THE

HISTORY

OF

ir CHARLES BENTINCK, Bart.

AND

LOUISA CAVENDISH.

VOL. III.



THE

I S. T O R. Y

R CHARLES BENTINCK, BART.

AND

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LOUISA CAVENDISH.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

LAURA AND AUGUSTUS.

VOLUME III.

"Sorrow and joy in love alternate reign,
Sweet is the blifs, diftrating is the pain...
So when the Nile its fruitful deluge fpreads,
And genial heat informs its flimy beds.
Here yellow harvefts crown the fertile plain,
There monftrous ferpents fright th' lab'ring fwain;
A various product fills the fatten'd fand,
And the fame floods enrich and curfe the land."

Phædra Hippolitus**, SMLTH.**

L Q N D O N:

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LETTER LXI.

Miss Brudnel to Miss Cavendish.

Brudnel Place.

WHAT can be the occasion of your long filence, my dearest Louisa?—Surely my sweet friend cannot have forgot her Maria, or suffered absence to weaken that tender regard which has proved so much the delight and pride of my heart!—But perhaps I wrong your excellent nature; as sickness or pain may cause that intermission of which I so loudly complain, and which I Vol. III. B

very fincerely regret!—Do, my fweet love, contrive fome method to ease my anxious thoughts.—But, alas! I hope you are not ill!—Let me endeavour to satisfy my solicitude, by supposing that your amiable Sir Charles engrosses so great a part of your engaging society, as to have proved an impertinent interruption. This will be the most acceptable excuse that can come from the pen of Miss Cavendish.

My uncertainty with regard to the reason of your filence, has, I affure your ladyship, made me so exceedingly previse, that I have done nothing but squabbled with Sedley, who seems thunderstruck at the visible alteration in my temper.—I fent him from the room, about half an hour ago, in an odd kind of a humour; but, to dislipate my chagrin, I will relate the particulars of my

(I fear

(I fear you will think ill) behaviour.—
Yesterday evening the quarrel commenced, originating from a flupid fright I was thrown into yesterday morning.

Aurora having unbarred her gates, in one of her most bewitching smiles, so far tempted our noble visitors, that an airing on horse-back was proposed, and as readily agreed to.—Our horses, were soon in readiness; ourselves springing on the elegant creatures, ventured to exhibit our wondrous skill in horsemanship.

Mr. Sedley rode a beautiful beaft, which he had ordered from London, and which had arrived a few days before—Thus mounted, we proceeded to view the wonderful charms of nature, and was delighting our fenfes with the refreshing gales of perfume which the B 2 gentle

gentle zephyrs wafted from the neighbouring plantations, and admiring the divine creative hand, when our ears were faluted by the huntiman's horn. Scarce had the found reached us, when Mr. Sedley's horse, in spite of all his master's strength and dexterity, galloped away in obedience to the call.-Upon my word, Louisa, I almost blush to acknowledge, that on perceiving the animal in full speed, disburdened of its rider, my terrified imagination presented my Edward, dashed on the earth, and bereft of life!-Need I fay, my fenses forfook me? -I fell-my foot, not instantly difentangling from the stirrup, broke in part the violence of the fall !- In this state of insensibility I must have continued fome time; for on opening my eyes, I beheld the amiable caufe of my alarm, kneeling in the utmost anxiety; my head supported on the bosom of Lord Cardigan;

Cardigan Mr. Sedley upbraiding himself as the misfortune of my illness; and, notwithstanding the apparent roughness of his fpeech when in general company (from which people would be led to imagine his nature not the most gentle) he was at that moment using the most endearing expressions of love and tenderness, to recall me to life! -But I will not weary your patience with all the pretty nonfense thut passed on the occasion, as I believe there is little variety in fuch lover-like scenes,-You will, I doubt not, from what has been already faid, suppose the simple behaviour of your friend; which feemed fo highly to enrapture (to use the gentleman's own phrase) my swain, as to make him infufferably encroaching; and I was actually under the necessity of taking his honour down a little : for, would you believe it, that in the evening, I caught my beau in

the very all of sketching off this in apid phiz of mine, on a piece of vellum, which was dexteroufly concealed within his pocketbock !- To chance alone was my ladyship indebted for the discovery .- A bat, happening to make its unwished-for entrance into the apartment in which we were at work, greatly discomposed us .- Lady Fleming, who, as well as myfelf, bore a prodigious aversion to this frightful creature, joined with me in a most violent scream !- Down dropped our work; up rofe our gallant knights, and, with the heroic firmness of Quixotes, prepared to give battle to the formidable enemy, who had fo dreadfully difcomposed the serenity of our pretty features. for which purpose the noble Lord Cardigan's book was thrown afide, for the more terrific appearance of a scented cambric handkerchief !- My Arellius, unthinkingly laying

down on the table his open pocket-book, in order also to attack the ugly flutterer; by which manœuvre he favoured your Maria with a glance of her own face, without the affistance of a mirror. The refemblance had no sooner struck my view, than I felt the blood mantling in my cheeks.—How to act I was at a loss; it was in my opinion by no means prudent to suffer any gentleman to remain in possession of such a picture, until an union of hands had made our honour one.

To mention it to my mother, I thought would be affronting my lover;—to ask him to deliver it into my hands, would have, I feared, too much the appearance of coquetry, or prudery:—in short, I found my-felf greatly embarrassed and irresolute how to conduct myself towards this bold mortal.

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Thus,

Thus, while I was balancing in my mind what step to pursue, Mr. Sedley, having routed the bird, returned, and taking my hand tenderly, hoped I was recovered from my terror.-Not at all pleafed at the difcovery I had just made, I hasfily withdrew my hand from his, and glancing my eye towards the table, replied, I believe, rather previfuly. Observing my looks confused, and my attention engaged from himfelf, he turned his head in fearch of the object that thus feemingly engroffed my notice; the picture foon caught his eyes, and colouring hastily, he thrust it into his pocket. Entreating Lady Paulina's excuse for a few minutes, myself retired into the garden .- I had just reached a walk of furze, when I was joined by my Edward, who, advancing with a most respectful air, blended with a kind of discontent, addressed me thus: --- " Pardon me, my dearest

dearest Miss Budnel, for thus intruding on your retirement; but the evident displeasure on your countenance, when leaving the parlour, and also the visible anger in which you drew away that dear hand (taking it at the fame time)-I disengaging it, begged he would quit me, and join again the company, as I particularly defired to be alone .- " Good God! is this my amiable Maria Brudnel? (replied he) what can have occasioned so sudden and freezing a change in your carriage towards your Sedley, fince the morning?-By Heavens, Madam! it would almost lead me to imagine, that in reality your fex was devoid of even the shadow of confistency !-(and, foftening his voice) For pity's fake, lovely Maria, acquaint me in what I have fo. greatly transgressed to merit such killing coldness?-Is it necessary that the sweet and enchanting mark of your tenderness for

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your adoring Edward, this morning, and which has yielded his foul the most rapturous pleasures, should be dashed away by the cruel idea, that what he had fondly looked upon as a testimony of your partiality to him, was merely a weakness of nature, and would equally have been expressed, had the supposed endangered person been any other?"

This speech, my Louisa, as you will imagine, not a little nettled my pride. It was indelicate, ungenerous, and ungrateful, to throw so harshed construction on my conduct; and therefore I answered him accordingly. "If, Mr. Sedley, cried I, those are your suppositions, enjoy them and welcome; and be affured that my heart (whatever your contracted sentiments and wishes may be) is formed of materials melting to the distress of every fellow-creature; and

that you rightly guessed, when you said it was a failing of nature, if commisseration can come under that denomination. However, Sir, I must again entreat your absence, in this request you will at least find I can be confishent."

"No, by my foul, Madam, I will not leave you until you fatisfy me in what I have had the misfortune to offend. As to the unkind conftruction you have been pleased to put on my words, I am at a loss how to account for it.—But allow me to know the crime I have been guilty of, that I may expiate it in the most ample manner."

"Very well, Sir, then I prefume you can have no objection to destroy that bit of vellum in your pocket-book?—And, further, to promise never more to amuse your fancy

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at my expence; and this, Mr. Sedley, I demand of your generofity, with no prudish notions I declare: but merely from my ideas (confined ones you may think them) of right and wrong.

"If those, my dearest life, are your ideas of right and wrong, they must be just; for never have I known my Maria but actuated by princples which do honour to the human mind. Therefore, notwithstanding the secret delight I had promised myself in contemplating the imperfect resemblance of the loveliest seatures in the universe; yet will I, in compliance with your wishes, facrifice my own inclinations, by giving up this little sketch so dear to my sight:—Accept of it then, my amiable Maria, in trust, until that blissful day shall arrive, when you may deem me worthy, of being put in possession of a

far more valuable prize—the beauteous original!"—Saying which, he presented me the little drawing; and continued, "Now, tell me, my adorable girl! am I once more restored to your favour M—Pronounce, my charming Maria, your Sedley's pardon, for the attempted precious theft!"

"Indeed, Mr. Sedley, I hold myfelf obligated to you for your polite acquiefcence:

—But——"

"Nay, my fweetest girl! no buts; say that you pardon me, and permit me to seal my forgiveness on that sweet hand." Upon which, Louisa, he had truly the boldness to kiss me. The first time, indeed, that he had ventured to take that liberty. But see, my dear, what encroaching beings these lordly wretches are—no sooner do they imagine they have

in the least obliged you, than they hold themselves licensed to seize their reward.-But, however, the faucy Edward reaped little advantage from his prefumption. For this freedom, you may be affured, I did not pass in filence; but, on the contrary, was highly offended. This created a fecond quarrel: my gentleman, in his turn, affumed most wonderful airs, and took it into his wisdom to be affronted; vexed with my coldness, and believing he had actually been in pursuit of a mere coquet. He would, however, endeavour to root my image from his thoughts; and be the struggle ever fo violent, would break the chains which at present held him captive; and declared he would continue the fool of none of my fex.

His violence really frightened me. I burft into tears, which I in vain endeavour-

ed to conceal; but which my broken voice too clearly betrayed .- This briny shower in an inftant calmed my choleric fwain; who in a milder accent began to upbraid me with a want of affection. But here my pride once interposed to his disadvantage, and determined me not to be indebted to his pity for a reconciliation. Accordingly I defired him to think no more of fo contemptible a coquet; but advised him to throw aside his chains: accordingly, to his defign, I, for my part, would lend him my affiftance; myfelf being resolved to give up all thoughts of uniting my deftiny with fo unaccountable a temper. Upon which, with hafty and agitated steps, I returned to the house.-Thus ended scene the first .- Sullen and filent was the man the remainder of the evening; pretending letters to write, he retired the instant s the

the cloth was removed .-- Lord Cardigan observing that all was not comme il faut between Sedley and myself, thought it a fit moment to renew his own odious suit; but an evil hour, you will naturally conclude. he hit upon: his finical, but tragi-comic address, ill-suited my wandering thoughts; but I was, from politeness, obliged to pay some attention to him. But the cream of the jest, Louisa, is, that while his fage Lordship had been exhausting all his magazine of rhetoric, and fatiguing his spirits, so as to be under the necessity of stopping folely to take breath, and have recourse to his eau de luce; (for never fure was there fo pedantic a petitmaitre,) I had ungratefully been employing my ideas about his rival; fo that when his Lordship expected a reply to his elaborate harangue, I was confidering how to punish the

the insolence of my lover. Miss Cavendish would, doubtless, have played the puppy against the mastiff. But no, Louisa; that experiment was attended with too much danger for the venture of fo timid a being as your friend: fo I determined to play him off against himself. And, therefore, having come to this notable refolve, I arose, and wishing the expectant Lord a good repose, withdrew, leaving him confounded, no doubt, at my rufficity. This morning my doughty fquire was all attention-fo humble-fo every thing lover-like, that I was once or twice on the brink of forgetting my refentment; and had actually drawn my mouth into a half simper of approbation, when the postman's appearance threw my spirits into a pleafing hurry, concluding he was the bearer of the long-looked for letter, from the fifter

of my heart. I started from my feat; and ran to meet him, eagerly asking if he had any letter for me. - No, was the answer! and that one monofyllable dispersed at once the fun-shine of my countenance. In vain was Sedley's fubmission now displayed; my friendship was wounded—and not having any person on whom I could vent my ill-humour, was necessitated to throw the weight of my displeasure on my hero; who, to do him justice, bore my pettishness for near an hour with the greatest patience. But at last his fortitude forfook him; and we parted in the queerest mood imaginable; he to bite his nails through vexation, and myfelf to fcold your Ladyship. But I know not how it is, instead of railing at your want of punctuality, I have only been exposing myself to my Louisa's censure. However, as Sedley says,

in pity do not be the cause of another misunderstanding by your cruel silence; but rectify this error by the speedy dispatch of a large packet to your truly affectionate though half-offended,

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MARIA BRUDNEL

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LETTER LXII.

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

Brudnel Place.

WITHOUT waiting for the formal punctilio of letter for letter, I shall continue scribbling, in hopes some further accounts of my prosperous amour may serve to dissipate these corroding reslections which await the remembrance of a disappointed love!—Tho', upon my soul, Bentinck, I think thy whining folly cursed stupid and inexcusable.—But since there is no kicking against the commands of that tyranness, dame Nature, why, faith, I must e'en leave thee to thy own cogitations,

cogitations, and proceed in my above mentioned good-natured refolves.

First, then, I must beg permission to tell your worthip, that every thing succeeds here to the utmost of my wishes .- The lady all condescension, the mama all simper, my lord a little in the dumps or fo, the die-away lady' Paulina, quite a woman. But to let thee, Charles, into a little kind of a fecret, there is at present a small matter of misunderstanding betwixt myfelf and charmer: but the quarrel of lovers, (you know the good old adage) is the renewal of love; and to this battle of Cupid art thou partly indebted for this fecond epiftle; for not being in humour to taste the insipid produce of Lord Cardigan's and Lady Fleming's brain, after the delicate and refined fentiments of my beloved, I have even been obliged to favour you with another hour of my conversation.

But pray, Sir Charles, what think you is the rock on which our good humour fplit? -Why truly a kifs!-Upon my foul, Bentinck, that was all; a simple kis!-and the little vixen has made fuch a curfed rout about it, notwithstanding I had the instant before facrificed to her refined delicacy, the little portrait I had been endeavouring to sketch of her. Methinks, Bentinck, I here see you, in spite of your own melancholy reflections, laughing at the filly lover-like penitential appearance of the poor trembling culprit, on receiving the displeasure of his empress, and hear your worship demanding Who is the dupe of a woman now?-But patience, good Sir Charles, foft and flow; not quite fo fast .- Maria Brudnel, 'tis true,

is at this moment, dearer to me than life; but yet am I determined to be convinced that I am equally dear to her heart, before I run my neck into the Gordian knot .- I. will try her, Bentinck; -try the strength of her attachment. - At this prefent I am much inclined to doubt her affection. - I do not half like this prudish bustle: -can a woman, let me ask you, be so highly offended at such a trifle, if her heart was fincerely affected? -It is impossible, I feel, to be long at variance with the object of one's love !- But the little gipfey has been fo confoundedly shy ever fince, that she nearly staggers my faith. However, try her I will, and at once put an end to all doubts and fears .- If her affections stand proof, why then, by Jupiter, my fair maid, I am your's to the end of the chapter; -but if it cannot, why then Earewell all hymeneal fetters; and away I hasten to join thy

thy fober company; and endeavour to teach thee the bleffed art of forgetfulness, and by habituating ourselves to laugh at the sex through disappointment, at last come in reality to laugh from contempt.-Well, how like you my plan?—Is it not admirable?—I think fo, by Jove !- But, ah! what heavenly vision swims with such inimitable grace before my ravished eyes?—It is my fair!—She ftops! and gathers from the prickly thorn the fragrant rose !- and now she gently raises the drooping lily !- now stoops to pluck the glowing amaranthus!-fhe places them in her lovely bosom !- Now, Sir Charles, were you in my place, and I in your's, what a pretty display of moralizing should I here be favoured with! it would not be in nature for your honour to let flip so delicate an opportunity. Instead of which, however, I will fly to join the fair fubject, and either

laugh or rail her into good humour; fo I am, Sir Charles Bentinck's most obedient to command,

EDWARD SEDLEY.

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LET-

LETTER, LXIII.

Louisa to Miss Brudnel

What is this world?—Thy fchool, O Mifery!
Our only leffon is, to learn to fuffer;
And he who knows not that, was born for nothing!
Tho' deep my pangs, and heavy at my heart,
My comfort is, each moment takes away
A grain, at leaft, from the dead load that's on me;
And gives a nearer prospect of the grave!—
YOUNG.

FROM what an abyss of horror am I awakened!—what aggravated wretchedness encompasses the poor undone Louisa!—O, Maria! Fate has now really dropt her curtain, and misery is for ever entailed upon my distracted head!—But, alas! you, my amiable

amiable friend, are ignorant to what dreadful mystery these melancholy lines allude; and hard, hard fliall I find the unravelling it to your gentle bosom!

Indeed I had hoped to have been released from this piercing trial by the friendly, and now only resource of thy Louisa-death!-But that bleffing has been denied; and I still furvive to all the agony of despair, and to be myself the relater of my own remediless diftrefs!

The names of Bentinck and Louisa, Fate has, indeed, decreed should never be united. -Unhappy youth! what agonizing pangs shall rend thy faithful heart, when the horrid recital shall reach thy ears!-But will not appearances stamp his mind with unfavourable ideas of my fidelity?—Will he not be C 2

apt

apt to imagine that I yielded my hand to the impulse of a new affection?-Yes; too sure he will:-Nor will I be fo barbaroufly just, as to clear my injured love, when I am convinced the only probability of returning peace dawning upon his days, must be from a conviction of my unworthiness. - Then rest, still tenderly remembered youth, in happy ignorance of the wrongs and innocence of the ill-starred Louisa; and mayest thy breast ever remain a stranger to those torments, which wring the foul of her, who, not long fince, hoped to have participated in all thy joys and all thy cares .- But these delightful, these flattering prospects are now for ever closed; and the only view, which can, at this period, afford the least ray of fatisfaction, is the cold and filent tomb !- Bleffed flate of tranquilling !- whose dark and gloomy regions are the only preservative from afflic-

tion's barbed arrows .- O my amiable Maria! little did I conceive that my next letter to you would be filled with fuch mournful greetings-but, alas! what vain-mortal shall dare promise himself aught of certainty in this state of mutability! I concluded my last epistle in all the security of conscious virtue, in all the exultation of returning felicity; affured that Heaven would yet enable me to trace the invidious flanderers of my, till then, spotless fame. Enchanting dream !- Why, why was I diffurbed from the pleafing delirium ?- But hold, I will not prefumptuoufly arraign the ways of Providence.-Perhaps it was right I should be thus humbled .- I will, therefore, endeavour to fubmit without murmuring; and teach my foul the hard leffon of refignation; and, if possible, forget what I was, what I might

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have

have been, and the wretched thing I now am!—But to my tale of woe!

The day following that on which I difpatched my last letter, I received a message from (as I thought) the Marchioness of Lofrios, but which, I have fince fatally dif-·covered to have been a forgery, requesting me to bring my netting box, and fpend the day with her. Having received many tokens of politeness, and indeed of friendship, I made no hefitation, but promifed to wait on her Ladyship; -accordingly, slipping on my things, haftened to obey the fummons: in paffing through the park I met the person whom I introduced to your notice fome posts ago, by the name of Wilmot. Whither are you going, Miss Cavendish, cried he? -To the Marchioness of Losrios, replied I. -lermit me, returned he, to be your efcort,

escort, and give me leave to shew you a most delightful pleafant road .- Not suspecting any treachery in my guide, I readily consented. We had not proceeded far, when in croffing one of the fireets, the barbarous Mr. Wilmot flipped, by which accident he feemed much hurt, and declared his incapacity to walk any further .- I was really much diftreffed, and was at a loss how to act, when espying a shop on the opposite side of the way, I entreated him to endeavour by the affistance of my arm to gain that harbour, where he might procure fome help. This, with much apparent reluctance, he confented to; when, leaning on my arm, and hobbling, as though torn by the throes of extreme pain, he made a shift at length to reach the deftined house; which I had no fooner entered, than I was feized and forcibly conveyed up stairs, in despite of all my

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cries and refistance. As soon as the consternation which this abrupt and unaccountable behaviour had caused, would permit,
I demanded in a peremptory tone, of my
base compassion, the meaning of so outrageous a proceeding, who slinging himself
at my feet intreated my attention to what he
was about to say. Sensible that Pwas now entirely in the wretch's power, and that all resistance was vain, I defired him briefly to
proceed, which he did in the following
words:

"To tell you, adorable Louifa, that the steps I have taken have resulted from the violence of that hopeless passion which your bewitching beauty has kindled, would be to inform you of what you must already have guessed. I shall, therefore, only say, that hurried away by the dread of for ever losing

lofing you. I have been impelled to this rash action. I am affured, from your own lips, how immoveable your heart is attached to Sir Charles .- I faw your preparations for a fpeedy return to Europe, to difcover the enemies of your repose!-I feared I never more frould behold you; and concluded a few months would put the envied Bentinck in possession of those world of charms, for which I would gladly facrifice my existence.-All hopes, my heart assured me, of winning you over to my love, were fruitless; and unable to endure the thought of your bestowing those beauties on another, I refolved to hazard all, relying upon the fweetness of your disposition to pardon the involuntary crime committed from excess of love. My hand and fortune are at your disposal. Allow me, angelic maid, but to call you mine, and my whole life shall be too

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short to express my gratitude!"—Here he ceased.—The horrors of my situation struck me dumb.—O, how frightful did the monster appear in my sight? Medusa's head could not have wore a more terrifying aspect.

At last, recollecting myself, I addressed him thus:—"That I am in your power, Mr. Wilmot, I fear I shall woefully experience.
—It is power you have usurped by unwarrantable authority; therefore, tremble at the dire punishment which awaits such a violation of the laws of community; and do not vainly imagine, because I am trepan'd hither, and forcibly detained, that I will ever yield to your proposal. Take my advice, return me instantly to my friends, and I will give you my solemn oath, that not a featence of what has passed shall rescape my lips.

lips. On the contrary, if you perfift in your villanous intentions, by all that is facred, no power on earth shall mitigate my just refentment; I will pursue you to the utmost extent of law. Reflect, therefore, before it be too late. - Detaining me will be of no avail. My refolutions are unalterably fixed to die, rather than violate my faith to the most amiable of men!"-During this speech he appeared much agitated, changed colour, bit his lips, measured the room with hafty fleps, flopped, gazed on me in filence for fome minutes, then muttering fome expressions which I could not distinguish, quitted the apartment, but took the precaution of fastening the door as he went out.

I was no fooner left to myfelf, than I began to cast about for some happy means of escape? In vain did I examine the one soli-

tary window in the room, but found it fecured by grates on the outfide. Wild at the melancholy posture of my affairs, I threw myself into a chair, and gave vent to the grief that oppressed my swoln heart, by a feafonable flood of tears. From this fad indulgence, I was, however, foon roufed by the re-entrance of my infamous jailor, who, after a very long preparatory harangue, acquainted me that I must immediately confent to a union, or be under the necessity of carrying me out of the town, as he was fenfible he could not possibly remain there much longer in fafety. I told him he had already heard my determination, from which I was refolved never to fwerve. But to cut short this disagreeable recital; suffice it to acquaint you, that after intreating my excuse for the seeming harshness of the treatment, a handkerchief was tied round my mouth,

mouth, and the inhuman barbarian, taking me in his arms, placed me in a chaife, and getting in himfelf, the carriage drove off with the utmost velocity. As foon as we got from without the town, he gave liberty to my hands and mouth. I was at a loss to guess whither he designed to conduct me;and begged him to inform me to what enchanted castle he meant to confine his prifoner, or when I might hope for an end to this frolic. However, not to weary your patience with every little minute circumstance, be it sufficient to fay, that at the conclusion of two days we finished our journey at Spa; at which place I was kept under the strictest guard. For three days the infamous wretch used every argument, in the power of language, to prevail on me to confent to a marriage: But staunch to my resolves, I still continued to forswear ever entering into so hate-

ful

ful a connexion!—But here, Maria, I own I feel myself almost incapacitated from proceeding!—My blood freezes with horror!—The tears of agonized recollection start from my dim'd eyes! and my pen would fain refuse the ungrateful task! but as it is the last test of my friendship my Maria will in all probability ever receive from her insulted friend, the dread of anguish shall not affright me.

From the time of finding myself entirely exposed to the machinations of this detested villain, my mind continued in such a distracted state, that my weak frame, unable to support so violent a contest, sunk under the pressure of my afflictions. A sever and destrium seemed for two days to bassle the powers of medicine.—Bless'd state! enviable insensibility!—Why, O why, did frightful recollections.

recollection ever more revisit this tortured breaft?-In short, my brain even now is, I fear, not right!-They tell me, my Maria, that I am married! -- Married! To whom? To Wilmot! Then what is Bentinck ?- Impossible !- Oh Maria, Maria! why does tardy death fo long with-hold. its wished-for aid from an unhappy being; a wretch even in the first bloom of life?-Surely my loved companion, there cannot be truth in fuch a tale? What priest would: dare perform that folemn office, under: fuch dreadful circumftances?-Can fuch as union be valid? - O yes, I apprehend too fatally; and I am doomed to mifery extreme. -- Great God! my frantic thoughts will drive my desperate hands to act some deed of horror !- My dearest Miss Brudnel, could you conceive your Louifa capable of murder?-Nay, start not! these weak hands have

have indeed attempted to wreck vengeance on the monster who thus meanly took advantage of my forlorn condition, to have the marriage ceremony read over!—Gracious Providence! was it possible that an institution, stamped with thy approbation and authority, should be so impiously profaned! and thy just thunder not strike the miscreant to the earth?—But think not, Maria, I will tamely submit to live a willing slave to the humour and caprice of so vile a wretch! for witness, Heaven, I here most solemnly swear, no power on earth shall force me to acknowledge him my husband!

To groan under so mortifying a yoke, with fo iniquitous a monster, and at whose idea our very soul recoils, is no better than legal prostitution! With such opinions as these, to continue under the same abode with him,

would

would be afting in direct violation of all fentiments of virtue !- With fo fixed an averfion it cannot furprize you, when I declare the determination to which I am come, in order to free me from fo miserable a bondage. I am convinced my fortune, small as it is, was his principal inducement to this diabolical contrivance; and having accomplished this, his grand aim, his vigilance will relax; and accordingly I am resolved to seize the first favourable opportunity to make my escape from these vile walls, resolving to fuffer any hardship rather than bear the difgraceful title of his wife.—I am very well aware, that in the opinion of the world, this step will be severely condemned, as my character must have received the most mortal wound, from remaining three weeks under the fame roof with the barbarian. Your amiable mama will also, I fear, think me to blame.

blame, and accord with the world, in supposing my interest demanded my filent and patient acquiescence in my wrongs, because they are without redress; but however we may wish to keep up appearances in the eyes of mankind, yet it is the height of folly to facrifice our own inward tray quillity to the prejudices of an unjust world.

You, my fweet girl, will I know, kindly fympathize in the torture of my mind, and will, I am fure, lament that cruel fate which urges me to convey in these lines a long and perhaps a last adieu!—I go, Maria, where in all likelihood I may never more be heard of.—One comfort I have lest, that let me fall into whatever hands I may, I cannot be worse than I have already been.—Suffer me, however, my much loved friend, to retain a place in your tender remembrance;

and if ever chance should bring my ill-sated life in converse, rescue, I beseech you, my guiltless name from the soul tongue of slander.—Speak of me, my Maria, as I am; nothing extenuate, nor permit my enemies to set down aught in malice!

Adieu, my amiable and much esteemed friend; forget my failings, and remember only that tender affection I bear you.—Recommend me to the prayers of your honoured mother; and as I hope this will prove the last trial of my strength, on this side eternity, accept of it as the last legacy of the

Wretched undone

Louisa

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LETTER LXIV.

Louisa Cavendish to Maria Brudnet.

I CANNOT forego, my careft Maria, that tender impulse of affection which urges me to ease, as much as lyes within my power, those moments of anxious inquietude which the dubious fate of the wretched Louisa, must occasion in your friendly breast.——In compassion, therefore, to the kind regard of my sweet companion, I have come to a determination of yielding her every satisfaction which a further detail of my unfortunate affairs may afford.

My last melancholy lines acquainted you of the design I entertained of privately quitting

quitting the abandoned affaffin of my repose, and feeking shelter from the hospitality of strangers. This scheme of escaping I found difficult to put in execution; and indeed from the amazing vigilance of my betrayer, began to despair of ever succeeding in. - For three days after the date of my letter (which not having had an opportunity of fending before, must unavoidably be the companion of this sheet) my mind was in a continual state of watchful impatience; till, on the fourth morning, 1; rendered desperate by the horrors that engulphed me, I took the resolution of making, before the dawning of the fifth day, some violent efforts to regain my freedom.

On the fable appearance of night, I pretended extreme drowzines, at the same time requesting the house to be kept as quiet as possible.—This order feemed to delight my infamous gaoler, who, no doubt, took it as an omen in his favour; and, willing to show his wonderful eagerness to oblige, commanded the family to retire early to rest, and himself set the example, by taking to his couch at a twilight hour.—Thus far every thing conspired to my wish; but the most hazardous part of the enterprize was yet to come.

Putting on an artificial fleep, I lay profoundly still until the clock had proclaimed the midnight knell; when discovering, from the dead filence which reigned, that all was in fecurity, I gently disengaged from the bed, and equipping myself in a fuit of apparel, which I fortunately found in a closet adjoining my chamber; and, at the same time buckling on a sword which hung in the

room, with caution unlocked my door, and descended the stairs; then, opening a window which led to the street, leaped out.—
Fear gave me strength; and, unmindful of aught but the danger I had escaped, sled with precipitation, indifferent what course I took, being equally ignorant of the town and its inhabitants; however, the direction I had taken, conducted me from the midst of the buildings to the dreary solitude of the country.

Faint, and finking under the fatigue I had undergone, exhausted nature could no longer support itself, and I dropped senseless to the earth; and, from what I have since been able to recollect, must have lost an hour of misery, in tranquil insensibility!—On raising my eye-lids, I cast them wistfully round, in hopes of espying some friendly taper, whose glimmering

glimmering light might guide me to some generous afylum, but none appeared in view. -O, Maria! my horrors at that dreadful instant, are not to be described !- Half wild and frantic at my forlorn and piteous condition, I meditated on felf-destruction!-Twice I unsheathed the fatal instrument of death, which hung by my nerveless side!but twice the hand of Providence with-held the impious stroke !- At length, my heated brain received relief from a gushing torrent of tears, which at that moment iffued down my pallid cheeks!-My foul feemed to gain confidence, as though from fome power divine! and, raising myself on my knees, humbly implored the protection of the Great Omnipotent!-After this act of devotion, I felt my heart lighter; and again endeavoured, through my fuffused eyes, to explore a beaten track which might lead my defence-

less steps to some hospitable gate, not daring to attempt the open road .- At last, from the pale light which proceeded through the filver rays of the moon, I deferred a narrow path which I instantly pursued; not doubting but that it would chickly bring me to the wishedfor haven; but judge my disappointment and chagrin, when, instead of the defired harbour I had fo industriously been in fearch of, to find all my flattering illusions vanished, and my feet at the entrance of a wood. "Ah! unhappy Louifa, cried I, what a deftiny attends thy steps !- Behold thee now a nightly wanderer on the wide heath !-- deftititute of even a truss of hay to lay thy diftracted head upon!-Dispossessed of even hope! the last anchor of the wretched!far from thy country, thy lover, and thy friends!"-Then reflecting, that, in fo fequestered a spot, I might encounter with Vol. III. D fome

fome of those unhappy beings, whose support depends upon the plunder of their fellow-creatures, and whose life is a continual war of blood, my horrors redoubled !-These ideas, my Maria, as you may imagine, freezed every drop of purple within my veins !- I looked around me with fearful apprehension!-Nought could my terrified fenses perceive but the calm majesty of Cynthia, whose waning light diffused, if possible, a deeper horror through the trees!-The gentle breezes which curled among the leaves-the reflection of my own lengthened shadow, were more than my mind could endure, and a cold fweat bedewed my whole frame!

Thus flood the trembling fugitive, irrefolute whether to enter the dreary recess or not, when a violent shower descending, com-

pelled me to advance, in order to preferve myself from the inclemency of the weather. -I had not proceeded far through the wood, when my terror feemed infembly to abate, and my mind to refume fome share of melancholy composure .- I fought the brownest shade, and seating myself under the spreading branches of an aged oak, whose extended arms feemed to offer a fafe retreat, began to contemplate the past unhappy fortunes which had attended new youth .- I recapitulated in my "mind's eye," every transaction of my unfortunate days; examined my heart, to fee in what I had fo greatly transgreffed, to have merited fuch mortifying afflictions!

I found, indeed, I had been guilty of many errors, many follies, and no doubt many fins, but could not recall one action of my life, which could create an uneafy pang at the closing moment of existence!—then again prostrating myself before the throne of Grace, I hembly solicited to be released from this load of anguish, by a blessed translation from my terrestrial trists!—For, O Maria! I selt myself as a poor vessel stranded upon some undiscovered shoal, which, when the whistling wind assailed her, felt each rolling billow more boisterous than the last, till with irresistible violence they overspread her decks, bury every thing beneath them, and dash her all to pieces!

But to proceed; I continued these mournful meditations, until the blushing beauties of Aurora began to diffuse her chearful smiles over all the world; to me alone those smiles were unwelcome.—The glare of day was no longer pleasing to my sight: with the morning

morning my forrows feemed to have fresh rifen, and could not forbear repeating aloud this melancholy invocation to death:

O Death? thou gentleend of human forrows! Still must my weary eye-lids vainly wake In tedious expectation of thy peace! Why stand my thousand thousand doors still open, To take the wretched in, if stern religion Guard every passage, and forbid my entrance?-Lucrece could bleed, and Portia swallow fire. When urg'd with griefs beyond a mortal's fuffrance; But here it must not be !- Think then, Louisa, Think on the facred dictates of thy faith, And let that arm thy virtue, to perform What Cato's daughter durst not !- Live, Louisa; And dare to be unhappy!

·Rowe's Tamerlane, Act IV.

At the conclusion of which words, as I raised my eyes to heaven in fupplication, the fight of a venerable fage, standing by my side, struck my view!-The whitened honours of his head, the filvered beard that hung ma-HARAD BERFOGI'S

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jestic on his aged elest, proclaimed his numbered years.

"My fon, faid this reverend Afcetic, from the desponding strains which have so lately dropped from those youthful lips, some dire assistance to have of ertaken thy steps; but, prithee, inform me, by what strange adventure I have discovered thee in this sequestered spot, where for these many years the foot of mortal (myself excepted) was never known to tread?"

"O! holy father, pardon a wretch whose wandering and uncertain steps, in the lone midnight hour, directed him to this hallowed earth, where dwell wild solitude and you. Here have I all this live-long night enjoyed a full banquet of my ceaseless woe!—here have I feasted that worm of forrow that preys

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upon my heart, and here an all probability shall I end my miserable being!"

" Plainly I do perceive, my fon, from thy distress, that the keen piercing winds of adverfity have already, in despite of thy yet unripened machood, whistled around thy head, and poisoned the fair blossoms of thy vouth with its malignant blafts !- But come, my child, be of good courage, perhaps fome favourable gale may yet arife, which shall fleer thy little bark to the port of tranquillity and joy !- Trust thou in that omniscient Power who will not forfake thee in the hour of calamity !- Lift up thine heart in prayer, repose thou in his strength and mercy, and he will not abandon thee !- Providence, that great and all-wife Pilot of human affairs, may yet convey thee fafe into the land of felicity!-Arife, my fon, and accept the

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feanty offering which my humble dwelling affords. I fee weakened nature flands in need of gentle nourishment and rest!—The best my cell can boast, will I freely bestow on thee, thou child of forrow!"

At the close of which speech the venerable hermit affisted me to rife,—and tenderly supporting me, led me by divers windings to the trunk of an immense tree, within which, by the skilful hand of ingenuity and industry, a secret passage had been contrived, that led to a habitation formed by the rough unpolished singers of nature.—A tremor seized o'er all my limbs, on descending to this subterraneous cavern, which my holy guide perceiving, stopped, and looking on me, cried:—"O! thou child of little faith, what secret dread has taken possession.

fearful foul?—Follow, for fuffer vain apprehension to delude thy finking spirits!"

After which we again proceeded, and foon reached a chamber bewn from the bowels of a rock; in the middle of which folitary apartment was fulpended a lamp, whose glimmering served as a director thro' a small passage, at the extremity of which flood another chamber, but of an afpect more pleasing and comfortable than the last.-Here my conductor desired me to repose; then, trimming his lamp, which lay on a walnut table, he produced, from a chest that was placed in a corner, some dried fweetmeats, fruits, and biscuit; and, with the utmost dexterity, fetting a light to a bundle of flicks, which lay in a kind of fireplace, boiled in an earthen pot some grains of coffee. Believe me, Maria, never did

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your Louisa enjoy to sweet a breakfast -My famished lips received, with grateful thanks, the cordial drop from a wooden spoon and cup, the only kind of ware which this fepulchral habitation afforded .- After I had paid a necessary compliment to his hospitable meal, of which he himself did not partake, my generous entertainer, in the words of mild humanity, counfelled me to endeavour to court, for a few hours, the balmy affiftance of fleep, to recruit my wearied strength. Then kindly spreading a load of straw on the earth, told me it was the all of bed his cell commanded; but bade me to be of good cheer, and feek that rest which my fainting looks convinced him I greatly stood in need of.

To this tender advice I turned not a deaf ear, but inflantly obeyed the friendly prefcription;

fcription .- Long I had not lain, before the fweet poppies of forgetfulness were happily fpread around my humble couch; but, Maria, though it was humble, yet I found it a kind and charitable bed, which fo foon could bring foft content about my pillow; for in a few minutes I was afleep .- In this state of supineness I lay for three hours, a length of peaceful infensibility I had been ignorant of for fixteen nights and days. - On awaking, I found myfelf most wonderfully refreshed; and on looking round, beheld the venerable fage deeply intent on a book which lay open on the table.—A wed by his more than mortal appearance, I kept in perfect stillness for some minutes, fearful of disturbing his heavenly contemplation; during which period I came to the refolution of revealing the real truth of my unhappy fituation to the venerable fire, and imploring his generous protection. I had no fooner

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made this determination, when I role to put it in execution.—The noise I unavoidably made in rising, drew off his notice from the fubical that had before so greatly engrossed his attention, and seeing me advancing towards him, he closed his book.

The venerable ascetic congratulated me on the calm refreshing slumber I had enjoyed, and kindly enquired how I found my state of mind and body; when throwing myself at his feet, I briesly expressed my grateful senfations, and in the moving expressions of distress, implored his farther protection for an unfortunate wretched semale, bereft of kindred, friends and fortune!

I had no fooner made the above difcovery of fex than the holy anchoret began to crofs himfelf.—However, on recovering from

from his momentary surprize, he affished me to rise from my beseeching posture, and entreating me to recollect and compose myself, desired me to proceed, if agreeable, in the relation of my narrative, in which he doubted not there was somewhat extraordinary; at the same instant promising all my desolate condition so earnestly panted for.

Here, my charming friend, I began; and as concifely as my wandering imagination would permit, related every transaction of my ill-fated life, antecedent to my with him in the wood, making known at the fame time the resolution I had formed of separating myself for ever from a world in which I had experienced nothing but disappointment, mortification, and affliction!—

The good recluse at first attempted to turn me from so hasty a resolve; telling me I

was as yet too young to think of cherishing so cynical and improper a determination; that there might yet be many pleasurable days in store for me; nor did he think, that in the sight of Heaven, such a step would be justifiable. He deduced many theoretical as well as practical arguments to dissuade me from my purpose; all which I opposed with the little stock of eloquence I was mistress of; when, at length, seeing me bent in sollowing the impulse of my inclinations, he desisted from using further remonstrances.

In the course of our conversation I could not with-hold expressing a curiosity, what could have induced a person, so formed as he must have been for the endearing delights of society, thus to seclude himself, and lead so sequestered a life; he benevolently, smiling,

smiling, replied, "Your curiofity, my daughter, is, I acknowledge, perfectly natural; and as, perhaps, the relation of my woes may ferve as a temporary oblivion to your own, I will, though it is a painful talk, endeavour to retrace those past scenes of my checquered life, which may tend to convince you, better than the most studied rhetoric, how little confidence is to be placed on outward appearance, or on the promifed joys of this transitory globe. I am sensible the recital will cost me many bitter pangs; and that it will probe my wounds to the quick; but those pangs will be foothed by the reflection, that I am diverting your attention from the melancholy contemplation of felfmifery, to the far nobler, but less acute anguish of sympathizing in the misfortunes of another. Nay, indeed, probing of this nature is frequently necessary, as it often roufes

rouses us to a due sense of the dignity and importance of our being, which, affisted by the gentle and salutary wing of time, may, though a seeming desperate remedy, in due season bring the patient to a state of stoical composure.

Before I attempt my forrowful detail, however, we will endeavour to fortify our minds against all moving relations, by taking some necessary refreshment. My board smokes not with the delicacies of creation—the four legged animals of the green pastures are free to rove uncontroused by me—the sweet harmonizing inhabitants of the airy regions warble their tuneful notes unmolested by these hands—the bountiful produce of the earth supplies my thristy board with the requisites of life;—a spring whose meandering current winds its course along

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the borders of this wood, generously yields a fweet and cooling beverage; and from a little cultivated spot of earth, the labour of these aged hands, that show he hack of this my humble cave, I bring whatever my appetite demands."

At the conclusion of these words, the reverend father arose to prepare his frugal food, leaving me to my own melancholy retrospects; but wishing to dissipate these painful reslections, I have employed the sew minutes of his absence, by adding to my letter, although I cannot at present devise the means by which it can ever arrive to my friend—But as my generous and hospitable protector has prepared our repast, I will lay aside my pen till to-morrow. The good hermit having promised, this evening, to indulge me with reciting the heads of

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his life; and not doubting but it will prove both entertaining and inftructive, I will, with his permission, transcribe it for your perusal. —Till then, adieu.

In Continuation.

Good Heavens, my Maria! how wonderful are the workings of Providence!—Never, fure, was aftonishment equal to your Louisa's, on discovering the venerable sage to be no other than Mr. Levison, the father of the unfortunate Laura. You may remember the many tears it cost us last winter, on reading her melancholy history. But as you will doubtless be desirous of learning the particulars, which could induce this once obdurate father, to bid an eternal renunciation to the world, I will endeavour to relate the sequel of his story as nearly in his own expressions as my memory will permit.

" Words,

"Words, my dear child, cried this unhappy man, "would but faintly paint the torturing stings that pierced my heart on the death of my injured daughter.—I felt myself the barbarous executioner of my only child!—and, as such, found no balm capable of asswaging, the acute anguish of my wounds.

"With the most bitter and agonizing reflections, I attended the remains of the illfated pair to their cold and tranquil repofitory; and too late lamented, that inflexibility which had thus untimely funk to earth
the fairest blossoms of creation. To encrease the measure of my misery, Mrs.
Levison, unable to support the upbraiding
recollections, which incessantly obtruded
on her mind, in less than a fortnight followed the spirit of her angel daughter bleaving

leaving me bereft of even the shadow of comfort.—I longed impatiently for that moment of endless quiet which would unite me to them; and at the same time free me from my load of unavailing forrow.—It was a refuge, however, which I did not dare of myself to sly to.—Alas! my affrighted conscience forbade it.

"The innocent Cecilia, at every fight, renewed my agony, by recalling to my remembrance the treasure I had lost in her departed mother!—Her infant caresses brought my angelic Laura to my thoughts, when at the same tender age!—and, instead of reaping any consolation from the society of my beauteous grandchild, her presence but redoubled my affliction!—The light of day became irksome to me—perpetual night was all my soul eagerly sought;—and, at length,

length, wearied of my being, and of a country which fo continually reminded me of my misfortunes, I took the resolution of trying what effect the change of scene and climate would have on my feelings: accordingly, within two months after this diffolution, I bade adieu to England. On my arrival at Spa, (to which place I gave the preference, having an intimate acquaintance fettled in that town;) I made frequent excursions alone about the adjacent country. In one of thefe, chance directed me hither. The folitude of the spot delighted me; and many days did I spend here in mournful contemplation.

"My friend, at last, grew alarmed at my frequent and long absences; and with a warmth of tender solicitude sollowed me unperceived on my next visit hither. On seeing

feeing me enter the wood, he joined me. I was greatly furprized at his appearance being the first time I had, as yet, feen creature within its confines. He faw my aftonishment; and instantly relieved my amaze, by informing me of the motive which had induced him to follow me;and, at the fame time, acquainted me that he believed I might frequent this wood for years, unmolefted, as there was not an inhabitant within many miles would enter it recess, having an idea of its being haunted But, continued he, as we are here, I will show you a curiofity of nature and art, which was discovered to me about fix month! fince, by father Alonza Gonzaga, monk of the order of Saint Austin. Saying which, he conducted me to this cavern. " Here," continued my friend, " was concealed, for some years, the riches belonging to the Jefuits' Jesuits' college, when they were expelled St. Omer's; and who, themselves, artfully poisoned the minds of the commonalty with the notion of spectres and goblins inhabiting this wood, to preserve from invasion their own property."

- "The gloom which here feemed to reign in awful majefty, with the choruffes of owls, ravens, and hawks, appeared to me the fit accompaniments to woes like mine, and fuitable to the despairing habit of my soul.
- "My friend, in vain, endeavoured to dispel the melancholy which so perpetually guarded the avenues of my heart; and finally concluding the disease too deeply rooted ever to be eradicated, and observing that solitude alone administered any relief to my afflictions, by permitting me the free indulgence

dulgence of my grief, at length yielded to a propofal I had urgently made on our return from the wood, that he would humanely connive with me in propagating a report of my death; that by feeluding myfelf and miseries from the world, and dedicating the remanent part of my wretched existence to the fervice of my Creator, I might, in a degree, by prayer and penance expiate my past finful life. Ambition, that quickfand to my repose, could, in this sequestered spot, never find entrance; the calm retirement, would, by allowing me room for reflection, teach me a more perfect knowledge of myfelf, and by that means affift my weak efforts in the grand work of reformation,

"All my temporal concerns were foon adjuted. The daughter of my Laura will inherit those possessions which I so cruelly with-

with-held in the hour of penury from her parents; and, O! may the great God not visit my fins on her lovely head, by fuffering the immense wealth she will be mistress of, to prove to her as great a curse as it has proved to her grandfire!"-Here the tears of penitence bedewed his venerable cheeks. " My will," proceeded he, "has left her to the tender guardianship of the sympathizing friends of her departed father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. York, late Mifs Byng; and in case of their demise, Miss Sidney is requested to supply the place of parent to the offspring of the luckless couple. Thus having fettled my affairs, and prepared my fubterraneous abode for my reception, nothing remained but how to contrive the deception of my diffolution. At length, the worthy monk who had first disclosed the secret of the cave to my friend, and who WOL. III. E had

had on my first arrival been introduced to me, and to whose friendly counsel and asfistance I was much indebted, took upon himself the whole management. He proposed that, accompanied by my friend and himself, we should set off from Spa, as with an intention of vifiting his abbey; and, that when I had been absent about a week, there should accounts be spread of my having been fuddenly taken ill; after which it would be no difficult matter to circulate a flory of my death, which might be confirmed by a mock funeral: having, fince my knowledge of the excellent monk, been convinced of the purity of the Romish faith, and a few days previous to my leaving Spa, having also been admitted into the bosom of mother church, there would be no necessity to carry my supposed remains to England. Thus every thing being concluded

cluded upon, and fuccess crowning the scheme as I could wish, I retired hither to enjoy the luxury of reflection. It is now three years fance I have been an inhabitant of this solitude; during which time I have never beheld the face of a human being, except the holy father, and my friend, whom I have limited to quarterly visits.

"My only recreation confifts in contemplating a full-length piece of my unfortunate daughter, and before which I spend many fadly pleasing hours. After having paid my devotions to the Supreme, and quaffed my thirst from the refreshing fountains of nature, I retire to this mournful employment; I gaze on the lifeless canvas until pregnant imagination nearly realizes it into a living form. After two or three hours thus dedicated, I quit the solution of my unfortunation of mature, I gaze on the lifeless canvas until pregnant imagination nearly realizes it into a living form. After two or three hours thus dedicated, I quit the solution chamber,

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and if the weather permit, go forth among my leafy companions, and beguile the moments of filence with the converse of some departed author; but if the climate prove unfavourable, I pass those hours within my rocky cell .- The inward fatisfaction, the tranquil moments I here enjoy, give me a foretaste of a bleffed futurity, which I thankfully feel is not far distant. The worm of forrow which has for fo long a time preyed on my vitals; and which, though a flow, is yet a fure fore-runner of the grave, has, for fome time past, warned my heart of its approaching diffolution. My firength daily decreases—the sun of life is nearly set—a few months, nay, perhaps weeks, and this weary fabric shall crumble into its primitive nothingness. My grave is already prepared-dug by these weakened hands-my coffin stands ready to receive its earthly load.

All, all is in a joyful readiness, and waits only for the last final fummons."-Here the venerable hermit raifed his dim'd eyes to heaven, as supplicating a speedy release .-My tears flowed apace-my voice, for fome feconds, refused to give my wishes birtha mournful filence enfued-and was interrupted by nought but the distant falling of a cascade, and the echoing murmurs of fighs which escaped from the tortured bosom of recollection. Recovering, however, from our melancholy stupification, I endeavoured, though myself in need of consolation, to pour the oil of comfort and tender fympathy into the bofom of my reverend companion. The relation of his afflictions had caused the wounds, as yet scarce skinned over, to bleed afresh. O, Maria! how and we reprobate the name of this wretched man !-but who, alas! now calls for mild

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humanity:-his bosom is the feat of perpetual remorfe-his hoary eye-lids awake to every vigil-his thoughts one fad retrospect of unceafing grief!-Compaffionate his woes, my love, and when you weep over the miferies of your Louisa, forget not to drop one tear to the forrows of the repentant father .- I have beheld, my friend, the chamber appropriated to the fad scene of penitential regret. Mr. Levison kindly gratified my eyes with a fight of the portrait of his lovely Laura. The rocky chamber in which it is placed is hung with black !- A number of lamps burn perpetually around the. frameat the feet of which stands the simple shell defigned as the last mansion of this once haughty imperious man .- In one corner is dug the peaceful grave, ready to receive the now humble penitent. Believe me, Maria, I could with difficulty support the dismal fpectacle;

fpectacle, and with furcharged heart hashily withdrew. The picture too is drawn in the most beautiful attitude—the piece represents her sleeping on a bank—a fawn sporting at her seet; an animal of which, when the happy inmate of her father's house, she was particularly fond.—This picture was, it seems, taken about a twelvemonth before her marriage with Mr. Montague; and which Mr. Levison had carried over from England with himself.

But having now exhausted the little remains of my strength, in this long epistle, must delay any further converse for the present, and endeavour to recruit tired nature by the benign influence of sleep.

In Continuation.

I am just returned, my dear Maria, from a serious conversation with the unhappy Mr. Levison, who has been again using all the arguments of wildom, religion, and experience, to dissuade your Louisa from her wish of folitude. - But, at length, my dearest girl, my forrows have prevailed over his reasons, and he has kindly promifed to introduce me to the protection of father Alonza .- I need not tell you, my defign is to conceal myfelf in some sequestered monastery, where I may happily escape the persecution of the abandoned Wilmot. Would to Heaven I could at once receive the holy vows!-but that is now rendered impossible. - However, I feel I shall soon be released from all my troubles. -But do not, I befeech you, my amiable Maria,

Maria, fuffer my cruel deftiny to affect your heart too fenfibly, but confider my death as the only balm of anguish like mine.

I was about to name a certain person-But, alas!-I dare not trust my weak mind on that tender theme. - Ill-fated attachment! -O, Maria! should chance ever throw the injured youth in your fociety, foothe, my fweet love, his griefs !- Affift the mellowing hand of Time to wipe away the bitter tears of recollection !- You will find him, Maria, every way deferving the tender folicitude of friendship. However, I cannot enlarge on this moving topic; it requires more refolution than your friend dare boast-Permit me, therefore, to conclude this long packet, which I shall request Mr. Levison's friend, when he pays his next visit, to forward to you. Allow me, too, the consolation

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of

of now and then a few lines from your amiable pen. Your letters, my love, will prove the most agreeable solace to my woes that I can receive on this side eternity.—Favour me to direct by the name of Damer, under cover, to the reverend father Alonza Gonzaga, monk of the order of St. Austin.—Once more adieu, and remember, with affection, your unfortunate

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LETTER LXV.

Mr. Woolerton to Mr. Tomlinson.

Bruffels.

AM preparing, Jack, to attend an invitation from that little virago Charlotte.—
But how the devil the jade found out my return hither, is wonderful!—I have been arrived in this city but a couple of days; and already is it known—The damned confequence of being a man of intrigue and fashion!—For, faith, Jack, the part of a man of fashion I have actually topped fince my residence here; and as to the former, that my boy, I have been from youth to manhood;—and pretty successful too, let me

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tell you :- For, curse me, Tomlinson, if I have not always found the little fimpletons as ready to believe, as myself to deceivemy angel Louisa excepted.—She is, indeed, an exception to the general rule-heighho!-Faith, a figh that might have thawed even the bosom of feventy !- But hold, a notable thought has this moment occurred -May not the innocent Cavendish, think you, Jack, have returned to the protection of her detestable aunt?-and the envious spiteful Charlotte, from a spirit of revenge deliver the little vixen to my arms !- Nothing very improbable in this; ha, Jack?-Faith, there is extacy in the thought!-It must, it shall be so .- Fly away, ye lazy minutes !-- O, Jack! where could have been my profound comprehension not sooner to have discovered this palpable truth?-For where elfe could the pretty turtle have concealed cealed its self from the prying eyes of the searching Woolerton?—For, upon my soul, Jack, I have left no corner of the city or its environs unexplored; and had not the malice of the envenomed Thompson; (you see I allow not a doubt to arise in opposition to my hopes), saved me a further enquiry, I designed to have embraced the first opportunity of returning to England, in order to set some of my emissaries at work, to discover the asylum of my fair run-away.—But nobly am I prevented the voyage a few hours, and the haughty beauty will be mine!—O, calum in terra!—I can proceed no further.—Thine,

THOMAS WOOLERTON?

LETTER LXVI.

Sir Charles Bentinck, Bart, to Edward
Sedley, Esq.

Bruffels.

DEAR SEDLEY,

YOU will undoubtedly be aftonished at the date of this sheet, so contrary to the intentions expressed in my last letter; but an event of a most shocking nature has detained me in this city longer than I imagined.—
The infamous Woolerton and Charlotte are now no more! The wretched man has fallen a victim to the rage of slighted love, and the desperate girl to the violence of her own disposition!—Never did I behold so melancho-

ly a speciacle as that unfortunate wretch, Woolerton, exhibited in those his last moments; conscious of his approaching dissolution, and yet trembling to meet the aweful summons!

My epiftle of the 14th inftant acquainted you of the discovery which had been made to me by Mrs. Thompson, and at the same time of the melancholy and deplorable situation of the distracted Charlotte, and the repentant state of the mother.

delso led you of all profeed of felloir, im-

Yesterday, on my return from a fruitless search after my injured Louisa, I found a letter waiting my arrival. My valet informed me the person who had brought it had been several times since, enquiring when my return was expected, and appeared greatly disappointed at my absence.—v-On opening

opening the paper, to my aftonishment I found it came from that bitter foe to my repose, Mrs. Thompson; it contained the following lines:

To Sir CHARLES BENTINCK, Bart.

- "Sinking under the accumulated miseries of guilt and imprudence, the wretched fister of Captain Cavendish ventures to solicit the interference of Sir Charles Bentinck.
- "I dare not, Sir, who have fo cruelly despoiled you of all prospect of felicity, implore in my own name, your generous assistance: But permit me, in the name of that brother so deservedly dear to your remembrance, to entreat your kind compassion!
- "Alas! Sir Charles, the wrongs done yourself and your Louisa, are now amply revenged!

venged!—The justice of offended Heaven has at length overtaken the wretched criminal.—But the story is too long;—the tale too shocking for my trembling hand to relate!—The bearer will conduct you to the miserable scene of anguish! hasten, therefore, for the sake of that God whose mercy the best of us so greatly stands in need of, to suffil my earnest entreaty; you will not, I trust, resuse this last petition of

The wretched

JANE THOMPSON."

No address being subjoined to this paper, I could not obey the summons so immediately as my regard to the memory of my late excellent guardian would have impelled me.—However, I determined to wait at home,

home, in expectation of the meffenger's re-

About four o'clock he came; the impatience the man appeared to be under permited me not to make any enquiries into the cause of the calamity which the letter seemed to hint at; but, according to the request of my conductor, prepared to accompany him to this dreadful abode of human mifery !-But, great God, Sedley! what tongue can paint my inconceivable horror and amazement, at perceiving my companion directing his course towards the common gaol. I started!-The fellow observing it, faid in French,-" This Sir, is nothing to the fight you will shortly behold!-Expect to view the most shocking spectacle that ever eyes beheld!-But excuse me, you are now arrived at the end of your journey!"---He then conducted conducted me through a narrow passage, at the end of which we were met by the turnkey, who led us through several dark entries, before we reached the dismal apartment which contained the guilty mother and daughter!

On my entrance I found the wretched Miss Thompson just expired, and the weeping mother absorbed in all the bitterness of forrow!——I stood for some moments contemplating in silent horror, the unhappy scene before me!

Image to yourfelf, Sedley, a chamber whose smoaked and disfigured walls portrayed but too faithfully, I doubt, the sad employment of its various inhabitants!—A single window, whose cobweb furniture excluded the chearing rays of Phœbus, and admitted

admitted just light enough to discover the terrific horrors and desolation which pervaded this dreary mansion!——A walnut-tree bedstead, worm-eaten, and devoid of hangings—on that a mattress, ragged and filthy, designed as the sad lodgment for the weary limbs of many a distracted wretch, now covered by the remains of the only niece of the best and most virtuous of men!—This once-loved sister standing in mute grief by the side of her departed daughter, supporting her throbbing head against a crazy tester!

This, my Edward, was the scene which presented itself to my view, on my entrance into this loathsome apartment, the horror of which struck my soul with the deepest commisseration; at last, endeavouring to stille all selfish retrospects, and invoking the spirit

of the excellent Cavendish, to back my weak efforts to discharge my duty as a man and as a Christian, I advanced towards the overwhelmed and afflicted parent, and befought her to mitigate her forrow!-My voice awakened her from her lethargy of woe; and clasping her hands in all the tokens of despair, cried, "She is gone! -Behold there, my poor unfortunate child!-See where she lies, bereft of life! -O! Sir Charles, Sir Charles! when shall I know peace! when shall the weary pilgrim be at rest!"--But I will not, Sedley, trouble you with all that passed on the melancholy occasion, but proceed with the fequel.

After having prevailed with the mother to quit the moving spechacle, and given

proper orders for the interment of the body, I returned home greatly discomposed at the scene I had that evening witnessed. The next morning I waited again on Mrs. Thompson, and sound her much more reconciled to her condition than I could have expected, and which gave me an opportunity of enquiring into the particulars that could have brought them into the dreadful duageon I yesterday beheld her in.

She told me that the unhappy Charlotte, contrary to all expectations, had recovered, foon after I faw her, the use of her intellects, but continued very weak and low;—that one morning her daughter, standing at the window, imagined she saw Woolerton cross the way; she immediately gave orders for him to be traced, and found, too truly, that her eyes had not deceived her.—Inexprefsibly

fbly great was her wrath on this discovery, and the determined to way-lay him, and to his face upbraid him with his perfidy—then again she changed her mind, and would write whim, to entreat his presence but for halfin hour .- Accordingly fhe did fo, and had the letter dispatched .- The villain, not fuspeding any personal danger, promised to obey the invitation.—Accordingly, at the appointed hour, he made his appearance.-Charlotte requested her mother to remain in the next room, and permit her a free and uninterrupted converfation with the perjured wretch. - Mrs. Thompson fays, that a thin partition only dividing the two apartments, she could hear distinctly every thing that paffed :- That Woolerton and her daughter conversed for some time, with great feeming calmness, when at length Charlotte demanded whether he would not fulfil his engageengagements to her.—To which he replied, "That he had neither the inclination or ability fo to do;" upon which her daughter, in a feeming rage arofe, and, half-choaked with paffion, cried, "Then, despicable monther, receive the reward of thy perfidy, from the hands of the injured Charlotte!"

Mrs. Thompson said, "That on hearing the conclusion of this speech, she attempted to enter, but sound the door sastened; and before she could let herself in at the other, the desperate girl had not only stabbed Woolerton, but had swallowed the contents of a phial prepared for the purpose!"—So you may see, Sedley, this horrid deed was premeditated, and not the satal effects of a momentary phrenzy.—What I have already written, will account for my finding the mo-

ther and daughter in the already-described miserable situation.

Mrs. Thompson continued-" Now, Sir Charles, exert that generofity and humanity to eminently conspicuous in your character. -Forget the barbarous affaffin of your joys, and behold in the dying Woolerton, only a miserable fellow-creature!-He has not, I fear, many hours longer to be a burthen to the world; but yet is defirous of imploring, before his fummons to the tremendous audit of his offended Maker, the pardon of yourfelf and doubly-injured Louisa!-The latter there is no hopes of his procuring, before it is too late; but in your noble forgiveness, the expiring penitent will receive a dawn of comfort.—As to myfelf, Sir, fo conscious am I of the wrongs I have been guilty of towards you, that I will not prefume to fue VOL. III. for

for your pardon, until a length of repentance shall in a degree have expiated my crimes!—I wait but to fulfil the last office to the wretched accomplice of my guilt, particularly as the unhappy man received from my daughter his death-wound!"

The poniard, it appears, must have been struck with violence.—Poor unfortunate girl!—Ah, Sedley! to what unwarrantable lengths does passion hurry its votaries?—How carefully ought we to guard against its first invasions, and how severely reprimand the approaches of it in our offspring?—May the sate of this wretched woman be a useful lesson to youth in general, but, above all, to that sex whose greatest charm is weakness; and let the lovely fair reslect, that a deviation from virtue is seldom retrieved.—The soul insensibly loses its purity, and by a gradual progression

progression becomes hardened in vice, till at length it starts at no crime, though of ever so black a die. Of all profligates, surely none is so horrible to humanity as one under a semale mould.—Should Heaven blets me, my Sedley, with children, with what tatchful solicitude should I guard over their young hearts; and by timely weeding and clearing the breast of all those this sand briars, which suffered to remain unexpunged, in due period, choak up all the noble principles of the human heart, and render us a disgrace to our species!—But pardon this digression.

I need not tell you, Sedley, that forgetful of low-born revenge, I eagerly haftened to gratify the prayers of the murdered Woolerton!—On entering the chamber of hovering death, my ears were fruck with

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the pathetic exclamation of the dying fin-

Mrs. Thompson advanced to the bedfid, and acquainted the miserable being of my approach.-His ebbing spirits-seemed to regain new vigour on this information; for endeavouring to raise himself in his bed, he exclaimed, with energy:-" Thank God! thank God! the wretched Woolerton will die in peace !- O! bring me, bring me near him!"-On this I drew his curtain afide.-The fight of me appeared to be too much for him; for, covering his eyes with his hands, he cried, "O! hide me, hide me from the light of virtue !- Open, thou patient earth, and enclose me within thy friendly bosom! -O where can the wicked find reft?-No peace in heaven or earth for the finful!"

I attempted

I attempted to speak comfort to the defooding man, and tried to soothe his soul into serenity.

Alas! Sir Charles, returned the penitent wretch, all efforts to give me consolation must be vain !- I feel now, too late, the bad effects of my mif-spent life!-Had I virtuously exerted those talents I derived from nature and education, I might long ere this have rendered myfelf independent, and perhaps conspicuous in the world; and, like a young oak, which being firmly rooted in its kindred foil, gradually raises up its lofty head, expands its leafy arms, projects a noble shade, and towers the glory of the plain; whereas I am, after a viciffitude of difappointments, dangers, and fatigues, reduced to mifery, to shame, and death, aggravated by a conscious as of

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The entrance of the furgeon interrupted this his felf-accufation!—During the dreffing of his wound he fainted twice!—I took that opportunity of enquiring whether there were any hopes of his recovery; and was fenfibly shocked at learning, that if he beheld the dawning of the next morning, it would be as much as we could possibly expect; for that nature was entirely exhausted; and as repose was recommended, and the poor creature seemed himself inclined to seek it, I retired for the present, but lest not the house, lest he should again solicit my presence.

It was fortunate that fuch a thought occurred to me, for in about an hour the wretched man awoke in the most horrible condition, calling with anxiety upon my name.—
"Save me! fave me! (cried the terrified wretch),

wretch), See! see! where the poor suffering Louisa dies!—Look!—O Charlotte!—and must I indeed sink into that bottomless pit?

—Is there no redemption?

I took his hand, "Compose yourself, Mr. Woolerton, and recommend your foul to mercy. '- For by this time, Sedley, his eyes were fixed .- The glass of death had deadened his fight; -the stroke of fate seemed sufpended with impatience by the gloomy tyrant!—The facrament was proposed to him, but the mention of it nearly threw him into the dreaded eternity !- The folemn preparation carried with it too near a view of the grave, and that was a prospect he wished still to flatter himself with being yet distant, in direct contradiction to every mortal symptom; for turning his half-closed eye-lids towards me, he cried, " Sir Charles, it is a

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hard

hard thing to die, when we have lived fo very finful a life; and can I receive no hopes of a reprieve!—not one fhort year!—not one fingle month!—O no!—I feel it here! Hell has already taken possession of my heart!"—And then again the unhappy man began to rave, in which state he continued till midnight, when he expired, in a condition not to be imagined, and still less to be described!

O Sedley! what a prospect was the grave to the miserable Woolerton!—How terrifying the approaches of death to a guilty confcience!—Nothing surely can be more edifying than a death-bed scene, to the human understanding; but may I never again witness a similar horrible exit!—This unhappy man expired, a prey to all the horrors of a guilty conscience!—Too late sensible of

the ruinous steps which he had been pursuing, and only began to acknowledge the erroneous path he had trod, when he felt himself evertaken by the eternal justice of Heaven!—tottering on the edge of eternity, without one friendly ray of comfort to chear his benighed soul, or give him a hope of mercy or redemption, from the terrible abyss of endless misery, which his past abandoned life so fatally presaged.—

I broke off rather abruptly just now, to peruse a letter from you, which the post this moment brought, and cannot withstand saying a few words upon the contents before I close this sheet.

Upon my foul, Sedley, I am aftonished at the blindness of your proceedings.—
You a lover!—No!—Prithee do not, Edward, profane the noblest of passions, by

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comparing thy own fantastic fancies to it .-Were you to come under that denomination, think you, that you could thus coolly talk of trials and eternal adieus?-Believe me Sedley, you are either infenfible to the powerful force of Cupid, or are acting derogatory to all principles of honour.—It is cruel, it is inhuman, to think of putting the girl's affection to the test .- She has already given you a most convincing proof of her regard, by preferring you to a title and noble fortune; what more ought you to defire?-There is no trial, in my opinion, which you can put Miss Brudnel to, that will not entirely frustrate all hopes of an union with her. An infult offered to her virtue, as a woman of delicacy, fhe cannot, nay ought not, to pardon, much less marry the man who was capable of thinking fo meanly of her.

As to playing off the character of a male coquet, I will not even for a moment harbour fo contemptible an opinion of you.-What, then can be your schemes?—for my part, I am unable to divine. — I fear, Sedley, you will sport around the flame, until the tender wings of felicity shall be finged, and, like the thoughtless moth, dream not of danger, till the fmarting pain arifing from thy imprudence, will have taught thee the folly of thy conduct--Beware, therefore, my dear Edward, how you trifle with your own happiness and that of an amiable woman!or how you wound the gentle breast of the innocent Maria. - Do not fuffer chimerical ideas to rob you of every future prospect of blifs!

If your heart really feels that warmth of tenderness for Miss Brudnel, your letters ex-

press, hesitate not a moment to ensure for life the possession of the greatest jewel on earth—the love of a truly virtuous woman!
—Reslect calmly on your designs, before you permit yourself to put them in execution, and let your next epistle, my dear Sedley, be written in a different strain from your last.

I have myfelf experienced fo feverely the pangs of an ill-fated affection, that it renders me particularly folicitous to warn fo effeemed a friend as yourfelf from all difappointments of the tender kind.—Your heart is naturally generous, and requires only a few prejudices removed (originating from an acquaintance with the more libertine part of the fair fex) to stamp you one of the worthiest fellows in the kingdom,

and an ornament to mankind!—Though, in spite of every soible, you will ever retain the first place in the

Friendship of.

CHARLES BENTINCK.

LET.

LETTER LXVII.

Miss Brudnel to her Friend, under Cover to the Reverend Alonza Gonzaga, Monk of ______.

Brudnet Place.

O MY fuffering!—my angelic Louisa!—what softened language can I find to soothe woes like thine?—Alas! my heart bleeds for thy wrongs; my tears have nearly effaced the characters of your dreadful packet.

And have I, your affectionate Maria, been tasting all the joys of life and love, while my angel friend has been a prey to the most profligate of wretches!——Inhuman Wilmot! could nothing move thy barbarous nature?—

nature?-No; thy heart must have been nurfed in fome tyger's den .- But, oh! my love, do not tamely suffer the ravisher to glory in his villany; -but return to England, the land of justice, and affert your right. Permit not a false timidity to overcloud all future hopes of blifs .- You must not, shall not die!-No! I, your tender Maria, will dispute the precious prize with the grim tyrant.-Talk not then, thus, difmally—triumph over the wayward frowns of malicious fortune-fly to the protecting wing of my mother-fhe will fupply the place of every natural relation—she will be father, mother, brother, all, to my fweet Louisa !- Grant, my dearest, injured girl, the prayers of your sympathizing friend !-The villain dare not molest my sweet love under so respectable a roof.-Nay, your Maria will herfelf crofs the channel to con-

vey my charming friend to her native foil. -O! do not deny me the dear delight of once more embracing the fifter of my heart! -Refuse not my urgent entreaty.-Could you conceive the pangs I have endured fince the receipt of your piercing letters, your gentle breast could not withstand my tender folicitations. Do not, I befeech you, my Louisa, permit the weight of calamity which at this period presses on your youth, and throws the deepest cloud over your mind, to hood-wink your better judgment. But, confider, my fweet girl, how ungrateful it will be in you, on whom Heaven has fo lavishly bestowed an understanding fo far above your years, to fuffer a disappointment, however severe, to make you forget what is due to fociety and yourfelf. Juffice calls loudly for the punishment of the inhuman murderer of your peace; and reflect,

my Louisa, when the full-blown blossoms of youth shall have fallen beneath the all-potent fcythe of Time, how commendable, and how grateful will be that fecret pride which shall whisper-Afflictions have been heaped on my younger years; the plough of disappointment has thrown up furrows of diffress upon every feature; my heart has been depreffed by the most barbarous treatment! but all these cruel shocks has Providence enabled me to baffle; and I can now glory in faying, that by repelling those foes to my repose, with a manly fortitude, I have fulfilled my duty in the most trying situations .- Yes, my love, you are now called upon to stand forth the champion for our fex's freedom of choice. Let not then my friend's refolution forfake her in the arduous hour. Louisa, listen I implore you, listen to my friendly counsel-my mother, too, joins in the request.

quest. You once flattered her, (the dear lady bids me tell you) with the endearing appellation of parent,—and sweetly bade her use the kind freedom of one.—The above advice, then, is her's, my lovely girl, conveyed through the medium of my quill.

But while I continue thus fcribbling, my meffenger waits, who is in readiness to set off express with this to——. Let, therefore, my charming friend, one line convey your affent to my proposition, and thy Maria shall hasten, accompanied by her indulgent parent, to conduct my Louisa to the arms of her protecting country.—Adieu: as you value my friendship, comply with the wishes of your sympathizing,

MARIA BRUDNEL.

LETTER LXVIII.

Miss Cavendish to Miss Brudnel.

Convent.

THE date of this, my amiable, and affectionate Maria, would, without further announcing, inform you, that your Louisa has parted, she fears, for ever, from the unhappy Mr. Levison!—A few days after the sealing of my melancholy packet, of the 10th inst. my venerable preserver was agreeably surprized by a visit from the pious Abbé, on an earlier day than usual. According to his friendly promise, he introduced your friend and her unlucky adventures to his knowledge.—The excellent Religious,

ligious, after having paid the tribute of fympathy to my misfortunes, and urged those persuasive doctrines, which the holy writings teach us, to assume the poignancy of my afflictions; humanely promised to take me under his patronage, and place me in security, within the peaceful enclosure of a conventual life.

I felt very confiderable pain at parting with the venerable and generous entertainer. The wifest counsels dropped from his trembling lips, as he bestowed on me the parting benediction. He mingled his tears with mine, as the final adieu died on our tongues. My friend, I selt for the resigned and humble Ascetic, the filial tenderness of affection. His gentle, mild, and engaging deportment, ornamented with an understanding finely cultivated, joined to a thorough experience

of life and manners, had rendered his fociety fo beneficial and pleasing to my mind, that I fenfibly regretted the necessity which commanded a feparation .-- O my Maria! judge the fweet fenfations I experienced in the kind carreffes of this worthy man: they recalled to my mind the indulgent fondness of my dearest father!-they caused the briny drops of recollection to fream afresh. -My heart, fo long a stranger to the fostering affection of maternal tenderness, felt, with redoubled fatisfaction, those marks of paternal regard lavished on me by this unfortunate recluse. In me, the excellent fage thought he could trace fome lineaments of his departed Laura!-My esteem and love encreased each day; and was flattered by a mutual return on my preferver's part. -But, alas! my Maria, why do I indulge my pen in this melancholy pleasure, when

when it will but ferve to augment my af. fliction for the unwished-for separation!-Death however, would all in probability have shortly performed that unwelcome office .-He has not long, I am convinced, to remain an inhabitant of this tearful globethe mortal blow has long been ftruck !-The willing spirit will quickly take its slight to those realms of endless joy, where unfading wreaths of felicity await to crown the weary pilgrim; perhaps too-but I will not again wound the fympathizing bosom of friendship, by the repetition of what I hope. My ardent wishes cannot be attained, I am convinced, but at the expence of my Maria's fenfibility. ---

I was interrupted in the progress of my dismal reflections, by the arrival of my amiable Miss Brudnel's most affectionate letter.

Alas! my sweet girl, how severely am I

mortified at being under the necessity of rejecting your friendly offers; but, really, my Maria, there is a fomething fo very indelicate in a young woman's appearing in a public court of justice; though, in a cause wherein her tranquillity is ever fo nearly concerned, that must, in my opinion, require an amazing effrontery. Your admirable mother, my love, is probably not aware of the many inconveniencies attending fuch an appearance. How think you, my friend, your Louisa could stand the cross examination of a man whose object would be to confound and perplex her. The attempted witticisms of the furrounding multitudethe daily canvaffings of the feveral papers -the tea-table criticisms-in short, to become the public talk and gaze of fools.-These, my Miss Brudnel, are the mortifying confequences which would await an appeal

to the laws of my country. Therefore, do not, my dearest girl, in pity, do not press the fuit again. Indeed, indeed, I cannot confert to the propofal: neither think of again croffing the ocean on my account, as in the desperate state of my offairs, it would be madness to venture a return to England. I thank you, fincerely, for the generous offer; it was my Maria's felf!-O! what a balm is such an exalted friendship to the wretched!-How foothing is the language of tenderness, when flowing from the pen of fincerity!-What a fweet confolation in the dying hour, to reflect that we poffels (that greatest of all earthly bleffings) a difinterested friend, to bedew the memory of our wrongs with the melting drop of affection. It shields our name from the invidious tongue of flander; to keep in gentle remembrance our virtues, and to bury in oblivion our er-

rors.-Believe me, I am truly grateful to Heaven for its bounty in this respect; for in your amiable regard is verified all that our poets feign. - Poor Sir Charles! his foul too glowed with its facred ardour-with a mind formed of the most refined and exquisite fenfibility, what a world of disappointment has he had to fullain !- Maria, when I fit. down in my folitary apartment, and renew the wonderful chain of events which have for fatally conspired to my undoing; and reflect that they have all originated from the baneful effects of an epiftle, difguifed under the luring colours of friendship, and with what dexterous art the anonymist, if I may be allowed the term, threw the facred veil over the infamous invention, I feel my foul shudder at the depravity of human nature. But away with these melancholy reflections, which can neither amend the heart of mar, VOL. III. G nor

nor diminish my own breast-felt anguish, but, on the contrary, serve but to imbitter the small remanent of my unfortunate days. Therefore, for the present, adieu.—My next shall contain a sketch of my new habitation and its inhabitants.

Remember me with grateful respect and affection, to our dear mother!—And receive all that tenderness and esteem, which my pen is unable to delineate, and which is so justly your due, from the ill-stated

LOUISA.

LETTER LXIX.

Miss Cavendish to Miss Brudnel.

Convent.

boarders

I HAVE now, my dearest Maria, taken up my pen with a view to sulfil the promise with which I concluded my last.

This convent is fituated at the bottom of a valley enclustered by trees, that are refreshed by several little rivulets, which derive their course from a beautiful cascade, nearly opposite the window of my apartment. The society consists of thirty nuns, already professed, ten novices, and myself, whose reception within these hallowed walls was deemed a mark of great favour; no

boarders being here received; and for the indulgences I here am allowed, am indebted to the influence of the venerable Abbé, to whose protection the worthy Mr. Levison recommended me at parting.

Among the fifterhood there is one in particular, whose beauty and melancholy, have greatly impressed me in her favour. A similarity of destiny, if I may be permitted to judge by the despondence too apparently depictured in her sine expressive features, have imperceptibly drawn us into a friendly intercourse.—We frequently meet in her hours of recreation, in the beautiful gardens that belong to this cloister.—We each of us feem studious to avoid the subject so generally dwelt on by our fex:—Need I say love is the theme I allude to?—from which circumstance, I am led to imagine that the

forrows of the gentle fifter Ann Xaviria, originate in some disappointment of the heart .- Judge, then, if we are not fit companions for each other.

She is, I believe, a native of England; at least fo the purity of her English accent leads me to fuppose.- I have avoided expressing the least curiosity with regard to her history, or even the place of her nativity; as nothing, I am convinced, can be more mortifying to an ingenuous mind, than being under the disagreeable necessity of prevaricating; and to refuse direct, is what both good-nature and good manners forbid. In time, perhaps, she may deem me worthy of her confidence. - At prefent, my acquaintance by no means warrants fuch a trust .-However, we are upon a most friendly footing.-Her conversation has that sweet G 3

fimplicity,

fimplicity, that engaging openness which imperceptibly fleals on our esteem .- We pass our time as happily as the nature of our fituations will permit. - I endeavour to render myfelf agreeable to our fociety, by giving into their form of prayer. For you, my Maria, know well my fentiments with regard to these particulars; and have often heard me argue on the various modes of worship practised in the different countries. -Our oraisons are all, in fact, offered up to one God; and we, in reality, all worship the same omniscient Being, though, as it were, through different channels .- What consequence is it then, (have I often thought) in what church, or chapel, or chamber I address my prayers to the Throne of Grace, provided my fpeech is directed by the grateful effusions of my heart? - It is not (I have faid to myself) the repeating a long particular

cular string of prayer, that will alone he of any avail, or will be exclusively acceptable to the Supreme.—No, I should hope and believe, sentiments offered up with fervency and true devotion of spirit, will always be heard by a merciful and benevolent Deity, without any regard to a mere form. As to my own part, I glory in avowing I possess none of those illiberal and narrow notions which so frequently disgrace that charity which ought to attend true religion.

But this is a theme of too exalted a nature, for so indifferent a pen as mine.—I feel how unequal I have been to the subject; and should be tempted to begin my letter afresh, were I not convinced of the partiality of my amiable Maria, who so kindly allows her Louisa the privilege of scribbling her unreserved.

referved opinions, however nakedly fent into being.

Will you do me the favour, my dear Miss Brudnel, to make some enquiries after my aunt and cousin, who I imagine are returned to England; as on my arrival here I wrote them a long letter, but had it returned; the bearer being informed they had lest their lodgings a fortnight before, but was ignorant whither they were gone.—I have requested my reverend friend, the Abbé, to take the trouble of informing himself more particularly of the time of their departure.

Mrs. Thompsom must doubtless be greatly distressed on my account; I would therefore wish to ease, as speedily as possible, the anxiety her affectionate heart must labour under.

under.—Do then, my fweet girl, be as minute in your enquiries as you can; and affure yourfelf that I am, in all fituations,

Your very obliged

and affectionate

Louisa.

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LET-

LETTER LXX.

Mis Brudnel to Miss Cavendish

Brudnel Place.

AND must I then, my dearest Louisa, give up all hopes of again beholding the sister of my soul?—O yes! I must at last!—So rigid destiny has cruelly ordained it!—Hard disposition of unequal fate!—Indeed, my sweet girl, I find it dissicult to acquiesce in so severe a disposal!—But what arguments can so weak a pen as your Maria's use against such powerful, reasons as your's (in answer to my last) contains?—Nothing can I advance in opposition to the pleas so forcibly produced by you, against the further prosecu-

profecution of my mother's advice.—Sheherfelf acknowledges the justness of your observations—allows it to be a case of great delicacy, and is thoroughly sensible how singularly cautious every young woman ought to be in what respects her reputation; for as she rightly says, "a semale character is like a sheet of white paper, whose purity is of such a texture, as the least stain can never be effaced!"

Would to Heaven, my amiable friend, that I could be permitted to dedicate my life to the gentle offices of alleviating the forrows of my Louisa; but that is a happiness fate has denied me.—My lot has for some time been cast.—The various viciffitudes you have of late experienced, have prevented you from being acquainted with the particulars of my love adventures; but the enclosed

G. 6 pacquet

pacquet will inform you of the capture of my heart-of the little flutterer's lofs of liberty!-The letters will, I hope, divert a melancholy hour .- They were returned by the last foreign, mail, in a blank cover. Had not your unlucky flory been already communicated to me through fo authentic a channel as yourfelf, guess how truly wretched the receipt of my own pacquet would have rendered me; but the horrors of suspence and doubt, thank Heaven, I have been preserved from; as in my opinion the worst of certainties is not fo bad as that pain which is ever the attendant on uncertainty. - Our imagination, generally fertile, is always apt to form the misfortunes we expect, beyond all endurance, by which reason we frequently feel as much for trifling afflictions, as for those of a more weighty nature !- But, alas! my Louisa! your afflictions are not to be regarded regarded as light!—The canker of affliction has unsparingly tortured your youthful heart, and misfortune and disappointment have lavishly been dealt to you.

Few, I with pride acknowledge, could have supported with such astonishing equanimity such forrows;—but in this, as well as many other things, you tower superior to your sex!—Look, therefore, on them as trials sent by Providence to exercise those virtues in your mind, which would otherwise have continued in a torpid state of inactivity.

Permit not then, my fweet girl, defpondency to feize on your mind, and, by fo doing, throw an envious cloud over your magnanimity.—As yet you have borne, with wonderful fortitude, all the viciffitudes of fortune!

fortune!—But at present a tincture of defipair seems to be usurping dominion over your better reason; and my amiable Louisa, forgetful of the unceasing mercy and power of her Creator, beholds the gloomy caverns of death as the sole asylum left wherein to find that rest and quiet which her wearied spirits so greatly need.

You will probably fay, I preach that to you which I myfelf should fail in resolution to support.—Perhaps I do;—for truly sensible is your Maria of her own weakness, and confesses that a disappointment of that delicate nature which has attended her Cavendish, would have in all likelihood proved of fatal consequences to her reason, if not to her life.—Of this I am recently assured from the melancholy which has taken hold of my heart on my temporary separation from the worthy

worthy Sedley, who is returned to London for a few days, to attend the wedding of a female coufin, to whom he has, I am told, afted the part of a parent.——I am really half ashamed to think what a ravage that filly rogue Cupid has made in my breast in fo short a space; but yet when the object is deserving, where is the impropriety of acknowledging a virtuous prepossession? When we foolishly bestow our affection on a man without merit, then indeed, and only then, ought we to blush.

I do not mean what I have faid, my Louifa, as a vindication of myfelf, for fuffering
my affections to be fo very eafily enfhared
—far from it;—I conceive the excellent
qualities of my Edward will be a fufficient
excuse.—There is a ridiculous kind of
prudery, which I hope never to possess,
but

but which the generality of our fex hold it proper to purfue; and that is difowning (tho' on the brink of an union) feeling any tender esteem; and think it a mark of wondrous delicacy to forfwear the least knowledge of their approaching marriage, as if ashamed of their choice; while on the other hand they view it as no breach of decorum. to flirt with every well-dreffed puppy who comes in their way; -laugh with an easy nonchalance at the most fulfome compliments, delivered with the groffest felf-fufficiency;nay, will even liften with complacency to the attentions of a man, who the moment before, had in an attempt to display his promptitude at wit and double entendre, wounded the ear of modesty without the smallest compunction !- I, at this time, my dear Cavendish, am acquainted with a young gentleman possessed (I really think from the knowledge

ledge I have of him) of all those real virtues, which when properly exercised, are so great a credit and honour to human nature; and which ought alone to render a man eftimable in the eyes of the world. He is an excellent fon and brother, and from what I have heard, capable of being an invaluable friend !- I am told he is generous; I believe him to be open and fincere !- Yet this man I have ever been most guarded in the company of, though poffeffing these pleasing and valuable accompaniments, to form an agreeable companion, when accidentally thrown into his fociety, as he lays under the fligma, in my opinion, of debating his understandng, which appears strong and ready, by lescending to a perpetual play on words, and an aptitude in turning most of your exressions into those abominable pests to uneserved conversation, double entendres, by

which means he renders an exchange of thoughts dreaded by every young woman of innate purity of fentiment.-It is a thousand pities; for he would be, I think, if divested of that unfortunate folly, truly amiable.-Do you remember how greatly difgusted you and myfelf, were at the company of the Hon. Mr. L-, whom we met on a visit at Madame de --- ? He was one of those pretty gentlemen who conceive that they cannot show their wit to more advantage than when calling the purple of innocence into the cheek of offended modesty!-But a truce with these over-abundant sage observations; let it be enough for me to affure my Louisa, with what fincerity of friendship and esteem I am, and ever shall be, her MARIA, though the name of BRUDNEL may be exchanged.

LETTER LXXI.

EDWARD SEBLEY, Esq. to Miss Brudnel.

London:

How shall I address the angelic purity of my Maria?—how tell her that the once-favoured Sedley now takes his pen to renounce all hopes of being united to the object of his tenderest regard?—Yes, Miss Brudnel, Edward Sedley is no longer worthy your gentle friendship,—his folly is its own punishment!—Cursed infatuation!—In what an abyss of woe have you plunged me? Fatal moment of intoxication!—Now, too late, I deplore thy potent power!—Pardon, my amiable

Miss Brudnel, these incoherent expressions; for, alas! I am all consussion, and scarce know how to begin my mortifying recital; but right is it the guilty should feel the utmost extent of his crime. Hear then, O lovely innocent maid, to what a miserable condition a moment's madness has reduced me!

Last Friday I spent the day with his Grace the Duke of ——; in the evening we adjourned to Brooke's, where, with my reason entombed in a sea of Burgundy, I engaged at play, a folly which, with unclouded judgment, I never carried to excess;—but, on that cursed night, every good genius forsook me, and, before I was even sensible of my danger, was entirely ruined.

Need I fay more?—O Maria! What an aggravation is it of my crime, to feel I must for ever abandon my charming betrothed bride?—Ves, I will embark by the first ship for India.—Should fortune favour my endeavours with success, and my sweet love should then be unengaged, and will deign to receive the wanderer again to her affection, then shall I esteem even a seven years' banishment happily repaid!

I do not ask my Maria to preserve for the guilty Sedley her inestimable hand.—No! he is undeserving of so great a blessing.—Bestow it then, my beauteous girl, on some person whose merit and prudence will be a surety for your future felicity; and however poignant my own feelings may be on the distressing occasion, yet will the consciousness of having brought them on myself, by my own

own faulty conduct, effectually stop all murmurings; and prayers and wishes shall, to the latest moment of existence, be offered for the permanent happiness of Miss Brudnel, and the envied man whom she shall honour with her election, by

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EDWARD SEDLEY.

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LETTER LXXII.

Miss Brudnel to Edward Seduzy, Esq.

Brudnel Place. .

SIR,

I WILL not attempt to paint the variety of terrifying objects that presented themselves to my mind, on perusing the first page of your letter. — Alarmed imagination was on the rack of uncertainty, and the most horrid images of guilt swam before my sight.—I scarce permitted a respiration, so anxious was I to discover the leading clue to those violent self-accusations.—I had represented to myself Mr. Sedley as having done some dishonourable action, inglorious to himself, his country, and connections—Pardon the suspicion.—Guess then my joy,

joy, when the real truth was disclosed to my impatient view!—I will not pretend to fay that Mr. Sedley acted with that prudence, which, fince my knowledge of him, I had effected his characteristic.—But as there are moments in the life of every mortal liable to error, we should not be too strict in our reprehensions, lest our own, in all probability, more frequent deviations, receive the same severity of censure.

The mistake you were guilty of, Sir, will, in all likelihood, be of infinite benefit to you; you will have bought experience, though perhaps a little too dearly.—
Your story will prove an instructive example to the sashionable, young, and thoughtless, among whom gambling is a vice at this day, I fear, too prevalent.—Your own heart for the suture will be guarded against any further deviations of the like nature; and,

and, by having felt the frowns of fortune, you will become the more worthy of its favours, and learn to put a just estimation on its bounties.—Permit me here to transcribe a few lines for your consolation; and am forry the elegant author's name has escaped my rescollection:

When feeking joy, we feldom forrow mifs, And often mifery points the path to blifs; The foil, most worthy of the thrifty swain, Is wounded thus ere trusted with the grain: The struggling grain must work obscure its way, Ere the first green springs upward to the day; Up sprung, such weed-like coarseness it betrays, Flocks on the abandon'd blade permissive graze; Then shoots the wealth from impersection clear, And thus a grateful harvest crowns the year.

Having thus freely dwelt on that error, of which your heart feems to thoroughly fenfible, permit me now to call you to an account for a fault of which you appear totally unfufpicious.—What reparation can Vol. III. Hyou

you make me, Sedley, for the injuffice you have done my fentiments, by claffing me with the common and low-minded part of my fex? Did you suppose, Sir, my regard fettled on the few dirty acres you poffeffed, and yourself but a secondary object?-If fo, where had fled the delicacy of Mr. Sedley, that could condescend to purchase a hand divested of a heart? - Fie, fie!do more justice to your own merit, and my virtue.—Talk no more of India—the very found conveys ten thousand horrors.--I promifed to be your's at that period when Plutus had rendered you by his favours far beyond my hopes; yet, Sedley, did I not behold you as conferring any obligation on me; for I rightly imagined, had you not thought I should be conducive to your happinels, you would never have dreamt of alking me in marriage. Such then is the

felfish disposition of your Maria, who on this occasion thinks it not a derogation from modesty to endeavour to insure her own felicity, by offering to your acceptance that hand you so heroically would resign, with ten thousand pounds.-It may not be adequate to what you have loft, but it will be fufficient, with economy, to fupply all the wants of life, and, by a residence in the country, to a few of its elegancies. - Nay, I am richer too than what you imagine, being in possession of a set of jewels that were my grandmother's. - They accompany this letter, and may be of fervice in extricating my friend, and future lord and mafter from fome prefent exigencies.

My mother commands me to tell you, that fhe expects you the beginning of next week at Brudnel Place.—And were I not fearful of raising a few seeds of vanity in your breast, I would also tell you, that the excellent lady declares your society renews the spring of life, and calls to her remembrance those days of joy she passed with my ever-regretted father.

Upon taking a furvey of what my tattling pen has faid, am aftonished at the licence I have allowed it; but, to convince me my power is not less than I flattered myself, hasten to affure me in person how much you are the devoted slave and admirer of

Your

MARIA BRUDNEL

LETTER LXXIII.

EDWARD SEDLEY, Efq. to Miss BRUDNEL.

London:

Oh, were they all like thee! men would adore 'em, And all the bus'ness of their lives be loving.

ROWE.

CAN there be in woman fuch exalted nobleness of sentiment?—fuch generous virtue?—fuch mild condescension?—such strength of judgment?—Where, O man, lies thy boasted superiority?—Blush to be outdone in every glorious thought by tender nonage in the garb of seminine beauty.

Maria, my adorable girl, how shall I begin those acknowledgments so justly due to

that ineffable goodness!—Gratitude raps loudly at the portals of my heart; but love, that tyrant of the foul, has so fully taken possession, that gratitude, necessitated to yield to the mighty superiority, is struck speechless.

While the lengthened hours creep flowly forward, which are to conduct me to that feat of all my joys and hopes, the loved prefence of my Maria, permit your enraptured Sedley to fue for your gentle forgiveness.

I have deceived you, my fweet love, by the feigned story of a folly that, thank Heaven, I had never the least inclination to be guilty of.—Those dirty acres, which were of so little estimation in the eyes of my dearest Miss Brudnel, are still in the power of

her Edward, and not any ways diminished by the pernicious vice of gaming.

But to apologize for this little piece of treachery, give me leave in a few words to relate my reasons in the detail of a youthful adventure.—My Maria must not expect to meet perspicuity or connection in the relation, as my mind and recollection are so wholly engrossed by her lovely idea, as to exclude all other reslection.

While I was purfuing my studies at Oxford, my uncle, whose undoubted heir at law I was, and to whose guardianship my father had committed me on his death-bed, was nominated governor of the island of Jamaica.—On his departure he left orders with his merchant, that after I had finished my studies at the university, a proper per-

fon

fon fhould be fought for, with whom I could be entrufted to make the tour of Europe.

The fortune left me by my father was very moderate, when put in competition with that I should come into on the death of my uncle.

Sir Thomas Maxwell was the only furviving branch of my mother's family, and in him centered all its riches, amounting to about feven thousand a-year, exclusive of the profits arising from his post as Governor-General. — My own estate was estimated from sisteen hundred to two thousand per annum.

You will naturally, my fweet Maria, be led to imagine, with fo genteel a landed property, that nothing but avarice could tempt

tempt a man, advanced to the years of fixty, to quit his native kingdom in fearch of wealth, and rifk his life on the burning fands of America.—But fo inordinate is the love of power and gold in the mind of age, that in defiance of every inconvenience attending the profecution of fo long a voyage, and the fatigues annexed to fo high an office, in fo well-peopled an island, Sir Thomas embarked to take possession with all the glee of five-and-twenty.

While at Paris, I received letters from the old gentleman, entreating me to make him a vifit at his government; and as I had for fome time known no other parent, his wishes were held by me nearly as a command.—Besides which, he had ever since my orphan state performed the tenderest part towards me. — These circumstances, when

when considered, would not permit me to sufficient for an instant my determination, and I prepared with all expedition to return to England, in order to take shipping for the West Indies.—My affairs were soon adjusted in Europe, and I embarked at Portsmouth the latter end of July, 17—. After a passage of nine weeks, we made the port of Kingston.—My arrival was announced by the firing of a cannon.—The old gentleman, though at that time laid up with the gout, insisted upon being brought in a hammock to the beach to welcome my safety.

About a month after my refidence beneath the torrid zone, the daughter of one of the principal planters in that ifland made her appearance from England, to which place she had been sent for her education, as is the custom in those countries,—She was, when when I first beheld her, just turned of eighteen and exceeding pretty.-The scarcity of beauty in that part of the world, made her nearly looked upon in the light of a goddefs, and in reality courted as fuch .- No party of pleasure was esteemed complete, unless graced by the presence of Miss Morton. As to myself, I quickly became sensible of the power of her charms, which foon made me amongst the many who attended her triumphal car. - Her apparent innocence first attracted and won my young heart as her admirer .- But how was I deceived !-The smile of simplicity—the down-cast eyethe blush of confusion—the modest reply were all so many garlands of flowers hung out to tempt the unwary gazer, and to lure him to destruction; for beneath this inviting garb was concealed a mind directly the reverse to what the fair outlide promised; as the

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the fequel will fully convince my best beloved girl.

An opportunity was not long wanting for me to make a declaration of my tenderness. -In the warm and fincere language of my heart I made her a tender of my hand and fortune.-Her reception of my address was all my fondest wishes could defire, and ere we parted, I brought her to acknowledge that my affiduity had rendered my love of consequence to her felicity. - For a fortpight we continued to enjoy the fweet exchange of mutual love, unknown to any one; when, anxious to receive that hand, on which I thought my happiness depended, I' resolved to make my uncle acquainted with my attachment, not in the least doubting his ready acquiefcence. - Accordingly, feizing the earliest moment, I informed Sir Thomas,

Thomas, that fince my abode with him I had had the misfortune to lose my heart, and could discover no other method of recalling the wanderer, than by taking poffeffion of the thief that had lured it away; therefore waited upon him as commander in chief, to demand permission to take the receiver into custody.-My address created a fmile, and an interrogation who this fair pilferer was. - Instantly as informed he arose, and telling me I was my own master, and at liberty to act as best pleased myself, quitted the apartment. Too much taken up with my own imaginary blifs, I had not time to reflect on the oddity of the old gentleman's behaviour. - I was engaged that evening to escort Miss Morton to a lady's house, a few miles from town; desirous of preserving my appointment, I arose from table before the second glass had circulated,

excusing myself to the gentlemen with whom I dined, pleading a prior engagement, which was with difficulty admitted.

deling the wanderer, than by the

On my arrival at Mr. Morton's I was acquainted the young lady was just then engaged, but would wait upon me in a few moments. Scarce had I been in the room many minutes, before my uncle's voice faluted my ears; and I diffinctly heard him fay, "Upon my word, Miss Morton, you have managed this intrigue with wonderful address and secrecy; far beyond what could be expected from fuch tender years.-However, if you prefer the being Mrs. Sedley, to Lady Maxwell, I have nothing more to fay."-- Thunderstruck at this discovery, I flood motionless-nor heard the lady's reply. How long I should have continued this monumental statue, I cannot determine, had

had not Kitty herfelf made her entrance, and roused me from my entrancement. No fooner did the faculty of articulation return to me, than I briefly informed her of the words which had caught my attention .-Duped by the apparent fincerity of her professions, I, in an instant, forgot the cause of my difquiet; and we fet off on our little journey, the most enamoured of friends and lovers. It was agreed on either fide, that I should take no notice of Sir Thomas's penchant, but continue to comport myself as if ignorant of my venerable rival. In this state things remained for a month longer, when a party of gentlemen infifted on my accompanying them on a marooning scheme. We were to be absent a week or fortnight: -The invitation was of fuch a pature as could not be rejected-and after taking an affectionate adieu of my mistress, myself and friends -

friends began our rout.-We were from home eight days longer than we defigned. On my return to town, wearied and fatigued. I was aftonished at beholding the government house in the utmost confusione On my entrance, my fight was dazzled by the most splendid illuminations; and my ears faluted by music. But to cut short the tedious thread of my narrative, shall only say, the cause of those manifestations of joy I quickly learned to be no other than the celebration of my uncle's marriage with my intended bride; who had, that morning, facrificed youth and beauty, to age and infirmity!-Rage, on the first intelligence, usurped so great dominion over me, that in fpite of all opposition to the contrary, I rushed into the ball-room; and in presence of Sir Thomas, and the whole affembly, upbraided her with her perfidy. - Where my frenzy

frenzy would have ended, Heaven only knows, had not a gentleman prefent, (with whom I had, fince my arrival, contracted an intimacy,) hurried me away to his own house. After the first violence of passion was fomewhat abated, Mr. Lesley, (the friend alluded to) acquainted me that he understood Miss Morton having made known to her father the strange overture of Sir Thomas Maxwell, the provident parent had counselled her to encourage an union with the uncle, in preference to the nephew as he might then have it in his power to enrich, through the governor's interest, the younger branches of his family. Urging a still more weighty plea, the prospect of a handsome jointure, speedy widowhood, and the tickling appellation of your Ladyship.

In fine, what, with the arguments used by my friend, and the aid of my own reflection. I foon recovered my former tranquillity; and with it the most contemptuous opinion of the hearts and disposition of the fair fex. To strengthen which, three months after my infatuated uncle's marriage, Lady Maxwell, to the utter difmay of her hufband, presented the world with a fon, who lived fcarcely to receive the baptifinal benediction; the infant being half dead before its entrance into light; owing, it was supposed, to the means the mother had recourse to, in order to conceal her infamy. From that hour the unfortunate Sir Thomas never more held up his head. His pride was great; and this shock was far too severe for his shattered frame to encounter -He lingered for fome months a prey to a tortured mind, and died within within the twelvemonth, after the unequal match, in my arms.

Having paid the tribute of gratitude and affection to the memory of this my fecond parent, and fettled my affairs in that island, but being not only by law, but by will, heir to all his effects, excepting a jointure of twelve hundred a-year, payable to the widow, I was unavoidably detained much longer than by me could have been wished .- I returned to England, impressed with the most unfavourable ideas of womankind:-The observations I have fince been led to make on the conduct of my fair countrywomen, ferved, by no means, to eradicate the ill impressions I had conceived; -but, on the contrary, contributed greatly to strengthen them on my mind.—But to my divine Maria is her adoring Sedley indebted for clear-

ing

ing his fight of that uncomfortable milt which obscured his social enjoyments, and left the canker of suspicion on the tablets of his heart.—For her sake, will he henceforth believe all refinement of virtue centered alone in her lovely fex!

Need I advance any further apology than my first disappointment, to plead my pardon for the little artifice used to discover the real bent of your inclination.—No; I am convinced none more is requisite to so noble, so generous a bosom, where sits enthroned all the mild, benevolent, and affectionate virtues!—Teach me then, my love, how to merit such transcendent goodness and beauty—Mould my heart, my soul, as you think sit.—You shall find me pliant as wax, ambitious to be sealed with thy dear impression!
—But why waste I these precious moments

on paper, which ought, as my Maria sweetly commands, to be employed in the enchanting delight of avowing how sincerely I am her devoted and adoring slave,

EDWARD SEDLEY.

P. S. Most grateful and affectionate remembrance awaits the amiable Mrs. Brudnel.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

Edward Sedley, Elq. to Sir Charles
Bentinck, Bart.

London.

Your fine fermonizing epiftle, my dear Bentinck, made its appearance a day too late for the intended efficacy!; and made me lament, that one who preached fo well, should preach in vain. Faith, Sir Charles, had I even been inclined to follow thy fage counfel, of what a fweet testimony of exalted tenderness should I have been bereft!—How would the dove-like Maria have had cause to lament thy premature advice, which would

would have prevented her displaying her heavenly difinterested disposition .- O Beninck! if I do not repay her angelic affection with the andivided dominion of my heart; -if I e'er wander, even in thought, from the bewitching maid!-if the whole endeavours of my future life tend not to convince her, how dear she is to my grateful throbbing bosom!-then brand me as the worst of villains; a traitor to love; to friendhip, and myself.—Heaven never formed a. em of brighter water!- It is a jewel of fo are and beautiful a quality, that would add uftre to the crown of the greatest earthly potentate. But all comparisons fall short of the unspeakable perfections of my delicate Maria Brudnel!-Bentinck, I fear, when put in possession of this invaluable treasure, I shall become fo great a churl, as to grudge the fons and daughters of mortality, the extatic

tatic delight of contemplating, though at an humble distance, this all accomplished creature.

Even you, my dear Charles, though first in my friendship, must not venture to view too closely the lovely wife of your Sedley, lest her virtues dazzle thy fight, and blot from thy remembrance, thy, at prefent, adored Louisa!-Behold not these effusions, Bentinck, as the mere rhapfody of passionit will be the same when the frost of age shall have spread its filvered honours on our heads-when the rofes of youth shall have faded, and the palfied hand of hoary Time shall have deprived those beauties of their vivid tints: for well am I affured, that as those transient flowers decay, Minerva will ingraft on her pure and spotless mind, those nevernever-fading bloffoms, which eternity's felf cannot destroy.

But left you should imagine this same love has had a too powerful effect on my brain, prithee read the enclosed copies, one of which will let you into a private anecdote of my youth, which as yet has been facred to my own breaft .- It will account to you, Sir Charles, for the violence of my rancour against the fair daughters of creation.-It is a circumstance, you may remember, which often puzzled you to unravel; and was a topic I ever studiously declined, from a respect to the memory of my poor uncle; who, bating that one folly, was as worthy a fellow as ever existed, and one to whom I was under great obligations.

Vol. III. Permit

Permit me, now, however, to congratulate you on the opening prospect of blis before you.-Woolerton's dying words, as well as the repentant confessions of Mrs. Thompson, have fully cleared the fame of the lovely Cavendish !- Pursue, therefore, the fearch—Cupid will doubtless give you a clue, by which to discover the sweet mourner's abode. This done, hasten to conduct the fair heroine to the land of freedom, liberty, and love .- I shall be the less afraid to trust you with my little enslaver, when guarded by fo excellent a loadstone as your own beauteous Louisa!-We must not forget to include, within our fire circle, the amiable and difcerning Don Edwin, with his faithful helpmate:—and then, by my foul, Eentinck, I conceive a happier groupe will not be found within the precincts of the three kingdoms. - Butadieu, I cannot possibly

yield thee any more of my time, as the carriage waits that is to convey me to the feet of my beloved Maria!—Need I fay, your next address must be to Brudnel Place.—
Thy happy,

EDWARD SEDLEY.

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LETTER LXXV.

Miss CAVENDISH to Miss BRUDNEL.

Convent.

HOW wonderful, my dearest Maria, is that chain of circumstances by which our lives are connected! and by what unaccountable means are all things brought to light!— How difficult to guard even our own secrets within the confines of our own bosoms!— An unguarded word, the conscious blush, the trembling frame, all conspire to betray the struggling mind; poor sister Ann Xavaria! in her is fully verified the truth of this observation.—Little could my Brudnel imagine that those introcent lines which convey-

ed merely the effusions of gratitude, friends ship and love, should have proved the cause of a most moving discovery!—But not to keep the amiable fister of my affections longer in painful uncertainty, I will briefly relate to what my words allude.

A few days ago, as the fair Xavaria and myfelf were fitting over the fire, in the portress's room (which is the office this unhappy nun fills) a letter from you was presented to me.—On perusing it, the joy I felt was instantaneously communicated to my features. My companion congratulated me on receiving pleasing news from my friends.—Having observed her that morning particularly pensive, and imagining that entertaining her with a hearing of your letter, might serve in a degree, to diffipate her gloom, I instantly began the pleasing task.

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With fighs she applauded my Maria's sentiments, and with a tear declared fuch difinterested affection, and nobleness of soul, merited every felicity .- When, I came to Sedley's letter*, not holding myfelf quite at liberty to betray the private piece of family history therein mentioned, was about to return it to my pocket; but my new friend expressing a curiofity to hear what answer a man could make to fo generous an epiftle as my Brudnel's, I determined to fatisfy her curiofity, by doing justice to your Sedley's motives, at the fame time refolving to conceal the parties' names, as I had already done the firnames of Sedley and yourfelf; confining myfelf to those of Edward and Maria.

^{*} Which letter is omitted, as being no ways conducive to the material part of our history; it only relating what Mr. Sedley's epistle to his friend had already some.

Attentive only to the contents of the paper in my hand, the various changes of countenance in my auditor, escaped my notice; but when I come to those lines which mention Lady Maxwell's attempts to conceal her fhame, by bringing on the premature birth of her infant, and which was supposed to be the immediate cause of its death, a deep groan commanded my attention; but conceive my terror and astonishment at beholding my companion, to all appearance, bereaved of life!-Alarmed at her shocking looks, I rung with violence the bell, which foon affembled feveral of the fifterhood about us. - For upwards of an hour she lay infenfible to all our endeavours, and I actually began to imagine that the grim herald had finished her career in this life, and put a period to her forrows !- The fociety feem-

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ed to be a little of my opinion, and hurried her to the infirmary.

You who fo well know my heart, may be affured the difmal fcene to which I was that morning a witness, ferved effentially to oppress my spirits, though unconscious of the part I innocently had in producing the effect.

For two days I was kept in an anxious folicitude as to the fate of the lovely Xavaria; a vifit from me, in the infirmary, would have been, I feared, deemed improper, and therefore never folicited permiffion; and was under the necessity of beguiling my melancholy hours, by a retrospect of my own woes and disappointments!—While thus indulging, I was agreeably surprized on the fourth morning, with a fight of fister Anna Xavaria

Xavaria herself; who, holding her officebook in her hand, suddenly entered, and threw a letter on the table, retiring withour permitting me a moment to enquire after her health.

Her behaviour aftonished me; but concluding she might be at her meditation, thought no further of the matter, but took up the epistle she had left.—On breaking the feal, and running over the contents, I was thrown into the utmost confusion; for here I discovered this fair mourner to be no other than the identical Miss Morton, afterwards Lady Maxwell!—This at once accounted for the extreme disorder your Sedley's letter had thrown her into.—The circumstances were too strong, notwithstanding the concealment of name, to clude the eye of conscious guilt.—I shall enclose her

penitential letter, with leave to disclose it to your Sedley, if you think fit.—My strength will not permit me to comment on its contents, as even this short scrawl has rendered me exceeding faint.

I grow, my Maria, weaker each day, and am worn to a mere shadow—sure presages of a speedy release!—Wished-for moment!—Welcome only to the miserable—shunned by the children of prosperity!—O my sweet girl, what a dear consolation will it be to your affectionate Louisa, to reslect that her beloved Maria's bosom will be shielded from those arrows of malignant fortune which have so forely pierced her friend!—You, my love, will feel none of those woes that have so violently affailed the heart of the unhappy Cavendish.

O! bleffed

O! bleffed fpirits of my departed and regretted parents! hover a while around this earthly tenement!—fortify my weak and finking mind, in the trying hour of diffolution!—Strengthen my reason to fulfill the last facred offices of the dying finner!—affist the struggling soul to break its cloying bondage! inspire thy child, O celestial shades, with a perfect reliance on the mercy of her Creator, that expiring she may say, with grateful hope, "O Death! where is thy sting?"

Weep not, my loved Maria, at this folemn apostrophe, nor mourn the loss of that friend, who living lived but to forrow, and dying, died to bliss eternal!

But, farewell!—my trembling fingers refuse their task, and will, I fear, unintelligibly ligibly affure you how truly I am, to the last moment of existence,

Thine, I di

TAHLEA

LET.

LETTER LXXVI.

To Mrs. DAM.ER.

[Enclosed in the preceding Letter.]

Infirmary Covent.

WITH a confeience bent down by guilt, the wretched widow of Sir Thomas Maxwell prefumes to address these lines to the amiable Mrs. Damer—Pardon, Madam, the intrusion, but I can no longer endure the idea of imposing on such exemplary purity, with the appearance of that innocence I do not posses!

I have long balanced in my mind this confession, and was, the fatal morning of your

your receiving that letter, the contents of which had so powerful an effect on my fenses, come to a refolution of unbosoming my feeret hoard of griefs to you; -but, alas! the dread of forfeiting, by my mortifying avowal, that place in your efteem, which I had fo industriously fought to acquire, deterred my trembling lips from the painful office;you, with that mild and benignant compaffion fo conspicuous in your every word, endeavoured to divert that chagrin, which your penetration would not permit you to pass unnoticed, by reading to me your English correspondence; little imagining how nearly the unworthy object of your folicitude was concerned in them.

Your attention to the subject on which you were engaged, prevented your perceiving my embarrassment at the first part of Mr. Sedley's history; but at length the colouring became too affecting for my fight: and the consequences I need not relate.-Your kind folicitude for my recovery was most faithfully recounted to me; and instead of alleviating the agony of my mind, encreafed its stings, by reflecting on my own demerits and your virtues. The contrast was far too great, and I at first determined to frun that presence whose superiority funk me in my own opinion for very low. -To this refolution Ladhered for a whole day, but found no relief .- Torn with tormenting recollection, I at length refolved to avail myself of that virtue so much stood in awe of, and fubmit to your inspection my unhappy life, convinced that where you could not pardon, you would at least pity!-Take then, Madam, that account which will hardly admit of extenuation.

At an early age the unhappy writer was configned, like a bale of goods (as is the usual mode among the planters) to the care of a West-India merchant in London, by whom I was placed at a capital boarding-school near Bloomsbury.—There I remained till arrived at the years of seventeen, when my father, finding his circumstances exceedingly embarrassed, wrote orders for my immediate removal and return to Jamaica.—No ships being at that time ready for fail, my guardian was necessitated to keep me for three months at his own house.

Young, gay, and thoughtless, and ever accustomed to school-confinement, the translation into all the gaieties of the world, dazzled at first my youthful fancy.—The transition was too instantaneous!—Driven round the vortex of folly, I tottered on the brink

of destruction, nor awoke from the delirium of blifs, until my ruin was completed!

Among the number of the many gentlemen who frequented Mr. Watman's house, was one named Stanley; with a form and features whose conspiring attractions seemed formed for the undoing of my thoughtless fex, and master of all those winning arts which steal imperceptibly on our regards; and before we are aware of the danger, cling around our hearts, and entwine our every hope of felicity upon their smiles.

With these outward allurements, and a tongue whose bewitching silver tones commanded the admiring attention, is it to be wondered at, that with a heart formed of susceptibility, and an imagination heated by the glowing colours of romance, whose per-

tioned for three years in the fame illand, on

nicious language had early been familiarized to my ears, I fell an eafy victim to the shafts of love!

Our correspondence was carried on with the utmost fecrecy, as the fituation in which fortune had placed my lover, barred every prospect of an immediate union; for the rank in which he was going to Jamaica, forbade all hopes of my father's confent; the whole of his income confifting of only a fubaltern's commission. Unfortunately for me his regiment was ordered abroad, and stationed for three years in the same island, on which my destiny had cast me .- Every thing feemed to conspire to my downfall; for it so happened, that in the very veffel in which my passage had been taken, part of the corps to which Stanley belonged was embarked, among whom was himself.-This was a circumstance that at that period appeared to me as the peculiar favour of the gods.—My breast was elated with gladness, and I no longer regretted my expected departure from the enchanting scenes of London.

Oh, Mrs. Damer, spare my blushes!—
fuffer me to draw a veil over the fatal hour!
—Need I tell you, that before we reached the destined harbour, I had inconsiderately facrificed virtue, honour, the dignity and purity of my fex, to my enthusiastic and romantic ideas of love.—

Great God! how easy is the gradation from virtue to vice—how flowery the progress—but how thorny the after-reslection! Would the youthful mind but allow itself time for recollection, how would it start and

and shudder at the gulf and endless remorked it was preparing for itself!—but, hurried on by the impetuosity of our passions, and blinded by unpardonable levity and vanis, we pursue the treacherous meteor of pleasure, cunfearful of its sure attendants, pain and disappointment.—But excuse, dear Madam, this digression, a fault I will in the sequel endeavour to avoid.

On my landing in Jamaica, my heart was intoxicated with the daily adulation paid me by men of the first consequence in the island. Among the gentlemen whose flattering attentions fed my self-importance and self-love, was Mr. Sedley.—His manners were engaging, and his person, though not critically handsome, had that attractive something which never fails to interest the company in the possession.—Love, which renders

renders the dullest quick-fighted, soon pointed out to Mr. Stanley the pleasure I visibly took in the society of his rival, who with remth reproached me with my inconstancy. Words arose, and we parted with mutual upbraidings.

I had foon after my arrival found, to my extreme mortification, that my imprudent conduct was likely to meet with that exposure fo well deserved, by the appearance of a fatal pledge of my folly.—Alarmed at the terrifying symptoms, I applied to my partner in guilt, who with that honour and humanity my conduct had little merited, made me an offer of his hand, as the only expedient lest to rescue my fame from the sangs of malice: but this, though fill tenderly attached to him, I rejected; for, to my confusion be it told, ambition had now taken entire pos-

feffion of my foul .- About this time Sir Thomas Maxwell became the fecret rival of his accomplished nephew, and appeared to me the best cloak I could throw on to conceal my infamy; accordingly determined to use every art to inveigle him into a speedy marriage. - In this I was backed by my father's counsel, who, as he found his affairs every day in a more unfavourable condition, thought by my marriage with the governor, to infure to his family a certain aggrandizement.-Had I followed the bent of my own inclination, I should have rather preferred the blooming Edward; not that my foul was fenfible of love towards him; for the foftest paffion had poffeffed my breaft for Stanley, but which was for a period blinded by ambition and avarice. The infamy of my conduct in deceiving a man of merit, by imposing myself on him as a woman of virtue,

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when confcious I had, by my imprudent folly, forfeited all right and title to that diftinction, never for a moment created a pang; nor did the inhumanity of depriving the lawful heir of his just inheritance, by palming a spurious one in his room, in the least deter me from the profecution of my defigns: (for I call the God of heaven to witness, I never directly or indirectly committed the black action Mr. Sedley's letter lays to my charge).-Bad as I was, I was not yet arrived to that pitch of unfeeling barbarity .-During the time this unequal match was in agitation, the unhappy Stanley used every argument in his power to alter my refolution, but in vain .- To give you fome little idea of the struggle held between love and vanity in my breaft, I will transcribe a poetical letter, written to my lover, In anfwer to repeated solicitations on his part,

To WILLIAM STANLEY. Efq.

URGE me no more, nor think I ere can yield; Relentless Prudence this fad heart has steel'd; Yet fure, too fure, ah! Stanley, might you guess, I would not fly you, did I love you lefs. This little pride, which I have cherish'd long, And title still the burthen of my fong, Has often stagger'd when they faw thee nigh, And blush'd to find a rival in thinge eye. What are postilions, clad in rich array, And fix light horfes in their trappings gay, Compar'd to Stanley on a fingle bay? But fince, alas! fince thine I ne'er can be, Step not between Ambition's paths and me. But quickly leave me, lest my tears rebel, Leave me, nor yet pronounce one foft farewell. From Love and thee for ever must I go, To feeming happinefs-but real woe!

C. M.

Exasperated at the unaccountable inconfishency of my conduct, my lover gained leave of absence from his commanding officer, and in a few days quitted the island.—
Just about the same time Mr. Sedley made

an excursion to the interior parts of the country, on a pleafuring scheme: during his nephew's route, Sir Thomas pressed for the fulfilling of my promise; as, knowing the fincere though undeferved regard borne me by that voung gentleman, was apprehensive if he returned before the folemnization of the ceremony, the rhetoric of twenty might prove more persuasive than the eloquence of a Cicero, delivered by the lips of fixty-five. My fituation, too, called loudly for the hafty conclusion of the marriage; as my shapes every day grew more conspicuous.

Had I given myself time for a moment's cool deliberation, the madness of my conduct must have stared me in the face; and must have convinced me on how fandy a foundation I was about to build my greatness; and that a very short time would expose me to the contempt and hatred of my Vol. III.

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husband, the derision of my enemies, and the fcorn of all mankind.—Gracious Heaven! by what refiftless power was the wretched Morton at that moment governed ?-Alas! I fear that at that dishonorable period, some fiend, a foe to delicacy and virtue, possessed me; nor would permit the milder voice of integrity and fentiment to plead their cause. Miserable infatuation! fatal delirium! what tears have attended the confummation of that abhorred match!-O madam! how shall I bring my horrid detail to an end!-Stanley, much-loved youth! for ever dear! too late, alas, come my repentant fighs!-Mr. Sedley, Mrs. Damer, bath told his Maria of the death of Sir Thomas Maxwell, but proceeds no farther: indeed, that amiable man knew not the melancholy fequel: mine then be the cruel task ! And O, thou dear remembered shade, witness that justice thy mourning but ungrateful love doth thee!-Great God!

God! that my tears could obliterate the horrid tale! but, alas! were each drop that diftils from my deadened eye, to be exchanged for my heart's nearest blood, it would not atone for the wrongs my folly heaped on thy generous head!—But permit me, Mrs. Damer, to hurry through the wounding particulars to the letter, a copy of which is enclosed. I received no reply.

It has already been related that Stanley gained leave of absence from his regiment;—in pursuance of which, and supposing the gaiety of the French best calculated to dispel his woe, he set sail for the island of Martinique; where he became acquainted with a widow lady of large and independent possessions.—She was lovely—and made the most tender advances to the unhappy Stanley. In short, driven on by a fatal thirst of retaliation, he married her.—The week.

following, Sir Thomas died, leaving me at liberty, and mistress of a fine jointure to follow the bent of my own inclinations; -and as the news of my Stanley's union had not as yet reached my ears, immediately complied with the impulse of the moment, and addressed a few lines to him, with an avowal of my continued affection, and an offer of that hand rendered by its acquifition of wealth more worthy his acceptance. His reply was dictated by the pen of frenzy; and contained the mortifying annunciation of the indiffoluble engagements into which he had entered. -Frantic with disappointment, I took shiping for Europe, refolving never more to permit my mind a fingle fond recollection. -On my arrival in England, chance introduced me to the acquaintance of a Roman Catholic family: quickly observing the extreme oppression which hung upon my spirits, they took those moments of despondence to awaken me to a true fense of the mother faith; and eafily convinced me, that ro real comfort could so haprily be administered as from the heavenly aid of religion. -They were at this period on the wing for France-and prevailed with me to accom-The lady had a fifter Abbefs pany them. of this community, which rendered a visit necessary-in this temporary seclusion she also took me. - The fweet tranquillity which here feemed to reign-the amiable fociety that filled the walls—the novel tenets I had fo lately embraced—all conspired to make me ambitious of spending the remainder of my life among this pious fisterhood; which defire was no fooner formed than executed, and I immediately entered on my noviciate: four months of which were scarce transpired, when I was surprised by a visit from

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a person the least expected.—It was the amiable, unfortunate Stanley, who had been informed of the facrifice myself was about to make, and came to take the last eternal adieu.

—We mingled our fighs with the passing air

—Our tears bore witness through the iron grates of our indissoluble attachment.

My lover acknowledged himself miserable; and confessed, that neither his wise's beauty, or continual affiduity to give him satisfaction, could bring his heart to a proper sense of its duty;—that to add to his misery, Mrs. Stanley had come to the knowledge of our former connection; and sailed not to impute his coldness to the continued love he still felt for me;—that her jealousy rendered his home a prison; and his hours were galled by perpetual reproaches: but the death of her brother; a man of considerable

rable property in his Catholic Majesty's dominions, had made necessary a trip hither, in order to take possession of his effects:that on his arrival, prompted by his refiftless passion to make enquiries concerning me, he learnt the particulars above related. --- O Mrs. Damer! what words can paint our mutual feelings! My foul was divested of its former ambitious views, by the attainment of that fplendor I fo vainly imagined conducive to felicity; but which, alas! I found, as the world in general will that happiness is more indebted to imagination than possession .-My heart participated in all my lover's griefs; and instead of the final separation, repeated visits at length brought us to such a pitch of enthusiasm as to form the desperate resolution of flying from all shackles but those of Love. My Stanley provided me with a proper disguise, in which to escape; the appointed K 4

pointed hour was fixed; and my lover was to have met me at the bottom of a lane, with a proper conveyance.—All things were thus fettled, and Fortune favoured my defigns to the utmost of my wishes: but horrid disappointment! after waiting for upwards of two hours in that folitary fituation, neither lover, carriage, nor fervants, made their appearance. Concluding myself betrayed, I was nearly distracted. Should my flight be difcovered before I had made good my retreat, I was fensible little mercy was to be expected .- Thus harrowed, and almost convulsed by terror, I took the uncommon resolution of making the best of my way to the Bishop's, whose palace was not far distant; when proftrating myself before him, and relating briefly the particulars of my unhappy flory, I threw myself on his humanity. Happily for me he was a man of fingular piety, benevolence

lence, and generofity. He was moved at the melancholy recital; and ordering his coach and fix, defired me to enter, he himfelf following. On arriving at the gate, and ringing the bell, the convent was alarmed, and demanded what commands. The Bishop was no fooner announced, then the portrefs threw open the doors; and, as had been before concerted, I dropped my difguise in the carriage, and in the midst of the confusion, favoured by his Lordship holding the Lady Abbess in earnest conversation, flew up to my cell. When that worthy prelate had, as he imagined, given me time to compose myfelf in bed, he then informed the Abbels, that one of her community had escaped; defiring her for the future to be more careful of her charge; but generously refused naming which of the fifterhood; and as we were all on examination found in our feparate cells, it was

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impossible to fix on any one particular nun.

—Thus did I, by the unexampled humanity and philanthropy of this excellent man, whose purity of life will be a shining example to the rising generation, escape the most lingering and torturing punishment or death.

The remaining part of this cruel night was fpent in all the wildness of despair; notwithstanding which, necessity obliged me to rise with the rest of the community, to prevent giving room for suspicion.—With a troubled mind I wandered from place to place, unable to six in any spot. About the close of the following day, a lay-sister came to inform me a gentleman at the grate enquired for me.—Willing to catch at the least glimmering of hope which presented itself, of my lover's sidelity, I hastened to receive the wished-for token.—On entering the parlour,

parlour, my foreboding heart feemed to foretell some dismal catastrophe, by its quick vibration. * * * * * *

Pardon, dear madam, this break: but the bursting torrent of grief would not be repelled on the painful retrospection; it commanded the ceffation of my quill for a few moments. -- " libralitatil and was in

Having again composed my mind by a ftrenuous address to the blessed Virgin, I am now, through her aid; enabled to proceed; though feeling the task of too heart-rending a nature to fuffer me to enter into every minute particular, will only in few words fay, that the stranger came to inform me of the death of this dearest, best of men .- Mrs. Stanley, it feems, had gained intelligence of the intended elopement, and in a fit of madness

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ness intercepted his way to the place of asfignation: thus disappointed, the too faithful Stanley had, in a paroxism of despair, fallen on the point of his fword; leaving his wretched wife too late fenfible of the error of her proceedings .- With his last dying . words he conjured his friend to discover if I had escaped; or, if still within these walls, to relate to my ears his miferable exit .- I heard no more, but fell senseless on the floor: the noise of my fall brought to my affistance many of the community, who had me conveyed to the infirmary as dead: but, alas! that was a bleffing denied—the gates of death were still shut against my entrance; and after lingering some months, bent down by agony unspeakable, I was at last restored to health, but not to peace-no; that is for ever fled, and has entered within the tomb of the most conflant and beloved of men.

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Three years have elapsed since this most shocking of all missortunes: But time, instead of pouring balm on my wounded mind, seems rather to augment the memory of my calamity; and, in spite of every endeavour to the contrary, the image of the deserving youth "steals betwixt my God and me."

I am fenfible, Mrs. Damer, my melancholy, though guilty recital, will beguile your eyes of the mild effusions of generous compassion; and, though in yourself all purity is centered, you will not result to allow me now and then the kind participation of a solitary hour.—True virtue is never severe; let me then hope this, the only consolitation left me this side eternity, will not be resulted.

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Permit me, dearest madam, to conclude myself, with this flattering presumption, your fincere and affectionate,

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CATH. MAXWELL.

compeliion; and, though in yourfelf all pus-

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LETTER PLXXVII.

Sir Charles Bentinck, Bart. to Edward
Sedley, Efq.

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I THANK you, Sedley, for the generous confidence you have reposed in me, in relation to Sir Thomas Maxwell's unfortunate engagement; I from my soul congratulate you on the removal of those ungrateful ideas, the misconduct of a falle woman occafioned; may you, and your lovely Maria, prove through life a mutual blessing to each other, and may no jealous thoughts ever intrude to interrupt the quiet of your mind.

As for myself, notwithstanding the jocose conclusion of your letter, I almost begin to despair of ever more tasting felicity !- For, ah! Sedley, what am I to think?-Every bar is removed that once cruelly choaked up my road to happiness!-Diligent search and enquiries have been made after my beauteous Louifa, but without fuccess!---Say, is it not probable, that unable to frem the torrent of adverfity which has of late purfued her youthful steps, her pure spirit may have quitted its load of mortality, to join its kindred faints !- If fo, furely Heaven fuffered not the lovely maid to fink to earth, unbleffed with charitable fuccour, but permitted fome angel to minister consolation to the dying fair .- O Sedley! should this furmise prove just, where shall I sly for comfort?-where feek my lost tranquillity!been how and prediction where

where on earth shall I hope to find another Cavendish?

Edward, fhe was all my fond heart held valuable in life; her fmiles would have illumined even a defert!—Her melodious notes would have calmed the wild phrenzy of a lunatic, or charmed to peace the ferocious anger of the tigrefs, from the protection of her young!—Whatever was amiable, lovely, and attractive, was in her fummed, and in her contained.—Her generous mind was diftinguished by that noble superiority of talents, which so greatly dignifies human nature!

O my Louisa! if the envious Fates have indeed fnatched thee from the arms of thy Bentinck—if Providence has doomed him never more to liften to thy love-taught accents:

cents; the world will have no longer any allurements for him.—From the gaudy pomp of man he will retire—for thy dear fake abandon all fociety—and expiate by his terrestrial sufferings, the wrongs his base suspicion did thy spotless virtue.

Some remote and humble hermitage shall be his habitation, encompassed by uncouth and pathless woods—the stars alone shall be his lamps—the clouds his canopy—fruits shall supply his hunger, and the silver stream his thirs:

For thee all thoughts of pleasure I forego,
For thee my tears shall never cease to slow;
For thee at once, I from the world retire,
To feed in silent shades a hopeless sire!
My bosom all thy image shall retain,
The full impression there shall still remain;
As thou hast taught my constant heart to prove,
The noblest height and elegance of love;

That

That facred passion I to thee confine, My spotless faith shall be for ever thine.

But lest I infect thee, my dear Sedley, with my melancholy, I will conclude this fheet; first telling thee, that the amiable brother of my loft love, desires me to befpeak for him a place in thy friendship. Poor fellow! what a fluctuating life has his been; - the fate of his lovely fifter bears heavy on his mind, and obliges the lover to fmother his feelings, in compassion to fraternal affection .- The gentle Louisa exerts all her winning accomplishments to divert that bugbear, recollection .- However, I hope his trip to Spain will dispel some part of that grief which at prefent embitters his shining fortunes.-I have prevailed on him to fix next week for the commencement of his journey. When he is gone, the gnawing worm

worm of forrow will have full leifure, undifturbed to prey on my torn mind.—But once more farewell.

Thine,

CHARLES BENTINCA.

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LETTER LXXVIII.

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

Brudnel Place.

UPON my foul, Sir Charles, it is a pity, a wondrous pity, that an unlucky discovery I have just made, should be the means of preventing the execution of that delightful romantic scheme of thine;—what a delectable plan hadst thou laid down!—a perfect Oroondates in love!—faith, there must be something mighty fascinating in this little Louisa, that so fine a fellow as thou art should, for her dear Jake, (thy own words) relinquish all other pretty woman!—a charm-

ing exertion truly of heroic constancy !-Why, Bentinck, all the little Miffes of a hundred generations to come would have handed down the faithful, though unprosperous loves of Charles and Louisa; -and your worship would have been rendered as immortal as any hero of antiquity, at least by the love-fick simpletons .- And I verily think, that had I a proper regard for thy glory, which as thy friend I ought to have, the fecret I am poffeffed of, should remain for even in oblivion. But I am, at this moment, in the state of a venerable tabby, who having gained possession of the key to some private piece of fcandal, is reftlefs, nay almost miserable, till she has had the grateful fatisfaction of being the first circulater. So, having as they usually do, first excited thy surjofity, I will proceed to unravel my myftical

tical words, and shall therefore begin accordingly thus:

On a certain day, in the course of last week, the hour having escaped my memory, as I was entertaining my mistress in a painted alcove, at the bottom of the garden, with a repetition of lover's oaths, we were fuddenly interrupted by the arrival of a letter. - But to keep thee, Bentinck, no longer in suspence, know, that I have discovered the bosomfriend of my Maria to be no other than your amiable, fuffering Louisa; who is now a pensioner at the monastry of _____, on the borders of Bicardy, and goes by the name of Damer, to avoid the dreaded, but imaginary power of her late perfecutor, Wilmot, alias Woolerton.-She is as yet ignorant of the fatal tragedy that has been performed in her family; but having related

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the bloody particulars to my Maria, and given her your letters, which contain the circumstantial detail of the whole story, she intends to forward them immediately to her distressed friend; she will at the same time of your receiving this, be fully informed of every circumstance.

By this time, I presume, you have abandoned woods, fruits, and brooks; and the pathless desert may remain untroden by you.

I shall not, Sedley, make an apology for the suspence the first part of this paper kept thee in; as, upon my soul, I apprehended the intelligence being too suddenly delivered, might have scattered the remaining part of thy wits beyond all redemption.

I trust the worthy Don Edwin has not began his expedition, and shall be curfedly disappointed if he has! But, farewell; the man and horse are ready, who is ordered to fet off express for Dover with this, and the pacquet for your fair Cavendish, that thy Sedley may be the first to congratulate thee on thy refloration to fociety and thyfelf.

EDWARD SEDLEY.

LETTER LXXIX.

Miss Brudnel to Miss Cavendist.

Brudnel Place.

LOUISA, my sweet desponding friend, read the enclosed pacquet; and with your Maria, thank that Power Divine who has thus miraculously praserved the two most faithful of hearts, from the torturing pangs of separation !- who has fo wonderfully restored my friend, a long-lost-long-lamented Vol. III. brother,

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brother, to her affection!—who bids her once more live to love, to happiness, and joy!

O Sedley! doubly dear to my foul, for being the bleffed instrument of my acquainting my Cavendish with her enchanting turn of fortune!

Louisa, I am half wild with delight, and feem to tread in air!—My dear and honoured mother, too, participates in my transports, and declares the shall count with impatience those hours that are to bring my angel friend to Brudnel Place!—for she insists, my sweet girl, that the happy ceremony of her two daughters shall both be performed at this loved spot!—Our house is large, and you are therefore commanded to bring with you the accomplished Edwin, and his engaging Louisa, with their sweet little one.

O my Louisa! how ardently I long for that moment that will once again unite you to the bands of social life!—when the fair Cavendish shall bid an eternal adieu to monastic walls!—talking of which, brings to my mind the wretched sate of poor Lady Maxwell!—Would to God there was a possibility of tranquillity ever more dawning on her mind;—but to wees like her's there is no balm to be administered!—These lines of the inimitable Mrs. Rowe, strike me as applicable to her unfortunate state:

Unhappy day! with what a difinal light Dost thou appear to my afflictive fight? In vain the chearful spring returns with thee, There is no future chearful spring for me!

While my Alexis withers in the tomb,
Untimely cropt, nor fees a fecond bloom!
The fairest feason of the changing year,
A wild and wint'ry aspect feems to wear;
The flow'rs no more their former beauty boast,
Their painted hue, and fragrant scents are lost;
The joyous birds their harmony prolong,
But, oh! I find no music in their song!

Ye mossy caves, ye groves and filver streams, (The muses' lov'd retreat, and gentle theme)
Ye verdant fields, no more your landscapes please,
Nor give my soul one interval of ease;
Tranquillity and pleasure sly your shades,
And refules care your solitude invades.
Nor the still evining, nor the rosy dawn,
Nor moon-light glimming o'er the dewy lawn,
Nor stars, nor sun, my gloomy sancy chear;
But heav'n and earth a dismal prospect wear;
That hour that snatch'd Alexis from my arms,
Rent from the face of Nature, all its charms!

Unhappy day! be facred fill to grief!
A grief too obftinate for all relief!
On thee my face shall never wear a smile,
No joy on thee shall e'er my heart beguile!
Why does thy light again my eyes molest?
Why am I not, with thee, dear youth, at rest?
When shall I, stretch'd upon my dusty bed,
Forget the toils of life, and mingle with the dead!

Had you beheld, my Louisa, the manly tears struggling for vent in the eyes of my amiable Edward, on the perusal of her ladyship's melancholy pacquet, how must you have admired his noble generous disposition!

His lips acknowledged the tenderest compassion for the fair sufferer, and regretted that her afflictions admitted not of alleviation.

Need I tell you, my fair friend, that to that letter was I indebted for the heart-joying information with which this paper is fraught?

There is one circumstance in the pacquet, however, that I am convinced will severely wound your sensibility, and that is the fate of the wretched Charlotte!—As to Mrs. Thompson, she has in my opinion, chosen the only mode of life that can any ways afford her consolation.—Before she entered on her probation, she yielded up into your lover's hand, an account of your fortune, and was herself indebted to the generosity

of

of Sir Charles, for the fum fufficient to procure her admission within a cloister.

Sedley tells me that the dreadful exit of her two accomplices has brought her to a true state of penitence:—may it prove acceptable in the sight of her offended Maker!—and may her closing life receive that comfort her dying daughter was denied!—in which wish, being convinced my Louisa will heartily join, shall conclude this incoherent letter, with an assurance how much I am,

Her affectionate

MARIA BRUDNEL.

LETTER LXXX.

SIF CHARLES BENTINCE, Bart. to
Edward Sedley, Efq.

Picardy.

SEDLEY, I have beheld my angelic, my adored Louisa!—and should be the most blessed of mankind, did, I not fear her altered looks!—Yes, Edward, the sweet maid has suffered the worm of forrow to feed on her damask cheek!—Her changed and pallid appearances indicate to my terrissed imagination, a consumptive habit.—Great God! should she be snatched from me, after all my anxieties—after once again cherishing the fond expectation of her being for ever

mine, what would become of me?—Sedley, there is madness in the thought!—Let me then embrace that deluder, Hope, which would flatter me with the idea that the unwearied attention and affection of her Bentinck, joined to the dear society of her excellent brother and her charming Maria, may restore the sweet blossom to its former strength.

The furprize your lovely miftress's discovery threw her in, greatly affected her tender spirits.—What then must have been her situation, had she been obliged to support at the same time an interview with her loved Edwin?—From this double trial, however, she was preserved; he having set off the day preceding that on which your express arrived; but on the receipt of it I instantly dispatched a courier to recall him, with your curious

curious kind of epifle in his hand, myself being too much agitated with pleasure to hold my pena

I look for him momently, and have prepared my fweet love to fee him this evening.

I must trouble you, my dear Sedley, to take a ride over to Bentinck Lodge, and order my steward to get all things in readiness for our reception.—I design erecting in the middle of the wilderness, a temple sacred to Virtue, and on its doors shall be engraven these beautiful lines of the elegant Mrs. Rowe:

No envious tattle enter here, That wrongs the innocent and fair; But let the graces and the loves Wander round these gentle groves; And banish from Loussa's breast, Whatever may her joys molest; While here she finds that fost repose Which from virtue only slows!

Rut.

But, hark!—the rattling of a carriage falutes my ears;—perhaps it is Edwin;—let me hasten to congratulate the worthy youth.

The impatient Cavendish commands me to halten the conclusion of my letter, and scarce will permit me to fign the name of the happy,

Thrice happy,

CHARLES BENTINCK.

LETTER LXXXI.

Mis Cavendish to Mis Brudnel.

Convent.

MARIA! my dearest Maria!-do I live? do I breathe? am I awake? are these pleasing fcenes real, and not imaginary?-Oh! my friend, tell me in what thy Louisa hath fo greatly merited the favour of Providence; teach my exulting heart to support with some degree of equanimity, this amazing change of fortune!-Behold me now fnatched from the depths of despondency, and restored to bliss unutterable! My God! I thank thee ;-thou hast indeed delivered thy fervant from an abyss of wretchedness, to the highest pinnacle of happiness! Strengthen my heart in this hour of gladness, as thou didst in that of tribulation.

You

You must not expect, my charming sympathizing Maria, my pen capable of delineating the dear pathetic meeting between myfelf, my Bentinck, and my loved Edwin!-No; impossible!-It was beyond all power of description-Tears were the sole interpreters of our excess of joy !- My brother, my new found brother, held me to his noble, generous breaft !- In short, words cannot do justice to the grateful, affectionate youthscarce would he permit my Sir Charles a participation of my fociety, fo eager was the loved relative to engage me all to himself! And indeed, my Maria, my fwain would, I very much fear, have been but poorly off, if it had not been for an importunate pleader within my bofom.

When, my Brudnel, did your friend experience fo fleeting an afternoon?——How imperceptibly flew the moments, thus wing'd with

with delight!—Such was our focial fituation, that the fun had retired behind the azure hills ere we were aware; and gave the unwelcome fignal for a speedy separation.

The dear youths would fain have persuaded me to return with them to their hotel: but really the agitation my spirits had sustained, rendered such a step imprudent.—But of this excuse I did not chuse to avail myself, lest it should alarm their tenderness with a more dreadful idea of the state of my health, than there is, I slatter myself, occasion for.—My amiable Bentinck is all apprehension; and watches with the kindest solicitude the various changes of my countenance;—in every thing he is tremblingly anxious for my safety.

On our first meeting, the visible alteration in my person struck him to the soul.—No wonder—

wonder—I looked very ill; and fancy even you, my Maria, would find it difficult to recognife, in my languid feature, your once fprightly Louifa—However, do not fuffer this intelligence to render you uneafy; for I can affure you, that, as I have already my dearest Sir Charles and Edwin, within these few days I feel myself prodigiously improved; and have not a doubt of baffling the fullen monarch of the grave.

I have not as yet had the happiness of seeing my Edwin's lovely Louisa, or my pretty nephew.—My brother tells me, he with difficulty prevented her from accompanying him in his visit; so very desirous was she to be introduced to the sister of her loved Cavendish—and laughing, declared he was under the necessity of using his authority, as lord and master, to prevent her from so dangerous a step; having been confined for eight

eight days with a violent cold and fever:—I have therefore promifed, out of compliment to my fweet fifter, to abandon the amiable fociety I am with, some days earlier than I at first intended. Accordingly, on the morrow after the next, shall bid these walls, and their agreeable inhabitants, an eternal adieu.

The thoughts of the melancholy state in which I leave the unfortunate Ann Xavaria, considerably damps my rising joy.—On my showing her your letter, wherein you so tenderly make mention of her name, the tears of gratitude thanked my lovely Maria. On reading that passage which speaks of Sedley's sensibility, she sobbed aloud, and, falling on her knees, implored the protection of Heaven to guard my friend, her Edward, and myself, from these poignant afflictions she had herself experienced.—Her manner was

fo very moving, her expressions fo touching, that she melted my very foul.

How greatly, my dearest Miss Brudnel, is this young woman to be pitied! for indeed she possessed a natural good disposition; but a bad education, aided by the imprudence of an ill-judging parent, has indirectly hurried this lovely creature to destruction.— She has often acknowledged to me, that her mind first received the taint of evil at school. This I can easily believe; for, though I never was within one of those fashionable seminaries of instruction, yet from what has reached my ears, and from observations I have made, a boarding-school is the last place on earth I would chuse to fend my child to.

They are taught the fuperficial accomplishments, while the mind is almost totally neglected: morality is a theme out of vogue;

how then can they attempt to fatigue a little miss or master of distinction with its dull lessons; and if, as it too frequently happens, there should be one child of loose or vicious morals among the community, his or her example, like a contagion, infects the greatest part, if not the whole of them.

No parent, in my opinion, (however exalted their station in life), should be above superintending the improvement of their off-spring; and in doing this, it is to be hoped, when considered how nearly interested in their welfare, the more effential branches of instruction would not be neglected; as in my estimation the most shining qualities of the head cannot compensate for a depravity of heart.

But forgive me, Maria; my pen is a stually running on at a strange rate, and if suffered to proceed much further, will doubtless sermonize thee into a gentle dose: 4 will theretherefore, to avoid fo great an imputation on your good-breeding, conclude with acquainting my fweet girl, that the next greeting the will receive from her friend, will be in perfon.—I long to fee my dear second mother—when held to her amiable bosom, I shall indeed fancy myself, within a maternal embrace, and no longer feel my orphan state. Once more, adieu; and assure yourself, that no felicity will ever make me forget how much I am your's, and my honoured Mrs. Brudnel's,

Most affectionate and grateful
LOUISA CAVENDISH.

P. S. You will fee, my fweet girl, that the fubject concerning certain persons, has been studiously shunned; not chusing to trust my pen on so delicate and piercing a topic.—Alas! poor Charlotte—excuse the blot—many tears have bedewed her unsortunate memory.

PHE

CONOCLUSIONS

Soon after the arrival of Sir Charles and his Louisa on the British coast, the double wedding, of the two amiable friends, was celebrated with every demonstration of joy at Brudnel Place; where the maternal tenderness of the excellent Mrs. Brudnel supplied to the orphan Cavendish those worthy parents, whose ashes for such a length of time had lain entombed:—but whose virtues will never expire, but bloom asresh in their exemplary progeny.

We will not pretend to impose on the patience of our pretty readers, by a circumstantial history of the splendid dresses of the brides and bridegrooms, or the pempous entertainments succeeding these happy unions,

unions, lest some of our judicious female critics fhould affrontingly tell us:-" Stupid :the mere hacknied cant'; - cannot the author discover some unbeaten track to amuse our senses with! What! the same insipid jargon that fills our circulating libraries!"-Well, then, my lovely admonishers, permit us, with all due fubmission, to leave to the brilliant imaginations of our fair country women, the decorative part-whose taste in those important matters, is indisputable; and content ourfelves with affuring them, that not an hamlet within many miles around, but what fully felt the generous dispositions of the happy fire-fide at Brudnel Place .- Sir Charles, neglected not to forward, with his usual munificence, orders to his steward for the like donations to be made among the poor of his estate and neighbourhood.

Peace of mind, that first balfamic of health,

health, aided with the unwearied affiduity of her tender husband, quickly restored the fading bloom of the beautiful Lady Bentinck; and the roses, once more, begin to shame the drooping lily.

The conjugal felicity of the three lovely pair, prove, that where love is founded on so lasting a basis as esteem, possession rather serves to encrease than diminish its force.

The undiffurbed flarmony which Teigns within their hospitable walls is a daily topic of envy among the narrow-minded; and of emulation to the young and prudent.

Lady Bentinck never fails to acknowledge her gratitude to Providence, for the wonderful protection afforded her in the day of adverfity; and bleffes that unerring Wisdom which, by such unforeseen events, brought to light light her innocence, and permitted not her unfulpecting nature to fall the facrifice of base-minded avarice; and in so wonderful a way suffered the anonymous slanderers of her same, to derive their punishment from the sources of their own iniquity.—Her Ladyship, however, with that generosity so characteristic of the Cavendishes, bestowed on the repentant Mrs. Thompson her free forgiveness; at the same time, making a handsome settlement upon her for life; with a view to insure to her the respect and goodwill of the society with whom she had now enrolled herself.

The excellent Sir Charles and his friend, now fill, with honour to themselves and country, distinguished places in the senate of Britain. We will not pretend to affert whether as ministerialists, or supporters of opposition: shall only say, that these gentlemen pursue a con-

a conduct unbiased by either selfish or mercenary views; voting as their conscience, that old-fashioned friend, shall direct; and which, they have refolved shall ever be their leading star. Their speeches are spirited, vigorous, and well delivered; and reflect, not only the highest credit on the speakers, but evidently on those whose care formed and inspired to virtue, their young minds .-Fully have the wifhes of the worthy Captain Cavendish been answered, with respect to his young charge: and we doubt not, refulgent as he has now began his course, to behold his fetting fun as glorioufly finished. The cloud, which in the morning of life, envéloped his blissful prospects, serves as a useful leffon to his neart; and teaches him not to place dependence on those accidental advantages which are derived merely from the effects of chance. He had himself experienced that neither birth, fortune, sense, or virtue,

virtue, could infure the creature from the afflictive strokes of adversity. He therefore wisely holds himself as the tenant of an hour, liable to be called upon at a moment's warning; looks upon his past forrows and disappointments as bleffings sent in disguise; joins his grateful acknowledgments with the poet, in these elegant lines at the conclusion of Barbarossa.

"Now let us thank th' eternal Pow'r; convinc'd That Heav'n but tries our virtue by affliction: That oft' the cloud which wraps the prefent hour, Serves but to brighten all our future days."

