer to this: in which you will be pleased to let me know, if I cannot be hid, according to your former contrivance [happy, had I given into it at the time!] by Mrs. Townsend's assistance, till the heat of his search be over. The Deptford road, I imagine, will be the right direction to hear of a passage, and to get safely aboard.

O why was the great fiend of all unchained, and

permitted to assume so specious a form, and yet allowed to conceal his feet and his talons, till with the one he was ready to trample upon my honour, and to strike the other into my heart!—And what had I done, that he should be let loose particularly upon me!

Forgive me this murmuring question, the effect of my impatience, my *guilty* impatience, I doubt; for, as I have escaped with my honour, and nothing but my worldly prospects, and my pride, my ambition, and my vanity, have suffered in this wreck of my hopefuller fortunes, may I not still be more happy than I deserve to be? And is it not in my own power still, by the divine favour, to secure the great stake of all? And who knows but that this very path into which my inconsideration has thrown me, strewed as it is with briers and thorns, which tear in pieces my gaudier trappings, may not be the right path to lead me into the great road to my future happiness; which might have been endangered by evil communication?

And after all, are there not still more deserving persons than I, who never failed in any capital point of duty, that have been more humbled than myself; and some too, by the errors of parents and relations, by the tricks and baseness of guardians and trustees, and in which their own rashness or folly had no part?

I will then endeavour to make the best of my present lot. And join with me, my best, my only friend, in praying, that my punishment may end here; and that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me.

This letter will enable you to account for a line or two, which I sent to Wilson's, to be carried to you, only for a feint, to get his servant out of the way. He seemed to be left, as I thought, for a spy

upon me. But he returning too soon, I was forced to write a few lines for him to carry to his master, to a tavern near Doctors' Commons, with the same view: and this happily answered my end.

I wrote early in the morning a bitter letter to the wretch, which I left for him obvious enough: and I suppose he has it by this time. I kept no copy of it. I shall recollect the contents, and give you the particulars of all, at more leisure.

I am sure you will approve of my escape—the rather, as the people of the house must be very vile: for they, and that Dorcas too, did hear me (I know they did) cry out for help: if the fire had been other than a villanous plot (although in the morning, to blind them, I pretended to think it otherwise) they would have been alarmed as much as I; and have run in, hearing me scream, to *comfort me*, supposing my terror was the fire; to *relieve me*, supposing it were any thing else. But the vile Dorcas went away as soon as she saw the wretch throw his arms about me!—Bless me, my dear, I had only my slippers and an under-petticoat on. I was frighted out of my bed, by her cries of fire; and that I should be burnt to ashes in a moment—and she to go away, and never to return, nor any body else! And yet I heard womens' voices in the next room; indeed I did—an evident contrivance of them all:—God be praised, I am out of their house!

My terror is not yet over: I can hardly think myself safe: every well-dressed man I see from my windows, whether on horseback or on foot, I think to be him.

I know you will expedite an answer. A man and horse will be procured me to-morrow early, to carry this. To be sure, you cannot return an answer by the same man, because you must see Mrs. Towns-

end first: nevertheless, I shall wait with impatience till you *can*; having no friend but you to apply to; and being such a stranger to this part of the world, that I know not which way to turn myself; whether to go; nor what to do—what a dreadful hand have I made of it!

Mrs. Moore, at whose house I am, is a widow, and of good character: and of this one of her neighbours, of whom I bought a handkerchief, purposely to make enquiry before I would venture, informed me.

I will not set my foot out of doors, till I have your direction: and I am the more secure, having dropt words to the people of the house where the coach set me down, as if I expected a chariot to meet me in my way to Hendon; a village a little distance from this. And when I left their house, I walked backward and forward upon the hill; at first, not knowing what to do; and afterwards, to be certain that I was not watched before I ventured to enquire after a lodging.

You will direct for me, my dear, by the name of Mrs. Harriet Lucas.

Had I not made my escape when I did, I was resolved to attempt it again and again. He was gone to the Commons for a licence, as he wrote me word; for I refused to see him, notwithstanding the promise he extorted from me.

How hard, how next to impossible, my dear, to avoid many *lesser* deviations, when we are betrayed into a *capital* one!

For fear I should not get away at my first effort, I had apprised him, that I would not set eye upon him under a week, in order to gain myself time for it in different ways—and were I so to have been watched as to have made it necessary, I would, after such an instance of the connivance of the women

of the house, have run out into the street, and thrown myself into the next house I could have entered, or claimed protection from the first person I had met.—*Women to desert the cause of a poor creature of their own sex, in such a situation, what must they be!*—Then, such poor guilty sort of figures did they make in the morning after he was gone out—so earnest to get me up stairs, and to convince me, by the scorched window-boards, and burnt curtains and vallens, that the fire was real—that (although I seemed to believe all they would have me believe) I was more and more resolved to get out of their house at all adventures.

When I began, I thought to write but a few lines. But, be my subject what it will, I know not how to conclude when I write to *you*. It was *always* so: it is not therefore owing peculiarly to that most interesting and unhappy situation, which you will allow however, to engross at present the whole mind of

Your unhappy, but ever affectionate,
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER VI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday morning, past two o'clock.

Io triumphe! Io Clarissa, sing!—Once more what a happy man thy friend!—A silly dear novice, to be heard to tell the coachman whither to carry her!—And to go to *Hampstead*, of all the villages about London!—The place where we had been together more than once!

Methinks I am sorry she managed no better!—I shall find the recovery of her too easy a task, I

fear! Had she but known how much difficulty enhances the value of any thing with me, and had she had the least notion of obliging me by it, she would never have stopt short at *Hampstead*, surely.

Well, but after all this exultation, thou wilt ask, 'If I have already got back my charmer?'—I have not: but knowing where she is, is almost the same thing as having her in my power. And it delights me to think how she will start and tremble when I first pop upon her! How she will look with conscious guilt, that will more than wipe off my guilt of Wednesday night, when she sees her injured lover, and acknowledged husband, from whom, the greatest of felonies, she would have stolen herself.

But thou wilt be impatient to know how I came by my lights. Read the inclosed here, and remember the instructions which from time to time, as I have told thee, I have given my fellow, in apprehension of such an elopement; and that will tell thee all, and what I may reasonably expect from the rascal's diligence and management, if he wishes ever to see my face again.

I received it about half an hour ago, just as I was going to lie down in my clothes: and it has made me so much alive, that, midnight as it is, I have sent for a Blunt's chariot, to attend me here by day dawn, with *my usual coachman*, if possible: and knowing not else what to do with myself, I sat down, and, in the joy of my heart, have not only written thus far, but have concluded upon the measures I shall take when admitted to her presence: for well am I aware of the difficulties I shall have to contend with from her perverseness.

HONNORED SUR,

THIS is to sertifie your honner, as how I am heer at Hamestet, where I have found out my lady to

be in logins at one Mrs. Moore's, near upon Hamstet-Hethe. And I have so ordered matters, that her ladiship cannot stur but I must have notice of her goins and comins. As I knowed I durst not look into your honner's fase, if I had not found out my lady, thoff she was gone off the prems's in a quarter of an hour, as a man may say; so I knowed you would be glad at hart to know I had found her out; and so I send this Petur Patrick, who is to have 5 shillings, it being now near 12 of the clock at nite; for he would not stur without a hearty drink too besides; and I was willing all shulde be snug likeways at the logins before I sent.

I have munny of your honner's; but I thought as how if the man was payed by me before end, he mought play trix; so left that to your honner.

My lady knows nothing of my being hereaway. But I thoute it best not to leve the plase, because she has taken the logins but for a fue nites.

If your honner come to the Upper Flax, I will be in site all the day about the Tapp House or the Hethe. I have borroued another cote, instead of your honner's liferie, and a black wigg; so cannot be knoen by my lady, if as howe she shuld see me: and have made as if I had the tooth-ake, so with my hancriffe at my mothe, the teth which your honner was pleased to bett out with your honner's fyste, and my damn'd wide mothe, as your honner notify's it to be, cannot be knoen to be mine.

The two inner letters I had from my lady, before she went off the prems's. One was to be left at Mr. Wilson's for Miss Howe. The next was to be for your honner. But I knowed you was not at the plase directed; and being afear'd of what fell out, so I kept them for your honner, and so could not give um to you, until I seed you. Miss Howe's

I only made belief to her ladiship as I carried it, and sed as how there was nothing left for hur, as she wished to knoe: so here they be bothe.

I am, may it please your honner,
Your honner's most dutiful,
and, wonce more, happy servant,
WM. SUMMERS.

The two *inner* letters, as Will calls them, 'tis plain, were wrote for no other purpose but to send him out of the way with them, and one of them to amuse me. That directed to Miss Howe is only this:

Thursday, June 8.

I WRITE this, my dear Miss Howe, only for a feint, and to see if it will go current. I shall write a large very soon, if not miserably prevented!!!

CL. H.

Now, Jack, will not *her feints*, justify *mine!* Does she not invade my province, thinkest thou? And is it not now fairly come to *who shall most deceive and cheat the other?* So, I thank my stars, we are upon a par, at last, as to this point—which is a great ease to my conscience, thou must believe. And if what Hudibras tells us is true, the dear fugitive has also abundance of pleasure to come.

Doubtless the pleasure is as great,
In being cheated, as to cheat.
As lookers-on find most delight,
Who least perceive the juggler's sleight;
And still the less they understand,
The more admire the slight of hand.

This is my dear juggler's letter to me; the other *inner* letter sent by Will.

MR. LOVELACE, Thursday, June 8.

Do not give me cause to dread your return. If you would not that I should hate you for ever, send me half a line by the bearer, to assure me that you will not attempt to see me for a week to come. I cannot look you in the face without equal confusion and indignation. The obliging me in this is but a poor atonement for your last night's vile behaviour.

You may pass this time in a journey to Lord M.'s: and I cannot doubt, if the ladies of your family are as favourable to me, as you have assured me they are, but that you will have interest enough to prevail with one of them to oblige me with her company. After your baseness of last night, you will not wonder, that I insist upon this proof of your future honour.

If Captain Tomlinson comes meantime, I can hear what he has to say, and send you an account of it.

But in less than a week if you see me, it must be owing to a fresh act of violence, of which you know not the consequence.

Send me the requested line, if ever you expect to have the forgiveness confirmed, the promise of which you extorted from

The unhappy

CL. H.

Now, Belford, what canst thou say in behalf of this sweet rogue of a lady? What *canst* thou say for her? 'Tis apparent, that she was fully determined upon an elopement, when she wrote it: and thus would she make me of party against myself, by drawing me in to give her a week's time to complete it: and, more wicked still, send me upon

a fool's errand to bring up one of my cousins:—when we came to have the satisfaction of finding her gone off, and me exposed for ever!—What punishment can be bad enough for such a little villain of a lady!

But mind, moreover, how plausibly she accounts by this billet (supposing she should not find an opportunity of eloping before I returned) for the resolution of not seeing me for a week; and for the bread and butter expedient!—So childish as we thought it!

The chariot is not come; and if it were, it is yet too soon for every thing but my impatience. And as I have already taken all my measures, and can think of nothing but my triumph, I will resume her violent letter, in order to strengthen my resolutions against her. I was *before* in too gloomy a way to proceed with it: but now the subject is all alive to me, and my gayer fancy, like the sunbeams, will irradiate it, and turn the solemn deep green into a brighter verdure.

When I have called upon my charmer to explain some parts of her letter, and to atone for others, I will send it, or a copy of it, to thee.

Suffice it at present to tell thee, in the first place, that *she is determined never to be my wife*—to be sure, there ought to be no compulsion in so material a case. Compulsion was her parents' fault, which I have censured so severely, that I shall hardly be guilty of the same. I am therefore glad I know her mind as to this essential point.

I have *ruined* her, she says!—Now that's a fib, take it in her own way—if I had, she would not perhaps have run away from me.

She is *thrown upon the wide world*: Now I own that Hampstead Heath affords very pretty and very *extensive* prospects; but 'tis not the *wide world*

neither: and suppose that to be her grievance, I hope soon to restore her to a *narrower*.

I am the *enemy of her soul, as well as of her honour!*—Confoundedly severe! Nevertheless, another fib!—For I love her soul very well; but think no more of it in this case than of my own.

She is to be *thrown upon strangers!*—And is not that her own fault?—much against my will, I am sure.

She is cast from a state of *independency* into one of *obligation*. She never was in a state of *independency*; nor is it fit a woman should, of any age, or in any state of life. And as to the state of obligation, there is no such thing as living without being beholden to somebody. Mutual obligation is the very essence and soul of the social and commercial life: why should she be exempt from it?—I am sure the person she raves at, desires not such an exemption;—has been long *dependant* upon her; and would rejoice to owe *further obligations* to her than he can boast of hitherto.

She talks of her *father's curse*—but have I not repaid him for it an hundred fold in the same coin? But why must the faults of other people be laid at my door? Have I not enow of my own?

But the grey-eyed dawn begins to peep—let me sum up all.

In short, then, the dear creature's letter is a collection of invectives not very new to *me*; though the occasion for them, no doubt, is new to *her*. A little sprinkling of the romantic and contradictory runs through it. She loves, and she hates: she encourages me to pursue her, by telling me I safely may; and yet she begs I will not: she apprehends poverty and want, yet resolves to give away her estate; to gratify whom? why, in short, those who have been the cause of her misfortunes.

And finally, though she resolves never to be mine, yet she has some regrets at leaving me, because of the opening prospects of a reconciliation with her friends.

But never did morning dawn so tardily as this!—neither is the chariot yet come.

* * *

A GENTLEMAN to speak with me, Dorcas?—Who can want me thus early?

Captain Tomlinson, sayest thou? Surely he must have travelled all night!—Early riser as I am, how could he think to find me up *thus* early?

Let but the chariot come, and he shall accompany me in it to the bottom of the hill (though he return to town on foot; for the captain is all obliging goodness) that I may hear all he has to say, and tell him all my mind, and lose no time.

Well, now I am satisfied that this rebellious flight will turn to my advantage, as all crushed rebellions do to the advantage of a sovereign in possession.

* * *

DEAR captain, I rejoice to see you—just in the nick of time—See! see;

> The rosy-finger'd morn appears,
> And from her mantle shakes her tears:
> The sun arising, mortals cheers;
> And drives the rising mists away,
> In promise of a glorious day.

Excuse me, sir, that I salute you from my favourite bard. He that rises with the lark, will sing with the lark. Strange news since I saw you, captain!—Poor mistaken lady!—But you have too much goodness, I know, to reveal to her uncle Harlowe the errors of this capricious beauty. It will all turn out for the best. You must accompany me part of the way. I know the delight you

take in composing differences. But 'tis the task of the prudent to heal the breaches made by the rashness and folly of the imprudent.

* * *

And now (all around me so still, and so silent) the rattling of the chariot-wheels at a street's distance do I hear!—and to this angel of a woman I fly!

Reward, O God of love (the cause is thy own); reward thou, as it deserves, my suffering perseverance!—Succeed my endeavours to bring back to thy obedience this charming fugitive!—make her acknowledge her rashness; repent her insults; implore my forgiveness; beg to be reinstated in my favour, and that I will bury in oblivion the remembrance of her heinous offence against thee, and against me, thy faithful votary.

* * *

The chariot at the door!—I come! I come—

I attend you, good captain—

Indeed, sir—

Pray, sir—civility is not ceremony.

And now, dressed like a bridegroom, my heart elated beyond that of the most desiring one (attended by a footman whom my beloved never saw) I am already at Hampstead!

LETTER VII.

MR LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Upper Flask, Hampstead, Fri. morn. 7 o'clock. (June 9.)

I am now here, and here have been this hour and half. What an industrious spirit have I!—nobody can say, that I eat the bread of idleness. I take true pains for all the pleasure I enjoy. I cannot but admire myself strangely; for certainly, with this active soul, I should have made a very great

figure in whatever station I had filled. But had I been a prince! To be sure I should have made a most *noble* prince! I should have led up a military dance equal to that of the great Macedonian. I should have added kingdom to kingdom, and despoiled all my neighbour sovereigns, in order to have obtained the name of *Robert the Great*. And I would have gone to war with the great Turk, and the Persian, and Mogul, for their seraglios; for not one of those Eastern monarchs should have had a pretty woman to bless himself with, till I had done with her.

And now I have so much leisure upon my hands, that, after having informed myself of all necessary particulars, I am set to my short-hand writing in order to keep up with time as well as I can: for the subject is now become worthy of me; and it is yet too soon, I doubt, to pay my compliments to my charmer, after all her fatigues for two or three days past: and moreover, I have abundance of matters preparative to my future proceedings to recount, in order to connect and render all intelligible.

I parted with the captain at the foot of the hill, trebly instructed; that is to say, as to the *fact*, to the *probable*, and to the *possible*. If my beloved and I can meet and make up without the mediation of this *worthy* gentleman, it will be so much the better. As little foreign aid as possible in my amorous conflicts has always been a rule with me; though here I have been obliged to call in so much. And who knows but it may be the better for the lady the less she makes necessary. I cannot bear that she should sit so indifferent to me as to be in earnest to part with me for ever upon so *slight*, or even upon *any* occasion. *If I find she is* —but no more threatenings till she is in my power —Thou knowest what I have vowed.

All Will's account from the lady's flight to his

finding her again, all the accounts of the people of the house, the coachman's information to Will, and so forth, collected together, stand thus.

'The Hampstead coach, when the dear fugitive came to it, had but two passengers in it. But she made the fellow go off directly, paying for the vacant places.

'The two passengers directing the coachman to set them down at the Upper Flask, she bid him set her down there also.

'They took leave of her (very respectfully no doubt); and she went into the house, and asked, if she could not have a dish of tea, and a room to herself for half an hour.

'They showed her up to the very room where I now am. She sat at the very table I now write upon; and, I believe, the chair I sit in was hers.' O Belford, if thou knowest what love is, thou wilt be able to account for these *minutiæ*.

'She seemed spiritless and fatigued. The landlady herself chose to attend so genteel and lovely a guest. She asked her, if she would have bread and butter with her tea?

'No. She could not eat.

'They had very good biscuits.

'As she pleased.

'The woman stept out for some; and returning on a sudden, she observed the sweet fugitive endeavouring to restrain a violent burst of grief, to which she had given way in that little interval.

'However, when the tea came, she made the landlady sit down with her, and asked her abundance of questions about the villages and roads in that neighbourhood.

'The woman took notice to her, *that she seemed to be troubled in mind.*

'Tender spirits, she replied, could not part with *dear* friends without concern.'

She meant *me*, no doubt.

'She made no inquiry about a lodging, though by the sequel, thou'lt observe, that she seemed to intend to go no further that night than Hampstead. But after she had drank two dishes, and put a biscuit in her pocket—(Sweet soul! to serve for her supper perhaps) she laid down half a crown; and refusing change, sighing, took leave, saying, she would proceed towards Hendon; the distance to which had been one of her questions.

'They offered to send to know, if a Hampstead coach was not to go to Hendon that evening.

'No matter, she said—perhaps she might meet the chariot.'

Another of her *feints*, I suppose: for how, or with whom, could any thing of this sort have been concerted since yesterday morning?

'She had, as the people took notice to one another, something so uncommonly noble in her air, and in her person and behaviour, that they were sure she was of quality. And having no servant with her of either sex, her eyes [her fine eyes, the landlady called them, stranger as she was, and a woman!] being swelled and red, they were sure there was an elopement in the case, either from parents or guardians: for they supposed her too young and too maidenly to be a married lady: and were she married, no husband would let such a fine young creature be unattended and alone; nor give her cause for so much grief as seemed to be settled in her countenance. Then, at times, she seemed to be so bewildered, they said, that they were afraid she had it in her head to make away with herself.

'All these things put together, excited their curiosity; and they engaged a *peery* servant, as they called a footman who was drinking with Kit the hostler at the taphouse, to watch all her motions.

This follow reported the following particulars, as they were re-reported to me.

'She indeed went towards Hendon, passing by the sign of the Castle on the Heath; then, stopping, looked about her, and down in the valley before her. Then, turning her face towards London, she seemed, by the motion of her handkerchief to her eyes, to weep; repenting [who knows?] the rash step she had taken, and wishing herself back again.'

Better for her, if she do, Jack, once more I say! —Woe be to the girl who could think of marrying me, yet be able to run away from me, and renounce me for ever!

'Then, continuing on a few paces, she stopt again; and, as if disliking her road, again seeming to weep, directed her course back towards Hampstead.'

I am glad she wept so much, because no heart bursts (be the occasion for the sorrow what it will) which has that kindly relief. Hence I hardly ever am moved at the sight of these pellucid fugitives in a fine woman. How often, in the past twelve hours, have I wished, that I could cry most confoundedly!

'She then saw a coach and four driving towards her empty. She crossed the path she was in, as if to meet it; and seemed to intend to speak to the coachman, had he stopt or spoken first. He as earnestly looked at *her*. Every one did so who passed her (so the man who dogged her was the less suspected)—Happy rogue of a coachman, hadst thou known whose notice thou didst engage, and whom thou mightest have obliged!—It was the divine Clarissa Harlowe at whom thou gazedst!—mine own Clarissa Harlowe!—But it was well for me that thou wert as undistinguishing as the beasts

thou drovest; otherwise what a wild-goose chace had I been led!

'The lady as well as the coachman, in short, seemed to want resolution; the horses kept on [the fellow's head and eyes, no doubt, turned behind him;] and the distance soon lengthened beyond recal. With a wistful eye she looked after him; sighed and wept again; as the servant, who then slily passed her, observed.

'By this time she had reached the houses. She looked up at every one, as she passed; now and then breathing upon her bared hand, and applying it to her swelled eyes, to abate the redness and dry the tears. At last, seeing a bill up for letting lodgings, she walked backwards and forwards half a dozen times, as if unable to determine what to do. And then went further into the town; and there the fellow, being spoken to by one of his familiars, lost her for a few minutes: but he soon saw her come out of a linen-drapery shop, attended by a servant-maid, having, as he believed, bought some little matters, and, as it proved, got that maid-servant to go with her to the house she is now at *.

'The fellow, after waiting about an hour, and not seeing her come out, returned, concluding that she had taken lodgings there.

And here, supposing my narrative of the dramatic kind, ends act the first. And now begins,

ACT II.

SCENE, *Hampstead Heath continued.*

Enter my Rascal.

WILL having got at all these particulars, by exchanging others as frankly against them, with

* See p. 58.

which I had formerly prepared him both verbally and in writing; I found the people already of my party, and full of good wishes for my success, repeating to me all they told him.

But he had first acquainted me with the accounts he had given them of his lady and me. It is necessary that I give thee the particulars of his tale—and I have a little time upon my hands; for the maid of the house, who had been out of an errand, tells us, that she saw Mrs. Moore [with whom must be my first business] go into the house of a young gentleman, within a few doors of her, who has a maiden sister, Miss Rawlins by name, *so notify'd* for prudence, that none of her acquaintance undertake any thing of consequence without consulting her.

Meanwhile my honest coachman is walking about Miss Rawlins's door, in order to bring me notice of Mrs. Moore's return to her own house. I hope her gossip's-tale will be as soon told as mine. Which take as follows.

Will told them, before I came, 'That his lady was but lately married to one of the finest gentlemen in the world. But that he, being very gay and lively, she was *mortal* jealous of him; and in a fit of that sort, had eloped from him. For although she loved him dearly, and he doated upon her (as well he might, since, as they had seen, she was the finest creature *that ever the sun shone upon;)* yet she was apt to be very wilful and sullen, if he might take the liberty to say so—but truth was truth;—and if she could not have her own way in every thing, would be for leaving him. That she had three or four times played his master such tricks; but with all the virtue and innocence in the world; running away to an inti-

mate friend of hers, who though a young lady of honour, was but too indulgent to her in this her *only* failing; for which reason his master had brought her to London lodgings; their usual residence being in the country: and that, on his refusing to satisfy her about a lady he had been seen with in St. James's Park, she had for the first time since she came to town, served his master thus: whom he had left half distracted on that account.'

And truly well he might, poor gentleman! cried the honest folks, pitying me before they saw me.

'He told them how he came by his intelligence of her; and made himself such an interest with them, that they helped him to a change of clothes for himself; and the landlord, at his request, privately inquired, if the lady actually remained at Mrs. Moore's; and for how long she had taken the lodgings: which he found only to be for a week certain: but she had said that she believed she should hardly stay so long. And then it was that he wrote his letter, and sent it by honest Peter Patrick, as thou hast heard.'

When I came, my person and dress having answered Will's description, the people were ready to worship me. I now and then sighed, now and then put on a lighter air; which, however, I designed should show more of vexation ill-disguised, than of real cheerfulness: and they told Will it was a thousand pities so fine a lady should have such *skittish tricks*; adding, that she might expose herself to great dangers by them; for there were rakes every where [*Lovelaces in every corner, Jack!*] and many about that town, who would leave nothing unattempted to get into her company: and although they might not prevail upon her, yet might they nevertheless hurt her reputation; and,

in time, estrange the affections of so fine a gentleman from her.

Good sensible people, these!—

Here, landlord; one word with you.—My servant, I find, has acquainted you with the reason of my coming this way. An unhappy affair, landlord! a very unhappy affair! but never was there a more virtuous woman.

So, sir, she seems to be. A thousand pities her ladyship has such ways—and to so good-humoured a gentleman as you seem to be, sir.

Mother-spoilt, landlord!—mother-spoilt! that's the thing!—but, sighing, I must make the best of it. What I want you to do for me, is to lend me a great coat. I care not what it is. If my spouse should see me at a distance, she would make it very difficult for me to get at her speech. A great coat with a cape, if you have one. I must come upon her before she is aware.

I am afraid, sir, I have none fit for such a gentleman as you.

O, any thing will do! the worse the better.

Exit landlord. Re-enter with two great-coats.

Ay, landlord, this will be best; for I can button the cape over the lower part of my face. Don't I look devilishly down and concerned, landlord?

I never saw a gentleman with a better natured look. 'Tis a pity you should have such trials, sir.

I must be very unhappy, no doubt of it, landlord. And yet I am a little pleased, you must needs think, that I have found her out before any great inconvenience has arisen to her. However, if I cannot break her of these freaks, she'll break my heart; for I do love her with all her failings.

The good woman, who was within hearing of all this, pitied me much.

Pray, your honour, said she, if I may be so bold, was madam ever a mamma?

No!—and I sighed—we have been but a little while married; and as I may say to *you*, it is her own fault that she is not in that way [not a word of a lie in this, Jack]. But to tell you truth madam, she may be compared to the dog in the manger—

I understand you, sir, [simpering]—She is but young, sir. I have heard of one or two such skittish young ladies, in my time, sir—but when madam is in that way, I dare say, as she loves you (and it would be strange if she did not!) all this will be over, and she may make the best of wives.

That's all my hope.

She is as fine a lady as I ever beheld. I hope, sir, you won't be too severe. She'll get over all these freaks, if once she be a mamma, I warrant.

I can't be severe to her; she knows that. The moment I see her, all resentment is over with me, if she give me but one kind look.

All this time, I was adjusting my horseman's coat, and Will was buttoning the cape over my chin.

I asked the woman for a little powder. She brought me a powder-box, and I lightly shook the puff over my hat, and flapt one side of it, though the lace looked a little too gay for my covering; and slouching it over my eyes—Shall I be known, think you, madam?

Your honour is so expert, sir! I wish, if I may be so bold, your lady has not some *cause* to be jealous. But it will be impossible, if you keep your laced clothes covered, that any body should know you in that dress to be the same gentleman—except they find you out by your clocked stockings.

Well observed—can't you, landlord, lend or

sell me a pair of stockings, that will draw over these?

I can cut off the feet, if they won't go into my shoes.

He could let me have a pair of coarse, but clean, stirrup-stockings, if I pleased.

The best in the world for the purpose.

He fetched them. Will drew them on; and my legs then made a good gouty appearance.

The good woman, smiling, wished me success: and so did the landlord: and as thou knowest that I am not a bad mimic, I took a cane, which I borrowed of the landlord, and stooped in the shoulders to a quarter of a foot of less height, and stumped away cross to the bowling-green, to practise a little the hobbling gait of a gouty man. The landlady whispered her husband, as Will tells me, He's a good one, I warrant him—I dare say the fault lies not at all of one side. While mine host replied, that I was so lively and so good-natured a gentleman, that he did not know who could be angry with me, do what I would. A sensible fellow! —I wish my charmer were of the same opinion.

And now I am going to try, if I can't agree with goody Moore for lodgings and other conveniences for my sick wife.

'Wife, Lovelace?' methinks thou interrogatest.

Yes, *wife*, for who knows what cautions the dear fugitive may have given in apprehension of me?

'But has Goody Moore any other lodgings to let?

Yes, yes; I have taken care of that; and find that she has just such conveniences as I want. And I know that my wife will like them. For although married, I can do every thing I please; and that's a bold word, you know. But had she only a garret to let, I would have liked it; and been a poor author afraid of arrests, and made that

my place of refuge; yet would have made shift to pay beforehand for what I had. I can suit myself to any condition, that's my comfort.

* * *

THE widow Moore return'd! say you—Down, down, flutterer!—This impertinent heart is more troublesome to me than my conscience, I think.—I shall be obliged to hoarsen my voice, and roughen my character, to keep up with its puppily dancings.

But let me see, shall I be angry or pleased, when I am admitted to my beloved's presence?

Angry, to be sure.—Has she not broken her word with me? at a time too when I was meditating to do her grateful justice?—And is not breach of word a dreadful crime in good folks? I have ever been for forming my judgment of the nature of things and actions, not so much from what they are in themselves, as from the character of the actors. Thus it would be as odd a thing in such as we to *keep* our words with a woman, as it would be wicked in her to *break* hers to us.

Seest thou not, that this unseasonable gravity is admitted to quell the palpitations of this unmanageable heart? But still it will go on with its bound ings. I'll try, as I ride in my chariot, to *tranquillize*.

Ride, Bob! so little a way?

Yes, ride, Jack; for am I not lame? and will it not look well to have a lodger who keeps his chariot? What widow, what servant, asks questions of a man with an equipage?

My coachman, as well as my other servant, is under Will's tuition.

Never was there such a hideous rascal as he has made himself. The devil only and his *other* master can know him. They both have set their marks

upon him. As to my honour's mark, it will never be out of *his d—n'd wide mothe,* as he calls it. For the dog will be hanged before he can lose the rest of his teeth by age.

I am gone.

LETTER VIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Hampstead, Friday night, June 9.

Now, Belford, for the narrative of narratives. I will continue it, as I have opportunity; and that so dexterously, that if I break off twenty times, thou shalt not discern where I piece my thread.

Although grievously afflicted with the gout, I alighted out of my chariot (leaning very hard on my cane with one hand, and on my new servant's shoulder with the other) the same instant almost that he had knocked at the door, that I might be sure of admission into the house.

I took care to button my great coat about me, and to cover with it even the pummel of my sword, it being a little too gay for my years. I knew not what occasion I might have for my sword. I stooped forward; blinked with my eyes to conceal their lustre [No vanity in saying that, Jack]; my chin wrapped up for the tooth-ach; and my slouched laced hat, giving me, altogether, the appearance of an antiquated beau.

My wife, I resolved beforehand, should have a complication of disorders.

The maid came to the door. I asked for her mistress. She showed me into one of the parlours; and I sat down with a gouty Oh!

Enter Goody Moore.

Your servant, madam—But you must excuse me; I cannot well stand—I find by the bill at the door, that you have lodgings to let [mumbling my words as if, like my man Will, I had lost some of my fore-teeth]: be pleased to inform me what they are; for I like your situation—and I will tell you my family—I have a wife, a good old woman—older than myself, by the way, a pretty deal. She is in a bad state of health, and is advised into the Hampstead air. She will have two maid servants and a footman. The coach or chariot (I shall not have them up both together) we can put up any where, and the coachman will be with his horses.

When, sir, shall you want to come in?

I will take them from this very day; and, if convenient, will bring my wife in the afternoon.

Perhaps, sir, you would board, as well as lodge?

That as you please. It will save me the trouble of bringing my cook, if we do. And I suppose you have servants who know how to dress a couple of dishes. My wife must eat plain food, and I don't love kickshaws.

We have a single lady, who will be gone in two or three days. She has one of the best apartments: that will then be at liberty.

You have one or two good ones mean time, I presume, madam, just to receive my wife; for we have lost time—these damned physicians—excuse me, madam, I am not used to curse; but it is owing to the love I have for my wife—they have kept her in hand till they are ashamed to take more fees, and now advise her to the air. I wish we had sent her hither at first. But we must now make the best of it.

Excuse me, madam [for she looked hard at me] that I am muffled up in this warm weather. I am but too sensible that I have left my chamber sooner than I ought, and perhaps shall have a return of my gout for it. I came out thus muffled up with a dreadful pain in my jaws; an ague in them, I believe. But my poor dear will not be satisfied with any body's care but mine. And, as I told you, we have lost time.

You shall see what accommodations I have, if you please, sir. But I doubt you are too lame to walk up stairs.

I can make shift to hobble up now I have rested a little. I'll just look upon the apartment my wife is to have. Any thing may do for the servants: and as you seem to be a good sort of gentlewoman, I shan't stand for a price, and will pay well besides for the trouble I shall give.

She led the way; and I, helping myself by the banisters, made shift to get up with less fatigue than I expected from ancles so weak. But oh! Jack, what was Sixtus the Vth's artful depression of his natural powers to mine, when, as the half dead Montalto, he gaped for the pretendedly unsought Pontificate, and the moment he was chosen leaped upon the prancing beast, which it was thought by the amazed conclave he was not able to mount without help of chairs and men? Never was there a more joyous heart and lighter heels than mine, joined together; yet both denied their functions; the one fluttering in secret, ready to burst its bars for relief-ful expression, the others obliged to an hobbling motion; when, unrestrained, they would, in their master's imagination, have mounted him to the lunar world without the help of a ladder.

There were three rooms on a floor: two of them

handsome; and the third, she said, still handsomer; but the lady was in it.

I saw, I saw, she was! for as I hobbled up, crying out upon my weak ankles, in the hoarse mumbling voice I had assumed, I beheld a little piece of her as she just cast an eye (with the door a-jar, as they call it) to observe who was coming up; and, seeing such an old clumsy fellow, great coated in weather so warm, slouched, and muffled up, she withdrew, shutting the door without any emotion. But it was not so with me; for thou canst not imagine how my heart danced to my mouth, at the very glimpse of her; so that I was afraid the thump, thump, thumping villain, which had so lately thumped as much to no purpose, would have choked me.

I liked the lodging well; and the more as she said the third room was still handsomer. I must sit down, madam [and chose the darkest part of the room]; Won't you take a seat yourself?—No price shall part us—but I will leave the terms to you and my wife, if you please. And also whether for board or not. Only please to take this for earnest, putting a guinea into her hand—and one thing I will say; my poor wife loves money; but is not an ill-natured woman. She was a great fortune to me: but, as the real estate goes away at her death, I would fain preserve her for that reason, as well as for the love I bear her as an honest man. But if she makes too close a bargain with you, tell *me*; and unknown to *her*, I will make it up. This is my constant way: she loves to have her pen'worths; and I would not have her vexed or made uneasy on any account.

She said, I was a very considerate gentleman; and, upon the condition I had mentioned, she was content to leave the terms to my lady.

But, madam, cannot a-body just peep into the other apartment; that I may be more particular to my wife in the furniture of it?

The lady desires to be private. Sir—but—and was going to ask her leave.

I caught hold of her arm—However, stay, stay, madam: It mayn't be proper, if the lady loves to be private. Don't let me intrude upon the lady—

No intrusion, sir, I dare say: the lady is good-humoured. She will be so kind as to step down into the parlour, I dare say. As she stays so little a while, I am sure she will not wish to stand in my way.

No, madam, that's true, if she be good-humoured, as you say—has she been with you long, madam?

She came but yesterday, sir.

I believe I just now saw the glimpse of her. She seems to be an elderly lady.

No, sir! you're mistaken. She's a young lady; and one of the handsomest I ever saw.

Cot so, I beg her pardon! Not but that I should have liked her the better, were she to stay longer, if she had been elderly. I have a strange taste, madam, you'll say; but I really, for my wife's sake, love every elderly woman. Indeed I ever thought age was to be reverenced, which made me (taking the fortune into the scale too, *that* I own) make my addresses to my present dear.

Very good of you, sir, to respect age: we all hope to live to be old.

Right, madam.—But you say the lady is beautiful. Now you must know, that though I choose to converse with the elderly, yet I love to see a beauful young woman, just as I love to see fine flowers in a garden. There's no casting an eye upon her, is there? without her notice? For in this dress, and

thus muffled up about my jaws, I should not care to be seen any more than she, let her love privacy as much as she will.

I will go ask if I may show a gentleman the apartment, sir; and, as you are a married gentleman, and not *over* young, she'll perhaps make the less scruple.

Then, like me, she loves elderly folks best perhaps. But it may be she has suffered by young ones!

I fancy she has, sir, or is afraid she shall. She desired to be very private; and if by description enquired after, to be denied.

Thou art true woman, Goody Moore, thought I.

Good lack—good lack?—What may be her story then, I pray?

She is pretty reserved in her story; but, to tell you my thoughts, I believe *love* is in the case: she is always in tears, and does not much care for company.

Nay, madam, it becomes not me to dive into ladies' secrets; I want not to pry into other people's affairs. But, pray, how does she employ herself?—Yet she came but yesterday; so you can't tell.

Writing continually, sir.

These women, Jack, when you ask them questions by way of information, don't care to be ignorant of any thing.

Nay, excuse me, madam, I am very far from being an inquisitive man. But if her case be difficult, and not merely *love*, as she is a friend of yours, I would give her my advice.

Then you are a lawyer, sir—

Why, indeed, madam, I was some time at the bar; but I have long left practice; yet am much

consulted by my friends in difficult points. In a pauper case I frequently *give* money; but never *take* any from the richest.

You are a very good gentleman, then, sir.

Ay, madam, we cannot live always here; and we ought to do what good we can—But I hate to appear officious. If the lady stay any time, and think fit, upon better acquaintance, to let me into her case, it may be a happy day for her, if I find it a just one; for, you must know, that when I was at the bar, I never was such a sad fellow as to undertake, for the sake of a paltry fee, to make white black, and black white; for what would that have been, but to endeavour to establish iniquity by quirks, while I robbed the innocent?

You are an excellent gentleman, sir: I wish [and then she sighed] I had had the happiness to know there was such a lawyer in the world; and to have been acquainted with him.

Come, come, Mrs. Moore, I think your name is, it may not be too late—when you and I are better acquainted, I may help *you*, perhaps.—But mention nothing of this to the lady; for, as I said, I hate to appear officious.

This prohibition I knew, if Goody Moore answered the specimen she had given of her womanhood, would make her take the first opportunity to tell, were it to be necessary to my purpose that she should.

I appeared, upon the whole, so indifferent about seeing the room, or the lady, that the good woman was the more eager I should see both. And the rather, as I, to stimulate her, declared, that there was more required in my eye to merit the character of a handsome woman, than most people thought necessary; and that I had never seen six truly lovely women in my life.

To be brief, she went in; and after a little while came out again. The lady, sir, is retired to her closet. So you may go in and look at the room.

Then how my heart began again to play its pug's tricks!

I hobbled in, and stumped about, and liked it very much; and was sure my wife would. I begged excuse for sitting down, and asked, Who was the minister of the place? If he were a good preacher? Who preached at the chapel? And if *he* were a good preacher, and good *liver* too, madam—I must inquire after *that*: for I love, I must needs say, that the clergy should practise what they preach.

Very right, sir; but that is not so often the case, as were to be wished.

More's the pity, madam. But I have a great veneration for the clergy in general. It is more a satire upon human nature, than upon the cloth, if we suppose those who have the *best* opportunities to be good, less perfect than other people. For my part, I don't love *professional* any more than *national* reflections.—But I keep the lady in her closet. My gout makes me rude.

Then up from my seat stumped I—What do you call these window-curtains, madam?

Stuff-damask, sir.

It looks mighty well, truly. I like it better than silk. It is warmer to be sure, and much fitter for lodgings in the country; especially for people in years. The bed is in a pretty taste.

It is neat and clean, sir: that's all we pretend to.

Ay, mighty well—very well—a silk camblet, I think—very well, truly!—I am sure my wife will like it. But we would not turn the lady out of her lodgings for the world. The other two apartments will do for us at the present.

Then stumping towards the closet, over the door of which hung a picture—What picture is that—Oh! I see: a St. Cecilia!

A common print, sir!

Pretty well, pretty well! It is after an Italian master.—I would not for the world turn the lady out of her apartment. We can make shift with the other two, repeated I, louder still: but yet mumblingly hoarse; for I had as great a regard to uniformity in accent, as to my words.

O Belford! to be so near my angel, think what a painful constraint I was under.

I was resolved to fetch her out, if possible: and pretending to be going—You can't agree as to any *time*, Mrs. Moore, when we can have this third room, can you?—Not that [whispered I, loud enough to be heard in the next room; not that] I would incommode the lady: but I would tell my wife *when* abouts—and women, you know, Mrs. Moore, love to have every thing before them of this nature.

Mrs. Moore, said my charmer, [and never did her voice sound so harmonious to me: O how my heart bounded again! It even talked to me, in a manner; for I thought I *heard*, as well as felt, its unruly flutters; and every vein about me seemed a pulse; Mrs. Moore] you may acquaint the gentleman, that I shall stay here only for two or three days at most, till I receive an answer to a letter I have written into the country; and rather than be your hindrance, I will take up with any apartment a pair of stairs higher.

Not for the world!—Not for the world, young lady! cried I.—My wife, well as I love her, should lie in a garret, rather than put such a considerate lady as you seem to be, to the least inconvenience.

She opened not the door yet; and I said, But since you have so much goodness, madam, if I could but just look into the closet as I stand, I could tell my wife whether it is large enough to hold a cabinet she much values, and will have with her wherever she goes.

Then my charmer opened the door, and blazed upon me, as it were in a flood of light, like what one might imagine would strike a man, who, born blind, had by some propitious power been blessed with his sight, all at once, in a meridian sun.

Upon my soul, I never was so strangely affected before. I had much ado to forbear discovering myself that instant: but, hesitatingly, and in great disorder, I said, looking into the closet, and around it, There is room, I see, for my wife's cabinet; and it has many jewels in it of high price; but, upon my soul [for I could not forbear swearing, like a puppy:—habit is a cursed thing, Jack—] nothing so valuable as the lady I see can be brought into it.

She started, and looked at me with terror. The truth of the compliment, as far as I know, had taken dissimulation from my accent.

I saw it was impossible to conceal myself longer from her, any more than (from the violent impulses of my passion) to forbear manifesting myself. I unbuttoned therefore my cape, I pulled off my flapped slouched hat; I threw open my great coat, and, like the Devil in Milton [an odd comparison though!]

> I started up in my own form divine,
> Touch'd by the beam of her celestial eye,
> More potent than Ithuriel's spear.—

Now Belford, for a similitude—now for a likeness to illustrate the surprising scene, and the effect

it had upon my charmer, and the gentlewoman!—But nothing *was* like it, or equal to it. The plain fact can only describe it, and set it off—thus then take it.

She no sooner saw who it was, than she gave three violent screams; and, before I could catch her in my arms, (as I was about to do the moment I discovered myself) down she sunk at my feet, in a fit; which made me curse my indiscretion for so suddenly, and with so much emotion, revealing myself.

The gentlewoman, seeing so strange an alteration in my person, and features, and voice, and dress, cried out, Murder, help! Murder, help! by turns, for half a dozen times running. This alarmed the house, and up ran two servant maids, and *my* servant after them. I cried out for water and hartshorn, and every one flew a different way, one of the maids as fast down as she came up; while the gentlewoman ran out of one room into another, and by turns up and down the apartment we were in, without meaning or end, wringing her foolish hands, and not knowing what she did.

Up then came running a gentleman and his sister, fetched and brought in by the maid, who had run down, and having let in a cursed crabbed old wretch, hobbling with his gout, and mumbling with his hoarse broken-toothed voice, who was metamorphosed all at once into a lively gay young fellow, with a clear accent, and all his teeth, she would have it, that I was neither more or less than the Devil, and could not keep her eye from my foot; expecting, no doubt, every minute to see it discover itself to be cloven.

For my part, I was so intent upon restoring my angel, that I regarded nobody else. And at last, she slowly recovering motion, with bitter sighs and

sobs (only the whites of her eyes however appearing for some moments) I called upon her in the tenderest accent, as I kneeled by her, my arm supporting her head; My angel! my charmer! my Clarissa; look upon me, my dearest life! I am not angry with you; I will forgive you, my best beloved!—

The gentleman and his sister knew not what to make of all this: and the less, when my fair one, recovering her sight, snatched another look at me; and then again groaned, and fainted away.

I threw up the closet-sash for air, and then left her to the care of the young gentlewoman, the same notable Miss Rawlins whom I had heard of at the Flask; and to that of Mrs. Moore, who by this time had recovered herself; and then retiring to one corner of the room, I made my servant pull off my gouty stockings, brush my hat, and loop it up into the usual smart cock.

I then stepped to the closet to Mr. Rawlins, whom, in the general confusion, I had not much minded before.—Sir, said I, you have an uncommon scene before you. The lady is my wife, and no gentleman's presence is necessary here but my own.

I beg pardon, sir; *if* the lady be your wife, I have no business here. *But*, sir, by her concern at seeing you—

Pray, sir, none of your *ifs* and *buts*, I beseech you: nor *your* concern about the *lady's* concern, you are a very unqualified judge in this cause; and I beg of you, sir, to oblige me with your absence. The women only are proper to be present on this occasion, added I; and I think myself obliged to them for their care and kind assistance.

'Tis well he made not another word: for I found my choler begin to rise. I could not bear, that the finest neck, and arms, and foot in the world,

should be exposed to the eyes of any man living but mine.

I withdrew once more from the closet, finding her beginning to recover, lest the sight of me too soon, should throw her back again.

The first words she said, looking round her with great emotion, were, O hide me, hide me! is he gone!—O hide me!—is he gone!

Sir, said Miss Rawlins, coming to me with an air both peremptory and assured, this is some surprising case. The lady cannot bear the sight of you. What you have done is best known to yourself. But another such fit will probably be her last. It would be but kind therefore for you to retire.

It behoved me to have so notable a person of my party; and the rather as I had disobliged her impertinent brother.

The dear creature, said I, may *well* be concerned to see me. If *you*, madam, had a husband who loved you as I love her, you would not, I am confident, fly from him, and expose yourself to hazards, as she does whenever she has not all her way—and yet with a mind not capable of intentional evil—but mother-spoilt!—This is her fault, and all her fault: and the more inexcusable it is, as I am the man of her choice, and have reason to think she loves me above all the men in the world.

Here, Jack, was a story to support to the lady; face to face too *!

* And here, Belford, lest thou through inattention shouldst be surprised at my assurance, let me remind thee (and that, thus, by way of marginal observation, that I may not break in upon my narrative), that this my intrepidity was but a consequence of the measures I had previously concerted (as I have from time to time acquainted thee), in apprehension of such an event as has fallen out. For had not the dear crea-

You *speak* like a gentleman; you *look* like a gentleman, said Miss Rawlins—but, sir, this is a strange case; the lady seems to dread the sight of you.

No wonder, madam; taking her a little on one side nearer to Mrs. Moore. I have three times already forgiven the dear creature—but this *jealou-*

ture already passed for my wife, before no less than four worthy gentlemen of family and fortune *? and before Mrs. Sinclair, and her household, and Miss Partington? And had she not agreed to her uncle's expedient, that she *should* pass for such, from the time of Mr. Hickman's application to that uncle †; and that the worthy Capt. Tomlinson should be allowed to propagate that belief; as he had actually reported to two families (*they possibly to more*); purposely that it might come to the ears of James Harlowe; and serve for a foundation for uncle John to build his reconciliation-scheme upon ‡? And canst thou think, that nothing was meant by all this contrivance? And that I am not still *further* prepared to support my story?

Indeed, I little thought, at the time that I formed these precautionary schemes, that she would ever have been able, if *willing*, to get out of my hands. All that I hoped I should have occasion to have recourse to them for, was only, in case I should have the courage to make the grand attempt, and should succeed in it, to bring the dear creature [and *this out of tenderness to her*, for what attention did I ever yet pay to the grief, the execrations, the tears of a woman, I had triumphed over?] to bear me in her sight; to expostulate with me, to be pacified by my pleas, and by her own future hopes, founded upon the reconciliatory project, upon my reiterated vows, and upon the captain's assurances. Since in that case, to forgive me, to have gone on with me, *for a week*, would have been to forgive me, to have gone on with me, *for ever*. And then had my eligible life of honour taken place; her trials would all have been then over; and she would have known nothing but gratitude, love, and joy, to the end of one of our lives: for never would I, never could I, have abandoned such an admirable creature as this. Thou knowest, I never was a sordid villain to any of her inferior—her *inferiors*, I may say—for who is not her inferior?

* See Vol. III. Letter lxii. towards the conclusion.
† See Vol. IV. Letter iv. ‡ Ibid.

sy!—There is a spice of *that* in it—and of *phrensy* too [whispered I, that it might have the face of a secret, and of consequence the more engage their attention]—but our story is too long—

I then made a motion to go to my beloved. But they desired that I would walk into the next room; and they would endeavour to prevail upon her to lie down.

I begged that they would not suffer her to talk; for that she was accustomed to fits, and when in this way, would talk of any thing that came uppermost; and the more she was suffered to run on, the worse she was; and if not kept quiet, would fall into ravings; which might possibly hold her a week.

They promised to keep her quiet; and I withdrew into the next room, ordering every one down but Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins.

She was full of exclamations. Unhappy creature! miserable! ruined! and undone! she called herself; wrung her hands, and begged they would assist her to escape from the terrible evils she should otherwise be made to suffer.

They preached patience and quietness to her; and would have had her to lie down: but she refused; sinking, however, into an easy chair; for she trembled so, she could not stand.

By this time, I hoped, that she was enough recovered to bear a presence that it behoved me to make her bear; and fearing she would throw out something in her exclamations, that would still more disconcert me, I went into the room again.

O there he is! said she, and threw her apron over her face—I cannot see him!—I cannot look upon him!—Begone, begone! touch me not!—

For I took her struggling hand, beseeching her to

be pacified; and assuring her, that I would make all up with her upon her own terms and wishes.

Base man! said the violent lady, I have no wishes, but never to behold you more! Why must I be thus pursued and haunted? Have you not made me miserable enough already?—Despoiled of all succour and help, and of every friend, I am contented to be poor, low, and miserable, so I may be free from your persecutions.

Miss Rawlins stared at me [a confident slut this Miss Rawlins, thought I]: so did Mrs. Moore. I told you so! whispering, said I, turning to the women; shaking my head with a face of great concern and pity; and then to my charmer. My dear creature, how you rave! You will not easily recover from the effects of this violence. Have patience, my love. Be pacified; and we will coolly talk this matter over: for you expose yourself, as well as me: these ladies will certainly think you have fallen among robbers, and that I am the chief of them,

So you are! so you are! stamping, her face still covered [*she thought of Wednesday night, no doubt*]; and sighing as if her heart were breaking, she put her hand to her forehead—I shall be quite distracted!

I will not, my dearest love, uncover your face.

You shall *not* look upon me, since I am so odious to you. But this is a violence I never thought you capable of.

And I would have pressed her hand as I held it, with my lips; but she drew it from me with indignation.

Unhand me, sir, said she. I will not be touched by you. Leave me to my fate. What right, what title, have you to persecute me thus?

What right, what title, my dear!—But this is not a time—I have a letter from Captain Tomlinson—here it is—offering it to her—

I will receive nothing from your hands—tell me not of Captain Tomlinson—tell me not of any body—you have no right to invade me thus—Once more leave me to my fate—have you not made me miserable enough?

I touched a delicate string, on purpose to set her in such a passion before the women, as might confirm the intimation I had given of a phrensical disorder.

What a turn is here!—Lately so happy—nothing wanting but a reconciliation between you and your friends!—That reconciliation in such a happy train—shall so *slight*, so *accidental* an occasion be suffered to overturn all our happiness.

She started up with a trembling impatience, her apron falling from her indignant face—Now, said she, that thou darest to call the occasion *slight* and *accidental*, and that I am happily out of thy vile hands, and out of an house I have reason to believe *as* vile, traitor and wretch that thou art, I will venture to cast an eye upon thee—and O that it were in my power, in mercy to my sex, to look thee first into shame and remorse, and then into death!

This violent tragedy-speech, and the high manner in which she uttered it, had its desired effect. I looked upon the women, and upon her in turns, with a pitying eye; and they shook their wise heads, and besought *me* to retire, and *her* to lie down to compose herself.

This hurricane, like other hurricanes, was presently allayed by a shower. She threw herself once more into her armed chair, and begged par-

don of the women for her passionate excess; but not of me: yet I was in hopes, that when compliments were stirring I should have come in for a share.

Indeed, ladies, said I, [with assurance enough, thou'lt say] this violence is not natural to my beloved's temper—misapprehension.—

Misapprehension, wretch!—And want I excuses from thee!

By what a scorn was every lovely feature agitated!

Then turning her face from me, I have no patience, O thou guileful betrayer, to look upon thee. Begone! begone! With a face so unblushing, how darest thou appear in my presence?

I thought then, that the character of a husband obliged me to be angry.

You may one day, madam, repent this treatment:—by my soul you may. You know I have not deserved it of you—you *know* I have not.

Do I know you have not?—wretch! do I know—

You do, madam—and never did man of my figure and consideration [I thought it was proper to throw that in] meet with such treatment—

She lifted up her hands: indignation kept her silent.

But all is of a piece with the charge you bring against me of *despoiling you of all succour and help*, of making you *poor* and *low*, and with other unprecedented language. I will only say, before these two gentlewomen, that since it *must* be so, and since your former esteem for me is turned into so rivetted an aversion, I will soon, *very* soon, make you entirely easy. I *will* be gone;—I *will* leave you to *your own fate*, as you call it; and may that be happy!—Only, that I may not appear to be a

spoiler, a robber indeed, let me know whither I shall send your apparel, and every thing that belongs to you, and I will send it.

Send it to this place; and assure me, that you will never molest me more; never more come near me; and that is all I ask of you.

I will do so, madam, said I, with a dejected air. But did I ever think I should be so indifferent to you?—However, you must permit me to insist on your reading this letter; and on your seeing Capt. Tomlinson, and hearing what he has to say from your uncle. He will be here by-and-by.

Don't trifle with me, said she, in an imperious tone—do as you offer. I will not receive any letter from your hands. If I see Captain Tomlinson, it shall be on his *own* account; not on *yours*. You tell me you will send me my apparel: if you would have me believe any thing you say, let this be the test of your sincerity—leave me *now*, and send my things.

The women stared. They did nothing but stare: and appeared to be more and more at a loss what to make of the matter between us.

I pretended to be going from her in a pet; but when I had got to the door, I turned back; and as if I had recollected myself, One word more, my dearest creature!—Charming even in your anger!—O my fond soul! said I, turning half-round, and pulling out my handkerchief.

I believe, Jack, my eyes did glisten a little. I have no doubt but they did. The women pitied me. Honest souls! they showed that they had each of them a handkerchief as well as I. So, hast thou not observed (to give a familiar illustration) every man in a company of a dozen, or more, obligingly pull out his watch, when some

one has asked, what's o'clock?—As each man of a like number, if one talks of his beard, will fall to stroking his chin with his four fingers and thumb.

One word only, madam, repeated I (as soon as my voice had recovered its tone): I have represented to Captain Tomlinson in the most favourable light the cause of our present misunderstanding. You know what your uncle insists upon; and with which you have acquiesced. The letter in my hand [and again I offered it to her] will acquaint you with what you have to apprehend from your brother's active malice.

She was going to speak in a high accent, putting the letter from her with an open palm—Nay, hear me out, madam—the Captain, you know, has reported our *marriage* to two different persons. It is come to your brother's ears. My own relations have also heard of it. Letters were brought me from town this morning, from Lady Betty Lawrance and Miss Montague. Here they are [I pulled them out of my pocket, and offered them to her, with that of the Captain; but she held back her still open palm, that she might not receive them]. Reflect, madam, I beseech you reflect, upon the fatal consequences with which this your high resentment may be attended.

Ever since I knew you, said she, I have been in a wilderness of doubt and error. I bless God that I am out of your hands. I will transact for myself what relates to myself. I dismiss all your solicitude for me. Am I not my own mistress!—Have you any title—

The women stared [the devil stare ye, thought I. Can ye do nothing but stare?] It was high time to stop her here.

I raised my voice to drown her's—You used, my

dearest creature, to have a tender and apprehensive heart—you never had so much reason for such a one as now.

Let me judge for myself, upon what I shall *see*, not upon what I shall *hear*—do you think I shall ever—

I dreaded her going on—I *must* be heard, madam, raising my voice still higher. You *must* let me read one paragraph or two of this letter to you, if you will not read it yourself—

Begone from me, man!—Begone from me with thy letters! What pretence hast thou for tormenting me thus—what right—what title—

Dearest creature, what questions you ask! questions that you can as well answer yourself—

I *can*, I *will*—and *thus* I answer them—

Still louder raised I my voice. She was overborne. Sweet soul! it would be hard, thought I, [and yet I was very angry with her] if such a spirit as thine cannot be brought to yield to such a one as mine!

I lowered my voice on her silence. All gentle, all *intreative*, my accent: my head bowed; one hand held out; the other on my honest heart:—For heaven's sake, my dearest creature, resolve to see Captain Tomlinson with temper. He would have come along with me: but I was willing to try to soften your mind first on this fatal misapprehension; and this for the sake of your own wishes: for what is it otherwise to me whether your friends are or are not reconciled to us? *Do I want any favour of them?*—For your own mind's sake therefore, frustrate not Captain Tomlinson's negociation. That worthy gentleman will be here in the afternoon—Lady Betty will be in town with my cousin Montague, in a day or two. They will be your visitors. I beseech you do not carry this misunder-

standing so far, as that Lord M. and Lady Betty and Lady Sarah, may know it. [*How considerable this made me look to the women*] Lady Betty will not let you rest till you consent to accompany her to her own seat—and to that lady you may safely entrust your cause.

Again, upon my pausing a moment, she was going to break out. I liked not the turn of her countenance, nor the tone of her voice—"And thinkest thou, base wretch—" were the words she *did* utter. I again raised my voice and drowned hers—*Base wretch*, madam?—You know that I have not deserved the violent names you have called me. Words so opprobrious! from a mind so gentle!—But this treatment is from *you*, madam!—from *you*, whom I love more than my own soul!—by that soul I swear that I do—[the women looked upon each other. They seemed pleased with my ardour. Women, whether wives, maids, or widows, love ardours. Even Miss Howe, thou knowest, speaks up for ardours *].—Nevertheless, I must say, that you have carried matters too far for the occasion. I see you hate me—

She was just going to speak—If we are to *separate for ever*, in a strong and solemn voice, proceeded I, this island shall not long be troubled with me. Meantime, only be pleased to give these letters a perusal, and consider what is to be said to your uncle's friend, and what he is to say to your uncle—any thing will I come into (renounce me if you will) that shall make for *your* peace, and for the reconciliation *your heart was so lately set upon*. But I humbly conceive, that it is necessary, that you should come into better temper with me, were it but to give a favourable appearance to what *has*

* See Vol. IV. p. 83, 120.

passed, and weight to any *future application* to your friends, in whatever way you shall think proper to make it.

I then put the letters into her lap, and retired into the next apartment with a low bow, and a very solemn air.

I was soon followed by the two women. Mrs. Moore withdrew to give the fair perverse time to read them: Miss Rawlins for the same reason; and because she was sent for home.

The widow besought her speedy return. I joined in the same request; and she was ready enough to promise to oblige us.

I excused myself to Mrs. Moore for the disguise I had appeared in at first, and for the story I had invented. I told her, that I held myself obliged to satisfy her for the whole floor we were upon; and for an upper room for my servant; and that for a month certain.

She made many scruples, and begged she might not be urged on this head, till she had consulted Miss Rawlins.

I consented; but told her, that she had taken my earnest; and I hoped there was no room for dispute.

Just then Miss Rawlins returned with an air of eager curiosity; and having been told what had passed between Mrs. Moore and me, she gave herself airs of office immediately: which I humoured, plainly perceiving, that if I had *her* with me, I had the other.

She wished, if there was time for it, and if it were not quite impertinent in her to desire it, that I would give Mrs. Moore and her a brief history of an affair, which, as she said, bore the face of novelty, mystery, and surprise: for sometimes it looked to her as if we were married; at other times, that point appeared doubtful; and yet the

lady did not absolutely deny it; but, upon the whole, thought herself highly injured.

I said, that ours was a very particular case: that were I to acquaint them with it, some part of it would hardly appear credible. But, however, as they seemed to be persons of discretion, I would give them a brief account of the whole; and this in so plain and sincere a manner, that it should clear up to their satisfaction every thing that had passed, or might hereafter pass between us.

They sat down by me, and threw every feature of their faces into attention. I was resolved to go as near the truth as possible, lest any thing should drop from my Clarissa to impeach my veracity; and yet keep in view what passed at the Flask.

It is necessary, although thou knowest my whole story, and a good deal of my views, that thou shouldst be apprized of the substance of what I told them.

'I gave them, in as concise a manner as I was able, the history of our families, fortunes, alliances, antipathies; her brother's and mine particularly. I averred the truth of our private marriage.' The Captain's letter, which I will inclose, will give thee my reasons for that. And besides, the women might have proposed a parson to me by way of compromise. 'I told them the conditions my wife had made me swear to; and to which she held me, in order, I said, to induce me the sooner to be reconciled to her relations.'

'I owned, that this restraint made me sometimes ready to fly out.' And Mrs. Moore was so good as to declare, that *she did not much wonder at it.*

Thou art a very good sort of a woman, Mrs. Moore, thought I.

As Miss Howe has actually detected our mother;

and might possibly find some way still to acquaint her friend with her discoveries; I thought it proper to prepossess them in favour of Mrs. Sinclair and her two nieces.

I said, 'they were gentlewomen born; that they had not bad hearts; that indeed Mrs. Lovelace did not love them; they having once jointly taken the liberty to blame her for her over-niceness with regard to me. People, I said, even *good* people who knew themselves to be guilty of a fault they had no inclination to mend, were too often least patient, when told of it; as they could less bear than others, to be thought indifferently of.'

Too often the case, they owned.

'Mrs. Sinclair's house was a very handsome house, and fit to receive the first quality [true enough, Jack!]. Mrs. Sinclair was a woman very easy in her circumstances: a widow-gentlewoman—as *you*, Mrs. Moore, are. Lets lodgings—as *you*, Mrs. Moore do. Once had better prospects—as *you*, Mrs. Moore, may have had: the relict of Colonel Sinclair; you, Mrs. Moore, might know Colonel Sinclair—he had lodgings at Hampstead.'

She had heard of the name.

'O, he was related to the best families in Scotland: and his widow is not to be reflected upon, because she lets lodgings, you know, Mrs. Moore—you know, Miss Rawlins.'

Very true, and very true: and they must needs say, it did not look quite so pretty in such a lady to be so censorious.

A foundation here, thought I, to procure these women's help to get back the fugitive, or their connivance at least at my doing so; as well as for anticipating any future information from Miss Howe.

I gave them the character of that virago: and intimated, 'that for a head to contrive mischief,

and a heart to execute it, she had hardly her equal in her sex.'

To *this* Miss Howe it was, Mrs. Moore said, she supposed, that the lady was so desirous to dispatch a man and horse, by day-dawn, with a letter she wrote before she went to bed last night: proposing to stay no longer than till she had received an answer to it.

The very same, said I. I *knew* she would have immediate recourse to her. I should have been but too happy, could I have prevented such a letter from passing, or so to have managed, as to have it given into Mrs. Howe's hands, instead of her daughter's. Women who have lived some time in the world knew *better*, than to encourage such skittish pranks in young wives.

Let me just stop to tell thee, while it is in my head, that I have since given Will his cue to find out where the man lives who is gone with the fair fugitive's letter; and, if possible, to see him on his return, before he sees her.

I told the women, 'I despaired that it would ever be better with us while Miss Howe had so strange an ascendancy over my wife, and remained herself *unmarried;* and until the reconciliation with her friends could be effected; or a *still* happier event—as I should think it, who am the last male of my family; and which my foolish vow and her rigour, had hitherto'—

Here I stopt, and looked modest, turning my diamond ring round my finger: while Goody Moore looked mighty significant, calling it a very particular case; and the maiden fanned away, and primm'd and purss'd, to show, that what I said needed no further explanation.

'I told them the occasion of our present difference: I avowed the reality of the fire: but own-

ed, that I would have made no scruple of breaking the unnatural oath she had bound me in (having an husband's right on my side) when she was so accidentally frighted into my arms: and I blamed myself, excessively, that I did not; since she thought fit to carry her resentment so high, and had the injustice to suppose the fire to be a contrivance of mine.'

Nay, for that matter, Mrs. Moore said—as we were *married*, and *madam* was so *odd*—Every gentleman *would not*—and there stopt Mrs. Moore.

'To suppose I should have recourse to such a *poor* contrivance, said I, when I saw the dear creature *every hour*—' Was not this a bold put, Jack?

A most extraordinary case, truly! cried the maiden; fanning, yet coming in with her *well-buts;* and her sifting *pray sirs!* and her restraining *enough, sirs!*—flying *from* the question *to* the question; her seat now and then uneasy, for fear my *want of delicacy* should hurt her abundant *modesty;* and yet it was difficult to satisfy her *super*-abundant *curiosity.*

'My beloved's jealousy [and jealousy of itself, to female minds, accounts for a thousand unaccountablenesses] and the imputation of her half-phrensy brought upon her by her father's wicked curse, and by the previous persecutions she had undergone from all her family, were what I dwelt upon, in order to provide against what might happen.'

In short 'I owned against myself most of the offences which I did not doubt but she would charge me with in their hearing: and as every cause has a black and a white side, I gave the worst parts of our story the gentlest turn. And when I had done, acquainted them with some of the contents of that letter of Captain Tomlinson which

I had left with the lady. I concluded with cautioning them to be guarded against the inquiries of James Harlowe, and of Captain Singleton, or of any sailor-looking men.'

This thou wilt see from the letter itself was necessary to be done. Here therefore thou mayest read it. And a charming letter to my purpose wilt thou find it to be, if thou givest the least attention to its contents.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Wedn. June 7.

ALTHOUGH I am obliged to be in town to-morrow, or next day at furthest, yet I would not dispense with writing to you, by *one of my servants*, (whom I send up before me upon a particular occasion) in order to advertise you, *that it is probable you will hear from some of your own relations on your* [*supposed**] *nuptials.* One of the persons, (Mr. Lilburne by name) to whom I hinted my belief of your marriage, happens to be acquainted with Mr. Spurrier, Lady Betty Lawrance's steward; and (not being under any restriction) mentioned it to Mr. Spurrier, and he to Lady Betty, as a thing certain: and this (though I have not the honour *to be personally known to her ladyship*) brought on an inquiry from her ladyship to me by her gentleman; who coming to me in company with Mr. Lilburne, I had no way but to confirm the report. And I understand, that Lady Betty takes it amiss, that she was not acquainted with so desirable a piece of news from yourself.

* What is between hooks [ ] thou mayest suppose, Jack, I sunk upon the women, in the account I gave them of the contents of this Letter.

Her ladyship, it seems, has *business that calls her to town*, [and you will possibly choose to put her right. If you do, it will, I presume, *be in confidence*; that nothing may transpire from your *own* family to contradict what I have given out].

[I have ever been of opinion, *that truth ought to be strictly adhered to on all occasions*: and am concerned that I have (though with so good a view) departed from my old maxim. But my dear friend Mr. John Harlowe would have it so. Yet I never knew a departure of this kind a *single* departure. But, to make the best of it now, allow me, sir, once more to beg the lady, as soon as possible, to authenticate the report given out]—When both you and the lady join in the acknowledgment of your marriage, it will be impertinent in any one to be inquisitive as to the *day or week*: [and, if as privately celebrated as you intend (while the gentlewomen with whom you lodge are properly instructed, as you say they are, and who actually believe you were married long ago) who shall be able to give a contradiction to my report?]

And yet it is very probable, that minute inquiries will be made; and this is what renders precaution necessary. For Mr. James Harlowe will not believe that you are married; and is sure, he says, that you both lived together when Mr. Hickman's application was made to Mr. John Harlowe: and if you lived together *any* time unmarried, he infers from *your* character, Mr. Lovelace, that it is not probable, that you would ever marry. And he leaves it to his two uncles to decide, if you even *should be married*, whether there be not room to believe, that his sister was *first dishonoured*; and if so, to judge of the title she will have to their favour, or to the forgiveness of any of her family.

I believe, sir, this part of my letter had best be kept from the lady.

Young Mr. Harlowe is *resolved to find this out*, and *to come at his sister's speech likewise*; and for that purpose sets out *to-morrow*, as I am well informed, *with a large attendance armed*, and *Mr. Solmes is to be of the party*. And what makes him the more earnest to find it out, is this: Mr. John Harlowe has told the whole family that he will alter and new settle his will. Mr. Antony Harlowe is resolved to do the same by his; for, it seems, he has now given over all thoughts of changing his condition, *having lately been disappointed in a view he had of that sort with Mrs. Howe*. These two brothers generally *act in concert*; and Mr. James Harlowe dreads (and let me tell you, that he has reason for it, on *my* Mr. Harlowe's account) that his younger sister will be, at last, more benefited than he wishes for, by the alteration intended. He has already been endeavouring to sound his uncle Harlowe on this subject, and wanted to know whether any *new application* had been made to him on his sister's part. Mr. Harlowe avoided a direct answer, and expressed his wishes for a general reconciliation, and his hopes that his niece was married. This offended the furious young man, and he reminded his uncle of engagements they had all entered into at his sister's going away, *not to be reconciled but by general consent*.

Mr. John Harlowe complains to me often, of the uncontrollableness of his nephew; and says, that now, that the young man has not any body of whose superior sense he stands in awe, he observes not decency in his behaviour to any of them. And this makes *my* Mr. Harlowe still more desirous than ever of bringing his younger niece into

favour again. I will not say all I might of this young man's extraordinary rapaciousness:—but one would think, *that these grasping men expect to live for ever!*

'I took the liberty but within these two hours, to propose to set on foot (and offered my cover to) a correspondence between *my friend, and his daughter-niece*, as he still sometimes fondly calls her. She was mistress of so much prudence, I said, that I was sure she could better direct every thing to its desirable end, than any body else could. But he said, he did not think himself entirely at liberty to take such a step *at present;* and that it was best that he should have it in his power to say, occasionally, that he had not any correspondence *with* her, or letter *from* her.

'You will see, sir, from all this, the necessity of keeping our treaty an *absolute secret;* and if the lady has mentioned it to her *worthy friend* Miss Howe, I hope it is in confidence.'

[And now, sir, a few lines in answer to yours of Monday last.]

[Mr. Harlowe was very well pleased with your readiness to come into his proposal. But as to what you *both* desire, that he will be present at the ceremony, he said, that his nephew watched all his steps so narrowly, that he thought it impracticable (if he were inclinable) to oblige you: but that he consented with all his heart, that I should be the person whom he had stipulated should be privately present at the ceremony on his part.]

[However, I think, I have an *expedient* for this, if your lady *continues* to be very desirous of her uncle's presence (except he should be more determined than his answer to me seemed to import); of which I shall acquaint you, and perhaps what

he says to it, *when I have the pleasure to see you in town.* But, indeed, I think you have *no time to lose.* Mr. Harlowe is impatient to hear, that you are actually one; and I hope I may carry him down word, when I leave you next, that I *saw* the ceremony performed.]

[If any obstacle arises from the lady, (from *you* it cannot) I shall be tempted *to think a little hardly of her punctilio.*]

Mr. Harlowe hopes, sir, that you will rather take pains to *avoid*, than to *meet*, this violent young man. He has the better opinion of you, let me tell you, sir, from the account I gave him of your moderation and politeness; neither of which are qualities with his nephew. *But we have all of us something to amend.*

You cannot imagine how dearly my friend still loves this excellent niece of his—I will give you an instance of it, which affected me a good deal —'If once more, said he, (the last time but one we were together) I can but see this sweet child gracing the upper end of my table, as mistress of my house, in my *allotted month;* all the rest of my family present but as her guests; for so I formerly would have it, and had her *mother's consent for it.*—' There he stopt; for he was forced to turn his reverend face from me. Tears ran down his cheeks. Fain would he have hid them: but he could not. 'Yet—yet, said he,—how—how—' Poor gentleman, he perfectly sobbed, 'how shall I be able to bear the first meeting!'

I bless God I am *no hard-hearted man*, Mr. Lovelace: my eyes showed to my worthy friend, that he had no reason to be ashamed of his humanity before me.

I will put an end to this long epistle. Be

pleased to make my compliments acceptable to the most excellent of women; as well as believe me to be,

Dear sir,

Your faithful friend, and humble servant,

ANTONY TOMLINSON.

During the conversation between me and the women, I had planted myself at the further end of the apartment we were in, over-against the door, which was open; and opposite to the lady's chamber-door, which was shut. I spoke so low that it was impossible for her, at that distance, to hear what we said; and in this situation I could see if her door opened.

I told the women, that what I had mentioned to my spouse of Lady Betty's coming to town with her niece Montague, and of their intention to visit my beloved, whom they had never seen, nor she them, was real; and that I expected news of their arrival every hour. I then showed them copies of the other two letters, which I had left with *her*; the one from Lady Betty, the other from my cousin Montague.—And here thou mayest read them if thou wilt.

Eternally reproaching, eternally upbraiding me, are my impertinent relations. But they are fond of occasions to find fault with me. Their love, their love, Jack, and their dependence on my known good humour, are their inducements.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

DEAR NEPHEW, Wedn. morn. June 7.

I UNDERSTAND, that at length all our wishes are answered in your happy marriage. But I think, we might as well have heard of it directly from

you, as from the round-about way by which we have been made acquainted with it. Methinks, sir, the *power* and the will we have to oblige you, should not expose us the more to your slights and negligence. My brother had set his heart upon giving to you the wife we have all so long wished you to have. But if you were actually married at the time you made him that request (*supposing, perhaps, that his gout would not let him attend you*) it is but like *you**.—If your lady had *her* reasons to wish it to be private while the differences between her family and self continue, you might nevertheless have communicated it to us with *that* restriction; and we should have forborn the public manifestations of our joy, upon an event we have so long desired.

The distant way we have come to know it is by my steward; who is acquainted with a friend of Captain Tomlinson, to whom that gentleman revealed it: and he, it seems, had it from yourself and lady, with such circumstances as leave it not to be doubted.

I am, indeed, very much disobliged with you: so is Lady Sarah. But I shall have a very speedy opportunity to tell you so in person; being obliged to go to town on my old chancery-affair. My cousin Leeson, who is, it seems, removed to Albemarle-street, has notice of it. I shall be at *her* house, where I bespeak your attendance on Sunday night. I have written to my niece Charlotte for either her, or her sister, to meet me at Reading, and accompany me to town. I shall stay but a few days; my business being matter of form only. On my return I shall call upon Lord M. at M. Hall, to see in what way his last fit has left him.

* I gave Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins room to think this reproach *just*, Jack.

Meantime, having told you my mind on your negligence, I cannot help congratulating you both on the occasion—your fair lady particularly, upon her entrance into a family which is prepared to admire and love her.

My principal intention of writing to you (dispensing with the necessary punctilio) is, that you may acquaint my dear new niece, that I will not be denied the honour of her company down with me into Oxfordshire. I understand, that your proposed house and equipages cannot be soon ready. She shall be with me till they are. I insist upon it. This shall make all up. My house shall be her own. My servants and equipages her's.

Lady Sarah, who has not been out of her own house for months, will oblige me with her company for a week, in honour of a niece so dearly beloved, as I am sure she will be of us all.

Being but in lodgings in town, neither you nor your lady can require much preparation.

Some time on Monday I hope to attend the dear young lady, to make her my compliments; and to receive *her* apology for *your* negligence: which, and her going down with me, as I said before, shall be full satisfaction. Meantime, God bless *her* for her courage [tell her I say so]; and bless you *both* in each other: and that will be happiness to us all —particularly, to

Your truly affectionate aunt,

ELIZ. LAWRANCE.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

DEAR COUSIN,

At last, as we understand, there is some hope of you. Now does my good lord run over his bead-

roll of proverbs; of *black oxen, wild oats, long lanes*, and so forth.

Now, cousin, say I, is your time come; and you will be no longer, I hope, an infidel either to the power or excellence of the sex you have pretended hitherto so much to undervalue; nor a ridiculer or scoffer at an institution which all sober people reverence, and all rakes, sooner or later, are brought to reverence, or to wish they had.

I want to see how you become your silken fetters: whether the charming yoke sits light on your shoulders. If with such a sweet yoke-fellow it does not, my lord, and my sister, as well as I, think that you will deserve a closer tie about your neck.

His lordship is very much displeased, that you have not written him word of the day, the hour, the manner, and every thing. But I ask him, how he can *already* expect any mark of deference or politeness from you? He must stay, I tell him; till that sign of reformation among others, appear from the influence and example of your lady: but that, if ever you will be good for any thing it will be quickly seen. And, O cousin, what a vast, vast journey have you to take from the dreary land of libertinism, through the bright province of reformation, into the serene kingdom of happiness?—You have need to lose no time. You have many a weary step to tread, before you can overtake those travellers, who set out for it from a less remote quarter. But you have a charming pole-star to guide you; that's your advantage. I wish you joy of it: and as I have never yet expected any highly complaisant thing from you, *I make no scruple to begin first:* but it is purely, I must tell you, in respect to my new cousin; whose acce-

sion into our family we most heartily congratulate and rejoice in.

I have a letter from Lady Betty. She commands either my attendance or my sister's at Reading, to proceed with her to town, to our cousin Leeson's. She puts Lord M. in hopes, that she shall certainly bring down with her our lovely new relation; for she says, she will not be denied. His lordship is the willinger to let *me* be the person, as I am in a manner wild to see her; my sister having two years ago had that honour at Sir Robert Biddulph's. So get ready to accompany us in our return; except your lady has objections strong enough to satisfy us all. Lady Sarah longs to see her; and says, this accession to the family will supply to it the loss of her beloved daughter.

I shall soon, I hope, pay my compliments to the dear lady in person: so I have nothing to add, but that I am

Your old mad playfellow and cousin,
CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE.

The women having read the copies of these two letters, I thought that I might then threaten and swagger—'But very little heart have I, said I, to encourage such a visit from Lady Betty and Miss Montague to my wife. For after all, I am tired out with her strange ways. She is not what she was, and (as I told her in your hearing, ladies) I will leave this plaguy island, though the place of my birth, and though the stake I have in it is very considerable: and go and reside in France or Italy, and never think of myself as a married man, *nor live like one.*'

O dear! said one.

That would be a sad thing! said the other.

Nay, madam [turning to Mrs. Moore]—Indeed,

madam [to Miss Rawlins]—I am quite desperate. I can no longer bear such usage. I have had the good fortune to be favoured by the smiles of very fine ladies, though I say it [and I looked modest] both abroad and at home—[*Thou knowest this to be true, Jack*]. With regard to my wife here, I had but one hope left (for as to the reconciliation with her friends, I scorn them all too much to value that, but for her sake); and that was, that if it pleased God to bless us with children, she might entirely recover her usual serenity; and we might then be happy. But the reconciliation her heart was so much set upon, is now, as I hinted before, entirely hopeless—made so, by this rash step of her's, and by the rasher temper she is in! since (as you will believe) her brother and sister, when they come to know it, will make a fine handle of it against us both;—affecting as they do at present to disbelieve our marriage—and the dear creature herself too ready to countenance such a disbelief—as nothing *more than the ceremony—as nothing more—hem!—as nothing more than the ceremony*—

Here, as thou wilt perceive, I was bashful; for Miss Rawlins, by her preparatory primness, put me in mind, that it was *proper to be so*—

I turned half round; then facing the fan-player and the matron—You *yourselves*, ladies, knew not what to believe till *now*, that I have told you our story: and I do assure you, that I shall not give myself the same trouble to convince people I hate; people from whom I neither expect nor desire any favour; and who are determined *not* to be convinced. And what, pray, must be the issue, when her uncle's friend comes, although he seems to be a *truly worthy man?* Is it not natural for him to say, 'to what purpose, Mr. Love-

lace, should I endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between Mrs. Lovelace and her friends, by means of her elder uncle, when a good understanding is wanting between yourselves?'—A fair inference, Mrs. Moore!—A fair inference, Miss Rawlins—and here is the unhappiness—till she is reconciled to them, this cursed oath, in her notion, is binding.

The women seemed moved; for I spoke with great earnestness, though low—and besides, they love to have their sex, and its favours appear of importance to us. They shook their deep heads at each other, and looked sorrowful: and this moved my tender heart too.

'Tis an unheard-of case, ladies—had she not preferred me to all mankind—there I stopped—and that, resumed I, feeling for my handkerchief, is what staggered Captain Tomlinson when he heard of her flight; who, the last time he saw us together, saw the most affectionate couple on earth!—The most affectionate couple on earth!—in the accent grievous, repeated I.

Out then I pulled my handkerchief, and putting it to my eyes, arose, and walked to the window—It makes me weaker than a woman, did I not love her, as never man loved *his wife* [I have no doubt but I do, Jack].

There again I stopt; and resuming—Charming creature, as you see she is, I wish I had never beheld her face!—Excuse me, ladies; traversing the room, and having rubbed my eyes till I supposed them red, I turned to the women; and, pulling out my letter-case, I will show you one letter—here it is—read it, Miss Rawlins, if you please—it will confirm to you, how much all my family are prepared to admire her. I am freely treated in it;—

so I am in the two others: but after what I have told you, nothing need be a secret to you two.

She took it, with an air of eager curiosity, and looked at the seal, ostentatiously coroneted; and at the superscription, reading out, *To Robert Lovelace, Esq.*—Ay, madam, that's my name, [giving myself an air, though I had told it to them before] I am not ashamed of it. My wife's maiden name—*unmarried* name, I should rather say—fool that I am!—and I rubbed my cheek for vexation [fool enough in conscience, Jack!] was Harlowe—Clarissa Harlowe—you heard me call her *my Clarissa*—

I did—but thought it to be a feigned or love-name, said Miss Rawlins.

I wonder what is Miss Rawlins's love-name, Jack. Most of the fair romancers have in their early womanhood chosen love-names. No parson ever gave more *real* names, than I have given *fictitious* ones. And to very good purpose: many a sweet dear has answered me a letter for the sake of owning a name which her godmother never gave her.

No—it was her real name, I said.

I bid her read out the whole letter. If the spelling be not exact, Miss Rawlins, said I, you will excuse it; the writer is a lord. But, perhaps, I may not show it to Mrs. Lovelace; for if those I have left with her have no effect upon her, neither will this: and I shall not care to expose my Lord M. to her scorn. Indeed I begin to be quite careless of consequences.

Miss Rawlins, who could not but be pleased with this mark of my confidence, looked as if she pitied me.

And here thou mayest read the Letter, No. III.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

COUSIN LOVELACE, M. Hall, Wedn. June 7.

I THINK you might have found time to let us know of your nuptials being actually solemnized. I might have expected this piece of civility from you. But perhaps the ceremony was performed at the very time that you asked me to be your lady's father—but I shall be angry if I proceed in my guesses—and *little said is soon amended.*

But I can tell you, that Lady Betty Lawrance, whatever Lady Sarah does, will not so soon forgive you, as I have done. *Women resent slights longer than men.* You that know so much of the sex (I speak it not however to your praise) might have known *that.* But never was you before acquainted with a lady of such an amiable character. I hope there will be but one soul between you. I have before now said, that I will disinherit you, and settle all I can upon her, if you prove not a good husband to her.

May this marriage be crowned with a great many fine boys (I desire no girls) to build up again a family so ancient! The first boy shall take my surname by Act of Parliament. That is in my will.

Lady Betty and niece Charlotte will be in town about business *before you know where you are.* They long to pay their compliments to your fair bride. I suppose you will hardly be at the Lawn when they get to town; because Greme informs me, you have sent no orders there for your lady's accommodation.

Pritchard has all things in readiness for signing. I will take no advantage of your slights. Indeed I am too much used to them—more praise to my patience, than to your complaisance, however.

One reason for Lady Betty's going up, as I may tell you *under the rose*, is, to buy some suitable presents for Lady Sarah and all of us to make on this agreeable occasion.

We would have blazed it away, could we have had timely notice, and thought it would have been agreeable to all round. The *like occasion don't happen every day*.

My most affectionate compliments and congratulations to my new niece, conclude me, for the present, in violent pain, that with all your heroicalness would make you mad,

Your truly affectionate uncle,

M.

This letter clenched the nail. Not but that, Miss Rawlins said, she saw I had been a wild gentleman; and, truly, she thought so, the moment she beheld me.

They began to intercede for my spouse (so nicely had I turned the tables); and that I would not go abroad, and disappoint a reconciliation so much wished for on one side, and such desirable prospects on the other in my own family.

Who knows, thought I to myself, but more may come of this plot, than I had even promised myself? What a happy man shall I be, if these women can be brought to join to carry my marriage into consummation!

Ladies, you are exceeding good to us both. I should have some hopes, if my unhappily nice wife could be brought to dispense with the unnatural oath she has laid me under. You see what my case is. Do you think I may not insist upon her absolving me from this abominable oath? Will you be so good, as to give your advice, that one apartment may serve for a man and his wife, at the hour of

retirement?—Modestly put, Belford!—And let me here observe, that few rakes would find a language so decent as to engage modest women to talk with him in, upon such subjects.

They both simpered, and looked upon one another.

These subjects always make women simper, at least. No *need* but of the most delicate hints to *them*. A man who is gross in a woman's company, ought to be knocked down with a club: for, like so many musical instruments, touch but a single wire, and the dear souls are sensible all over.

To be sure, Miss Rawlins learnedly said, playing with her fan, a casuist would give it, that the matrimonial vow ought to supersede any other obligation.

Mrs. Moore, for her part, was of opinion, that, if the lady owned herself to be a wife, she ought to behave *like* one.

Whatever be my luck, thought I, with this *all-eyed* fair one, any other woman in the world, from fifteen to five-and-twenty, would be mine upon my own terms before the morning.

And now, that I may be at hand to take all advantages, I will endeavour, said I to myself, to make sure of good quarters.

I am your lodger, Mrs. Moore, in virtue of the earnest I have given you for these apartments, and for any one you can spare above for my servants. Indeed for *all* you have to spare—for who knows what my wife's brother may attempt? I will pay you your own demand; and that for a month or two certain (board included) as I shall or shall not be your hindrance. Take *that* as a pledge; or in part of payment—offering her a thirty pound bank note.

She declined taking it; desiring she might con-

sult the lady first; adding, that she doubted not my honour; and that she would not let her apartments to any other person, whom she knew not something of, while I and the lady were here.

The lady! The lady! from both the womens' mouths continually (which still implied, a doubt in their hearts): and not Mrs. Lovelace, and *your lady, sir.*

I never met with such women, thought I:—so thoroughly convinced but this moment, yet already doubting—I am afraid I have a couple of sceptics to deal with.

I knew no reason, I said, for my wife to object to my lodging in the same house with her here, any more than in town, at Mrs. Sinclair's. But were she to make such objection, I would not quit possession, since it was not unlikely that the same freakish disorder which brought her to Hampstead, might carry her absolutely out of my knowledge.

They both seemed embarrassed; and looked upon one another; yet with such an air, as if they thought there was reason in what I said. And I declared myself her boarder, as well as lodger; and dinner-time approaching, was not denied to be the former.

LETTER IX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

I THOUGHT it was now high time to turn my whole mind to my beloved; who had had full leisure to weigh the contents of the letters I had left with her.

I therefore requested Mrs. Moore to step in, and desire to know whether she would be pleased to

admit me to attend her in her apartment, on occasion of the letters I had left with her; or whether she would favour me with her company in the dining-room?

Mrs. Moore desired Miss Rawlins to accompany her in to the lady. They tapped at the door, and were both admitted.

I cannot but stop here for one minute, to remark, though against myself, upon that security which innocence gives, that nevertheless had better have in it a greater mixture of the serpent with the dove. For here, heedless of all I could say behind her back, because she was satisfied with her own worthiness, she permitted me to go on with my own story, without interruption, to persons as great strangers to her as to me; and who, as strangers to *both*, might be supposed to lean to the side most injured: and that, as I managed it, was to mine. A dear silly soul, thought I, at the time, to depend upon the goodness of her own heart, when the heart cannot be seen into but by its actions; and she, to appearance, a runaway, an eloper, from a tender, a most indulgent husband!—To neglect to cultivate the opinion of individuals, when the whole world is governed by appearance!

Yet, what can be expected of an angel under twenty?—she has a world of knowledge: knowledge *speculative*, as I may say, but no *experience!* How should she?—Knowledge by theory only, is a vague uncertain light: a will o' the wisp, which as often misleads the doubting mind, as puts it right.

There are many things in the world, could a moralizer say, that would afford inexpressible pleasure to a reflecting mind, were it not for the mixture they come to us with. To be graver still: I have seen parents [perhaps my own did so] who

delighted in those very qualities in their children, while young, the natural consequences of which (too much indulged and encouraged) made them, as they grew up, the plague of their hearts.—To bring this home to my present purpose, I must tell thee, that I adore this charming creature for her vigilant prudence; but yet I would not, methinks, wish her, by virtue of that prudence, which is, however, necessary to carry her above the *devices* of all the rest of the world, to be too wise for *mine*.

My revenge, my *sworn* revenge, is nevertheless (adore her as I will) uppermost in my heart.—Miss Howe says, that my love is an *Herodian* love*: by my soul, that girl's a witch! I am half-sorry to say, *that I find a pleasure in playing the tyrant over what I love*. Call it an ungenerous pleasure, if thou wilt: softer hearts than mine know it. The women to a woman know it, and *show* it too, whenever they are trusted with power. And why should it be thought strange, that I, who love them so dearly, and study them so much, should catch the infection of them?

LETTER X.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

I WILL now give thee the substance of the dialogue that passed between the two women and the lady.

Wonder not, that a perverse wife makes a listening husband. The event, however, as thou wilt find, justified the old observation, *that listeners seldom hear good of themselves*. Conscious of their own demerits, if I may guess by myself, [there's ingenuousness, Jack!] and fearful of censure, they sel-

* See p. 44.

dom find themselves disappointed. There is something of sense, after all, in these proverbs, in these phrases, in this *wisdom of nations*.

Mrs. Moore was to be the messenger; but Miss Rawlins began the dialogue.

Your SPOUSE, madam,—[Devil!—only to fish for a negative or affirmative declaration.]

Cl. My *spouse*, madam—

Miss R. Mr. Lovelace, madam, avers, that you are married to him; and begs admittance, or your company in the dining-room, to talk upon the subject of the letters he left with you.

Cl. He is a poor wicked wretch: let me beg of you, madam, to favour me with your company as often as possible while he is hereabouts, and I remain here.

Miss R. I shall with pleasure attend you, madam. But, methinks, I could wish you would *see* the gentleman, and hear what he has to say on the subject of the letters.

Cl. My case is a hard, a very hard one!—I am quite bewildered!—I know not what to do!—I have not a friend in the world, that can or will help me!—Yet had none *but* friends till I knew *that man!*

Miss R. The gentleman neither looks nor talks like a bad man.—Not a *very* bad man; as men go.

As men go!—Poor Miss Rawlins! thought I—and dost thou know, *how men go?*

Cl. O madam, you know him not!—He can put on the appearance of an angel of light; but has a black, a very black heart!

Poor I!—

Miss R. I could not have thought it, truly!—But men are very deceitful now-a-days.

Now-a-days!—A fool!—Have not her history-books told her, that they were always so?

Mrs. Moore, sighing. I have found it so, I am sure, to my cost!—

Who knows but in her time, poor Goody Moore may have met with a Lovelace, or a Belford, or some such vile fellow?—My little hare-um-scare-um beauty knows not what strange histories every woman living, who has had the least independence of will, could tell her, were such to be as communicative as she is.—But here's the thing;—I have given her cause enough of offence; but not enough to make her hold her tongue.

Cl. As to the letters he has left with me, I know not what to say to *them*:—but am resolved never to have any thing to say to *him*.

Miss R. If, madam, I may be allowed to say so, I think you carry matters very far.

Cl. Has he been making a bad cause a good one with you, madam?—*That* he can do with those who know him not. Indeed I heard him talking, though not what he said, and am indifferent about it. But what account does he give of himself?

I was pleased to hear this. To arrest, to stop her passion, thought I, in the height of its career, is a charming presage.

Then the busy Miss Rawlins fished on, to find out from her either a *confirmation* or *disavowal* of my story. Was Lord M. my uncle? Did I court her at first with the allowance of her friends, her brother excepted? Had I a rencounter with that brother? Was she so persecuted in favour of a very disagreeable man, one Solmes, as to induce her to throw herself into my protection?

None of these were denied. All the objections she *could* have made, were stifled, or kept in, by the consideration (as she mentioned) that she should stay there but a little while; and that her story was too long. But Miss Rawlins would not be thus easily answered.

Miss R. He says, madam, that he could not prevail for marriage, till he had consented, under a solemn oath, to separate beds, while your family remained unreconciled.

Cl. O the wretch! what can be still in his head, to endeavour upon pass these stories upon strangers?

So no direct-denial, thought I—Admirable!—all will do by-and-by!

Miss R. He has owned, that an accidental fire had frightened you very much on Wednesday night—and that—and that—and that—an accidental fire had frightened you—very much frightened you—last Wednesday night!

Then, after a short pause—In short, he owned, that he had taken some innocent liberties, which might have led to a breach of the oath you had imposed upon him: and that this was the cause of your displeasure.

I would have been glad to see how my charmer then looked.—To be sure she was at a loss in her own mind, to justify herself for resenting so highly an offence so trifling.—She hesitated—did not presently speak—when she did, she wished, that she, Miss Rawlins, might never meet with any man who would take such innocent liberties with *her*.

Miss Rawlins pushed further.

Your case, to be sure, madam, is very particular. But if the hope of a reconciliation with your own friends is made more distant by your leaving him, give me leave to say, that 'tis pity—'tis pity [I suppose the maiden then primmed, fanned, and blushed;—'tis pity] the oath cannot be dispensed with; especially as he owns he has not been so strict a liver.—

I could have gone in and kissed the girl.

Cl. You have heard *his* story. Mine, as I told you before, is too long, and too melancholy; my

disorder on seeing the wretch is too great; and my time here is too short, for me to enter upon it. And if he has any end to serve by his own vindication, in which I shall not be a *personal* sufferer, let him make himself appear as white as an angel; with all my heart.

My love for her, and the excellent character I gave her, were then pleaded.

Cl. Specious seducer!—Only tell me, if I cannot get away from him by some back-way?

How my heart then went *pit-a-pat!* to speak in the female dialect.

Cl. Let me look out—[I heard the sash lifted up] whither does that path lead? Is there no possibility of getting to a coach? Surely, he must deal with some fiend, or how could he have found me out?—Cannot I steal to some neighbouring house, where I may be concealed till I can get quite away?—You are good people! I have not been always among such!—O help me, help me, ladies, [with a voice of impatience] or I am ruined!

Then pausing, Is that the way to Hendon? [pointing, I suppose]—is Hendon a private place?—The Hampstead coach, I am told, will carry passengers thither.

Mrs. Moore. I have an honest friend at Mill Hill, [devil fetch her! thought I] where, if such be your determination, madam, and if you think yourself in danger, you may be safe, I believe.

Cl. Any whither, if I can but escape from *this man!*—Whither does that path lead, out yonder?—What is that town on the right-hand called?

Mrs. Moore. Highgate, madam.

Miss R. On the side of the Heath is a little village called North End. A kinswoman of mine lives there. But her house is small. I am not sure she could accommodate such a lady.

Devil take *her* too! thought I—I imagined, that I had made myself a better interest in these women. But the whole sex love plotting—and plotters too, Jack.

Cl. A barn, an outhouse, a garret will be a palace to me, if it will but afford me a refuge from *this man!*

Her senses, thought I, are much livelier than *mine*. What a devil have I done, that she should be so very implacable!—I told thee, Belford, all I did: was there any thing in it so *very* much amiss?—Such prospects of family-reconciliation before her too?—To be sure she is a very *sensible* lady!—

She then espied my new servant walking under the window, and asked, if he were not one of mine?

Will was on the look-out for old Grimes [so is the fellow called whom my beloved has dispatched to Miss Howe]. And being told that the man she saw *was* my servant; I see, said she, that there is no escaping, unless you, madam, [to Miss Rawlins, I suppose] can befriend me, till I can get further. I have no doubt that the fellow is planted about the house to watch my steps. But the wicked wretch his master has no *right to control me*. He shall not hinder me from going whither I please. I will raise the town upon him, if he molests me. Dear ladies, is there no back-door for me to get out at while you hold him in talk?

Miss R. Give me leave to ask you, madam, is there no room to hope for accommodation? Had you not better see him? He certainly loves you dearly: he is a fine gentleman: you may exasperate him, and make matters more unhappy for yourself.

Cl. O Mrs. Moore, O Miss Rawlins! you know not the man!—I wish not to see his face, nor to

exchange another word with him as long as I live.

Mrs. Moore. I don't find, Miss Rawlins, that the gentleman has misrepresented any thing. You see, madam, [to my Clarissa] how respectful he is; not to come in till permitted. He certainly loves you dearly. Pray, madam, let him talk to you, as he wishes to do, on the subject of the letters.

Very kind of Mrs. Moore!—Mrs. Moore, thought I, is a very good woman. I did not curse her *then*!

Miss Rawlins said something; but so low, that I could not hear what it was. Thus it was answered.

Cl. I am greatly distressed! I know not what to do!—But, Mrs. Moore, be so good as to give his letters to him—here they are.—Be pleased to tell him, that I wish him and Lady Betty and Miss Montague a happy meeting. He never can want excuses to them for what has happened, any more than pretences to those he would delude. Tell him, that he has ruined me in the opinion of my own friends. I am for that reason the less solicitous how I appear to his.

Mrs. Moore then came to me; and I, being afraid that something would pass meantime between the other two, which I should not like, took the letters, and entered the room, and found them retired into the closet; my beloved whispering with an air of earnestness to Miss Rawlins, who was all attention.

Her back was towards me; and Miss Rawlins, by pulling her sleeve, giving intimation of my being there. Can I have no retirement uninvaded, sir? said she, with indignation, as if she were interrupted in some talk her heart was in.—What business have you here, or with me?—You have your letters; have you not?

Lovel. I have, my dear; and let me beg of you to consider what you are about. I every moment exp- btain Tomlinson here. Upon my soul, I do. He as promised to keep from your uncle what has happened: but what will he think if he find you hold in this strange humour?

Cl. I will endeavour, sir, to have patience with you for a moment or two, while I ask you a few questions before this lady, and before Mrs. Moore, [who just then came in] both of whom you have prejudiced in your favour by your specious stories: Will you say, sir, that we are married together? Lay your hand upon your heart, and answer me, am I your wedded wife?

I am gone too far, thought I, to give up for such a push as this, home-one as it is.

My dearest soul! how can you put such a question? Is it either for *your* honour or *my own*, that it should be doubted?—Surely, surely, madam, you cannot have attended to the contents of Captain Tomlinson's letter.

She complained often of want of spirits throughout our whole contention, and of weakness of person and mind, from the fits she had been thrown into: but little reason had *she* for this complaint, as I thought, who was able to hold me to it, as she did. I own that I was excessively concerned for her several times.

You and I! *Vilest of men!*

My name is Lovelace, madam—

Therefore it is that I call you the *vilest of men* [was this pardonable Jack!]—*You* and *I* know the truth, the *whole* truth—I want not to clear up my reputation with these gentlewomen:—that is already lost with every one I had most reason to value: but let me have this *new* specimen of what you are capable of—say, wretch, (say, Lovelace, if thou

hadst rather) art thou really and truly my wedded husband?

Say; answer without hesitation.

She trembled with impatient indignation; but had a wildness in her manner, which I took some advantage of, in order to parry this cursed thrust. And a cursed thrust it was; since, had I positively averred it, she never would have believed any thing I said: and had I owned that I was not married, I had destroyed my own plot, as well with the women as with her; and could have no pretence for pursuing her, or hindering her from going whithersoever she pleased. Not that I was ashamed to aver it, had it been consistent with policy. I would not have thee think me such a milksop neither.

Lovel. My dearest love, how wildly you talk! What would you *have* me answer? Is it necessary that I should answer? May I not re-appeal this to your own breast, as well as to Captain Tomlinson's treaty and letter? You know yourself how matters stand between us.—And Captain Tomlinson—

Cl. O wretch! Is this an answer to my question? Say, are we married, or are we not?

Lovel. What *makes a marriage*, we all know. If it be the union of two hearts, [there was a turn, Jack!] to my utmost grief, I must say we are *not*; since now I see you hate me. If it be the completion of marriage, to my confusion and regret, I must own we are *not*. But, my dear, will you be pleased to consider what answer half a dozen people whence you came, could give to your question? And do not now, in *the disorder of your mind*, and the height of passion, bring into question before these gentlewomen a point you have acknowledged before those who know us better.

I would have whispered her about the treaty with

her uncle, and about the contents of the Captain's letter; but, retreating, and with a rejecting hand, Keep thy distance, *man*, cried the dear insolent—To thine own heart I appeal, since thou evadest me thus pitifully!—I own no marriage with thee!—Bear witness, ladies, I do not. And cease to torment me, cease to follow me.—Surely, surely, faulty as I have been, I have not deserved to be *thus* persecuted!—I resume, therefore, my former language: you have no right to pursue me: you *know* you have not: begone, then, and leave me to make the best of my hard lot. O my dear cruel father! said she, in a violent fit of grief [falling upon her knees, and clasping her uplifted hands together] thy heavy curse is completed upon thy devoted daughter! I am *punished*, dreadfully punished, *by the very wretch in whom I had placed my wicked confidence!*

By my soul, Belford, the little witch with her words, but more by her manner, moved *me!* Wonder not then, that her action, her grief, her tears, set the women into the like compassionate manifestations.

Had I not a cursed task of it?

The two women withdrew to the further end of the room, and whispered, A strange case! There is no phrensy here—I just heard said.

The charming creature threw her handkerchief over her head and neck, continuing kneeling, her back towards me, and her face hid upon a chair, and repeatedly sobbed with grief and passion.

I took this opportunity to step to the women, to keep them steady.

You see, ladies [whispering], what an unhappy man I am!—You see what a spirit this dear creature has!—All, all owing to her implacable relations, and to her father's curse.—A curse upon them

all! they have turned the head of the most charming woman in the world.

Ah! sir, sir, replied Miss Rawlins, whatever be the fault of her relations, all is not as it should be between you and her. 'Tis plain she does not think herself married: 'tis plain she does not: and if you have any value for the poor lady, and would not totally deprive her of her senses, you had better withdraw, and leave to time and cooler consideration the event in your favour.

She will compel me to this at last, I fear, Miss Rawlins; I *fear* she will; and then we are both undone: for I cannot live without her; she knows it too well: and she has not a friend who will look upon her: this also she knows. Our marriage, when her uncle's friend comes, will be proved incontestibly. But I am ashamed to think I have given her room to believe it no marriage: that's what she harps upon!

Well, 'tis a strange case, a very strange one, said Miss Rawlins; and was going to say further, when the angry beauty, coming towards the door, said, Mrs. Moore, I beg a word with you. And they both stepped into the dining-room.

I saw her just before put a parcel into her pocket; and followed them out, for fear she should slip away; and stepping to the stairs, that she *might not go by me*, Will, cried I, aloud [though I knew he was not near]—Pray, child, to a maid, who answered, call either of my servants to me.

She then came up to me, with a wrathful countenance: Do you call your servant, sir, to hinder me, between you, from going whither I please?

Don't, my dearest life, misinterpret every thing I do. Can you think me so mean and so unworthy as to employ a servant to constrain you?—I call him to send to the public houses, or inns in this

town, to inquire after Captain Tomlinson, who may have alighted at some one of them, and be now, perhaps, needlessly adjusting his dress; and I would have him come, were he to be without clothes. God forgive me! for I am stabbed to the heart by your cruelty.

Answer was returned, that neither of my servants was in the way.

Not in the way! said I.—Whither can the dogs be gone?

O sir! with a scornful air; not far, I'll warrant. One of them was under the window just now; according to order, I suppose, to watch my steps—but I will do what I please, and go whither I please; and that to your face.

God forbid, that I should hinder you in any thing that you may do with safety to yourself!

Now I verily believe, that her design was, to slip out, in pursuance of the closet-whispering between her and Miss Rawlins; perhaps to Miss Rawlins's house.

She then stepped back to Mrs. Moore, and gave her something, which proved to be a diamond ring, and desired her [not whisperingly, but with an air of defiance to me] that that might be a pledge for her, till she defrayed her demands; which she should soon find means to do; having no more money about her, than she might have occasion for before she came to an acquaintance's.

Mrs. Moore would have declined taking it; but she would not be denied; and then, wiping her eyes, she put on her gloves—Nobody has a right to stop me! said she.—I *will* go!—Whom should I be afraid of?—Her very question, charming creature! testifying her fear.

I beg pardon, madam, [turning to Mrs. Moore, and courtesying] for the trouble I have given you.

—I beg pardon, madam, to Miss Rawlins [courtesying likewise to her]—You may both hear of me in a happier hour, if such a one fall to my lot—and God bless you both!—struggling with her tears till she sobbed—and away was tripping

I stepped to the door: I put it to; and setting my back against it, took her struggling hand—My dearest life! my angel! said I, why will you thus distress me?—Is this the forgiveness which you so solemnly promised?—

Unhand me, sir!—You have no business with me! You have no right over me! You *know* you have not.

But whither, whither, my dearest love, would you go!—Think you not that I will follow you, were it to the world's end?—Whither would you go?

Well do you ask me, whither I would go, who have been the occasion that I have not a friend left!—But God, who knows my innocence, and my upright intentions, will not wholly abandon me when I am out of your power—but while in it, I cannot expect a gleam of the Divine grace or favour to reach me.

How severe is this!—How shockingly severe!—Out of *your* presence, my angry fair one, I can neither hope for the one nor the other. As my cousin Montague, in the letter you have read, observes, you are my pole-star, and my guide; and if ever I am to be happy, either here or hereafter, it must be in and by you.

She would then have opened the door. But I respectfully opposing her, Begone, man! begone, Mr. Lovelace! said she: stop not my way. If you would not that I should attempt the window, give me passage by the door; for, once more, you have *no right to detain me.*

Your resentments, my dearest life, I will own to be well grounded. I will acknowledge, that I have been all in fault. On my knee [and down I dropped] I ask your pardon. And can you refuse to ratify your own *promise?*—Look forward to the happy prospect before us. See you not my Lord M. and Lady Sarah longing to bless *you*, for blessing me, and their whole family? Can you take no pleasure in the promised visit of Lady Betty and my cousin Montague? And in the protection *they* offer you, if you are dissatisfied with *mine?* Have you no wish to see your uncle's friend? Stay only till Captain Tomlinson comes. Receive from him the news of your uncle's compliance with the wishes of both.

She seemed altogether distressed; was ready to sink; and forced to lean against the wainscot, as I kneeled at her feet. A stream of tears at last burst from her less indignant eyes—Good heaven! said she, lifting up her lovely face, and clasped hands, what is at last to be my destiny!—Deliver me from this dangerous man: and direct me! I know not what I do; what I can do; nor what I ought to do!

The women, as I had owned our marriage to be but half completed, heard nothing in this whole scene to contradict (not flagrantly to contradict) what I had asserted: they believed they saw in her returning temper, and staggered resolution, a love for me, which her indignation had before suppressed; and they joined to persuade her to tarry till the Captain came, and to hear his proposals; representing the dangers to which she would be exposed; the fatigues she might endure; a lady of her appearance, unguarded, unprotected. On the other hand, they dwelt upon my declared contrition, and on my promises; for the performance of

which they offered to be bound. So much had my kneeling humility affected them.

Women, Jack, tacitly acknowledge the inferiority of their sex, in the pride they take to behold a kneeling lover at their feet.

She turned from me, and threw herself into a chair.

I arose, and approached her with reverence. My dearest creature, said I—and was proceeding—but, with a face glowing with conscious dignity, she interrupted me—Ungenerous, ungrateful Lovelace!—You know not the value of the heart you have insulted! nor can you conceive how much my soul despises your meanness. But meanness must ever be the portion of the man, who can act vilely!—

The women believing we were likely to be on better terms, retired. The dear perverse opposed their going; but they saw I was desirous of their absence. And when they had withdrawn, I once more threw myself at her feet, and acknowledged my offences; implored her forgiveness for this one time, and promised the most exact circumspection for the future.

It was impossible for her, she said, to keep her *memory* and *forgive* me. What hadst thou *seen* in the conduct of Clarissa Harlowe, that should encourage such an insult upon her, as thou didst dare to make? How meanly must thou think of *her*, that *thou* couldst presume to be so guilty, and expect *her* to be so weak as to forgive thee?

I besought her to let me read over to her Captain Tomlinson's letter. I was sure it was impossible she could have given it the requisite attention.

I *have* given it the requisite attention, said she; and the other letters too. So that what I say, is upon deliberation. And what have I to fear from my

brother and sister?—They can but *complete* the ruin of my fortunes with my father and uncles. Let them and welcome. You, sir, I thank you, have lowered my fortunes: but I bless God, that my mind is not sunk with my fortunes. It is, on the contrary, raised above fortune, and above you; and for half a word, they shall have the estate they have envied me for, and an acquittal from me of all expectations from my family that may make them uneasy.

I lifted up my hands and eyes in silent admiration of her.

My brother, sir, may think me ruined. To the praise of *your* character he may think it impossible to be with *you*, and be innocent. You have but too well justified their harshest censures by every part of your conduct. But now, that I have escaped from you, and that I am out of the reach of your mysterious devices, I will wrap myself up in mine own innocence, [and then the passionate beauty folded her arms about herself] and leave to time, and to my future circumspection, the re-establishment of my character.—Leave me then, sir—pursue me not!—

Good heaven! interrupting her—And all this, for what?—Had I *not* yielded to your intreaties (forgive me, madam) you could not have carried further your resentments—

Wretch!—Was it not crime enough to give *occasion* for those *entreaties?* Wouldst thou make a merit to me, that thou didst not utterly ruin *her* whom thou oughtest to have protected?—Begone, man! turning from me, her face crimsoned over with passion—See me no more!—I cannot bear thee in my sight—

Dearest, dearest creature!

If I forgive thee, Lovelace—and there she stop-

ped. To endeavour, proceeded she, to endeavour, by *premeditation*, by *low contrivance*, by *cries of fire*—to terrify a poor creature who had consented to take a wretched chance with thee for life!

For heaven's sake—offering to take her repulsing hand, as she was flying from me towards the closet—

What hast thou to do, to plead the sake of heaven in thy favour, O darkest of human minds!

Then turning *from me*, wiping her eyes, and again turning *towards me*, but her sweet face half aside, What difficulties hast thou involved me in!—*Thou that hadst a plain path before thee*, after thou hadst betrayed me into thy power—at once my mind takes in the whole of thy crooked behaviour; and if thou thinkest of Clarissa Harlowe as her proud heart tells her thou oughtest to think of her, thou wilt seek thy fortunes elsewhere. How often hast thou provoked me to tell thee, that my soul is above thee?

For heaven's sake, madam, for a soul's sake, which it is in your power to save from perdition, forgive me the past offence. I am the greatest villain on earth, if it was a premeditated one. Yet I presume not to excuse myself. On your mercy I throw myself. I will not offer at any plea, but that of penitence. See but Captain Tomlinson. See but Lady Betty and my cousin; let *them* plead for me; let *them* be guarantees for my honour.

If Captain Tomlinson come while I stay here, I may see *him*. But as for *you*, sir—

Dearest creature! let me beg of you not to aggravate my offence to the Captain, when he comes. Let me beg of you—

What askest thou?—Is it not that I shall be of party against myself!—That I shall palliate—

Do not charge me, madam, interrupted I, with

villanous premeditation!—Do not give such a construction to my offence, as may weaken your uncle's opinion—as may strengthen your brother's—

She flung from me to the further end of the room [*she could go no further*]—and just then Mrs. Moore came up, and told her, that dinner was ready; and that she had prevailed upon Miss Rawlins to give her her company.

You must excuse me, Mrs. Moore, said she. Miss Rawlins I hope also will—but I cannot eat—I cannot go down. As for *you*, sir, I suppose you will think it right to depart hence; at least till the gentleman comes whom you expect.

I respectfully withdrew into the next room, that Mrs. Moore might acquaint her [I durst not myself] that I was her lodger and boarder, as [whisperingly] I desired she would: and meeting Miss Rawlins in the passage, Dearest Miss Rawlins, said I, stand my friend: join with Mrs. Moore to pacify Mrs. Lovelace, if she has any new flights upon my having taken lodgings, and intending to board here. I hope she will have more generosity than to think of hindering a gentlewoman from letting her lodgings.

I suppose Mrs. Moore (whom I left with my fair one) had apprised her of this before Miss Rawlins went in; for I heard her say, while I withheld Miss Rawlins—'No, indeed; he is much mistaken—surely he does not think I will.'

They both expostulated with her, as I could gather from bits and scraps of what they said; for they spoke so low, that I could not hear any distinct sentence, but from the fair perverse, whose anger made her louder. And to this purpose I heard her deliver herself in answer to different parts of their talk to her:—'Good Mrs. Moore, dear Miss Raw-

lins, press me no further:—I cannot sit down at table with him!'

They said something, as I suppose in my behalf—'O the insinuating wretch!—What defence have I against a man, who, go where I will, can turn every one, even of the virtuous of my sex, in his favour?'

After something else said, which I heard not distinctly—'This is execrable cunning!—Were you to know his wicked heart, he is not without hope of engaging you two good persons to second him in the vilest of his machinations.'

How came she (thought I at the instant) by all this penetration? My devil surely does not play me booty. If I thought he did, I would marry, and live honest, to be even with him.

I suppose then, they urged the plea which I hinted to Miss Rawlins at going in, that she would not be Mrs. Moore's hindrance; for thus she expressed herself—'He will no doubt pay you your own price. You need not question his liberality: but one house cannot hold us. Why, if it would, did I fly from him, to seek refuge among strangers!'

Then, in answer to somewhat else they pleaded—'Tis a mistake, madam; I am *not* reconciled to him, I will believe nothing he says. Has he not given you a flagrant specimen of what a man he is, and of what he is capable, by the disguises you saw him in? My story is too long, and my stay here will be but short; or I could convince you, that my resentments against him are but too well founded.'

I suppose then, that they pleaded for *her* leave, for *my* dining with them: for she said, 'I have nothing to say to that—it is your own house, Mrs. Moore—it is your own table—you may admit whom you

please to it—only leave me at my liberty to choose my company.'

Then in answer, as I suppose, to their offer of sending her up a plate—'A bit of bread, if you please, and a glass of water: that's all I can swallow at present. I am really very much discomposed. Saw you not how bad I was?—Indignation only could have supported my spirits!—

'I have no objections to his dining with you, madam;' added she, in reply, I suppose to a further question of the same nature—'But I will not stay a night in the house where he lodges.'

I presume Miss Rawlins had told her, that she would not stay dinner—for she said, 'Let me not deprive Mrs. Moore of your company, Miss Rawlins. You will not be displeased with his talk. He can have no design upon you.'

Then I suppose they pleaded what I might say behind her back, to make my own story good:—'I care not what he says, or what he thinks of me. Repentance and amendment are all the harm I wish him, whatever becomes of me!'

By her accent, she wept when she spoke these last words.

They came out both of them wiping their eyes; and would have persuaded me to relinquish the lodgings, and to depart till her uncle's friend came. But I knew better. I did not care to trust the devil, well as she and Miss Howe suppose me to be acquainted with him, for finding her out again, if once more she escaped me.

What I am most afraid of, is that she will throw herself among her own relations; and if she does, I am confident they will not be able to withstand her affecting eloquence. But yet, as thou'lt see, the Captain's letter to me is admirably calculated to obviate my apprehensions on this score; parti-

cularly in that passage, where it is said, that her uncle thinks not himself at liberty to correspond directly with her, or to receive applications from her—*but through Captain Tomlinson*, as is strongly implied *.

I must own (notwithstanding the revenge I have so solemnly vowed) that I would very fain have made for her a merit with myself *in her returning favour*, and have owed as little as possible to the mediation of Captain Tomlinson. My pride was concerned in this: and this was one of my reasons for not bringing him with me. Another was: that, if I were obliged to have recourse to his assistance, I should be better able (by visiting her without him) to direct him what to say or to do, as I should find out the turn of her humour.

I was, however, glad at my heart, that Mrs. Moore came up so seasonably with notice that dinner was ready. The fair fugitive was all in alt. She had the game in her own hands; and by giving me so good an excuse for withdrawing, I had time to strengthen myself; the Captain had time to come; and the lady to cool. Shakspeare advises well,

> Oppose not rage, whilst rage is in its force;
> But give it way awhile, and let it waste.
> The rising deluge is not stopp'd with dams;
> Those it o'erbears, and drowns the hope of harvest.
> But, wisely manag'd, its divided strength
> Is sluic'd in channels, and securely drain'd:
> And when its force is spent and unsupply'd,
> The residue with mounds may be restrain'd,
> And dry-shod we may pass the naked ford.

I went down with the women to dinner, Mrs. Moore sent her fair boarder up a plate; but she only eat a little bit of bread, and drank a glass of

* See p. 109.

water. I doubted not but she would keep her word, when it was once gone out. Is she not an Harlowe! —She seems to be inuring herself to hardships, which at the worst she can never know; since, though she should ultimately refuse to be obliged to me, or (to express myself more suitable to my own heart) to *oblige me*, every one who sees her must befriend her.

But let me ask thee, Belford, art thou not solicitous for me in relation to the contents of the letter which the angry beauty had written and dispatched away by man and horse; and what may be Miss Howe's answer to it! Art thou not ready to inquire whether it be not likely that Miss Howe, when she knows of her saucy friend's flight, will be concerned about her letter, which she must know could not be at Wilson's till after that flight; and so, probably, would fall into my hands?—

All these things, as thou'lt see in the sequel, are provided for with as much contrivance as human foresight can admit.

I have already told thee that Will is upon the look out for old Grimes—Old Grimes is, it seems, a gossiping sottish rascal; and if Will can but light of him, I'll answer for the consequence; for has not Will been my servant upwards of seven years?

LETTER XI.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

We had at dinner, besides Miss Rawlins, a young widow-niece of Mrs. Moore, who is come to stay a month with her aunt—*Bevis* her name; very forward, very lively, and a great admirer of *me*, I

assure you;—hanging smirkingly upon all I said; and prepared to approve of every word before I spoke: and who, by the time we had half dined, (by the help of what she had collected before) was as much acquainted with our story, as either of the other two.

As it behoved me to prepare them in my favour against whatever might come from Miss Howe, I improved upon the hint I had thrown out above stairs against that mischief-making lady. I represented her to be an arrogant creature, revengeful, artful, enterprising, and one who, had she been a man, would have sworn and cursed, and committed rapes, and played the devil, as far as I knew [*I have no doubt of it, Jack*]: but who, nevertheless, by advantage of a female education, and pride, and insolence, I believed was *personally* virtuous.

Mrs. Bevis allowed, that there was a *vast deal* in education—and in *pride* too, she said. While Miss Rawlins came with a prudish God forbid, that virtue should be owing to education only! However, I declared that Miss Howe was a subtle contriver of mischief; one who had always been *my* enemy: her motives I knew not: but despising the man whom her mother was desirous she should have, one Hickman; although I did not directly aver, that she would rather have had me; yet they all immediately imagined that *that* was the ground of her animosity to me, and of her envy to my beloved: and it was pity, they said, that so fine a young lady did not see through such a pretended friend.

And yet nobody [added I] has more reason than she to know by *experience* the force of a hatred founded in envy; as I hinted to *you* above, Mrs. Moore, and to *you*, Miss Rawlins, in the case of her sister, Arabella.

I had compliments paid to my person and talents on this occasion: which gave me a singular opportunity of displaying my modesty, by disclaiming the merit of them, with a *No, indeed! I should be very vain, ladies, if I thought so.* While thus abasing myself, and exalting Miss Howe, I got their opinion both for modesty and generosity; and had all the graces which I disclaimed thrown in upon me besides.

In short, they even oppressed that modesty, which (to speak modestly of myself) their praises *created*, by disbelieving all I said against myself.

And, truly, I must needs say, they have almost persuaded even me myself, that Miss Howe is actually in love with me. I have often been willing to hope this. And who knows but she may? The Captain and I have agreed, that it shall be so insinuated *occasionally*—and what's thy opinion, Jack! She certainly hates Hickman; and girls who are *disengaged* seldom *hate*, though they may not *love*: and if she had rather have *another*, why not that *other* ME? For am I not a smart fellow and a rake? And do not your sprightly ladies love your smart fellows and your rakes? And where is the wonder, that the man who could engage the affections of Miss Harlowe, should engage those of a lady (with her *alas's**) who would be honoured in being deemed her second?

Nor accuse thou me of SINGULAR vanity in this presumption, Belford. Wert thou to know the secret vanity that lurks in the hearts of those who *disguise* or *cloak it best*, thou wouldst find great reason to acquit, at least, to allow for *me*: since it is generally the *conscious over-fulness of conceit*, that

* See p. 45, where Miss Howe says, *Alas! my dear, I know you loved him!*

makes the hypocrite most upon his guard to conceal it.—Yet with these fellows, proudly humble as they are, it will break out sometimes in spite of their cloaks, though but in self-denying, compliment-begging self-degradation.

But now I have undervalued myself, in apologizing to thee on this occasion, let me use another argument in favour of my observation, that the ladies generally prefer a rake to a sober man; and of my presumption upon it, that Miss Howe is in love with me: it is this: common fame says, that Hickman is a very virtuous, a very innocent fellow—a *male-virgin*, I warrant!—an odd dog I always thought him. Now women, Jack, like not novices. *Two maidenheads meeting together in wedlock, the first child must be a fool*, is their common aphorism. They are pleased with a love of the sex that is founded in the *knowledge of it*. Reason good; novices expect more than they can possibly find in the commerce with them. The man who knows them, yet has ardours for them, to borrow a word from Miss Howe *, though those ardours are generally owing more to the *devil* within him, than to the witch *without* him, is the man who makes them the highest and most grateful compliment. He knows *what to expect*, and *with what to be satisfied*.

Then the merit of a woman, in some cases, must be *ignorance*, whether *real* or *pretended*. The man, in *these* cases, must be an *adept*. Will it then be wondered at, that a woman prefers a libertine to a novice?—While she expects in the one the confidence *she* wants, she considers the other and herself as two parallel lines, which though they run side by side, can never meet.

Yet in this the sex is generally mistaken too; for

* See Vol. IV. p. 83, 120.

these sheepish fellows are sly. I myself was modest once; and this, as I have elsewhere hinted to thee *, has better enabled me to judge of both sexes.

But to proceed with my narrative:

Having thus prepared every one against any letter should come from Miss Howe, and against my beloved's messenger returns, I thought it proper to conclude that subject with a hint, that Mrs. Lovelace could not bear to have any thing said *that reflected upon Miss Howe*; and, with a deep sigh, added, that I had been made very unhappy more than once by the ill will of ladies whom I had never offended.

The widow Bevis believed, that might very easily be.

These hints within doors, joined with others to Will, both without and within, [for I intend he shall fall in love with widow Moore's maid, and have saved one hundred pounds in my service, at least] will be great helps, as things may happen.

LETTER XII.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

We had hardly dined, when my coachman, who kept a look-out for Captain Tomlinson, as Will did for old Grimes, conducted hither that worthy gentleman, attended by one servant, *both* on horseback: he alighted. I went out to meet him at the door.

Thou knowest his solemn appearance, and unblushing freedom; and yet canst not imagine what

* See Vol. III. p. 115.

a dignity the rascal assumed, nor how respectful to him I was.

I led him into the parlour, and presented him to the women, and them to him. I thought it highly imported me (as they might still have some diffidences about our marriage, from my fair one's home-pushed questions on that head) to convince them entirely of the truth of all I had asserted. And how could I do this better, than by dialoguing a little with him before them?

Dear captain, I thought you long; for I have had a terrible conflict with Mrs. Lovelace.

Capt. I am sorry that I am later than my intention—my account with my banker [there's a dog, Jack!] took me up longer time to adjust than I had foreseen [all the time pulling down and stroking his ruffles:] for there was a small difference between us—only twenty pounds, indeed, which I had taken no account of.

The rascal has not seen twenty pounds of his own these ten years.

Then had we between us the characters of the Harlowe family; I railing against them all; the captain taking his dear friend Mr. John Harlowe's part; with a *not so fast!—not so fast, young gentleman!*—and the like free assumptions.

He accounted for *their* animosity by *my* defiances: no good family, having such a charming daughter, would care to be *defied*, instead of *courted*: he *must* speak his mind: never was a double-tongued man.—He appealed to the ladies, if he were not right!

He got them of his side.

The correction I had given the brother, he told me, must have aggravated matters.

How valiant this made me look to the women!—The sex love us mettled fellows at their hearts.

Be that as it would, I should never love any of the family but my spouse; and wanting nothing from them, I would not, but for *her* sake, have gone so far as I *had* gone towards a reconciliation.

This was very good of me; Mrs. Moore said.

Very good indeed; Miss Rawlins.

Good;—it is *more* than good; it is very generous; said the widow.

Capt. Why so it is, I must needs say: for I am sensible, that Mr. Lovelace has been rudely treated by them all—more rudely, than it could have been imagined a man of his *quality* and *spirit* would have put up with. But then, sir, [turning to me] I think you are amply rewarded in such a lady; and that you ought to forgive the father for the daughter's sake.

Mrs. Moore. Indeed so I think.

Miss R. So must every one think, who has seen the lady.

Widow B. A fine lady, to be sure! But she has a violent spirit; and some very odd humours too, by what I have heard. The value of good husbands is not known till they are lost!

Her conscience then drew a sigh from her.

Lovel. Nobody must reflect upon my angel—an angel she is—some little blemishes, indeed, as to her over-hasty spirit, and as to her unforgiving temper. But this she has from the Harlowes; instigated too by *that* Miss Howe.—But her innumerable excellences are all her own.

Capt. Ay, talk of spirit, there's a spirit, now you have named Miss Howe! [and so I led him to confirm all I had said of that vixen] yet she was to be pitied too; looking with meaning at me.

As I have already hinted, I had before agreed

with him to impute secret love *occasionally* to Miss Howe, as the best means to invalidate all that might come from her in my disfavour.

Capt. Mr. Lovelace, but that I know your modesty, or *you* could give a reason.—

Lovel. Looking down, and very modest—I can't think so, captain—but let us call another cause.

Every woman present could look me in the face, so bashful was I.

Capt. Well, but as to our present situation—only it mayn't be proper—looking upon me, and round upon the women.

Lovel. O captain, you may say any thing before this company—only, Andrew, [to my new servant, who attended us at table] do you withdraw: this good girl [looking at the maid-servant] will help us to all we want.

Away went Andrew: he wanted not his cue; and the maid seemed pleased at my honour's preference of her.

Capt. As to our *present* situation, I say, Mr. Lovelace—why, sir, we shall be all *untwisted*, let me tell you, if my friend Mr. John Harlowe were to know what *that* is. He would as much question the truth of your being married, as the rest of the family do.

Here the women perked up their ears; and were all silent attention.

Capt. I asked you before for particulars, Mr. Lovelace; but you *declined giving them*.—Indeed it may not be *proper* for me to be acquainted them.—But I must own, that it is past my comprehension, that a wife can resent any thing a husband can do (that is not a breach of the peace) so far as to think herself justified for *eloping* from him.

Lovel. Captain Tomlinson:—sir—I do assure

you, that I shall be offended—I shall be extremely concerned—if I hear that word *eloping* mentioned again—

Capt. Your nicety, and your love, sir, may make you take offence—but it is my way to call every thing by its proper name, let who will be offended—

Thou canst not imagine, Belford, how brave, and how independent, the rascal looked.

Capt. When, *young gentleman*, you shall think proper to give us particulars, we will find a word for this rash act in so admirable a lady, that shall please you better—you see, sir, that, being the representative of my dear friend Mr. John Harlowe, I speak as freely as I suppose *he* would do, if present. But you blush, sir—I beg your pardon, Mr. Lovelace: it becomes not a modest man to pry into those secrets, which a modest man cannot reveal.

I did not blush, Jack; but denied not the compliment, and looked down: the women seemed delighted with my modesty: but the widow Bevis was more inclined to laugh at me, than praise me for it.

Capt. Whatever be the cause of this step, (I will not again, sir, call it *elopement*, since that harsh word wounds your tenderness) I cannot but express my surprise upon it, when I recollect the affectionate behaviour, to which I was witness between you, when I attended you last. *Over-love*, sir, I think you once mention—but *over-love* [smiling] give me leave to say, sir, is an odd cause of quarrel—few ladies—

Lovel. Dear captain! And I tried to blush.

The women also tried, and being more used to it, succeeded better.—Mrs. Bevis indeed has a red-hot countenance, and always blushes.

Miss R. It signifies nothing to mince the matter: but the lady above as good as denies her marriage. You *know*, sir, that she does; turning to me.

Capt. Denies her marriage; heavens! how then have I imposed upon my dear friend Mr. John Harlowe!

Lovel. Poor dear! — But let not her *veracity* be called in question. She would not be guilty of a wilful untruth for the world.

Then I had all their praises again.

Lovel. Dear creature!—She thinks she has reason for her denial. You know, Mrs. Moore; you know, Miss Rawlins; what I owned to you above as to my vow—

I looked down, and, as once before, turned round my diamond ring.

Mrs. Moore looked awry; and with a leer at Miss Rawlins, as to her partner in the hinted-at reference.

Miss Rawlins looked down as well as I; her eyelids half-closed, as if mumbling a pater-noster, meditating her snuff-box, the distance between her nose and chin lengthened by a close-shut mouth.

She put me in mind of the pious Mrs. Fetherstone at Oxford, whom I pointed out to thee once, among other grotesque figures at St. Mary's church, whither we went to take a view of her two sisters: her eyes shut, not daring to trust her heart with them open: and but just half-rearing her lids, to see who the next comer was; and falling them again, when her curiosity was satisfied.

The widow Bevis gazed, as if on the hunt for a secret.

The captain looked archly, as if half in possession of one.

Mrs. Moore at last broke the bashful silence.

Mrs. Lovelace's behaviour, she said, could be no otherwise so well accounted for, as by the ill offices of *that* Miss Howe; and by the severity of her relations; which might but too probably have affected her head a little at times: adding, that it was very generous in me to give way to the storm when it was up, rather than to exasperate at such a time.

But let me tell you, sirs, said the widow Bevis, that is not what one husband in a thousand would have done.

I desired, that *no part of this conversation might be hinted to Mrs. Lovelace;* and looked still more bashfully. Her great fault, I must own, was over-delicacy.

The captain leered round him; and said, he believed he could guess from the hints I had given him in town of my *(over-love)*, and from what had now passed, that we had not consummated our marriage.

O Jack! how sheepishly then looked, or endeavoured to look, thy friend! how primly Goody Moore! how affectedly Miss Rawlins!—while the honest widow Bevis gazed around her fearless; and though only simpering with her mouth, her eyes laughed outright, and seemed to challenge a laugh from every eye in the company.

He observed, that I was a phœnix of a man, if so; and he could not but hope, that all matters would be happily accommodated in a day or two; and that then he should have the pleasure to aver to her uncle, that he was present, as he might say, on our wedding-day.

The women seemed all to join in the same hope.

Ah, captain! Ah, ladies!—how happy should I be, if I could bring my dear Mrs. Lovelace to be of the same mind!

It would be a very happy conclusion of a very

knotty affair, said widow Bevis; and I see not why we may not make this very night a merry one.

The captain superciliously smiled at me. He saw plainly enough, he said, that we had been at *children's play* hitherto. A man of my character, who could give way to such a caprice as this, must have a prodigious value for his lady. But one thing he would venture to tell me; and that was this—that, however desirous young skittish ladies might be to have their way in this particular, it was a very bad setting out for the man; as it gave his bride a very high proof of the power she had over him: and he would engage, that no woman, *thus* humoured, ever valued the man the more for it; but very much the contrary—and there were *reasons to be given why she should not.*

Well, well, captain, no more of this subject before the ladies. — *One* feels [shruggling my shoulders in a bashful *try-to-blush* manner] that one is so ridiculous—I have been punished enough for my tender folly.

Miss Rawlins had taken her fan, and would needs hide her face behind it—I suppose because her blush was not quite ready.

Mrs. Moore hemmed, and looked down; and by that, gave her's over.

While the jolly widow, laughing out, praised the captain as one of Hudibras's metaphysicians, repeating,

> He knew what's what, and that's as high
> As metaphysic wit can fly.

This made Miss Rawlins blush indeed:—Fie, fie, Mrs. Bevis! cried she, unwilling, I suppose, to be thought absolutely ignorant.

Upon the whole, I began to think, that I had not made a bad exchange of our professing mother, for the unprofessing Mrs. Moore. And indeed the

woman and I, and my beloved too, all mean the same thing: we only differ about the manner of coming at the proposed end.

LETTER XIII.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

It was now high time to acquaint Mrs. Lovelace, that Captain Tomlinson was come. And the rather, as the maid told us, that the lady had asked her, if such a gentleman [describing him] was not in the parlour?

Mrs. Moore went up, and requested, in my name, that she would give us audience.

But she returned, reporting my beloved's desire, that Captain Tomlinson would excuse her for the present. She was very ill. Her spirits were too weak, to enter into conversation with him; and she must lie down.

I was vexed, and at first extremely disconcerted. The captain was vexed too. And my concern, thou mayest believe, was the greater on *his account*.

She had been very much fatigued, I own. Her fits in the morning must have disordered her: and she had carried her resentment so high, that it was the less wonder she should find herself low, when her raised spirits had subsided. *Very* low, I may say; if sinkings are proportioned to risings; for she had been lifted up above the standard of a common mortal.

The captain, however, sent up in his own name, that if he could be admitted to drink one dish of tea with her, he should take it for a favour: and would go to town, and dispatch some necessary

business, in order, if possible, to leave his morning free to attend her.

But she pleaded a violent head-ache; and Mrs. Moore confirmed the plea to be just.

I would have had the captain lodge there that night, as well in compliment to him, as introductory to my intention of entering myself upon my new-taken apartment: but his hours were of too much importance to him to stay the evening.

It was indeed very inconvenient for him, he said, to return in the morning; but he was willing to do all in his power to heal this breach, and that as well for the sakes of me and my lady, as for that of his dear friend Mr. John Harlowe; who must not know how far this misunderstanding had gone. He would therefore only drink one dish of tea with the ladies and me.

And accordingly, after he had done so, and I had had a little private conversation with him, he hurried away.

His fellow had given him, in the interim, a high character to Mrs. Moore's servants: and this reported by the widow Bevis, (who, being no proud woman, is *hail fellow, well met*, as the saying is, with all her aunt's servants) he was a *fine* gentleman, a *discreet* gentleman, a man of *sense* and *breeding*, with them all: and it was pity, that, with such great business upon his hands, he should be obliged to come again.

My life for yours, audibly whispered the widow Bevis, there is *humour* as well as *head ache* in somebody's declining to see this worthy gentleman.—Ah, Lord! how happy might some people be, if they would!

No perfect happiness in this world, said I, very gravely, and with a sigh; for the widow must know that I heard her. If we have not *real* unhappiness,

we can make it, even from the overflowings of our good fortune.

Very true, and, very true, the two widows. A charming observation! Mrs. Bevis. Miss Rawlins smiled *her* assent to it; and I thought she called me in her heart, charming man! For she professes to be a great admirer of moral observations.

I had hardly taken leave of the captain, and sat down again with the women, when Will came; and calling me out, 'Sir, sir,' said he, grinning with a familiarity in his looks as if what he had to say entitled him to take liberties; 'I have got the fellow down!—I have got old Grimes—hah, hah, hah, hah!—He is at the Lower Flask—almost in the condition of *David's sow*, and please your honour—[the dog himself not much better] here is his letter—from—from Miss Howe—ha, ha, ha, ha, laughed the varlet; holding it fast, as if to make conditions with me, and to excite my praises, as well as my impatience.

I could have knocked him down; but he would have his *say* out—'Old Grimes knows not that I have the letter—I must get back to him before he misses it—I only made a pretence to go out for a few minutes—but—but'—and then the dog laughed again—'he *must* stay—old Grimes *must* stay—till I go back to pay the reckoning.'

D—n the prater!—Grinning rascal!—The letter!—The letter!—

He gathered in his *wide mothe*, as he calls it, and gave me the letter; but with a *strut*, rather than a *bow*; and then sidled off like one of widow Sorlings's dunghill cocks, exulting after a great feat performed. And all the time that I was holding up the billet to the light, to try to get at its contents without breaking the seal [for, dispatched in a hurry, it had no cover] there stood he, laughing,

shrugging, playing off his legs; now stroking his shining chin; now turning his hat upon this thumb! then leering in my face, flourishing with his head—O Christ! now-and-then cried the rascal—

What joy has this dog in mischief!—More than I can have in the completion of my most favourite purposes!—These fellows are ever happier than their masters.

I was once thinking to rumple up this billet till I had broken the seal. *Young* families [Miss Howe's is not an ancient one] love ostentatious sealings: and it might have been supposed to have been squeezed in pieces, in old Grimes's breeches pocket. But I was glad to be *saved* the guilt as well as suspicion of having a hand in so dirty a trick; for thus much of the contents (enough for my purpose) I was enabled to scratch out in character, without it; the folds depriving me only of a few connecting words; which I have supplied between hooks.

My Miss Harlowe, thou knowest, had *before* changed her name to *Miss* Lætitia Beaumont. Another *alias* now, Jack, to it; for this billet was directed to her by the name of *Mrs.* Harriet Lucas. I have taught her to be half a rogue, thou seest.

'I CONGRATULATE you, my dear, with all my heart and soul, upon [your escape] from the villain. [I long] for the particulars of all. [My mother] is out; but expecting her return every minute, I dispatched [your] messenger instantly. [I will endeavour to come at] Mrs. Townsend without loss of time; and will write at large in a day or two, if in that time I can see her. [Meantime I] am excessively uneasy for a letter I sent you yesterday by Collins, [who must have left it at] Wilson's after you got away. [It is of very] great import-

ance. [I hope the] villain has it not. I would not for the world [that he should.] Immediately send for it, if by so doing, the place you are at [will not be] discovered. If he has it, let me know it by some way [out of] hand. If not, you need not send.

June 9. Ever, ever your's.

A. H.'

O Jack, what heart's-ease does this *interception* give me!—I sent the rascal back with the letter to old Grimes, and charged him to drink no deeper. He owned, that he was *half seas over*, as he phrased it.

Dog! said I, are you not to court one of Mrs. Moore's maids to-night?—

Cry your mercy, sir!—I will be sober.—I had forgot that—but old Grimes is plaguy tough—I thought I should never have got him down.

Away, villain!—Let old Grimes come; and on horseback too, to the door—

He shall, and please your honour, if I can get him on the saddle, and if he can sit—

And charge him not to have alighted, nor to have seen *any* body—

Enough, sir! familiarly nodding his head, to show he took me. And away went the villain—into the parlour, to the women, I.

In a quarter of an hour came old Grimes on horseback, waving to his saddle-bow, now on this side, now on that; his head, at others, joining to that of his more sober beast.

It looked very well to the women, that I made no effort to speak to old Grimes (though I wished *before them*, that I knew the contents of what he brought); but, on the contrary, desired that they

would instantly let Mrs. Lovelace know that her messenger was returned.

Down she flew; violently as she had the head-ache!

O how I prayed for an opportunity to be revenged of her for the ungrateful trouble she had given to her uncle's friend!

She took the letter from old Grimes with her own hands, and retired to an inner parlour to read it.

She presently came out again to the fellow, who had much ado to sit his horse—Here is your money, friend. I thought you long. But what shall I do to get somebody to go to town immediately for me? I see *you* cannot.

Old Grimes took his money; let fall his hat in d'offing it; had it given him; and rode away; his eyes isinglass, and set in his head, as I saw through the window; and in a manner speechless; all his language hiccoughs. My dog needed not to have gone so deep with this *tough* old Grimes. But the rascal was in his kingdom with him.

The lady applied to Mrs Moore: she mattered not the price. Could a man and horse be engaged for her?—Only to go for a letter left for her, at one Mr. Wilson's in Pall Mall.

A poor neighbour was hired. A horse procured for him. He had his directions.

In vain did I endeavour to engage my beloved, when she was below. Her head-ache, I suppose, returned. She, like the rest of her sex, can be ill or well when she pleases.

I see her drift, thought I: it is to have all her lights from Miss Howe before she resolves; and to take her measures accordingly.

Up she went, expressing great impatience about the letter she had sent for; and desired Mrs.

Moore to let her know if I offered to send any of my servants to town—to get at the letter, I suppose, was her fear: but she might have been quite easy on that head; and yet perhaps would not, had she known, that the worthy Capt. Tomlinson (who will be in town before her messenger) will leave there the important letter: which I hope will help to pacify her, and reconcile her to me.

O Jack! Jack! thinkest thou that I will take all this roguish pains, and be so often called villain, for nothing?

But yet, is it not taking pains to come at the finest creature in the world, not for a *transitory moment* only, but for one of our lives! The struggle only, whether I am to have her in *my own way*, or in *hers?*

But now I know thou wilt be frightened out of thy wits for me—What, Lovelace! wouldst thou let her have a letter that will inevitably blow thee up; and blow up the mother, and all her nymphs! —yet not intend to reform, nor intend to marry?

Patience, puppy! Canst thou not trust thy master?

LETTER XVI.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

I WENT up to my new taken apartment, and fell to writing in character, as usual. I thought I had made good my quarters. But the cruel creature, understanding that I intended to take up my lodgings there, declared with so much violence against it, that I was obliged to submit, and to accept of another lodging, about twelve doors off, which Mrs. Moore recommended. And all the advan-

tage I could obtain was, that Will, unknown to the lady, and for fear of a freak, should lie in the house.

Mrs. Moore, indeed, was unwilling to disoblige *either* of us. But Miss Rawlins was of opinion, that nothing more ought to be allowed me: and yet Mrs. Moore owned, that the refusal was a strange piece of tyranny to a husband, if I *were* a husband.

I had a good mind to make Miss Rawlins smart for it. Come and see Miss Rawlins, Jack—if thou likest her, I'll get her for thee with a *wet finger*, as the saying is!

The widow Bevis indeed stickled hard for me [an innocent or injured man will have friends every where]. She said, that to *bear much* with some wives, was to be obliged to bear more: and I reflected, with a sigh, *that tame spirits must always be imposed upon.* And then, in my heart, I renewed my vows of revenge upon this haughty and perverse beauty.

The second fellow came back from town about nine o'clock, with Miss Howe's letter of Wednesday last, 'Collins, *it seems*, when he left it, had desired, that it might be safely and speedily delivered into Miss Lætitia Beaumont's own hands. But Wilson, understanding, that neither she nor I were in town, [*he could not know of our difference thou must think*] resolved to take care of it till our return, in order to give it into one of our own hands; and now delivered it to her messenger.'

This was told *her*. Wilson, I doubt not, is in her favour upon it.

She took the letter with great eagerness; opened it in a hurry [I am glad she did; yet, I believe, all was right] before Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Bevis [Miss Rawlins was gone home]; and said, she would not for the world that I should have had that

letter, for the sake of her dear friend the writer; who had written to her very uneasily about it.

Her *dear friend!* repeated Mrs. Bevis, when she told me this:—such mischief makers are always deemed *dear friends* till they are found out!

The widow says, that I am the finest gentleman she ever beheld.

I have found a warm kiss now-and-then very kindly taken.

I might be a very wicked fellow, Jack, if I were to do all the mischief in my power. But I am evermore for quitting a too easy prey to *reptile rakes*. What but difficulty (though the lady is an angel) engages me to so much perseverance here? And *here, conquer or die!* is now the determination.

* * *

I HAVE just now parted with this honest widow. She called upon me at my new lodgings. I told her, that I saw I must be further obliged to her in the course of this difficult affair. She must allow me to make her a handsome present when all was happily over. But I desired, that she would take no notice of what should pass between us, *not even to her aunt*; for that she, as I saw, was in the power of Miss Rawlins; and Miss Rawlins being a maiden gentlewoman, knew not the *right* and the *fit* in matrimonial matters, as she, my dear widow, did.

Very true: how *should* she? said Mrs. Bevis, proud of knowing—nothing! But, for her part, she desired no present. It was enough if she could contribute to reconcile man and wife, and disappoint mischief makers. She doubted not that such an envious creature as Miss Howe was glad that Mrs. Lovelace had eloped—jealousy and love *was* Old Nick!

See Belford, how charmingly things work between me and my new acquaintance the widow!—

Who knows, but that she may, after a little further intimacy, (though I am banished the house on nights) contrive a midnight visit for me to my wife, when all is still and fast asleep?

Where can a woman be safe, who has once entered the lists with a contriving and intrepid lover?

But as to this *letter*, methinks thou sayest, of Miss Howe?

I knew thou wouldest be uneasy for me: but did not I tell thee that I had provided for every thing? That I always took care to keep seals entire, and to preserve covers *? Was it not easy then, thinkest thou, to contrive a shorter letter out of a longer; and to copy the very words?

I can tell thee, it was so well ordered, that, not being suspected to have been in my hands, it was not easy to find me out. Had it been my beloved's hand, there would have been no imitating it, for such a length. Her delicate and even mind is seen in the very cut of her letters. Miss Howe's hand is no bad one; but it is not so equal and regular. That little devil's natural impatience hurrying on her fingers, gave, I suppose, from the beginning, her hand-writing, as well as the rest of her, its fits and starts, and those peculiarities, which, like strong muscular lines in a face, neither the pen, nor the pencil, can miss.

Hast thou a mind to see what it was I *permitted* Miss Howe to write to her lovely friend? Why then read it here, as extracted from her's of Wednesday last, with a few additions of my own. The additions underscored.

MY DEAREST FRIEND, Wednesday, June 7.

You will perhaps think, that I have been too long silent. But I had begun two letters at different

* See page 52.

times since my last, and written a great deal each time; and with spirit enough, I assure you; incensed as I was against the abominable wretch you are with, particularly on reading yours of the 21st of the past month.

The FIRST I intended to keep open till I could give you some account of my proceedings with Mrs. Townsend. It was some days before I saw her: and this intervenient space giving me time to re-peruse what I had written, I thought it proper to lay that aside, and to write in a style a little less fervent: for you would have blamed me, I knew, for the freedom of some of my expressions [execrations if you please.] And when I had gone a good way in the SECOND, the change in your prospects, on his communicating to you Miss Montague's letter, and his better behaviour, occasioning a change in your mind, I laid that aside also: and in this uncertainty thought I would wait to see the issue of affairs between you before I wrote again; believing that all would soon be decided one way or other.

* * *

Here I was forced to break off. I am *too little* my own mistress—my mother * is always up and down; and watching as if I were writing to a fellow. What need I [she asks me] lock myself in †, if I am only reading past correspondences? For that is my pretence, when she comes poking in with her face sharpened to an edge, as I may say, by a curiosity that gives her more pain than pleasure—the Lord forgive me; but I believe I shall huff her next time she comes in.

* * *

Do you forgive me too, my dear. My mother

* See p. 31. † P. 34.

ought; because she says I am my father's girl; and because I am sure I am her's.

Upon my life, my dear, I am sometimes of opinion, that this vile man was capable of meaning you dishonour. When I look back upon his past conduct, I cannot help thinking so: what a villain, if so!—But now I hope, and verily believe, that he has laid aside such thoughts. My reasons for both opinions I will give you.

For the first; to wit, that he had it once in his head to take you at advantage if he could, I consider *, *that* pride, revenge, and a delight to tread in unbeaten paths, are principal ingredients in the character of this finished libertine. He hates all your family, yourself excepted—yet is a savage in love. His pride, and the credit which a few plausible qualities sprinkled among his odious ones, have given him, have secured him too good a reception from our eye-judging, our undistinguishing, our self-flattering, our too-confiding sex, to make assiduity and obsequiousness, and a conquest of his unruly passions, any part of his study.

He has some reason for his animosity to all the men, and to one woman, of your family. He has always shown you and his own family too, that he prefers his pride to his interest. He is a declared marriage-hater; a notorious intriguer; full of his inventions, and glorying in them. As his vanity had made him imagine, that no woman could be proof against his love, no wonder that he struggled like a lion held in toils †, against a passion that he thought not returned ‡ hence, perhaps, it is not difficult to believe, that it became possible for such a wretch as this to give way to his old prejudices against marriage; and to that revenge *which* had always been a first passion with him §.

* P. 39. † See p. 41. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

And hence we may account for his delays, his teasing ways; his bringing you to bear with his lodging in the same house; his making you pass to the people of it as his wife; his bringing you into the company of his libertine companions; the attempt of imposing upon you that Miss Partington for a bedfellow, &c.

My reasons for a contrary opinion; to wit, that he is now resolved to do you all the justice in his power to do you; are these: that he sees that all his own family * have warmly engaged themselves in your cause: that the horrid wretch loves you; with such a love, *however*, as Herod loved his Mariamne: that, on inquiry, I find it to be true, that Counsellor Williams (whom Mr. Hickman knows to be a man of eminence in his profession) has actually as good as finished the settlements: that two draughts of them have been made; one avowedly to be sent to *this very* Captain Tomlinson: and I find, that a licence has actually been more than once endeavoured to be obtained, and that difficulties have hitherto been made equally to Lovelace's vexation and disappointment. My mother's proctor, who is very intimate with the proctor applied to by the wretch, has come at this information, in confidence; and hints, that as Mr. Lovelace is a man of high fortunes, these difficulties will probably be got over.

I had once resolved to make strict inquiry about Tomlinson; and still, if you will, your uncle's favourite housekeeper may be sounded at distance.

I know that the matter is so laid †, that Mrs. Hodges is supposed to know nothing of the treaty set on foot by means of Capt. Tomlinson. But your uncle is an old man ‡; and old men imagine themselves to be under obligation to their paramours,

* P. 43. † See p. 86. ‡ P. 87.

if younger than themselves, and seldom keep any thing from their knowledge—yet, methinks, there can be no need; since Tomlinson, as you describe him, is so good a man, and so much of a gentleman; the end to be answered by his being an impostor so much more than necessary, if Lovelace has villany in his head.—And then what he communicated to you of Mr. Hickman's application to your uncle, and of Mrs. Norton's to your mother (some of which particulars I am satisfied his vile agent Joseph Leman could not reveal to his viler employer); his pushing on the marriage-day, in the name of your uncle; which it could not answer any wicked purpose for him to do; and what he writes of your uncle's proposal, to have it thought that you were married from the time that you had lived in one house together; and that to be made to agree with the time of Mr. Hickman's visit to your uncle; the insisting on a trusty person's being present at the ceremony, at that uncle's nomination—these things make me *assured that he now at last means honourably.*

But if any unexpected delays should happen on his side, acquaint me, my dear, with the very street where Mrs. Sinclair lives; and where Mrs. Fretchville's house is situated (which I cannot find that you have ever mentioned in your former letters—which is a little odd); and I will make strict inquiries of them, and of Tomlinson too; and I will (if your heart will let you take my advice) soon procure you a refuge from him with Mrs. Townsend.

But why do I now, when you seem to be in so good a train, puzzle and perplex you with my retrospections? And yet they may be of use to you, if any delay happen on his part.

But that I think cannot well be. What you have therefore now to do, is so to behave to this proud-

spirited wretch, as may banish from his mind all remembrance of past disobligations *, and to receive his addresses, as those of a betrothed lover. You will incur the censure of prudery and affectation, if you keep him at that distance which you have hitherto *kept him at*. His sudden (and as suddenly recovered) illness has given him an opportunity to find out that you love him [alas! my dear, I knew you loved him!] He has seemed to change his nature, and is all love and gentleness. *And no more quarrels now, I beseech you.*

I am very angry with him, nevertheless, for the freedoms which he took with your person †; *and I think some guard is necessary, as he is certainly an encroacher. But indeed all men are so; and you are such a charming creature, and have kept him at such a distance!—But no more of this subject. Only, my dear, be not over-nice, now you are so near the state. You see what difficulties you laid yourself under* when Tomlinson's letter called you again into *the wretch's* company.

If you meet with no impediments, no new causes of doubt ‡, your reputation in the eye of the world is concerned, that you should be his, *and, as your uncle rightly judges, be thought to have been his, before now.* And yet, *let me tell you,* I can *hardly* bear *to think,* that these libertines should be rewarded for their villany with the best of the sex, when the worst of it are too good for them.

I shall send this long letter by Collins §, who changes his day to oblige me. As none of our letters by Wilson's conveyance have miscarried, when you have been in more apparently disagreeable situations than you are in at present, *I have no doubt* that this will go safe.

* See p. 45. † Vol. IV. Letter liv.
‡ See p. 46. § P. 47.

Miss Lardner * (whom you have seen at her cousin Biddulph's) saw you at St. James's church on Sunday was fortnight. She kept you in her eye during the whole time; but could not once obtain the notice of yours, though she courtsied to you twice, she thought to pay her compliments to you when the service was over; for she doubted not but you were married—and for an odd reason—because you came to church by yourself.—Every eye, as usual wherever you are, she said, was upon you: and this seeming to give you hurry, and you being nearer the door than she, you slid out before she could go to you. But she ordered her servant to follow you till you were housed. This servant saw you step into a chair which waited for you; and you ordered the men to carry you to the place where they took you up. She *describes the house* as a very genteel house, and fit to receive people of fashion: *and what makes me mention this is, that perhaps you will have a visit from her; or message, at least.*

So that you have Mr. Doleman's testimony to the credit of the house and people you are with; and he is a man of fortune, and some reputation; formerly a rake indeed; but married to a woman of family; and having had a palsy blow, one would think, a penitent †. You have *also Mr. Mennell's at least passive testimony; Mr.* Tomlinson's; *and now, lastly, Miss Lardner's; so that there will be the less need for inquiry: but you know my busy and inquisitive temper, as well as my affection for you, and my concern for your honour. But all doubt will soon be lost in certainty.*

Nevertheless I must add, that I would have you command me up, if I can be of the least service or

* P. 34, 35. † See p. 33, 34.

pleasure to you*. I value not fame; I value not censure; nor even life itself, I verily think, as I do your honour and your friendship—for is not your honour my honour? And is not your friendship the pride of my life?

May heaven preserve you, my dearest creature, in honour and safety, is the prayer, the hourly prayer, of

Your ever faithful and affectionate

Thursday morn. 5. ANNA HOWE.

I have written all night. *Excuse indifferent writing. My crow quills are worn to the stumps, and I must get a new supply.*

These ladies always write with crow quills, Jack.

If thou art capable of taking in all my *providences*, in this letter, thou wilt admire my sagacity and contrivance almost as much as I do myself. Thou seest, that Miss Lardner, Mrs. Sinclair, Tomlinson, Mrs. Fretchville, Mennell, are all mentioned in it. My first liberties with her person also [modesty, modesty, Belford, I doubt is more confined to time, place, and occasion, even by the most delicate minds, than those minds would have it believed to be]. And why all these taken notice of by me from the genuine letter, but for fear some future letter from the vixen should escape my hands, in which she might refer to these names? And if none of them were to have been found in this that is to pass for hers I might be routed *horse and foot*, as Lord M. would phrase it in a like case.

Devilish hard (and yet I may thank myself) to be put to all this plague and trouble:—and for *what* dost thou ask?—O Jack, for a triumph of more value to me *beforehand* than an imperial

* P. 48.

crown!—Don't ask me the value of it a *month hence*. But what indeed is an imperial crown itself, when a man is used to it?

Miss Howe might well be anxious about the letter she wrote. Her sweet friend, from what I have let pass of hers, has reason to rejoice in the thought that it fell not into my hands.

And now must all my contrivances be set at work, to intercept the expected letter from Miss Howe; which is, as I suppose, to direct her to a place of safety, and out of my knowledge. Mrs. Townsend is, no doubt, in this case, to smuggle her off: I hope the *villain*, as I am so frequently called between these two girls, will be able to manage this point.

But what, perhaps, thou askest, if the lady should take it into her head, by the connivance of Miss Rawlins, to quit this house privately in the night?

I have thought of this Jack. Does not Will lie in the house? And is not the widow Bevis my fast friend?

LETTER XV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Saturday, 6 o'clock, June 10.

THE lady gave Will's sweetheart a letter last night to be carried to the post-house, as this morning, directed for Miss Howe, under cover to Hickman. I dare say neither cover nor letter will be seen to have been opened. The contents but eight lines—to own —'the receipt of her double-dated letter in safety; and referring to a longer letter, which she intends to write, when she shall have a quieter heart, and less trembling fingers. But mentions something to

have happened [my detecting her she means] which has given her very great flutters, confusions, and apprehensions: but which she will wait the issue of [some hopes for me hence, Jack!] before she gives her fresh perturbation or concern on her account.—She tells her how impatient she shall be for her next,' &c.

Now, Belford, I thought it would be but kind in me to save Miss Howe's concern on these alarming hints; since the curiosity of such a spirit must have been prodigiously excited by them. Having therefore so good a copy to imitate, I wrote: and taking out that of my beloved, put under the same cover the following short billet; inscriptive and conclusive parts of it in her own words.

Hampstead, Friday evening.

MY EVER-DEAR MISS HOWE.

A FEW lines only, till calmer spirits and quieter fingers be granted me, and till I can get over the shock which your intelligence has given me—to acquaint you—that your kind long letter of Wednesday, and, as I may say, of Thursday morning, is come safe to my hands. On receipt of yours by my messenger to you, I sent for it from Wilson's. There, thank heaven! it lay. May that heaven reward you for all your past, and for all your *intended*, goodness to

Your for-ever obliged
CL. HARLOWE.

I took great pains in writing this. It cannot, I hope, be suspected. Her hand is so *very* delicate. Yet hers is written less beautifully than she usually writes: and I hope Miss Howe will allow somewhat for *hurry of spirit*, and *unsteady fingers*.

My consideration for Miss Howe's *ease of mind*

extended still further than to the instance I have mentioned.

That this billet might be with her as soon as possible, (and before it could have reached Hickman by the post) I dispatched it away by a servant of Mowbray's. Miss Howe, had there been any failure or delay, might, as thou wilt think, have communicated her anxieties to her fugitive friend; and she *to me* perhaps in a way I should not have been pleased with.

Once more wilt thou wonderingly question—all this pains for a single girl?

Yes, Jack—but is not this girl a CLARISSA?—And who knows, but kind fortune, as a reward for my perseverance, may toss me in her charming friend? Less likely things have come to pass, Belford. And to be sure I shall have her, if I resolve upon it.

LETTER XVI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Eight o'clock, Sat. morn. June 10.

I AM come back from Mrs. Moore's, whither I went in order to attend my charmer's commands. But no admittance—a very bad night.

Doubtless she must be as much concerned, that she has carried her resentments so very far, as I have reason to be, that I made such poor use of the opportunity I had on Wednesday night.

But now, Jack, for a brief review of my present situation; and a slight hint or two of my precautions.

I have seen the women this morning, and find them half-right, half-doubting.

Miss Rawlins's brother tells her, that she *lives* at Mrs. Moore's.

Mrs. Moore, can do nothing without Miss Rawlins.

People who keep lodgings at public places expect to get by every one who comes into their purlieus. Though not permitted to lodge there myself, I have engaged all the rooms she has to spare, to the very garrets; and *that*, as I have told thee before, for a month certain, and at her own price, board included; my spouse's and all: but she must not at present know it. So I hope I have Mrs. Moore fast *by the interest*.

This, devil-like, is suiting temptations to inclinations.

I have always observed, and, I believe, I have hinted as much formerly *, that all dealers, though but for pins, may be taken in by customers for pins, sooner than by a direct bribe of ten times the value; especially if pretenders to conscience: for the offer of a bribe would not only give room for suspicion, but would startle and alarm their scrupulousness; while a high price paid for what you buy, is but submitting to be cheated in the method the person makes a profession to get by. Have I not said that human nature is a rogue †?—And do not I know that it is?

To give a higher instance, how many proud senators in the year 1720, were induced, by presents or subscriptions of South Sea Stock, to contribute to a scheme big with national ruin; who yet would have spurned the man who should have presumed to offer them even twice the sum certain, that they had a chance to gain by the Stock?—But to return to my *review*, and to my *precautions*.

* Vol. III. p. 175. † Ibid. p. 185. and Vol. IV. p. 57.

Miss Rawlins fluctuates, as she hears the lady's story, or as she hears mine. Somewhat of an infidel I doubt, is this Miss Rawlins. I have not yet considered *her* foible. The next time I see her, I will take particular notice of all the moles and freckles in her mind; and then *infer* and *apply*.

The widow Bevis, as I have told thee, is all my own.

My man Will lies in the house. My other new fellow attends upon *me*; and cannot therefore be quite stupid.

Already is Will over head and ears in love with one of Mrs. Moore's maids. He was struck with her the moment he set his eyes upon her. A raw country wench too. But all women, from the countess to the cook-maid, are put into high good humour with themselves when a man is taken with them at first sight. Be they ever so *plain* [no woman can be *ugly*, Jack!] they'll find twenty good reasons, besides the great one *(for sake's sake)* by the help of the glass without, (and perhaps in spite of it) and conceit within, to justify the honest fellow's *caption*.

"The rogue has saved 150*l*. in my service"—more by 50 than I bid him save. No doubt, he thinks he *might* have done so; though I believe not worth a groat. "The best of masters I—passionate, indeed; but soon appeased."

The wench is extremely kind to him already. The other maid is also very civil to him. He has a husband for *her* in his eye. She cannot but say, that Mr. Andrew, my *other* servant, [the girl is for fixing the *person*] is a very well-spoken civil young man.

"We common folks have our joys, and please your honour, says honest Joseph Leman, like as

our betters have *." And true says honest Joseph. —Did I prefer ease to difficulty, I should envy these low-born sinners some of their joys.

But if Will had *not* made amorous pretensions to the wenches, we all know, that servants, united in one *common compare-note cause*, are intimate the moment they see one another—great genealogists too; they know immediately the whole kin and kin's kin of each other, though dispersed over the three kingdoms, as well as the genealogies and kin's kin of those whom they serve.

But my precautions end not here.

O Jack, with such an invention, what occasion had I to carry my beloved to Mrs. Sinclair's?

She may have *further* occasion for the messengers whom she dispatched, one to Miss Howe, the other to Wilson's. With one of these Will is already well acquainted, as thou hast heard—to mingle liquor is to mingle souls with these fellows —with the other messenger he will soon be acquainted, if he be not already.

The captain's servant has *his* uses and instructions assigned him. I have hinted at some of them already †. *He* also serves a most humane and considerate master. I love to make every body respected to my power.

The post, general and penny, will be strictly watched likewise.

Miss Howe's Collins is remembered to be described. Miss Howe's and Hickman's liveries also.

James Harlowe and Singleton are warned against. I am to be acquainted with any inquiry that shall happen to be made after the lady, whether by her married or maiden name, before *she* shall be told

* Vol. III. Letter xliii. † See p. 158.

of it—and this that I may have it in my power to *prevent mischief.*

I have ordered Mowbray and Tourville (and Belton, if his health permit) to take their quarters at Hampstead for a week, with their fellows to attend them. I spare thee for the present, because of thy private concerns. But hold thyself in cheerful readiness, however, as a mark of thy *allegiance.*

As to my beloved herself, has she not reason to be pleased with me for having permitted her to receive Miss Howe's letter from Wilson's? A plain case, either that I am no deep plotter, or that I have no further views than to make my peace with her for an offence so slight and so *accidental.*

Miss Howe says, though prefaced with an *alas!* that her charming friend loves me: she must therefore yearn after this reconciliation—prospects so fair—if she used me with less rigour, and more politeness; if she showed me any *compassion;* seemed inclinable to spare me, and to make the most favourable constructions, I cannot but say, that it would be impossible not to show *her* some. But to be insulted and defied by a rebel in one's power, what prince can bear that?

But I return to the scene of action. I must keep the women steady. I had no opportunity to talk to my worthy Mrs. Bevis in private.

Tomlinson, a dog, not come yet!

LETTER XVII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

From my apartments at Mrs. Moore's.

Miss Rawlins at her brother's; Mrs. Moore engaged in household matters; widow Bevis dressing; I have nothing to do but write. This cursed Tom-

linson not yet arrived!—Nothing to be done without him.

I think he shall complain in pretty high language of the treatment he met with yesterday. 'What are our affairs to him? He can have no view but to serve us. Cruel to send back to town, *un-audienced*, unseen, a man of his business and importance. He never stirs a foot, but something of consequence depends upon his movements. A confounded thing to trifle thus humorsomely with such a gentleman's moments!—These women think, that all the business of the world must stand still for their *figaries*: [a good female word, Jack!] the greatest triflers in the creation, to fancy themselves the most important beings in it—*marry come up!* as I have heard Goody Sorlings say to her servants, when she has rated at them, with mingled anger and disdain.'

After all, methinks I want these *tostications* [thou seest how women, and women's words, fill my mind] to be over, *happily* over, that I may sit down quietly, and reflect upon the dangers I have passed through, and the troubles I have undergone. I have a *reflecting* mind, as thou knowest; but the very word *reflecting* implies *all got over*.

What briars and thorns does the wretch rush into (a scratched face and tattered garments the unavoidable consequence) who will needs be for striking out a new path through overgrown underwood; quitting *that* beaten out for him by those who have travelled the same road before him!

* * *

A visit from the widow Bevis, in my own apartment. She tells me, that the lady had thoughts last night, after I was gone to my lodgings, of removing from Mrs. Moore's.

I almost wish she had attempted to do so.

Miss Rawlins, it seems, who was applied to upon it, dissuaded her from it.

Mrs. Moore also, though she did not own that Will lay in the house, (or rather sat up in it, courting) set before her the difficulties, which, in her opinion, she would have to get clear off, without my knowledge; assuring her, that she could be no where more safe than with her, till she had fixed whither to go. And the lady herself recollected, that if she went, she might miss the expected letter from her dear friend Miss Howe! which, as she owned, was to direct her future steps.

She must also surely have some curiosity to know what her uncle's friend had to say to her from her uncle, contemptuously as she yesterday treated a man of his importance. Nor could she, I should think, be absolutely determined to put herself out of the way of receiving the visits of two of the principal ladies of my family, and to break entirely with me in the face of them all.—Besides, whither could she have gone?—Moreover, Miss Howe's letter coming (after her elopement) so safely to her hands, must surely put her into a more confiding temper with me, and with every one else, though she would not immediately own it.

But these good folks have so *little* charity!—Are such *severe* censurers!—Yet who is *absolutely perfect?*—It were to be wished, however, that *they would* be so modest as to doubt themselves sometimes: then would they allow for others, as others (excellent as they imagine themselves to be) must for them.

Saturday, one o'clock.

Tomlinson at last is come. Forced to ride five miles about (though I shall impute his delay to great and important business) to avoid the sight of

two or three impertinent rascals, who, little thinking whose affairs he was employed in, wanted to obtrude themselves upon him. I think I will make this fellow easy, if he behave to my liking in this affair.

I sent up the moment he came.

She desired to be excused receiving his visit till four this afternoon.

Intolerable!—No consideration!—None at all in this sex, when their cursed humours are in the way!—Pay-day, pay-*hour*, rather, will come!—O that it were to be the next!

The captain is in a pet. Who can blame him? Even the women think a man of his consequence, and generously coming to serve *us*, hardly used. Would to heaven she had attempted to get off last night! The women not my enemies, who knows but the husband's exerted authority might have met with such connivance, as might have concluded either in carrying her back to her former lodgings, or in consummation at Mrs. Moore's, in spite of exclamations, fits, and the rest of the female obsecrations?

My beloved has not appeared to any body this day, except to Mrs. Moore. Is, it seems, extremely low: unfit for the interesting conversation that is to be held in the afternoon. Longs to hear from her dear friend Miss Howe—yet cannot expect a letter for a day or two. Has a bad opinion of all mankind.—No wonder!—Excellent creature as she is! with such a *father*, such *uncles*, such a *brother*, as she has!

How does she look?

Better than could be expected from yesterday's fatigue, and last night's ill rest.

These tender doves know not, till put to it, what they can bear; especially when engaged in love-

affairs; and their attention wholly engrossed. But the sex love busy scenes. Still life is their aversion. A woman will *create* a storm, rather than be without one. So that they can preside in the whirlwind, and direct it, they are happy.—But my beloved's misfortune is, that she must live in tumults; yet neither raise them herself, nor be able to control them.

LETTER XVIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sat. night, June 10.

WHAT will be the issue of all my plots and contrivances, devil take me if I am able to divine. But I will not, as Lord M. would say, *forestall my own market.*

At four, the appointed hour, I sent up, to desire admittance in the captain's name and my own.

She would wait upon the *captain* presently; [not upon *me!*] and in the parlour, if it were not engaged.

The dining-room being *mine*, perhaps that was the reason of her naming the parlour—mighty nice again, if so!—No good sign for me, thought I, this stiff punctilio.

In the parlour with me and the captain, were Mrs. Moore, Miss Rawlins, and Mrs. Bevis.

The women said, they would withdraw when the lady came down.

Lovel. Not except she chooses you should, ladies—people who are so much above-board as I am, need not make secrets of any of their affairs. Besides, you three ladies are now acquainted with all our concerns.

Capt. I have some things to say to your lady, that perhaps she would not herself choose that any body should hear; not even *you*, Mr. Lovelace, as you and her family are not upon such a good foot of understanding as were to be wished.

Lovel. Well, well, captain, I must submit. Give us a sign to withdraw; and we will withdraw.

It was better that the exclusion of the women should come from him, than from me.

Capt. I will bow, and wave my hand, thus—when I wish to be alone with the lady. Her uncle doats upon her. I hope, Mr. Lovelace, you will not make a reconciliation more difficult, for the earnestness which my dear friend shows to bring it to bear. But indeed I must tell you, *as I told you more than once before*, that I am afraid you have made lighter of the occasion of this misunderstanding to me, than it ought to have been made.

Lovel. I hope, Captain Tomlinson, you do not question my veracity!

Capt. I beg your pardon, Mr. Lovelace—but those things which we men may think lightly of, may not be light to a woman of delicacy.—And then, if you *have* bound yourself by a vow, you ought—

Miss Rawlins bridling, her lips closed (but her mouth stretched to a smile of approbation, the longer for not buttoning) tacitly showed herself pleased with the captain for his delicacy.

Mrs. Moore *could* speak—*very true*, however, was all she said, with a motion of her head that expressed the bow-approbatory.

For my part, said the jolly widow, staring, with eyes as big as eggs, I know what I know—but man and wife *are* man and wife; or they are *not* man and wife.—I have no notion of standing upon such niceties.

But here she comes! cried one, hearing her chamber-door open—here she comes! another, hearing it shut after her—and down dropt the angel among us.

We all stood up, bowing and curtesying; and could not help it, for she entered with such an air as commanded all our reverence. Yet the captain looked plaguy grave.

Cl. Pray keep your seats, ladies—pray do not go. [For they made offers to withdraw; yet Miss Rawlins would have burst, had she been suffered to retire.] Before this time you have heard all my story, I make no doubt—pray keep your seats—at least all Mr. Lovelace's.

A very saucy and whimsical beginning, thought I.

Capt. Tomlinson, your servant, addressing herself to him with inimitable dignity. I hope you did not take amiss my declining your visit yesterday. I was really incapable of talking upon any subject that required attention.

Capt. I am glad I see you better now, madam. I hope I do.

Cl. Indeed I am not well. I would not have excused myself from attending you some hours ago, but in hopes I should have been better. I beg your pardon, sir, for the trouble I have given you; and shall the rather expect it, as *this day will*, I hope, *conclude it all.*

Thus set; thus determined; thought I—yet to have *slept* upon it!—But, as what she said was capable of a good, as well as a bad construction, I would not put an unfavourable one upon it.

Lovel. The captain was sorry, my dear, he did not offer his attendance the moment he arrived yesterday. He was afraid that you took it amiss that he did not.

Cl. Perhaps I thought that my *uncle's* friend

might have wished to see me as soon as he came [how we stared!]—But, sir, [to me], it might be *convenient to you* to detain him.

The devil, thought I!—So there really was resentment, as well as head-ach, as my good friend Mrs. Bevis observed, in her refusing to see the *honest* gentleman.

Capt. You *would* detain me, Mr. Lovelace—I was for paying my respects to the lady the moment I came—

Cl. Well, sir, [interrupting him] to wave this; for I would not be thought captious—if you have not suffered inconvenience, in being obliged to come again, I shall be easy.

Capt. [Half-disconcerted] a *little* inconvenience, I can't say but I have suffered. I have, indeed, too many affairs upon my hands. But the desire I have to serve you and Mr. Lovelace, as well as to oblige my dear friend your uncle Harlowe, make great inconveniences but small ones

Cl. You are very obliging, sir.—Here is a great alteration since you parted with us last.

Capt. A great one indeed, madam! I was very much surprised at it, on Thursday evening when Mr. Lovelace conducted me to your lodgings, where we hoped to find you.

Cl. Have you any thing to say to me, sir, from my uncle himself, that requires my *private* ear? Don't go, ladies [for the women stood up, and offered to withdraw]—if Mr. Lovelace stays, I am sure *you* may.

I frowned. I bit my lip. I looked at the women; and shook my head.

Capt. I have nothing to offer, but what Mr. Lovelace is a party to, and may hear, except one private word or two, which may be postponed to the last.

Cl. Pray, ladies, keep your seats.—Things are altered, sir, since I saw you. You can mention nothing that relates to *me* now, to which *that gentleman* can be a party.

Capt. You surprise me, madam! I am sorry to hear this!—Sorry for your *uncle's* sake!—Sorry for *your* sake!—Sorry for Mr. *Lovelace's* sake!—And yet I am sure he must have given greater occasion than he has mentioned to me, or—

Lovel. Indeed, captain, indeed, ladies, I have told you great part of my story!—And what I told you of my offence was the truth:—what I concealed of my story was only what I apprehended would, if known, cause this dear creature to be thought more censorious than charitable.

Cl. Well, well, sir, say what you please. Make me as black as you please. Make yourself as white as you can. I am not now in your power: that consideration will comfort me for all.

Capt. God forbid that I should offer to plead in behalf of a crime, that a woman of virtue and honour cannot forgive! But surely, surely, madam, this is going too far.

Cl. Do not blame me, Captain Tomlinson. I have a good opinion of you, as my *uncle's* friend. But if you are Mr. *Lovelace's* friend, that is another thing; for my interest and Mr. Lovelace's must now be for ever separated.

Capt. One word with you, madam, if you please—offering to retire.

Cl. You may say all that you please to say before these gentlewomen. Mr. Lovelace may have secrets. I have none. You seem to think me faulty: I should be glad that all the world knew my heart. Let my enemies sit in judgment upon my actions; fairly scanned I fear not the result. Let them even ask me my most secret thoughts,

and, whether they make for me, or against me, I will reveal them.

Capt. Noble lady! who can say as you say?

The women held up their hands and eyes; each as if she had said, not I.

No disorder here! said Miss Rawlins: but (judging by her own heart) a confounded deal of improbability, I believe she thought.

Finely *said*, to be sure, said the widow Bevis, shrugging her shoulders.

Mrs. Moore sighed.

Jack Belford, thought I, knows all mine: and in this I am more ingenuous than any of the three, and a fit match for this paragon.

Cl. How Mr. Lovelace has found me out here, I cannot tell. But such mean devices, such artful, such worse than Waltham disguises put on, to obtrude himself into my company; such bold, such shocking untruths—

Capt. The favour of but one word, madam, in private—

In order to support a right which he has not over me!—O sir! O Capt. Tomlinson!—I think I have reason to say, that the man (there he stands!) is capable of any vileness!—

The women looked upon one another, and upon me, by turns, to see how I bore it. I had such dartings in my head at the instant, that I thought I should have gone distracted. My brain seemed on fire. What would I have given to have had her alone with me!—I traversed the room; my clenched fist to my forehead. O that I had any body here, thought I, that Hercules-like, when flaming in the tortures of Dejanira's poisoned shirt, I could tear in pieces!

Capt. Dear lady! see you not how the poor gen-

tleman—Lord, how have I imposed upon your uncle, at this rate! How happy, did I tell him, I saw you! How happy I was sure you would be in each other!

Cl. O sir, you don't know how many premeditated offences I *had forgiven* when I saw you last, before I could appear to you, what I hoped then I might for the future be!—But now you may tell my uncle, if you please, that I cannot hope for his mediation. Tell him, that my guilt, in giving this man an opportunity to spirit me away from my *tried*, my *experienced*, my *natural* friends, (harshly as they treated me) stares me every day more and more in the face; and still the more, as my fate seems to be drawing to a crisis, according to the malediction of my offended father!

And then she burst into tears, which even affected that dog, who, brought to abet me, was himself all *Belforded* over.

The women, so used to cry without grief, as they are to laugh without reason, by mere force of example [confound their promptitudes!] must needs pull out *their* handkerchiefs. The less wonder, however, as I myself, between confusion, surprise, and concern, could hardly stand it.

What's a tender heart good for?—Who can be happy that has a *feeling* heart?—And yet thou'lt say, that he who has it not, must be a tiger, and no man.

Capt. Let me beg the favour of one word with you, madam, in private; and that on my *own* account.

The women hereupon offered to retire. She insisted, that if *they* went, *I* should not stay.

Capt. Sir, bowing to me, shall I beg.—

I hope, thought I, that I may trust this solemn

dog, instructed as he is. She does not doubt him. I'll stay out no longer than to give her time to spend her first fire.

I then passively withdrew, with the women—but with such a bow to my goddess, that it won for me every heart but that I wanted *most* to win; for the haughty maid bent not her knee in return.

The conversation between the captain and the lady, when we were retired, was to the following effect: they both talked loud enough for me to hear them: the lady from anger, the captain with design; and thou mayest be sure there was no listener but myself. What I was imperfect in was supplied afterwards; for I had my vellum-leaved book to note all down. If she had know this, perhaps she would have been more sparing of her invectives—and but *perhaps* neither.

He told her, that as her brother was absolutely resolved to see her; and as he himself, in compliance with her uncle's expedient, had reported her marriage; and as that report had reached the ears of Lord M. Lady Betty, and the rest of my relations; and as he had been obliged, in consequence of his first report, to vouch it; and as her brother might find out where she was, and apply to the women here, for a confirmation or refutation of the marriage; he had thought himself obliged to countenance the report before the women: that this had embarrassed him not a little, as he would not for the world that she should have cause to think him capable of prevarication, contrivance, or double dealing: and that this made him desirous of a private conversation with her.

It was true, she said, she *had* given her consent to such an expedient, believing it was her *uncle's*; and little thinking, that it would lead to so many errors. Yet she might have known, that one error is fre-

quently the parent of many. Mr. Lovelace had made her sensible of the truth of that observation, on more occasions than one; and it was an observation, that he the captain had made, in one of the letters that was shown her yesterday *.

He hoped, that she had no mistrust of him: that she had no doubt of his honour. If, madam, you suspect me—if you think me capable—what a man—the Lord be merciful to me—what a man must you think me!

I hope, sir, there cannot be a man in the world who could deserve to be suspected in such a case as this. I do *not* suspect you. If it were possible there could be *one* such man, I am sure, Capt. Tomlinson, a father of children, a man in years, of sense and experience, cannot be that man.

He told me, that just then, he thought he felt a sudden flash from her eye, an *eye-beam* as he called it, dart through his shivering reins; and he could not help trembling.

The dog's conscience, Jack!—Nothing else!—I have felt half a dozen such flashes, such eye-beams, in as many different conversations with this soul-piercing beauty.

Her uncle, she must own, was not accustomed to think of such expedients: but she had reconciled this to herself, as the case was unhappily uncommon; and by the regard he had for her honour.

This set the puppy's heart at ease, and gave him more courage.

She asked him, if he thought Lady Betty and Miss Montague intended her a visit?

He had no doubt but they did.

And does he imagine, said she, that I could have brought to countenance to them the report you have given out?

* See p. 107.

[*I had hoped to bring her to this, Jack, or she had not seen their letters.* But I had told the captain, that I believed I must give up this expectation.]

No. He believed, that I had not such a thought. He was pretty sure, that I intended, when I saw *them*, to tell them (as in confidence) the naked truth.

He then told her, that her uncle had already made some steps towards a general reconciliation. The moment, madam, that he knows you are really married, he will enter into conference with your *father* upon it; having actually expressed to your *mother*, his desire to be reconciled to you.

And what, sir, said my mother? What said my *dear* mother?

With great emotion she asked this question; holding out her sweet face, as the captain described her, with the most earnest attention, as if she would shorten the way which his words were to have to her heart.

Your mother, madam, burst into tears upon it: and your uncle was so penetrated by *her* tenderness, that he could not proceed with the subject. But he intends to enter upon it with her in form, as soon as he hears that the ceremony is over.

By the tone of her voice she wept. The dear creature, thought I, begins to relent! And I grudged the dog his eloquence. I could hardly bear the thought that any man breathing should have the power which I had lost, of persuading this high-souled woman, though in my own favour. And, wouldst thou think it? this reflection gave me more uneasiness at the moment, than I felt from her reproaches, violent as they were; or than I had pleasure in her supposed relenting. For there is beauty in every thing she says and does: beauty in her passion: beauty in her tears!—Had

the captain been a young fellow, and of rank and fortune, *his* throat would have been in danger; and I should have thought very hardly of *her*.

O Capt. Tomlinson, said she, you know not what I have suffered by this man's strange ways! He had, as I was not ashamed to tell him yesterday, a *plain path before him*. He at first betrayed me into his power: but when I *was* in it—there she stopt. Then resuming—O sir, you know not what a strange man he has been!—An unpolite, a rough-mannered man!—In disgrace of his birth, and education, and knowledge, an unpolite man!—And so acting, as if his worldly and personal advantages set him above those graces which distinguish a gentleman.

The first woman that ever said, or that ever thought so of me, that's my comfort, thought I!—But this (spoken to her *uncle's friend* behind my back) helps to heap up thy already too-full measure, d arest!—It is down in my vellum-book.

Cl. When I look back on his whole behaviour to a poor young creature, (for I am but a *very* young creature), I cannot acquit him either of great folly, or of deep design.—And, last Wednesday—there she stopt; and I suppose turned away her face.

I wonder she was not ashamed to hint at what she thought so shameful; and that to a *man*, and *alone* with him.

Capt. Far be it from me, madam, to offer to enter too closely into so tender a subject. Mr. Lovelace owns, that you have reason to be displeased with him. But he so solemnly clears himself to me, of *premeditated* offence.—

Cl. He cannot clear himself, Capt. Tomlinson. The people of the house must be very vile, as well as he. I am convinced, that there was a wicked confederacy—but no more upon such a subject.

Capt. Only one word more, madam—he tells me, that you promised to pardon him. He tells me—

He knew, interrupted she, that he deserved not pardon, or he had not extorted that promise from me. Nor had I given it to him, but to shield myself from the vilest outrage—

Capt. I could wish, madam, inexcusable as his behaviour has been, since he has *something* to plead in the reliance he made upon your *promise*; that, for the sake of appearances to the world, and to avoid the mischiefs that may follow if you absolutely break with him, you could prevail upon your naturally generous mind to lay an obligation upon him by your forgiveness.

She was silent.

Capt. Your father and mother, madam, deplore a daughter lost to them, whom your generosity to Mr. Lovelace may restore: do not put it to the possible chance, that they may have cause to deplore a double loss; the losing of a *son*, as well as a *daughter*, who, by his own violence, which you may perhaps prevent, may be for ever lost to them, and to the whole family.

She paused. She wept. She owned, that she felt the force of this argument.

I will be the making of this fellow, thought I.

Capt. Permit me, madam, to tell you, that I do not think it would be difficult to prevail upon your uncle, if you insist upon it, to come up privately to town, and to give you with his own hand to Mr. Lovelace—except indeed your present misunderstanding were to come to his ears.—Besides, madam, your brother, it is likely, may at this very time be in town; and he is resolved to find you out—

Cl. Why, sir, should I be so much afraid of my *brother?* My brother has injured *me*, not I *him*.

Will my brother offer to me, what Mr. Lovelace has offered!—Wicked, ungrateful man! to insult a friendless, unprotected creature, made friendless by himself!—I cannot, cannot think of him in the light I once thought of him. What, sir, to put myself into the power of a wretch, who has acted by me with so much vile premeditation! who shall pity, who shall excuse me, if I do, were I to suffer ever so much from him?—No, sir.—Let Mr. Lovelace leave me—let my brother find me. I am not such a poor creature, as to be afraid to face the brother who has injured me.

Capt. Were you and your brother to meet only to confer together, to expostulate, to clear up difficulties, it were another thing. But what, madam, can you think will be the issue of an interview (Mr. Solmes with him) when he finds you *unmarried*, and resolved never to have Mr. Lovelace; supposing Mr. Lovelace were *not* to interfere; which cannot be imagined?

Cl. Well, sir, I can only say, I am a very unhappy creature!—I must resign to the will of Providence, and be patient under evils, which *that* will not permit me to shun. But I have taken my measures. Mr. Lovelace can never make *me* happy, nor I *him*. I wait here only for a letter from Miss Howe. That must determine me—

Determine you as to Mr. Lovelace, madam? interrupted the captain.

Cl. I am already determined as to him.

Capt. If it be not in his favour, I have done. I cannot use stronger arguments than I have used, and it would be impertinent to repeat them. If you cannot forgive his offence, I am sure it must have been much greater than he has owned to me. If you are absolutely determined, be pleased to let me know what I shall say to your uncle? You were

pleased to tell me, *that this day would put an end to what you called my trouble*: I should not have thought it any, could I have been an humble means of reconciling persons of worth and honour to each other.

Here I entered with a solemn air.

Lovel. Captain Tomlinson, I have heard a part of what has passed between you and this unforgiving (however otherwise excellent) lady. I am cut to the heart to find the dear creature so determined. I could not have believed it possible, with such prospects, that I had so little share in her esteem. Nevertheless I must do myself justice with regard to the offence I was so unhappy as to give, since I find you are ready to think it much greater than it really was.

Cl. I hear not, sir, your recapitulations. I am, and ought to be, the sole judge of insults offered to my person. I enter not into discussion with you, nor hear you on the shocking subject. And was going.

I put myself between her and the door—You *may* hear all I have to say, madam. My *fault* is not of such a nature, but that you *may*. I will be a just accuser of myself; and will not wound your ears.

I then protested that the fire was a real fire (so it was]. I disclaimed [less truly indeed] premeditation. I owned that I was hurried on by the violence of a youthful passion, and by a sudden impulse, which few other persons, in the like situation, would have been able to check: that I withdrew, at her command and entreaty, on the promise of pardon, without having offered the least indecency, or any freedom, that would not have been forgiven by persons of delicacy, surprised in an attitude so charming—her terror, on the alarm

of fire, calling for a soothing behaviour, and personal tenderness, she being ready to fall into fits: my hoped-for happy day so near, that I might be presumed to be looked upon as a betrothed lover —and that this excuse might be pleaded *even for the women of the house*, that they, thinking us actually married, might suppose themselves to be the less concerned to interfere on so tender an occasion.—There, Jack, was a bold insinuation on behalf of the women!

High indignation filled her disdainful eye, eye-beam after eye-beam flashing at me. Every feature of her sweet face had soul in it. Yet she spoke not. Perhaps, Jack, she had a thought, that this *plea for the women* accounted for my contrivance to have her pass to them as married, when I *first carried her thither*.

Capt. Indeed, sir, I must say that you did not well to add to the apprehensions of a lady so much terrified before.

The dear creature offered to go by me. I set my back against the door, and besought her to stay a few moments. I had not said thus much, my dearest creature, but for *your* sake, as well as for *my own*, that Captain Tomlinson should not think I had been viler than I was. Nor will I say one word more on the subject, after I have appealed to your own heart, whether it was not necessary, that I should *say so much*; and to the captain, whether otherwise he would not have gone away with a much worse opinion of me, if he had judged of my offence by the violence of your resentment.

Capt. Indeed I *should*. I *own* I should. And I am very glad, Mr. Lovelace, that you are able to defend your elf thus far.

Cl. That cause must be well tried, where the offender takes his seat upon the same bench with the

judge.—I submit not mine to men. Nor, give me leave to say, to you, Captain Tomlinson, though I am willing to have a good opinion of you. Had not the man been assured that he had influenced you in his favour, he would not have brought you up to Hampstead.

Capt. That I am *influenced*, as you call it, madam, is for the sake of your uncle, and for your own sake, more (I will say to Mr. Lovelace's face) than for his. What can I have in view, but peace and reconciliation? I have, from the *first*, blamed, and I now, *again*, blame Mr. Lovelace, for adding distress to distress, and terror to terror; the lady, as you acknowledge, sir, [*looking valiantly*] ready *before* to fall into fits.

Lovel. Let me own to you, Captain Tomlinson, that I have been a very faulty, a very foolish man; and, if this dear creature *ever* honoured me with her love, an *ungrateful* one. But I have had too much reason to doubt it. And this is now a flagrant proof that she never had the value for me which my proud heart wished for; that, with such prospects before us; a day so near; settlements approved and drawn; her uncle mediating a general reconciliation, which, for *her* sake, not *my own*, I was desirous to give into; she can, for an offence so *really* slight, on an occasion so truly accidental, renounce me for ever; and, with me, all hopes of that reconciliation in the way her uncle had put it in, and she had acquiesced with; and risk all consequences, *fatal ones* as they may too possibly be.—By my soul, Captain Tomlinson, the dear creature must have hated me all the time she was intending to honour me with her hand. And now she must resolve to abandon me, as far as I know, with a preference in her heart of the most odious of men—in favour of *that Solmes*, who, as

you tell me, accompanies her brother: and with what hopes, with what view accompanies him!—How can I bear to think of this?—

Cl. It is fit, sir, that you should judge of my regard for you, by your own consciousness of demerit. Yet you know, or you would not have dared to behave to me as sometimes you did, that you had *more of it* than you deserved.

She walked from us; and then returning, Captain Tomlinson, said she, I will own to you, that I was not *capable* of resolving to give my *hand*, and —*nothing but my hand*. Have I not given a flagrant proof of this to the once most indulgent of parents? which has brought me into a distress, which this man has heightened, when he ought, in gratitude and honour, to have endeavoured to render it supportable. I had even a *bias*, sir, in his favour, I scruple not to own it. Long (much too long!) bore I with his unaccountable ways, attributing his errors to *unmeaning gaiety*, and to a want of knowing what *true delicacy*, and *true generosity*, required from a heart susceptible of grateful impressions to one involved by his means in unhappy circumstances. It is now *wickedness* in him (a wickedness which discredits all his *professions*) to say, that this last cruel and ungrateful insult was not a *premeditated* one—but what need I say more of this insult, when it was of such a nature, that it has changed that bias in his favour, and made me choose to forego all the inviting prospects he talks of, and to run all hazards, to free myself from his power?

O my dearest creature! how happy for us both, had I been able to *discover that bias*, as you condescend to call it, through such reserves as man never encountered with!

He *did* discover it, Captain Tomlinson. He

brought me, *more than once, to own it;* the more needlessly brought me to own it, as I dare say his own *vanity* gave him *no cause to doubt it;* and as I had apparently no other motive in not being *forward* to own it, than my too justly-founded apprehensions of his want of *generosity.* In a word, Captain Tomlinson, (and now, that I am determined upon my measures, I the less scruple to say it) I should have despised myself, had I found myself capable of affectation or tyranny to the man I intended to marry. I have always blamed the dearest friend I have in the world for a fault of this nature. In a word—

Lovel. And had my angel really and indeed the favour for me she is pleased to own?—Dearest creature, forgive me. Restore me to your good opinion. Surely I have not sinned beyond forgiveness. You say, that I extorted from you the promise you made me. But I could not have presumed to make that promise the condition of my obedience, had I not thought there *was room to expect* forgiveness. Permit, I beseech you, the prospects to take place, that were opening so agreeably before us. I will go to town, and bring the licence. All difficulties to the obtaining of it are surmounted. Captain Tomlinson shall be witness to the deeds. He will be present at the ceremony on the part of your uncle. Indeed he gave me hope that your uncle himself—

Capt. I *did,* Mr. Lovelace: and I will tell you my grounds for the hope I gave. I proposed to my dear friend (your uncle, madam) that he should give out, that he would take a turn with me to my little farm-house, as I call it, near Northampton, for a week or so.—Poor gentleman! he has of late been very little abroad! Too visibly indeed declining!—Change of air, it might be given out, was

good for him.—But I see, madam, that this is too *tender* a subject—

The dear creature wept. She knew how to apply as meant the Captain's hint to the *occasion* of her uncle's declining state of health.

Capt. We might indeed, I told him, set out in that road, but turn short to town in *my* chariot; and he might see the ceremony performed with his own eyes, and be the desired father, as well as the beloved uncle.

She turned from us, and wiped her eyes.

Capt. And really, there seem now to be but two objections to this, as Mr. Harlowe discouraged not the proposal—the one, the unhappy misunderstanding between you; which I would not by any means he should know; since then he might be apt to give weight to Mr. James Harlowe's unjust surmises.—The other, that it would necessarily occasion some delay to the ceremony; which certainly may be performed in a day or two—if—

And then he reverently bowed to my goddess. —Charming fellow!—But often did I curse my stars, for making me so much obliged to his adroitness.

She was going to speak; but, not liking the turn of her countenance, (although as I thought, its severity and indignation seemed a little abated) I said, and had like to have blown myself up by it —One expedient I have just thought of—

Cl. None of your *expedients*, Mr. Lovelace!—I abhor your *expedients*, your *inventions*—I have had too many of them.

Lovel. See, Captain Tomlinson! See, sir!—O how we expose ourselves to you!—Little did you think, I dare say, that we have lived in such a continued misunderstanding together!—But you will make the best of it all. We may yet be happy.

O that I could have been assured, that this dear creature loved *me* with the hundredth part of the love I have for *her*!—Our diffidences have been mutual. I presume to say, that she has too much punctilio: I am afraid, that I have too little. Hence our difficulties. But I have a heart, Captain Tomlinson, a heart, that bids me hope for her love, because it is resolved to deserve it as much as man *can* deserve it.

Capt. I am indeed surprised at what I have seen and heard. I defend not Mr. Lovelace, madam, in the offence he has given you—as a father of daughters myself, I *cannot* defend him; though his fault seems to be lighter than I had apprehended—but in my conscience, madam, I think you carry your resentment too high.

Cl. Too high, sir!—Too high, to the man that might have been happy if he would? Too high to the man that has held *my soul in suspense* an hundred times, since (by artifice and deceit) he obtained a power over me!—Say, Lovelace, thyself say, art thou not the *very* Lovelace, who by insulting *me*, hast wronged thine *own hopes*?—The wretch that appeared in vile disguises, personating an old lame creature, seeking for lodgings for thy sick wife?—Telling the gentlewomen here, stories all of thine own invention; and asserting to them an husband's right over me, which thou hast not?—And is it [turning to the captain] to be expected that I should give credit to the protestations of *such a man*?

Lovel. Treat me, dearest creature, as you please, I will bear it: and yet your scorn and your violence have fixed daggers in my heart—but was it possible, without those disguises, to come at your speech?—And could I lose you, if study, if invention, would put it in my power to arrest your

anger, and give me hope to engage you to confirm to me the *promised pardon?* The address I made to you before the women, as if the marriage-ceremony had passed, was in consequence of what your uncle *had advised*, and what *you had acquiesced with*; and the rather made, as your brother, and Singleton, and Solmes, were resolved to find out whether what was reported of your marriage were true or not, that they might take their measures accordingly; and in hopes to prevent that mischief, which I have been but *too* studious to prevent, since this tameness has but invited insolence from your brother and his confederates.

Cl. O thou strange wretch, how thou talkest!—But, Captain Tomlinson, give me leave to say, that, were I inclined to enter further upon this subject, I would appeal to Miss Rawlins's judgment, (whom else have I to appeal to?) She seems to be a person of prudence and honour; but not to any *man's* judgment, whether I carry my resentment beyond fit bounds, when I resolve—

Capt. Forgive, madam, the interruption—but I think there can be no reason for this. You ought, as you said, to be the *sole judge* of indignities offered you. The gentlewomen here are strangers to you. You will perhaps stay but a little while among them. If you lay the state of your case before any of them, and your brother come to inquire of them, your uncle's intended mediation will be discovered, and rendered abortive—I shall appear in a light that I never appeared in, in my life—for these women may not think themselves obliged to keep the secret.

Charming fellow!

Cl. O what difficulties has one fatal step involved me in—but there is no necessity for such an appeal to any body. I am resolved on my measures.

Capt. Absolutely resolved, madam?

Cl. I am.

Capt. What shall I say to your uncle Harlowe, madam?—Poor gentleman! how will he be surprised!—You see, Mr. Lovelace—you see, sir,—turning to me, with a flourishing hand—but you may *thank yourself*—and admirably stalked he from us.

True, by my soul, thought I. I traversed the room, and bit my unpersuasive lips, now upper, now under, for vexation.

He made a profound reverence to her—and went to the window, where lay his hat and whip; and, taking them up, opened the door. Child, said he, to somebody he saw, pray order my servant to bring my horse to the door—

Lovel. You won't go, sir,—I hope you won't!—I am the unhappiest man in the world!—You won't go—yet alas!—but you won't go, sir!—There may be yet hopes that Lady Betty may have some weight—

Capt. Dear Mr. Lovelace! and may not my worthy friend, an affectionate uncle, hope for *some* influence upon his *daughter-niece?*—But I beg pardon—a letter will always find me disposed to serve the lady, and that as well for her sake, as for the sake of my dear friend.

She had thrown herself into her chair; her eyes cast down: she was motionless, as in a profound study.

The captain bowed to her again: but met with no return to his bow. *Mr. Lovelace,* said he, (with an air of equality and independence) *I am yours.*

Still the dear unaccountable sat as immoveable as a statue; stirring neither hand, foot, head, nor eye. I never before saw any one in so profound a reverie, in so waking a dream.

He passed by her to go out at the door she sat near, though the passage by the other door was his direct way; and bowed again. She moved not. I will not disturb the lady in her meditations, sir. —Adieu, Mr. Lovelace—*no further, I beseech you.*

She started, sighing—Are you going, sir?

Capt. I am, madam. I could have been glad to do you service; but I see it is not in my power.

She stood up, holding out one hand, with inimitable dignity and sweetness—I am sorry you are going, sir!—I can't help it—I have no friend to advise with—Mr. Lovelace has the art (or good fortune, perhaps I should call it) to make himself many.—Well, sir—if you *will* go, I can't help it.

Capt. I will *not* go, madam; his eyes twinkling, [again seized with a fit of humanity!] I will not go, if my longer stay can do you either service or pleasure. What, sir, [turning to me] what, Mr. Lovelace, was your expedient?—Perhaps something may be offered, madam—

She sighed and was silent.

REVENGE, *invoked I to myself, keep thy throne in my heart.—If the usurper* LOVE *once more drive thee from it, thou wilt never regain possession.*

Lovel. What I had thought of, what I had intended to propose [and I sighed] was this, that the dear creature, if she will not forgive me, as she promised, will suspend the displeasure she has conceived against me, till Lady Betty arrives.—That lady may be the mediatrix between us. This dear creature may put herself into *her* protection, and accompany her down to her seat in Oxfordshire. It is one of her ladyship's purposes to prevail on her supposed new niece to go down with her. It may pass to every one but to Lady Betty, and to you, Captain Tomlinson, and to your friend Mr. Harlowe (as he desires) that we have been

some time married: and her being with my relations, will amount to a proof to James Harlowe, that we *are*; and our nuptials may be privately, and at this beloved creature's pleasure, solemnized; and your report, captain, authenticated.

Capt. Upon my honour, madam, clapping his hand upon his breast, a charming expedient!—This will answer every end.

She mused—she was greatly perplexed—at last, God direct me! said she: I know not what to do—a young unfriended creature! Whom have I to advise with!—Let me retire, if I *can* retire.

She withdrew with slow and trembling feet, and went up to her chamber.

For heaven's sake, said the penetrated varlet [his hands lifted up]; for heaven's sake, take compassion upon this admirable woman!—I cannot proceed—I cannot proceed—she deserves all things—

Softly!—d—n the fellow!—The women are coming in.

He sobbed up his grief—turned about—hemm'd up a more *manly* accent—Wipe thy cursed eyes—he did. The sunshine took place on one cheek, and spread slowly to the other, and the fellow had his whole face again.

The women all three came in, led by that ever-curious Miss Rawlins. I told them, that the lady was gone up to consider of every thing: that we had hopes of her. And such a representation we made of all that had passed, as brought either tacit or declared blame upon the fair perverse for hardness of heart and over-delicacy.

The widow Bevis, in particular, put out one lip, tossed up her head, wrinkled her forehead, and made such motions with her now lifted-up, now cast-down eyes, as showed, that she thought that

there was a great deal of perverseness and affectation in the lady. Now and then she changed her censuring looks to looks of pity of me—But (as she said) she loved not to aggravate!—A poor business, *God help's!* shrugging up her shoulders, to make such a rout about! And then her eyes laughed heartily—Indulgence was a good thing! Love was a good thing!—But too much was too much!

Miss Rawlins, however, declared, after she had called the widow Bevis, with a prudish simper, a *comical gentlewoman!* that there must be something in our story, which she could not fathom! and went from us into a corner, and sat down, seemingly vexed that she could not.

LETTER XIX.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

THE lady staid longer above than we wished; and I hoping that (lady-like) she only waited for an *invitation* to return to us, desired the widow Bevis, in the captain's name, (who wanted to go to town) to request the favour of her company.

I cared not to send up either Miss Rawlins or Mrs. Moore on the errand, lest my beloved should be in a *communicative disposition*; especially as she had hinted at an appeal to Miss Rawlins; who, besides, has such an unbounded curiosity.

Mrs. Bevis presently returned with an answer (winking and pinking at me) that the lady would follow her down. Miss Rawlins could not but offer to retire, as the others did. Her eyes, however,

intimated that she had rather stay. But they not being answered as she seemed to wish, she went with the rest, but with slower feet; and had hardly left the parlour, when the lady entered it by the other door, a melancholy dignity in her person and air.

She sat down. Pray, Mr. Tomlinson, be seated.

He took his chair over against her. I stood behind her's that I might give him *agreed-upon* signals, should there be occasion for them.

As thus—A wink of the left-eye was to signify *push that point, captain.*

A wink of the right, and a nod, was to indicate *approbation* of what he had said.

My fore finger held up, and biting my lip, *get off of that, as fast as possible.*

A right-forward nod, and a frown—*Swear to it, captain.*

My whole spread hand,—*To take care not to say too much on that particular subject.*

A scowling brow, and a positive nod, was to bid him *rise in his temper.*

And these motions I could make, even those with my hand, without holding up my arm, or moving my wrist, had the women been there; as, when the motions were agreed upon, I knew not but they would.

She hemmed—I was going to speak, to spare her supposed confusion: but this lady never wants presence of mind, when presence of mind is necessary either to her honour, or to that conscious dignity which distinguishes her from all the women I ever knew.

I have been considering, said she, as well as I was able, of every thing that has passed; and of all that has been said: and of my unhappy situation: I mean no ill; I wish no ill, to any creature

living, Mr. Tomlinson. I have always delighted to draw favourable rather than unfavourable conclusions; sometimes, as it has proved, for very bad hearts. Censoriousness, whatever faults I have, is not *naturally* my fault.—But, circumstanced as I am; treated as I have been, unworthily treated, by a man who is full of contrivances, and glories in them—

Lovel. My dearest life!—But I will not interrupt you.

Cl. Thus treated, it becomes me to doubt—it concerns my honour to doubt, to fear, to apprehend—*your* intervention, sir, is so seasonable, so kind, for *this man*—my uncle's expedient, the first of the kind he ever, I believe, thought of! a plain honest, good-minded man, as he is, not affecting such expedients—your report in conformity to it—the consequences of that report; the alarm taken by my brother; his rash resolution upon it—the alarm taken by Lady Betty, and the rest of Mr. Lovelace's relations—the *sudden* letters written to him upon it, which, with yours, he showed me—all ceremony, among persons *born observers of ceremony*, and entitled to value themselves upon *their distinction*, dispensed with—all these things have happened *so quick*, and some of them *so* seasonable—

Lovel. Lady Betty, you see, madam, in her letter, dispenses with punctilio, avowedly in compliment to you. Charlotte, in hers, professes to do the same for the same reason. Good heaven! that the respect intended you by my relations, who, in every other case, are really punctilious, should be thus construed! They were glad, madam, to have an opportunity to compliment you at my expense. Every one of my family takes delight in railying me. But their joy on the supposed occasion—

Cl. Do I doubt, sir, that you have not something

to say, for any thing you think fit to do? I am speaking to Captain Tomlinson, sir. I wish you would be pleased to withdraw—at least, to come from behind my chair.

And she looked at the captain, observing, no doubt, that his eyes seemed to take lessons from mine.

A fair match, by Jupiter!

The captain was disconcerted. The dog had not had such a blush upon his face for ten years before. I bit my lip for vexation: walked about the room; but nevertheless took my post again; and blinked with my eyes to the captain, as a caution for him to take more care of *his*, and then scowling with my brows, and giving the nod positive, I as good as said, *resent that, captain.*

Capt. I hope, madam, you have no suspicion, that I am capable—

Cl. Be not displeased with me, Captain Tomlinson. I have told you, that I am not of a suspicious temper. Excuse me for the sake of my sincerity. There is not, I will be bold to say, a sincerer heart in the world, than her's before you.

She took out her handkerchief, and put it to her eyes.

I was going, at that instant, after her example, to vouch for the honesty of *my* heart; but my conscience *Mennelled* upon me; and would not suffer the meditated vow to pass my lips.—A devilish thing, thought I, for a man to be so little himself, when he has most occasion for himself!

The villain Tomlinson looked at me with a rueful face, as if he begged leave to cry for company. It might have been as well, if he *had* cried. A feeling heart, or the tokens of it given by a sensible eye, are very reputable things, when kept in countenance by the occasion.

And here let me fairly own to thee, that twenty

times in this trying conversation I said to myself, that could I have thought, that I should have had all this trouble, and incurred all this guilt, I would have been honest at first. But why, Jack, is this dear creature so lovely, yet so invincible?—Ever heardst thou before, that the sweets of May blossomed in December?

Capt. Be pleased—be pleased, madam—if you have doubts of my honour—

A whining varlet! He should have been quite angry—for what gave I him the nod positive? He should have stalked again to the window, as for his whip and hat.

Cl. I am only making such observations as my youth, my inexperience, and my present unhappy circumstances, suggest to me—a worthy heart (such, I hope, is Captain Tomlinson's) need not fear an examination—need not fear being looked into—whatever doubts *that* man, who has been the *cause of my errors*, and, as my severe father imprecated, *the punisher of the errors he has caused*, might have had of me, or of my honour, I would have forgiven him for them, if he had fairly proposed them to me: for some doubts perhaps *such a man* might have of the future conduct of a creature whom he could induce to correspond with him against *parental prohibition*, and against the *lights which her own judgment threw in upon her:* and if he had propounded them to me like a man and a gentleman, I would have been glad of the opportunity given me to clear my intentions, and to have shown myself entitled to his good opinion—and I hope *you*, sir—

Capt. I am ready to hear all your doubts, madam, and to clear them up—

Cl. I will only put it, sir, to your conscience and honour—

The dog sat uneasy: he shuffled with his feet:

her eye was upon him: he was therefore, after the rebuff he had met with, afraid to look at me for my motions; and now turned his eyes towards me, then from me, as if he would *unlook* his own looks.

Cl. —That all is true, that you have written, and that you have told me.

I gave him a right-forward nod, and a frown—as much as to say, *swear to it, captain.* But the varlet did not round it off as I would have had him. However, he averred that it was.

He had hoped, he said, that the circumstances with which his commission was attended, and what he had communicated to her, *which he could not know but from his dear friend her uncle,* might have shielded him even from the *shadow* of suspicion—But I am contented, said he, stammering, to be thought—to be thought—what—what you please to think me—till, till, you are satisfied—

A varlet!

Cl. The circumstances you refer to, I must own, *ought* to shield you, sir, from suspicion—but the man before you is a man that would make an angel suspected, should that angel plead for him.—

I came forward; traversed the room—was indeed in a bloody passion—I have no patience, madam!—and again I bit my unpersuasive lips—

Cl. No man ought to be impatient at imputations he is not ashamed to deserve. An innocent man *will not* be outrageous upon such imputations; a guilty man *ought not.* [Most excellently would this charming creature cap sentences with Lord M.] But I am not now trying you, sir, [to me] on the foot of your *merits.* I am only sorry, that I am constrained to put questions to this *worthier* gentleman [*worthier* gentleman, Jack!] which perhaps I ought not to put, so far as they regard *himself.*—And I hope, Captain Tomlinson, that you, who know not

Mr. Lovelace so well, as, to my unhappiness, I do, and who have children of your own, will excuse a poor young creature, who is deprived of all worldly protection, and who has been insulted and endangered by the most *designing man in the world*, and perhaps *by a confederacy of his creatures*.

There she stopt; and stood up, and looked at me; fear, nevertheless, apparently mingled with her anger, and so it ought. I was glad, however, of this poor sign of love—no one fears whom they value not.

Women's tongues were licenced, I was going to say—but my conscience would not *let* me call her a *woman*; nor use to her so vulgar a phrase. I could only rave by my motions; lift up my eyes, spread my hands, rub my face, and look like a fool. Indeed, I had a great mind to run mad. Had I been alone with her, I would, and she should have taken consequences.

The captain interposed in my behalf; gently, however, and as man not quite sure that he was himself acquitted. Some of the pleas we had both insisted on, he again enforced—and, speaking low—Poor gentleman! said he, who can but pity him! Indeed, madam, it is easy to see, with all his failings, the power you have over him!—

Cl. I have no pleasure, sir, in distressing any one—not even *him*, who has so much distressed *me*.—But, sir, when I THINK, and when I see him before me, I cannot command my temper!—Indeed, indeed, Captain Tomlinson, Mr. Lovelace *has not acted by me* either as a grateful, or a generous man; nor even as a *prudent* one!—He knows not, as I told him yesterday, the value of the heart he has insulted!

There the angel stopt; her handkerchief at her eyes.

O Belford, Belford! that she should so greatly excel, as to make me, at times, appear a villain in my own eyes!

I besought her pardon. I promised, that it should be the study of my whole life to deserve it. My faults, I said, *whatever* they had been, were rather faults in her *apprehension*, than in *fact*. I besought her to give way to the expedient I had hit upon—I repeated it. The captain enforced it, for her uncle's sake. I once more, for the sake of the general reconciliation; for the sake of all my family; for the sake of preventing future mischief.—

She wept. She seemed staggered in her resolution—she turned from me. I mentioned the letter of Lord M. I besought her to resign to Lady Betty's mediation all our differences, if she would not forgive me *before* she saw her.

She turned towards me—she was going to speak; but her heart was full—and again she turned away her face—then, half-turning it to me, her handkerchief at her eyes—And do you *really* and *indeed* expect Lady Betty and Miss Montague?—and do you—again she stopt—

I answered in a solemn manner.

She turned from me her whole face, and paused, and seemed to consider. But, in a passionate accent, again turning towards me [O how difficult, Jack, for a Harlowe spirit to forgive!]—Let her ladyship come, if she pleases, said she—I cannot, cannot wish to *see* her—and if I did see her, and she were to plead for you, I cannot wish to *hear* her! The more I *think*, the less I can forgive an attempt, that I am convinced was intended to *destroy* me. [A plaguy strong word for the occasion, supposing she was right!] What has my conduct been, that an insult of *such* a nature should be offered to me, as it would be a *weakness* in me to forgive? I am

sunk in my own eyes!—And how can I receive a visit that must depress me more?

The captain urged her in my favour with greater earnestness than before. We both even clamoured, as I may say, for mercy and forgiveness. [Didst thou never hear the good folks talk of taking heaven by storm?]—contrition repeatedly avowed—a total reformation promised—the happy expedient again urged.—

Cl. I have taken my measures. I have gone too far to recede, or to *wish* to recede. My mind is prepared for adversity. That I have not *deserved* the evils I have met with, is my consolation.—I have written to Miss Howe what my intentions are. My heart is not *with you*.—It is *against* you, Mr. Lovelace. I had not written to you as I did in the letter I left behind me, had I not resolved, whatever became of me, to renounce you for ever.

I was full of hope now. Severe as her expressions were, I saw she was afraid that I should think of what she had written. And indeed, her letter is violence itself. *Angry people, Jack, should never write while their passion holds.*

Lovel. The severity you have shown me, madam, whether by pen or by speech, shall never have place in my remembrance, but for your *honour*. In the light you have taken things, all is deserved, and but the natural result of virtuous resentment; and I adore you even for the pangs you have given me.

She was silent. She had employment enough with her handkerchief at her eyes.

Lovel. You lament sometimes, that you have no friends of your own sex to consult with. Miss Rawlins, I must confess, is too inquisitive to be confided in [I liked not, thou mayest think, her appeal to Miss Rawlins]. She *may mean* well. But I

never in my life knew a person who was fond of prying into the secrets of others, that was fit to be trusted. The curiosity of such is governed by pride, which is not gratified but by whispering about a secret till it becomes public, in order to show either their consequence, or their sagacity. It is so in every case. What man or woman, who is *covetous* of *power*, or of *wealth*, is covetous of either, for the sake of making a right use of it?—But in the ladies of my family you *may* confide. It is their ambition to think of you, as one of themselves. Renew but your consent to pass *to the world*, for the sake of your uncle's expedient, and for the prevention of mischief, as a lady some time married. Lady Betty may be acquainted with the naked truth; and you may *(as she hopes you will)* accompany her to her seat; and, if it *must* be so, consider me as in a state of penitence or probation, to be accepted or rejected, as I may appear to deserve.

The captain again clapt his hand on his breast, and declared upon his honour, that this was a proposal, that were the case that of his own daughter, and she were not resolved upon *immediate* marriage, (which yet he thought by far the more eligible choice) he should be very much concerned, were she to refuse it.

Cl. Were I with Mr. Lovelace's relations, and to pass as his wife to the world, I could not have any choice. And how could he be then in a state of probation?—O, Mr. Tomlinson, you are too much his *friend* to see into his drift.

Capt. His friend, madam, as I said before, as I am *your's* and your *uncle's*, for the sake of a general reconciliation, which must begin with a better understanding between yourselves.

Lovel. Only, my dearest life, resolve to attend

the arrival and visit of Lady Betty: and permit her to arbitrate between us.

Capt. There can be no harm in *that*, madam. You can suffer no inconvenience from *that*. If Mr. Lovelace's offence be such, that a woman of Lady Betty's character judges it to be unpardonable, why then—

Cl. [Interrupting; and to me] If I am not invaded by you, sir—if I am (as I ought to be) my own mistress, I think to stay here, in this *honest house*, [and then had I an *eye-beam*, as the captain calls it, flashed at me] till I receive a letter from Miss Howe. That, I hope, will be in a day or two. If in that time the ladies come whom you expect, and if they are desirous to see the creature whom you have made unhappy, I shall know whether I can or cannot receive their visit.

She turned short to the door, and retiring went up stairs to her chamber.

O sir, said the captain, as soon as she was gone, what an angel of a woman is this! I *have been*, and I *am*, a very wicked man. But if any thing should happen amiss to this admirable lady, through *my* means, I shall have more cause for self-reproach than for all the bad actions of my life put together.

And his eyes glistened.

Nothing can happen amiss, thou sorrowful dog! What *can* happen amiss?—Are we to form our opinion of things by the romantic notions of a girl, who supposes *that* to be the greatest which is the slightest of evils? Have I not told thee our whole story? Has she not broken her promise? Did I not generously spare her, when in my power? I was decent, though I had her at such advantage. Greater liberties have I taken with girls of character at a common romping-bout, and all has been laughed off, and handkerchief and headcloths ad-

justed, and petticoats shaken to rights, in my presence. Never man, in the like circumstances, and resolved as I was resolved, goaded on as I was goaded on, as well by her own sex, as by the impulses of a violent passion, was ever so decent. Yet what mercy does she show me?

Now, Jack, this pitiful dog was such another unfortunate one as thyself—his arguments serving to confirm me in the very purpose he brought them to prevail upon me to give up. Had he left me to myself, to the tenderness of my own nature, moved as I was when the lady withdrew; and had he sat down, and made odious faces, and said nothing; it is very possible, that I should have taken the chair over-against him which she had quitted; and have cried and blubbered with him for half an hour together. But the varlet to *argue* with me!—To pretend to *convince* a man, who knows in his heart that he is doing a wrong thing!—He must needs think, that this would put me upon trying what I could say for myself; and when the excited compunction can be carried from the *heart* to the *lips* it must evaporate in words.

Thou perhaps, in his place, wouldst have urged the same pleas that he urged. What I answered to him therefore may do for thee, and spare *thee* the trouble of writing, and *me* of reading, a good deal of nonsense.

Capt. You were pleased to tell me, sir, that you only proposed *to try her virtue*; and that you believed you should actually marry her.

Lovel. So I shall, and cannot help it. I have no doubt but I shall. And as to *trying* her, is she not now in the height of her trial? Have I not reason to think that she is coming about? Is she not now yielding up her resentment for an attempt which she thinks she ought *not* to forgive?—And

if she do, may she not forgive the *last attempt?*—Can she, in a word, resent *that* more than she does *this?*—Women often, for their own sakes, will keep the *last secret;* but will ostentatiously din the ears of gods and men with their clamours upon a successless offer. It was my folly, my weakness, that I gave her not more cause for this her unsparing violence!

Capt. O sir, you will never be able to subdue this lady without force.

Lovel. Well, then, puppy, must I not endeavour to find a proper time and place—

Capt. Forgive me, sir! but can you you think of force to such a fine creature?

Lovel. Force, indeed, I abhor the thought of; and for what, thinkest thou, have I taken all the pains I have taken, and engaged so many persons in my cause, but to avoid the necessity of *violent* compulsion? But yet, imaginest thou that I expect *direct consent* from such a lover of forms as this lady is known to be! Let me tell thee, M'Donald, that thy master Belford has urged on thy side of the question all that thou canst urge. Must I have every sorry fellow's conscience to pacify, as well as my own?—By my soul, Patrick, she has a friend *here* [clapping my hand on my breast] that pleads for her with greater and more irresistible eloquence, than all the men in the world can plead for her. And had she *not escaped me*—and yet how have I answered my first design of trying her*, and in *her* the virtue of the most virtuous of the sex?—Perseverance, man!—perseverance—what! wouldst thou have me decline a trial that may make for the honour of a sex we all so dearly love?

Then, sir, you have no thoughts—no thoughts—

* See Vol. III. p. 86, & seq.

[looking still more sorrowfully] of marrying this wonderful lady?

Yes, yes, Patrick, but I have. But let me, first, to gratify *my* pride, bring down *hers*. Let me see, that she loves me well enough to forgive me for my *own* sake. Has she not heretofore lamented, that she staid not in her father's house, though the consequence must have been, if she *had*, that she would have been the wife of the odious Solmes? If now she be brought to consent to be mine, seest thou not, that the *reconciliation* with her *detested relations* is the *inducement*, as it *always* was, and not *love of me?*—Neither her virtue nor her love can be established but upon full trial; the *last* trial—but if her resistance and resentment be such as hitherto I have reason to expect they will be, and if I find in that resentment less of hatred of *me*, than of the *fact*, then shall she be mine in her own way. Then, hateful as is the *life of shackles* to me; will I *marry her*.

Well, sir, I can only say, that I am dough in your hands, to be moulded into what shape you please. But if, as I said before—

None of thy *saids-before*, Patrick. I remember all thou saidst—and I know all thou canst *further* say—thou art only, Pontius Pilate like, washing thine own hands (don't I know thee?) that thou mayst have something to silence thy conscience with by loading me. But we have gone too far to recede. Are not all our engines in readiness?—Dry up thy sorrowful eyes. Let unconcern and heart's ease once more take possession of thy solemn features. Thou hast hitherto performed extremely well. Shame not thy *past* by thy *future* behaviour; and a rich reward awaits thee. If thou *art* dough *be* dough; and I slapt him on the shoul-

der—resume but thy former shape—and I'll be answerable for the event.

He bowed assent and compliance: went to the glass; and began to untwist and unsadden his features: pulled his wig right, as if that, as well as his head and heart, had been discomposed by his compunction; and once more became old Lucifer's and mine.

But didst thou think, Jack, that there was so much—what shall I call it?—in this Tomlinson? Didst thou imagine that such a fellow as that had bowels? That nature, so long dead and buried in him, as to all humane effects, should thus revive and exert itself?—Yet why do I ask this question of thee, who, to my equal surprise, hast shown, on the same occasion, the like compassionate sensibilities?

As to Tomlinson, it looks as if poverty had made him the wicked fellow *he* is; as plenty and wantonness have made us what *we* are. *Necessity*, after all, is the test of principle. But what is there in this dull word, or thing, called HONESTY, that even I, who cannot in my present views be served by it, cannot help thinking even the accidental emanations of it amiable in Tomlinson, though demonstrated in a *female case*; and judging *better of him* for being capable of such?

LETTER XX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

THIS debate between the captain and me was hardly over, when the three women, led by Miss Rawlins, entered, hoping no intrusion—but very desirous, the maiden said, to know if we were likely to accommodate.

O yes, I hope so. You know, ladies, that your sex must, in these cases, preserve their forms. They must be courted to comply with their own happiness. A lucky expedient we have hit upon. The uncle has his doubts of our marriage. He cannot believe, nor will any body, that it is possible that a man so much in love, the lady so desirable—

They all took the hint—it was a very extraordinary case, the two widows allowed. Women, Jack, [as I believe I have observed * elsewhere] have a high opinion of what they can do for us:—Miss Rawlins desired, if I pleased, to let them know the expedient; and looked as if there was no need to proceed in the rest of my speech.

I begged, that they would not let the lady know I had told them what this expedient was; and they should hear it.

They promised.

It was this: that to oblige and satisfy Mr. Harlowe, the ceremony was to be *again performed*. He was to be *privately present*, and to give his niece to me with his own hands—and she was retired to consider of it.

Thou seest, Jack, that I have provided an excase, to save my veracity to the women here, in case I should incline to marriage, and she should choose to have Miss Rawlins's assistance at the ceremony. Nor doubted I to bring my fair one to save my credit on this occasion, if I could get her to consent to be mine.

A charming expedient! cried the widow. They were all three ready to clap their hands for joy upon it. Women love to be married twice at least,

* See p. 117.

Jack; though not indeed to the *same man*. And all blessed the reconciliatory scheme, and the proposer of it; and, supposing it came from the captain, they looked at him with pleasure, while his face shined with the applause implied. He should think himself very happy, if he could bring about a general reconciliation; and he flourished with his head like my man Will, on his victory over old Grimes; bridling by turns, like Miss Rawlins in the height of a prudish fit.

But now it was time for the captain to think of returning to town, having a great deal of business to dispatch before morning. Nor was he certain that he should be able again to attend us at Hampstead before he went home.

And yet, as every thing was drawing towards a crisis, I did not intend that he should leave Hampstead that night.

A message to the above effect was carried up, at my desire, by Mrs. Moore; with the captain's compliments, and to know if she had any commands for him to her uncle.

But I hinted to the women, that it would be proper for them to withdraw, if the lady did come down; lest she should not care to be so free before *them* on a proposal so particular, as she would be to *us*, who had offered it to her consideration.

Mrs. Moore brought down word, that the lady was following her. They all three withdrew; and she entered at one door, as they went out at the other. The captain accosted her, repeating the contents of the message sent up; and desired that she would give him her commands in relation to the report he was to make to her uncle Harlowe.

I know not what to say, sir, nor what I would have *you* to say, to my uncle—perhaps you may

have business in town—perhaps you need not see my uncle, till I have heard from Miss Howe; till after Lady Betty—I don't know what to say.

I implored the return of that value, which she had so generously acknowledged once to have had for me. I presumed, I said, to flatter myself that Lady Betty, in her own person, and in the name of all my family, would be able, on my promised reformation and contrition, to prevail in my favour, especially as our prospects in other respects, with regard to the general reconciliation wished for, were so happy. But let me owe to *your own generosity*, my dearest creature, said I, rather than to the mediation of *any person on earth*, the forgiveness I am an humble suitor for. How much more agreeable to *yourself*, O best beloved of my soul, must it be, as well as *obliging to me*, that your first personal knowledge of my relations, and theirs of you, (for they will not be denied attending you) should not be begun in recriminations, in appeals! As Lady Betty will be here so soon, it will not perhaps be possible for you to receive her visit with a brow absolutely serene. But dearest, dearest creature, I beseech you, let the misunderstanding pass as a slight one—as a misunderstanding cleared up. Appeals give pride and superiority to the persons appealed to, and are apt to lessen the appellant, not only in their eye, but in her own. Exalt not into judges those who are prepared to take lessons and instructions from you. The individuals of my family are as proud as I am said to be. But they will cheerfully resign to your superiority—you will be the first woman of the family in every one's eyes.

This might have done with any other woman in the world but *this;* and yet she is the only woman

in the world of whom it may with truth be said. But thus, angrily, did she disclaim the compliment.

Yes, indeed!—[and there she stopt a moment, her sweet bosom heaving with a noble disdain]—Cheated out of myself from the very first!—A fugitive from my own family! Renounced by my relations! Insulted by you!—Laying humble claim to the protection of yours!—Is not this the light in which I must appear not only to the ladies of your family, but to all the world?—Think you, sir, that in these circumstances, or even had I been in the *happiest*, that I could be affected by this plea of undeserved superiority?—You are a stranger to the mind of Clarissa Harlowe, if you think her capable of so poor and so *undue* a pride!

She went from us to the further end of the room.

The captain was again affected—Excellent creature! I called her; and, reverently approaching her, urged further the plea I had last made.

It is but lately, said I, that the opinions of my relations have been more than indifferent to me, whether good or bad; and it is for *your* sake, more than for *my own*, that I now wish to stand well with my whole family. The principal motive of Lady Betty's coming up, is to purchase presents for the whole family to make on the happy occasion.

This consideration, turning to the captain, with so noble-minded a dear creature, I know, can have no weight; only as it will show their value and respect. But what a damp would their worthy hearts receive, were they to find their admired new niece, as they now think her, not only *not* their niece, but capable of renouncing me for ever! They love me. They *all* love me. I have been guilty of carelessness and levity to them, indeed; but of carelessness and levity only; and *that* owing to a pride

that has set me above meanness, though it has not done every thing for me.

My whole family will be guarantee for my good behaviour to this dear creature, their niece, their daughter, their cousin, their friend, their chosen companion and directress, all in one.—Upon my soul, captain, we *may*, we *must* be happy.

But dearest, dearest creature, let me on my knees, [and down I dropt, her face all the time turned half from me, as she stood at the window, her handkerchief often at her eyes] on my knees let me plead your *promised* forgiveness; and let us not appear to them, on their visit, thus unhappy with each other. Lady Betty, the next hour that she sees you, will write her opinion of you, and of the likelihood of our future happiness, to Lady Sarah her sister, a weak-spirited woman, who now hopes to supply to herself, in my bride, the lost daughter she still mourns for!

The captain then joined in, and re-urged her uncle's hopes and expectations, and his resolution effectually to set about the general reconciliation; the mischief that might be prevented; and the certainty that there was, that her uncle might be prevailed upon to give her to me with his own hand, if she made it her choice to wait for his coming up. But, for his own part, he humbly advised, and fervently pressed her, to make the very next day, or Monday at furthest, my happy day.

Permit me, dearest lady, said he, and I could kneel to you myself, [bending his knee] though I have no interest in my earnestness, but the pleasure I should have to be able to serve you all; to beseech you to give me an opportunity to assure your uncle, that I myself saw with my own eyes the happy knot tied!—All misunderstanding, all doubts, all diffidences, will then be at an end.

And what, madam, rejoined I, still kneeling, can there be in your new measures, be they what they will, that can so happily, so *reputably*, I will presume to say, for all around, obviate the present difficulties?

Miss Howe herself, if she love you, and if she love your fame, madam, urged the captain, his knee still bent, must congratulate you on such a happy conclusion.

Then turning her face, she saw the captain half-kneeling—O sir! O Captain Tomlinson!—Why this *undue* condescension? extending her hand to his elbow, to raise him. I cannot bear this!—Then casting her eye on me, Rise, Mr. Lovelace—kneel not to the poor creature whom you have insulted! How cruel the occasion for it!—And how mean the submission!

Not mean to such an angel!—Nor can I rise but to be forgiven!

The captain then re-urged once more the day—He was amazed, he said, if she ever valued me—

O Captain Tomlinson, interrupted she, how much are you the friend of this man!—*If I had never valued him, he never would have had it in his power to insult me;* nor could I, if I had never regarded him, have *taken to heart as I do*, the insult (execrable as it was) so undeservedly, so ungratefully given—but let him retire—for a moment let him retire.

I was more than half afraid to trust the captain by himself with her. He gave me a sign that I might depend upon him. And then I took out of my pocket his letter to me, and Lady Betty's, and Miss Montague's and Lord M.'s letters (which last she had not then seen); and giving them to him, Procure for me, in the first place, Mr. Tomlinson, a re-perusal of these three letters; and of *this* from

Lord M. And I beseech you, my dearest life, give them due consideration: and let me on my return find the happy effects of that consideration.

I then withdrew; with slow feet, however, and a misgiving heart.

The captain insisted upon this re-perusal previously to what she had to say to him, as he tells me. She complied, but with some difficulty; as if she was *afraid* of being *softened in my favour*.

She lamented her unhappy situation; destitute of friends, and not knowing whither to go or what to do. She asked questions, *sifting questions*, about her uncle, about her family, and after what he knew of Mr. Hickman's fruitless application in her favour.

He was well prepared in this particular; for I had shown him the letters and extracts of letters of Miss Howe, which I had so happily come at *. Might she be assured, she asked him, that her brother, with Singleton and Solmes, were actually in quest of her?

He averred that they were.

She asked, if he thought I had hopes of prevailing on her to go back to town?

He was sure I had not.

Was he really of opinion that Lady Betty would pay her a visit?

He had no doubt of it.

But, sir; but, Captain Tomlinson—[impatiently turning from him, and again to him] I know not what to do—but were I *your* daughter, sir—were *you* my own father—alas! sir, I have neither father nor mother!

He turned from her and wiped his eyes.

O sir! you have humanity! [she wept too.]

* See Vol. IV. p. 185, and seq

There are some men in the world, thank heaven, that *can* be moved. O sir, I have met with hard-hearted men—in my own family too—or I could not have been so unhappy as I am—but I make every body unhappy!

His eyes no doubt ran over.—

Dearest madam! Heavenly lady!—Who can—who can—hesitated and blubbered the dog, as he owned. And indeed I heard some part of what passed, though *they both* talked lower than I wished; for, from the nature of *their* conversation, there was no room for altitudes.

THEM, and BOTH, and THEY!—How it goes against me to include this angel of a creature, and any man on earth but myself, in *one* word!

Capt. Who can forbear being affected?—But, madam, you can be no other man's.

Cl. Nor would I be. But he is so sunk with me!—To fire the house!—An artifice so vile!—contrived for the worst of purposes!—Would you have a daughter of yours—but what would I say? Yet you see, that I have nobody in whom I can confide!—Mr. Lovelace is a vindictive man!—He could not love the creature whom he could insult as he has insulted me!

She paused. And then resuming—In short, I never, never can forgive *him*, nor he *me*.—Do you think, sir, I would have gone so far as I have gone, if I had intended ever to draw with him in one yoke?—I left behind me *such* a letter—

You know, madam, he has acknowledged the justice of your resentment—

O sir, he can acknowledge, and he can retract, fifty times a day—but do not think I am trifling with myself and you, and want to be *persuaded* to forgive him, and to be *his*. There is not a creature of my sex, who would have been *more explicit*, and

more frank, than I would have been, from the moment I *intended* to be his, had I had a heart like my own to deal with. I was always *above reserve*, sir, I will presume to say, where I had no cause of doubt. Mr. Lovelace's conduct has made me appear, perhaps, *over-nice*, when my heart wanted to be *encouraged* and *assured!* and when, if it had been so, my whole behaviour would have been governed by it.

She stopt; her handkerchief at her eyes.

I inquired after the minutest part of her behaviour as well as after her words. I love, thou knowest, to trace human nature, and more particularly female nature, through its most secret recesses.

The pitiful fellow was lost in silent admiration of her. And thus the noble creature proceeded.

It is the fate in unequal unions, that tolerable creatures, through them, frequently incur censure, when more happily yoked, they might be entitled to praise. And shall I not shun a union with a man, that might lead into errors a creature who flatters herself that she is blest with an inclination to be good; and who wishes to make every one happy with whom she has any connection, even to her very servants?

She paused, taking a turn about the room—the fellow, devil fetch him, a mummy all the time:—then proceeded.

Formerly, indeed, I hoped to be an humble means of reforming him. But, when I have *no such hope*, is it right [you are a serious man, sir] to make a venture that shall endanger *my own morals?*

Still silent was the varlet. If my advocate had nothing to say for me, what hope of carrying my cause?

And now, sir, what is the result of all?—It is this—that you will endeavour, if you have that influence over him which a man of your sense and experience ought to have, to prevail upon him, and that for *his own* sake, as well as for *mine*, to leave me free to pursue my own destiny. And of this you may assure him, that I never will be any other man's.

Impossible, madam! I know that Mr. Lovelace would not hear me with patience on such a topic. And I do assure you that I have *some spirit*, and should not care to take an indignity from him or from any man living.

She paused—then resuming—And think you, sir, that my uncle will refuse to receive a letter from me? [*How averse, Jack, to concede a tittle in my favour.*]

I know, madam, as matters are circumstanced, that he would not *answer* it. If you please I will carry one down from you.

And will he not pursue his intentions in *my* favour, nor be himself reconciled to me, except I am married?

From what your brother gives out, and affects to believe, on Mr. Lovelace's living with you in the same—

No more, sir—I am an unhappy creature!

He then re-urged, that it would be in her power instantly, or on the morrow, to put an end to all her difficulties.

How can that *be?* said she: the licence *still* to be obtained? The settlements *still* to be signed? Miss Howe's answer to my last *unreceived?*—And shall I, sir, be in such a HURRY, as if I thought my *honour in danger if I delayed? Yet marry* the man from whom only it *can* be endangered!—Unhappy,

thrice unhappy Clarissa Harlowe!—In how many difficulties has one rash step involved thee—and she turned from him and wept.

The varlet, by way of comfort, wept too: yet her tears, as he might have observed, were tears that indicated rather a *yielding* than a *perverse* temper.

There is a sort of stone, thou knowest, so soft in the quarry, that it may in a manner be cut with a knife; but if the opportunity be not taken, and it is exposed to the air for any time, it will become as hard as marble, and then with difficulty it yields to the chizel * so this lady, not taken at the moment, after a turn or two across the room, gained more resolution; and then she declared, as she had done once before, that she would wait the issue of Miss Howe's answer to the letter she had sent her from hence, and take her measures accordingly—leaving it to him, meantime, to make what report he thought fit to her uncle—the kindest that *truth* could bear, she doubted not from Captain Tomlinson: and she should be glad of a few lines from him, to hear what *that* was.

She wished him a good journey. She complained of her head; and was about to withdraw: but I stept round to the door next the stairs, as if I had but just come in from the garden, (which, as I entered, I called a very pretty one) and took her reluctant hand as she was going out: My dearest life you are not going?—What hopes, captain?—Have you not some hopes to give me of pardon and reconciliation?

She said, she would not be detained. But I would not let her go, till she had promised to re-

* The nature of the Bath stone, in particular.

turn, when the captain had reported to me what her resolution was.

And when he had, I sent up and claimed her promise; and she came down again, and repeated (as what she was determined upon) that she would wait for Miss Howe's answer to the letter she had written to her, and take her measures according to its contents.

I expostulated with her upon it, in the most submissive and earnest manner. She made it necessary for me to repeat many of the pleas I had before urged. The captain seconded me with equal earnestness. At last, each fell down on our knees before her.

She was distres ed. I was afraid at one time she would have fainted. Yet neither of us would rise without some concessions. I pleaded my own sake; the captain, his dear friend her uncle's; and *both* re-pleaded, the prevention of future mischief; and the peace and happiness of the two families.

She owned herself unequal to the conflict. She sighed. She sobbed. She wept. She wrung her hands.

I was perfectly eloquent in my vows and protestations. Her tearful eyes were cast down upon me; a glow upon each charming cheek; a visible anguish in every lovely feature—at last, her trembling knees seeming to fail her, she dropt into the next chair; her charming face, as if seeking for a hiding place (which a mother's bosom would have best supplied) sinking upon her own shoulder.

I forgot at the instant all my vows of revenge, I threw myself at her feet as she sat; and, snatching her hand, pressed it with my lips. I besought

heaven to forgive my past offences, and prosper my future hopes, as I designed honourably and justly by the charmer of my heart, if once more she would restore me to her favour. And I thought I felt drops of scalding water [could they be tears?] trickle down upon my cheeks; while my cheeks, glowing like fire, seemed to scorch up the unwelcome strangers.

I then arose, not doubting of an *implied* pardon in this silent distress. I raised the captain. I whispered him—By my soul, man, I am in earnest. Now talk of reconciliation, of her uncle, of the licence, of settlements—and, raising my voice, If now at last, Captain Tomlinson, my angel will give me leave to call so great a blessing mine, it will be impossible that you should say too much to her uncle in praise of my gratitude, my affection, and fidelity to his charming niece, and he may begin as soon as he pleases, his kind schemes for effecting the desirable reconciliation!—Nor shall he prescribe any terms to me that I will not comply with.

The captain blessed me with his eyes and hands —Thank God! whispered he. We approached the lady together.

Capt. What hinders, dearest madam, what now hinders, but that Lady Betty Lawrance, when she comes, may be acquainted with the truth of every thing? And that then she may assist privately at your nuptials?—I will stay till they are celebrated; and then shall go down with the happy tidings to my dear Mr. Harlowe. And all will, all must, soon be happy.

I must have an answer from Miss Howe, replied the still trembling fair one. I cannot change my new measures but with her advice. I will forfeit

all my hopes of happiness in this world, rather than forfeit her good opinion, and that she should think me giddy, unsteady, or precipitate. All I shall further say on the present subject is this, that, when I have her answer to what I *have* written, I will write to her the whole state of the matter, as I shall then be enabled to do.

Lovel. Then must I despair for ever—O Captain Tomlinson, Miss Howe hates me!—Miss Howe—

Capt. Not so perhaps—when Miss Howe knows your concern for having offended, she will never advise, that with such prespects of general reconciliation, the hopes of so many considerable persons in both families should be frustrated. Some little time, as this excellent lady has foreseen and hinted, will necessarily be taken up in actually procuring the licence, and in perusing and signing the settlements. In that time Miss Howe's answer may be received; and Lady Betty may arrive; and she, no doubt, will have weight to dissipate the lady's doubts, and to accelerate the day. It shall be my part, meantime, to make Mr. Harlowe easy. All I fear from delay is, from Mr. James Harlowe's quarter; and therefore all must be conducted with prudence and privacy:—as your uncle, madam, has proposed.

She was silent, I rejoiced in her silence. The dear creature, thought I, has actually forgiven me in her heart!—But why will she not lay me under obligation to her, by the generosity of an explicit declaration?—And yet, as that would not accelerate any thing, while the licence is not in my hands, she is the less to be blamed (if I do her justice) for taking more time to *descend*.

I proposed, as on the morrow night, to go to town; and doubted not to bring the licence up

with me on Monday morning. Would she be pleased to assure me, that she would not depart from Mrs. Moore's.

She should stay at Mrs. Moore's till she had an answer from Miss Howe.

I told her, that I hoped I might have her *tacit* consent at least to the obtaining of the licence.

I saw by the turn of her countenance that I should not have asked this question. She was so far from *tacitly* consenting, that she declared to the contrary.

As I never intended, I said, to ask her to enter again into a house, with the people of which she was so much offended, would she be pleased to give orders for her clothes to be brought up hither? Or should Dorcas attend her for her commands on that head?

She desired not ever more to see any body belonging to that house. She might perhaps get Mrs. Moore or Mrs. Bevis to go thither for her, and take her keys with them.

I doubted not, I said, that Lady Betty would arrive by that time. I hoped she had no objection to my bringing that lady and my cousin Montague up with me?

She was silent.

To be sure, Mr. Lovelace, said the captain, the lady can have no objection to this.

She was still silent. So silence in this case was assent.

Would she be pleased to write to Miss Howe?—

Sir! sir! peevishly interrupting—no more questions; no prescribing to me—you will do as you think fit. So will I, as I please. I own no obligation to you. Captain Tomlinson, your servant. Recommend me to my uncle Harlowe's favour. And was going.

I took her reluctant hand, and besought her only to promise to meet me early in the morning.

To what purpose meet you? Have you more to say than has been said—I have had enough of vows and protestations, Mr. Lovelace. To what purpose should I meet you to-morrow morning?

I repeated my request, and that in the most fervent manner, naming six in the morning.

"You know that I am always stirring before that hour, at this season of the year," was the half-expressed consent.

She then again recommended herself to her uncle's favour; and withdrew.

And thus, Belford, has she *mended her markets*, as Lord M. would say, and I worsted mine. Miss Howe's next letter is now the hinge on which the fate of both must turn. I shall be absolutely ruined and undone, if I cannot intercept it.

LETTER XXI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sat. midnight.

No rest, says a text that I once heard preached upon, *to the wicked*—and I cannot close my eyes (yet only wanted to compound for half an hour in an elbow chair)—so must scribble on.

I parted with the captain after another strong debate with him in relation to what is to be the fate of this lady. As the fellow has an excellent head, and would have made an eminent figure in any station of life, had not his early days been tainted with a deep crime, and he detected in it; and as he had the right side of the argument; I had a good deal of difficulty with him; and at last

brought myself to promise, that if I could prevail upon her generously to forgive me, and to reinstate me in her favour, I would make it my whole endeavour to get off of my contrivances, as happily as I could (only that Lady Betty and Charlotte *must come)*; and then substituting him for her uncle's proxy, take shame to myself and marry.

But if I should, Jack, (with the strongest antipathy to the state that ever man had) what a figure shall I make in rakish annals? And can I have taken all this pains for nothing? Or for a wife only, that however excellent [and *any* woman, do I think I could make good, because I could make any woman *fear* as well as *love* me] might have been obtained without the plague I have been at, and much more reputably than with it? And hast thou not seen, that this haughty woman [forgive me that I call her *haughty!* and a *woman!* Yet is she not haughty?] knows not how to forgive with graciousness? Indeed has not at all forgiven me? But holds my soul in a *suspense* which has been so grievous to her own.

At this silent moment, I think, that if I were to pursue my former scheme, and resolve to try whether I cannot make a greater fault serve as a spunge to wipe out the less: and then be forgiven for that; I can justify myself to *myself;* and that, as the fair invincible would say, is all in all.

As it is my intention, in all my reflections, to avoid repeating, at least dwelling upon, what I have before written to thee, though the state of the case may not have varied; so I would have thee to re-consider the *old* reasonings (particularly those contained in my answer to thy last * expostulatory nonsense); and add the *new* as they fall from my

* See Vol. IV. Letter lvii.

pen; and then I shall think myself invincible;—at least, as arguing rake to rake.

I take the gaining of this lady to be essential to my happiness: and is it not natural for *all* men to aim at obtaining whatever they think will make them happy, be the object more or less considerable in the eyes of others?

As to the manner of endeavouring to obtain her, by falsification of oaths, vows, and the like—do not the poets of two thousand years and upwards tell us, that Jupiter laughs at the perjuries of lovers? And let me add to what I have heretofore mentioned on that head, a question or two.

Do not the mothers, the aunts, the grandmothers, the governesses of the pretty innocents, always, from their very cradles to riper years, preach to them the deceitfulness of men?—That they are not to regard their oaths, vows, promises?—What a parcel of fibbers would all these reverend matrons be, if there were not now and then a pretty credulous rogue taken in for a justification of their preachments, and to serve as a beacon lighted up for the benefit of the rest?

Do we not then see, that an honest prowling fellow is a necessary evil on many accounts? Do we not see that it is highly requisite that a sweet girl should be now and then drawn aside by him? —And the more eminent the girl, in the graces of person, mind, and fortune, is not the example likely to be the more efficacious?

If these *postulata* be granted me, who, I pray, can equal my charmer in all these? Who therefore so fit for an example to the rest of the sex?—At worst, I am entirely within my worthy friend Mandeville's assertion, *that private vices are public benefits.*

Well then, if this sweet creature must *fall*, as it

is called, for the benefit of all the pretty fools of the sex, she *must;* and there's an end of the matter. And what would there have been in it of uncommon or rare, had I not been so long about it? —And so I dismiss all further argumentation and debate upon the question: and I impose upon thee, when thou writest to me, an eternal silence on this head.

Wafered on, as an after-written introduction to the paragraphs which follow, marked with turned commas [*thus,*"]:

Lord, Jack, what shall I do now!—How one evil brings on another!—Dreadful news to tell thee!—While I was meditating a simple robbery, here have I (in my own defence indeed) been guilty of murder! A bloody murder!—So I believe it will prove.—At her last gasp!—Poor impertinent opposer! Eternally resisting!—Eternally contradicting! There she lies, weltering in her blood!. her death's wound have I given her!—But she was a thief, an impostor, as well as a tormentor. She had stolen my pen.—While I was sullenly meditating, doubting, as to my future measures, she stole it; and thus she wrote with it, in a hand exactly like my own; and would have faced me down, that it was really my own hand-writing.

" But let me reflect, before it be too late. On the manifold perfections of this ever admirable creature let me reflect. The hand yet is only held up. The blow is not struck. Miss Howe's next letter may blow thee up. In policy thou shouldest be now at least honest. Thou can'st not live without her. Thou wouldest rather marry her than lose her absolutely. Thou mayest undoubtedly prevail upon her, inflexible as she seems to be, for marriage. But if now she find thee a villain, thou

mayest never more engage her attention, and she perhaps will refuse and abhor thee.

"Yet already have I not gone too far? Like a repentant thief, afraid of his gang, and obliged, to go on, in fear of hanging till he comes to be hanged, I am afraid of the gang of my cursed contrivances.

"As I hope to live, I am sorry (at the present writing) that I have been such a foolish plotter, as to put it, as I fear I have done, out of my *own power* to be honest. I hate compulsion in all forms; and cannot bear, even to be *compelled* to be the wretch my choice has made me!—So now, Belford, as thou hast said, I am a machine at last, and no free agent.

"Upon my soul, Jack, it is a very foolish thing for a man of spirit to have brought himself to such a height of iniquity, that he must proceed, and cannot help himself; and yet to be next to certain, that his very victory will undo him.

"Why was such a woman as this thrown into my way, whose very fall will be her glory, and perhaps not only my shame, but my destruction?

"What a happiness must that man know, who moves regularly to some laudable end, and has nothing to reproach himself within his progress to it! When, by honest means, he attains his end, how great and unmixed must be his enjoyments! What a happy man, in this particular case, had I been, had it been given me to *be* only what I wished to *appear* to be!"

Thus far had my *conscience* written with my pen; and see what a recreant she had made of me!—I seized her by the throat—*There!—there*, said I, thou vile impertinent!—Take *that*, and *that!*—How often have I gave thee warning!—and now, I hope, thou intruding varletess, have I done thy business!

Puling and low voiced, rearing up thy detested head, in vain implorest thou *my* mercy, who, in *thy* day, hast showed me so little!—Take *that*, for a rising blow!—And now will *thy* pain, and *my* pain from *thee*, soon be over.—Lie there!—Welter on!—Had I not given thee thy death's wound, thou wouldest have robbed me of all my joys. Thou couldest not have mended me, 'tis plain. Thou couldest only have thrown me into despair. Didst thou not see, that I had gone too far to recede?—Welter on, once more I bid thee!—Gasp on!—*That* thy last gasp surely!—How hard diest thou!

ADIEU!—Unhappy man! ADIEU!

'Tis kind in thee, however, to bid me *adieu*!—

Adieu, adieu, adieu, to thee, O thou inflexible, and, till now, unconquerable bosom intruder!—Adieu to thee for ever!

LETTER XXII.

MR LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday morn. (June 11) 4 o'clock.

A FEW words to the verbal information thou sentest me last night concerning thy poor old man; and then I rise from my seat, shake myself, refresh, new-dress, and so to my charmer, whom, notwithstanding her reserves, I hope to prevail upon to walk out with me on the Heath, this warm and fine morning.

The birds must have awakened her before now. They are in full song. She always gloried in accustoming herself to behold the sun-rise; one of God's natural wonders, as once she called it.

Her window salutes the east. The valleys must

be gilded by his rays, by the time I am with her; for already have they made the up-lands smile, and the face of nature cheerful.

How unsuitable wilt thou find this gay preface to a subject so gloomy, as that I am now turning to!

I am glad to hear thy tedious expectations are at last answered.

Thy servant tells me, that thou art plaguily grieved at the old fellow's departure.

I can't say, but thou may'st *look* as if thou wert; harassed as thou hast been for a number of days and nights with a close attendance upon a dying man, beholding his drawing-on hour—pretending, for decency's sake, to whine over his excruciating pangs—to be in the way to answer a thousand impertinent inquiries after the health of a man thou wishedst to die—to pray by him—for so once thou wrotest to me!—To read by him—to be forced to join in consultation with a crew of solemn and parading doctors, and their officious Zanies, the apothecaries, joined with the butcherly tribe of scarificators; all combined to carry on the physical farce, and to cut out thongs both from his flesh and his estate—to have the superadded apprehension of dividing thy interest in what he shall leave with a crew of eager-hoping, never-to-be-satisfied relations, legatees, and the devil knows who, of private gratifiers of passions laudable and illaudable—in these circumstances, I wonder not that thou lookest before servants (as little grieved at heart as thyself, and who are gaping after legacies, as thou after *heirship*) as if thou indeed were grieved; and as if the most wry-faced woe had befallen thee.

Then, as I have often thought, the reflection that must naturally arise from such mortifying objects, as the death of one with whom we have been familiar, must afford, when we are obliged to

attend it in its slow approaches, and in its face-twisting pangs, that it will one day be our own case, goes a great way to credit the appearance of grief.

And this it is that, seriously reflected upon, may temporarily give a fine air of sincerity to the wailings of lively widows, heart-exulting heirs, and residuary legatees of all denominations; since, by keeping down the inward joy, those interesting reflections must sadden the aspect, and add an appearance of real concern to the assumed sables.

Well, but now thou art come to the reward of all thy watchings, anxieties, and close attendances, tell me what it is; tell me if it compensate thy trouble, and answer thy hope.

As to myself, thou seest, by the gravity of my style, how the subject has helped to mortify me. But the necessity I am under of committing either speedy matrimony, or a rape, has saddened over my gayer prospects, and, more than the case itself, contributed to make me sympathize with thy present joyful sorrow.

Adieu, Jack, I must be soon out of my pain; and my Clarissa shall be soon out of hers—for so does the arduousness of the case require.

LETTER XXIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday morning.

I HAVE had the honour of my charmer's company for two complete hours. We met before six in Mrs. Moore's garden. A walk on the Heath refused me.

The sedateness of her aspect, and her kind com-

pliance in this meeting, gave me hopes. And all that either the captain or I had urged yesterday to obtain a full and free pardon, that re-urged I; and I told her, besides, that Captain Tomlinson was gone down with hopes to prevail upon her uncle Harlowe to come up in person, in order to present to me the greatest blessing that ever man received.

But the utmost I could obtain was, that she would take no resolution in my favour till she received Miss Howe's next letter.

I will not repeat the arguments I used: but I will give thee the substance of what she said in answer to them.

She had considered of every thing, she told me. My whole conduct was before her. The house I carried her to must be a vile house. The people early showed what they were capable of, in the earnest attempt made to fasten Miss Partington upon her; as she doubted not, with my approbation—[surely, thought I, she has not received a duplicate of Miss Howe's letter of detection?] They heard her cries. My insult was undoubtedly premeditated. By my whole recollected behaviour to her, previous to it, it must be so. I had the vilest of views, no question. And my treatment of her put it out of all doubt.

Soul all over, Belford! she seems sensible of liberties that my passion made me insensible of having taken, or she could not so deeply resent.

She besought me to give over all thoughts of her. Sometimes, she said, she thought herself cruelly treated by her nearest and dearest relations: at *such* times, a spirit of repining and even of resentment took place; and the reconciliation at other times so desirable, was not then so much the favourite wish of her heart, as was the scheme she had formerly planned—of taking her good

Norton for her directress and guide, and living upon her own estate in the manner her grandfather had intended she should live.

This scheme she doubted not that her cousin Morden, who was one of her trustees for that estate, would enable her (and that, as she hoped, without litigation) to pursue. And if he can, and does, what sir, let me ask you, said she, have I seen in your conduct, that should make me prefer to it an union of interest, where there is such a disunion in minds?

So thou seest, Jack, there is *reason* as well as *resentment*, in the preference she makes against me! —Thou seest, that she presumes to think that she can be happy *without* me; and that she must be unhappy *with* me!

I had besought her, in the conclusion of my re-urged arguments, to write to Miss Howe before Miss Howe's answer could come, in order to lay before her the present state of things; and if she *would* pay a deference to her judgment, to let her have an opportunity to give it, on the full knowledge of the case.—

So I would, Mr. Lovelace, was the answer, if I were in doubt myself, which I would prefer; marriage, or the scheme I have mentioned. You cannot think, sir, but the latter must be my choice. I wish to part with you with temper—don't put me upon repeating—

Part with me, madam! interrupted I—I cannot bear those words!—But let me beseech you, however, to write to Miss Howe. I hope, if Miss Howe is not my enemy.—

She is not the enemy of your *person*, sir;—as you would be convinced, if you *saw her last letter* *

* The lady innocently means Mr. Lovelace's forged one. See p. 166. and seq.

to me. But were she not an enemy to your *actions*, she would not be *my* friend, nor the friend of *virtue*. Why will you provoke from me, Mr. Lovelace, the harshness of expression, which, however deserved by you, I am unwilling just now to use, having suffered enough in the two past days from my own vehemence?

I bit my lip for vexation. I was silent.

Miss Howe, proceeded she, knows the full state of matters already, sir. The answer I expect from her respects *myself*, not *you*. Her heart is too warm in the cause of friendship, to leave me in suspense one moment longer than is necessary, as to what I want to know. Nor does her answer absolutely depend upon herself. She must see a person first; and that person perhaps must see others.

The cursed smuggler-woman, Jack? —— Miss Howe's Townsend, I doubt not?—Plot, contrivance, intrigue, stratagem!—Underground moles these women—but let the earth cover me! let me be a mole too, thought I, if they carry their point!—And if this lady escape me now!

She frankly owned, that she had once thought of embarking *out of all our ways* for some one of our American colonies: but now that she had been *compelled* to see me (which had been her greatest dread, and which she would have given her life to avoid), she thought she might be happiest in the resumption of her former favourite scheme, if Miss Howe could find her a reputable and private asylum, till her cousin Morden could come. But if he came not soon, and if she had a difficulty to get to a place of refuge, whether from her brother or from *any body else*, [meaning me, I suppose] she might yet perhaps go abroad: for, to say the truth, she could not think of returning to her father's house; since her brother's rage, her sister's up-

braidings, her father's anger, her mother's still more affecting sorrowings, and her own consciousness under them all, would be insupportable to her.

O Jack! I am sick to death, I pine, I die, for Miss Howe's next letter! I would bind, gag, strip, rob, and do any thing but murder, to intercept it.

But, determined as she seems to be, it was evident to me nevertheless, that she had still some tenderness for me.

She often wept as she talked, and much oftener sighed. She looked at me twice with an eye of *undoubted* gentleness, and three times with an eye *tending* to compassion and softness: but its benign rays were as often *snatched* back, as I may say, and her face averted, as if her sweet eyes were not to be trusted, and could not stand against my eager eyes; seeking, as they did, for a lost heart in hers, and endeavouring to penetrate to her very soul.

More than once I took her hand. She struggled not *much* against the freedom. I pressed it once with my lips. She was not *very* angry. A frown indeed; but a frown that had more distress in it than indignation.

How came the dear soul (clothed as it is with such a silken vesture) by all its steadiness *? — Was it necessary, that the active gloom of such a tyrant of a *father*, should commix with such a passive sweetness of a will-less *mother*, to produce a constancy, an equanimity, a steadiness, in the *daughter*, which never woman before could boast of?—If so, she is more obliged to that despotic father than I could have imagined a creature to

* See Vol. I. p. 54, 55, 93, 136, 137, for what she herself says on that steadiness which Mr. Lovelace, though *a deserved* sufferer by it, cannot helping admiring.

be, who gave distinction to every one related to her beyond what the crown itself can confer.

I hoped, I said, that she would admit of the intended visit, which I had so often mentioned, of the two ladies.

She was *here*. She had seen *me*. She could not help herself at present. She ever had the highest regard for the ladies of my family, because of their worthy characters. There she turned away her sweet face, and vanquished an half-risen sigh.

I kneeled to her then. It was upon a verdant cushion; for we were upon the grass walk. I caught her hand. I besought her with an earnestness that called up, as I could feel, my heart to my eyes, to make me, by her forgiveness and example, more worthy of them, and of her own kind and generous wishes. By my soul, madam, said I, you stab me with your goodness, your undeserved goodness! and I cannot bear it!

Why, why, thought I, as I did several times in this conversation, will she not *generously* forgive me? Why will she make it necessary for me to bring Lady Betty and my cousin to my assistance? Can the fortress expect the same advantageous capitulation, which yields not to the summons of a resistless conqueror, as if it gave not the trouble of bringing up, and raising its heavy artillery against it?

What *sensibilities*, said the divine creature, withdrawing her hand, must thou have suppressed!—What a dreadful, what a judicial hardness of heart must thine be; who canst be capable of such emotions as sometimes thou hast shown; and of such sentiments as sometimes have flowed from thy lips; yet canst have so far overcome them all, as to be able to act as thou hast acted, and that from settled purpose and premeditation; and this, as it is *said*,

throughout the whole of thy life, from infancy to this time!

I told her, that I had hoped, from the generous concern she had expressed for me, when I was so suddenly and dangerously taken ill—[the ipecacuanha experiment, Jack!]

She interrupted me—Well have you rewarded me for the concern you speak of!—However, I will frankly own, now that I am determined to think no more of you, that you might (unsatisfied as I nevertheless was with you) have made an interest—

She paused. I besought her to proceed.

Do you suppose, sir, and turned away her sweet face as we walked; do you suppose, that I had not thought of laying down a plan to govern myself by, when I found myself so unhappily over-reached and cheated, as I may say, out of myself—when I found, that I could not *be*, and *do*, what I wished *to be*, and *to do*, do you imagine, that I had not cast about, what was the *next* proper course to take?—And do you believe, that this *next* course has not cost me some pain, to be obliged to—

There again she stopt.

But let us break off discourse, resumed she. The subject grows too—she sighed—let us break off discourse—I will go in—I will prepare for church—[the devil! thought I.] Well as I *can* appear in these every day worn clothes—looking upon herself—I will go to church.

She then turned from me to go into the house.

Bless me, my beloved creature, bless me with the continuance of this affecting conversation—remorse has seized my heart!—I have been excessively wrong—give me further cause to curse my heedless folly, by the continuance of this calm, but soul penetrating conversation.

No, no, Mr. Lovelace. I have said too much. Impatience begins to break in upon me. If you can excuse me to the ladies, it will be better for my mind's sake, and for your credit's sake, that I do not see them. Call me to *them* over-nice, petulant, prudish; what you please call me to them. Nobody but Miss Howe, to whom, next to the Almighty, and my own mother, I wish to stand acquitted of wilful error, shall know the whole of what has passed. Be happy, as you may!—*Deserve* to be happy, and happy you will be, in your own reflection at least, were you to be ever so unhappy in other respects. For myself, if I shall be enabled, on due reflection, to look back upon my own conduct, without the great reproach of having wilfully, and against the light of my own judgment, erred, I shall be more happy than if I had all that the world accounts desirable.

The noble creature proceeded; for I could not speak.

This self-acquital, when spirits are lent me to dispel the darkness, which at present too often overclouds my mind, will, I hope, make me superior to all the calamities that can befal me.

Her whole person was informed by her sentiments. She seemed to be taller than before. How the God within her exalted her, not only above me, but above herself!

Divine creature! (as I *thought* her) I *called* her. I acknowledged the superiority of her mind; and was proceeding — but she interrupted me — All human excellence, said she, is comparative only. My mind, I believe, is indeed superior to yours, debased as yours is by evil habits: but I had not known it to be so, if you had not *taken pains* to convince me of the inferiority of yours.

How great, how sublimely great, this creature!

By my soul, I cannot forgive her for her virtues! There is no bearing the consciousness of the infinite inferiority she charged me with.—But why will she break from me, when good resolutions are taking place?—The red-hot iron she refuses to strike—O why will she suffer the yielding wax to harden?

We had gone but a few paces towards the house, when we were met by the impertinent women, with notice that breakfast was ready. I could only, with uplifted hands, beseech her to give me hope of a renewed conversation after breakfast.

No; she would go to church.

And into the house she went, and up stairs directly. Nor would she oblige me with her company at the tea table.

I offered by Mrs. Moore to quit both the table and the parlour, rather than she should exclude herself, or deprive the two widows of the favour of her company.

That was not all the matter, she told Mrs. Moore. She had been struggling to keep down her temper. It had cost her some pains to do it. She was desirous to compose herself, in hopes to receive benefit by the divine worship she was going to join in.

Mrs. Moore hoped for her presence at dinner.

She had rather be excused. Yet, if she could obtain the frame of mind she hoped for, she might not be averse to show, that she had got above those sensibilities, which gave consideration to a man who deserved not to be to her what he *had* been.

This said, no doubt, to let Mrs. Moore know, that the garden conversation had not been a reconciling one.

Mrs. Moore seemed to wonder, that we were not upon a better foot of understanding, after so long a conference; and the more, as she believed, that

the lady had given in to the proposal for the repetition of the ceremony, which I had told them was insisted upon by her uncle Harlowe. But I accounted for this, by telling both widows, that she was resolved to keep on the reserve, till she heard from Capt. Tomlinson, whether her uncle would be present in person at the solemnity, or would name that worthy gentleman for his proxy.

Again I enjoined strict secresy, as to this particular, which was promised by the widows, as well for themselves, as for Miss Rawlins; of whose taciturnity they gave me such an account, as showed me, that she was *secret-keeper-general* to all the women of fashion at Hampstead.

The Lord, Jack! What a world of mischief, at this rate, must Miss Rawlins know?—What a Pandora's box must her bosom be?—Yet, had I nothing that was more worthy of my attention to regard, I would engage to open it, and make my uses of the discovery.

And now, Belford, thou perceivest, that all my reliance is upon the mediation of Lady Betty and Miss Montague, and upon the hope of intercepting Miss Howe's next letter.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

THE fair inexorable is actually gone to church, with Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Bevis. But Will closely attends her motions; and I am in the way to receive any occasional intelligence from him.

She did not *choose* [a mighty word with the sex! as if they were *always* to have their own wills!] that I should wait upon her. I did not much

press it, that she might not apprehend, that I thought I had reason to doubt her voluntary return.

I once had it in my head to have found the widow Bevis other employment. And I believe she would have been as well pleased with my company as to go to church; for she seemed irresolute when I told her, that two out of a family were enough to go to church for one day. But having her things on, (as the women call every thing) and her aunt Moore expecting her company, she thought it best to go—*lest it should look oddly, you know*, whispered she, to one who was above regarding how it looked.

So here am I in my dining-room; and have nothing to do but to write, till they return.

And what will be my subject, thinkest thou!—Why, the old beaten one, to be sure; self-debate—through temporary remorse: for the blow being not struck, her guardian angel is redoubling his efforts to save her.

If it be not *that* [and yet what power should *her* guardian angel have over *me?*] I don't know what it is, that gives a check to my revenge, whenever I meditate treason against so sovereign a virtue. Conscience is dead and gone, as I told thee; so it cannot be that. A young conscience growing up, like the phœnix, from the ashes of the old one, it cannot be surely. But if it were, it would be hard, if I could not overlay a young conscience.

Well, then, it must be LOVE, I fancy. LOVE itself, inspiring love of an object so adorable. Some little attention possibly paid likewise to thy whining arguments in her favour.

Let LOVE then be allowed to be the moving principle; and the rather, as LOVE naturally makes the lover loth to disoblige the object of its flame: and

knowing, that an offence of the *meditated* kind will be a mortal offence to her, cannot bear that I should think of giving it.

Let LOVE and me talk together a little on this subject—be it a *young conscience*, or *love*, or *thyself*, Jack, thou seest that I am for giving every whiffler audience. But *this* must be the last debate on this subject; for is not her fate in a manner at its crisis? And must not my next step be an irretrievable one, tend which way it will?

* * *

AND now the debate is over.

A thousand charming things (for love is gentler than CONSCIENCE) has this little urchin suggested in her favour.

He pretended to know both our hearts: and he would have it, that though my love was a prodigious strong and potent love; and though it has the merit of many months faithful service to plead, and has had infinite difficulties to struggle with; yet that it is not THE RIGHT SORT OF LOVE.

Right sort of love!—A puppy!—But, with due regard to your deityship, said I, what merits has she with you, that *you* should be of her party? Is *hers*, I pray you, a *right sort of love?* Is it *love* at all?—She don't *pretend* that it is. She owns not your sovereignty. What a d—— moves *you*, to plead thus earnestly for a rebel, who despises your power?

And then he came with his *iff's* and *and's*—and it would *have been*, and *still*, as he believed, would be, love, and a love of the exalted kind, if I would encourage it by the *right sort of love*, he talked of: and, in justification of his opinion, pleaded her own confessions, as well those of yesterday, as of this morning: and even went so far back as to my ipecacuanha illness.

I never talked so familiarly with his godship

before: thou mayest think therefore that his dialect sounded oddly in my ears. And then he told me how often I had thrown cold water upon the most charming flame that ever warmed a lady's bosom, while but young and rising.

I required a definition of this *right sort* of love. He tried at it: but made a sorry hand of it: nor could I, for the soul of me, be convinced, that what he meant to extol, was LOVE.

Upon the whole, we had a notable controversy upon this subject, in which he insisted upon the *unprecedented merit* of the lady. Nevertheless I got the better of him; for he was struck absolutely dumb, when (waving her present perverseness, which yet was a sufficient answer to all his pleas) I asserted, and offered to prove it, by a thousand instances *impromptu*, that love was not governed by *merit*, nor could be under the dominion of *prudence*, or any other *reasoning power*: and if the lady were capable of love, it was of such a sort of love, *as he had nothing to do with*, and which never before reigned in a female heart.

I asked him, what he thought of her flight from me, at a time when I was more than half overcome by the *right sort of love* he talked of?—And then I showed him the letter she wrote, and left behind her for me, with an intention, no doubt, absolutely to break my heart, or to provoke me to hang, drown, or shoot myself; to say nothing of a multitude of declarations from her, defying his power, and imputing all that looked like love in her behaviour to me, to the persecution and rejection of her friends; which made her think of me but as a last resort.

LOVE then gave her up. The letter, he said, deserved neither pardon nor excuse. He did not think he had been pleading for such a *declared*

rebel. And as to the rest, he should be a betrayer of the rights of his own sovereignty, if what I had alleged were true, and he were still to plead for her.

I swore to the truth of all. And *truly* I swore: which perhaps I do not always do.

And now what thinkest thou must become of the lady, whom LOVE itself gives up, and CONSCIENCE cannot plead for?

LETTER XXV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday afternoon.

O BELFORD! what a hair's-breadth escape have I had!—Such a one, that I tremble between terror and joy, at the thoughts of what *might* have happened, and did not.

What a perverse girl is this, to contend with her fate; yet has reason to think, that her very stars fight against her! I am the luckiest of men!—But my breath almost fails me, when I reflect upon what a slender thread my destiny hung.

But not to keep thee in suspense; I have, within this half-hour, obtained possession of the expected letter from Miss Howe—and by *such* an accident! but here, with the former, I dispatch this; thy messenger waiting.

LETTER XXVI.

MR. LOVELACE. IN CONTINUATION.

Thus it was—my charmer accompanied Mrs. Moore again to church this afternoon. I had been very earnest, in the *first* place, to obtain her company at dinner: but in vain. According to what she had said to Mrs. Moore*, I was *too considerable* to her to be allowed that favour. In the *next* place, I besought her to favour me, after dinner, with another garden-walk. But she *would* again go to church. And what reason have I to rejoice that she did!

My worthy friend Mrs. Bevis thought one sermon a day, *well* observed, enough; so staid at home to bear me company.

The lady and Mrs. Moore had not been gone a quarter of an hour, when a young country-fellow on horseback came to the door, and inquired for Mrs. *Harriet Lucas*. The widow and I (undetermined how we were to entertain each other) were in the parlour next the door; and hearing the fellow's inquiry, O my dear Mrs. Bevis, said I, I am undone, undone for ever, if you don't help me out!—Since here, in all probability, is a messenger from that implacable Miss Howe with a letter; which, if delivered to Mrs. Lovelace, may undo all we have been doing.

What, said she, would you have me do?

Call the maid in this moment, that I may give her her lesson; and if it be as I imagine, I'll tell you what you shall do.

Wid. Margaret!—Margaret! come in this minute.

* See p. 253.

Lovel. What answer, Mrs. Margaret, did you give the man, upon his asking for Mrs. *Harriet Lucas?*

Peggy. I only asked, what was his business, and who he came from? (For, sir, your honour's servant had told me how things stood): and I came at your call, madam, before he answered me.

Lovel. Well, child, if ever you wish to be happy in wedlock yourself, and would have people disappointed, who want to make mischief between you and your husband, get out of him his message, or letter if he has one, and bring it to me, and say nothing to Mrs. Lovelace, when she comes in; and here is a guinea for you.

Peggy. I will do all I can to serve your honour's worship, for nothing [nevertheless, with a ready hand, taking the guinea]: for Mr. William tells me what a good gentleman you be.

Away went Peggy to the fellow at the door.

Peggy. What is your business, friend, with Mrs. *Harriet Lucas?*

Fellow. I must speak to her her own self.

Lovel. My *dearest* widow, do you personate Mrs. Lovelace—for heaven's sake do you personate Mrs. Lovelace.

Wid. I personate Mrs. Lovelace, sir! How can I do that?—She is fair; I am brown. She is slender; I am plump—

Lovel. No matter, no matter—the fellow may be a new-come servant: he is not in livery, I see. He may not know her person. You can but be bloated and in a dropsy.

Wid. Dropsical people look not so fresh and ruddy as I do.

Lovel. True—but the clown may not know that. 'Tis but for a present deception.

Peggy, Peggy, called I, in a female tone, softly

at the door. Madam, answered Peggy; and came up to me to the parlour-door.

Lovel. Tell him the lady is ill; and has lain down upon the couch. And get his business from him, whatever you do.

Away went Peggy.

Lovel. Now, my dear widow, lie along on the settee, and put your handkerchief over your face, that, if he *will* speak to you himself, he may not see your eyes and your hair.—So—that's right,—I'll step into the closet by you.

I did so.

Peggy. [returning.] He won't deliver his business to me. He will speak to Mrs. Harriet Lucas her own self.

Lovel. [holding the door in my hand] Tell him, that this is Mrs. Harriet Lucas: and let him come in. Whisper him (if he doubts) that she is bloated, dropsical, and not the woman she was.

Away went Margery.

Lovel. And now, my dear widow, let me see what a charming Mrs. Lovelace you'll make!—Ask, if he comes from Miss Howe. Ask, if he lives with her. Ask, how she does. Call her, at every word, your dear Miss Howe. Offer him money—take this half guinea for him—complain of your head, to have a pretence to hold it down; and cover your forehead and eyes with your hand, where your handkerchief hides not your face.—That's right—and dismiss the rascal—[here he comes]—as soon as you can.

In came the fellow, bowing and scraping, his hat poked out before him with both his hands.

Fellow. I am sorry, madam, and please you, to find you be'n't well.

Widow. What is your business with me, friend?

Fellow. You are Mrs. Harriet Lucas, I suppose, madam?

Widow. Yes. Do you come from Miss Howe?

Fellow. I do, madam.

Widow. Dost thou know my right name, friend?

Fellow. I can give a shrewd guess. But that is none of my business.

Widow. What is thy business? I hope Miss Howe is well?

Fellow. Yes, madam; pure well, I thank God. I wish you were so too.

Widow. I am too full of grief to be well.

Fellow. So belike I have *hard* say.

Widow. My head aches so dreadfully, I cannot hold it up. I must beg of you to let me know your business.

Fellow. Nay, and that be all, my business is soon known. It is but to give this letter into your own *partiklar* hands—here it is.

Widow. [taking it] From my dear friend Miss Howe?—Ah, my head!

Fellow. Yes, madam: but I am sorry you are so bad.

Widow. Do you live with Miss Howe?

Fellow. No, madam: I am one of her tenant's sons. Her lady-mother must not know as how I came of this errand. But the letter, I suppose, will tell you all.

Widow. How shall I satisfy you for this kind trouble?

Fellow. Na how at all. What I do is for love of Miss Howe. She will satisfy me more than enough. But, may-hap, you can send no answer, you are so ill.

Widow. Was you ordered to wait for an answer?

Fellow. No, I cannot say as that I was. But I was

bidden to observe how you looked, and how you was; and if you did write a line or so, to take care of it, and give it only to our young lady in secret.

Widow. You see I look strangely. Not so well as I used to do.

Fellow. Nay, I don't know that I ever saw you but once before; and that was at a stile, where I met you and my young landlady; but knew better than to stare a gentlewoman in the face; especially at a stile.

Widow. Will you eat, or drink, friend?

Fellow. A cup of small ale, I don't care if I do.

Widow. Margaret, take the young man down, and treat him with what the house affords.

Fellow. Your servant, madam. But I staid to eat as I come along, just upon the Heath yonder; or else, to say the truth, I had been here sooner [*thank my stars, thought I, thou didst.*] A piece of powdered beef was upon the table, at the sign of the Castle, where I stopt to inquire for this house: and so, thoff I only intended to wet my whistle, I could not help eating. So shall only taste of your ale; for the beef was woundily corned.

Prating dog! Pox on thee! thought I.

He withdrew, bowing and scraping.

Margaret, whispered I, in a female voice, [whipping out of the closet, and holding the parlour-door in my hand] get him out of the house as fast as you can, lest they come from church, and catch him here.

Peggy. Never fear, sir.

The fellow went down, and it seems, drank a large draught of ale; and Margaret finding him very talkative, told him, she begged his pardon; but she had a sweetheart just come from sea, whom she was forced to hide in the pantry; so

was sure he would excuse her from staying with him.

Ay, ay, to be sure, the clown said: *for if he could not make sport, he would spoil none.* But he whispered her, that one 'Squire Lovelace was a *d—nation rogue*, if the truth might be told.

For what? said Margaret. And could have given him, she told the widow, (who related to me all this) a good dowse of the chaps.

For kissing all the women he came near.

At the same time, the dog wrapped himself round Margery, and gave her a smack, that, she told Mrs. Bevis afterwards, she might have heard into the parlour.

Such, Jack, is human nature: thus does it operate in all degrees; and so does the clown, as well as his betters, practise what he censures; and censure what he practises! Yet this sly dog knew not but the wench had a sweetheart locked up in the pantry! If the truth were known, some of the ruddy-face dairy wenches might perhaps call him a *d—nation rogue*, as justly as their betters of the same sex might 'Squire Lovelace.

The fellow told the maid, that, by what he discovered of the young lady's face, it looked very *rosy* to what he took it to be; and he thought her a good deal fatter, as she lay, and not so tall.

All women are born to intrigue, Jack; and practise it more or less, as fathers, guardians, governesses, from dear experience can tell; and in love-affairs are naturally expert, and quicker in their wits by half than men. This ready, though raw wench, gave an instance of this, and improved on the dropsical hint I had given her. The lady's seeming plumpness was owing to a dropsical disorder, and to the round posture she lay in—*very likely, truly.* Her appearing to him to be shorter,

he might have observed was owing to her drawing her feet up, from pain, and because the couch was too short, she supposed—*Adso, he did not think of that.* Her rosy colour was owing to her grief and head-ache—*ay, that might very well be*—but he was highly pleased that he had given the letter into Mrs. Harriet's own hand, as he should tell Miss Howe.

He desired once more to see the lady at his going away, and would not be denied. The widow therefore sat up, with her handkerchief over her face, leaning her head against the wainscot.

He asked, if she had any *partiklar* message?

No: she was so ill she could not write; which was a great grief to her.

Should he call next day? for he was going to London, now he was near; and should stay at a cousin's that night, who lived in a street called Fetter Lane.

No: she would write as soon as able, and send by the post.

Well then, if she had nothing to send by him, mayhap he might stay in town a day or two; for he had never seen the lions in the Tower, nor Bedlam, nor the tombs; and he would make a holiday or two, as he had leave to do, if she had no business or message that required his posting down next day.

She had not.

She offered him the half-guinea I had given her for him; but he refused it, with great professions of disinterestedness, and love, as he called it, to Miss Howe; to serve whom, he would ride to the world's end, or *even* to Jericho.

And so the shocking rascal went away: and glad at my heart was I when he was gone; for I feared

nothing so much as that he would have staid till they came from church.

Thus, Jack, got I my *heart's-ease*, the letter of Miss Howe; and through such a train of accidents as makes me say, that the lady's stars fight against her. But yet I must attribute a good deal to my own precaution; in having taken right measures. For had I not secured the widow by my stories, and the maid by my servant, all would have signified nothing. And so heartily were they secured, the one by a single guinea, the other by half a dozen warm kisses, and the aversion they both had to such wicked creatures as delighted in making mischief between man and wife, that they promised, that neither Mrs. Moore, Miss Rawlins, Mrs. Lovelace, nor any body living, till a week at least were past, and till I gave leave, should know any thing of the matter.

The widow rejoiced that I had got the mischief-maker's letter. I excused myself to her, and instantly withdrew with it, and, after I had read it, fell to my shorthand, to acquaint thee with my good luck: and they not returning so soon as church was done, (stopping, as it proved, in to Miss Rawlins's, and tarrying there awhile, to bring that busy girl with them to drink tea) I wrote thus far to thee, that thou mightest, when thou comest to this place, rejoice with me upon the occasion.

They are all three just come in.

I hasten to them.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

I HAVE begun another letter to thee, in continuation of my narrative: but I believe I shall send thee this before I shall finish that. By the inclosed thou wilt see, that neither of the correspondents deserve mercy from me: and I am resolved to make the ending with one, the beginning with the other.

If thou sayest, that the provocations I have given to *one* of them, will justify *her* freedoms; I answer, so they *will*, to any other person but myself. But he that is capable of giving those provocations, and has the power to punish those who abuse him *for* giving them, *will* show his resentment; and the more remorselessly, perhaps, as he has *deserved* the freedoms.

If thou sayest, it is, however, wrong to do so; I reply, that it is nevertheless human nature:—and wouldst thou not have me to be a *man*, Jack?

Here read the letter, if thou wilt. But thou art not my friend, if thou offerest to plead for either of the saucy creatures, after thou *hast* read it.

TO MRS. HARRIET LUCAS, AT MRS. MOORE'S, AT HAMPSTEAD.

AFTER the discoveries I had made of the villanous machinations of the *most abandoned of men*, particularized in my long letter of Wednesday * last, you will believe, my dearest friend, that my surprise upon perusing your's of Thursday evening from Hampstead † was not so great as my indignation. Had the *villain* attempted to fire a city

* See p. 30—48. † See p. 52—59.

instead of an house, I should not have wondered at it. All that I am amazed at, is, that he (whose boast, as I am told, it is, *that no woman shall keep him out of her bedchamber, when he has made a resolution to be in it*) did not discover *his foot* before; and it is as strange to me, that, having got you at such a shocking advantage, and in such a horrid house, you could, at the time, *escape dishonour*, and afterwards get from such a set of *infernals*.

I gave you, in my long letter of Wednesday and Thursday last, reasons why you ought to mistrust that specious Tomlinson. That man, my dear, must be a solemn villain. *May lightning from heaven blast the wretch, who has set him, and the rest of his* REMORSELESS GANG, *at work, to endeavour to destroy the most consummate virtue!*—Heaven be praised! you have escaped from all their snares, and *now are out of danger*.—So I will not trouble you at present with the particulars that I have further collected relating to this abominable imposture.

For the same reason, I forbear to communicate to you some *new stories of the abhorred wretch himself* which have come to my ears. One in particular, of so *shocking* a nature!—Indeed, my dear, the man's a devil.

The whole story of Mrs. Fretchville, and her house, I have no doubt to pronounce, likewise, an absolute fiction.—*Fellow!—How my soul spurns the villain!*

Your thought of going abroad, and your reasons for so doing, most sensibly affect me. But be comforted, my dear; I hope you will not be under a necessity of quitting your native country. Were I sure, that that must be the cruel case, I would abandon all my own better prospects, and join me with you. And I would accompany you whithersoever

you went, and share fortunes with you: for it is impossible that I should be happy, if I knew that you were exposed not only to the perils of the sea, but to the attempts of other vile men; your personal graces attracting every eye, and exposing you to those hourly dangers, which others, less distinguished by the gifts of nature, might avoid.—All that I know, that beauty (so greatly coveted, and so greatly admired) is good for.

O, my dear, were I ever to marry, and to be the mother of a CLARISSA, [*Clarissa* must be the name, if promisingly lovely] how often would my heart ache for the dear creature, as she grew up, when I reflected, that a prudence and discretion unexampled in woman, had not, in *you*, been a sufficient protection to that beauty, which had drawn after it as many admirers as beholders!—How little should I regret the attacks of that cruel distemper, as it is called, which frequently makes the greatest ravages in the finest faces!

Sat. afternoon.

I HAVE just parted with Mrs. Townsend*. I thought you had once seen her with me: but she says, she never had the honour to be personally known to you. She has a *manlike spirit*. She knows the world. And her two brothers being in town, she is sure she can engage *them* in so good a cause, and (if there should be occasion) *both their ships' crews*, in your service.

Give your consent, my dear; and the *horrid villain* shall be repaid with *broken bones, at least*, for all his vileness!

The misfortune is, Mrs. Townsend cannot be with you till *Thursday next*, or *Wednesday, at soon-*

* For the account of Mrs. Townsend, &c. see Vol. IV. p. 162—165.

est; are you sure you can be safe where you are till then? I think you are too near London; and perhaps you had better be *in it*. If you remove, let me, the very moment, know *whither*.

How my heart is torn, to think of the necessity so dear a creature is driven to, of hiding herself! *Devilish fellow!* He must have been sportive and wanton in his intentions—yet that cruel, that savage sportiveness has saved you from the sudden violence to which he has had recourse in the violation of others, of names and families not contemptible. For such the *villain* always gloried to spread his snares.

The *vileness* of this *specious monster* has done more than any other consideration could do, to bring Mr. Hickman into credit with me. Mr. Hickman alone knows (from me) of your flight, and the reason of it. Had I not given him the reason, he might have thought *still worse* of the vile attempt. I communicated it to him by showing him your letter from Hampstead. When he had read it, *and he trembled and reddened*, as he read) he threw himself at my feet, and besought me to permit him to attend you, and to give you the protection of his house. The good-natured man had tears in his eyes, and was repeatedly earnest on this subject; proposing to take his chariot and four, or a set, and in person, in the face of all the world, give himself the glory of protecting such an oppressed innocent.

I could not but be pleased with him. And I let him know that I was. I hardly expected so much spirit from him. But a man's passiveness to a beloved object of our sex may not, perhaps, argue want of courage on proper occasions.

I thought I ought, in return, to have some consideration for his safety, as such an open step

would draw upon him the vengeance of the most *villanous enterpriser* in the world, who has always a *gang of fellows*, such as himself, at his call, ready to support one another in the vilest outrages. But yet, as Mr. Hickman might have strengthened his hands by legal recourses, I should not have stood upon it, had I not known your delicacy [since such a step must have made a great noise, and given occasion for scandal, as if some advantage had been gained over you] and were there not the greatest probability, that all might be more silently, and more effectually, managed by Mrs. Townsend's means.

Mrs. Townsend will in person attend you—she *hopes*, on Wednesday—her brothers, and some of their people, will scatteringly, and as if they knew nothing of you, [so we have contrived] see you safe not only to London, but to her house at Deptford.

She has a kinswoman, who will take your commands there, if she herself be obliged to leave you. And there you may stay, till the wretch's fury on losing you, and his search, are over.

He will very soon, 'tis likely, enter upon some *new villany*, which may engross him: and it may be given out, that you are gone to lay claim to the protection of your cousin Morden at Florence.

Possibly, if he can be made to believe it, he will go over, in hopes to find you there.

After a while, I can procure you a lodging in one of our neighbouring villages: where I may have the happiness to be your daily visitor. And if this Hickman be not silly and apish, and if my mother do not do unaccountable things, I may the sooner think of marrying, that I may without control receive and entertain the darling of my heart.

Many, very many, happy days do I hope we

shall yet see together: and as this is *my* hope, I expect, that it will be *your* consolation.

As to your estate, since you are resolved not to litigate for it, we will be patient, either till Colonel Morden arrives, or till shame compels some people to be just.

Upon the whole, I cannot but think your prospects *now* much happier, than they could have been, had you been actually married to such a man as this. I must therefore congratulate you upon your escape, not only from an *horrid libertine*, but from *so vile a husband*, as he *must* have made to any woman; but more especially to a person of your virtue and delicacy.

You hate him, heartily hate him, I hope, my dear—I am *sure* you do. It would be strange, if so much purity of life and manners were not to abhor what is so repugnant to itself.

In your letter before me, you mention one written to me for a *feint* *. I have not received any such. Depend upon it, therefore, that he must have it. And if he has, it is a wonder that he did not likewise get my long one of the 7th. Heaven be praised that he did not; *and that it came safe to your hands!*

I send this by a young fellow, whose father is one of our tenants, with command to deliver it to no other hands but yours. He is to return directly, if you give him any letter. If not, he will proceed to London upon his own pleasures. He is a simple fellow; but very honest. So you may say any thing to him. If you write not by him, I desire a line or two, as soon as possible.

My mother knows nothing of *his* going to you; nor yet of your abandoning *the fellow*. Forgive me! But he is not entitled to good manners.

* See p. 56, 62.

I shall long to hear how you and Mrs. Townsend order matters. I wish she could have been with you sooner. But I have lost no time in engaging her, as you will suppose. I refer to *her*, what I have further to say and advise. So shall conclude with my prayers, that heaven will direct and protect my dearest creature, and make your future days happy!

ANNA HOWE.

And now, Belford, I will suppose, that thou hast read this cursed letter. Allow me to make a few observations upon some of its contents.

It is strange to Miss Howe that having got her friend at such a shocking advantage, &c.] And it is strange to me, too. If ever I have such another opportunity given to me, the cause of both our wonder, I believe, will cease.

So thou seest Tomlinson is further detected. No such person as Mrs. Fretchville. *May lightning from heaven*—O lord, O lord, O lord!—what an horrid vixen is this!—My *gang*, my *remorseless gang*, too, is brought in—and thou wilt plead for these girls again; wilt thou?—*Heaven be praised*, she says, that her friend is out of danger—Miss Howe should be sure of *that*: and that she herself is safe.—But for this termagant (as I often said) I must surely have made a better hand of it—

New stories of me, Jack!—What can they be?—I have not found that my generosity to my Rosebud ever did me *due* credit with this pair of friends. Very hard, Belford, that credits cannot be set against debits, and a balance struck in a rake's favour, as well as in that of every *common* man!—But he, from whom no good is expected, is not allowed the merit of the good he does.

I ought to have been a little more attentive to *character*, than I have been. For, notwithstanding that the measures of right and wrong are said to be so manifest, let me tell thee, that *character* biasses and runs away with all mankind. Let a man or woman once establish themselves in the world's opinion, and all that either of them do will be sanctified. Nay, in the very courts of justice, does not *character* acquit or condemn as often as facts, and sometimes even in spite of facts?—Yet, [impolitic that I have been and am!] to be so careless of mine!—And now, I doubt, it is irretrievable.—But to leave moralizing.

Thou, Belford, knowest almost all my enterprises worth remembering. Can this particular story, which this girl hints at, be that of Lucy Villars?—Or can she have heard of my intrigue with the pretty gipsy, who met me in Norwood, and of the trap I caught her cruel husband in, [a fellow, as gloomy and tyrannical as old Harlowe] when he pursued a wife, who would not have deserved ill of *him*, if he had deserved well of *her*!—But he was not quite drowned. The man is alive at this day: and Miss Howe mentions the story as a *very* shocking one. Besides, both these are a twelvemonth old, or more.

But evil fame and scandal are always *new*. When the offender has forgot a vile fact it is often told to one and to another, who, having never heard of it before, trumpet it about as a novelty to others. But well said the honest corregidor at Madrid [a saying with which I enriched Lord M.'s collection] —*Good actions are remembered but for a day: bad ones for many years after the life of the guilty.*—Such is the relish that the world has for scandal. In other words, such is the desire which every one has to exculpate himself by blackening his neigh-

bour. You and I, Belford, have been very kind to the world, in furnishing it with opportunities to gratify its devil.

Miss Howe will abandon her own better prospects, and share fortunes with her, were she to go abroad.] —Charming romancer! — I must set about this girl, Jack. I have always had hopes of a woman whose passions carry her into such altitudes!— Had I attacked Miss Howe first, her passions (inflamed and guided, as I could have managed them) would have brought her to my lure in a fortnight.

But thinkest thou [and yet I think thou dost] that there is any thing in these high flights among the sex? Verily, Jack, these vehement friendships are nothing but chaff and stubble, liable to be blown away by the very wind that raises them. Apes! mere apes of *us*! they think the word *friendship* has a pretty sound with it; and it is much talked of; a fashionable word: and so, truly, a single woman, who thinks she has a soul, and knows that she wants something, would be thought to have found a fellow-soul for it in her own sex. But I repeat, that the word is a *mere* word, the thing a *mere* name with them; a cork-bottomed shuttle-cock, which they are fond of striking to and fro, to make one another glow in the frosty weather of a single state; but which, when a *man* comes in between the pretended *inseparables*, is given up, like their music, and other maidenly amusements; which, nevertheless, may be necessary to keep the pretty rogues out of active mischief. They then, in short, having caught the *fish*, lay aside the *net* *.

Thou hast a mind, perhaps, to make an excep-

* He alludes here to the story of a Pope, who (once a poor fisherman) through every preferment he rose to, even to that of the cardinalate, hung up in view of all his guests, his net,

tion for these two ladies. With all my heart. My Clarissa has, if *woman* has, a soul capable of friendship. Her flame is bright and steady. But Miss Howe's, were it not kept up by her mother's opposition, is too vehement to endure. How often have I known opposition not only cement friendship, but create love? I doubt not but poor Hickman would fare the better with this vixen, if her mother were as heartily against him, as she is for him.

Thus much indeed, as to these two ladies, I will grant thee: that the active spirit of the one, and the meek disposition of the other, may make their friendship more durable than it would otherwise be; for this is certain, that in every friendship, whether male or female, there must be a man and a woman spirit (that is to say, one of them, a *forbearing* one) to make it permanent.

But this I pronounce, as a truth, which all experience confirms; that friendship between women never holds to the sacrifice of capital gratifications, or to the endangering of life, limb, or estate, as it often does in our nobler sex.

Well, but next comes an indictment against poor *beauty!*—What has beauty done, that *Miss Howe* should be offended at it?—Miss Howe, Jack, is a charming girl. *She* has no reason to quarrel with beauty!—Didst ever see her?—Too much fire and spirit in her eye indeed, for a girl!—But that's no fault with a man, that can lower that fire and spirit at pleasure; and I know I am the man that can.

A sweet auburn beauty is Miss Howe. A first beauty among beauties, when her sweeter friend [with such an assemblage of serene gracefulness, of

as a token of humility. But, when he arrived at the pontificate, he took it down, saying, that there was no need of the net, when he had caught the fish.

natural elegance, of native sweetness, yet conscious, though not arrogant, dignity, every feature glowing with intelligence] is not in company.

The difference between the two, when together, I have sometimes delighted to *read*, in the addresses of a stranger entering into the presence of both, when standing side by side. There never was an instance on such an occasion where the stranger paid not his first devoirs to my Clarissa.

A respectful solemn awe sat upon every feature of the addresser's face. His eye seemed to ask leave to approach her; and lower than common, whether man or woman, was the bow or court'sy. And although this awe was immediately diminished by her condescending sweetness, yet went it not so entirely off, but that you might see the reverence remain, as if the person saw more of the goddess than of the woman in her.

But the moment the same stranger turns to Miss Howe, (though proud and saucy, and erect and bridling, she) you will observe by the turn of his countenance, and the air of his address, a kind of equality assumed. He appears to have discovered the woman in her, charming as that woman is. He smiles. He seems to expect repartee and smartness, and is never disappointed. But then visibly he prepares himself to *give* as well as *take*. He dares, after he has been awhile in her company, to dispute a point with her—every point yielded up to the other, though no assuming or dogmatical air compels it.

In short, with Miss Howe, a bold man sees [no doubt but Sir George Colmar did] that he and she may either very soon be familiar together, [I mean with innocence] or he may so far incur her displeasure, as to be forbid her presence for ever.

For my own part, when I was first introduced to

this lady, which was by my goddess when she herself was a visitor at Mrs. Howe's; I had not been half an hour with her, but I even hungered and thirsted after a romping bout with the lively rogue; and in the second or third visit, was more deterred by the delicacy of her friend, than by what I apprehended from her own. This charming creature's presence, thought I, awes us both. And I wished her absence, though any other woman were present, that I might try the difference in Miss Howe's behaviour before her friend's face, or behind her back.

Delicate women *make* delicate women, as well as decent men. With all Miss Howe's fire and spirit, it was easy to see, by her very eye, that she watched for lessons, and feared reproof, from the penetrating eye of her milder dispositioned friend *: and yet it was as easy to observe, in the candour and sweet manners of the other, that the fear which Miss Howe stood in of her, was more owing to her own generous apprehension that she fell short of her excellences, than to Miss Harlowe's consciousness of excellence over *her*. I have often, since I came at Miss Howe's letters, revolved this just and fine praise contained in one of them †: 'every one saw, that the preference they gave *you* to *themselves* exalted you not into any visible triumph over them; for you had always something to say, on every point you carried, that raised the yielding heart, and left every one pleased and satisfied

* Miss Howe, in Vol. III. p. 89, says, *that she was always more afraid of* Clarissa *than of her mother*; and, in Vol. III. p. 229, *that she fears her almost as much as she loves her*; and in many other places, in her letters, verifies this observation of Lovelace.

† Vol. IV. p. 65.

with themselves, though they carried not off the palm.'

As I propose in a more advanced life, to endeavour to atone for my youthful freedoms with individuals of the sex, by giving cautions and instructions to the whole, I have made a memorandum to enlarge upon this doctrine;—to wit, that it is full as necessary to direct daughters in the choice of their female companions, as it is to guard them against the designs of men.

I say not this, however, to the disparagement of Miss Howe. She has from *pride*, what her friend has from *principle* [the lord help the sex, if they had not pride!]—But yet I am confident, that Miss Howe is indebted to the conversation and correspondence of Miss Harlowe for her highest improvements. But, both these ladies out of the question, I make no scruple to aver [and I, Jack, should know something of the matter] that there have been more girls ruined, at least *prepared* for ruin, by their own sex, (taking in servants as well as companions) than *directly* by the attempts and delusions of men.

But it is time enough when I am old and joyless, to enlarge upon this topic.

As to the comparison between the two ladies, I will expatiate more on the subject (for I like it) when I have *had them both*. Which this letter of the vixen girl's, I hope thou wilt allow, warrants me to try for.

I return to the consideration of a few more of its contents, to justify my vengeance so nearly now in view.

As to Mrs. Townsend; her manlike spirit; her two brothers; and the ships' crews—I say nothing but this to the insolent threatening—let them come! —But as to her sordid menace—to *repay the hor-*

rid villain, as she calls me, *for all my vileness*, by BROKEN BONES!—Broken bones, Belford!—who can bear this porterly threatening!—Broken bones, Jack!—D—n the little vulgar—give me a name for her—but I banish all *furious* resentment. If I get these two girls into my power, heaven forbid that I should be a second Phalaris, who turned his bull upon the artist! No bones of their's will I break—they shall come off with me upon much lighter terms!—

But these fellows are smugglers, it seems. And am not I a smuggler too?—I am; and have not the least doubt, but I shall have secured my goods before Thursday, or Wednesday either.

But did I want a plot, what a charming new one does this letter of Miss Howe strike me out? I am almost sorry, that I have fixed upon one.—For here, how easy would it be for me, to assemble a crew of swabbers, and to create a Mrs. Townsend (whose person, thou seest, my beloved knows not) to come on Tuesday, at Miss Howe's repeated solicitations, in order to carry my beloved to a warehouse of my own providing?

This, however, is my triumphant hope, that at the very time, that these ragamuffins will be at Hampstead, (looking for us) my dear Miss Harlowe and I [so the fates, I imagine, have ordained] shall be fast asleep in each other's arms in town.—Lie still, villain, till the times comes.—My heart, Jack! my heart!—It is always thumping away on the remotest prospects of this nature.

But it seems, that *the vileness of this specious monster* [meaning me, Belford!] has brought Hickman into credit with her. So I have done *some* good! But to whom I cannot tell: for this poor fellow, should I permit him to have this termagant, will be punished, as many times we all are, by the enjoy-

ment of his own wishes—nor can she be happy, as I take it, with him, were he to govern himself by her will, and have none of his own; since never was there a directing wife, who knew where to stop: power makes such a one wanton—she despises the man she can govern. Like Alexander, who wept that he had no more worlds to conquer, she will be looking out for new exercises for her power, till she grow uneasy to herself, a discredit to her husband, and a plague to all about her.

But this honest fellow, it seems, *with tears in his eyes*, and with *humble prostration* besought the vixen to *permit* him to set out in his *chariot and four*, in order to *give himself the glory of protecting such an oppressed innocent, in the face of the whole world.* Nay, he *reddened*, it seems; and *trembled* too! as he read the fair complainant's letter.—How *valiant* is all this!—Women love *brave* men; and no wonder, that his *tears*, his *trembling*, and his *prostration*, gave him high reputation with the meek Miss Howe.

But dost think, Jack, that I in the like case (and equally affected with the distress) should have acted thus? Dost think, that I should not first have rescued the lady, and then, if needful, have asked excuse for it, the lady in my hand?—Would'st not *thou* have done thus, as well as I?

But, 'tis best as it is. Honest Hickman may now sleep in a whole skin. And yet that is more perhaps than he would have done (the lady's deliverance *unattempted*) had I come at this *requested permission* of his any other way than by a letter that it must not be known I have intercepted.

Miss Howe thinks I may be diverted from pursuing my charmer, by some new-started *villany*. *Villany* is a word that she is extremely fond of. But I can tell her, that it is impossible I should, till

the end of this *villany* be obtained. Difficulty is a *stimulus* with such a spirit as mine. I thought Miss Howe knew me better. Were she to offer herself, person for person, in the romancing zeal of her friendship, to save her friend, it should not do, while the dear creature is on this side the moon.

She thanks heaven, that her friend has received her letter of the 7th. We are all glad of it. She ought to thank me too. But I will not at present claim her thanks.

But when she rejoices that the letter went safe, does she not, in effect, call out for vengeance, and *expect* it!—All in good time, Miss Howe. *When settest thou out for the Isle of Wight, love?*

I will close at this time with desiring thee to make a *list* of the virulent terms with which the inclosed letter abounds: and then, if thou supposest, that I have made such another, and have added to it all the flowers of the same blow, in the former letters of the same saucy creature, and those in that of Miss Harlowe which she left for me on her elopement, thou wilt certainly think, that I have provocations sufficient to justify me in all that I shall do to either.

Return the inclosed the moment thou hast perused it.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday night—Monday morning.

I WENT down with revenge in my *heart*, the contents of Miss Howe's letter almost engrossing me, the moment that Miss Harlowe and Mrs. Moore (accompanied by Miss Rawlins) came in: but in my countenance all the gentle, the placid, the

serene, that the glass could teach; and in my behaviour all the polite, that such an *unpolite* creature, as she has often told me I am, could put on.

Miss Rawlins was sent for home almost as soon as she came in, to entertain an unexpected visitor; to her great regret, as well as to the disappointment of my fair-one, as I could perceive from the looks of both: for they had agreed, it seems, if I went to town, as I said I intended to do, to take a walk upon the Heath, at least in Mrs. Moore's garden; and who knows, what might have been the issue, had the spirit of curiosity in the one met with the spirit of communication in the other?

Miss Rawlins promised to return, if possible: but sent to excuse herself: her visitor intending to stay with her all night.

I rejoiced in my heart at her message; and, after much supplication, obtained the favour of my beloved's company for another walk in the garden, having, as I told her, abundance of things to say, to propose, and to be informed of, in order ultimately to govern myself in my future steps.

She had vouchsafed, I should have told thee, with eyes turned from me, and in an *half-aside* attitude, to sip two dishes of tea in my company—dear soul! —how anger *unpolishes* the most polite! for I never saw Miss Harlowe behave so awkwardly. I imagined she knew not how to be awkward.

When we were in the garden, I poured my whole soul into her attentive ear; and besought her returning favour.

She told me, that she had formed her scheme for her future life: that, vile as the treatment was which she had received from me, that was not all the reason she had for rejecting my suit: but that, on the maturest deliberation, she was convinced,

that she could neither be happy with me, nor make me happy; and she enjoined me, for both our sakes, to think no more of her.

The captain, I told her, was rid down post in a manner, to forward my wishes with her uncle.—Lady Betty and Miss Montague were undoubtedly arrived in town by this time. I would set out early in the morning to attend them. They adored her. They longed to see her. They *would* see her.—They would not be denied her company into Oxfordshire. Whither could she better go, to be free from her brother's insults?—Whither, to be absolutely made unapprehensive of any body else? —Might I have any hopes of her returning favour, if Miss Howe could be prevailed upon to intercede for me?

Miss Howe prevailed upon to intercede for you! repeated she, with a scornful bridle, but a very pretty one.—And there she stopt.

I repeated the concern it would be to me to be under a necessity of mentioning the misunderstanding to Lady Betty and my cousin, as a misunderstanding still to be made up; and as if I were of very *little* consequence to a dear creature who was of so *much* to me; urging, that these circumstances would extremely lower me not only in my own opinion, but in that of my relations.

But still she referred to Miss Howe's next letter; and all the concession I could bring her to in this whole conference was, that she would wait the arrival and visit of the two ladies, if they came in a day or two, or before she received the expected letter from Miss Howe.

Thank heaven for this! thought I. And now may I go to town with hopes at my return to find thee, dearest, where I shall leave thee.

But yet, as she may find reasons to change her

mind in my absence, I shall not entirely trust to this. My fellow, therefore, who is in the house, and who, by Mrs. Bevis's kind intelligence, will know every step she can take, shall have Andrew and a horse ready, to give me immediate notice of her motions; and moreover, go whither she will, he shall be one of her retinue, though unknown to herself, if possible.

This was all I could make of the fair inexorable. Should I be glad of it, or sorry for it?—

Glad, I believe: and yet my pride is confoundedly abated to think, that I had so little hold in the affections of this daughter of the Harlowes.

Don't tell me, that virtue and principle are her guides on this occasion! — 'Tis *pride*, a greater pride than my own, that governs her. Love, she has none, thou seest; nor ever had; at least not in a superior degree. Love that deserves the name, never was under the dominion of *prudence*, or of any *reasoning* power. She cannot bear to be thought a *woman*, I warrant! And if, in the last attempt, I find her *not* one, what will she be the worse for the trial!—No one is to blame for suffering an evil he cannot shun or avoid.

Were a general to be overpowered, and robbed by a highwayman, would he be less fit for the command of an army on that account?—If indeed the general, pretending great valour, and having boasted that he never would be robbed, were to make but faint resistance when he was brought to the test, and to yield his purse when he was master of his own sword, then indeed will the highwayman who robs him be thought the braver man.

But from these last conferences am I furnished with one argument in defence of my favourite purpose, which I never yet pleaded.

O Jack! what a difficulty must a man be allow-

ed to have, to conquer a predominant passion, be it what it will, when the gratifying of it is in his *power*, however wrong he knows it to be to resolve to gratify it! Reflect upon this; and then wilt thou be able to account for, if not to excuse, a projected crime, which has *habit* to plead for it, in a breast as stormy as uncontrollable!

This that follows is my new argument———

Should she fail in the trial; should I succeed; and should she refuse to go on with me; and even resolve not to marry me (of which I can have no notion); and should she disdain to be obliged to me for the handsome provision I should be proud to make for her, even to the *half of my estate*; yet cannot she be altogether unhappy—is she not entitled to an independent fortune? Will not Col. Morden, as her trustee, put her in possession of it? And did she not in our former conference point out the *way of life*, that she always preferred to the *married life*—to wit, 'To take her good Norton for her directress and guide, and to live upon her own estate in the manner her grandfather desired she should live *?'

It is moreover to be considered that she cannot, according to her own notions, recover above *one half* of her fame, were we now to intermarry; so much does she think she has suffered by her going off with me. And will she not be always repining and mourning for the loss of the *other half*?—And if she must live a life of such uneasiness and regret for *half*, may she not as well repine and mourn for the *whole*?

Nor, let me tell thee, will her own scheme of penitence, in this case, be half so perfect, if she do *not* fall, as if she *does*: for what a foolish penitent will she make, who has nothing to repent of;—she

* See p. 228.

piques herself, thou knowest, and makes it matter of reproach to me, that she went not off with me by her own consent; but was tricked out of herself.

Nor upbraid thou me upon the meditated breach of vows so repeatedly made. She will not, thou seest, *permit* me to fulfil them. And if she *would*, this I have to say, that at the time I made the most solemn of them, I was fully determined to keep them. But what prince thinks himself obliged any longer to observe the articles of treaties the most sacredly sworn to, than suits with his interest or inclination; although the consequence of the infraction must be, as he knows, the destruction of thousands?

Is not this then the result of all, that Miss Clarissa Harlowe, if it be not her own fault, may be as virtuous *after* she has lost her honour, as it is called, as she was *before*? She may be a more eminent example to her sex; and if she yield (a *little* yield) in the trial, may be a *completer penitent*. Nor can she, but by her own wilfulness, be reduced to *low fortunes*.

And thus may her *old* nurse and she, an *old* coachman and a pair of *old* coach-horses; and two or three *old* maid-servants, and perhaps a *very old* footman or two, (for every thing will be old and penitential about her) live very comfortably together; reading *old* sermons, and *old* prayer-books, and relieving *old* men and *old* women; and giving *old* lessons, and *old* warnings, upon new subjects, as well as *old* ones, to the young ladies of her neighbourhood; and so pass on to a good *old* age, doing a great deal of good both by precept and example in her generation.

And is a woman who can live thus prettily without *control*; who ever did prefer, and who *still* pre-

fers, the *single* to the *married life*; and who will be enabled to do every thing, that the plan she had formed will direct her to do; to be said to be ruined, undone, and such sort of stuff?—I have no patience with the pretty fools, who use these strong words to describe a transitory evil; an evil which a mere church-form makes none?

At this rate of romancing, how many *flourishing ruins* dost thou, as well as I, know? Let us but look about us, and we shall see some of the haughtiest and most *censorious* spirits among our acquaintance of that sex, now passing for chaste wives, of whom strange stories might be told; and others, whose husbands' hearts have been made to ache for their gaities, both before and after marriage; and yet know not half so much of them, as some of us honest fellows could tell them.

But, having thus satisfied myself in relation to the worst that can happen to this *charming creature*, and that it will be her own fault, if she be unhappy; I have not at all reflected upon what is likely to be *my own lot*.

This has always been my notion, though Miss Howe grudges us rakes the best of the sex, and says, that the worst is too good for us*; that the wife of a libertine ought to be pure, spotless, uncontaminated. To what purpose has such a one lived a free life, but to know the world, and to make his advantage of it!—And, to be *very* serious, it would be a misfortune to the public for two persons, heads of a family, to be both bad; since, between two such, a race of varlets might be propagated (Lovelaces and Belfords, if thou wilt) who might do great mischief in the world.

Thou seest at bottom that I am not an abandoned fellow; and that there is a mixture of gravity in

* See p. 46.

me. This, as I grow older, may increase; and when my active capacity begins to abate, I may sit down with the preacher, and resolve all my past life into vanity and vexation of spirit.

This is certain, that I shall never find a woman so well suited to my taste, as Miss Clarissa Harlowe. I only wish that I may have such a lady as her to comfort and adorn my setting sun. I have often thought it very unhappy for us both, that so excellent a creature sprang up a little too late for my *setting out*, and a little too early in my *progress*, before I can think of *returning*. And yet, as I have picked up the sweet traveller in my way, I cannot help wishing, that she would bear me company in the *rest* of my journey, although she were to step out of her own path to oblige me. And then, perhaps, we could put up in the *evening* at the same *inn*; and be very happy in each other's conversation; recounting the difficulties and dangers we had passed in our way to it.

I imagine, that thou wilt be apt to suspect, that some passages in this letter were written in town. Why, Jack, I cannot but say, that the Westminster air is a little grosser than that at Hampstead; and the conversation of Mrs. Sinclair, and the nymphs, less innocent than Mrs. Moore's and Miss Rawlins's. And I think in my heart, that I can say and write those things at one place, which I cannot at the other; nor indeed any where else.

I came to town about seven this morning—all necessary directions and precautions remembered to be given.

I besought the favour of an audience before I set out. I was desirous to see which of her lovely faces she was pleased to put on, after another night had passed. But she was resolved, I found, to leave our quarrel open. She would not give me

an opportunity so much as to intreat her again to close it, before the arrival of Lady Betty and my cousin.

I had notice from my proctor, by a few lines brought by a man and horse, just before I set out, that all difficulties had been for two days past surmounted; and that I might have the licence for fetching. I sent up the letter to my beloved, by Mrs. Bevis, with a repeated request for admittance to her presence upon it: but neither did this stand me in stead. I suppose she thought it would be allowing of the consequences that were naturally to be expected to follow the obtaining of this instrument, if she had consented to see me on the contents of this letter, having refused me that honour before I sent it up to her.—No surprising her.—No advantage to be taken of her inattention to the nicest circumstances.

And now, Belford, I set out upon business.

LETTER XXIX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday, June 12.

DIDST ever see a licence, Belford?

Edmund, by divine permission, Lord Bishop of London, to our well-beloved in Christ, Robert Lovelace, [your servant, my good lord! What have I done to merit so much goodness, who never saw your lordship in my life?] *of the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields, bachelor, and Clarissa Harlowe, of the same parish, spinster, sendeth greeting.—WHEREAS ye are, as is alleged, determined to enter into the holy state of matrimony* [this is only alleged, thou observest] *by and with the consent of, &c. &c. &c. and are very desirous of obtaining your marriage to*

be solemnized in the face of the church: we are willing that such your honest desires [honest desires, Jack!] *may more speedily have their due effect: and therefore, that ye may be able to procure such marriage to be freely and lawfully solemnized in the parish church of St. Martin in the Fields, or St. Giles in the Fields, in the county of Middlesex, by the rector, vicar, or curate thereof, at any time of the year,* [at ANY time of the year, Jack!] *without publication of bans: provided, that by reason of any precontract,* [I verily think that I have had three or four precontracts in my time; but the good girls have not claimed upon them of a long while] *consanguinity, affinity, or any other lawful cause whatsoever, there be no lawful impediment in this behalf; and that there be not at this time any action, suit, plaint, quarrel, or demand, moved or depending before any judge, ecclesiastical or temporal, for or concerning any marriage contracted by or with either of you; and that the said marriage be openly solemnized in the church above mentioned, between the hours of eight and twelve in the forenoon; and without prejudice to the minister of the place where the said woman is a parishioner: we do hereby, for good causes* [it cost me—let me see, Jack—what did it cost me?] *give and grant our licence, or faculty, as well to you the parties contracting, as to the rector, vicar, or curate of the said church, where the said marriage is intended to be solemnized, to solemnize the same, in manner and form above specified, according to the rites and ceremonies prescribed in the book of common-prayer in that behalf published by authority of Parliament. Provided always, that if hereafter any fraud shall appear to have been committed, at the time of granting this licence, either by false suggestions, or concealment of the truth,* [now this, Belford, is a little hard upon us: for I cannot say, that

every one of our suggestions is literally true:—so, in good conscience, I ought not to marry under this licence] *the licence shall be void to all intents and purposes, as if the same had not been granted. And in that case, we do inhibit all ministers whatsoever, if any thing of the premises shall come to their knowledge, from proceeding to the celebration of the said marriage, without first consulting us, or our Vicar General.* Given, &c.

Then follow the registrar's name, and a large pendent seal, with these words round it—SEAL OF THE VICAR-GENERAL AND OFFICIAL PRINCIPAL OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON.

A good whimsical instrument, take it altogether! But what, thinkest thou, are the arms to this matrimonial harbinger? — Why, in the first place, *two crossed swords;* to show that marriage is a state of offence as well as defence; *three lions,* to denote, that those who enter into the state, ought to have a triple proportion of courage. And [couldst thou have imagined that these priestly fellows, in so solemn a case, would cut their jokes upon poor souls, who came to have their *honest desires* put in a way to be gratified;] there are *three crooked horns,* smartly topknotted with ribbands; which being the ladies wear, seem to indicate that they may very probably adorn as well as bestow the bull's feather.

To describe it according to heraldry art, if I am not mistaken—gules, two swords, saltire-wise, or; second coat, a chevron sable between three bugle-horns, OR [*so it ought to be*]: on a chief of the second, three lions rampant of the first—but the devil take them for their hieroglyphics, should I say, if I were determined in good earnest to marry!

And determined to marry I would be, were it not for this consideration, that once married, and I am married for life.

That's the plague of it!—Could a man do as the birds do, change every Valentine's day, [a *natural* appointment! for birds have not the *sense*, forsooth, to fetter themselves, as we wiseacre men take great and solemn pains to do] there would be nothing at all in it. And what a glorious time would the *lawyers* have, on the one hand, with their *noverint universi's*, and suits commenceable on restitution of goods and chattels; and the *parsons*, on the other, with their indulgences [renewable annually, as *other* licences] to the *honest desires* of their clients?

Then, were a stated mulct, according to rank or fortune, to be paid on every change, towards the exigences of the state, [but none on *renewals* with the *old loves*, for the sake of encouraging constancy, especially among the *minores*] the change would be made sufficiently difficult, and the whole public would be the better for it; while those children, which the parents could not agree about maintaining, might be considered as the *children of the public*, and provided for like the children of the ancient Spartans; who were (as ours would in this case be) a nation of heroes. How, Jack, could I have improved upon Lycurgus's Institutions had I been a lawgiver!

Did I never show you a scheme, which I drew up on such a notion as this?—In which I demonstrated the *conveniences*, and obviated the *inconveniences*, of changing the present mode to this? I believe I never did.

I remember I proved, to a demonstration, that such a change would be a means of annihilating, absolutely annihilating, four or five very atrocious and capital sins.—*Rapes*, vulgarly so called; adultery, and fornication; nor would *polygamy* be panted after. Frequently would it prevent *murders* and *duelling*: hardly any such thing as *jealousy*

(the cause of shocking violences) would be heard of: and hypocrisy between man and wife be banished the bosoms of each. Nor, probably, would the reproach of *barrenness* rest, as now it too often does, where it is least deserved.—Nor would there possibly be such a person as a barren woman.

Moreover, what a multitude of domestic quarrels would be avoided, were such a scheme carried into execution! Since both sexes would bear with each other, in the view that they could help themselves in a few months.

And then what a charming subject for conversation would be the gallant and generous last partings between man and wife! each, perhaps, a new mate in eye, and rejoicing secretly in the manumission, could afford to be complaisantly sorrowful in appearance. 'He presented *her* with this jewel, it will be said by the reporter, for *example* sake: she *him* with that: how *he* wept! How *she* sobbed! How they looked after one another!' Yet, that's the jest of it, neither of them wishing to stand another twelve months trial.

And if giddy fellows, or giddy girls, misbehave in a first marriage, whether from *noviceship*, having expected to find more in the matter than can be found; or from *perverseness* on *her* part, or *positiveness* on *his*, each being mistaken in the other [a mighty difference, Jack, in the same person, an *inmate*, or a *visitor*;] what a fine opportunity will each have, by this scheme, of recovering a lost character, and of setting all right in the next adventure?

And, O Belford, with what joy, with what rapture, would the *changelins* (or *changeables*, if thou like that word better) number the weeks, the days, the hours, as the annual obligation approached to its desirable period!

As for the spleen or vapours, no such malady would be known or heard of. The physical tribe would, indeed, be the sufferers, and the only sufferers; since fresh health and fresh spirits, the consequences of sweet blood and sweet humours, (the mind and body continually pleased with each other) would perpetually flow in; and the joys of *expectation*, the highest of all our joys, would invigorate and keep all alive.

But, that no body of men might suffer, the *physicians*, I thought, might turn *parsons*, as there would be a great demand for parsons. Besides, as they would be partakers in the general benefit, they must be sorry fellows indeed, if they preferred themselves to the public.

Every one would be married a dozen times at least. Both men and women would be careful of their characters and polite in their behaviour, as well as delicate in their *persons*, and elegant in their *dress*, [a great matter each of these, let me tell thee, to keep passion alive] either to induce a renewal with the *old love*, or to recommend themselves to a *new*. While the newspapers would be crowded with paragraphs; all the world their readers, as all the world would be concerned to see *who and who's together*—

'Yesterday, for instance, entered into the holy 'state of matrimony' [we should all speak reverently of matrimony then] 'the Right Honourable Robert Earl of M.' [I shall be an earl before that time] 'with her Grace the Duchess Dowager of fifty manors; his lordship's one-and-thirtieth wife.'—I shall then be contented, perhaps, to take up, as it is called, with a widow. But she must not have had more than one husband neither. Thou knowest, that I am nice in these particulars.

I know, Jack, that thou, for thy part, wilt approve of my scheme.

As Lord M. and I, between us, have three or four boroughs at command, I think I will get into parliament, in order to bring in a bill for this good purpose.

Neither will the House of Parliament, nor the houses of convocation, have reason to object to it. And all the courts, whether *spiritual* or *sensual*, *civil* or *uncivil*, will find their account in it, when passed into a law.

By my soul, I should be apprehensive of a general insurrection, and that incited by the women, were such a bill to be thrown out.—For here is the excellency of the scheme: the women will have equal reason with the men to be pleased with it.

Dost think, that *old prerogative Harlowe*, for example, must not, if such a law were in being, have pulled in his horns?—So excellent a wife as she has, would never else have *renewed* with such a gloomy tyrant: who, as well as all other married tyrants, must have been upon good behaviour from year to year.

A termagant wife, if such a law were to pass, would be a phœnix.

The *churches* would be the only *market-places* for the fair sex; and *domestic excellence* the capital recommendation.

Nor would there be an *old maid* in Great Britain, and all its territories. For what an odd soul must she be, who could not have her *twelvemonth's trial?*

In short, a total alteration for the better, in the *morals* and *way of life* in both sexes must, in a very few years, be the consequence of such a salutary law.

Who would have expected such a one from me! I wish the devil owe me not a spite for it.

Then would not the distinction be very pretty, Jack? as in flowers; such a gentleman, or such a lady, is an ANNUAL—such a one a PERENNIAL.

One difficulty, however, as I remember, occured to me, upon the probability that a wife might be *enceinte*, as the lawyers call it. But thus I obviated it.

That no man should be allowed to marry another woman without his *then* wife's consent, till she were broughtto-bed, and he had defrayed all incident charges; and till it was agreed upon between them, whether the child should be *his*, *hers*, or the *public's*. The women in this case, to have what I call the *coercive option*: for I would not have it in the man's power to be a dog neither.

And indeed I gave the turn of the scale in every part of my scheme in the women's favour: for dearly do I love the sweet rogues.

How infinitely more preferable this my scheme to the polygamy one of the old Patriarchs; who had wives and concubines without number!—I believe David and Solomon had their hundreds *at a time*. Had they not, Belford?

Let me add, that *annual parliaments*, and *annual marriages*, are the projects next my heart. How could I expatiate upon the benefits that would arise from both.

LETTER XXX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

WELL, but now my plots thicken; and my employment of writing to thee on this subject will soon come to a conclusion. For now, having got the

licence; and Mrs. Townsend with her tars being to come to Hampstead next Wednesday or Thursday; and another letter possibly or message from Miss Howe, to inquire how Miss Harlowe does, upon the rustic's report of her ill health, and to express her wonder that she has not heard from her in answer to hers on her escape;—I must soon blow up the lady, or be blown up myself. And so I am preparing, with Lady Betty and my cousin Montague, to wait upon my beloved with a coach and four, or a set; for Lady Betty will not stir out with a pair, for the world: though but for two or three miles. And this is a well-known part of her character.

But as to the arms upon the coach and trappings?

Dost thou not know, that a Blunt's must supply her, while her own is new lining and repairing? An opportunity she is willing to take now she is in town. Nothing of this kind can be done to her mind in the country. Liveries nearly Lady Betty's.

Thou hast seen Lady Betty Lawrance several times—hast thou not, Belford?

No, never in my life.

But thou hast; and lain with her too; or fame does thee more credit than thou deservest—why, Jack, knowest thou not Lady Betty's other name?

Other name!—Hast she two?

She has. And what thinkest thou of Lady Bab Wallis?

O the devil!

Now thou hast it. Lady Barbara, thou knowest, lifted up in circumstances, and by pride, never appears or produces herself, but on occasions special—to pass to men of quality or price, for a duchess, or countess, at least. She has always been admired for a grandeur in her air, that few woman of

quality can come up to: and never was supposed to be other than what she passed for; though often and often a paramour for lords.

And who, thinkest thou, is my cousin Montague?

Nay, how should I know?

How indeed! Why, my little Johanetta Golding, a lively, yet modest-looking girl, is my cousin Montague.

There, Belford, is an aunt!—There's a cousin!—Both have wit at will. Both are accustomed to ape quality. Both are genteely descended. Mistresses of themselves, and well educated—yet past pity—true *Spartan* dames; ashamed of nothing but *detection*—always, therefore, upon their guard against that. And in their own conceit, when assuming top parts, the very quality they ape.

And how dost think I dress them out?—I'll tell thee.

Lady Betty in a rich gold tissue, adorned with jewels of high price.

My cousin Montague in a pale pink, standing on end with silver flowers of her own working. Charlotte, as well as my beloved, is admirable at her needle. Not quite so richly jewel'd out as Lady Betty; but ear-rings and solitaire very valuable, and infinitely becoming.

Johanetta, thou knowest, has a good complexion, a fine neck, and ears remarkably fine—so has Charlotte. She is nearly of Charlotte's stature too.

Laces both, the richest that could be procured.

Thou canst not imagine what a sum the loan of the jewels cost me; though but for three days.

This sweet girl will half ruin me. But seest thou not by this time, that her reign is short!—It must be so. And Mrs. Sinclair has already prepared every thing for her reception once more.

* * *

HERE come the ladies—

How dress advantages women! — Especially those who have naturally a genteel air and turn, and have had education.

Hadst thou seen how they paraded it—cousin, and cousin, and nephew, at every word; Lady Betty bridling and looking *haughtily condescending*: Charlotte galanting her fan, and swimming over the floor without touching it.

How I long to see my niece elect! cries one—for they are told, that we are not married; and are pleased, that I have not put the slight upon them, that they had apprehended from me.

How I long to see my dear cousin that is to be, the other!

Top your parts, ye villains — you know how nicely I distinguish. There will be no passion in *this case* to blind the judgment, and to help on meditated delusion, as when you engage with fair sinners. My charmer is as cool and as distinguishing, though not quite so learned in her own sex, as I am. Your commonly assumed dignity won't do for me now, airs of superiority, as if *born* to rank. —But no over-do! — Doubting nothing. Let not your faces arraign your hearts.

Easy and unaffected!—Your very dresses will give you pride enough.

A little *graver*, Lady Betty.—More significance, less bridling in your dignity.

That's the air! Charmingly hit——Again——— You have it.

Devil take you!—Less arrogance. You are got into airs of *young quality*. Be less sensible of your new condition. People born to dignity command respect without needing to require it.

Now for *your* part, cousin Charlotte!—

Pretty well. But a little too frolicly that air—

yet have I prepared my beloved to expect in you both, great vivacity and quality freedom.

Curse those eyes!—Those glances will never do. A down-cast bashful turn, if you can command it —look upon me. Suppose me now to be my beloved.

Devil take that leer. Too *significantly* arch!—Once I knew you the girl I would now have you to be.

Sprightly, but not confident, cousin Charlotte!—Be sure forget not to look down, or aside, when looked at. When eyes meet eyes, be your's the retreating ones. Your face will bear examination.

O Lord! Lord! that so young a creature can so soon forget the innocent appearance she first charmed by; and which I thought born with you all!—Five years to ruin what twenty had been building up!—How natural the latter lesson! How difficult to regain the former!

A stranger, as I hope to be saved, to the principal arts of your sex!—Once more, what-a-devil has your heart to do in your eyes?

Have I not told you, that my beloved is a great observer of the eyes? She once quoted upon me a text*, which showed me how she came by her knowledge—Dorcas's were found guilty of treason the first moment she saw her.

Once more, suppose *me* to be my charmer.—Now you are to encounter my *examining* eye, and my *doubting* heart—

That's my dear!
Study that air in the pier-glass!—
Charming!—Perfectly right!—
Your honours, now devils!—

* Ecclus. xxvi. *The whoredom of a woman may be known in her haughty looks and eye-lids. Watch over an impudent eye, and marvel not if it trespass against thee.*

Pretty well, cousin Charlotte, for a young country lady!—Till form yields to familiarity, you *may* courtesy low. You must not be supposed to have forgot your boarding-school airs.

But too low, too low, Lady Betty, for your years and your quality. The common fault of your sex will be your danger: aiming to be young too long!—The devil's in you all, when you judge of yourselves by your wishes, and by your vanity! Fifty, in that case, is never more than fifteen.

Graceful ease, conscious dignity, like that of my charmer, O how hard to hit!

But together now—

Charming!—That's the air, Lady Betty!—That's the cue, cousin Charlotte, suited to the character of each!—But once more, be sure to have a guard upon your eyes.

Never fear, nephew!—

Never fear, cousin!—

A dram of Barbadoes each—

And now we are gone—

LETTER XXXI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

At Mrs. Sinclair's, Monday afternoon.

ALL's right, as heart can wish!—In spite of all objection—in spite of a reluctance next to fainting—in spite of all foresight, vigilance, suspicion—once more is the charmer of my soul in her old lodgings!

Now throbs away every pulse! Now thump, thump, thumps my bounding heart for something!

But I have not time for the particulars of our management.

My beloved is now directing some of her clothes

to be packed up—never more to enter this house! Nor ever more will she, I dare say, when once again out of it.

Yet not so much as a condition of forgiveness!—The Harlowe-spirited fair one will not *deserve* my mercy!—She will wait for Miss Howe's next letter; and then if she find a *difficulty in her new schemes* [thank her for nothing]—will—will what?—Why even *then* will take time to consider, whether I am to be forgiven, or for ever rejected. An indifference that revives in my heart the remembrance of a thousand of the like nature.—And yet Lady Betty and Miss Montague [*a man would be tempted to think, Jack, that they wish her to provoke my vengeance*] declare, that I ought to be satisfied with such a proud suspension.

They are entirely attached to her. Whatever she says, *is, must be*, gospel! They are guarantees for her return to Hampstead this night. They are to go back with her. A supper bespoken by Lady Betty at Mrs. Moore's. All the vacant apartments there, by my permission, (for I had engaged them for a month certain) to be filled with them and their attendants, for a week at least, or till they can prevail upon the dear perverse, as they hope they shall, to restore me to her favour, and to accompany Lady Betty to Oxfordshire.

The dear creature has thus far condescended—that she will write to Miss Howe, and acquaint her with the present situation of things.

If she write, I shall see what she writes. But I believe she will have other employment soon.

Lady Betty is sure, she tells her, that she shall prevail upon her to forgive me; though she dares say, that I deserve not forgiveness. Lady Betty is too delicate to inquire strictly into the nature of

my offence. But it must be an offence against *herself*, against *Miss Montague*, against the *virtuous of the whole sex*, or it could not be so highly resented. Yet she will not leave her till she forgive me, and till she see our nuptials privately celebrated. Meantime, as she approves of her *uncle's expedient*, she will address her as *already my wife before strangers*.

Stedman her solicitor may attend her for orders, in relation to her chancery affair, at Hampstead. Not one hour they *can* be favoured with, will they lose from the company and conversation of so dear, so charming a new relation.

Hard then if she had not obliged them with her company, in their coach and four, to and from their cousin Leeson's, who longed (as they themselves had done) to see a lady so justly celebrated.

'How will Lord M. be raptured when he sees her, and can salute her as his niece!

'How will Lady Sarah bless herself!—She will now think her loss of the dear daughter she mourns for, happily supplied!'

Miss Montague dwells upon every word that falls from her lips. She perfectly adores her new cousin: 'for her cousin she *must* be. And her cousin will she call her! She answers for equal admiration in her sister Patty.

'Ay, cried I, (whispering loud enough for her to hear) how will my cousin Patty's dove's eyes glisten and run over, on the very first interview!—So gracious, so noble, so unaffected a dear creature!'

'What a happy family,' chorus we all, 'will ours be!'

These and such like congratulatory admirations every hour repeated: her modesty hurt by the ecstatic praises:—'her graces are too natural to herself for her to be proud of them:—but she must

be content to be punished for excellences that cast a shade upon the *most* excellent!'

In short, we are here, as at Hampstead, all joy and rapture: all of us except my beloved; in whose sweet face [her almost fainting reluctance to re-enter these doors not overcome] reigns a kind of anxious serenity!—but how will even that be changed in a few hours!

Methinks I begin to pity the half-apprehensive beauty!—But avaunt, thou unseasonably intruding pity! Thou hast more than once already well nigh undone me!—And, adieu, reflection! begone, consideration! and commiseration! I dismiss ye all, for at least a week to come!—Be remembered her broken word! her flight, when my fond soul was meditating mercy to her!—Be remembered her treatment of me in her letter on her escape to Hampstead!—Her Hampstead virulence! What is it she ought not to expect from an unchained Beelzebub, and a plotting villain?

Be her preference of the single life to *me* also remembered!—That she despises me!—That she even refuses to be my WIFE!—A proud Lovelace to be denied a *wife!*—To be more proudly rejected by a daughter of the *Harlowes!*—The ladies of my own family [she *thinks* them the ladies of my family] supplicating in vain for her returning favour to their despised kinsman, and taking laws from her still prouder punctilio.

Be the execrations of her vixen friend likewise remembered, poured out upon me from *her* representations, and thereby made her *own* execrations!

Be remembered still more particularly, the Townsend plot, set on foot between them, and now, in a day or two, ready to break out; and the *sordid threatening* thrown out against me by that little fury!

Is not *this* the crisis for which I have been long waiting? Shall Tomlinson, shall these women, be engaged, shall so many engines be set at work, at an immense expense, with infinite contrivance; and all to no purpose?

Is not *this* the hour of her trial—and in *her*, of the trial of the virtue of her whole sex, so long premeditated, so long threatened? Whether her frost be frost indeed? Whether her virtue be principle? Whether, if *once subdued, she will not be always subdued?* And will she not want the very crown of her glory, the proof of her till now all-surpassing excellence, if I stop short of the ultimate trial?

Now is the end of purposes long over-wed, often suspended, at hand. And need I to throw the sins of her cursed family into the too weighty scale? [*Abhorred be force!—Be the thoughts of force! There's no triumph over the will in force!*] This I know I have said *. But would I not have avoided it, if I could?—Have I not tried every other method? And have I any other recourse left me? Can she resent the *last outrage* more than she has resented a *fainter effort*?—And if her resentments run ever so high, cannot I repair by matrimony?—She will not refuse me, I know, Jack: the haughty beauty will not refuse me, when her pride of being corporally inviolate is brought down; when she can tell no tales, but when (be her resistance what it will) even her own sex will suspect a yielding in resistance; and when that modesty, which may fill her bosom with resentment, will lock up her speech.

But how know I, that I have not made my own difficulties?—Is she not a woman!—What redress

* Vol. IV. p. 239.

lies for a perpetrated evil?—Must she not *live?*—Her piety will secure her life.—And will not *time* be my friend!—What, in a word, will be her behaviour afterwards?—She cannot fly me!—She must forgive me—and, as I have often said, *once forgiven, will be for ever forgiven.*

Why then should this enervating pity unsteel my foolish heart?

It shall not. All these things will I remember; and think of nothing else, in order to keep up a resolution, which the women about me will have it I shall be still unable to hold.

I'll teach the dear charming creature to emulate me in contrivance!—I'll teach her to weave webs and plots against her conqueror! I'll show her, that in her smuggling schemes she is but a spider compared to me, and that she has all this time been spinning only a cobweb!

* * *

WHAT shall we do now! We are immersed in the depth of grief and apprehension! How ill do women bear disappointment!—Set upon going to Hampstead, and upon quitting for ever a house she re-entered with infinite reluctance; what things she intended to take with her, ready packed up; herself on tip-toe to be gone; and I prepared to attend her thither; she begins to be afraid, that she shall not go this night; and in grief and despair has flung herself into her old apartment; locked herself in; and through the key-hole Dorcas sees her on her knees—praying, I suppose, for a safe deliverance.

And from what?—And wherefore these agonizing apprehensions?

Why, here, this unkind Lady Betty, *with* the dear creature's knowledge, though to her concern, and this mad-headed cousin Montague *without* it,

while she was employed in directing her package, have hurried away in the coach to their own lodgings [only, indeed, to put up some night-clothes, and so forth, in order to attend their sweet cousin to Hampstead;] and, no less to my surprise than hers, are not yet returned.

I have sent to know the meaning of it.

In a great hurry of spirits, she would have had me to go myself. Hardly any pacifying her!—The girl, God bless her! is wild with her own idle apprehensions!—What is she afraid of?

I curse them both for their delay—my tardy villain, how he stays!—Devil fetch them!—Let them send their coach, and we'll go without them. In her hearing I bid the fellow tell them so.—Perhaps he stays to bring the coach, if any thing happens to hinder the ladies from attending my beloved this night.

* * *

Devil take them, again say I!—They *promised* too they would not stay, because it was but two nights ago, that a chariot was robbed at the foot of Hampstead Hill; which alarmed my fair-one when told of it.

Oh! here's Lady Betty's servant, with a billet.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Monday night.

Excuse us, dear nephew, I beseech you, to my dearest niece. One night cannot break squares. For here Miss Montague has been taken violently ill with three fainting fits, one after another. The hurry of her joy, I believe, to find your dear lady so much surpass all expectations, [never did family love, you know, reign so strong, as among us] and the too eager desire she had to attend her, have

occasioned it! For she has but weak spirits, poor girl! well as she looks.

If she be better, we will certainly go with you to-morrow morning, after we have breakfasted with *her*, at your lodgings. But whether she be, or not, I will do myself the pleasure to attend your lady to Hampstead; and will be with you for that purpose about nine in the morning. With due compliments to your most worthily beloved, I am

Yours affectionately,
ELIZAB. LAWRANCE.

Faith and troth, Jack, I know not what to do with myself: for here, just now having sent in the above note by Dorcas, out came my beloved with it in her hand: in a fit of phrensy!—True, by my soul!

She had indeed complained of *her head* all the evening.

Dorcas ran to me, out of breath, to tell me, that her lady was coming in some strange way: but she followed her so quick, that the frighted wench had not time to say in what way.

It seems, when she read the billet—Now indeed, said she, am I a lost creature; O the poor Clarissa Harlowe!

She tore off her head-dress: inquired where I was: and in she came, her shining tresses flowing about her neck, her ruffles torn, and hanging in tatters about her snowy hands; with her arms spread out; her eyes wildly turned, as if starting from their orbits—down sunk she at my feet, as soon as she approached me; her charming bosom heaving to her uplifted face; and clasping her arms about my knees, Dear Lovelace, said she, if

ever—if ever—if ever—and, unable to speak another word, quitting her clasping hold, down prostrate on the floor sunk she, neither in a fit nor out of one.

I was quite astonished.—All my purposes suspended for a few moments, I knew neither what to say, nor what to do. But, recollecting myself, am I *again*, thought I, in a way to be overcome, and made a fool of!—If I now recede, I am gone for ever.

I raised her; but down she sunk, as if quite disjointed; her limbs failing her—yet not in a fit neither. I never heard of or saw such a dear unaccountable: almost lifeless, and speechless too for a few moments: what must her apprehensions be at that moment? And for what?—An high-notioned dear soul!—Pretty ignorance!—thought I.

Never having met with so sincere, so unquestionable a repugnance, I was staggered—I was confounded—yet how should I know that it would be so till I tried?—And how, having proceeded thus far, could I stop, were I *not* to have had the women to goad me on, and to make light of circumstances, which they pretended to be better judges of than I?

I lifted her, however, into a chair; and in words of disordered passion, told her, all her fears were needless: wondered at them: begged of her to be pacified: besought her reliance on my faith and honour: and revowed all my old vows, and poured forth new ones.

At last, with an heart-breaking sob, I see, I see, Mr. Lovelace, in broken sentences she spoke—I see, I see—that at last—at last—I am ruined!—Ruined, if *your* pity—let me implore your pity!—And down on her bosom, like a half-broken-stalked

lily top-heavy with the overcharging dews of the morning, sunk her head, with a sigh that went to my heart.

All I could think of to re-assure her, when a little recovered, I said.

Why did I not send for their coach, as I had intimated? It might return in the morning for the ladies.

I had actually done so, I told her, on seeing her strange uneasiness. But it was then gone to fetch a doctor for Miss Montague, lest his chariot should not be so ready.

Ah! Lovelace! said she, with a doubting face; anguish in her imploring eye.

Lady Betty would think it very strange, I told her, if she were to know it was so disagreeable to her to stay one night for *her* company in the house where she had passed *so many*.

She called me names upon this—she had called me names before.—I was patient.

Let her go to Lady Betty's lodgings then; *directly* go; if the person I called Lady Betty was really Lady Betty.

If, my dear? Good heaven! what a villain does that IF show you believe me to be!

I cannot help it—I beseech you once more, let me go to Mrs. Leeson's, if *that* IF ought not to be said.

Then assuming a more resolute spirit—I *will* go! I will inquire my way!—I will go by myself!—And would have rushed by me.

I folded my arms about her to detain her; pleading the bad way I heard Miss Montague was in; and what a further concern her impatience, if she went, would give to poor Charlotte.

She would believe nothing I said, unless I would

instantly order a coach, (since she was not to have Lady Betty's, nor was permitted to go to Mrs. Leeson's) and let her go in it to Hampstead, late as it was, and all alone; so much the better: for in the house of *people* of whom Lady Betty, upon inquiry, had heard a bad character, [*dropt foolishly this, by my prating new relation, in order to do credit to herself, by depreciating others*] every thing, and every face, looking with so much meaning vileness, as well as *my own*, [*thou art still too sensible, thought I, my charmer!*] she was resolved not to stay another night.

Dreading what might happen as to her intellects, and being very apprehensive, that she might possibly go through a great deal before morning, (though more violent she could not well be with the worst she dreaded) I humoured her, and ordered Will to endeavour to get a coach directly to carry us to Hampstead; I cared not at what price.

Robbers, with whom I would have terrified her, she feared not—*I* was all her fear, I found; and this house her terror: for I saw plainly, that she now believed that Lady Betty and Miss Montague were both impostors.

But her mistrust is a little of the latest to do her service!

And, O Jack, the rage of love, the rage of revenge is upon me! By turns they tear me!—The progress already made—the womens' instigations—the power I shall have to try her to the utmost, and still to marry her, if she be not to be brought to cohabitation—let me perish, Belford, if she escape me now!

* * *

Will is not yet come back. Near eleven.

* * *

Will is this moment returned.—No coach to be got, either *for love or money*.

Once more, she urges—To Mrs. Leeson's let me go, Lovelace! Good Lovelace, let me go to Mrs. Leeson's! What is Miss Montague's illness to my terror?—For the Almighty's sake, Mr. Lovelace! —her hands clasped—

O my angel! what a wildness is this!—Do you know, do you see, my dearest life, what appearance your causeless apprehensions have given you?—Do you know it is past eleven o'clock?

Twelve, one, two, three, four—any hour—I care not—if you mean me honourably, let me go out of this hated house!

Thou'lt observe, Belford, that though this was written afterwards, yet (as in other places) I write it as it was spoken and happened, as if I had retired to put down every sentence as spoken. I know thou likest this lively *present tense* manner, as it is one of my peculiars.

Just as she had repeated the last words, *if you mean me honourably, let me go out of this hated house*, in came Mrs. Sinclair, in a great ferment—And what, pray, madam, has *this house* done to you?—Mr. Lovelace, you have known me some time; and, if I have not the niceness of this lady, I hope I do not deserve to be treated thus?

She set her huge arms akembo: *Hoh!* madam, let me tell you, I am amazed at your freedoms with my character! And, Mr. Lovelace, [holding up, and violently shaking her head] if you are a gentleman, and a man of honour—

Having never before seen any thing but obsequiousness in this woman, little as she liked her, she was frightened at her masculine air and fierce look—God help me! cried she—what will become

of me now! Then, turning her head hither and thither, in a wild kind of amaze, Whom have I for a protector! What will become of me now!

I will be your protector, my dearest love!—but indeed you are uncharitably severe upon poor Mrs. Sinclair! Indeed you are!—She is a gentlewoman born, and the relict of a man of honour; and though left in such circumstances as to oblige her to let lodgings, yet would she scorn to be guilty of a wilful baseness.

I hope so—it may be so—I may be mistaken—but—but there is no crime, I presume, no treason, to say I don't like her house.

The old dragon straddled up to her, with her arms kemboed again—her eye-brows erect, like the bristles upon a hog's back, and, scowling over her shortened nose, more than half-hid her ferret eyes. Her mouth was distorted. She pouted out her blubber-lips, as if to bellows up wind and sputter into her horse-nostrils; and her chin was curdled, and more than usually prominent with passion.

With two *hoh-madams* she accosted the frighted fair-one; who, terrified, caught hold of my sleeve.

I feared she would fall into fits; and, with a look of indignation, told Mrs. Sinclair, that these apartments were mine; and I could not imagine what she meant, either by listening to what passed between me and my spouse, or to come in uninvited; and still more I wondered at her giving herself these strange liberties.

I may be to blame, Jack, for suffering this wretch to give herself these airs; but her coming in was without my orders.

The old beldam, throwing herself into a chair, fell a blubbering and exclaiming. And the paci-

fying of her, and endeavouring to reconcile the lady to her, took up till near one o'clock.

And thus, between terror, and the late hour, and what followed, she was diverted from the thoughts of getting out of the house to Mrs. Leeson's, or any where else.

LETTER XXXII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday morn. June 13.

And now, Belford, I can go no further. The affair is over. Clarissa lives. And I am

Your humble servant,

R. LOVELACE.

The whole of this black transaction is given by the injured lady to Miss Howe, in her subsequent letters, dated Thursday, July 6. See Vol. VI. Letters xliv. xlv. xlvi.

LETTER XXXIII.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Watford, Wedn. June 14.

O thou savage-hearted monster! What work hast thou made in *one guilty hour*, for a *whole age* of repentance!

I am inexpressibly concerned at the fate of this matchless lady! She could not have fallen into the hands of any other man breathing, and suffered as she has done with thee.

I had written a great part of another long letter to try to soften thy flinty heart in her favour: for I thought it but too likely, that thou shouldst succeed in getting her back again to the accursed woman's. But I find it would have been too late, had I finished it, and sent it away. Yet cannot I forbear writing, to urge thee to make the *only* amends thou now canst make her, by a proper use of the licence thou hast obtained.

Poor, poor lady! It is a pain to me, that I ever saw her. Such an adorer of virtue to be sacrificed to the vilest of her sex; and thou their implement in the devil's hand, for a purpose so base, so ungenerous, so inhuman!—Pride thyself, O cruelest of men! in this reflection; and that thy triumph over a woman, who for thy sake was abandoned of every friend she had in the world, was effected; not by advantages taken of her weakness and credulity; but by the blackest artifice; after a long course of studied deceits had been tried to no purpose.

I can tell thee, it is well either for thee or for me, that I am not the brother of the lady. Had I been her brother, her violation must have been followed by the blood of one of us.

Excuse me, Lovelace; and let not the lady fare the worse for my concern for her. And yet I have but one *other* motive to ask thy excuse; and that is, because I owe to thy own communicative pen the knowledge I have of thy barbarous villany, since thou mightest, if thou wouldst, have passed it upon me for a common seduction.

CLARISSA LIVES, thou sayest. That she does, is my wonder: and these words show, that thou thyself (though thou couldst, nevertheless, proceed) hardly expectedst she would have survived the

outrage. What must have been the poor lady's distress (watchful as she had been over her honour) when dreadful certainty took place of cruel apprehension!—And yet a man may guess what it must have been, by that which thou paintest, when she suspected herself tricked, deserted, and betrayed, by the pretended ladies.

That thou couldst behold her phrensy on this occasion, and her half-speechless, half-fainting prostration at thy feet, and yet retain thy evil purposes, will hardly be thought credible, even by those who know *thee*, if they have seen *her*.

Poor, poor lady! with such noble qualities as would have adorned the most exalted married life, to fall into the hands of the *only* man in the world, who could have treated her as thou hast treated her!—And to let loose the old dragon, as thou properly callest her, upon the before-affrighted innocent, what a barbarity was *that!* What a *poor* piece of barbarity! in order to obtain by terror, what thou despairedst to gain by love, though supported by stratagems the most insidious!

O LOVELACE! LOVELACE! *had I doubted it before, I should now be convinced, that there must be a* WORLD AFTER THIS, *to do justice to injured merit, and to punish barbarous perfidy!* Could the divine SOCRATES, and the divine CLARISSA, otherwise have suffered?

But let me, if possible, for one moment, try to forget this villanous outrage on the most excellent of women.

I have business here, which will hold me yet a few days; and then perhaps I shall quit this house for ever.

I have had a solemn and tedious time of it. I should never have known, that I had half the re-

spect I really find I had for the old gentleman, had I not so closely, at his earnest desire, attended him, and been a witness of the tortures he underwent.

This melancholy occasion may possibly have contributed to humanize me: but surely I never could have been so remorseless a caitiff as *thou* hast been, to a woman of *half* this lady's excellence.

But pry'thee, dear Lovelace, if thou'rt a man, and not a devil, resolve, immediately, to repair thy sin of ingratitude, by conferring upon thyself the highest honour thou *canst* receive, in making her lawfully thine.

But if thou canst not prevail upon thyself to do her this justice, I think I should not scruple a tilt with thee [an everlasting rupture *at least* must follow] if thou sacrificest her to the accursed women.

Thou art desirous to know what advantage I reap by my uncle's demise. I do not certainly know, for I have not been so greedily solicitous on this subject, as some of the kindred have been, who ought to have shown more decency, as I have told them, and suffered the corpse to have been cold before they had begun their hungry inquiries. But, by what I gathered from the poor man's talk to me, who oftener than I wished touched upon the subject, I deem it will be upwards of 5000*l.* in cash, and in the funds, after all legacies paid, besides the real estate, which is a clear 1000*l.* a year.

I wish from my heart, thou wert a money-lover! Were the estate to be of double the value, thou shouldst have it every shilling; only upon one condition [for my circumstances before were as easy as I wish them to be while I am single]—that thou wouldest permit me the honour of being this fatherless lady's *father*, as it is called, at the altar.

Think of this! my dear Lovelace: be honest: and let me present thee with the brightest jewel that man ever possessed; and then, body and soul, wilt thou bind to thee for ever, thy

BELFORD.

LETTER XXXIV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday, June 15.

LET me alone, you great dog, you!—Let me alone! —I have heard a lesser boy, his coward arms held over his head and face, say to a bigger, who was pommelling him, for having run away with his apple, his orange, or his gingerbread.

So say I to thee, on occasion of thy severity to thy poor friend, who, as thou ownest, has furnished thee (ungenerous as thou art!) with the weapons thou brandishest so fearfully against him.—And to what purpose, when the mischief is done? when, of consequence, the affair is irretrievable? and when a CLARISSA could not move me?

Well, but, after all, I must own, that there is something very singular in this lady's case: and, at times, I cannot help regretting, that I ever attempted her; since not *one power either of body or soul* could be moved in my favour: and since, to use the expression of the philosopher, on a much graver occasion, there is no difference to be found between the skull of King Philip, and that of another man.

But people's extravagant notions of things alter not *facts*, Belford: and, when all's done, Miss Clarissa Harlowe has but run the fate of a thousand others of her sex—only that they did not set such a romantic value upon what they call their *honour*; that's all.

And yet I will allow thee this—that if a person set a high value upon any thing, be it ever such a trifle in itself, or in the eye of others, the robbing of that person of it is *not* a trifle to *him*. Take the matter in this light, I own I have done wrong, great wrong, to this admirable creature.

But have I not known twenty and twenty of the sex, who have seemed to carry their notions of virtue high; yet, when brought to the test, have abated of their severity? And how should we be convinced that *any* of them are proof, till they are tried?

A thousand times have I said, that I never yet met with such a woman as this. If I *had*, I hardly ever should have attempted Miss Clarissa Harlowe. Hitherto she is all angel: and was not that the point which at setting out I proposed to try *? and was not *cohabitation* ever my darling view? And am I not now, at last, in the high road to it?—It is true, that I have nothing to boast of as to her will. *The very contrary.* But now are we come to the test, whether she cannot be brought to make the best of an irreparable evil—if she exclaim [she has reason to exclaim, and I will sit down with patience by the hour together to hear her exclamations, till she is tired of them] she will then descend to expostulation perhaps: expostulation will give me hope: expostulation will show, that she hates me not. And if she hate me not, she will forgive: and if she *now* forgive; then will all be over; and she will be mine upon my own terms: and it shall then be the whole study of my future life to make her happy.

So, Belford, thou seest, that I have journeyed on to this stage [indeed, through infinite mazes, and as infinite remorses] with one determined point in

* See Vol. III. p. 94.

view, from the first. To thy urgent supplication then, that I will do her grateful justice by marriage, let me answer in Matt. Prior's two lines on his hoped-for auditorship; as put into the mouths of his St. John and Harley;

> —— Let that be done, which Matt. doth say,
> YEA, quoth the earl—BUT NOT TO DAY.

Thou seest, Jack, that I make no resolutions however, against doing her, one time or other, the wished-for justice, even were I to succeed in my principal view, *cohabitation*. And of this I do assure thee, that, if I ever marry, it must, it shall be Miss Clarissa Harlowe.—Nor is her honour at all impaired with *me*, by what she has *so far* suffered: but the contrary. She must only take care, that, if she be at last brought to forgive me, she show me, that her Lovelace is the only man on earth, whom she could have forgiven on the like occasion.

But, ah, Jack! what, in the meantime, shall I do with this admirable creature? At present—[I am loth to say it—but, at present] she is quite stupefied.

I had rather, methinks, she should have retained all her active powers, though I had suffered by her nails and her teeth, than that she should be sunk into such a state of absolute—insensibility (shall I call it?) as she has been in ever since Tuesday morning. Yet, as she begins a little to revive, and now and then to call names, and to exclaim, I dread almost to engage with the anguish of a spirit that owes its extraordinary agitations to a niceness that has no example either in ancient or modern story. For, after all, what is there in her case that should *stupefy* such a glowing, such a *blooming* charmer?—Excess of grief, excess of terror, has made a person's hair stand on end, and even (as we have read) changed the colour of it.

But that it should so stupefy, as to make a person, at times, insensible to those imaginary wrongs, which would raise others *from* stupefaction, is very surprising!

But I will leave this subject, lest it should make me too grave.

I was yesterday at Hampstead, and discharged all obligations there, with no small applause. I told them, that the lady was now as happy as myself: and that is no great untruth; for I am not altogether so, when I allow myself to *think*.

Mrs. Townsend, with her tars, had not been then there. I told them what I would have them say to her, if she came.

Well, but, after all [how many *after-all's* have I?] I could be very grave, were I to give way to it.—The devil take me for a fool! What's the matter with me, I wonder!—I must breathe a fresher air for a few days.

But what shall I do with this admirable creature the while?—Hang me, if I know!—For, if I stir, the venomous spider of this habitation will want to set upon the charming fly, whose silken wings are already so entangled in my enormous web, that she cannot move hand or foot: for so much has grief stupefied her, that she is at present as destitute of will, as she always seemed to be of desire. I must not therefore think of leaving her yet for two days together.

LETTER XXXV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

I HAVE just now had a specimen of what the resentment of this dear creature will be when quite recovered: an affecting one!—For entering her

apartment after Dorcas; and endeavouring to sooth and pacify her disordered mind; in the midst of my blandishments, she held up to heaven, in a speechless agony, the innocent licence (which she has in her own power); as the poor distressed Catalans held up their English treaty, on an occasion that keeps the worst of my actions in countenance.

She seemed about to call down vengeance upon me; when, happily, the leaden god, in pity to her trembling Lovelace, waved over her half-drowned eyes his somniferous wand, and laid asleep the fair exclaimer, before she could go half through with her intended imprecation.

Thou wilt guess, by what I have written, that some *little* art has been made use of: but it was with a *generous* design, (if thou'lt allow me the word on such an occasion) in order to lessen the too quick sense she was likely to have of what she was to suffer. A contrivance I never had occasion for before, and had not thought of now, if Mrs. Sinclair had not proposed it to me: to whom I left the management of it: and I have done nothing but curse her ever since, lest the quantity should have for ever damped her charming intellects.

Hence my concern—for I think the poor lady ought not to have been so treated. *Poor lady*, did I say?—What have I to do with thy creeping style? —But have not I the worst of it; since her insensibility has made me but a thief to my own joys?

I did not intend to tell thee of this little *innocent* trick; for such I designed it to be; but that I hate disingenuousness: to thee, especially: and as I cannot help writing in a more serious vein than usual, thou wouldest perhaps, had I not hinted the true cause, have imagined that I was sorry for the

fact itself: and this would have given *thee* a good deal of trouble in scribbling dull persuasives to repair by matrimony; and *me* in reading thy crude nonsense. Besides, one day or other thou mightest, had I not confessed it, have heard of it in an aggravated manner; and I know thou hast such an high opinion of this lady's virtue, that thou wouldest be disappointed, if thou hadst reason to think, that she was subdued by *her own* consent, or any the least yielding in her will. And so is she beholden to me in some measure, that, at the expense of *my* honour, she may so justly form a plea, which will entirely salve *hers*.

And now is the whole secret out.

Thou wilt say I am a horrid fellow! — As the lady does, that I am the *unchained Beelzebub*, and a *plotting villain:* and as this is what you both said beforehand, and nothing worse *can* be said, I desire, if thou wouldest not have me quite serious with thee, and that I should think thou meanest more by thy tilting hint than I am willing to believe thou dost, that thou wilt forbear thy invectives: for is not the thing done?—Can it be helped?—And must I not now try to make the best of it?—And the rather do I enjoin thee this, and inviolable secresy, because I begin to think, that my punishment will be greater than the fault, were it to be only from my own reflection.

LETTER XXXVI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, June 16.

I AM sorry to hear of thy misfortune; but hope thou wilt not long lie by it. Thy servant tells me, what a narrow escape thou hadst with thy neck. I wish it may not be ominious: but I think thou seemest not to be in so enterprising a way as formerly; and yet, merry or sad, thou seest a rake's neck is always in danger, if not from the hangman, from his own horse. But 'tis a vicious toad, it seems; and I think thou shouldest never venture upon his back again; for 'tis a plaguy thing for rider and horse both to be vicious.

Thy fellow tells me, thou desirest me to continue to write to thee in order to *divert* thy chagrin on thy forced confinement: but how can I think it in my *power* to divert, when my subject is not pleasing to myself?

Cæsar never knew what it was to be *hipped*, I will call it, till he came to be what Pompey was; that is to say, till he arrived at the height of his ambition: nor did thy Lovelace know what it was to be gloomy, till he had completed his wishes upon the most charming creature in the world.

And yet why say I *completed?* when the *will*, the *consent*, is wanting—and I have still views before me of obtaining that?

Yet I could almost join with thee in the wish, which thou sendest me up by thy servant, unfriendly as it is, that I had had thy misfortune before Monday night last: for here, the poor lady has run into a contrary extreme to that I told thee

of in my last: for now is she as much too lively, as before she was too stupid; and 'bating that she has pretty frequent lucid intervals, would be deemed raving mad, and I should be obliged to confine her.

I am most confoundedly disturbed about it: for I begin to fear that her intellects are irreparably hurt.

Who the devil could have expected such strange effects from a cause so common and so slight?

But these high-souled and high-sensed girls, who had set up for shining lights and examples to the rest of the sex, are with such difficulty brought down to the common standard, that a wise man, who prefers his peace of mind to his glory, in subduing one of that exalted class, would have nothing to say to them.

I do all in my power to quiet her spirits, when I force myself into her presence.

I go on, begging pardon one minute; and vowing truth and honour another.

I would at first have persuaded her, and offered to call witnesses to the truth of it, that we were actually married. Though the licence was in her hands, I thought the assertion might go down in her disorder; and charming consequences I hoped would follow. But this would not do.—

I therefore gave up that hope: and now I declare to her, that it is my resolution to marry her, the moment her uncle Harlowe informs me, that he will grace the ceremony with his presence.

But she believes nothing I say; nor (whether in her senses, or not) bears me with patience in her sight.

I pity her with all my soul; and I curse myself, when she is in her wailing fits, and when I appre-

hend, that intellects, so charming, are for ever damped.

But more I curse these women, who put me upon such an expedient! Lord! Lord! what a hand have I made of it!—*And all for what?*

Last night, for the first time since Monday last, she got to her pen and ink; but she pursues her writing with such eagerness and hurry, as show too evidently her discomposure.

I hope, however, that this employment will help to calm her spirits.

* * *

Just now Dorcas tells me, that what she writes she tears, and throws the paper in fragments under the table, either as not knowing what she does, or disliking it: then gets up, wrings her hands, weeps, and shifts her seat all round the room: then returns to her table, sits down, and writes again.

* * *

One odd letter, as I may call it, Dorcas has this moment given me from her—*Carry this*, said she, *to the vilest of men.* Dorcas, a toad, brought it, without any further direction, to *me.* I sat down intending (although 'tis pretty long) to give thee a copy of it: but, for my life, I cannot; 'tis so extravagant. And the original is too much an original to let it go out of my hands.

But some of the scraps and fragments, as either torn through, or flung aside, I will copy, for the novelty of the thing, and to show thee how her mind works now she is in this whimsical way. Yet I know I am still furnishing thee with new weapons against myself. But spare thy comments. My own reflections render them needless. Dorcas thinks her lady will ask for them: so wishes to have them to lay again under her table.

By the first thou'lt guess, that I have told her, that Miss Howe is very ill, and can't write; that she may account the better for not having received the letter designed for her.

PAPER I.

(Torn in two pieces.)

MY DEAREST MISS HOWE!

O WHAT dreadful, dreadful things have I to tell you! But yet I cannot tell you neither. But say, are you really ill, as a vile, vile creature informs me you are?

But he never yet told me truth, and I hope has not in this: and yet, if it were not true, surely I should have heard from you before now!—But what have I to do to upbraid?—You may well be tired of me!—And if you are, I can forgive you: for I am tired of myself: and all my own relations were tired of me long before you were.

How good you have always been to me, mine own dear Anna Howe!—But how I ramble!

I sat down to say a great deal—my heart was full—I did not know what to say first—and thought, and grief, and confusion, and (O my poor head) I cannot tell what—and thought, and grief, and confusion, came crowding so thick upon me; *one* would be first, *another* would be first, *all* would be first; so I can write nothing at all.—Only that, whatever they have done to me, I cannot tell; but I am no longer what I was in any one thing—in any one thing did I say? Yes, but I am; for I am still, and I ever will be,

Your true——

Plague on it! I can write no more of this elo-

quent nonsense myself; which rather shows a raised, than a quenched imagination: but Dorcas shall transcribe the others in separate papers, as written by the whimsical charmer: and some time hence when all is over, and I can better bear to read them, I may ask thee for a sight of them. Preserve them therefore; for we often look back with pleasure even upon the heaviest griefs, when the cause of them is removed.

PAPER II.

(Scratched through, and thrown under the table.)

—And can you, my dear honoured papa, resolve for ever to reprobate your poor child?—But I am sure you would not, if you knew what she has suffered since her unhappy—and will nobody plead for your poor suffering girl?—No one good body?—Why then, dearest sir, let it be an act of your own innate goodness, which I have so much experienced, and so much abused. I don't presume to think you should receive me—no, indeed—my name is—I don't know what my name is!—I never dare to wish to come into your family again!—But your heavy curse, my papa,—yes, I *will* call you papa, and help yourself as you can—for you are my own dear papa, whether you will or not—and though I am an unworthy child—yet I *am* your child—

PAPER III.

A lady took a great fancy to a young lion, or a bear, I forget which—but a bear, or a tiger, I believe, it was. It was made her a present of

when a whelp. She fed it with her own hand: she nursed up the wicked cub with great tenderness; and would play with it without fear or apprehension of danger: and it was obedient to all her commands: and its tameness, as she used to boast, increased with its growth; so that, like a lap-dog, it would follow her all over the house. But mind what followed: at last, some how, neglecting to satisfy its hungry maw, or having otherwise disobliged it on some occasion, it resumed its nature; and on a sudden fell upon her, and tore her in pieces. — And who was most to blame, I pray? The brute, or the lady? The lady, surely! —For what *she* did, was *out* of nature, *out* of character, at least: what *it* did, was *in* its own nature.

PAPER IV.

How art thou now humbled in the dust, thou proud Clarissa Harlowe! Thou that never steppedst out of thy father's house, but to be admired! Who wert wont to turn thine eye, sparkling with healthful life, and self-assurance, to different objects at once as thou passedst, as if (for so thy penetrating sister used to say) to plume thyself upon the expected applauses of all that beheld thee! Thou that used to go to rest satisfied with the adulations paid thee in the past day, and couldst put off every thing but thy vanity!—

PAPER V.

Rejoice not now, my Bella, my sister, my friend; but pity the humbled creature, whose foolish heart you used to say you beheld through the thin veil of humility which covered it.

It must have been so! My fall had not else been permitted—

You penetrated my proud heart with the jealousy of an elder sister's searching eye.

You knew me better than I knew myself.

Hence your upbraidings and your chidings, when I began to totter.

But forgive now those vain triumphs of my heart.

I thought, poor proud wretch that I was, that what you said was owing to your envy.

I thought I could acquit my intention of any such vanity.

I was too secure in the knowledge I thought I had of my own heart.

My supposed advantages became a snare to me.

And what now is the end of all?—

PAPER VI.

What now is become of the prospects of a happy life, which once I thought opening before me?—Who now shall assist in the solemn preparations? Who now shall provide the nuptial ornaments, which soften and divert the apprehensions of the fearful virgin? No court now to be paid to my smiles! No encouraging compliments to inspire thee with hope of laying a mind not unworthy of thee under obligation! No elevation now for conscious merit, and applauded purity, to look down from on a prostrate adorer, and an admiring world, and up to pleased and rejoicing parents and relations!

PAPER VII.

THOU pernicious caterpillar, that preyest upon the fair leaf of virgin fame, and poisonest those leaves which thou canst not devour.

Thou fell blight, thou eastern blast, thou over-spreading mildew, that destroyest the early promises of the shining year! that mockest the laborious toil, and blastest the joyful hopes, of the painful husbandman!

Thou fretting moth, that corruptest the fairest garment!

Thou eating canker-worm, that preyest upon the opening bud, and turnest the damask rose into livid yellowness!

If, as religion teaches us, God will judge us, in a great measure, by our benevolent or evil actions to one another — O wretch! bethink thee, in time bethink thee, how great must be thy condemnation!

PAPER VIII.

AT first, I saw something in your air and person that displeased me not. Your birth and fortunes were no small advantages to you.—You acted not ignobly by my passionate brother. Every body said you were brave: every body said you were generous: a *brave* man, I thought, could not be a *base* man: a *generous* man, could not, I believed, be *ungenerous*, where he acknowledged *obligation*. Thus prepossessed, all the rest that my soul loved and wished for in your reformation, I hoped!—I knew not, but by report, any flagrant instances of

your vileness. You seemed frank, as well as generous: frankness and generosity ever attracted me: whoever kept up those appearances, I judged of their hearts by my own; and whatever qualities I *wished* to find in them, I was *ready* to find; and *when* found, I believed them to be natives of the soil.

My fortunes, my rank, my character, I thought a further security. I was in none of those respects unworthy of being the niece of Lord M. and of his two noble sisters.—Your vows, your imprecations —but oh! you have barbarously and basely conspired against that honour which you ought to have protected: and now you have made me—what is it of vile that you have *not* made me?—

Yet, God knows my heart, I had no culpable inclinations!—I honoured virtue!—I hated vice!—But I knew not, that you were vice itself.

PAPER IX.

Had the happiness of any the poorest outcast in the world, whom I had never seen, never known, never before heard of, laid as much in *my* power, as my happiness did in *yours*, my benevolent heart would have made me fly to the succour of such a poor distressed—with what pleasure would I have raised the dejected head, and comforted the desponding heart!—But who now shall pity the poor wretch, who has increased instead of diminished, the number of the miserable!

PAPER X.

Lead me where my own thoughts themselves may lose me;
Where I may doze out what I've left of life,
Forget myself, and that day's guilt!——
Cruel remembrance!——how shall I appease thee?

——Oh! you have done an act
That blots the face and blush of modesty;
Takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And makes a blister there!

Then down I laid my head,
Down on cold earth; and for a while was dead;
And my freed soul to a strange somewhere fled!
Ah! sottish soul! said I,
When back to its cage again I saw it fly;
Fool! to resume her broken chain,
And row the galley here again!
Fool! to that body to return,
Where it condemn'd and destin'd is to *mourn!*

O my Miss Howe, if thou hast friendship, help me,
And speak the words of peace to my divided soul,
That wars within me,
And raises every sense to my confusion.
I'm tott'ring on the brink
Of peace; and thou art all the hold I've left!
Assist me——in the pangs of my affliction!

When Honour's lost, 'tis a relief to die:
Death's but a sure retreat from infamy.

Then farewell, youth,
And all the joys that dwell
With youth and life!
And life itself, farewell!

For life can never be sincerely blest.
Heav'n punishes the *bad*, and proves the *best*.

Death only can be dreadful to the bad;
To innocence 'tis like a bugbear dress'd
To frighten children. Pull but off the mask,
And he'll appear a friend.

I con'd a tale unfold——
Would harrow up thy soul——

By swift misfortunes
How am I pursu'd!
Which on each other
Are, like waves, renew'd!

After all, Belford, I have just skimmed over these transcriptions of Dorcas; and I see there are method and good sense in some of them, wild as others of them are; and that her memory, which serves her so well for these poetical flights, is far from being impaired. And this gives me hope, that she will soon recover her charming intellects —though I shall be the sufferer by their restoration, I make no doubt.

But in the letter she wrote to me, there are yet greater extravagances; and though I said it was too affecting to give thee a copy of it, yet, after I have let thee see the loose papers inclosed, I think I may throw in a transcript of that. Dorcas therefore shall here transcribe it. *I* cannot. The reading of it affected me ten times more than the severest reproaches of a regular mind could do.

TO MR. LOVELACE.

I never intended to write another line to you. I would not see you, if I could help it—O that I never had!

But tell me of a truth, is Miss Howe really and truly ill?—Very ill?—And is not her illness poison? and don't you know who gave it her?

What you, or Mrs. Sinclair, or somebody, (I cannot tell who) have done to my poor head, you best know: but I shall never be what I was. My head is gone. I have wept away all my brain, I believe; for I can weep no more. Indeed I have had my full share; so it is no matter.

But, good now, Lovelace, don't set Mrs. Sinclair upon me again. I never did her any harm. She *so* affrights me, when I see her!—Ever since—when was it? I cannot tell. *You* can, I suppose. She may be a good woman, as far as I know. She

was the wife of a man of honour—very likely—though forced to let lodgings for her livelihood. Poor gentlewoman! Let her know I pity her: but don't let her come near me again—pray don't!

Yet she may be a very good woman—

What would I say!—I forget what I was going to say.

O Lovelace, you are Satan himself; or he helps you out in every thing; and that's as bad!

But have you really and truly sold yourself to him? And for how long?—What dura ion is your reign to have?

Poor man! the contract *will* be out: and then what will be your fate!

O Lovelace! if you could be sorry for yourself, I would be sorry too — but when all my doors are fast, and nothing but the key-hole open, and the key of late put into that, to be where you are, in a manner without opening any of them—O wretched, wretched Clarissa Harlowe!

For I never will be Lovelace—let my uncle take it as he pleases.

Well, but now I remember what I was going to say—it is for *your* good—not *mine*—for nothing can do me good now!—O thou villanous man! thou hated Lovelace!

But Mrs. Sinclair may be a good woman—if you love me—but that you don't—but don't let her bluster up with her worse than mannish airs to me again! O she is a frightful woman! If she *be* a woman! She needed not to put on that *fearful mask* to scare me out of my poor wits. But don't tell her what I say—I have no hatred to her—it is only fright and foolish fear, that's all.—She may not *be* a bad woman—but neither are all *men*, any more than all *women* alike—God forbid they should be like you!

Alas! you have killed my head among you—I don't say who did it! God forgive you all!—But had it not been better to have put me out of all your ways at once? You might safely have done it! For nobody would require me at your hands—no, not a soul—except, indeed, Miss Howe would have said, when she should see you, What, Lovelace, have you done with Clarissa Harlowe!—And then you could have given any slight gay answer—sent her beyond sea; or she has run away from me, as she did from her parents. And this would have been easily credited; for you know, Lovelace, she that could run away from *them*, might very well run away from *you*.

But this is nothing to what I wanted to say. Now I have it.

I have lost it again—this foolish wench comes teasing me—For what purpose should I eat? For what end should I wish to live?—I tell thee, Dorcas, I will neither eat nor drink. I cannot be worse than I am.

I will do as you'd have me — good Dorcas, look not upon me so fiercely—but thou canst not look so bad as I have seen somebody look.

Mr. Lovelace, now that I remember what I took pen in hand so say, let me hurry off my thoughts, lest I lose them again—here I am sensible—and yet I am hardly sensible, neither—but I know my head is not as it should be, for all that—therefore let me propose one thing to you: it is for *your* good—not *mine*: and this is it:

I must needs be both a trouble and an expense to you. And here my uncle Harlowe, when he knows how I am, will never wish any man to have me: no, not even *you*, who have been the occasion of it—barbarous and ungrateful!—A less compli-

cated villany, cost a Tarquin—but I forget what I would say again—

Then *this* is it—I never shall be myself again: I have been a very wicked creature—a vain, proud, poor creature full of secret pride—which I carried off under an humble guise, and deceived every body—my sister says so—and now I am punished—so let me be carried out of this house, and out of your sight; and let me be put into that Bedlam privately, which once I saw: but it was a sad sight to me then! Little as I thought what I should come to *myself!*—That is all I would say: this is all I have to wish for—then I shall be out of all your ways; and I shall be taken care of; and bread and water without your tormentings, will be dainties; and my straw-bed the easiest I have lain in—for—I cannot tell how long!

My clothes will sell for what will keep me there, perhaps as long as I shall live. But, Lovelace, *dear* Lovelace, I will call you; for you have cost me enough, I'm sure!—don't let me be made a show of for my *family's* sake; nay, for your *own sake,* don't do that—for when I know all I have suffered, which yet I do not, and no matter if I never do—I may be apt to rave against you by name, and tell of all your baseness to a poor humbled creature, that once was as proud as any body—but of what I can't tell—except of my own folly and vanity—but let that pass—since I am punished enough for it—

So suppose, instead of Bedlam, it were a private mad-house, where nobody comes!—That will be better a great deal.

But, another thing, Lovelace: don't let them use me cruelly when I am there—*you* have used me cruelly enough, you know!—Don't let *them* use

me cruelly; for I will be very tractable; and do as any body would have me to do—except what you would have me do—for that I never will—another thing, Lovelace: don't let this *good* woman, I was going to say *vile* woman; but don't tell her that—because she won't let you send me to this happy refuge, perhaps, if she were to know it—

Another thing, Lovelace: and let me have pen, and ink, and paper, allowed me—it will be all my amusement—but they need not send to any body I shall write to, what I write, because it will but trouble them: and somebody may do you a mischief may-be—I wish not that any body do any body a mischief upon my account.

You tell me, that Lady Betty Lawrance, and your cousin Montague, were here to take leave of me; but that I was asleep, and could not be waked. So you told me at first, I was married, you know; and that you were my husband—ah! Lovelace! look to what you say.—But let not them (for they will sport with my misery) let not *that* Lady Betty, let not *that* Miss Montague, whatever the *real* ones may do; nor Mrs. Sinclair neither, nor any of her lodgers, nor her nieces, come to see me in my place—*real* ones, I say; for, Lovelace, I shall find out all your villanies in time—indeed I shall—so put me there as soon as you can—it is for *your* good—then all will pass for ravings that I can say, as, I doubt not, many poor creatures' exclamations do pass, though there may be too much truth in them for all that—and you know *I began to be mad at Hampstead*—so you said.—Ah! villanous man! what have you not to answer for!

* * *

A little interval seems to be lent me. I had begun to look over what I have written. It is not fit for any one to see, so far as I have been able to

reperuse it: but my head will not hold, I doubt, to go through it all. If, therefore, I have not already mentioned my earnest desire, let me tell you, it is *this*: that I be sent out of this abominable house without delay, and locked up in some private mad-house about this town; for such it seems there are; never more to be seen, or to be produced to any body, except in your own vindication, if you should be charged with the murder of my person; a much lighter crime than that of my honour, which the greatest villain on earth has robbed me of. And deny me not this my last request, I beseech you; and one other, and that is, never to let me see you more! This surely may be granted to

The miserably abused

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

I will not bear thy heavy preachments, Belford, upon this affecting letter. So, not a word of that sort! The paper, thou'lt see, is blistered with the tears even of the hardened transcriber; which has made her ink run here and there.

Mrs. Sinclair is a true heroine; and, I think, shames us all. And she is a *woman* too! Thou'lt say, the best things corrupted become the worst. But this is certain, that whatever the sex set their hearts upon, they make thorough work of it. And hence it is, that a mischief which would end in simple robbery among men rogues, becomes murder, if a woman be in it.

I know thou wilt blame me for having had recourse to *art*. But do not physicians prescribe opiates in acute cases, where the violence of the disorder would be apt to throw the patient into a fever or delirium? I aver that my motive for this expedient was *mercy*; nor could it be any thing else. For a rape, thou knowest, to us rakes, is far

from being an undesirable thing. Nothing but the law stands in our way upon that account; and the opinion of what a modest woman will suffer rather than become a *viva voce* accuser, lessens much an honest fellow's apprehensions on that score. Then, if these *somnivolencies* [I hate the word *opiates* on this occasion] have turned her head, that is an effect they frequently have upon some constitutions; and in this case was rather the fault of the dose than the design of the giver.

But is not wine itself an opiate in degree?—How many women have been taken advantage of by wine, and other still more intoxicating viands?—Let me tell thee, Jack, that the *experience* of many of the *passive* sex, and the *consciences* of many more of the *active*, appealed to, will testify that thy Lovelace is not the worst of villains. Nor would I have *thee* put me upon clearing myself by comparisons.

If she escape a settled delirium when my plots unravel, I think it is all I ought to be concerned about. What, therefore, I desire of thee, is, that, if two constructions may be made of my actions, thou wilt afford me the most favourable. For this, not only friendship, but my own ingenuousness, which has furnished thee with the knowledge of the facts against which thou art so ready to inveigh, require of thee.

* * *

Will is just returned from an errand to Hampstead; and acquaints me, that Mrs. Townsend was yesterday at Mrs. Moore's, accompanied by three or four rough fellows; a greater number (as supposed) at a distance. She was strangely surprised at the news that my spouse and I are entirely reconciled; and that two fine ladies, my relations, came to visit her, and went to town with her:

where she is very happy with me. *She* was sure we were not married, she said, unless it was while we were at Hampstead: and *they* were sure the ceremony was not performed there. But that the lady *is* happy and easy, is unquestionable: and a fling was thrown out by Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Bevis at *mischief-makers*, as they knew Mrs. Townsend to be acquainted with Miss Howe.

Now, since my fair one can neither receive, nor send away letters, I am pretty easy as to this Mrs. Townsend and her employer. And I fancy Miss Howe will be puzzled to know what to think of the matter, and afraid of sending by Wilson's conveyance; and perhaps suppose that her friend slights her; or has changed her mind in my favour, and is ashamed to own it; as she has not an answer to what she wrote; and will believe that the rustic delivered her last letter into her own hand.

Meantime I have a little project come into my head, of a *new* kind; just for amusement sake, that's all: variety has irresistible charms. I cannot live without intrigue. My charmer has no passions; that is to say, none of the passions that I want her to have. She engages all my reverence. I am at present more inclined to regret what I have done, than to proceed to new offences: and shall regret it till I see how she takes it when recovered.

Shall I tell thee my project? 'Tis not a high one. —'Tis this—to get hither Mrs. Moore, Miss Rawlins, and my widow Bevis; for they are desirous to make a visit to Mrs. Lovelace, now we are so happy together. And, if I can order it right, Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and I, will show them a little more of the ways of this wicked town, than they at present know. Why should they be *acquainted* with a man of my character, and not be the *better* and *wiser* for it?—I would have every body rail

against rakes with *judgment* and *knowledge*, if they *will* rail. Two of these women gave me a great deal of trouble: and the third, I am confident, will forgive a merry evening.

Thou wilt be curious to know, what the *persons* of these women are, to whom I intend so much distinction. I think I have not heretofore mentioned any thing characteristic of their persons.

Mrs. *Moore* is a widow of about thirty-eight; a little mortified by misfortunes; but those are often the merriest folks, when warmed. She has good features still; and is what they call much of a gentlewoman, and very neat in her person and dress. She has given over, I believe, all thoughts of our sex: but when the dying embers are raked up about the half-consumed stump, there will be fuel enough left, I dare say, to blaze out, and give a comfortable warmth to a half-starved by-stander.

Mrs. *Bevis* is comely; that is to say, plump; a lover of mirth, and one whom no grief ever dwelt with, I dare say, for a week together; about twenty-five years of age: Mowbray will have very little difficulty with her, I believe; for one cannot do every thing one's self. And yet sometimes women of this free cast, when it comes to the point, answer not the promises their cheerful forwardness gives a man who has a view upon them.

Miss *Rawlins* is an agreeable young lady enough; but not beautiful. She has sense, and would be thought *to know the world*, as it is called; but, for her knowledge, is more indebted to *theory* than *experience*. A mere whipt-syllabub knowledge this, Jack, that always fails the person who trusts to it, when it should hold to do her service. For such young ladies have so much dependence upon their own understanding and wariness, are so much above the

cautions that the less opinionative may be benefited by, that their presumption is generally their overthrow, when attempted by a man of experience, who knows how to flatter their vanity, and to magnify their wisdom, in order to take advantage of their folly. But, for Miss Rawlins, if I can add *experience* to her *theory*, what an accomplished person will she be!—And how much will she be obliged to me; and not only *she*, but all those who may be the better for the *precepts* she thinks herself already so well qualified to give! Dearly, Jack, do I love to engage with these *precept givers*, and *example setters*.

Now, Belford, although there is nothing striking in any of these characters; yet may we, at a pinch, make a good frolicky half-day with them, if after we have softened their wax at table by encouraging viands, we can set our women and them into dancing: dancing, which all women love, and all men should therefore promote, for *both* their sakes.

And thus, when Tourville sings, Belton fiddles, Mowbray makes rough love, and I smooth; and thou, Jack, wilt be by that time well enough to join in the chorus; the devil's in't, if we don't mould them into what shape we please—our own women, by their laughing freedoms, encouraging them to break through all their customary reserves. For women to women, thou knowest, are great darers and incentives: not one of them loving to be outdone or outdared when their hearts are thoroughly warmed.

I know, at first, the difficulty will be the *accidental* absence of my dear Mrs. Lovelace, to whom principally they will design their visit: but if we can exhilarate them, they won't then wish to see

her; and I can form twenty accidents and excuses, from one hour to another, for her absence, till each shall have a subject to take up all her thoughts.

I am really sick at heart for a frolic, and have no doubt but this will be an agreeable one. These women already think me a wild fellow; *nor do they like me the less for it*, as I can perceive; and I shall take care, that they shall be treated with so much freedom before one another's faces, that in policy they shall keep each others' counsel. And won't this be doing a kind thing by them? since it will knit an indissoluble band of union and friendship between three women who are neighbours, and at present have only *common* obligations to one another: for thou wantest not to be told, that secrets of love, and secrets of this nature, are generally the strongest cement of female friendships.

But after all, if my beloved should be happily restored to her intellects, we may have scenes arise between us, that will be sufficiently busy to employ all the faculties of thy friend, without looking out for new occasions. Already, as I have often observed, has she been the means of saving scores of her sex, yet without her own knowledge.

Saturday night.

By Dorcas's account of her lady's behaviour, the dear creature seems to be recovering. I shall give the earliest notice of this to the *worthy* Capt. Tomlinson, that he may apprise uncle John of it. I must be properly enabled, from that quarter, to pacify her, or at least, to rebate her first violence.

LETTER XXXVII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday afternoon, 6 o'clock, (June 18.)

I WENT out early this morning, and returned not till just now; when I was informed, that my beloved, in my absence, had taken it into her head to attempt to get away.

She tripped down, with a parcel tied up in a handkerchief; her hat on; and was actually in the entry, when Mrs. Sinclair saw her.

Pray, madam, whipping between her and the street-door, be pleased to let me know whither you are going?

Who has a right to control me? was the word.

I have, madam, by order of your spouse: and, kemboing her arms, as she owned, I desire you will be pleased to walk up again.

She would have spoken; but could not: and, bursting into tears, turned back, and went up to her chamber: and Dorcas was taken to task for suffering her to be in the passage before she was seen.

This shows, as we hoped last night, that she is recovering her charming intellects.

Dorcas says, she was visible to her but once before the whole day; and then seemed very solemn and sedate.

I will endeavour to see her. It must be in her own chamber, I suppose; for she will hardly meet me in the dining-room. What advantage will the confidence of our sex give me over the modesty of hers, if she be recovered!—I, the most confident of men: *she*, the most delicate of women.

Sweet soul! methinks, I have her before me: her face averted: speech lost in sighs—abashed—conscious—what a triumphant aspect will this give me, when I gaze in her downcast countenance!

* * *

This moment Dorcas tell me, she believes she is coming to find me out. She asked her after me: and Dorcas left her, drying her red-swoln eyes at her glass [no design of moving me by tears!]; sighing too sensibly for my courage. But to what purpose have I gone thus far, if I pursue not my principal end? Niceness must be a little abated. She knows the worst. That she cannot fly me; that she must see me; and that I can look her into a sweet confusion; are circumstances greatly in my favour. What can she do, but rave and exclaim?—I am used to raving and exclaiming—but, if recovered, I shall see how she behaves upon this our first sensible interview after what she has suffered.

Here she comes.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday night.

Never blame me for giving way to have art used with this admirable creature. All the princes of the air, or beneath it, joining with me, could never have subdued her while she had her senses.

I will not anticipate—only to tell thee, that I am too much awakened by her to think of sleep, were I to go to bed; and so shall have nothing to do, but to write an account of our odd conversation,

while it is so strong upon my mind that I can think of nothing else.

She was dressed in a white lustring night-gown, with less negligence than for some days past. I was sitting with my pen in my fingers; and stood up when I first saw her, with great complaisance, as if the day were still her own. And so indeed it is.

She entered with such dignity in her manner, as struck me with great awe, and prepared me for the poor figure I made in the subsequent conversation. A poor figure indeed!—But I will do her justice.

She came up with quick steps, pretty close to me; a white handkerchief in her hand; her eyes neither fierce nor mild, but very earnest; and a fixed sedateness in her whole aspect, which seemed to be the effect of deep contemplation: and thus she accosted me, with an air and action that I never saw equalled.

You see before you, sir, the wretch, whose preference of you to all your sex, you have rewarded—as it indeed *deserved* to be rewarded. My father's dreadful curse has already operated upon me in the very letter of it, as to this life; and it seems to me too evident, that it will not be your fault, that it is not entirely completed in the loss of my soul, as well as of my honour—which you, villanous man! have robbed me of, with a baseness so unnatural, so inhuman, that it seems, you, even *you*, had not the heart to attempt it, till my senses were made the previous sacrifice.

Here I made an hesitating effort to speak, laying down my pen: but she proceeded!—Hear me out, guilty wretch!—abandoned man!—*Man* did I say?—Yet what name else can I? since the mortal worryings of the fiercest beast would have been

more natural, and infinitely more welcome, than what you have acted by me; and that with a premeditation and contrivance worthy only of that single heart, which now, *base* as well as ungrateful as thou art, seems to quake within thee.—And well mayest thou quake; well mayest thou tremble and falter, and hesitate, as thou dost, when thou reflectest upon what I have suffered for thy sake, and upon the returns thou hast made me!

By my soul, Belford, my whole frame was shaken: for not only her looks, and her action, but her voice, so solemn, was inexpressibly affecting: and then my cursed guilt, and her innocence, and merit, and rank, and superiority of talents, all stared me at that instant in the face so formidably, that my present account, to which she unexpectedly called me, seemed, as I then thought, to resemble that general one, to which we are told we shall be summoned, when our conscience shall be our accuser.

But she had had time to collect all the powers of her eloquence. The whole day probably in her intellects. And then I was the more disappointed, as I had thought I could have gazed the dear creature into confusion—but it is plain, that the sense she has of her wrongs sets this matchless woman *above all lesser, all weaker* considerations.

My dear—my love—I—I—I never—no never—lips trembling, limbs quaking, voice inward, hesitating, broken—never surely did miscreant look so *like* a miscreant! While thus she proceeded, waving her snowy hand, with all the graces of moving oratory.

I have no pride in the confusion visible in thy whole person. I have been all the day praying for a composure, if I could not escape from this vile house, that should once more enable me to look up

to my destroyer with the consciousness of an innocent sufferer. Thou seest me, since my wrongs are beyond the power of *words to express*, thou seest me, *calm enough* to wish, that thou mayest continue harassed by the workings of thy own conscience, till effectual repentance take hold of thee, that so thou mayest not forfeit all title to *that* mercy which thou hast not shown to the poor creature now before thee, who had so well deserved to meet with a faithful friend, where she met with the worst of enemies.

But tell me, (for no doubt thou hast *some* scheme to pursue) tell me, since I am a prisoner, as I find, in the vilest of houses, and have not a friend to protect or save me, what thou intendest shall become of the remnant of a life not worth the keeping!—Tell me, if yet there are more evils reserved for me; and whether thou hast entered into a compact with the grand deceiver, in the person of his horrid agent in this house; and if the ruin of my soul, that my father's curse may be fulfilled, is to complete the triumphs of so vile a confederacy?—Answer me!—Say, if thou hast courage to speak out to her whom thou hast ruined, tell me what *further* I am to suffer from thy barbarity?

She stopped here; and, sighing, turned her sweet face from me, drying up with her handkerchief those tears which she endeavoured to restrain; and, when she could not, to conceal from my sight.

As I told thee, I had prepared myself for high passions, raving, flying, tearing, execration: these transient violences, the workings of sudden grief, and shame and vengeance, would have set us upon a par with each other, and quitted scores. These have I been accustomed to; and, as nothing violent is lasting, with these I could have wished to encounter. But such a majestic composure—seek-

ing me—whom, yet it is plain, by her attempt to get away, she would have avoided seeing—no Lucretia-like vengeance upon herself in her thought—yet swallowed up, her whole mind swallowed up, as I may say, by a grief so heavy, as in her own words, to be beyond the power of speech to express—and to be able, discomposed as she was, to the very morning, to put such a home-question to me, as if she had penetrated my future view—how could I avoid looking like a fool, and answering, as before, in broken sentences, and confusion?

What—what-a—what has been done—I, I, I—cannot but say—must own—must confess—hem—hem——is not right—is not what should have been—but-a—but—but—I am truly—truly—sorry for it—upon my soul I am—and—and—will do all—do every thing—do what—whatever is incumbent upon me—all that you—that you—that you shall require to make you amends!—

O Belford! Belford! Whose the triumph now!—HERS, or MINE?

Amends! O thou truly despicable wretch!—Then lifting up her eyes—Good heaven! who shall pity the creature who could fall by so base a mind!—Yet—and then she looked indignantly upon me!—Yet, I hate thee not (base and low-souled, as thou art!) half so much as I hate myself, that I saw thee not sooner in thy proper colours!—That I hoped either morality, gratitude, or humanity, from a libertine, who, to *be* a libertine, must have got over and defied all moral sanctions *.

She then called upon her cousin Morden's name, as if he had warned her against a man of free

* *Her cousin Morden's words to her in his letter from Florence.* *See* Vol. IV. p. 34.

principles; and walked towards the window; her handkerchief at her eyes: but, turning short towards me, with an air of mingled scorn and majesty—[*what, at the moment, would I have given never to have injured her!*] What amends hast *thou* to propose!—What amends can such a one as thou make to a person of spirit, or common sense, for the evils thou hast so inhumanly made me suffer?

As soon, madam—as soon—as—as soon as your uncle—or—not waiting.—

Thou wouldst tell me, I suppose—I know what thou wouldst tell me—but thinkest thou, that *marriage will satisfy for a guilt like thine?* Destitute as thou hast made me both of friends and fortune, I too much despise the wretch, *who could rob himself of his wife's virtue*, to endure the thoughts of thee, in the light thou seemest to hope I will accept thee in!—

I hesitated an interruption: but my meaning died away upon my trembling lips. I could only pronounce the word *marriage*—and thus she proceeded:

Let me therefore know, whether I am to be controlled in the future disposal of myself? Whether, in a country of liberty, as *this*, where the *sovereign* of it must not be guilty of *your* wickedness, and where *you* neither durst have attempted it, had I one friend or relation to look upon me; I am to be kept here a prisoner, to sustain fresh injuries? Whether, in a word, you intend to hinder me from going whither my destiny shall lead me?

After a pause; for I was still silent;

Can you not answer me this plain question?—I quit all claim, all expectation, upon you—what right have you to detain me here?

I could not speak. What could I say to such a question?

O wretch! wringing her uplifted hands, had I not been robbed of my senses, and that in the *basest* manner—you best know how—had I been able to account for myself, and your proceedings, or to have known but how the days passed, a whole week should not have gone over my head, as I find it has done, before I had told you, what I now tell you—*that the man who has been the villain to me you have been, shall never make me his wife.*—I will write to my uncle, to lay aside his kind intentions in my favour—all my prospects are shut in—I give myself up for a lost creature as to this world—hinder me not from entering upon a life of severe penitence, for corresponding, after prohibition, with a wretch who has too well justified all their warnings and inveteracy; and for throwing myself into the power of your vile artifices. Let me try to secure the only hope I have left. This is all the amends I ask of you. I repeat, therefore, am I *now* at liberty to dispose of myself as I please?

Now comes the fool, the miscreant again, hesitating his broken answer: My dearest love, I am confounded, quite confounded, at the thought of what—of what has been done; and at the thought of—to whom. I see, I see, there is no withstanding your eloquence!—Such irresistible proofs of the love of virtue *for its own sake*—did I never hear of, nor meet with, in all my reading. And if you can forgive a repentant villain, who thus on his knees implores your forgiveness, [then down I dropt, absolutely in earnest in all I said] I vow by all that's sacred and just (and may a thunderbolt strike me dead at your feet, if I am not sincere!) that I will by marriage before to-morrow noon, without waiting for your uncle, or any body, do

you all the justice I now *can* do you. And you shall ever after control and direct me as you please, till you have made me more worthy of your angelic purity, than now I am: nor will I presume so much as to touch your garment, till I have the honour to call so great a blessing lawfully mine.

O thou guileful betrayer! There is a just God, whom thou invokest: yet the thunderbolt descends not; and thou livest to imprecate and deceive!

My dearest life! rising; for I hoped she was relenting—

Hadst thou not sinned beyond the *possibility of forgiveness*, interrupted she; and this had been the first time that thus thou solemnly promisest and invokest the vengeance thou hast as often defied; the desperateness of my condition might have induced me to think of taking a wretched chance with a man so profligate. But *after what I have suffered by thee*, it would be *criminal* in me to wish to bind my soul in covenant to a man so nearly allied to perdition.

Good God!—how uncharitable!—I offer not to defend—would to heaven that I could recal—*so nearly allied to perdition*, madam!—So *profligate* a man, madam!——

O how short is expression of *thy* crimes, and of *my* sufferings!—Such premeditation in thy baseness!—To prostitute the characters of persons of honour of thy own family—and all to delude a poor creature, whom thou oughtest—but why talk I to thee?—Be thy crimes upon thy head!—Once more I ask thee, am I, or am I not, at my own liberty *now?*

I offered to speak in defence of the women, declaring that they really were the very persons.——

Presume not, interrupted she, base as thou art, to

say one word in thine own vindication on this head. I have been contemplating their behaviour, their conversation, their over-ready acquiescences to my declarations in thy disfavour: their free, yet affectedly reserved light manners: and now that the sad event has opened my eyes, and I have compared facts and passages together, in the little interval that has been lent me, I wonder I could not distinguish the behaviour of the unmatron-like jilt whom thou broughtest to betray me, from the worthy lady whom thou hast the honour to call thy aunt: and that I could not detect the superficial creature, whom thou passedst upon me for the virtuous Miss Montague.

Amazing uncharitableness in a lady so good herself!—That the high spirits those ladies were in to see *you*, should subject them to such censures!—I do most solemnly vow, madam——

That they were, interrupting me, *verily* and *indeed* Lady Betty Lawrance, and thy cousin Montague!—O wretch! I see by thy solemn averment [*I had not yet averred it*] what credit ought to be given to all the rest. Had I no other proof——

Interrupting her, I besought her patient ear. 'I had found myself, I told her, almost *avowedly* despised and hated. I had no hope of gaining her love, or her confidence. The letter she had left behind her, on her removal to Hampstead, sufficiently convinced me, that she was entirely under Miss Howe's influence, and waited but the return of a letter from her to enter upon measures that would deprive me of her for ever: Miss Howe had *ever* been my enemy; more so *then*, no doubt, from the contents of the letter she had written to her on her first coming to Hampstead: that I dared not to stand the event of such a letter; and was glad of

an opportunity, by Lady Betty's and my cousin's means (though they knew not my motive) to get her back to town; far, at the *time*, from *intending* the outrage which my despair, and her want of confidence in me, put me so vilely upon'—

I would have proceeded; and particularly would have said something of Captain Tomlinson and her uncle; but she would not hear me further. And indeed it was with visible indignation, and not without several angry interruptions, that she heard me say so much.

Would I dare, she asked me, to offer at a palliation of my baseness? The two women, she was convinced, were impostors. She knew not but Captain Tomlinson, and Mr. Mennell, were so too. But, whether *they* were so or not, *I* was. And she insisted upon being at her own disposal for the remainder of her short life—for indeed she abhorred me in every light; and more particularly in that, in which I offered myself to her acceptance.

And, saying this, she flung from me; leaving me absolutely shocked and confounded at her part of a conversation, which she began with such uncommon, however severe composure, and concluded with so much sincere and unaffected indignation.

And now, Jack, I must address one serious paragraph *particularly* to thee.

I have not yet touched upon cohabitation—her uncle's mediation she does not absolutely discredit, as I had the pleasure to find by one hint in this conversation—yet she suspects my future views, and has doubts about Mennell and Tomlinson.

I *do* say, if she come *fairly* at her *lights*, at her *clues*, or what shall I call them? her penetration is *wonderful*.

But if she do *not* come at them fairly, *then* is her incredulity, *then* is her antipathy to me evidently accounted for.

I will speak out—thou couldst not, surely, play me booty, Jack?—Surely thou couldst not let thy weak pity for *her* lead thee to an unpardonable breach of trust to thy *friend*, who has been so unreserved in his communications to thee?

I cannot believe thee capable of such a baseness. Satisfy me, however, upon this head. I must make a cursed figure in her eye, vowing and protesting, as I shall not scruple occasionally to vow and protest, if all the time she has had unquestionable informations of my perfidy. I know thou as little fearest me, as I do thee, in any point of manhood; and wilt scorn to deny it, if thou *hast* done it, when thus home-pressed.

And here I have a good mind to stop, and write no further, till I have thy answer.

And so I will.

Monday morn. past three.

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday morn. 5 o'clock (June 19.)

I *must* write on. Nothing else can divert me: and I think thou canst not have been a dog to me.

I would fain have closed my eyes: but sleep flies me. Well says *Horace*, as translated by *Cowley*;

The Halcyon sleep will never build his nest
In any stormy breast.
'Tis not enough that he does find
Clouds and darkness in the mind:
Darkness but half his work will do.
'Tis not enough: he must find quiet too.

Now indeed do I from my heart wish, that I had never known this lady. But who would have thought there had been such a woman in the world? Of all the sex I have hitherto known or heard, or read of, it was *once subdued, and always subdued.* The *first* struggle was generally the *last;* or, at least, the subsequent struggles were so much fainter and fainter, that a man would rather have them than be without them. But how know I yet——

* * *

It is now near six—the sun for two hours past has been illuminating every thing about me: for that impartial orb shines upon mother Sinclair's house as well as upon any other: but nothing within me can it illuminate.

At day-dawn I looked through the key-hole of my beloved's door. She had declared she would not put off her clothes any more in this house. There I beheld her in a sweet slumber, which I hope will prove refreshing to her disturbed senses; sitting in her elbow-chair, her apron over her head; her head supported by one sweet hand, the other hand hanging down upon her side, in a sleepy lifelessness; half of one pretty foot only visible.

See the difference in our cases! thought I: she, the charming injured, can sweetly sleep, while the varlet injurer cannot close his eyes; and has been trying to no purpose the whole night to divert his melancholy, and to fly from himself!

As every vice generally brings on its own punishment, even in *this* life; if any thing were to tempt me to doubt of *future* punishment, it would be, that there can hardly be a greater than that which I at this instant experience in my own remorse.

I hope it will go off.—If not, well will the dear creature be avenged; for I shall be the most miserable of men.

Six o'clock.

Just now Dorcas tells me, that her lady is preparing openly, and without disguise, to be gone. Very probable. The humour she flew away from me in last night, has given me expection of such an enterprise.

Now, Jack, to be thus hated, and despised!—And if I *have* sinned beyond forgiveness——

* * *

But she has sent me a message by Dorcas, that she will meet me in the dining-room; and desires [odd enough] that the wench may be present at the conversation that shall pass between us. This message gives me hope.

Nine o'clock.

Confounded art, cunning villany!—By my soul, she had like to have slipt through my fingers! She meant nothing by her message but to get Dorcas out of the way, and a clear coast. Is a fancied distress sufficient to justify this lady for dispensing with her principles? Does she not show me that she can wilfully deceive, as well as I?

Had she been in the forehouse, and no passage to go through to get at the street door, she had certainly been gone. But her haste betrayed her; for Sally Martin happening to be in the fore parlour, and hearing a swifter motion than usual, and a rustling of silks, as if from somebody in a hurry, looked out; and seeing who it was, stept between her and the door, and set her back against it.

You must not go, madam. Indeed you must not.

By what right?—And how dare you?—And such

like imperious airs the dear creature gave herself.—While Sally called out for her aunt; and half a dozen voices joined instantly in the cry, for me to hasten down, to hasten down in a moment.

I was gravely instructing Dorcas above stairs, and wondering what would be the subject of the conversation to which the wench was to be a witness, when these outcries reached my ears. And down I flew.—And there was the charming creature, the sweet deceiver, panting for breath, her back against the partition, a parcel in her hand [women make no excursions without their parcels] Sally, Polly (but Polly obligingly pleading for her), the mother, Mabell, and Peter (the footman of the house) about her; all, however, keeping their distance; the mother and Sally between her and the door—in her soft rage the dear soul repeating, I *will* go—nobody has a right—I *will* go—if you kill me, women, I won't go up again!

As soon as she saw me, she stept a pace or two towards me; Mr. Lovelace, I *will* go! said she—do you authorize these women—what right have they, or *you* either, to stop me?

Is this, my dear, preparative to the conversation you led me to expect in the dining-room?—And do you think I can part with you thus?—Do you think I will?

And am I, sir, to be thus beset?—Surrounded thus?—What have these women to do with me?

I desired them to leave us, all but Dorcas, who was down as soon as I. I then thought it right to assume an air of resolution, having found my tameness so greatly triumphed over. And now, my dear, said I (urging her reluctant feet) be pleased to walk into the fore parlour. Here, since you will not go up stairs; here we may *hold our parley*; and Dorcas *be witness to it*.—And now, madam,

seating her, and sticking my hands in my sides, your pleasure!

Insolent villain! said the furious lady. And rising, ran to the window, and threw up the sash [she knew not, I suppose, that there were iron rails before the windows]. And, when she found she could not get out into the street, clasping her uplifted hands together, having dropt her parcel—for the love of God, good honest man!—For the love of God, mistress—[to two passers by] a poor, a poor, creature, said she, ruined!——

I clasped her in my arms, people beginning to gather about the window: and then she cried out, Murder! Help! Help!—And carried her up to the dining-room, in spite of her little plotting heart (as I may now call it) although she violently struggled, catching hold of the bannisters here and there, as she could. I would have seated her there; but she sunk down half-motionless, pale as ashes. And a violent burst of tears happily relieved her.

Dorcas wept over her. The wench was actually moved for her!

Violent hysterics succeeded. I left her to Mabell, Dorcas, and Polly; the latter the most supportable to her of the sisterhood.

This attempt, so resolutely made, alarmed me not a little.

Mrs. Sinclair and her nymphs, are much more concerned; because of the *reputation* of their house, as they call it, having received some insults (broken windows threatened) to make them produce the young creature who cried out.

While the mobbish inquisitors were in the height of their office, the women came running up to me, to know what they should do; a constable being actually fetched.

Get the constable into the parlour, said I, with

three or four of the forwardest of the mob, and produce one of the nymphs, onion-eyed, in a moment, with disordered head-dress and handkerchief, and let her own herself the person: the occasion, a female skirmish; but satisfied with the justice done her. Then give a dram or two to each fellow, and all will be well.

Eleven o'clock.

All done, as I advised; and all *is* well.

Mrs. Sinclair wishes she had never seen the face of so skittish a lady; and she and Sally are extremely pressing with me, to leave the perverse beauty to their *breaking*, as they call it, for four or five days. But I cursed them into silence; only ordering double precaution for the future.

Polly, though she consoled the dear perverse one all she could, when *with her*, insists upon it *to me*, that nothing but terror will procure me tolerable usage.

Dorcas was challenged by the women upon her tears. She owned them real. Said, she was ashamed of herself; but she could not help it. So sincere, so *unyielding* a grief, in so *sweet* a lady!—

The women laughed at her; but I bid her make no apologies for her tears, nor mind their laughing. I was glad to see them *so ready*. Good use might be made of such strangers. In short, I would have her indulge them often, and try if it were not possible to gain her lady's confidence by her concern for her.

She said, that her lady *did* take kind notice of them to her; and was glad to see such tokens of humanity in her.

Well then, said I, *your* part, whether any thing come of it or not, is to be *tender-hearted*. It can do no harm, if no good. But take care you are not *too suddenly*, or too *officiously* compassionate.

So Dorcas will be a humane good sort of creature, I believe, very quickly with her lady. And as it becomes women to be so, and as my beloved is willing to think highly of her own sex; it will the more readily pass with her.

I thought to have had one trial (having gone so far) for *cohabitation*. But what hope can there be of succeeding?—She is invincible!—*Against all my notions, against all my conceptions* (thinking of her as a woman, and in the very bloom of her charms) *she is absolutely invincible.* My whole view at the present, is to do her legal justice, if I can but once more get her out of her altitudes.

The *consent* of such a woman must make her ever new, ever charming. But astonishing! Can the want of a church ceremony make such a difference!

She *owes* me her consent; for hitherto I have had nothing to boast of. All of my side, has been *deep remorse; anguish of mind*, and *love increased* rather *than abated.*

How her proud rejection stings me!—And yet I hope still to get her to listen to my stories of the family-reconciliation, and of her uncle and Capt. Tomlinson—and as she has given me a pretence to detain her against her will, she *must* see me whether in temper or not.—She cannot help it. And if love will not do, terror as the women advise, must be tried.

A nice part, after all, has my beloved to act. If she forgive me easily, I resume perhaps my projects:—if she carry her rejection into violence, that violence may make me desperate, and occasion fresh violence. She ought, since she thinks she has found the women out, to consider *where she is.*

I am confoundedly out of conceit with myself. If I give up my contrivances, my joy in stratagem, and

plot, and invention, I shall be but a common man: such another dull heavy creature as thyself. Yet what does even my success in my machinations bring me, but regret, disgrace, repentance? But I am overmatched, egregiously overmatched, by this woman. What to do with her, or without her, I know not.

LETTER XL.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

I HAVE this moment intelligence from Simon Parsons, one of my Lord M.'s stewards, that his lordship is very ill. Simon, who is my obsequious servant, in virtue of my presumptive heirship, gives me a hint in his letter, that my presence at M. Hall, will not be amiss. So, I must accelerate, whatever be the course I shall be allowed or compelled to take.

No bad prospects for this charming creature, if the old peer would be so kind as to surrender; and many a summons has his gout given him. A good 10,000*l.* a year, and perhaps the title reversionary, would help me up with her.

Proudly as this lady pretends to be above all pride, grandeur will have its charms with her; for grandeur always makes a man's face shine in a woman's eye. I have a pretty good, because a clear, estate, as it is: but what a noble variety of mischief will 10,000*l.* a year, enable a man to do?

Perhaps thou'lt say, I do *already* all that comes into my head: but that's a mistake—not one half, I will assure thee. And even *good folks*, as I have heard, love to have the *power* of doing mischief, whether they make *use of it*, or *not*. The late Queen

Anne, who was a very good woman, was always fond of *prerogative*. And her ministers, in her name, in more instances than one, made a *ministerial* use of this her foible.

* * *

But now, at last, am I to be admitted to the presence of my angry fair-one: after three denials, nevertheless; and a *peremptory* one from me, by Dorcas, that I must see her in her chamber, if I cannot see her in the dining-room.

Dorcas, however, tells me that she says, if she were at her own liberty, she would never see me more; and that she had been asking after the characters and conditions of the neighbours. I suppose, now she has found her voice, to call out for help from them, if there were any to hear her.

She will have it now, it seems, that I had the wickedness from the very beginning, to contrive for her ruin, a house so convenient for dreadful mischief.

Dorcas begs of her to be pacified—entreats her to see me with patience—tells her that I am one of the most determined of men, as she has heard say. That gentleness may do with me; but that nothing else will, she believes. And what, as her ladyship (as she always stiles her) is *married*, if I *had* broken my oath, or *intended* to break it!—

She hinted plain enough to the honest wench, that she was *not* married. But Dorcas would not understand her.

This shows, that she is resolved to keep no measures. And now is to be a trial of skill, whether she shall or not.

Dorcas has hinted to her my lord's illness, as a piece of intelligence that dropt in conversation from me.

But here I stop. My beloved, pursuant to my peremptory message, is just gone up into the dining-room.

LETTER XLI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday afternoon.

PITY me, Jack, for pity's sake; since, if thou dost not, nobody else will: and yet never was there a man of my genius and lively temper that wanted it more. We are apt to attribute to the devil every thing that happens to us, which we would not *have* happen: but here, being (as perhaps thou'lt say) the devil myself, my plagues arise from an angel. I suppose all mankind is to be plagued by its *contrary*.

She began with me like a true woman [*she* in the fault, *I* to be blamed] the moment I entered the dining-room: not the least apology, not the least excuse, for the uproar she had made, and the trouble she had given me.

I come, said she, into thy detested presence, because I cannot help it. But why am I to be imprisoned here? Although to no purpose, I cannot help——

Dearest madam, interrupted I, give not way to so much violence. You must know, that your detention is entirely owing to the desire I have to make you all the amends that is in my power to make you. And this, as well for *your* sake as *my own*.—Surely there is still *one* way left to repair the wrongs you have suffered—

Canst thou blot out the past week! Several weeks past, I should say; ever since I have been with thee? Canst thou call back time?—If thou canst——

Surely, madam, again interrupting her, if I may be permitted to call you *legally* mine, I might have but anticip——

Wretch, that thou art! Say not another word upon this subject. When thou vowedst, when thou promisedst at Hampstead, I had begun to think that I must be thine. If I had consented, at the request of those I thought thy relations, this would have been a principal inducement, that I could then have brought thee, what was *most* wanted, an unsullied honour in dowry, to a wretch destitute of all honour; and could have met the gratulations of a family to which thy life has been one continued disgrace, with a consciousness of *deserving* their gratulations. But thinkest thou, that I will give a harlot niece to thy honourable uncle, and to thy *real* aunts; and a cousin to thy cousins from a brothel? For such, in my opinion, is this detested house!—Then, lifting up her clasped hands, 'Great and good God of Heaven, said she, give me patience to support myself under the weight of those afflictions, which thou, for wise and good ends, though at present impenetrable by me, hast permitted!'

Then, turning towards me, who knew neither what to say *to* her, nor *for* myself, I renounce thee for ever, Lovelace!—Abhorred of my soul! for ever I renounce thee!—Seek thy fortunes wheresoever thou wilt!—Only now, that thou hast already ruined me——

Ruined you, madam—the world need not—I knew not what to say.

Ruined me in my *own* eyes; and that is the same to me, as if *all the world* knew it—hinder me not from going whither my mysterious destiny shall lead me.

Why hesitate you, sir? What right have you to

stop me, as you lately did; and to bring me up by force, my hands and arms bruised with your violence? What right have you to detain me here?

I am cut to the heart, madam, with invectives so violent. I am but too sensible of the wrong I have done you, or I could not *bear* your reproaches. The man who perpetrates a villany, and resolves to go on with it, shows not the compunction I show. Yet, if you think yourself in my power, I would caution you, madam, not to make me desperate. For you *shall* be mine, or my life shall be the forfeit! Nor is life worth having without you!——

Be *thine!*—I be *thine!*—said the passionate beauty. O how lovely in her violence!

Yes, madam, be *mine!*—I repeat, you *shall* be mine!—My very crime is your glory. My love, my admiration of you is increased by what has passed: *and so it ought.* I am willing, madam, to court your returning favour: but let me tell you, were the house beset by a thousand armed men, resolved to take you from me, they should not effect their purpose, while I had life.

I never, never will be yours, said she, clasping her hands together, and lifting up her eyes!—I never will be yours!

We may yet see many happy years, madam. All your friends may be reconciled to you. The treaty for that purpose is in greater forwardness than you imagine. You know *better* than to think the *worse* of yourself for suffering what you *could not help.* Enjoin but the terms I can make my peace with you upon, and I will instantly comply.

Never, never, repeated she, will I be yours!

Only forgive me, my dearest life, this *one* time!—A virtue so invincible! what further view can I have against you?—Have I attempted any further outrage?—If you will be mine, your injuries will

be injuries done to myself. You have too well guessed at the unnatural arts that have been used. —But can a greater testimony be given of your virtue?—And now I have only to hope, that although I cannot make you *complete* amends, yet you will permit me to make you *all* the amends that can possibly be made.

Hear me out, I beseech you, madam; for she was going to speak with an aspect unpacifiedly angry: the God, whom you serve requires but repentance and amendment. Imitate *him*, my dearest love, and bless me with the means of reforming *a* course of life, that begins to be hateful to me. *That* was *once* your favourite point. Resume it, dearest creature: in charity to a soul, as well as body, which once, as I flattered myself, was *more* than indifferent to you, resume it. And let to-morrow's sun witness to our espousals.

I cannot judge thee, said she; but the God to whom thou so boldly referrest, can; and assure thyself *he* will. But, if compunction has *really* taken hold of thee; if indeed thou art touched for thy ungrateful baseness, and meanest any thing by pleading the holy example thou recommendest to my imitation; in this thy pretended repentant moment, let me sift thee thoroughly; and by thy answer I shall judge of the sincerity of thy pretended declarations.

Tell me then, is there any reality in the treaty thou hast pretended to be on foot between my uncle and Captain Tomlinson, and thyself?—Say, and hesitate not, is there any truth in that story?—But, remember, *if* there be *not*, and thou avowest that there *is*, what further condemnation attends thy averment, if it be as solemn as I require it to be!

This was a cursed thrust! What could I say!—

Surely this merciless lady is resolved to d—n me, thought I, and yet accuses me of a design against her soul!—But was I not obliged to proceed as I had begun?

In short, I solemnly averred, that there was!—How one crime, as the good folks say, brings on another!

I added, that the captain had been in town, and would have waited on her, had she not been indisposed: that he went down much afflicted, as well on her account, as on that of her uncle; though I had not acquainted him either with the nature of her disorder, or the ever-to-be-regretted occasion of it; having told him, that it was a violent fever: that he had twice since, by her uncle's desire, sent up to enquire after her health: and that I had already dispatched a man and horse with a letter, to acquaint him (and her uncle through him) with her recovery: making it my earnest request, that he would renew his application to her uncle for the favour of his presence at the private celebration of our nuptials; and that I expected an answer, if not this night, as to-morrow.

Let me ask thee next, said she (thou knowest the opinion I have of the women thou broughtest to me at Hampstead; and who have seduced me hither to my ruin; let me ask thee) if, *really* and *truly*, they were lady Betty Lawrance and thy cousin Montague?—What sayest thou—hesitate not—what sayest thou to this question?

Astonishing, my dear, that you should suspect them!—But, knowing your strange opinion of them, what can I say to be believed?

And is *this* the answer thou returnest me? Dost thou *thus* evade my question? But let me know, for I am trying thy sincerity now, and shall judge of thy new professions by thy answer to this ques-

tion; let me know, I repeat, whether those women be *really* lady Betty Lawrance and thy cousin Montague?

Let me, my dearest love, be enabled to-morrow to call you lawfully mine, and we will set out the next day, if you please, for Berkshire, to my Lord M.'s, where they both are at this time; and you shall convince yourself by your own eyes, and by your own ears; which you will believe sooner than all I can say or swear.

Now, Belford, I had really some apprehension of treachery from thee; which made me so miserably evade; for else, I could *as* safely have sworn to the truth of this, as to that of the former: but she pressing me still for a categorical answer, I ventured plumb; and swore to it [*lovers oaths, Jack!*] that they were really and truly lady Betty Lawrance and my cousin Montague.

She lifted up her hands and eyes—what *can* I think!—What *can* I think!—

You *think* me a devil, madam; a very devil! or you could not, after you have put these questions to me, seem to doubt the truth of answers so solemnly sworn to.

And if I do think thee so, have I not cause? Is there another man in the world (*I* hope, for the sake of human nature, there is not) who could act by any poor friendless creature as thou hast acted by *me*, whom thou hast *made* friendless—and who, before I knew thee, had for a friend every one who knew me?

I told you, madam, *before*, that lady Betty and my cousin were actually here, in order to take leave of you, before they set out for Berkshire: but the effects of my ungrateful crime (such, with shame and remorse, I own it to be) were the reason you could not see them. Nor could I be desirous that

they should see you: since they never would have forgiven me, had they known what had passed—and what reason had I to expect your silence on the subject, had you been recovered?

It signifies nothing now, that the cause of their appearance has been answered in my ruin, *who* or *what* they are: but if thou hast averred thus solemnly to two falsehoods, what a wretch do I see before me!

I thought she had now reason to be satisfied; and I begged her to allow me to talk to her of to-morrow, as of the happiest day of my life. We have the licence, madam—and you *must* excuse me, that I cannot let you go hence till I have tried every way I *can* try, to obtain your forgiveness.

And am I then [with a kind of frantic wildness] to be detained a prisoner in this horrid house: am I, sir?—Take care! Take care! holding up her hand, menacing, how you make me desperate! If I fall, though by my own hand, inquisition will be made for my blood: and be not out in thy plot, Lovelace, if it should be so—make *sure* work, I charge thee: dig a hole deep enough to cram in and conceal this unhappy body: for depend upon it, that some of those who will not stir to protect me living, will move heaven and earth to avenge me dead!

A horrid dear creature!—By my soul, she made me shudder! She had need indeed to talk of *her* unhappiness in falling into the hands of the only *man* in the world, who could have used her, as I have used her—she is the only *woman* in the world, who could have shocked and disturbed me, as she has done.—So we are upon a foot in *that* respect. And I think I have the *worst* of it by much: since very little has been my joy; very much my trouble: and *her* punishment, as she calls it, is *over*:

but when *mine* will, or what it *may be*, who can tell?

Here, only recapitulating, (think, then, how I must be affected at the time) I was forced to leave off, and sing a song to myself. I aimed at a lively air; but I croaked rather than sung. And fell into the old dismal thirtieth of January strain: I hemmed up for a sprightlier note; but it would not do; and at last I ended, like a malefactor, in a dead psalm melody.

Heigh-ho!—I gape like an unfledged kite in its nest, wanting to swallow a chicken, bobbed at its mouth by its marauding dam!—

What a devil ails me!—I can neither think nor write!—

Lie down, pen, for a moment!

LETTER XLII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

THERE is certainly a good deal in the observation, *that it costs a man ten times more pains to be wicked, than it would cost him to be good.* What a confounded number of contrivances have I had recourse to, in order to carry my point with this charming creature; and, after all, how have I puzzled myself by it; and yet am near tumbling into the pit which it was the end of all my plots to shun! What a happy man had I been with such an excellence, could I have brought my mind to marry when I first prevailed upon her to quit her father's house: but then, as I have often reflected, how had I known, that a but blossoming beauty, who could carry on a private correspondence, and run such risks with a notorious wild fellow, was

not prompted by inclination, which one day might give such a free-liver as myself, as much pain to reflect upon, as, at the time, it gave me pleasure? Thou rememberest the Host's Tale in Ariosto. And *thy* experience, as well as *mine*, can furnish out twenty *Fiametta's* in proof of the imbecility of the sex.

But to proceed with my narrative.

The dear creature resumed the topic her heart was so firmly fixed upon; and insisted upon quitting the *odious house*, and that in very high terms.

I urged her to meet me the next day at the altar in either of the two churches mentioned in the licence. And I besought her, whatever were her resolution, to let me debate this matter calmly with her.

If, she said, I would have her give what I desired the least moment's consideration, I must not hinder her from being her own mistress. To what purpose did I ask her *consent*, if she had not a power over either her own person or actions?

Will you give me your honour, madam, if I consent to your quitting a house so disagreeable to you?—

My honour, sir! said the dear creature—alas!—and turned weeping from me with inimitable grace—as if she had said—Alas!—you have robbed me of my honour!

I hoped then, that her angry passions were subsiding; but I was mistaken: for, urging her warmly for the day; and that for the sake of our mutual honour, and the honour of both our families; in this high-flown and high-souled strain she answered me:

And canst thou, Lovelace, be so *mean*—as to wish to make a wife of the creature thou hast insulted, dishonoured, and abused, as thou hast me? Was it

necessary to humble me down to the low level of thy baseness, before I could be a wife meet for thee? Thou hadst a father, who was a man of honour: a mother, who deserved a better son. Thou hast an uncle, who is no dishonour to the peerage of a kingdom, whose peers are more respectable than the nobility of any other country. Thou hast other relations also, who may be *thy* boast, though thou canst not be *theirs*—and canst thou not imagine, that thou hearest them calling upon thee; the dead from their monuments; the living from their laudable pride; not to dishonour thy ancient and splendid house, by entering into wedlock with a creature whom thou hast levelled with the dirt of the street, and classed with the vilest of her sex?

I extolled her greatness of soul, and her virtue. I execrated myself for my guilt: and told her, how grateful to the *manes* of my ancestors, as well as to the wishes of the living, the honour I supplicated for would be.

But still she insisted upon being a free agent; of seeing herself in other lodgings before she would give what I urged the *least* consideration. Nor would she promise me favour even then, or to permit my visits. How then, as I asked her, could I comply, without resolving to lose her for ever?

She put her hand to her forehead often as she talked; and at last, pleading disorder in her head, retired; neither of us satisfied with the other. But *she* ten times more dissatisfied with me, than I with her.

Dorcas seems to be coming into favour with her—What now!—What now!—

Monday night.

How determined is this lady!—Again had she like to have escaped us!—What a fixed resent-

ment!—She only, I find, assumed a little calm, in order to quiet suspicion. She was got down, and actually had unbolted the street-door, before I could get to her; alarmed as I was by Mrs. Sinclair's cookmaid, who was the only one that saw her fly through the passage: yet lightning was not quicker than I.

Again I brought her back to the dining-room, with infinite reluctance on her part. And before her face, ordered a servant to be placed constantly at the bottom of the stairs for the future.

She seemed even choked with grief and disappointment.

Dorcas was exceedingly assiduous about her; and confidently gave it as her own opinion, that her dear lady should be permitted to go to another lodging, since this was so disagreeable to her: were she to be killed for saying so, she would say it. And was *good* Dorcas for this afterwards.

But for some time the dear creature was all passion and violence—

I see, I see, said she, when I had brought her up, what I am to expect from your new professions, O vilest of men!

Have I offered to you, my beloved creature, any thing that can justify this impatience after a more hopeful calm?

She wrung her hands. She disordered her headdress. She tore her ruffles. She was in a perfect phrensy.

I dreaded her returning malady: but entreaty rather exasperating, I affected an angry air.—I bid her expect the worst she had to fear—and was menacing on, in hopes to intimidate her, when, dropping down at my feet,

'Twill be a mercy, said she, the highest act of mercy you can do, to kill me outright upon this

spot—this happy spot, as I will, in my last moments, call it!—Then baring, with a still more frantic violence, part of her enchanting neck—Here, here, said the soul-harrowing beauty, let thy pointed mercy enter! And I will thank thee, and forgive thee for all the dreadful past!—With my latest gasp will I forgive and thank thee!—Or help *me* to the means, and I will myself put out of thy way so miserable a wretch! And bless thee for those means!

Why all this extravagant passion? Why all these exclamations? Have I offered any new injury to you, my dearest life? What a phrensy is this! Am I not ready to make you all the reparation that I *can* make you? Had I not reason to hope—

No, no, no, no—half a dozen times, as fast as she could speak.

Had I not reason to hope, that you were meditating upon the means of making me happy, and yourself not miserable, rather than upon a flight so causeless and so precipitate?—

No, no, no, no, as before, shaking her head with wild impatience, as resolved not to attend to what I said.

My resolutions are so honourable, if you will permit them to take effect, that I need not be solicitous whither you go, if you will but permit my visits, and receive my vows.—And God is my witness, that I bring you not back from the door with any view to your dishonour, but the contrary: and this moment I will send for a minister to put an end to all your doubts and fears.

Say this, and say a thousand times more, and bind every word with a solemn appeal to that God whom thou art accustomed to invoke to the truth of the vilest falsehoods, and all will still be short of what thou hast vowed and promised to me. And were

not my heart to abhor thee, and to rise against thee, for thy *perjuries*, as it *does*, I would not, I tell thee once more, I would not bind my soul in covenant with such a man, for a thousand worlds!

Compose yourself, however, madam; for *your own sake*, compose yourself. Permit me to raise you up; *abhorred* as I am of your soul!

Nay, if I must not touch you; for she wildly slapt my hands; but with such a sweet passionate air, her bosom heaving and throbbing as she looked up to me, that although I was most sincerely enraged, I could with transport have pressed her to mine.

If I must not touch you, I will not.—But depend upon it, [and I assumed the sternest air I could assume, to try what that would do] depend upon it, madam, that this is not the way to avoid the evils you dread. Let me do what I will, I cannot be used worse—Dorcas, begone!

She arose, Dorcas being about to withdraw; and wildly caught hold of her arm: O Dorcas! If thou art of mine own sex, leave me not, I charge thee! —Then quitting Dorcas, down she threw herself upon her knees, in the furthermost corner of the room, clasping a chair with her face laid upon the bottom of it!—O where can I be safe?—Where, where can I be safe, from this man of violence?—

This gave Dorcas an opportunity to confirm herself in her lady's confidence: the wench threw herself at my feet, while I seemed in violent wrath; and embracing my knees, Kill me, sir, kill me, sir, if you please!—I must throw myself in your way, to save my lady. I beg your pardon, sir—but you must be set on!—God forgive the mischief-makers!—But your own heart, if left to itself, would not permit these things—spare, however, sir! spare my lady, I beseech you!—bustling on her knees

about me, as if I were intending to approach her lady, had I not been restrained by her.

This, humoured by me, Begone, devil!—Officious devil begone!—startled the dear creature: who, snatching up hastily her head from the chair, and as hastily popping it down again in terror, hit her nose, I suppose against the edge of the chair; and it gushed out with blood, running in a stream down her bosom; she herself too much affrighted to heed it!

Never was mortal man in such terror and agitation as I; for I instantly concluded, that she had stabbed herself with some concealed instrument.

I ran to her in a wild agony—for Dorcas was frighted out of all her mock interposition——

What have you done!—O what have you done!—Look up to me, my dearest life! Sweet injured innocence, look up to me! What have you done!—Long will I not survive you!—And I was upon the point of drawing my sword to dispatch myself, when I discovered—[what an unmanly blockhead does this charming creature make me at her pleasure!] that all I apprehended was but a bloody nose, which, as far as I know, (for it could not be stopped in a quarter of an hour) may have saved her head and her intellects.

But I see by this scene, that the sweet creature is but a pretty coward at bottom; and that I can terrify her out of her virulence against me, whenever I put on sternness and anger. But then, as a qualifier to the advantage this gives me over her, I find myself to be a coward too, which I had not before suspected, since I was capable of being so easily terrified by the apprehensions of her offering violence to herself.

LETTER XLIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

But with all this dear creature's resentment against me, I cannot, for my heart, think but she will get all over, and consent to enter the pale with me. Were she even to die to-morrow, and to know she should, would not a woman of her sense, of her punctilio, and in her situation, and of so proud a family, rather die married, than otherwise?—No doubt but she would; although she were to hate the man ever so heartily. If so, there is now but one man in the world whom she can have—and that is *me*.

Now I talk [*familiar writing* is but *talking*, Jack] thus glibly of entering the pale, thou wilt be ready to question me, I know, as to my intentions on this head.

As much of my heart, as I know of it myself, will I tell thee.—When I am *from* her, I cannot still help hesitating about marriage; and I even frequently resolve against it, and determine to press my favourite scheme for cohabitation. But when I am *with* her, I am ready to say, to swear, and to do, whatever I think will be most acceptable to her: and were a parson at hand, I should plunge at once, no doubt of it, into the state.

I have frequently thought, in *common* cases, that it is happy for many giddy fellows [there are giddy fellows, as well as giddy girls, Jack; and perhaps *those* are as often drawn in, as *these*] that ceremony and parade are necessary to the irrevocable solemnity; and that there is generally time for a man to recollect himself in the space between the heated over-night, and the cooler next morning; or I

know not who could escape the sweet gipsies, whose fascinating powers are so much aided by our own raised imaginations.

A wife at any time, I used to say. I had ever confidence and vanity enough to think that no woman breathing could deny her hand, when I held out mine. I am confoundedly mortified to find, that this lady is able to hold me at bay, and to refuse all my *honest* vows.

What force [allow me a serious reflection, Jack: it *will* be put down! What force] have evil habits upon the human mind! When we enter upon a devious course, we think we shall have it in our power when we will to return to the right path. But it is not so, I plainly see: for, who can acknowledge with more justice this dear creature's merits, and his own errors, than I? Whose regret, at times, can be deeper than mine, for the injuries I have done her? Whose resolutions to repair those injuries stronger?—Yet how transitory is my penitence!—How am I hurried away—canst thou tell by what!—O devil of youth, and devil of intrigue, how do you mislead me!—How often do we end in occasions for the deepest remorse, what we begin in wantonness!—

At the present writing, however, the turn of the scale is in behalf of matrimony—for I despair of carrying with her my favourite point.

The lady tells Dorcas, that her heart is broken: and that she shall live but a little while. I think nothing of that, if we marry. In the first place, she knows not what a mind unapprehensive will do for her, in a state to which all the sex look forward with high satisfaction. How often have the whole sacred conclave been thus deceived in their choice of a pope; not considering, that the new dignity is of itself sufficient to give new life! A

few months heart's ease will give my charmer a quite different notion of things: and I dare say, as I have heretofore said *, once married, and I am married for life.

I will allow, that her pride, in *one* sense, has suffered abasement: but her triumph is the greater in every other. And while I can think that all her trials are but additions to her honour, and that I have laid the foundations of her glory in my own shame, can I be called cruel, if I am *not* affected with her grief as some men would be?

And for what should her heart be broken? Her will is unviolated: at *present*, however, her will is unviolated. The destroying of good habits, and the introducing of bad, to the corrupting of the whole heart, is the violation. That her will is not to be corrupted, that her mind is not to be debased, she has hitherto unquestionably proved. And if she give cause for further trials, and hold fast her integrity; what *ideas* will she have to dwell upon, that will be able to corrupt her morals? What *vestigia*, what *remembrances*, but such as will inspire abhorrence of the attempter?

What nonsense then to suppose, that such a mere *notional violation* as she has suffered, should be able to cut asunder the strings of life?

Her religion, married, or not married, will set her above making such a trifling accident, such an *involuntary* suffering, fatal to her.

Such considerations as these, they are, that support me against all apprehension of bugbear consequences: and I would have them have weight with thee; who art such a doughty advocate for her. And yet I allow thee this; that she really makes too much of it: takes it too much to heart. To be

* See p. 292.

sure she ought to have forgot it by this time, except the charming, charming consequence happen, that still I am in hopes will happen, were I to proceed no further. And, if she apprehend this herself, then has the dear over-nice soul some reason for taking it so much to heart: and yet would not, I think, refuse to legitimate.

O Jack! had I an imperial diadem, I swear to thee, that I would give it up, even to my *enemy*, to have one charming boy by this lady. And should she *escape me*, and no such effect follow, my revenge on her family, and, in *such* a case, on herself, would be incomplete, and I should reproach myself as long as I lived.

Were I to be sure, that this foundation is laid [and why may I not hope it is?] I should not doubt to have her still (should she withstand her day of grace) on my own conditions: nor should I, if it were so, question that *revived* affection in *her*, which a woman seldom fails to have for the father of her first child, whether born in wedlock, or out of it.

And pr'ythee, Jack, see in this my ardent hope, a distinction in my favour from other rakes; who, almost to a man, follow their inclinations without troubling themselves about consequences. In imitation, as one would think, of the strutting villain of a bird, which from feathered lady to feathered lady pursues his imperial pleasures, leaving it to his sleek paramours to hatch the genial product in holes and corners of their own finding out.




THE TAMIL LANGUAGE
SERTUGI'S SANSKRIT MANUAL

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Lett.

I. *LOVELACE to Belford.* Dialogue with Clarissa, the door between them. Her letter to him. She will not see him for a week.

II. *From the same.* Copies of letters that pass between them. Goes to the Commons to try to get the licence. She *shall* see him, he declares, on his return. Love and compassion hard to be separated. His fluctuating reasonings on their present situation. Is jealous of her superior qualities. Does justice to her immoveable virtue.

III. *From the same.* The lady escaped. His rage. Makes a solemn vow of revenge, if once more he gets her into his power. His man Will is gone in search of her. His hopes. On what grounded. He will advertise her. Describes her dress. Letter left behind her. Accuses her (*that is to say*, LOVELACE *accuses her*) of niceness, prudery, affectation.

IV. *From the same.* A letter to Miss Howe from Clarissa falls into his hands: which, had it come to hers, would have laid open and detected all his designs. In it she acquits Clarissa of *prudery, coquetry*, and *undue reserve*. Admires, applauds, blesses her for the example she has set her sex, and for the credit she has done it, by her conduct in the most difficult situations.

This letter may be considered as a kind of summary of Clarissa's trials, persecutions, and exemplary conduct hitherto; and of Mr. Lovelace's intrigues, plots, and views, so far as Miss Howe could be supposed to know them, or to guess at them.

A letter from Lovelace, which further shows the fertility of his contriving genius.

V. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Informs her of Lovelace's villany, and of her escape. Her only concern, what. The course she intends to pursue.

VI. *Lovelace to Belford.* Exults on hearing from his man Will, that the lady has refuged herself at Hampstead. Observations in a style of levity on some passages in the letter she left behind her. Intimates, that Tomlinson is arrived to aid his purposes. The chariot is come; and now dressed like a bridegroom, attended by a footman she never saw, he is already, he says, at Hampstead.

VII. VIII. *From the same.* Exults on his contrivances.—By what means he gets into the lady's presence at Mrs.

Moore's. Her terrors, fits, exclamations. His plausible tales to Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins. His intrepid behaviour to the lady. Copies of letters from Tomlinson, and of pretended ones from his own relations, calculated to pacify and delude her.

IX. X. *Lovelace to Belford.* His further arts, inventions, and intrepidity.—She puts home questions to him. 'Ungenerous and ungrateful she calls him. He knows not the value of the heart he had insulted. *He had a plain path before him, after he had tricked her out of her father's house!* But that now her mind was raised above fortune, and above him.' His precautionary contrivances.

XI. XII. XIII. XIV. XV. XVI. *From the same.* Character of Widow Bevis. Prepossesses the women against Miss Howe. Leads them to think she is in love with him. Apt himself to think so: and why. Women like not novices: and why.—Their vulgar aphorism animadverted on. —Tomlinson arrives. Artful conversation between them. Miss Rawlins's prudery.—His forged letter in imitation of Miss Howe's, No. iv. Other contrivances to delude the lady, and attach the women to his party.

XVII. XVIII. XIX. XX. *From the same.* Particulars of several interesting conversations between himself, Tomlinson, and the lady. Artful management of the two former. Her noble spirit.—He tells Tomlinson before her, that he never had any proofs of affection from her. *She frankly owns the regard she once had for him.* 'He had brought her,' she tells Tomlinson and him, '*more than once* to own it to him. Nor did his own vanity, she was sure, permit him *to doubt of it.* He had kept her soul in suspense an hundred times.'—Both men affected in turn by her noble behaviour, and great sentiments.—Their pleas, prayers, prostrations, to move her to relent. Her distress.

XXI. XXII. *From the same.* His conditional promise to Tomlinson in the lady's favour. His pleas and arguments on their present situation, and on his darling and hitherto baffled views. His whimsical contest with his conscience. His last adieu to it.—His strange levity, which he calls gravity, on the death of Belford's uncle.

XXIII. XXIV. *From the same.* She favours him with a meeting in the garden. Her composure. Her conversation great and noble. But will not determine any thing in his favour. It is however evident, he says, *that she has still some tenderness for him.* His reasons. An affecting scene between them. Her *ingenuousness and openness of heart.* —She resolves to go to church; but will not suffer him to

accompany her thither. His whimsical debate with the god of love, whom he introduces as pleading for the lady.

XXV. XXVI. XXVII. *From the same.* He has got the wished for letter from Miss Howe.—Informs him of the manner of obtaining it.—His remarks upon it. Observations on female friendships. Comparison between Clarissa and Miss Howe.

XXVIII. *From the same.* Another conversation with the lady. His plausible arguments to re-obtain her favour ineffectual. His pride piqued. His revenge incited. New arguments in favour of his wicked projects. His notice that a licence is actually obtained.

XXIX. XXX. *Lovelace to Belford.* Copy of the licence; with observations upon it. His scheme for annual marriages.—He is preparing with Lady Betty and Miss Montague to wait upon Clarissa. Who these pretended ladies are. How dressed. They give themselves airs as of quality. Humorously instructs them how to act up to their assumed characters.

XXXI. XXXII. *From the same.* Once more is the charmer of his soul in her old lodgings. Brief account of the horrid imposture. Steels his heart by revengeful recollections. Her agonizing apprehensions. Temporary distraction. Is ready to fall into fits.—But all her distress, all her prayers, her innocence, her virtue, cannot save her from the most villanous outrage.

XXXIII. *Belford to Lovelace.* Vehemently inveighs against him. Grieves for the lady. Is now convinced, *that there must be a world after this, to do justice to injured merit.* Beseeches him, if he be a man, and not a devil, to do all the poor justice now in his power.

XXXIV. *Lovelace to Belford.* Regrets that ever he attempted her. Aims at extenuation. Does he not see that he has journeyed on to this stage, *with one determined point in view from the first?* She is at present stupified, he says.

XXXV. *From the same.* The lady's affecting behaviour in her delirium. He owns that art has been used to her. Begins to feel remorse.

XXXVI. *From the same.* The lady writes upon scraps of paper, which she tears, and throws under the table. Copies of ten of these rambling papers; and of a letter to him most affectingly incoherent. He attempts further to extenuate his villany. Tries to resume his usual levity; and forms a scheme to decoy the people at Hampstead to the infamous woman's in town. The lady seems to be recovering.

XXXVII. *From the same.* She attempts to get away in his absence. Is [illegible] by the odious Sir Hargrave. Insults in the hope [illegible] her into confusion when he sees her. Is told by [illegible] that she is coming into the dining-room to find him out.

XXXVIII. *From the same.* A high scene of *her* exalted, and of *his* depressed behaviour. Offers to make her amends by matrimony. She treats his offer with contempt. Afraid Belford plays him false.

XXXIX. *From the same.* Wishes he had never seen her. With all the women he had known till now, it was, *base subdues, and abuses subdued.* His miserable dejection. His remorse. She attempts to escape. A mob raised. His quick invention to pacify it. Out of conceit with himself, and his contrivances.

XL. XLI. *From the same.* Lord M. very ill. His presence necessary at M. Hall. Puts Dorcas upon ingratiating herself with her lady.—He re-urges marriage to her. She resolutely, from the most noble motives, rejects him.

XLII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Reflects upon himself. It costs, he says, more pains to be wicked than to be good. The lady's solemn expostulation with him. Extols her greatness of soul. Dorcas coming into favour with her. He is alarmed by another attempt of the lady to get off. She is in agonies at being prevented. He tries to intimidate her. Dorcas pleads for her. On the point of throwing his sword against himself. The occasion.

XLIII. *From the same.* Cannot yet persuade himself but the lady will be his. Reasons for his opinion. Opens his heart to Belford, as to his intentions by her. Mortified that she refuses his honest vows. Her violation but notional. Her triumph greater than her sufferings. Her *will* unviolated. He is a better man, he says, than most fellows: and why.

END OF VOL. V.

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