



THE

HISTORY

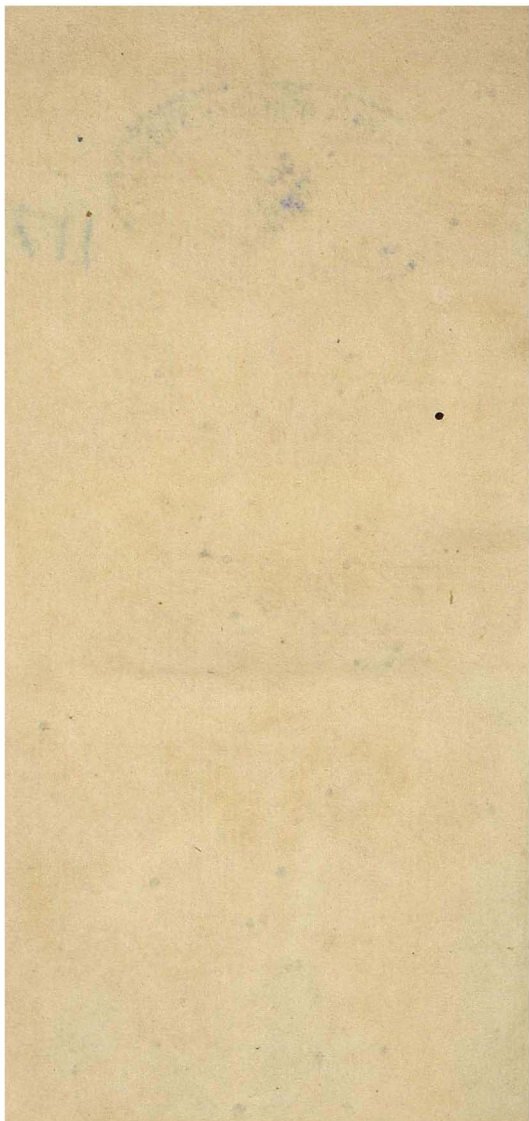
OF

CHARLES BENTINCK, Bart.

AND

LOUISA CAVENDISH.

VOL. II.



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THE

HISTORY

OF

SIR CHARLES BENTINCK, BART.

AND

LOUISA CAVENDISH.

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

LAURA AND AUGUSTUS.

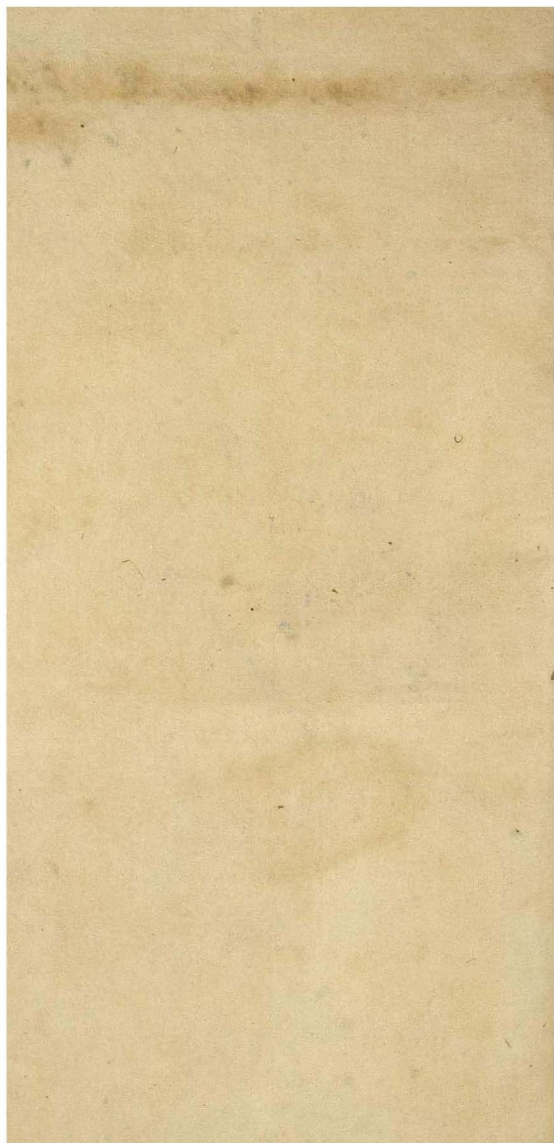
VOLUME II.

"Sorrow and joy in love alternate reign,
Sweet is the bliss, distracting is the pain.---
So when the Nile its fruitful deluge spreads,
And genial heat informs its slimy beds.
Here yellow harvests crown the fertile plain,
There monstrous serpents fright th' lab'ring swain;
A various product fills the fatten'd sand,
And the same floods enrich and curse the land."

Phædra & Hippolitus, SMITH.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. HOOKHAM, NEW-BOND STREET.



~~Handwritten signature~~

in Fajar Royal. 1831

T H E

H I S T O R Y, &c.



Brussels.

I THANK you, my dearest Maria, for your very entertaining letter, wherein you so admirably criticise the unfortunate tragedy. You cannot imagine how much I regreted my absence from London, which deprived me of partaking with my friend the laughter of the evening. For, from your
VOL. II. B account,

account, few must have been the handkerchiefs displayed upon the trial and execution.—Alas, poor Lord Russell!

You will perceive by the date of this that I am now no longer an inhabitant of a cloyster, but make one among the fashionable circle.—Our lodgings are most delightfully situated, commanding a view over the park.—You may be assured I shed a few tears on quitting my late dreary abode; my heart vibrated with joy when the carriage drove from those formidable gates;—and inwardly returned thanks for my escape from bigotry and superstition; and I hope shortly to bid adieu even to the very country.

My heart, my dear Maria, assents to the justice of our worthy mother's observations
with

with regard to the conduct of married women in general. I already observed, in one of my letters, that I pursued that coquetish behaviour, solely to veil the feelings of a wounded heart; and, therefore, trusted some extenuation would be found for the levity of my actions. But as I wish to dwell as little as possible on the ungrateful subject, will cease scribbling until some more agreeable theme shall arise: In the mean time, permit me to assure you of the affectionate regard of

LOUISA CAVENDISH.

LETTER XXXVI.

Miss CAVENDISH to Miss BRUDNEL.

Brußels.

I RENEW with avidity the delightful employment of chattering to my sweet friend. —I broke off in my last, I am sensible, rather abruptly, owing to the pain which ever accompanies the mention of a certain person's name. It is now a week since I bade farewell to my late dismal habitation; during which time, the hours have glided away in the most pleasing succession:—Our little society has been much indebted to the polite attention of a Mr. Wilmot, who occupies

cupies a part of the same house with ourselves. He is an agreeable man, and wonderfully assiduous in his endeavours to please. I think, for my part, that Charlotte and himself seem to have conceived a little kind of penchant for each other: I sincerely wish it may prove so; as, from all I can gather from his discourse, he possesses a handsome independency, is rather what one would style a fine soldierly looking man; and by no means deficient in understanding. I shall really be very sorry when he leaves us, which I apprehend will be speedily, as business, not pleasure, was the cause of his visit to this kingdom.—From some hints which have fallen from him, I should imagine some affair wherein the heart was engaged, brought him over.—However, I hope his continuance may be as long as our's. We are now making wonderful preparations

for a masked ball, which the Dutcheſs D'Arembourg is to give this day week ; I deſign figuring in Sultana, and Wilmot as Sultan. I, laughing, told him that I ought, in charity to him, to yield my garments to my couſin ; who is to perſonate the character of a gipſey, and Mrs. Thompson that of her mother.

I look forward, my dear, with anxious impatience for the day, as I expect to derive a ſingular ſatisfaction from the amuſement ; it is an entertainment I have heard much talk of, but of which I never yet partook ; and were you to be my companion, the pleaſure of the evening would then be complete. But as you never ſaw the dreſs, permit me to give you a ſketch of it.

In .

In the first place, a white gold tissue petticoat, with a deep gold fringe round the skirt; a body of the same, made close to the shape, like a child's stay-coat; the front crossed with gold lacings and gold tassels; a blue satin robe, with a fringe the same as that on the petticoat; no handkerchief;—in the room of which, as the Marchioness of Lofrier has obligingly insisted upon my wearing her jewels. I am to have a solitaire of brilliants; my hair in loose curls; a turban of silver gauze on one side, with a crescent of diamonds, with pearls intermixed with my hair: the whole of which, I think will cut a most brilliant and magnificent appearance. You will, I dare say, think me not deficient in the common foible of my sex—vanity, in thus making my public *entré* in so conspicuous an attire; but I do assure you, it was not by my own desire; for

the dress belongs to the Marchioness of Lofrier, who positively insists upon my making use of it for the night. I am sensible my rustic breeding will never be able to carry off the glittering attire with a sufficient quantum of town assurance or court elegance:—but my promise is given, and there is no retracting.—I am interrupted; must, therefore, for the present bid you adieu; and remain as usual your's,

LOUISA CAVENDISH.

LET-



L E T T E R. XXXVII.

SIR CHARLES BENTINCK to EDWARD
SEDLEY, Esq.

Brussels.

LOUISA has quitted her retirement; no hopes therefore of again seeing her alone.—Curfed fortune!—O Sedley! that undone fair one will now be ruined beyond all hopes of redemption!—She, with her aunt and cousin, at present lodge in a house where there is also, it seems, a young fellow of fashion and fortune, who is their constant escort to every place of polite resort. He divides his attention, I am told, equally be-

between the two young ladies, therefore it is impossible to surmise at whom he aims the blow of seduction.

I have not myself, as yet, seen him ; notwithstanding I have used every endeavour for that purpose ; but am in great hopes that in a short time my wishes will be gratified, as they in all probability will make a part of the company at the masked ball to be given by the Dutchesse D'Arembourg next week. — I cannot imagine who he is ; I have made enquiries of every creature of any consequence in this town, but to no effect. Nobody here has the least knowledge of him ; he is, they say, a perfect stranger, and but lately arrived. It is wonderful how a person come to the years of Mrs. Thompson, can so thoughtlessly form acquaintances ; but she certainly is a most imprudent woman ; and

I am

I am only amazed how she was capable of duping, for such a length of years, a man so conversant with life as Mr. Cavendish; for he actually reposed the most unreserved confidence in her, as is plainly shown by his leaving his daughter so immediately under her guardianship!—However, such is the weakness of human nature, that there is not one, even the wisest, but is liable to err; but of all men upon earth, I looked upon him to have been the most careful.

A manuscript, by accident, fell into my hands this morning, which as I think it has some merit, shall transcribe for your perusal. It was tied round a piece of music which I had purchased; and as I never, you know, suffer the smallest scrap of writing or printing to be destroyed before I examine it, so you may be assured, that curiosity prompted me

to peruse this paper ; and finding it possessed some ingenuity, must acknowledge I felt myself interested in the fate of the author, whom I am greatly desirous of finding out. You will justly say it is a wild-goose chase ; however, I by no means think it impossible, as it appears very extraordinary how such a paper, in the English language, should fall into the hands of a French music-vender ; I am therefore resolved to make some further enquiries ; in the interim I enclose it for your entertainment, and remain,

Your's,

CHARLES BENTINCK.

THE

(17)

T H E

V O Y A G E O F A P O E T,

U P T H E R I V E R S E V E R N .

A F R A G M E N T .

ON the 16th of May, 17—, a young sprig of the degraded race of Parnassus, set out from the very romantic and beautiful little town of Bridgenorth, for the elegant city of Worcester, in a common wherry.—Poet-like, he would have adopted any other method of conveyance, either by land or by water, that would have promised him a greater degree of indulgence; but his circumstances

cumstances being, as usual, very low, he was crammed into it, with about seventy companions, who, amidst the hoots and hisses of the populace of the place, set off on their voyage up the Severn.

On his right hand sat a limb of the law, and on his left a pillar of the church; the muse being, for the first time regulated by law, and chastened by religion.

The rest of the boat was occupied by maids, wives, infants, matrons, &c. &c. all as if ready placed for the pencil of our inimitable Hogarth.—But, with the reader's permission, I think Yorick had a better claim to them. Their artless tears, their parting sighs, the looks they cast behind, were his!—Brown as the maid in Prior's song, they left their own dulcet shades, to
earn

earn a daily pittance in the fields and gardens round the British metropolis.—
Every winding of the river wafted them farther from home ; and now they raise the song of sorrow for friends and kindred seen no more !

As quick, however, as a ray of sunshine shoots athwart the gloom of the valley upon the tranquil stream, so quick, O Severn ! nature and simplicity, bursting from their guileless hearts, re-light their moistened countenances with a sudden rude but transient laugh.—Their tears once more began to flow, and though they never turned the current, yet broke the surface of the stream ! —Some hanging over the side of the vessel, quaffed from their palms the chrystal element ; and some who held the early spotted children of May, and earliest offspring of the meadow,

meadow, unwooded Flora bound up in nosegays
ripe, shed their tarnished beauties in the tide.

Thus passed the hours away; while the
doleful song swelled every moment in sadder
accents upon the ear!

The oars kept time; the blustering pilot
paused, and was silent at his helm!—The
daws skimmed the sides of the rocks;—the
sun, by degrees, retired behind the hills,
while the willows, bending to the breeze
that seemed to grow colder in its pas-
sage through them, shook their melancholy
branches, and gave fearful signals of a bleak
afternoon.—A foolish weak custom of con-
templating the miseries of mankind, had
drawn a silent tear down the poet's cheek.—
The watermen chewed their quids in peace,
while the fishermen on the banks, as we pas-
sed,

sed, seemed to neglect their rods and lines, and to hang on the melancholy ditty they heard as on the song of the fabulous mermaids!—At this moment Divinity was no longer orthodox;—Law forgot his actions and costs; and even Poetry itself grew insipid!—Just at this instant we came ashore where we ate, and were full.—No sooner, however, had we proceeded a few miles, than a poor infant in our gondola, was seized with a violent fit of the ague.—The mother's poverty was not able to furnish it with a covering warm enough against the cold!—A generous-hearted fellow gave her his great coat, for I was a poet and had none!—This, with the strength of instinct in the mother's breast, did wonders!—The infant soon revived again, and looked as charming as a young lilac after a hard shower!—Poor baby!

baby! this was thy first affliction in a world of
 woe!—The time will come, when thy poor
 faltering tongue shall ask in vain; when that
 warm heart that held thee to its own, shall
 be mixed with the clay of some sequestered
 cloister, or fall crumbling away in some
 rustic repository!—" Drink, and be d—d,
 the gentleman desires you;" said a great
 bouncing fellow, handing about the ale,
 which we had brought with us, to the rest of
 his comrades, and the poor young women,
 who were almost chilled to death with the
 cold.

As soon as we had drank our liquor, we
 were called to by a couple of bailiffs, who
 had just taken charge of a prisoner. They
 came in, and going to the upper end of the
 boat, seemed a load heavy enough of all
 con-

conscience, to have sunk a navy.—The lawyer too, at that moment, beginning to vent his *fictions*, made me apprehensive of every shoal we came near, and impressed my mind with the opinion that we should sink in good earnest. I was at length relieved from my fears by the bailiffs, who sitting at the head of the boat, with their faces towards us, like a couple of wretches going to execution, pointed to Worcester, which was now clearly in view.—A boarding-school of young ladies going by at that time, on an excursion from the city, I took out my glass, and levelled it at one of them; she seemed a fine girl, and by that kind of toss she gave her head, I imagined she had been much admired.—I was just falling monstrously in love, when I heard the cathedral bell begin to toll, and saw the crows marshal themselves.

felves in order upon the spire, as if waiting for a corpse, which I judged at that moment to be near.

Having now come safe to land, I paid my fare, and took my leave of the poor daughters of industry, who carried all that they were possessed of in a towel or handkerchief. Why, said I to myself, should the sex, which nature formed of the weakest, alas, be reduced to such intolerable hardships!—There is not one of these creatures, whose natural good health, good spirits, and vivacity, but would bring far healthier heirs to many of our country gentlemen, than their own enervated mates; yet must themselves fall into the hands, and suffer the abuse of every booby heir.—
 “Take physic, pomp!”

I was

I was going on with these reflections, when a porter running along the street had nigh overset me, and obliged me to betake myself quietly to the Crown Inn for the night.

LET.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Sir CHARLES BENTINCK, to EDWARD
SEDLEY, Esq.

AT length, Sedley, I have discovered the unfortunate author of the Fragment which I sent you in my last. I had no sooner dispatched my epistle, than I hastened to the shop where I had purchased my music; and desiring to speak with the proprietor of the mansion, showed him the manuscript, and requested to know whether he could give me any information by what means it fell into his hands.—He replied, “ That he believed it might have been among some loose papers swept from the room of an unfortunate gentleman who lodged up stairs.”—

After

After a little further discourse, I gathered that the author was in eminent distress, and had a wife and infant; that he gained his livelihood by scribbling love-letters and poetic sonnets, for gentlemen whose education, or understanding, rendered them unequal to perform that task for themselves, and whose purse enabled them to supply the deficiencies of the head, by administering to the necessities of those who were more favoured by the Muses.

“ The gentleman, he said, was an Englishman, but perfect master of French and Italian.”—“ Well then, friend, cried I, permit me, if it is not inconvenient, to speak a word to your lodger.”—“ *Oui, mi Lor*, I vill acquaint de poor man,” and away he fled.—He soon returned, desiring me to follow, which I did, up two pair of stairs.—

On

On entering the apartment, the furniture of which exhibited misery in the extreme, I beheld a genteel handsome looking man of about thirty; a female, whose features had still the remains of exquisite beauty, which you might clearly perceive, had been faded by the shrill blasts of adversity; and an infant who lay sleeping in her lap, who might justly have sat for a cherubin.

On perceiving this hapless group, I felt the tear of soft compassion start to my eyes. —The unhappy gentleman approached me with, “Pray, Sir, be seated; my landlord acquaints me you wished to see me; may I crave your commands?” —While he was pronouncing these words, I had leisure to observe him, and could not forbear imagining I had somewhere beheld his features before; but recollecting myself, I entreated his pardon

don for intruding myself as a stranger upon his retirement, but that I understood he now and then took the trouble of composing a few stanzas for those whose talents lay not in the poetic line.—He bowed, “Your delicacy in this address is no more than what the benignity of your aspect led me to expect!—Allow me, Sir, to have the honour of being your amanuensis, and I will do my endeavour to give you satisfaction.”—I requested he would make me a copy of verses upon a young lady, as from an admirer who had frequented the church she used, with a view of feasting his eyes with her charms,—My bait took as I could wish, and he promised, that on my calling again they should be ready for my inspection.

I wished, but was at a loss how to offer them any thing, lest I should unintentionally

wound those hearts it would have been my highest gratification to relieve.—At last, leaning over the sleeping innocent, I dropt a purse into the mother's lap, and hastily departed.—I design to make them another visit in a few days, and if possible find out whether it is any way within my power essentially to assist this unfortunate couple.

I assure you, my dear Sedley, I feel a considerable relief from having found them out, as it in a great degree dissipates my thought from the more heart-felt recollection of lost Louisa.—To-morrow will be the night on which I expect to behold once more, that undone fair one!—I will watch her every motion!

Deem not my conduct, Edward, romantic; it is actuated by the most laudable gratitude

gratitude to that best of men, her father,
unto whom my youth is under the most
manifest obligations.

Your's,

CHARLES BENTINCK.

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LET.

L E T T E R X X X I X .

EDWARD SEDLEY, Esq. to Sir CHARLES
BENTINCK.

London.

BENTINCK, I have seen an angel!—a little divinity!—The sweetest creature that ever nature formed!—Soft as the tender blossom of the spring!—fair as the spotless lily of the vale! with eyes of celestial blue, whose lips outvie the damask rose!—In short, a paragon of beauty; and all similitude must fall far short of the delicate original!—You seem surprized, and with reason!—“Is this, you cry, the man who but a few posts hence was railing at the very sex, to the charms of whom he at present seems so
humble

humble a votary?"—True, upon my soul; the same Edward Sedley!—and as true that I neither know the fair enslaver's name nor place of abode!

You must know, Charles, that I, among the number who thronged to see the famous tragedy of Lord Ruffel, by the Reverend Doctor ———, performed not long since at Drury-Lane, was, as ill-fate would have it, thrown within eye-shot of my beautiful unknown!—The moment she entered the box, that wicked rogue, Cupid, whipt one of his keenest arrows into his quiver, and aimed it directly at my heart!—Wit, aided by Venus's charms, what mortal can withstand?—not I, by Jove!—Talk no more to me of your Louisa; I would bet half my estate, that she possesses not the bewitching smile and dimples of my little goddess!—To hear,

too, the remarks which escaped from her ivory palisadoes!—to see the laugh restrained by gentle humanity, for the author's feelings! to—but I could waste whole years enumerating her perfections!—I gazed on the lovely maid, until the ardour of my looks meeting her eyes, drove the lilies from their bed, to make room for the deeper tint of the carnation; I was therefore necessitated to put my features under command, in which I with difficulty succeeded.—At the conclusion of the piece, I had the transcendant felicity of handing my lovely maid into her carriage; and slipping a guinea into the footman's hand, enquired the name of his mistress.—Miss Batson of Berners street, was the reply.—Then, leaping into my chariot, drove home, to be at greater leisure to contemplate upon the exquisite charms of my little enslaver, and what method would be
the

the most feasible of introducing myself to her acquaintance.—At length I determined boldly to make an avowal of my love, and entreat permission to wait on her; at the same time resolving, if her mental were in any degree correspondent with her personal qualifications, to make her an honourable tender of my hand, heart, and fortune!—Accordingly I sat down, and after writing, and as often committing it to the flames, I at last finished a sheet of paper stuck full of darts; then ringing for Mr. John, desired him to hasten in the morning, by times, to Berners street, deliver that epistle, and by no means to return without a reply.—But the devil a wink of sleep could my honour get, until Aurora, in all her native brightness, broke into my chamber. After a couple of hours of anxious impatience, during which I had a thousand times cursed the lingering

C 4

moments,

moments, John returned, with Miss Batson's compliments, had not really the happiness of my acquaintance, but should be at home that morning, and would, if I called, see me : for that actually she did not understand the purport of my letter.—Aye ! thought I, women's tricks ! I see she does not chuse to comprehend my epistle, until she has had the pleasure of seeing me look as sheepish as an ass !——Well, Sir, after having taken the most unwearied pains with my outside appearance, and viewed and reviewed myself again and again in the mirror, I at length ventured to sally forth. As I drove along, repeating in imagination all the delicate speeches, and refined expressions, necessary to be used on the happy occasion, the carriage stopt.—A thundering rap announced the lover's approach ; my heart palpitated ! —The door of a handsome house was thrown
open,

open, and I was ushered up into a genteel study. The servant bowed, "Miss Batson, Sir, will wait on you immediately." A large table stood open, on which were scattered a variety of papers. Surely, thought I, this lovely creature must be superior indeed to the common class of females, if this is her apartment, and she dedicates much of her time to the amusements of the pen, and in reviewing the works of the departed ornaments of mankind.

While I was thus contemplating upon the imaginary virtues of my *dulcinea*, the doors opened, and in entered—not the blooming wished-for maid; but upon my soul, I have scarce patience to relate the mortifying disappointment!—You have, no doubt, either seen or read the description of an Aunt Deborah; but I have done more, been *tête-à-*

tête with one.—Prithee, Charles, figure to yourself my amazement, on beholding a tall, lean figure ; large goggle black eyes ; brows, which, like a willow, hung nodding over them ; a nose resembling a piece of putty ; a mouth whose dimension was from ear to ear ; with a most amazing redundancy of black down, which shaded her parched and skinny lips. Stumps which might formerly have borne the name of teeth, but now resembled ebony ; and a skin, naturally of the most sanguine hue, rendered still more obnoxious by a quantity of snuff, which meandered from the extended nostrils, down to the muslin scarf that concealed her other charms !—Faith, Bentinck, I can proceed no farther in this delicate portrait !——Nay, I believe it would be impossible to paint the consternation visible in my countenance, upon the entrance of this antediluvian

vian mortal!—But I soon discerned from whence my mortification had originated, by recollecting in her weather-beaten phiz, the features of one of the she-dragons who came to guard the beautiful Hesperian fruit; and to whom, I suppose, the servant belonged who gave me the address.—Miss Batson, I have since been informed, makes one among our learned and refined females, who aspires to the rank of an authoress, and is a second——, damn it, if I know which of the numberless female candidates for literary fame to give the precedence!—However, at all events, I shall conclude myself thine,

EDWARD SEDLEY.

LETTER XL.

Miss CAVENDISH to Miss BRUDNEL.

Brussels.

SURELY, my Maria, I dream, or I have beheld the loved image of my once amiable Charles!—This morning, as I was strolling in the park with my cousin, and the Marchioness of Lofrier, a gentleman passed me, whom I instantly recognized to be, as I thought, Mr. Waldron; and who, on going by, touched his hat. But this, you know, being the custom for every gentleman to do, whether known to you or not, it did not surprize me. I could have sworn, however,

to

to the identity of his person, but that the marchioness informed me it was a Sir Charles Bentinek. It is rather strange so very strong a likeness should subsist between people no ways connected, as I know of, by blood;—but of this I am convinced, no twin brothers could have borne a stronger resemblance!

How do I blush to acknowledge the effect this gentleman's presence had upon me!—Indeed, Maria, it is a cruel reflection, that I cannot, with all my endeavours, drive him from my mind!—The likeness has recalled a thousand painful circumstances to my remembrance, which I have with so much solicitude been essaying to forget!—It has thrown a damp over my spirits, which renders me little calculated to partake of this evening's amusement!—Alas! how justly shall I verify the old adage, “ That there is
many

many an aching heart in a coach and fix^{ed}!

The glare of finery, which I shall this night be apparelled in, will not for one moment divest my breast of the corroding stings of painful recollection. Ah! Maria, how blessed could I have thought myself, even in a desert, with Mr. Waldron!—For his sake, I would most willingly have foregone friends, family, and country; nay, to have rendered him happy, freely have resigned my very existence!

But, ah, unhappy Louisa! what a barbarous return has thy tenderness met with?—The dove, which for so long a time you cherished to thy bosom, changed into the verriest adder, and stung the heart which with but too much fondness held thee as its choicest treasure! O man, man! false deceitful man! —But believe me, Maria, from my soul I
 pardon

pardon the ungrateful wanderer, and do most fervently pray, that he may never feel those pangs of unrequited love, which at this moment rend the breast of your friend!—May the fair, whoe'er she be, return his love with warmth equal to his own; and may his heart never know a sorrow, nor his eyes witness a scene of woe; but may the remnant of his days be one uninterrupted calm of felicity!

You will imagine, my dearest girl, this melancholy strain ill suited to one, who will in a few hours be called upon to mix in all the merriment of pleasure!—True, it is not; but there is no struggling against nature; and I feel a sweet alleviation in my distress, by imparting the feelings of my mind to the bosom of a sincere friend!—Trust me, I look back with the warmest gratitude to Heaven, who

who providentially inspired my dearest Maria, with so refined a friendship for her Louisa; and at a time too when the world in general would not have viewed me in the most deserving light. The mask of coquetry shaded in those days (though I believe but imperfectly,) the workings of an agonized heart!—Your compassion, my sweet friend, led you to put the mildest construction upon my actions; and I might have still hurried blindly on, in the road my youth had chalked out, but for that timely and sensible letter of your excellent mother.—To her then, how greatly am I obligated?—Would it were in my power to give more convincing proofs of the sincerity of my esteem and affection to you both, than by mere words. Professions are too commonly used in the world, for the worst and basest of purposes, to allow people of sagacity to place much
 depen-

dependence on them ; it would therefore be paying you but an ill compliment to use them upon this occasion ; for certain it is, that where the heart feels much, little can be expressed by the tongue. However, I must here break off, or by indulging my scribbling vein, I shall forget what is due to politeness, and keep my aunt and cousin waiting ; but on my return, if not too much fatigued, will renew my letter.



Maria ! my dearest Maria ! 'tis he !—Wal-
dron and Bentinck are one and the same per-
son !—My eyes could not deceive me !—
O ! my friend ! my joy is too big for ut-
terance !—To find him, the youth of my
tenderest affection, true, faithful as the
turtle to its mate, is more than my sanguine
wishes

wishes ever expected. Did I, my friend, ever, to you, represent him as false, perfidious and inconstant?—Yes! too sure I did;—but now, O, Maria! I repeal the unjust epithets.—He is all constancy, all!—in short, he is every thing my fond foolish heart could wish.

But you stand amazed!—True, you are ignorant by what means this happy transporting metamorphosis was brought about. But I will, if my excess of joy will permit, acquaint you with the animating particulars.

I think I broke off in order to prepare myself to attend my aunt to the Dutches D'Arembourg's masked ball. Well then, my friend, with a heart little calculated to join in the mirth of the evening, I sat down under the friseur's hands, who, after keep-
ing

ing me three hours under his tormenting fingers, he bowed, assuring me it was impossible to resist my appearance; for that I should certainly do more execution than all the ladies in the room; and withdrew. Had one of the gentlemen of the comb in England made the like speech, he would never have been admitted a second time within the doors, but here every thing is different; and custom familiarizes us to circumstances and modes, though ever so unreasonable.

I am convinced you will excuse my giving you a description of the rooms and company, when I tell you my thoughts are at present too much occupied with another more interesting theme than ornamental walls, chandeliers, and variegated lamps; and indeed, I fear, you, will scarcely be able to decypher this scrawl, my hand is in so
great

great a tremor, and my heart so light; indeed, to use an expression of Shakespear's, "My bosom's lord sits lightly on its throne."

But to proceed, without keeping the sister of my heart in further suspense, whose tender affection for her Louisa will, I know, participate in her bliss as she has already done in her affliction :

The tremendous business of the toilet was no sooner dispatched, and the compliments which my dress extracted from our party over, than we set off in the Marchioness of Losrer's carriage, accompanied by Mr. Wilmot. On our entrance into the apartment, we beheld the Dutchess seated beneath a canopy of blue velvet, richly embossed with gold and silver, divers coloured stones, foils, &c. &c. upon a seat of burnished gold,
raised

raised considerably above the floor; at her feet knelt too little children of most wonderful beauty!—The one representing Cupid; his bow slung over his shoulder, with arrows in his hand;—the other Hymen, holding a lighted torch. The Dutchess herself, most magnificently attired in a fancy habit, sat unmasked to receive the compliments of the company as they entered; and really looked most divinely beautiful.—Every person as they advanced to the throne slipped aside their masks, but on retiring instantly resumed them. The glare of lights, the variety of figures which struck my view on my entrance, and the amazing notice which my dress attracted, abashed me prodigiously; and I was some moments before I could sufficiently recover my presence of mind to go up, and pay the proper respect due to the elegant entertainer. However, I came off better

better than I could expect; and truly rejoiced was I, when that piece of ceremony was ended.

My mind not being in the most composed and tranquil state, I had positively refused to join in the dance; and Mr. Wilmot, from politeness, did the same; declaring, since his Sultana would not grace the room with her inimitable skill in dancing, he could not possibly think of doing aught else, but following her example. My aunt, being a passionate admirer of that exercise, soon engaged, as also my cousin, with the motley crew.—The Marchioness being fatigued sat down, requesting we would not forego the pleasure of viewing the company out of complacency to her, but continue our promenade; which, after much persuasion, we did. While I was thus strolling, I could not
help

he, noticing to my companion a venerable figure of a hermit who followed us wherever we went. This drew some elaborate compliments from my Sultan, who supposed, no doubt, that it was actually necessary, for the better support of his character, to assume all the amorous gallantry of a Turk; and accordingly began to make a most wonderful declaration of a violent and lasting love; in the midst of which, a prodigious crowd passing to behold an allemande which was then going to be exhibited between a Friar and a Nun, separated us in an instant.—While I stood gazing about, in order to see if I could discover Mr. Wilmot, the hermit, who had before attracted my attention, approached me.—But now, my dear Maria, to prevent, says he, and says I, take it in dialogue.

Her.

Her. Tell me, daughter of Eve, what thou with such apparent solicitude seekest; why thy eyes thus wander from place to place?

Sullana. I seek, reverend father, my Lord, whom in this crowd I have just lost; canst thou, I pray you, direct me which course he took?

Her. Alas! my dear daughter, I fear thou art in search of Vanity and Folly;—if so, follow my steps, and I will shew thee thy idol.

——Struck with the oddity of his address, I did as he desired; not in the least apprehending danger, when, entering another room, he took my hand, and leading me to a glass, continued thus:—

Her.

Her. View well that figure ; see there the bane of thy sex, and curse of ours.

Sult. You talk, holy sage, as one who had received some recent wound, which the lenient hand of time had not as yet healed.—But wherefore judge thus harshly of all ?

Her. Yes, daughter ; you have, indeed, divined a-right.—I now smart under the wrongs inflicted by one not less lovely than thyself ; one, at whose birth the Graces all presided, and I had hoped, false delusive hope ! delicacy, and honour also.—But in a fatal moment a cruel spoiler came ; in an unhappy period, the votary of virtue quitted her habitation, and left it defenceless, exposed to the invader's arts.—Vice prevailed ; and virtue, the pride of the female world,

was banished.—She fell.—Ever since I have lived a curse and burthen to myself.

Sult. Father, my pity and my prayers shall be offered up for your returning peace.—But if you complain of my sex, I have not less reason to complain of your's.

Her. Ah! name but the wretch who shall dare to offer an injury to thee, that my quick sword may find him out, and do thee ample justice.

Sult. Hold, reverend man; this language ill suits the holy garb thou wearest. But the mention of thy faithless mistress has driven from thy mind, what thou owest to thyself and to thy maker. But, prithee, help me to seek my company; they will be surprized at my absence.

Her.

Her. Pardon me, fair daughter, if my zeal to serve oppressed merit, hurried me to a forgetfulness of what I am ;—but, tell me, child, didst thou ever experience love ? and did the object of thy affections prove false too ?

Sult. Yes!—too sure he did!—First did he gain my virgin heart ; then left me a prey to disappointed love !

Her. Alas ! fair maid, thou then hast known thy sorrows. But as we proceed to seek your party, permit me to relate a story to you.—Not long since I met a youth, bent down, seemingly, with some woeful calamity ; and as my holy office teaches me to minister balm to the afflicted, I prayed him to reveal to me the story of his woes ;—which having done, I learned that he, like
D 2
myself,

myself, mourned a false fair one!—I took him to my mossy cave, procured him what my scanty cell afforded:—In token of a sincere esteem, this ring he bestowed upon me with his parting breath.”

O, Maria! what was my astonishment to behold the identical ring, I had, in parting, given to my dearest Charles!—The idea of his death was too much!—it struck a panic to my very soul!—It was more than I could support!—I screamed and fainted. Fortunately we were in a picture gallery, which led to some of the apartments; and were, therefore, unobserved. On my revival, I found myself supported in the loved arms of my Waldron; for it was he.—He was the hermit!—In his terror, at beholding the senseless condition his melancholy recital had reduced me to, his mask had fallen off.

—O!

—O! cried he, and am I then still dear to thy remembrance? Oh! Waldron, replied I, endeavouring to disengage myself from his arms, was it Louisa you meant to paint in such false colours?—Thoughtest thou to veil thy own perfidy and ingratitude, by misrepresenting me?—was that well done?

Here, my friend, an explanation ensued; and he revealed a story to my ears which must have been the invention of some fiend, a foe to my repose, a foe to love, and a foe to humanity*.

To express to you, Maria, the various passions which agitated my breast, at the relation of these cruel particulars, is impossible.

* Here Miss Cavendish relates the particulars mentioned to Mr. Sedley by Sir C. Bentinck.—See letter the xxxii.

My pride, my feelings were severely mortified at the humiliating and degraded light in which I must have appeared in the eyes of the man, whose good opinion I prized far above all earthly treasure.

I burst into a flood of tears, which greatly relieved my over-charged heart.—When I had again recovered the power of speech, I addressed him in the following words :—To pretend, Mr. Waldron, to disguise my sentiments in your favour, after the convincing proofs I so often have given you of the sincerity of my attachment, would not only be mean and despicable, but unworthy the ingenuous blood from whence I sprang: But, alas! Sir, the knowledge of my innocence now comes too late! your fatal credulity has destroyed, not only your own peace, but mine also; though, I confess, we were both

both too easily deceived by appearances.—
 But such an impeachment on my honour
 has been the severest stroke of wayward for-
 tune I ever experienced. It banishes all
 hopes of happiness for ever from my breast,
 so long as this heart shall continue to beat
 responsive to the voice of love.———

Your's I never can, or will be, while the
 smallest doubt remains uncleared of my in-
 nocence:—circumstances were too visibly
 against me to permit my ever receiving your
 hand, until it shall please Heaven to unrav-
 el this shocking mystery, and wipe off the
 stain thrown upon my, till then, spotless
 name. Urge me not, therefore, thou still
 too tenderly beloved, to revoke my deter-
 mination. It is fixed; no power on earth
 can alter it; but of this assure yourself, that
 hand which I of necessity must refuse to you,
 shall never be given to another. I will

quickly return to Devonshire, and try to discover these enemies to my repose. The truth must sooner or later be brought to light. In the mean time, suffer us to remain as strangers. This is a request, which, if you have the proper and delicate affection for me I could wish, you will not deny me; it is the only proof I demand of the sincerity of your regard.

O, Maria! had you beheld him at that moment;—he stood like one petrified; I continued, taking his hand—“Why, Charles, do you not answer me?—is your love of too weak a nature to out-live a temporary reparation?—’Tis true, should fortune disappoint my endeavours of sifting out the particulars of this wicked aspersions, and the author of that malicious letter addressed to you under the guise of friendship, we, in
this

this world, can never be united; yet, my Charles, shall we meet on those regions of pure delight, where no dark clouds can intervene to destroy our felicity."

"O, my Louisa! and have I found you thus!—have I then found you spotless, unstained by guilt, only to make the curse of parting still more agonizing!—Hear me, my love!—my life!—cried he, throwing himself at my feet, and wildly seizing my hand; Oh! in pity to my tortures, recall your cruel words.—O do not drive me to distraction!—Could you be sensible of the thousandth part of my sufferings, your gentle nature could not surely be proof against the tears and prayers of the tenderest love that ever agitated the bosom of man.—My Louisa!—My wife!—My dearest life!—

compassionate the pangs that rend my distracted breast."

Charles, why should you wish me to grant what would embitter my future life, and debase me in my own opinion? I never could experience perfect tranquillity, while I thought you harboured the most distant suspicion derogatory to my honour!—My love, believe me, is of too delicate and refined a nature, to be satisfied under so unpromising a cloud.—Your's, I had flattered myself, would have been the same; but I see I am deceived!—Enough has passed, and it is time I tear myself from a man whose regard is of too selfish a nature to merit any further notice from the injured daughter of Captain Cavendish!—Farewell, Sir! and assure yourself my wishes and orisons shall ever

ever be for your prosperity and happiness, in this and in the world to come !”

So saying I arose to depart, and had just reached the door, nearly overcome by the struggles of my tenderness, when a deep groan caused me to turn my head !—In an instant I forgot my resolution of flying, and ran to support the breathless youth !—Fortunately, my friend, I had no witness to my weakness !—I blush even to acknowledge it on paper to you, my amiable companion ! but as I have promised to conceal no part of my conduct, I will freely confess, that, unmindful of female modesty, I endeavoured to recal his fleeting life !—a thousand times I pressed his hand !—a thousand times called upon his name ! and, in short, was, in my turn, nearly reduced to as deplorable a condition !—In the midst of this horrid scene

Mr. Wilmot entered ; this was a fortunate circumstance.—I had sufficient presence of mind to beg him to haste and procure some drops, which he immediately did, without alarming the rest of the company. As soon as I had discovered returning life to flush in his cheeks, I thought it most prudent to prevent us both the pangs of a formal adieu, to quit the gallery, which I did, strenuously recommending him to the care of Mr. Wilmot.

On my departure I met a domestic, when describing my aunt, I desired he would go and conduct her to me.—When she came I, as well as my distressed mind would admit, related to her the piercing particulars.—Though my heart was considerably eased, by the assurance of the stability of his attach-

attachment, I need not tell you, that after the scene in which I had just been performing, I felt myself in no situation to return among the joyful throng; but retired instantly to our lodgings, where the different sensations which tempestuously occupied my breast, prevented me from receiving the balmy assistance of Morpheus.—Soon after, Mr. Wilmot returned with the pleasing intelligence of Sir Charles Bentinck's perfect recovery, which name, I find Waldron has taken, with a large acquisition of wealth devolving to him with it; but as my fingers are now so cramped, that with difficulty I am able to hold my pen, I shall wish you a good night, or rather morning; for my watch informs me it is past four o'clock, and seek to rest my weary limbs.—Before this, I hope the god of sleep has closed the eyes of my beloved Charles, and lost his senses

senses in a pleasing forgetfulness of every care.—I shall send early in the morning to know how he rested; in the mean time I remain, comparatively speaking,

Your happy

LOUISA CAVENDISH.

LET.



L E T T E R XLI.

Miss BRUDNEL to Miss CAVENDISH,

[*In Answer to Letter xxxvi.*]

Brudnel Place.

I THANK you, my dearest Louisa, for the description of your beautiful dress, contained in your letter of the —, and long to hear further of your agreeable Mr. Wilmot. I wish, my dear, that this pleasing man may be the fortunate means of driving from your breast the loved image of your Charles!—But I know my sweet girl will be displeased at the bare supposition.—Forgive me,

me, then ; and lest my pen should inadvertently drop the hopes of its mistress, I will quit the dangerous topic, for one less interesting.

The date of this must already have acquainted you with my arrival among shady groves, purling streams, and flowery vallies. —Thank Heaven, my friend, I have bid adieu, and a long one I trust, to the smoke of London !—It is impossible to tell you how sweetly I slept the first night of my return to this loved mansion of my ancestors, with what pleasure I viewed again the faces of our old and faithful domestics !—O, Louisa ! I would not for the world's wealth have foregone the inward satisfaction which sat triumphant in my breast, at that blessed moment !—My revered parent shed tears of joy on welcoming me back to this dear seat
of

of my nativity ! and as to myself, I regreted only the absence of my charming friend.— Had you been my companion, my happiness would then have been compleat ; but regret and repining were fruitless ; and I resolved to comfort myself as well as I could, by seizing every opportunity of conversing with my Louisa on paper, and acquainting her with all the adventures that should fall within my knowledge.

By the bye—on my journey hither, a curious character fell in my way, at an inn upon the road, where we had dined.—At the moment we were going to depart, our landlord entered to request that if we understood either Latin or Greek, we would interpret what a gentleman in the next room said ; for that they could not comprehend his meaning.—“ I at first thought he was
speaking

speaking French, cried he, and my cook being a foreigner, I sent him in, but he could not make out what he meant, more than myself; so, ladies, I should be greatly obliged to you, if you would be kind enough to accompany me, and endeavour to learn what he wishes to say."—Neither my mother nor myself, you may be assured, knew any thing of the dead languages. However, my curiosity being greatly excited by this strange account, I requested my mother to permit me to visit along with her, this wonderful person, which she, kindly indulgent to the desires of her Maria, agreed to.—Accordingly we followed our host, who soon conducted us to the apartment of this learned man.—But, my dear Louisa, what was my mother's astonishment to behold in this incomprehensible gentleman, the apothecary of our village!—" Bless me, Mr. Bolus, cried

cried my mother, is it you !—in the name of fortune, what is the reason that the good people of this house cannot understand your desires ? “ Upon my soul, Madam, returned he, with a look of importance, it is a d—d thing that these fellows are unable to digest their own lingo !—I told the waiter before, and I again repeat it,—If my quadruped has put a period to his provender, to caparison him and produce him !”——At the conclusion of this elaborate sentence, I could not contain myself, but burst into a violent fit of laughter, notwithstanding the express prohibition of the late Lord Chesterfield ; even my mother could not forbear smiling ; however she immediately recollected herself, and explained to our wonder-struck host, the words of this son of Æsculapius.—It seems he is celebrated for this out-of-the-way and uncommon mode of expression !—My mother

ther tells me, " That being one day much indisposed, with a pain in her stomach, she sent for this same pedantic Mr. Bolus, who, after the usual ceremony of feeling the pulse, examining the tongue, and a numerous string of unimportant questions, very gravely desired her " to take a bolster of rag, dipt in the apozem, which he should send, and apply it warm to the regions of the heart !"—But no doubt you are by this time heartily tired of the insipid company of this trebly refined satire upon all learning; I shall therefore cease to trouble you with any more of his studied eloquence, but content myself with simply assuring you, my felicity will be incomplete, until the wished-for presence of my friend.

My dear mama commands me to tell you, that the undeserved compliments you so obligingly bestowed upon her in your letter,
 actually

actually brought her own demerits in such conspicuous colours to her mind, that she strongly felt how very imperfect she is to what she ought to be ; but desires I will also say every thing tender and affectionate on her part, and that you will believe you possess her warmest good wishes for the return of peace and happiness to your mind, in which she is most fervently joined by

Your sincere friend,

MARIA BRUDNĚL.

LET-

L E T T E R XLII.

EDWIN CAVENDISH to Sir CHARLES
BENTINCK.

Brussels.

S I R,

OPPRESSED with a sense of your generous and noble conduct to myself and unhappy family the other day, when your humanity led you to visit so unfortunate a set of beings, I take up my pen, tho' at a loss in what words to address you.—I am convinced your desire of the stanzas was only a plea to administer relief to the necessitous; but as I wish not in the smallest point to counteract your commands, I have inclosed
the

the lines; and any alterations you may think proper to make, I shall be proud to acquiesce in.

To tell you, Sir, what my sensations were on your departure, is what I have inclination, but not power to do!—The noble giver's mode of bestowing his liberality, far exceeded the gift; and, notwithstanding my early intimacy with sorrow, never did I experience more fully my mortifying and humiliated situation, than when I reflected at what a distance it threw me from a more near acquaintance with so great an ornament to humanity!—At fourteen years of age I first began to be sensible to the barbed arrows of adversity, from which fatal period happiness and myself have had little intercourse. But I will not, Sir, wound your soft and
philanthro-

philanthropic nature, with a recital of the various woes which have attended my footsteps; but be content with subscribing myself,

Your gratefully obliged,

and devoted humble servant,

EDWIN CAVENDISH.

On Miss ———. By an Admirer.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing Letter.*]

I.

TELL me no more of shepherd maids,
Beheld in fields or groves ;
My muse detests the sing-song shades,
Of hackney'd poets' loves !

II.

With other strains I wait the day,
That leads to sacred ground ;
And bless that sun's returning ray,
That brings the Sabbath round :

III.

Like some cold urn in Egypt's plain,
Where hearts of monarchs rest ;
A calm recess for lovers slain,
Is fair Serina's breast !

IV.

Her eyes, with no immodest lure,
Attract the jemmy spark ;
Nor on one object gaze demure,
Except the parish clerk !

V.

Should at her feet, in Sunday cloaths,
Unnumber'd striplings fall ;
Serina's heart no pity knows,
Because they're sinners all.

VI.

Sha'n't bards, with dew-besprinkl'd rhyme,
Outvie the labouring bee ;
And weeping loves erect, in time,
A pyramid to thee ?

VII.

No cupids near this sacred ground,
Their darts and quivers show ;
Save from the marble mirror round,
A cherub weeps his woe !

VIII.

Within the organs curtain'd rim,
The quiv'ring notes they man ;
And oft, unseen, the idlers skim,
Along Serina's fan.

IX.

At times conceal'd by Pagan laws,
They warm the wint'ry air;
She wields her fan, untucks her gauze,
But see, there's nothing there!

X.

But oft at sermon's tedious time,
To her blue eyes they creep,
And hushing organ, lyre, and rhyme,
Like Aldermen thep sleep!

XI.

See where the loves, with pointed darts,
Incarnadine the ground;
And throw, for this sweet queen of hearts,
The bloody gauntlet round!

XII.

Now here and there they lightly trip,
Like many a fairy band;
One little tyrant claims her lip,
One paints her lily hand.

XIII.

One round her neck is lull'd to rest,
Like Hope on Heav'n reclin'd;
One seems to paint serenely blest
Her meek and modest mind.

XIV.

If from that clear unruff'd source,
Of each pure azure eye;
Our bosoms feel her poison'd force,
'Tis ten to one we die!

XV.

For tho' each soft and am'rous gull
Implores returning breath;
The little loves, with quivers full,
Shoot Hymen's self to death!

XVI.

When Day's great king deserts the skies,
And Cynthia queens retire;
A spark from soft Serina's eyes,
Shall set the Muse on fire!

L E T T E R XLIII.

Sir CHARLES BENTINCK to Miss
CAVENDISH.

Brussels.

WONDER-working Providence!—who shall dare attempt to divine thy ways!—Presumptuous mortals! leave thy vain researches, and wait with due submission the all-wise designs!—Read, O my adored Louisa! the inclosed letter, and with me bless that great Omnipotent Power, who has in so unexpected a moment restored at once a brother to my love, and a lost friend to his Bentinck!—O my sweet girl! what a cordial did this epistle prove to the wounded breast

of your Charles!—" Thank Heaven, I cried, this long-lamented relative may chance to be a successful pleader in behalf of my suit!—Surely she will not refuse to hearken to the voice of one so dear, so much regretted, and so late restored!"

I long, my sweet maid, to hear the story of his griefs; and, believe me, nought detains me from the delightful task of unfolding to him my name, and restoring him to that affluence he was born to inherit, but the hope of adding to the felicity of my angelic girl, by this joyful intelligence!

Will you not then, my lovely Louisa, permit me to present this new-found relation to your arms this afternoon?—Sure my dearest life will not deny her Charles this small satisfaction!—But ah! what have I not to fear
from

from that inflexible virtue, when you could, with that degree of stoicism, abandon me to all the poignancy of repentance, and leave me senseless to a stranger's care!—Was that the boasted tenderness of love?—But pardon me!—My base suspicions, which could wrong the matchless purity of Heaven, merited a no less rigorous chastisement!—Forgive, too, my angel, your Bentinck, who thus delays that joyful information contained herein, to indulge in the overflowings of his fond and faithful heart!—Need I again assure my beauteous maid, how much I am

Her devoted admirer,

CHARLES BENTINCK?

• E 4

LET-

L E T T E R X L I V .

Miss THOMPSON to Sir CHARLES
BENTINCK.

Brussels.

S I R,

BY command of my mother, I take up my pen to acquaint you with a circumstance not less surprising to us, than it will be to the ears of a lover.

Your letter I here take the liberty of enclosing, as the lady to whom it was addressed is now no longer under the protection of this roof!—In compassion to the feelings of so sincere an affection as your's, I, with the
deepest

deepest reluctance, find myself compelled to enter upon the terrifying particulars.

Believe me, Sir, I most truly lament the fatal errors of my cousin ; I have myself, woefully experienced the agonizing pangs that rack the bosom dethroned of innocence, and can sympathize in the torture my unhappy cousin will endure, when the delirium of passion has subsided, and given way to cooler reflection !

This preface will, I am sensible, startle and astonish you ; but it must also prepare your mind for the wounding intelligence !—therefore compose yourself, Sir. — Teach your heart to bear the most cruel disappointment !——Louisa has absconded !——Your blood thrills with horror !—I know it must !—I judge of your sensations by my own,

and have endeavoured to lead to the melancholy truth, in as delicate a way as my poor abilities would permit.—It is now three days since that ill-advised girl, under pretence of making a visit to the Marchioness of Lofrier, quitted our lodgings.—To paint, Sir, our distraction, on her not returning at night, as she proposed, is impossible; for we had sent to that lady, and were assured she had not even called there!—We have used every means in our power to trace out the place of her concealment, but to no effect. She had acquainted my mother of the eclaircissement which had taken place between yourself and her, and we were making every preparation for our return to England, in order to discover, if possible, the ruffians who so basely stabbed her peace.

Pardon me, Sir, when I tell you, that on her first being missed, our doubts fell upon
you

you!—We began to imagine, urged by the violence of your love, you had conveyed her away, in hopes of prevailing on her to consent to your union; but, on enquiry, finding you was still in your old place of abode, we but too dreadfully foreboded the fact!—For it is not in nature to suppose, had she been taken off against her own consent, but that she would have seized some opportunity either of escaping or informing her friends of her situation. —Thus, Sir, have I briefly related to you this shocking circumstance; and that Providence may enable you to bear against so severe an affliction, is the prayer of,

Sir, your friend and welwisher,

though greatly distressed

CHARLOTTE THOMPSON.

L E T T E R X L V .

Sir CHARLES BENTINCK to EDWARD
SEDLEY, Esq.

Brussels.

FAREWELL to happiness!—Farewell
content!

“ O Nature! what hadst thou to do in hell,
“ When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
“ In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
“ O that deceit should dwell in such a gorgeous
“ palace!”

SHAKESPEAR.

Help me, my friend, to curse the whole
perfidious sex!—Trust me their very smiles
are lurking adders!—their words poisoned
honey!—Their caresses!—O my head! my
heart!—Edward, this double disappoint-
ment

ment will send me to an untimely grave!—but when I am no more, see, as the last kind office, that my unfortunate heart be separated from this piece of clay!—Embalm it in a silver urn!—Seek out this earth-treading star;—present it to her as the last solemn token she will ever receive of the sincerest and purest love that ever animated the soul of man!—Should some precious drops in soft remembrance of my long-tried truth, warm the senseless urn, it will soothe my pensive ghost, and calm my hovering shade!

O my Sedley! the bare idea, in a great measure, divests the grave of half its horrors!—Perdition seize the villain, who, with base insinuating speech, seduced her youthful ears!—Heavens! could I but discover this fiend of darkness, that I might glut my vengeance in the monster's blood!—

But,

But, alas! I rave!—would my nature endure the thought of injuring him, however vile, who is protected by the love of Louisa Cavendish!—O no! forbid it tenderness!—Heaven is my witness, that for her repose I would sacrifice my heart's dearest blood!—Yes, Sedley, I had fondly painted the exquisite delight that would animate those lovely expressive orbs of light, when I should present her long-lost brother to her arms!—but, O Edward! in pity to my sufferings, spare me the recital of this wounding disappointment, by perusing the enclosed from her cousin, Miss Thompson; since the receipt of which cursed intelligence, my mind has been in such a state of distraction, as to put it out of my power to discover myself to her unfortunate brother; and indeed I tremble at the mortifying tale I must needs relate.—Unhappy man! marked, I fear, thou

hast been, for the shafts of adversity.—This, if I mistake not thy character, will be the severest misery thou hast ever yet experienced; alas! so it has proved to the breast of Bentinck!

But I cannot, dare not, trust myself longer with this piercing theme! Would to Heaven you were near; from your kind friendship I might hope for comfort; but even that consolation cursed fortune has denied me!—My head grows worse; my eyes are so dim that I am able with difficulty to distinguish my own characters; suffer me therefore, while strength is left, to assure you once more, and perhaps for the last time, how truly I am,

Your sincere, tho' distracted friend,

CHARLES BENTINCK.

LET-

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. WOOLERTON to Miss THOMPSON.

Spa.

YOU will, no doubt, Charlotte, be astonished at the receipt of a letter instead of my presence.—But I have taken the most effectual method to make, not only my own fortune, but your's also, provided you conduct yourself with common prudence. Your husband, I never, in reality, designed to be.—For assure yourself of this one serious fact, that no man, however libertine he may be in his principle, will unite himself to a female debauchee.

The

The moment I beheld your cousin, my heart acknowledged the influence of her charms, and the resistless force of virtue :— and had not that consummate vanity of which you are mistress, blinded your penetration, you must soon have discovered the dangerous rival you had in the fair Louisa.—However, I will, if you do not by ill-timed malice frustrate my good intention towards you, still continue to grant you my protection.—Your cousin, I fear, cannot be kept long in ignorance of our connexion ; as the name I have assumed, must, in a short time, be wrested from me.—However, much in this case depends on your prudence ; and assure yourself it is still in your power to keep the friendship of

THOMAS WOOLERTON.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

Miss THOMPSON to Mr. WOOLERTON.

Brussels.

CURSED be thy false and fascinating tongue, and doubly cursed thy base and treacherous heart! O! for a curse heavy enough to crush thy very life, thou monster of ingratitude!—No, wretch! I scorn thy friendship and protection; neither will the injured Charlotte accept. Never will I be indebted to thy pity; thou hast slighted my love, and my hate shall pursue thee to the utmost corner of the globe. I will discover thy place of concealment, and make a full discovery

discovery of thy accursed nature to thy mission. Thou shalt live the scorn of my sex, and the disgrace of thy own. Nay, the very justice of Heaven must shortly overtake crimes like thine. Alas, I rave! what have I or thee to do with Heaven?—No, no!—Hell will alone take cognizance of thy crimes; and in that sulphurous cave thou wilt receive thy rewards, thou agent of the damned! My pulse beats in union with my heart. My eyes grow dim; my head swims; I can proceed no further. Rest, therefore, in security, until my frame shall again be re-animated with new strength and vigour, to hurl thee toppling down from the pinnacle of thy imaginary blifs.

CHARLOTTE THOMPSON.

LET-

L E T T E R X L V I I I .

Mr. WOOLERTON to Miss THOMPSON.

Spa.

W E A K filly girl, thy threats I scorn; thy boasts are vain. Before you can put your revengeful schemes into execution, the lovely Louisa will be irrecoverably mine; and then I bid defiance to thee and all thy agents, thou infernal. But rave on, curse on, thou canst not hurt me; for know, what I once dare do, I dare to justify. Such, then, poor woman, is the sprite thou hast to deal with; in

THOMAS WOOLERTON.

L E T T E R X L I X .

EDWARD SEDLEY, Esq. to Sir CHARLES
BENTINCK.

FAITH, Charles, I am at a loss what to say to thee; thy last epistle breathed so much the air of despondency, that I actually dread thy committing some rash action. How is it possible that a man, endued with your understanding, can give way, thus, to womanish weakness?—A boarding-school Miss could not, in more sorrowful terms, lament the inconstancy of her first love.—Shake off this gloomy sadness that hangs upon thy soul; rouse every spark of manhood in thy composition. Call reason, pride, self-love,

love, to thy assistance; for Heaven's sake
my friend, shew some fortitude.

I do allow thy situation most woundingly
mortifying, and pity thee more since I have
experienced myself, some twitches of this
same passion.love. But curse me if ever I
should think of ordering my heart to be sepa-
rated from my breast, to gratify the conceit-
ed vanity of any Lady-Bird in the universe.
It would serve, indeed, as a mighty pretty
testimony to the power of her charms. She
would, doubtless, place it in the most con-
spicuous point of view in her drawing-room
and the delicate ensignium of a lover's mad-
ness would take a stand, no doubt, in the
middle of her mantle-piece; or probably, in
honour to the donor, she might order a fil-
ver pedestal to be made to support this mar-
vellous mark of tenderness, and fix it new

her parrot's cage ; and Poll might, in compliment to the Lady's vanity, be taught to jabber forth.——Alas ! poor Charles Bentinck !

Upon my soul, I almost blush at thy romantic folly. The mad-headed Don Quixote could have thought of no more. But to be serious, my dear Bentinck, if my presence can any ways alleviate your melancholy, command me ; and in less time than a woman will take to make fools of half a dozen of us lords of the creation, I will be with you, notwithstanding I have just discovered, by all powerful bribery, the name and abode of my beautiful Dulcinea. But believe me, Charles, thy unhappy fate almost makes me forswear the whole sex ; and yet there is such a sweet *naïveté* in the looks of my lovely girl, that I cannot, for the life of me, bring myself to

harbour

harbour a thought to her disadvantage ; tho', in good truth, they all possess such a damned stock of cunning, that a perfect shrew will appear as meek as a dove.

However, if you do not command my attendance to the Emperor's dominions, I am determined to pursue my pretty turtle ; but not in the old John-Trot style of presenting my rent-roll to the fair one ; and on my knees entreating the sweet creature to accept of handsome pin-money during my life-time ; or a good jointure after my body shall be food for worms. And for what ?—Oh ! for the mighty happiness of being permitted the title of her husband ; and the favour of now and then sleeping in the same chamber : for it would be a perfect *twaddle* in the fashionable callendar, were married people not to have separate beds : And to complete my
bliss

bliss she might kindly, to immortalize my name, afford me a precious opportunity of commencing a suit in Doctor's Commons.—No, no! none of these modern matches for me:—Give me the girl who marries me from sheer esteem and affection, who is willing to endure all the vicissitudes of life with me;—who like Belvidera shall say:

‘Tho’ the bare earth be all our resting place;
Its roots our food, some cleft our habitation,
I’ll make this arm a pillow for thy head, &c.

This is the only kind of marriage that can make me happy; and it is the only one I will ever enter into. You will naturally ask, how I mean, or think to deceive the real state of my mistress’s heart, before the priest has made us one! To that I answer, Time will show:—And trust me, she shall not be born of woman, who deceives me in this

particular :—therefore, let me hear your wishes by the next post. I long to know more of the story of Mr. Cavendish; and I hope I need not desire you to make use of my interest in any way that may be of service to that unfortunate man. Thine sincerely,

EDWARD SEDLEY.

LET-

L E T T E R L.

Miss THOMPSON to Mr. WOOLERTON.

Brussels.

AT length, insidious villain, I have discovered thy lurking den. Thoughtest thou to elude my just revenge, by keeping from my knowledge, thy place of abode?—No, no! a woman's wrongs which called, thus loudly, for vengeance, was not so easily thrown aside by imaginary difficulties. Yes! thou poor mean despicable monster, now grown hateful to my recollection!—I have taken the surest way of returning the poisoned dart thou hast levelled at my peace. Before long thou wilt, I trust, feel the dire effects of

my venom.—O ! the dear delight of thy disappointment fills my agonized soul with rapture !—I breath again !—I feel returning joy flush my cheeks !—Extatic thought !— Methinks I behold the proud beauty spurn thee from her feet. She calls thee Woolerton ;—detested name !—Would that I had never known it !——But the wish is vain : Nor will I stay to say another word, but hasten to enjoy, uninterruptedly in idea, thy humiliating and desponding state.

CHARLOTTE THOMPSON.

LET.

L E T T E R . LI.

Miss THOMPSON to Miss CAVENDISH.

Brussels.

BLASTED be those beauties whose magic powers have robbed me of——. But hold! I will not gratify thy pride, vain girl, with a declaration of the mortifying truth.—No! Heaven be praised, if I have lost my peace, my happiness, thou enchantress art not less wretched.—And if thou should as yet be ignorant of the extent of thy woes, learn them from me. O precious thought!—balmy cordial to my distracted breast;—thy heart will suffer pang for pang. Did'st

thou love Bentinck?—So did I Woolerton :—Nay, start not!—Woolerton and Wilmot are one. But hold! my vengeance is not yet compleated :—Learn, that if I have lost my husband through thee, thou cursed forcerefs, thou hast lost no less by me and mine. My mother, blessed be her invention, was the friend who warned thy credulous lover of thy arts: she practised on his nature with the sight of thy supposed child: she knew his anguish!—I heard them; and rejoiced in the recital of each pang thou and he suffered. But hope not, vain girl, to triumph over me. Cursed be thy days! thy nights as mine have been :—stay ;—I will damn thee with this paper ere I am laid in the cold grave, where all my wrongs must be forgotten. Take, then, thy punishment from the injured and distracted

CHARLOTTE THOMPSON.

L E T.

L E T T E R LII.

Sir CHARLES BENTINCK to EDWARD
SEDLEY, Esq.

Brussels.

AFTER once more baffling with the grim
herald of the grove, I am permitted again
to pour out the sorrows of my soul into the
bosom of friendship.

I thank thee, my Edward, for thy gene-
rous offer of crossing the sea, to give me the
consolation of thy presence: but ill should
I merit such kindness, were I to demand so
great a sacrifice, as the giving up the plea-
sing attainment of thy love, for a momentary
F 4 gratification

gratification to myself. Trust me, such selfishness is not the inmate of Bentinck's breast. Besides, I hope shortly to reap some comfort from the society of my long-lost Edwin! —I have written to request he will favour me with a visit; for believe me, Sedley, I am impatient to exchange embraces with the friend of my youth.

You may remember I noticed to you that his features were familiar to my recollection, which is now easily accounted for; for there was ever esteemed a striking resemblance between him and ———. But I will not suffer my pen to write the fatal name!

I expect the unfortunate Cavendish every instant; and at every step imagine I hear him. He has not the least suspicion of the discovery I am about to make; and must, no doubt, think

it

it strange I have not noticed the letter he favoured me with. And, alas ! little guesses how deeply he himself is interested in the unhappy cause, which has occasioned my silence. But, hark ! methinks I hear his tread. I must throw aside my pen for the present, but will re-assume it again.

In Continuation.

Sedley, my sufferings are light comparatively speaking to those the amiable and deserving Edwin has endured. As I suspected, it was his approach that interrupted me yesterday. My servant announced him. I arose, though still very weak, and flew with fraternal friendship to receive the son of my revered Captain Cavendish.—Welcome, thrice welcome ! cried I, my dearest Cavendish,

vendish, to the arms of thy Charles Waldron.
 “ Gracious Providence !” replied the aston-
 ished Edwin, crushing me in his arms, “ is
 thy name indeed Waldron, and not Ben-
 tinck ? Do I live ? Am I in reality so
 blessed as to hold the companion of my boy-
 ish days thus to my breast !” — Here the
 power of joy stopped for some moments all
 utterance ; but when the first tumult of fe-
 licity had subsided, he breathed forth so
 many tender enquiries after his excellent fa-
 ther, and adorable Louisa, that I felt the
 keenest distress at the necessity I was under,
 of being the cruel bearer of such dismal tid-
 ings. With all the delicacy and tenderness in
 my power, I revealed to him the melancholy
 posture of affairs. Words cannot do justice
 to the feelings of this unhappy brother, upon
 the relation of the mortifying intelligence.
 Tears and rage, by turns, stopped his articu-
 lation.

lation. "Bentinck," cried he, "is it possible that the daughter of so exalted a pair can so far swerve from their virtuous examples?—But hold, my friend, do not let us, even supposing her to have erred in this last step, too prematurely abandon and condemn her;—she may not be so blameable as appearances seem to make her." In short, never were beheld depicted in stronger colours the workings of a noble feeling mind, than in this unhappy man!

He has experienced various fortunes, too tedious to relate last night; and, therefore, kindly promised to give me the heads of his life on paper: Accordingly, this morning, he obligingly sent it. I enclose the manuscript for your perusal;—it will afford you one instance of true virtue and disinterested affection in a female mind.

Sweet Louisa ! how I adore thy matchless goodness !—I expect them to spend the day with me.—It will be the happiest I have known for a considerable time ; and, could I root from my memory one unhappy fair !—But adieu ; I dare not trust myself on this subject. Accept of my best wishes for your success in your love enterprize ; and that it may prove more propitious to your desires and expectations than has that of

CHARLES BENTINCK.

THE

(113)

T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

EDWIN CAVENDISH, Esq.

[Enclosed in the foregoing Letter.]

YOU may remember, that on the morning I left our peaceful home, my dear Charles, I had engaged to meet you, and my sister, after I had finished my amusement of angling, at a grove of trees where you had found a nest of squirrels.—After having baited the hook in vain, for at least half an hour, I began to grow weary of my luck, and arose to fulfil my engagement with you and Louisa.

I had

I had not proceeded far, before I was overtaken by a girl, seemingly in the deepest distress.

—"What is the cause of your sorrow, fair maid?" cried I. "Alack a-day! please your honour, I have lost a lamb from the fold, and I dare not go home; my master will kill me for sartin; but mayhap your honour (cut-tesying and wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron) has seen it pass by?" "No, my pretty maid, returned I, but will go and help you to seek the little straggler."—The apparent trouble of the girl left me no room to suspect deception, nor indeed had I a thought of such a nature; therefore, following my conductress, I was soon in the highway.——We had not proceeded far, before a post-chaise and four stopped.—A man alighted, and while I was simply looking around, for the supposed strayed sheep, I was suddenly seized, and forcibly conveyed

into

into the carriage, which drove off with the greatest rapidity.—Amazement for some seconds, kept me dumb!—but at length I broke silence, by addressing my companion, —“ Pray, Sir, said I, may I beg leave to ask what your design can be, in thus tearing me from the arms of my parents and friends?” —In time, replied he, you shall be made acquainted with the reasons; but at present, your most prudent mode will be to submit with patience to the confinement you will for a short time undergo. Enquire no further, I am not at liberty to say more.”—— This speech was delivered in a very harsh tone of voice, and served by no means to render my apprehensions less formidable.— I could not, with the smallest probability, trace a cause which could be likely to induce any person to run so dangerous a risk!—— Had I been a female of extraordinary beauty,

ty, or a person of very large fortune; some reason might have been suggested for this step; but as that was not the case, I found it in vain to attempt to unravel the mystery: I therefore gave myself up to the deepest affliction!—I could not forbear painting to myself the anguish of my dear parents at my absence!—My conductor seemed moved at my grief, and endeavoured, as much as lay in his power, to give me consolation, but in vain!—We travelled with the utmost speed, until we reached London; never alighting from the carriage, but continued our rout day and night.—We were set down at a most magnificent building in Piccadilly, at least so it appeared in my eyes. I was conducted to a superb apartment, and there desired to be seated: Some refreshments were brought, and laid on a table, but not a syllable uttered;—I almost
 began

began to imagine myself in some enchanted palace, and was wondering what would be the end of all this, when the door was thrown open, and an old gentleman, sumptuously attired, approached me.—I felt a reverence for him arise in my bosom; his aspect was the most commanding I had ever beheld!—He advanced, and, in broken English, enquired, “Whether I understood French?”—I answered in the affirmative.—He was silent for some moments—and kept his eyes instantly fixed upon my face.—He sighed, and a tear stole down his venerable cheek!—At last, turning to me, he took my hand, saying, in French, “You are fatigued, child, you require something to refresh you; what would you like?”—I told him I did not chuse any thing; “But, said I, casting myself at his feet let me, on my knees implore you to restore me to my disconsolate parents!

parents!——I have, Sir, a father and a mother, whom the loss of me will reduce to the utmost wretchedness, nay, perhaps to the grave!"——" Rise, child, returned he, you now demand what I never can comply with!—Urge me no more; I pity your present feelings; but endeavour to moderate your grief, and be assured you are in hands that will do for you far beyond what your parents can!—Retire into the next room, and compose yourself to rest; to-morrow morning I will reveal to you the motives which have actuated me in my proceedings."

—I bowed and withdrew.—I felt a secret awe, which forbade the least remonstrance. I found my fellow-traveller waiting in the next chamber for me, who said, as I was doubtless fatigued, his lord had imagined I should chuse to retire early; but if it was not quite agreeable to me, I might do as I thought.

thought fit.—I replied, it was equal to me; but that as my heart was heavily oppressed, and company could afford me no pleasure, I would, for the present, embrace relief from my pillow.—As soon as I was in bed, he quitted the chamber, and I found fastened the door after him.—I was confident there was not the least probability of my effecting an escape; which, had I even been able to accomplish, what could I have done with only a single half-guinea in my pocket, and an entire stranger to the town?—I lay for some hours, revolving in my mind the oddity of the affair, and lamenting the distress of my dear parents, when tired nature sunk me into the refreshing arms of sleep.—I lay happily insensible to every sorrow, locked in the embraces of Somnus, until I was awakened by my attendant, who came to request I would prepare to wait upon his lord.

lord.—After some chocolate had been brought me, I was then conducted to the apartment the old gentleman was in, who rose at my entrance.—“How does my child this morning? you rested well, I hope?”—“I did, my lord, I thank you; but my heart cannot be at ease, while my family must be agonized on my account!”—The old gentleman took my hand, “Sit down, young man;” and after pausing, he began thus:—“You see before you, child, one who has felt all that your parents now endure; but your cursed nation have ever proved a poison to my repose!—One only brother fell by the hand of a base-born Briton!—My daughter, the only female, Heaven be praised, of my blood, ingloriously abandoned friends, family, and country, to follow the fortunes of that scoundrel, your father!”

“My

“ My lord, cried I, starting up, you forget that it is to him I owe my being ; and whatever respect may be due to you, as the parent of the best of mothers, I cannot suffer with patience the name of the worthiest of human beings to be insulted !—He has, since his marriage with my mother, treated her as she deserved, with every mark of tenderness and affection !”

“ Peace, returned he, young stripling ! and learn not to interrupt my speech ; I have a right, from injuries, to speak.”——

“ My lord, I am convinced I am in your power, and it is in your election to use me as you think fit ; but I can never sit by in silence, and hear the revered name of my beloved parent accompanied with epithets bestowed on felons !”——“ Child, I admire your spirit, and only regret that England shall

shall boast the giving thee birth ! I will, however, continue the thread of my discourse from whence I broke off.——My only comfort was a son, whose duty deserved my tenderest regard. Your mother, on her arrival in Europe, wrote to me ; but that, and her other letters, I returned unopened. For, on her departure, I made a vow never more to see or receive her into favour, and most religiously will I adhere to it !

“ On your birth, she wrote to her brother, informing him of that event, and assuring him that she had not a wish ungratified, but the pardon of her offended father ; gave him an account of the place of her abode, and entreated him to endeavour to reconcile me to the step she had taken, declaring it was the only alloy to her felicity !

“ My

“ My son urged every plea in favour of his sister, in vain ; I was resolved, and my resolution was not to be shaken ; she had disgraced my house, and it was a stain that nothing but her blood could wash away !——I insisted that, on pain of my everlasting displeasure, he never should write to, or open a letter from her more.——After some difficulty, I brought him to promise obedience to my commands.”

Here the old nobleman was so deeply affected, that he was obliged to stop, to permit nature to vent itself in a flood of tears !——
 “ My God ! cried he, in an agony of grief, what have I done to have merited such severe chastisement ?”——But, composing himself, he continued, “ About two years ago, this my last, and only comfort, was snatched from me, by a malignant fever.——I was
 nearly

nearly distracted at the loss of this my darling boy.—I had his body embalmed, and laid in a silver coffin. The room in which he died was hung with black velvet; lamps and torches burning night and day!—I had a canopy of crimson, fringed with gold, fixed over it.—At his head was placed his picture at full length.—In this chamber did I spend the greatest part of eighteen melancholy months, when accidentally your mother's letter to my departed son, fell into my hands. It seemed as a balm from Heaven sent to my wounded soul!—I had no heir to my immense possessions;—I resolved to speed me to this cursed country; and if you were yet living, to steal you from your parents.—It will, thought I, be but dealing with that d——d heretic, as he has done by me!—My plan was no sooner laid than executed; you know how I have succeeded.—

All

All that remains to inform you is, that I set off this evening on my return to Spain ; but, to quiet your mind, your parents shall be made acquainted with your safety ; and I command you, on pain of the severest punishment, that you do not, directly or indirectly, attempt to write to them ; for, be assured, no letter from you shall ever reach their hands."

It is impossible to paint my sensations at the delivery of the above speech.—Resistance I found was useless, and I had only to submit, with the best grace I could, to my destiny.—We set off, as he had told me he designed, that very evening, on our journey.—We arrived at Madrid in perfect health ; and could I have dislodged from my remembrance my English friends and their sufferings at my loss, I should have been

perfectly contented, and happy in my situation ; as my grandfather omitted no means to render my days unclouded and joyous ; but the melancholy recollection of Yorkshire, served to embitter every pleasure which the kindness of his lordship endeavoured to procure me.—I had been about six months an inhabitant of Spain, when one day my grandfather entered my apartment, “ My dear child, said the old gentleman, I come the bearer of tidings which, I fear, will severely afflict your filial breast ;—tidings which even at this distant period give the most piercing pang to my heart !—though I acknowledge I receive some degree of relief, in reflecting that that Englishman, your father, is more miserable than myself !”

“ Alas ! my lord, interrupting him, what do your words portend ? For Heaven’s sake inform

inform me ; and O permit me, if any sorrow has fallen upon the heads of my dear parents, to return to their comfort !"—“ Sorrow has indeed fallen upon your father, child ! but your mother I trust is happy !—She is no more !”—The old gentleman here ceased ; tears stopped his utterance !—I mingled mine with his !—Masses were offered up in every church, for the soul of my dearest mother. I lamented my absence from my native country now, more than ever !—I could not help looking upon my loss as having been in some degree accessory to her death !—I used every art, neglected no plea to prevail upon my grandfather to allow my return to Europe for a few weeks only ; or at least to consent to my writing. All I could advance was to no purpose ; he was resolute ; and I was too strictly guarded for some years, ever to find an opportunity of



of conveying any intelligence to those much regreted friends. However, at last he began to relax in his watchfulness over me, which happy moment I seized upon to send a courier over to England to procure me the long-wished for news of my family.— But notwithstanding the very strict search and enquiry that was made after my father, my darling Louisa and yourself, (my mother, I was already assured had paid the debt of nature,) I could not pick up the least clue, which could possibly lead me to trace out what was become of them; and I began, at last, to believe that they too had received the leaden pressure of fate.

Things continued in this state until I arrived at the age of twenty-four; when, one night, returning from a friend with whom I had passed the evening, I was alarmed by the reiterated

reiterated screams which seemed to proceed from a female; when instantly ordering my servants to stop, and snatching a pistol from one of the fellows' hands, I followed the echo, which soon conducted me to the spot from whence the cries had issued.— Providence had sent me in good time to save the honour, and perhaps the life of a lovely female; who, exhausted with terror and fatigue, had swooned, and was lying breathless on the cold earth. The rustling of the leaves, (for it was in the deep recess of a wood that the villain had chosen for the execution of his execrable scheme,) and the approach of feet caused him to desist from his purpose: when putting himself as in a posture of defence, demanded the reason of my intrusion;—at the same instant firing a pistol at me, which, carried off only the plume of feathers on my hat. Upon which,

drawing his sword, he fiercely advanced.— My pistol unfortunately missed fire:—but recovering myself, I instantly unsheathed my toledo; we engaged for some moments, and victory was doubtful, when happily, as he was endeavouring to make a desperate lunge, a branch of a tree entangling with his foot, threw him down, and in his fall the point of his sword, which he had designed as a compliment for my breast, entered his own, and with a hollow groan he expired. On this I hastened to the relief of the lady, who was now beginning to shew signs of returning life. On opening her eyes she gazed wildly around, heaved a sigh, and sunk senseless, a second time, on my breast. In this condition I conveyed her, in my arms, to my carriage; though hardly able to support myself, being nearly exhausted by the quantity of blood which issued from my wounds.

But

But the one which gave me the greatest pain was that in my shoulder; and which afterwards proved nearly fatal to my existence.—

• However, my servants bound them up as well as they could; and lifting the senseless beauty into the vehicle, I commanded them to proceed home. In a few moments my fair companion recovered; when, apprehending she might still be terrified at finding herself in a stranger's hands, of whose honour she could not be assured, I addressed her, and as briefly as possible, informed her of the means I had taken to rescue her from the clutches of her enemy. She thanked me in the most grateful terms; and shed tears of joy at her deliverance, which greatly relieved her: But seeing my bloody condition and my palid countenance, the gentle maid began to lament my fate; upbraid herself as my murderer; wished she had sunk

along with the dear lost authors of her being, in their watery bed; then clasping her lovely hands, in an agony of grief cried, "Why, just Heaven, didst thou prolong my wretched life, to become a loathsome burden to myself! O! blessed shade of my much loved parents, if ye are yet permitted to revisit the sinful children of mortality, view with pity the sorrows of thy wretched offspring; and grant her comfort in this miserable state!"—Here her sobs prevented further speech; and myself, was, by this time, too weak to offer any consolation to the engaging mourner. But as the distance from the wood, to our house, where the dismal scene had been performed, was not great, we soon reached home; when, recommending the lady to the care of the attendants, and the protection of my grandfather, I suffered my people to put me to bed.—

The

The surgeons pronounced none of my wounds to be dangerous, provided a fever could be kept off, of which, at present, there were but small symptoms; but the wound inflicted by the eyes of the fair unknown was far more to be dreaded than that given by the sword of my adversary. In vain did I implore the aid of sleep; the lovely image of the beauteous maid drove all comfort from my pillow; and the morning found me in a high fever. By noon, a delirium had seized upon my senses, in which melancholy state I continued for three days.—When the violence of the disease abated, on the third night my reason began to resume her dominion:—No sooner did returning sense dawn upon me, than drawing aside my curtains, with a design to enquire after my fair enemy, when the first object that struck my eyes was the sweet maid her-

self, fast locked in the arms of sleep. The heat of the weather, (for it was then about the middle of August) had driven the lilies from their couch, and the rose was conspicuous. A few straggling ringlets had escaped from beneath her cap, and wantoned o'er her swan-down forehead!—Lost in ecstasy, I gazed!—my soul drinking copious draughts of love!—Unable longer to forego my desire of imprinting a kiss on her delicate hand, which lay negligently by her side, I gently took it up:—My presumption awakened the sleeping beauty; who, opening her eyes, those refulgent orbs of love, started up—when, seeing my looks less wild than I suppose they had been, she returned thanks to Heaven for the bright prospect, as she sweetly termed it; and rising, presented me a draught, and gently enquired after my health. With a hand agitated by pleasure

I took

I took the cup. Sweet lady, I have not eloquence to express my gratitude for such exalted goodness!—The service of my whole life will be too short to make return for such condescending humanity.—“O! forbear,” replied she, with a voice tuned by Apollo’s self, “to waste the little remnant of your strength in idle compliment; the trifling attention I have shewn you, is but the just tribute paid to my preserver, my deliverer!—But I will haste, and bear the joyful tidings of your returning reason, to my lord your grandfather.”—O! stay, do not in pity leave me, at the very moment when returning sense permits me the dear delight of unbofoming the secrets of my soul!—at the same time seizing her hand.—She seemed irresolute what course to take;—at last she answered, “Alas! Sir, I feel myself unable to resist the entreaties of a man, to whom I

owe so vast, vast a debt!—At that instant the unexpected entrance of the old lord put a stop, for the present, to any further discourse; for my fair enslaver immediately retired.—Four days passed, and I neither heard nor saw aught of the lady; during which period, I mended surprisingly;—so much, indeed, as to be able to sit up in my dressing-room for several hours in the course of the day. I did not dare make any enquiries of the old nobleman, lest he should suspect the true situation of my heart.

I was convinced, from her conversation, that she possessed not any fortune;—and the badness of her pronounciation informed me she did not owe her birth to Spain. Those circumstances assured me little was to be expected from the indulgence of my grandfather; and he was himself so continually
with

with me, or his own valet, whom it would have been madness to interrogate, that I determined to write a letter, and wait the recovery of my own attendant, who was, at that time, laid up with a cold, and to whom I might with safety intrust it. This I did; in which I made a full avowal of my love, and entreated she would obey the dictates of her humanity, and favour me with a line; if only containing these five simple words—"I do not hate you!"—For a whole day and night I continued in the most racking and painful uncertainty.—The next morning, however, relieved me, by presenting me with an epistle from this object of my idolatry. But as her own letter will better express the delicacy of her sentiments than my most studied eloquence, here then let it speak for itself.

THE
CONTINUATION
OF THE
HISTORY.

LETTER LIH.

Miss FARMER to EDWIN CAVENDISH, Esq.

SIR,

WITH a mind impressed with the most lively sense of gratitude, I sit down to acknowledge the receipt of your very flattering letter. Your generous and noble conduct deserves a no less generous return. As a first step towards which, permit me to relate the story of my unhappy life.—It is a compliment due to my deliverer.

I need

I need not, I presume, inform you that Spain is not the place of my nativity. The indifferent accent which accompanies my speech will have announced that already.—In that unhappy country, America, the seat of war and slaughter, I first drew my vital breath. My father possessed a small piece of land, from the produce of which, and a benefice of three hundred a-year, he lived with a degree of elegance, little imagined by the children of those climes, the commodities of which are in general so extravagant.—Myself, ^{his} only child, was brought up with the tenderest indulgence. But in the year 1776 he was entirely ruined. His life was threatened on account of his assisting the King of England's troops with provisions, and he was under the necessity of flying.—He hired a small pilot-boat, not able to carry
upwards

upwards of twenty ton ; and embarked with my mother and self for Antigua, leaving the whole of his worldly wealth behind him in Long Island ; where, despairing of preferment, he threw up the gown, and fortunately soon got assignments to enable him to go over to New-York as a wine merchant.— Here fortune seemed to favour his industry, and he was again beginning to taste the sweets of content and happiness, when, in the year 1782, he was obliged to depart ; being informed the town would be shortly evacuated. We re-embarked with all our goods for England ; but had not been many days at sea when a storm arose, which momentarily threatened destruction. To complete the horrors of our situation, the vessel sprung a leak, and it was as much as all hands on board could do to keep her above water,

water, by pumping for two days and two nights successively.—At length the violence of the winds and sea abated;—and Hope, that pleasing flatterer, once more visited our bosoms with the idea of reaching, in a few days, our destined port; when the appearance of a sail, making full up to us, dashed all our promising prospects, and renewed our fears.—The attempt of out-failing her, our shattered condition forbade; and the captain, who was a man of tried courage, resolved to yield but with his life. Accordingly preparations were made to give the enemy a warm reception.—On the ship's nearer approach, we descried her to carry Spanish colours.—Crouding all their sail, they soon came along-side of us, and firing a broad-side, commanded us to strike.—Our captain returned the salute; and for three quarters of an hour, nought could be distinguished

distinguished for clouds of smoke. The victory was for some time doubtful, when a broadside from the enemy killed our gallant commander, and shot away our mast and great part of the rigging, and otherwise so much damaged the hulk of the ship, that we expected every moment she would sink to the bottom. The Spaniards then boarded us.—In this scene of horror and confusion my senses forsook me ; and I remember nothing 'till I found myself in a cabin surrounded by entire strangers. Words cannot express the agony of my mind in this moment of woe. I spoke to them, but could not make myself understood, until their captain came, of whom, in the French tongue, I enquired for my parents. Happily he spoke that language fluently ; and with much seeming humanity entreated me to call all the aids of philosophy to my assistance ;

for,

for, that before they had been ten minutes on board, the vessel sunk, and my dear parents, among many other unfortunate beings, perished; and that my own life was preserved by a miracle: That a sailor saw me lying on a plank, which was floating on the bosom of the deep; and humanely risked his life to preserve mine.—O! Sir, judge now, what must have been the extent of my sufferings!—I raved! tore my dishevelled hair; and more than once attempted to put a termination to my wretched existence.—But length of time, that lenient balm to the blackest woes, asswaged, in a degree, the bitterness of my afflictions. The captain's politeness and attention greatly assisted to bring about this wished-for calm. I was treated with the utmost respect by all on board, but by none more than Don Antonio D'Almeda, our commander. We arrived
in

in about two months at Madrid: Don Antonio carried me to his own house, and introduced me to his sisters and all his family, who received me with the utmost hospitality and complacency. A master was provided to instruct me in the language of the country; in which, in a month, I made so great a proficiency as to be able to understand most things said to me, and to make myself comprehended. In this situation^d I remained four months, as comfortable as my uncertain state would permit; when, one fatal evening, as I sat revolving in my mind the various fortunes which had pursued my youth, I was suddenly roused from my train of reflections, by the entrance of my benefactor.—At this unexpected visit I was much surprized, it being a step he had never before attempted; he having ever held my room as sacred to myself.—I arose;—but
give

give me leave to draw a veil over this mortifying scene; suffice it to tell you, he took that moment to make proposals so injurious to virtue, that in an instant, forgetting every obligation I had held myself under to him, (which, indeed, his vile proceedings, had they been of ever so high a nature, would, in my opinion, have cancelled,) I upbraided him in the severest terms:—Roused by the insults offered me, I spurned him away; and darting like lightning out of the apartment, fled from the house not knowing what course to take.—I had not gone far, before I was overtaken by a man who seized me in his arms, before I could discern who the ravisher was.—My screams, my prayers were of little avail!—He placed me on a horse, and galloped off.—The voice, however, informed me of what the darkness of the evening would have prevented me from discovering.

—You

—You know the rest;—to your generous bravery I am indebted for more than life—my honour.—The infamous D'Almeda fell a sacrifice to his own villainy and the justice of your sword.—Unhappy man!—mayest thou meet with that forgiveness from thy Maker, which thou dost from the ill-fated Louisa!

After the candid relation I have given you, Sir, of my unhappy fortunes, you must be convinced I should be guilty of the utmost ingratitude, were I to give your passion encouragement; I will, however, thus far acknowledge, and it is a justice I owe your merit, that were my birth and fortune equal to your's, there is not that man breathing to whom I would so readily give my hand as to yourself!—Your virtues have made a deep and lasting impression on my heart; but,
 alas!

alas ! too well I know the rigid notions your
 countrymen have of family !—Don Ferdi-
 nando De Malaga would never consent to
 your uniting yourself with a creature so de-
 stitute as myself, setting aside differences of
 religious principles ; and believe me, Sir,
 my love is of too refined a nature to plunge
 its object into such distress and misery as must
 be attendant on so ill-advised an attachment !
 —I now bless the interruption given to our
 discourse that night, when Heaven, in favour
 of my orisons, restored you to returning
 health ; since which time I have carefully
 avoided your presence.—I confess it was not
 without putting the utmost restraint upon the
 wishes of my heart, that I forbore informing
 myself in person of your condition ; but,
 for once at least, love was mastered by cooler
 prudence.—I already feel how greatly I have
 exceeded

exceeded the bounds of virgin modesty, by these free confessions ; but this paper cannot convey my blushes, else would it be dyed with scarlet ;—neither shall we ever more meet !

I am preparing to bid an eternal adieu to your benevolent mansion !—Ere your recovery will be perfected, I shall be far removed from the abode of my gallant deliverer !—Farewell, Sir ! and assure yourself, that while the warm blood flows to this heart, I will never fail to remember, with the sincerest esteem, the virtues of my kind and generous protector !

Receive this paper, Sir, as the highest mark of confidence I could have bestowed ; you will find it in many parts blistered with
the

the tears of recollection; and should it give birth to the melancholy sigh of pity, it will fully compensate the trouble of the

Unhappy

LOUISA FARMER.

VOL. II.

H

LET-

LETTER LIV.

THE HISTORY OF

EDWIN CAVENDISH, Esq.

[*In continuation.*]

THIS letter filled me with a mixture of pain and pleasure!—the joy which her sweet declaration of love had occasioned, was poisoned by the fear of her so speedy departure.—My love rendered me desperate; and I resolved, when the family should be retired to rest, to make her a visit, and endeavour to turn her determination into a channel more favourable to my wishes.—Accordingly, when sleep, as I imagined, had shed its calm and powerful influence on happy mortals,

mortals, assisted by my servant I stole softly to her apartment, under key of cautionary silence. The unsuspicious fair had left it unbolted.—I gently turned the lock, and entered without her perceiving me. She sat with her arms threaded;—her lovely eyes raised to Heaven, as lost in melancholy contemplation!—the big tears rolling down her tender cheeks!—I stood viewing, in silence, this model of perfection, blessing that wondrous Power who had created a work so passing fair!—Unable longer to contain myself, I fell at her feet!—She started, and gave a faint scream!—I addressed her in the tenderest language of inspired love!—prayed her, in kind compassion, to listen to my suit unless she wished to view me a breathless corpse at her feet!—My tears, my sighs, at length won on her easy nature, and we were indulging ourselves in the blissful ex-

change of mutual vows, when my valet hastily entered—" Ah, Sir, you are ruined; my lord has just entered your apartment, according to his custom since your illness." —Scarce had he uttered these words, than they were followed by the presence of my grandfather himself, breathless with choler! —" Ungrateful woman! cried he, (foaming with rage) is this the return you make to the generous protection my house has afforded you, to seduce the affections of this inconsiderate young man?—But my easy folly is well repaid, that could admit one of your designing nation within my doors!—Eternal curses await you and your country!" saying which, overpowered by passion, he sunk into a chair.

The affrighted Louisa, obeying the impulse of her exalted sentiments, threw herself

self at his feet, with a view to vindicate herself from his unjust charges ; but the barbarous Spaniard, before his cruel purpose could be foreseen, plunged his dagger in her defenceless bosom !—The lovely victim sunk at his feet.—Enraged at the inhumanity of the act, and thinking I had now lost all that was valuable on earth, I seized the accursed instrument of death, and, frantic, essayed to wash the stain of my Louisa's blood from the polished steel, with that from my own agonized heart ; which Don Ferdinando perceiving, wrenched the deadly weapon from my hand. — Happily Providence withheld the blow given to the gentle Farmer, from proving dangerous.—Terror had produced a swoon, which appeared to my shocked eyes as the sleep of death.—Fortunately the old barbarian, concluding her to be no longer an enemy to be

feared, withdrew from the chamber, before she shewed any signs of returning life, leaving me guarded by my servant.—When I found warmth begin to re-animate her frame, I determined to risque every thing, and convey her thence.—The dread of losing this my first and only love, invigorated me; and binding up the wound, which luckily proved but a slight scratch, I bribed my guard to aid me in rescuing the life of the unhappy maid.—The fellow, who happened to possess some small degree of humanity, consented; and taking her in his arms, carried her out of the house: then, taking a couple of horses from the stables, saddled them, and mounting my fair one before him, and myself getting on the other, we proceeded to a friend's house, which we reached without exchanging a syllable; so much were her

spirits

spirits affected by apprehension, and mine by the dread of parting with her.

On our arrival at the end of our little journey, I found it a difficult matter to awake the family ; in which, however, after repeated raps and ringing of the bell, I succeeded.—Our visit soon procured us the appearance of my friend, whom I briefly acquainted with the state of our affairs ; his behaviour was what, from the general tenour of his conduct, I expected.—This piece of Quixotism had, however, proved nearly fatal to my existence.—My emaciated body was, you may suppose, little calculated to cope with the heavy dew of the night.—I was again confined to my bed, during which time, apprehending my end was near, I entreated the fair Louisa to suffer me at least to die her husband !—Unable to refuse the last

H 4
request

request she thought I should ever be in a condition to make, she consented.—My friend procured the chaplain of the English ambaffador, to perform that ceremony which was to make me the envied husband of the adorable maid!—From that moment my sweet bride never quitted my chamber, but watched me with a mother's fond attention! —Each medicine was administered by her fair hand, and therefore could not fail of its desired effect.

In a fortnight I was tolerably reinstated in my health; and then began to think of writing to Don Ferdinando De Malaga, to entreat his forgiveness, and inform him of my marriage; hoping, when he found the deed done, his affection for me would lead him to receive us into favour.—But there is no hopes of a Spaniard's pride relenting; and
I too

I too soon found how falacious my ideas of his regard for me were!—To our mutual sorrow, I received a message, commanding me to quit, within twenty-four hours, the kingdom, or we should feel the dreadful effects of his just vengeance!

This was indeed a stroke; and rendered still more severe, as it was unexpected.—My gentle Louisa upbraided herself as the unhappy cause of my disgrace, and a thousand times entreated me to return to his lordship, and abandon her to the severity of her destiny:—But I was too much a lover to pay any regard to the dark clouds of woe that seemed to hover over our union.—

Young, and ignorant of the world, we embarked on the tempestuous ocean of life, with only five hundred dollars, the loan of my friend; for having departed in the hurry be-

fore mentioned, from my grandfather's house, I was totally unprovided. I did not dare trespass on the time limited by the Don; for I was but too well acquainted with his vindictive disposition, not to obey his mandate. Accordingly, we embarked in a vessel for Brest, and from thence proceeded to Ostend, determining to revisit my dear native country, and, if possible, get into some line of life to support ourselves until the anger of my grandfather should be appeased, which my friend had promised to use every endeavour to effectuate.

By the time we arrived in England, the expences of travelling had dipped largely into our little stock, and having a theatrical turn, I resolved to try my fortune in the buskin. This I did, and should have lived very comfortably, had not our manager cast
the

the eye of seduction on my wife.—His infamous designs I was for some time unacquainted with; when one day returning from rehearsal, on entering my lodging, I heard a scream, which I knew to proceed from my amiable Louisa.—Darting like thought upstairs, I found my lovely girl on her knees to our old villain of a manager; her cap torn off, and her fine hair in the utmost disorder!—On seeing me she fainted!—A sword laying on the table, in a fit of phrenzy I snatched it up, and rushing upon my dishonourable employer, laid him senseless on the floor!—Imagining I had killed him, I instantly picked up the little money I had left, and with my wife, hastened from the detested spot.

It would exceed my ability to paint the misery we suffered, during the several days

we wandered about; every zephyr that caused the rustling of the leaves, our terrified imaginations represented as the approach of the mastiffs of justice, in pursuit of the murderer!—At length, my wife proposed our disguising ourselves like Jews; in pursuance of which plan, by the help of some berries plucked from the hedges, we stained our skins yellow. At last we perceived a barn, which we entered; we concealed ourselves in this humble shed, till hunger compelled us to depart in quest of food.

My poor Louisa now began to grow faint, through want of nourishment and fatigue!—Happily we soon approached a brook, which observing, we refreshed ourselves with a draught out of the brim of my hat, from this liquid fount; and in a little degree allayed

layed the pressing calls of hunger, by gathering filberts and blackberries, with which bountiful nature had overloaded the branches!—Thus refreshed, we proceeded on, until overtaking a stage-coach, I procured a place in the inside for my dearest Louisa, and mounted myself with the driver, upon his box.

• This conveyance was travelling from York to London, to which place I determined to go, and from thence proceed to Dover, and so to the Continent. This scheme we carried into execution, and had not been a week in this city, when the hurry and fatigue my wife had undergone, brought on the premature birth of that little pledge of our unhappy loves, which you saw on your visit. However, youth and a good constitution, enabled my sweet girl to escape the bold invader;

vader; and, after a confinement of near two months, she was, thank Heaven, propounded out of all danger.—To compleat my ease of mind, the villain, whom I had supposed to be dead, had, as I afterwards learnt from an English newspaper, recovered, and, with his company, had removed to some other town.

We have now been inhabitants of this place five months, and finding my finances nearly exhausted, I have, for two months past, assisted our necessities, by the rapidity of my quill.—My thorough knowledge of the different languages has proved a very fortunate circumstance; for it would astonish you to know the numbers of people who daily call upon me for love billets, lampoons, and amorous sonnets.

Having

Having now fully acquainted you with the misfortunes of my life, I shall conclude with telling you how ardently I long for that moment that will bring to the arms of friendship.

EDWIN CAVENDISH.

LET-

LETTER LV.

Miss BRUDNEL to Miss CAVENDISH.

Brudnel-Place.

RECEIVE, my dearest girl, the warmest congratulations from the heart of your Maria, at the opening prospect of bliss now before you; and may each revolving year add to the measure of my Louisa's felicity. Did not I say, tho' appearances were so much in his disfavour, that he would, I was assured, be found Not guilty? Indeed, Sir Charles, you are most wonderfully indebted to my rhetoric; tho' in good truth, I fear much more to your own.—However, the only method in which I wish him to convince me of his
 sense

sense of the immense obligation, is to prove his affection, years after the magical words have been pronounced by the priest, to have been founded on a basis immoveable:—Thus, and only thus, will his gratitude be acceptable.

Your letter, my dear Louisa, has thrown me into such tip-top spirits, that I had actually overlooked your ladyship's delicate scruples, and concluded the mortifying word *obey* already uttered. Well, to be sure, it is rather provoking to be thus disappointed; however, I must console myself with the pleasing reflection, that my imagination has been courier to the happy event.—My dear mama is as much overjoyed as her Maria, and, with myself, longs ardently to congratulate you in person on the brightening view.—But to be serious, is it not astonishing who the wretch

wretch was, that could thus cruelly have villified your name?—Good Heavens!—when we reflect upon the barbarity of the deed, we scarce believe such a monster can exist in human nature, and should doubt our own senses, were there not fatal living instances of the depravity of mankind. Is it not much to be wondered at, that in a country like this, held in such high estimation by all nations for the justness and wisdom of its legislature, no mode of punishment has been proposed for the murderers of reputations; none, I mean, which has operated as an effectual restraint on the licentiousness of talking and writing?—And I should humbly hope this might be done without a material infringement on the liberty of the press. The unhappy wretch, who probably to rescue a beloved wife, and darling offspring from the oppressive hand of famine, attempts to stop
the

the cravings of nature, by levying a contribution on the highway, from the sons and daughters of affluence, if unhappily taken, is condemned to an ignominious death, tho' the robbery does not exceed a penny; while wretches, devoid of all honour and generosity, are suffered to live in defiance of all laws, human and divine, the curse of society, and the bane of private happiness. Shakespear finely expresses the value of an unspotted fame in the following lines:

“ Good name, in men and women, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his; and has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.”

There is not, in my opinion, a baser mode of attacking a man, than by an anonymous epistle;

epistle; you are stabbed in the dark, without a probability of discovering the invidious foe, and should you even be able to trace out the malignant aspersions, what recompence can a woman receive? A man may demand what is styled honorable satisfaction; that is to say, he may with honour cut the throat of his enemy, or shoot him through the head; but as for us, we have none of these honourable modes of revenge, but are obliged silently to submit to the stigmas thrown upon us; and we find the world ever but too ready to lean on the ill-natured side of the question.—But you, my sweet girl, shall yet rise superior to the malice of envy. Thy Charles's love and tenderness will fully compensate the sorrows thy gentle heart has experienced from the rancour of concealed enemies.—For once, virtue shall ride triumphant over villainy. The deuce
take

take it! I'm interrupted by the arrival of company.—Lord Cardigan, and Lady Paulina Fleming, his sister, with a stranger, have just alighted; and, by the band-boxes which the attendants are bringing into the hall, it seems as if they designed us a long visit; however, I will, at all events, renew the pen ere I sleep.

In continuation.

Here I am, my dear Louisa, fatigued to death with the rotine of insipidity that issued from the lips of this right honourable brother and sister.—Never sure was nobility so degraded as in this noble pair!—In one you see displayed a compound of pedantry, foppery and ignorance!—In the other, affectation, vanity, and indolence!—My lord
is

is but lately returned from making what is generally styled the *Grand Tour* ! which he gives you to be acquainted with, before you have been in his company five minutes !—The Lady Paulina declares she is amazed how her brother could possibly support the immense inconveniencies attending travelling !—For her part, the horrid idea of rising with so unfashionable a lady as Aurora, is enough to disgust any woman of quality, setting aside the prodigious danger which people of delicate constitutions must necessarily be exposed to !

But, come, suppose you take a part of our improving conversation, by way of dialogue :

D R A.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord CARDIGAN.

Lady PAULINA FLEMING.

Strangers.

Mr. SEDLEY,

Mrs. BRUDNEL,

MARIA.

Lord Card. 'Pon honour, ladies! were not blushing entirely out of vogue, my cheeks would express my confusion at these sentiments of Lady Paulina!——I do conceive, dear ladies, you will impute Lady Fleming's non-inclination to visit the tombs of the great heroes, and poets of antiquity, not to an ignorance of their worth and merit, but to— to—

Lady

Lady P. Dear my lord, give yourself no trouble, I pray, to apologize for my want of curiosity, as none is necessary; I hate the very name of study, and am only astonished how people of fashion can possibly run the risque of spoiling the lustre of their eyes, by poring over musty books. I dare answer for Miss Brudnel in this respect.

Mr. Sedley. If we may rely upon the information of features, your ladyship is rather mistaken in that particular; Miss Brudnel's eyes seem to express the wisdom and fire of Minerva, tempered by the gentle beams of humility. (*Bowing to Maria.*)

Lord Card. Ha! ha! bravo!—Upon my soul, Sedley, the country air has been of infinite service to thee already!—It has, in part, dispersed those vapourish ideas of the lovely,

lovely, all-bewitching sex, thou hast ever entertained!—How, in the name of Ovid, camest thou so wonderfully metamorphosed?—'Pon honour, Madam! you are, I verily believe, the first female that ever extorted a direct or indirect civil speech from him!—Ha! ha! ha!—'Pon honour, Edward, you should be expelled their society!

• *Maria.* I feel myself, my lord, highly indebted to Mr. Sedley, for the generous construction he put upon my looks; but believe me, I felt severely mortified at receiving a compliment so far surpassing my deserts.

Lady P. For Heaven's sake, good folks! a truce with compliments; Mr. Sedley is too well known among our sex, to be in the least regarded.

Mr. Sedley. Say another word in that strain, Lady Paulina, and upon my soul I'll revenge myself upon those pretty lips.

Lady P. O! you wretch, you! [*Starting from her seat, and looking at the glass.*—I vow if I do not look as frightful as Lady Goring, who, by the by, has now bid adieu to enchanting Pam, and is a constant attendant at Wesley's!—Apropos!—Dear Maria, did you see, before you quitted London, the charming Holman?

Mrs. Brudnel. My daughter was but a fortnight in town, after her arrival from France; but from the epithet preceding the name, I presume your ladyship is quite a Holmanite?

Mr. Sedley. Her ladyship, Mrs. Brudnel, is like women of fashion in general, carried
away

away by the torrent!—Novelty, novelty, my dear Madam, is the darling passion of their souls!

Lord Card. See, see, ladies! by Gad, the vapour begins to thicken!

But actually, Louisa, I can proceed no further.—The attention which politeness obliged me to pay to the stupid chit-chat, was a sufficient penance, without recapitulating such trash.—From the specimen already given, you will be able to guess what a bore their company will be for a whole tedious fortnight.—However, I must except Mr. Sedley, who, from the little I have seen of him, seems a very sensible pleasing man. But I shall say nothing more of him, until further acquaintance authorizes my good opinion; as it is impossible to be a compe-

tent judge of a man's virtues, at first sight: at present he appears the most agreeable I ever conversed with.—I shall now conclude for this night, wishing you propitious dreams, as I design to keep this packet open until the departure of our noble guests.

Wednesday Night.

For these four days I have found it impossible to seize a moment for the sweet employment of scribbling to my fair friend; and am even now obliged to steal those hours set apart for gentle sleep.

Ah, Louisa! what was it I said?—Sleep!—alas! I fear sleep will not in haste, take possession of these eye-lids!—Yes, my friend! would to Heaven this same Edward

Sedley

Sedley had never entered these doors !—Fatal, I apprehend, his entrance will prove to the peace of your Maria !—To complete my mortification, Lady Paulina seems to regard him with the eyes of partiality ; and as she possesses an independency of forty thousand pounds, an humble ten has little to expect !—But hold—if money can bias his heart, it is not worth a sigh !——But then, again, she has beauty ;—true ; and if Maria may believe the flattering tongue of men, she is not destitute of charms.

Indeed, Louisa, I blush at my folly ; but I am convinced a heart like your's, which has experienced the sad perplexities of love, will pardon and sympathize in those of mine !—I am convinced he views me with the utmost indifference. Five days are already passed, since he arrived ; during which time he



he has never paid me the least compliment; but, on the contrary, takes every opportunity to rail at the whims and inconstancy of our sex!—not very polite, you will allow, considering it is before three ladies.—To add to my embarrassment, Lord Cardigan seems inclined to assume the garb of love; and pesters me incessantly with his fulsome and elaborate panegyrics.—One moment I am compared to Helen, then to Juno, Minerva, and Venus:—in short, there is not a human being, or even a goddess, that I do not equal or surpass!—My eyes compared to the spangles of heaven!—eye-brows modelled by Cupid's bow!—eye-lashes turned by the delicate fingers of Queen Mab! —Lips, carnations honied o'er!—teeth like snow-drops on leaves of roses, &c. &c. —All this, and a thousand times worse, if possible, am I, for the sake of good manners,

ners, necessitated to endure!—Good Heavens! that people should pay so great a tax to form and ceremony!—Were I to obey the dictates of Nature, I should command him from my presence; or, at least, impose a perpetual silence. In good truth, I tremble at his making any overtures to my mother; for, notwithstanding I am convinced she has not a wish so near her heart as my happiness, yet will the splendour of the alliance bias her to his interest; and what reasonable excuse can I make?—Can I with decency acknowledge a prepossession in favour of an object who regards me in the most distant light?—Or can I, who have ever been accustomed to pay the most implicit obedience to her every desire, attempt to disobey her in a point like this, without producing some plea of force?—I am sensible my mother has too much good at heart ever to urge a

thing that she imagined would render me wretched!—But how can I convince her, who has spent all her life in courts, that rank, wealth, equipage, and parade, will be to me only splendid misery!—How much more enviable is that being, whose humble birth, and moderate station, exclude higher prospects from their imaginations!

Happy villagers! who rise with the early dawn, to pursue their daily occupations;—who sink in sweet tranquillity upon their bed of flock; and whose all of life is love!—Oh, Louisa! how far preferable is the lowly roof, if blessed with the society of the object of our love, to all the wealth the Indies could bestow, if chained to one indifferent to your affections?—Not that I would advise any girl, blindly, to marry the first man with whom she may imagine she is what the world

world calls violently smitten!—On the contrary, there are many of our sex, whose souls are incapable of love, but who, at the same time, are ever fancying themselves head and ears over in the tender passion.—The same with the men!—Few there are among them, who possess that delicacy and refinement of sentiment requisite to render the connubial state happy!—The misfortune is, that we frequently rush headlong into marriage, without once reflecting on the many blanks there are to one prize!—From this arises the many wretched couples we hourly behold!—But whether am I wandering? One would actually suppose I designed a treatise on matrimony; however, I fear your penetration will easily pierce through the thin veil, and quickly discover the cause of these incoherent lines! Therefore, lest I should tire your patience with any more of

my stupid moralizing, I will cease writing till in a better humour.

In Continuation:

Friday Morning, 12 o'Clock.

My forebodings, my sweet friend, were but too well founded.—Ah, me! unhappy prepossession!—Would to Heaven, either I had never beheld the agreeable Sedley, or that Lord Cardigan had kept his regard within the boundaries of friendship!

This morning my mama entered my dressing-room.—“Maria, my love,” cried she, “how fares my child?—What dreams visited you last night?—Dreamt you of aught relative to a change of condition?”—Here, Louisa, my heart palpitated; and I too just-ly

ly surmised to what end her discourse tended.—In short, she soon gave me to understand that she expected I would listen with complacency to the addresses of his Lordship, whose advances were by no means to be slighted.—Would you believe it? I had not power to utter a syllable, such an effect had her words on me; notwithstanding it was no more than what I had apprehended. She, however, took not the least notice of my visible confusion, but quitted the chamber; telling me Lady Paulina was already in the breakfast parlour.—She had no sooner retired, than my over-charged heart sought vent in a flood of tears:—In the midst of which I received a summons to attend the tea-table. Brushing away, as well as I was able, the traces of sorrow from my cheek, I descended. The hateful Lord Cardigan flew to me.—“ Say, lovely maid, what causes the

beauteous sunshine of these heavenly orbs
 to be eclipsed by the envious clouds of grief
 which are so discernible?"—This ridiculous
 speech drew the eyes of Sedley upon me;
 who viewed me with a fixed attention: Pro-
 voked that he, (I mean any man of sense,)
 should, for one moment, imagine I gave en-
 couragement to such a modern piece of an-
 tiquity, I hastily disengaged my hand, which
 he had taken on my entrance; and, without
 reply, seated myself at the table. Happily
 my mother was not in the room at that in-
 stant. However, on her entrance, she soon
 perceived the alteration in my countenance;
 and enquired if I had been suddenly indis-
 posed since she left me. Glad to lay hold
 of any excuse to rid me of further observa-
 tion, I seized the hint, and complained of a
 violent pain in my head. My mother ad-
 vised me to lye down a little. My Lord
 tortured

sense of the immense obligation, is to prove his affection, years after the magical words have been pronounced by the priest, to have been founded on a basis immoveable:—Thus, and only thus, will his gratitude be acceptable.

Your letter, my dear Louisa, has thrown me into such tip-top spirits, that I had actually overlooked your ladyship's delicate scruples, and concluded the mortifying word *obey* already uttered. Well, to be sure, it is rather provoking to be thus disappointed; however, I must console myself with the pleasing reflection, that my imagination has been courier to the happy event.—My dear mama is as much overjoyed as her Maria, and, with myself, longs ardently to congratulate you in person on the brightening view.—But to be serious, is it not astonishing who the wretch

have not, as I thought, bestowed my virgin affections upon an insensible.——No;——I breathe!——I live again!——and can now, with a proper confidence, acquaint my mother with the state of my heart, who will not, I am convinced, now urge me to favour the fulsome Lord Cardigan, when she finds the passion reciprocal, and the object every way suitable to my expectations; and indeed, in title excepted, equal to my right honourable lover. But pardon me, my fair friend, for thus running on without giving you a clue by which you might develope the meaning of my words.

I quitted my pen to join our guests, and avoid a private conference with my mother. On descending into the breakfast parlour I found it empty. I then concluded they were probably in the study; and thither bent my course.

course. On opening the door, I beheld
 solus, the man whose presence was most plea-
 sing; but whom, at that time, I most wished
 to avoid: he was standing in a thoughtful
 posture; I apologized for my entrance; I
 was about to quit the room, when he re-
 quested I would not so speedily deprive him
 of my company, and of an opportunity he
 had been so solicitous to obtain:—then
 entreating my pardon, proceeded to make
 the most engaging declaration my ears had
 ever received; at the same time, requesting
 me to regard this abrupt avowal not in any
 light derogatory to the esteem he bore me;
 but, on the contrary, to the fear he had of
 Lord Cardigan proving a powerful rival and
 opponent. But as the conversation of lovers
 seldom are regarded as very entertaining or
 instructive to their hearers, or to those whom
 the parties may chose to honour with their
 confidence,

confidence, I shall, in compassion to your Ladyship, leave your imagination to paint, or your Charles, if you please to realize the scene, and only say, that I now seem to tread in air; and am scribbling to you, my fair friend, merely *pour passer le tems*, while Sedley is closeted with my mama, and using his rhetoric to gain her consent, which will, I trust, ensure the felicity of her Maria. But this I am positively determined on, never to give my hand to the amiable Edward, until the priest shall also be authorized to give your fair hand to the discerning and faithful Bentinck. Therefore, my dear girl, if you expect to acquire a place in the esteem of my destined caro sposo, hasten to Brudnel Place, and compleat, by your loved presence, the happiness of

MARIA BRUDNEL.

LETTER LVI.

EDWARD SEDLEY, Esq. to Sir CHARLES
BENTINCK.

Brudnel Place.

MY last letter, dear Bentinck, informed you, that through the all-powerful means of bribery, I had succeeded in my endeavours to discover the name and rank of my fair enslaver. I learned that she was the only daughter of the late Colonel Brudnel, who lost his life in an engagement abroad.

Thus far, all was as I could wish; but how to get myself properly introduced was another question. I was in this dilemma, when
a card

a card arrived from Lord Cardigan with an invitation to dinner. You know the man, therefore description would be impertinent.

—This card brought to my recollection that his Lordship had a seat within twenty miles of my charmer's habitation ; and that in all likelihood, this same nobleman might be acquainted with the Brudnel family, by which circumstance an introduction might be accomplished. Every thing answered to my most sanguine desires, as the sequel will prove to you.—After the dinner was removed, and the desert placed on the table, the sentimental Lady Paulina addressed me in the following elegant harangue.—“ O gemmini! Sedley would you credit so horrid a *bore*?—My Lord Cardigan actually insists upon burying me, for ten days at least, at that dormitory called Brudnel Place.—O Heavens! the bare idea is enough to vapour any woman

man of fashion to death; but truly there is no refusing, for you must know, his Lordship has taken it into his noddle to fall desperately in love with that piece of still life, Maria Brudnel.—Pray, Sedley, did you ever see the girl?—She was in town a few days this summer upon her return from France, where the notable mama thought fit to send her; with what view I leave you to guess, for I am sure I cannot.”

This, Bentinck, you must allow was a lucky hit; and, faith, I was too excellent a sportsman to let it escape; so returned the lady this gallant reply:—“Upon my soul, your Ladyship’s condition is rather pitiable, cooped up in the dreary country with a couple of lovers and an antiquated dowager, at this season, when all the world will be in town. And, faith, if I was not half afraid
to

to trust myself with your Ladyship in so dangerous a situation, why truly, I dont know how far my charitable disposition would lead me. But come, Lady Paulina, if you will promise to indemnify me from all hair-breadth escapes, such as your Ladyship's taking a violent fancy for this sweet person, and in case of obstinate resistance, conveying me to some lonely castle, surrounded by moats and draw-bridges, where, to preserve my virtue, I shall be under the necessity of leaping from my chamber window—or—"

Agreed, agreed, you strange mortal, returned the fair one.—Upon which it was settled that Lady Paulina should introduce me at Brudnel Place, under the honourable title of her humble 'squire. Antecedent, however, to my departure I made a determination not to suffer a blind inclination to mislead my better

better judgment; therefore, on my arrival here, treated according to my usual custom, the conduct of the fair sex with the utmost severity; notwithstanding which, I thought I could plainly perceive my company not disagreeable to the lovely Maria. But yet I had seen too much of her sex's duplicity to put any great reliance upon the language of their features; so for some days kept up a polite reserve. But at last I began to be apprehensive from the melancholy in her countenance, and the noble offers I found Lord Cardigan had made, that she might, in obedience to parental authority, yield her hand to my rival; especially, as even supposing she honoured me with any place in her esteem, my silence and reserved conduct might lead her to imagine herself indifferent to my affections, and she might, therefore, the more willingly obey the commands of a beloved

beloved parent. These considerations urged me to make a declaration of my love; her reception of which, and her subsequent behaviour convinced me how rightly I judged. But still, Charles, I cannot think of entering into so solemn an engagement as matrimony, without a stronger surety of her heart being solely mine, and that she prefers me to all my sex.

However, I have not, as yet, determined what plan to pursue. But depend upon it, I shall do nothing rashly, though I believe I love her as sincerely as ever man loved woman. A short time will, therefore, decide my fate. In the interim let me hear how you go on, whether you have as yet recovered the loss of your inconstant mistress—Inform me further about the unfortunate Edwin, and his amiable consort: I feel myself

self interested in their felicity, and sympathize in the afflictions his manly breast must endure at the ill-conduct, to call it by no worse a name, of an only sister. Tell me too when you design revisiting this kingdom; I cannot conceive what magic can detain you so long on the other side of the water; unless, indeed, some foreign beauty should have filled up the chasm in thy heart: should this not be the case, prithee, return; not, believe me, Bentinck, that your advice will be of any service; for upon my soul, you have managed your own love affairs with so little adroitness, that I will not even ask thee thy opinion; notwithstanding which avowal, be assured you will ever retain the first and warmest place in the friendship of

EDWARD SEDLEY.

L E T T E R L V I I .

DON GUZMAN TO EDWIN CAVENDISH, Esq.

Madrid.

FORTUNE, my dear Edwin, wearied at length with persecuting your youth, has in kind compassion to your necessities, removed Don Ferdinanda de Malaga from this vale of care and anxiety. His Lordship now lies a splendid memento of the nothingness of all earthly pride and glory; and was himself before his death, I believe, thoroughly convinced of the insufficiency of wealth, the boast of heraldry, or pomp of authority; and found that all alike awaited the inevitable hour, and were soon terminated by the grave.

About

About ten days ago I received a message from his Lordship, entreating my presence; when hoping some spark of relenting affection might have kindled into a gentle flame of forgiveness, and consumed the remains of his displeasure, I hastened with friendly impatience to obey the summons.—

On arriving at the castle I learned from the domestics, that their lord was verging to the goal of life, worn out by the length of years.

—My name gained me immediate admittance:—On entering the apartment of stately woe, I beheld the venerable nobleman, supported in his bed by pillows, surrounded by a train of weeping dependents!—His ghastly father, a man of real and distinguished piety, knelt by his side, exhorting him to exclude from his mind all terrestrial objects, and fix his heart, as well as eyes, on the blessed image of the Saviour of mankind!—

However, on my approach, Don Ferdinando commanded every person to withdraw, his holy counsellor excepted; and then, in a low and expiring key, declared the extreme compunction of his mind, for the harshness of his treatment of his daughter and yourself; and with a deep sigh, said he, looked upon the death of his son, Don Manuel, as a judgment from Heaven for suffering his heart to make so great a difference between children, who ought, by every rule of nature, to have been both equally dear to him—and, most devoutly suing for pardon from the Throne of Grace, continued, that he had endeavoured to make every expiation in his power, by settling all his estates real and personal on you his grandson, and your heirs for ever; excepting a few legacies and a bequest to a holy order of Chanoines, whose prayers he most humbly implored.—

“ And

"And now, said the venerable parent, I have but one wish ungratified, which is to behold my darling Edwin, whom my false notions of honour and revenge exiled from this kingdom : but vain must be that desire, and the chastisement is just.—You, Don Guzman, are not unacquainted with the place of his residence, therefore, when the last sand of life shall be run, and this sinking frame consigned to the silent mansions of the dead, to rest with my great ancestors, then make known to him this last act of my being. And, Oh ! may my fluctuating and disappointed days prove a useful lesson to his youth ; and if Heaven blesses him with children, may he never permit his heart to show that partiality, which has proved the source of all my woes."—And expressing an inclination to try the assistance of the balmy restorative of nature, sleep, I retired, struck at

the awful scene I had just been witness of.—
 Nothing now remains, my dear friend, but
 to inform you, that the day following I
 received the melancholy intelligence that
 Don Ferdinando had breathed his last.

I have now fulfilled the commands of the
 deceased, and long impatiently to assure you
 once more, how sincerely I am interested
 in all that concerns your happiness, and that
 of your amiable and deserving Louisa, which
 I hope personally to have the pleasure to re-
 peat to you; as it is absolutely necessary you
 should once more visit this kingdom, to take
 possession of the immense treasures which
 have devolved to you. With most respect-
 ful compliments to your lady, I remain with
 the utmost sincerity,

Your's,

GUZMAN

LETTER LVIII.

Mr. WOOLERTON to Mr. TOMLINSON.

Spa.

UPON my soul, Jack, I almost repent!—
 I say, almost: for were my repentant fit at
 its exuberance, I am convinced I should be
 incapable of proceeding farther against this
 heart-moving beauty!—But as things now
 are, it would be the height of madness and
 folly to suffer my d——d whining consci-
 ence, to get the mastery of such a well-plan-
 ned scheme as mine. But, faith, Tomlin-
 son, callous as thy heart is to all the plead-
 ings of humanity, I much question whether
 even thou, with all thy boasted heroism,

could be proof against the terribly reduced condition of this girl, who, at this moment, is happily deprived of feeling, by the loss of that noblest of gifts, her *reason* !—The sweet sufferer seems overpowered by a sense of her defenceless situation ; and, in truth, I believe a too great exertion to support her spirits against any personal insults which her fearful mind might have led her to apprehend from so resolute a conduct as mine has hitherto been : these struggles hath no doubt been the cause of her present deplorable state ; not an hour ago I entered her apartment, and was so forcibly struck at my own villany, that had there at that moment been a possibility of restoring her, without imminent danger to myself, I do verily believe I should have relinquished my execrable designs ; but recollecting self-interest, I checked the rising compassion, and advanced towards

wards the scorched maid, who lay wildly gazing around!—I took the burning hand; and enquired after her health;—to which she made no reply; but, putting her finger to her lips, cried,—“ *Hark!*——Do’st see, Sir Charles, that pretty flutterer?——Oh poor bird!——Nay, do not beat thy tender breast thus!”——“ Sweet Louisa!” replied I, tenderly pressing her hand—“ Sweet Louisa! re-echoed the beauteous mourner, Ah me! and am I still your sweet Louisa?—O! how kind to soothe my painful head (putting her hand to her forehead.)—But come, come, my love! let’s haste away, for see the hour approaches!”——“ What hour? (interrupting her) whether would the fair Louisa go?”——“ Go!—quickly repeated she, why to yonder brook, where I have promised to meet my dear Edwin and my charming Bentinck!—Didst ever hear that pretty tale, Sir,

a naughty man taught my poor heart!"—
 Here I felt such a confounded inclination to
 be—a fool, that I blush to acknowledge my
 weakness!—But the lovely prattler proceed-
 ed:—"Once on a time, a maiden fair and
 young, like a certain person I know; but
 hush!—I won't tell indeed!—saw from her
 window a cage to which hung many lime
 twigs, to draw unwary birds within the cage;
 a black-bird sat to act the tempter's part!—
 ha! ha! ha! when, strange to say, a sparrow,
 silly fool, here hopped upon the snare!—
 Alas a-day, sweet bird! the maid returned;
 but, hold (rising briskly on her couch) I will
 set it to music!"—And then, playing her
 pillow, as if seated before the harpsichord,
 began singing in the most melancholy notes
 these lines:

“ With

" With a garland of straw I will crown thee, love ;
 I'll marry ~~you~~ thee with a rush ring !
 Thy frozen heart shall melt with love,
 So merrily I will sing !"

When repeating the last line over several times she actually composed herself into a state of forgetfulness ; for, dropping on her pillow, fell into a finer sleep than she has had since her fever !—After a moment's silent admiration, I retired to divert my thoughts from the channel of repentance ; and do most fervently pray that this slumber may prove conducive to her restoration !—And, faith, Jack, who knows, but that not having prayed for these many many years before, my petition may be granted !

In your last you seem to hint your suspicion of the impracticability of ever moulding this obdurate maid to a compliance,—

but, thou blockhead! dost thou not know,
 “ That a faint heart never *yon* a fair lady!”
 and, “ that none but the brave deserve suc-
 cess!” and “ that stratagem is allowable in
 love as well as in war;” therefore, prithee,
 Jack, no more of your canting!—I have a
 plan, my boy, the success of which must be
 infallible.—Let but my angel recover, and
 mine she shall and must be, by all the imma-
 culatè Powers!——What says your wife
 noddle to making the pretty innocent be-
 lieve, that in her state of insensibility I had
 the marriage ceremony performed?——To
 agree with which, I have given the servant
 a ring to slip on her delicate finger, during
 her repose.

I expect a most confounded inundation of
 female heroism; such *as*, faintings, execra-
 tions, censure, reproach, and all the artillery
 of

of feminine rage and disappointment!— Upon my soul, the spirit of fondness for contradiction, is the only principle to which the sex pay a constant attention and obedience, and that alone must be the master-key of her obstinate refusal.—Am not I a ‘young man?’ and, without vanity, Jack, a handsome fellow; at least so the lovely soft ones styles me; and am I not master of as flattering and smooth a tongue as the best or worst of my sex?—What the devil then would the girl have?—Why give me all this d—d trouble, when in the end she will doubtless thank me for thus kindly forcing her to her good!—By Heavens, Tomlinson, I feel myself a man again; and am prepared to stand the torrent which I expect to assail me on the provoking gipsy’s recovery.

By the bye, Jack, that malicious toad, Charlotte, had nearly ruined all my noble projects, by her cursed low-minded and insatiate thirst of vengeance.—Faith, what think you the little devil took it into her head to do?—Why truly, nothing less than to write a full and circumstantial discovery of my assumed character, and an avowal of the arts practised against Sir Charles Bentinck and Louisa, to place an eternal barrier to their union.—This diabolical epistle, you may be assured, I took special care should never reach my little prisoner's hand.—But think, Tomlinson, what a d——d silly figure I should have cut, had this notable plan met with the success expected, how devilishly I must have dwindled in my charmer's eyes!—Upon my soul, I shudder at my narrow escape!—Most justly is it said, “That no rage can equal a disappointed

disappointed woman!"—But this girl ever possessed more of the serpent in her composition than the dove; and, long, long ago, should I have taken my eternal farewell of the lady, had it not been my interest to continue the connexion.

My pocket, Tomlinson, you know is seldom in the most flourishing state; and therefore her purse was ever a happy resource; as it was no difficult matter to drain her of the cash which the liberal and generous spirit of Captain Cavendish, aided by the mother's private gifts, supplied her with.—At the captain's exit off the stage of life, the provident mother and daughter hit on the notable scheme which you know caused my visit to the Continent; but all this, Jack, you are already acquainted with; and therefore, as I at present can find no topic more agreeable,

agreeable, shall defer the conclusion of this letter till some future opportunity.

In Continuation.

Faith, Jack, thy friend Tom has had a cursed narrow escape: but to business in proper order.—By the date of the preceding part of this letter you will perceive, that it is now a week since I wrote last; I then mentioned the fine sleep the little tyrant had lulled herself into, and in which she continued for twelve hours. On waking after this propitious temporary death, she found herself so greatly refreshed as to be able to leave her couch, and really was, beyond credibility, restored to strength!—Of this I was no sooner informed, than I resolved to put my noble contrivance of a mar-

riage

riage in play.—Accordingly, with the freedom of an actual lord and master, I entered the lady's chamber, throwing in my countenance and manners, a proper mixture of the tender and important!—She was seated in an elbow chair, supported by pillows; had on a loose white dimity combing-gown, and had thrown off her cap, with a design, I suppose, (her dressing-case standing by her side) to disentangle her beautiful auburn locks.—On my entrance, her charming eyes, whose lustre but the day before seemed to have been totally extinguished, now flashed indignant on the bold intruder; and, rising from her seat, cried, with an air the most haughty she could possibly assume, “Wherefore, insolent man, this daring presumption?”——“Pardon me, replied I, sneakingly advancing, rather awed by her looks, pardon this anxious solicitude which has induced your
Wilmot

Wilmot to enter the adored presence of his Louisa uncommanded!—But, continued I, taking the hand on which the golden padlock was placed, and which had escaped her observation, this hand, this lovely hand, which beyond my life I prize, will surely plead its master's right!—O! my sweet, my angelic bride!"——" Bride!—returned she, struggling to release the hand I held captive, whose bride?"——" Can my Louisa ask? whose but the envied Wilmot!"——" Thine, monster!—O, unhand me, villain!" forcing her fingers from my grasp; and then, first espying the little chain around her finger, with an air of frantic grief, quickly tore it from its beauteous lodge; and, throwing it with scorn on the ground, stamped with the greatest venom on the innocent bauble!—— Here I thought it proper, in my turn, to mount the high steed; and, raising my voice, cried,

cried, "Take care, take care, Madam, and do not, by an ill-timed and perpetual aversion, lay in a store of endless woe for yourself!—By my soul, I love you at this moment, in despite of all your cruel disdain, beyond all earthly good; and, notwithstanding at this instant I am but too fatally convinced your heart doats on the detested Sir Charles Bentinck, yet is my affection for you of so exalted a stamp, that I am inclined to run all risques, and endeavour, by my unwearied assiduity, to merit at least your esteem and compassion!"

"My esteem! repeated the incensed maid, my detestation, you would rather say, barbarian!—Now hear me, bounteous Heaven I (falling on her knees) if ever I do forgive this outrage to humanity, or cease to view this monster with other eyes than loathing
and

and disgust ; let thy justice doom me to a long life of misery !—Rain, rain, thy vengeance not only on me, but on the peace of him whose happiness is dearer to me than the vital air !—Let pining want and anguish be my lot, and infamy my portion !—may my steps be followed by the finger of contempt !—and, O ! be any curse my punishment but Wilmot !” — Here she arose, and, with inimitable dignity, throwing herself into her chair, and covering her lovely features with her handkerchief, relieved her pain by a copious shower of tears !—Upon my soul, her furious apostrophe struck me dumb for a few minutes ; when, considering I had gone too far to retract, I found that nothing was left but to muster all the *brass* I could ; and, in short, to bluster her out of herself.—Accordingly, snatching the shade from her face, and fiercely seizing her arm, cried,

“ Ungrateful

“ Ungrateful woman ! think not my heart
 will tamely submit to this ungenerous treat-
 ment !—Does my unremitting respect—my
 honourable conduct—while thus I held you
 a helpless victim in my power, deserve no
 better return than the most vindictive abuse ?
 —Perdition catch me, if I longer bear it !—
 Mine you are, and shall be, by all the gods !”
 —Saying which, I caught her in my arms ;
 when, slipping from my encircling embrace,
 she sunk once more on her knees, and clasp-
 ed her hands, as in the act of supplication ;
 the tears streaming down her flushed cheeks,
 her hair in wild disorder flowing on her
 shoulders !—Faith, Jack, at that moment,
 methought she appeared something more
 than human ! when, with a voice broken
 by sobs, she thus entreated my pity !—“ O !
 Mr. Wimot, if there remains the least de-
 gree of human kindness in your breast ;—if
 you

you yourself ever hope to meet with *mercy* in your hour of death, O save me, save me! —Let this one generous deed cancel my past wrongs!—Your's I never, never, can be;—my heart and soul is another's!—O my beloved Charles!——”

“ Again, madame! (interrupting her) abhorred name!—Diseases blast him!—Provoking yet enchanting girl!” and again I attempted to seize her, when springing up, quick as thought, she caught her scissars from the table, and with the frantic aspect of madness, essayed to plunge the pointed weapon in my heart! but fortunately, by quickly moving my body on one side, I avoided the well-aimed blow.—In an instant she was calm; and raising her eyes to heaven, fervently ejaculated her thanks to God for preserving her from the terrible sin of murder! —Then turning to me, continued, “ Love me,

me, Sir, from this specimen of my phrenzy; you may take warning how dangerous to yourself a farther continuance in the room will be. I now tremble at the desperate deed this hand had nearly committed!—Fly, then, Sir, my presence, for the present at least, and permit me time to recover my wonted composure.—Do not, O! do not deny the undone Louisa, this small request!”

Thinking it by no means politic to exasperate the lady further, at that period, lest she should have glutted her rage in her own blood, I, deeply sighing, and laying my spread hand on my breast, replied, “ That notwithstanding I lived but in her presence, yet, in obedience to the commands of her whose wishes it would ever be my glory to anticipate, I would withdraw; but hoped,
and

and expected, that when she coolly reflected how impossible it was now to dissolve that union, to which, to my extreme mortification I found her soul so greatly averse, her good sense, aided by her just ideas of religion, would lead her to pardon the man; and, in weighing the violence of his love, against his faulty proceedings, suffer the balance to be predominant in the favour of Cupid;"—on which, bowing low, I retired.—I had no sooner quitted the apartment, than she arose, and double-locked the door; nor would admit any creature within the chamber until the next morning, when she delivered the following note to be given to me:

To

TO THOMAS WILMOT, Esq.

"S I R,

ON quitting my apartment yesterday, you made use of this expression:—"That it would be your glory to anticipate my wishes."—If then your words carry with them any signification, and are not like mere bubbles floating on the surface of the deep, permit her, whose peace you have so long destroyed, to make this one trial of your sincerity:—the test is trifling, and cannot conduce to aught but your advantage, and must essentially to my future tranquillity. Permit me, Sir, eight days of uninterrupted reflection!—Perhaps in that space I may be enabled to calm my perturbed soul!—Yield me then,
on

on my knees I entreat it, this small gratification, at the expiration of which time you shall receive the grateful acknowledgements

Of the distracted,

LOUISA ———."

Now, my boy, what say you?—where lies the practicability of a compliance?—Do you not know, that when the town capitulates, the day is our own, and that the weary foldier may then enjoy his happy slumbers in security!—And do you not see the fair inflexible begins already to make terms of peace?—Her grateful acknowledgements can tend to nought but my advantage.— Sweet lady!—Faith, Jack, I am half wild with joy!—Pray, do you not think it would be

be serving this little termagant as she merits, to lord it over her in my turn?—In a month hence, I believe I shall take that thought into contemplation; but in the interim peruse my submissive reply :

To Mrs. WILMOT.

YES, adorable and divine charmer, thy request is granted!—and every other desire which my lovely Louisa will deign to make known, shall be as willingly fulfilled!—O! my sweet, my beauteous bride! will not my so ready obedience to your command, notwithstanding the severe penance inflicted by it on your suffering Wilmot, make some small plea in my favour with your generous heart!—Ah, my charming wife! listen to the adoring pleader, and permit your enraptured husband to enjoy the pleasing

ling thought, that the interpretation his flattering hopes have thrown on your amiable lines, may not prove, to use your own sweet word, like a vain “trouble”—but, on the contrary, be realized by beholding the benignant smile, once more touch those ruby lips; in which delightful expectation, he subscribes himself, my lovely girl’s

Devoted slave,

THOMAS WILMOT.

Now, Jack, the golden harvest is ripe.—
By my soul, I am all extacy!—To-morrow!
—to-morrow!—Fly swift, ye tardy moments
—gallop away ye creeping hours!—But
hold, a billet from my emprefs.—No recan-
tation, I hope!—faith Jack, I almost dread
to open it.—But come, courage, my lad!—

Only

Only an entreaty that the house may be kept as still as possible, having a wondrous inclination for sleep.—This looks well, my boy.—What say you?—But farewell, I must hasten to comply with this last order of my Louisa.—O, Jack! envy me, you dog; for I am all bliss!—Truly I believe I shall at last reclaim, and be an honest man!—But no more.

Thine,

THOMAS WOOLERTON.

LETTER LIX.

MR. WOOLERTON to MR. TOMLINSON.

RUINED! tricked! outwitted by a novice! O, Jack! help me to curse the whole contriving sex; but, above all, my own fatal security!—'Sdeath! to be lulled into such a confounded disappointment by the d—d artifice of a simple girl!—I, who have deceived heads grown grey in the knowledge of mankind;—hearts experienced in the chicanery of the world.—Confusion!—but harkee, Tomlinson, do not dare even to smile at my mortification; for, by my soul, I want little temptation to the slaughter of half mankind!—All this time, I presume
you

you are rubbing those cursed heavy eyes of thine, to discover my meaning,—penetration not being among the number of your properties; so take my plaguy story, from the conclusion of my last.

Delighted by the enchanting yielding prospect in view, I, blockhead like, hastened to present the little devil with the means at once to gratify her own malicious designs, and close, at the same instant, my opening fortune.—Obedient to the inclination her billet expressed, I immediately commanded the family to retire as early as possible, and myself foolishly entered my chamber, with the most flattering ideas, unsuspecting of treachery; for who the devil could suspect; the house well fastened, and myself her next door neighbour?—With spirits exhilarated by an extraordinary glass which I had taken

to the health of my divinity, I soon, too fatally, fell into the arms of Morpheus, nor awoke till the clock had told the ninth hour the next morning; the day which I had vainly thought was to have insured the prize mine, beyond the power of fate or chance!—In passing her chamber, I gently tapped, and descended; then writing a few lines, painting my impatience to throw myself at her feet, and claiming that sweet reconciliation which her letter made me hope would attend the performance of her request; at the same time entreating the honour of her company to breakfast in the drawing room. I then desired the servant to carry the note up to Mrs. Wilmot, and throwing myself into a chair, began to consider the manner in which the haughty beauty would make her first entrance, and the difficulty she must needs be under to descend

scend from her high tosses with becoming decency, when the Abigail hastily entered; her frightful eyes goggling with amaze and terror;—her nostrils extended, with her d——d yabba mouth (to borrow a Creole expression) and informed me of the elopement; which she had no sooner done, than dropping on her clumsy knees, she began vociferating her own innocence.—Frantic with rage, I instantly rushed by this *she-devil*, and flew into the deserted room—but, alas! the lovely inhabitant was flown!—Scarce, however, believing my own senses, I ransacked each corner of the apartment and closet, from whence I soon missed my sword and a suit of my cloaths, which had been thrown into the latter place. Fatigued and disappointed, I was about leaving the chamber, when the sight of a letter on the dressing-table, which had before escaped my observation,

servation, recalled my steps. On taking it up, I found the superscription addressed to myself. With agitated fingers I unsealed the folded sheet: these were the contents;—read, and execrate with me the blind stupidity of

THOMAS WOOLERTON.

P. S. I have made every enquiry about the town and its environs, but fruitless have they as yet been. I shall continue my search, and if unsuccessful here, shall conclude that England, and her Maria, will be her refuge.—Brussels, I know, she can never think of returning to; besides, I doubt whether the little toad Charlotte would permit her mother to receive her. I have written to advise them of my cursed mortification: but farewell.

To

TO THOMAS WILMOT, Esq.

[Inclosed in the preceding.]

“ SIR,

I PROMISED, in the letter which contained my request of eight days privacy, that that granted, my grateful acknowledgments should ever repay the complaisance.—Receive them, then, Sir ; for be assured they are most truly your's !—However, before they can possibly reach you, the wretched object of your villany will, I trust, be far distant from thy future machinations, tho' a hapless wanderer on the bleak world, destitute and defenceless !—O, Mr. Wilmot ! suffer the accumulated evils your cruelty has already heaped on an unfortunate

L 5 orphan,

orphan, to suffice!—no farther pursue my unfriended youth.—O! Sir, let the miseries which you have doomed me to, for the remainder of my unhappy existence content you; though I have a joyful hope in God, that it will not be long before myself and sorrows will find a happy resting-place in the silent grave!—You have proved, Mr. Wilmot, an effectual, though not skilful executioner; for assure yourself, the dart with which you have stricken the unprotected deer, has, I feel, been dipped in the envenomed poison of a sure, but I fear, lingering death!—Permit me, then, to expire in tranquillity, and do not, with unheard-of barbarity, molest the last melancholy moments of

The undone

LOUISA ———



Sir CHARLES BENTINCK, Bart. to EDWARD
SEDLEY, Esq.

Brussels.

WITH a design to dissipate the most melancholy reflections, and at the same instant relate the wonderful discovery from which I am just returned, I have taken up my pen.

I need not recount to you, my Edward, who are so well acquainted with each movement of my soul, the cruel disquietude which the supposed infidelity of the now wandering, miserable, Louisa, has occasioned me.— It was a weakness of a most blameable nature; I was conscious it must unavoidably
L 6 lessen

lessen me in the estimation of every man of sense, and give me the appearance of more than womanish folly. Of this I was sensible, and therefore determined with manly fortitude to struggle against my ill-fated prepossession, and conquer or die, in the undertaking: for which purpose I avoided every subject that could in the smallest degree recall her to my memory.— The worthy Edwin, in compassion to my feelings forebore ever naming his sister in my presence.

Thus were things situated, when a letter arrived from Spain, with a relation of the death of Don Ferdinando de Malaga, which rendered a personal visit from Cavendish to that kingdom highly necessary. I promised to accompany him, hoping that diversity of scene might prove the best restorative to my depressed

depressed spirits. All was in readiness for our departure.—We waited but for a favourable gale springing up.—Impatient to bid adieu to this country, I was, this morning, watching the temper of the wind, when my attention was drawn off by my servant's delivering me a letter, the purport of which threw me into the greatest consternation; the signature informed me it come from Mrs. Thompson, the aunt of my sweet love!

Great God, Sedley! how difficult is it to bring one's self to think that in forms modelled by the hands of a beneficent Creator, there should be hearts so devoid of every virtue, as to delight in destroying the peace and happiness of our fellow-creatures? But such contradictions daily experience too fatally evinces. Upon my soul, Edward, I am sick of existence; I am tired of herding
among

among a set of beings whose dispositions are in general so savage. Do we not daily behold in the human species instances of abandoned profligacy, nay, of the most unnatural depravity?—Do we not see parents abandoning their children?—husbands their wives, and wives their husbands?—brothers and sisters warring with each other!—And as for friendship, where is it to be met with, but in the name—your's, my Sedley, excepted? Have we not witnessed, that under that sacred guise, the most infamous actions are perpetrated?—Do we not find that mankind, to compass some favourite point, will assume that garb? and under the fictitious vow of mutual confidence and regard, steal from your breast each secret thought and wish, will gain possession of your soul's key; and then, by some cursed advice, lure you to destruction; which, having accomplished,

will

will leave the silly fool to curse his unsuspecting nature? Indeed, when I take a melancholy review of those past occurrences which have fallen under my immediate knowledge, I am inclined to exclaim with Hamlet: "How weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable appear to me, all the uses of this life!"—And believe me, were it not for that after something, a hope of a happy eternity, a blessed futurity; or the dread of the just anger of an offended God—I would not bear about me many hours longer this load of wretched life. But I dare not, cannot, rush unsummoned into the presence of an insulted Deity!

Wonder not, my friend, at the desponding strain of these lines;—they proceed from a breast endued with fortitude enough to bear the roughest wrongs that fortune could

could have done me : But, when I reflect on the unmerited sufferings of my angelic Louisa, I confess my heart is not proof against so trying a recollection. You, doubtless, Sedley, are astonished at the style of this epistle, respecting my unhappy love; but it will cease when I inform you she is innocent—spotless as the fleecy lamb!—and has been betrayed to misery by those from whom she had every right to expect protection and gratitude. But as you must be desirous of coming to the sequel of the story, I will hasten to satisfy your impatience.

At the beginning of this letter, I acquainted you that I had received a few lines from Mrs. Thompson, the purport of which was, to request my presence for half an hour on urgent business.—Amazed at this summons, which I was at a loss to account for,

I re-

I revolved within myself whether it would be prudent or not to obey it:—I was thus inwardly wavering, when the entrance of Cavendish soon determined me. On informing him of the contents of the letter, the anxious brother entreated me to comply with the mandate, hoping to reap from her some intelligence relative to his sister. These suggestions were enough to balance my inclinations in favour of the visit; and I accordingly prepared to encounter this woman, whose disposition I never admired; but who, from respect to the worthy Captain Cavendish, I had ever treated with complacency. —A few moments brought me to her lodgings.—I sent up my name, and was quickly admitted to the presence of this guilty wretch!—On my approach she seemed under the utmost embarrassment; but soon recovering herself, she addressed me with
 signs

signs of the deepest contrition. " Sir Charles
 Bentinck, I took the liberty of requesting
 your presence upon one of the most mor-
 tifying occasions of my whole life : I feel
 myself, Sir, agitated by guilt; and my mind
 torn by remorse and the consciousness of my
 complicated offences. But as the only ex-
 piation of my crimes I can now render, I
 am come to a resolution of making a full
 avowal of my iniquitous proceedings; and
 to repair, as far as the distracting state of
 of affairs will permit, the numerous evils
 which I have helped to heap on your head,
 and ~~that~~ of the amiable, suffering, ruined
 Louisa!"—At this moment a violent scream
 from an inner room caused this wicked wo-
 man to start from her seat.—As to myself,
 my senses were so bewildered, that I was
 actually incapable of articulating a single
 syllable.—At length, recovering a little from
 my

my consternation, I commanded her, without further delay, to unravel the purport of her mysterious expressions.

But to be brief, my dear Sedley ; a scene of villany, of the most diabolical nature, was soon disclosed, which harrowed my very soul. In short, she acknowledged herself and daughter, with the assistance of that rascal Woolerton, to have been the calumniators of Miss Cavendish's reputation—the author of that d—d letter which came to me under the sacred signature of friendship ; and which I, with such unpardonable credulity, believed !——I could now no longer forbear interrupting the confession, by enquiring what could have instigated her to so barbarous a plot, against a family so nearly connected with herself, by the ties of consanguinity,

guinity, and to whom she was under such
weighty obligations.

“ Alas, Sir Charles !” returned she, “ your
question is natural, and my punishment is
just ; and may my wretched example prove a
useful warning to the rest of my sex ! let them
learn from my miseries, that iniquity can
never prosper ; and that Heaven will sooner
or later avenge the wrongs of injured Innocence !—But I will not, Sir, tire you with
reflections, which, had they been admitted
earlier, might have rescued my soul from this
abyss of despair !—You are not ignorant with
what a partial affection I beheld that child,
which Providence, for a trial no doubt, be-
stowed on me :—It will, therefore, be unne-
cessary to trace this whole transaction fur-
ther than to that blind tendernefs, by which
I was induced to form a scheme of enriching
her

her at the expence and repose of my brother's daughter. I was sensible to what a fond excess the unhappy Louisa was attached to you, and plainly perceived, that, could an irreconcilable breach be accomplished, it would require little art to drive her to take shelter within the walls of a cloister; which having accomplished, it would be an easy matter to get her fortune made over to myself and daughter. For this end every artifice was put in execution; but a stronger power guarded, at that period, this lost girl from falling a prey to our vile machinations!—Would to God she had been equally fortunate in escaping the snares of our cursed associate!—I need add no more, Sir, these letters * will explain to you the

* Alluding to the epistles that passed between Mr. Woolerton and Miss Thompson.

dreadful

dreadful truth!"—Saying which, she presented me with a parcel of papers, which I shall enclose for your perusal:—When you, my Sedley, shall have gone through the heart-wounding contents, as a lover, you may form some faint idea of the agony of my mind.

When the first tumult of passion had subsided, I began to suspect that his last letter to the abandoned Charlotte might be only a trick to elude any further enquiry; and that the insulted Louisa might probably be still within his power. This supposition, she assured me, must be false; for, that on the receipt of the last letter, she had immediately dispatched a trusty person to Spa to learn the real state of the affair; who had been informed that a lady and gentleman, answering their description, had resided in the town about

about a fortnight or three weeks, but had since absconded—And, continued this now repentant woman, v' to sum up, Sir Charles Bentinck, the extent of my punishment! my undone daughter, unable to support the loss of that villain, whom she but too tenderly regarded, has, from the time of the elopement, been in a state of distraction, with little hopes of regaining her lost reason, and the end of this horrid catastrophe is a mad-house for my child, and a cloister for myself!"—Here tears stopped her utterance;—and unable longer to endure the society of the wretch who had so inhumanly deprived me of all prospect of felicity, I hastily retired.

The afflicted Edwin was waiting my return:—my agitated looks quickly convinced him I had not received the most pleasing information;

formation ; and it was some seconds before I could sufficiently recover composure to make him acquainted with the melancholy tale ; which I had no sooner done, than I would have given worlds to have been less precipitant ; for words cannot express to you the situation into which he was thrown by the intelligence ; and which might have proved of the most fatal consequences, had not my physician happily entered at that moment, and seeing his terrifying condition, relieved him by opening a vein.

But having now exhausted the little remnant of my strength in penning this long epistle, I shall conclude with informing you, Cavendish and myself intend setting off to-morrow morning, in search of the ill-fated wanderer ; though, I am apprehensive, all endeavours to recover the lovely girl will be
vain.

vain. We shall visit every monastery within the precincts of the Emperor's dominions, as well as the meanest hamlet. But, alas! my Sedley, how mortifying is the reflection, that should even success crown our labour, she never must be mine!—Cruel destiny!—Ah! my friend, I dare not allow myself to dwell longer on the harrowing subject, lest I forget what is due to my God, and in a fit of frenzy terminate the being of the racked

CHARLES BENTINCK.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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