

THE
SCHOOL FOR FATHERS;
OR, THE
VICTIM OF A CURSE.

Myazie Hajoh. 1827
THE

SCHOOL FOR FATHERS;
OR, THE
VICTIM OF A CURSE.

A NOVEL.

CONTAINING
AUTHENTIC MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES,

WITH
HISTORICAL FACTS.

V O L. III.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXXVIII.

THE
SCHOOL FOR FATHERS.

LETTER LI.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

YOUR satisfaction and mine, my Alfred, are mutual. I feel all that true, that genuine happiness, which you said would inevitably be the result of acting uprightly: I feel it in its utmost sense. My father and mother have bound me to them by stronger ties than even filial obedience; by the sincerest love and affection!

May your excellent mother have the felicity of soon seeing the happiness of her amiable son made perfect here on earth! I know her happiness could rise no higher than by reflecting on his. I hope this uncle of yours is not quite a stranger to your blood, and that, with the whole of your fortune, he possesses a portion of the worth you derive from your father. Besides, I think it is only his interest that you want, and that will not cost him much. I should hope, that what little our family has will be exerted in your favour. I know, my brother, if he chose it, could ask Lord N——, and has some title to expect a compliance: perhaps my father may prevail on him. But indeed, Alfred, I am so very happy at present, that I can wait most patiently, convinced that I may even to my life's end cherish the image of the most amiable of men by my father's indulgence. Am I not the happiest of the happy?

I am

I am extremely sorry for the misapprehension of Mrs. M——, and will write this day to apologize to her, and, if possible, regain her esteem, for I should be hurt very much to lose it. I shall ever regard her, if for no other cause than that at her house I first became acquainted with you. I almost think she is offended, because she thinks her great sagacity will be called in question, which she does not a little pique herself upon. But I shall labour to make my peace, and doubt not of success. I told my mother, who really saw the propriety of not encumbering her with a secret. She commended the conduct of both, yours particularly, as she says few men possess such delicacy as to consider how much they distress and confuse a young woman, to whom they are attached, by drawing the whole attention of the company upon her, in consequence of a too particular fondness.

I did not tell her how often you have

frightened me, when I have detected you looking on me so intensely—Yet, I believe, very few, if any, noticed your *deux yeux*.

We are going this evening to the play; my mother wished me to accompany Isabella, and the rest of the bridal folk; but I have no great *gout* for the service. I shall not be very much entertained, either by the performance, or the company I go with. How much rather had I sit at home reading old letters, or writing new ones, or even “meditating on my last night’s vision,” which I send you to interpret.

I dreamed I was wandering about some strange place all alone, nor did I know where I was going. At last I saw a house, the side of which seemed open, or, to express myself more properly, it was the section of a room; and at a distance from me was a bed, in which your mother was sitting upright. She beckoned to me, and I strove

I strove to get to her, but met with nothing but frightful precipices and deep pits, which I was near falling into. After making many fruitless efforts, I espied my sister Matilda, who came up to me, and reaching out her hand, led me by another path, which I had not discovered, into a beautiful garden, from whence I had still the same view of your mother; but now saw a broad flight of steps which reached to her chamber—I ascended these steps, and was received by your mother with a sweet smile, who taking my hand obliged me to sit down by her. What became of my sister I know not; but presently I found myself seated at table with a large company—You was next me, and your conversation was uncommonly sprightly, as was that of the whole party. You said, speaking of the impropriety of some people's pronunciation, you had heard of a lady who declared her fondness for reading, and that her favourite books were Pope's *Eyelids* and *Oddities*; on which another immedi-

ately asked her if she did not likewise admire Demosthenes' *Felicities*? The idea set us all a laughing to such a degree, that I awakened by my own vociferation.

Are you Joseph enough to explain this droll dream? For my part I can see nothing it portends—only remember it was to your mother's bed, and not yours my sister conducted me.

But I must not be fooling away my time in scribbling to you. If I do I shall not get myself equipped for the side box.

I shall soon have an opportunity of sending you a piece of bride-cake to put under your head, that you may dream of your beloved. Mr. G—— sets off for the circuit next week; and when he has helped to save or condemn a few poor fellow creatures, he will hasten to celebrate his nuptials with his dear Isabella. Her poor elder sister must dance barefoot; poor girl! she

she is much to be pitied, considering all things—Don't you think so, Alfred?

Indeed now I must go, for Jenny is come to dress my hair. So *bon jour, et bon soir aussi*, for I shall not have time to add to this. Adieu—yours most truly for ever and ever. Amen.

ELWINA.

LETTER LII.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

THE sun, my dear Maria, is rather overcast, which lately shone so bright in the hemisphere of your friend Elwina. However, I think my father will never be influenced to falsify his word, and, indeed, should he discover so much frailty, the breach in him cannot justify a similar con-

duct in me, and, therefore, I am much easier in that point than I otherwise should be. But I have lost the slender hold I had in my brother's love, I see very plainly. He has taken it very ill of my father that he should be so indulgent to a ridiculous attachment of a silly girl to a beggar :
“ For his part, he foresaw nothing but poverty and ruin in the prospect, and he should never encourage disobedience and folly, by affording any maintenance to me, if I was reduced to ever so great exigencies.” My father did assume courage enough to tell him, “ That I had promised, and he knew he could rely on my word, I would never marry Alfred without his consent; and that Alfred himself had vowed never to receive my hand but as the gift of my father.” This moderated his rage a little, as he founded upon that assurance a hope of prevailing on my father to withhold his consent for ever, as no time is stipulated for our union ; and notwithstanding his dislike of the *beggar*,
he

he knows him to be a man of too nice principles not to adhere to his engagements. This fine scheme I should not have known but for Isabella; and I believe she let it escape her quite by chance too.

She had shewn me some very fine diamonds Mr. G—— had presented her with, consisting of a pair of dressed ear-rings, and three large stars for the head. I admired them, and congratulated her on her good fortune—I am sure without the smallest degree of envy, as you well know.

“ You might have had much finer,” said she, “ if you had not refused Sir Thomas K——.”

“ Possibly so,” I answered; “ but whenever I marry I shall look more to the man than the diamonds.”

“ Yes, *Love and a Cottage* is a pretty motto, and living on air, as my brother

“says, pleasant diet, if repentance is not
“too sour a sauce to it.”

“Really, my brother is quite a wit. I
“wonder he has not made a longer speech
“in the house than *yea* or *nay*. I think he
“would be as good an orator soon as Mr.
“Burke. But I fancy when he enters the
“pale of matrimony, he will think of lit-
“tle else than the aggrandizement of his
“family; love will have a small share
“in the engagement.”

“Love,” she said, “was a very pretty
“ingredient, when directed by prudence.”

“But there would have been neither
“one or the other, Isabella, in a marriage
“with Sir Thomas. Love him I could
“not; nor would it have been *prudent* to
“marry a man of such libertine principles,
“who, perhaps, would but part with his
“mistress the day before he married.”

“Indeed,

“ Indeed, Elwina, your notions are so
“ extremely delicate,” and she drawled out
the four last words, “ that in all probabi-
“ lity you will be forced to add to the sister-
“ hood of old maids. Though I suppose
“ Alfred is immaculate.”

“ Such as he is,” I replied, “ my father
“ has allowed me to hope one day I shall
“ be better able to judge of his merit.”

“ Aye, my brother says, that was a
“ very wise step indeed of him, and fully
“ proves he is in his dotage.”

I felt my colour rise at this undutiful reflection from a son so highly favoured, to the prejudice of the rest of the family. I was sorry afterwards, but I could not help saying with a degree of acrimony, “ Though
“ it hardly becomes me to repeat the dis-
“ respectful words of my brother, yet I
“ must say the only instance of dotage in
“ my father, was that of making a golden

“ calf, and expecting every one should
“ worship it as he did.”

“ Oh brave, my witty sister ! Why, my
“ dear, when you die we shall have the
“ booksellers quarrelling for the first copy
“ of your *bons mots*. I swear I never heard
“ any thing half so clever and metaphori-
“ cal as the *golden calf*.”

As I have already said, I was sorry my
indignation should have thus vented itself,
and I shall have cause to be more so I dare
say, for Isabella took the first opportunity
of repeating my speech to my brother ;
which I was soon convinced of, for this
night after supper I made some remark,
which Mr. G—— noticed as a good thing :
a gentleman present said, “ I have heard
“ nothing else but *good things* from her all
“ the evening.”

“ Oh, no,” cried my brother, with a
jeering smile, “ like Hudibras,

“ — the

“ ——— she cannot ope

“ Her mouth, but out there flies a trope.

“ You cannot imagine how very smart

“ she is sometimes, and Isabella says she

“ deals largely in metaphor.”

“ Isabella mistakes truth for metaphor

“ sometimes, brother; but even truth

“ should not be spoken at all times.”

It is plain from this, my dear Maria, I shall have something more to combat than merely waiting. But all this I keep to myself, trusting in the natural, or rather acquired politeness of the *gentleman of the family*, for Alfred's being treated with decency at least whenever he comes.

My brother can smile and bow, and bow and smile, at the same time that he wishes you a hundred miles off. He is quite a courtier in the most emphatic sense of the word. Alfred does not quite read his
6. character

character at present ; and I hope he will never have occasion to be guarded against it. Nothing but the apprehension of his suffering danger from the pride and malevolence of his disposition, shall ever urge me to disclose it, even to the man I love better than myself. But Clodio must think me a stock or a stone, not to be a little moved when I hear him say, with that supercilious air you are so well acquainted with : “ What, he again ! he lives here, I think.”

“ No, no,” my too gentle father says, “ not so, my son ; it is above a week since he was here.”

And, indeed, he never comes more than once a week, and very often then only stays an hour or two. He has parted with his sweet horse—I was really much hurt at it on several accounts. He now always walks to town and back again, which grieves me, both from his being fatigued,
and

and that I have less of his company, as more time is taken up in coming and going on foot than on horse-back. Another reason is, that I know the poor creature will not have so good a master. How would he follow him with his eyes, and turn his head at the sound of his voice! I do believe the animal would know him at any distance of time. He assures me the gentleman to whom he sold him will be very careful, and suffer no one to ride him but himself; and added, if he could not rely on his being well used, he would have shot him before he would have parted with him. But I cannot help thinking he had a particular affection for my dear Alfred, and it was really mutual.

My brother need not be so much displeased, for he very seldom meets him; a circumstance I never fail to rejoice at. I am sure their minds are not congenial. This morning Clodio came home from the House while we were at breakfast, took a

bafon

basin of tea, and went to bed—rose at five, and went down to the house about six, to pass the night there as usual. As Garrick said,

My country calls, and z——ds I'll do my best.

So it is all for the good of our country—but what domestic men do these make? Oh, defend me from such a husband; yet such a one I should have had in Sir Thomas K——, who is obliged still more than my brother to support the minister.

We entertain some hopes of Mr. Harley (Alfred's uncle) being able to do something, *willing* I should say; he has the power, if he has the inclination likewise. But alas, these two principles seldom are united.

Adieu, my dearest Maria; accept my tenderest love and good wishes. I am ever yours,

E L W I N A.

LETTER LIH.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

WE are surrounded with all the paraphernalia for my sister's approaching nuptials; and in order to make me keep tolerable pace with the bride in point of appearance, my dear father has presented me with an hundred pound bank note. How happy I am he has done so! Rather than lay out the sum in any article of finery, I shall not break it, having cash enough by me for any little supernumerary ornaments I may want; and shall lay the note up carefully to purchase some furniture by and by. You cannot think how notable I am grown—I am working a carpet, and have planned chairs to answer it. Oh, at the rate I go on, I shall half furnish

nish my house by Christmas, and in an elegant style too, I assure you.

I never was extravagant, but I shall now begin to abridge myself of many unnecessary articles, to add to the fund. In my mind's eye, I have arranged my household, and, oh, how delighted have I been, till I awakened from my *visionary* employment ! I fear sometimes I am only erecting castles in the air, to be blown down with a breath ; yet the business affords me much pleasure too, and makes my work go cheerly on, when I anticipate the hours of happiness I may enjoy *tête-à-tête* with my amiable Alfred seated on this same carpet. It is thus, my Maria, I amuse myself,

And strive what yet remains behind

Of loit'ring time to cheat.

Which surely is not illaudable, as by such means I have recovered much of my
vivacity,

vivacity, which you feared I was in danger of losing.

Heartily glad shall I be when our folks are married, as then I shall be mistress of more time, and, consequently, can devote whole days to my new employment; for now there is nothing but gadding abroad, and to public places that suits me not. But when Isabella has got other companions, I shall bid adieu to the play, the opera, Almack's, and a long et cetera of public amusements; by which I shall lay in a stock of health, and save my money, two very necessary ingredients for my well doing.

Health, peace, and competence.

How comprehensive! My dear Maria, I am convinced you wish them in their full extent to your faithful

E L W I N A.

L E T T E R L I V .

ELWINA TO MARIA.

ALFR ED told me the other day he saw a most extraordinary advertisement in a morning paper to this purport: "That any gentleman having three thousand pounds to spare, had now a good opportunity of improving it to six times as much. The money might remain with their own banker till the affair should be concluded—None but principals would be treated with;" with the usual assurance of secrecy, &c. and concluded with where any one desirous of further information might apply. As the sum, to use the words of poor General B —, "was within the scale of his talent," and naturally supposing it was intended

intended for a *douceur* for the appointment of some lucrative place, Alfred was determined to make some further inquiry about it. He went to the rendezvous, and there saw a grave-looking old gentleman, who seemed quite pleased at being addressed by a person of Alfred's appearance. Of course they soon entered on business, and which the advertiser doubted not would be agreeable to all parties, and speedily accomplished. On Alfred's requesting to be more particularly instructed in the nature of the subject they met upon, the old man said, "I presume, Sir, you understand there is a lady in the case?" Alfred declared it was immaterial to him with whom he was to negotiate; the money was now ready, and should be transferred in three hours if it was wanted.

"You seem a very pretty young gentleman," replied the other, "and my employer will be very happy to dispose of his charge so well."

In short, Alfred soon discovered, that by bribing a guardian he might marry a young girl of seventeen with twenty thousand pounds. He assured the agent that a compliance of that sort was out of his power, he having no thoughts of matrimony in such a line; therefore, there was an end of the treaty. He came immediately to me, heartily disappointed, and equally enraged against the villainy of such a guardian. I urged him to make some farther inquiry into this iniquitous transaction; and as he staid all night in town, he went the next morning, where he was informed the agent had completed his business, having met with a gentleman, not an hour after he had left him, who had accepted the offer with joy. How happy should I have been could this infamous principal have received some punishment, or even detection! Well, I believe they will marry Alfred amongst them some how or other, or at least he is to have no preferment without *matrimony being the sauce to it*. At last his

dear mother has had a letter "from her
"very affectionate brother-in-law," as he
signs himself. He tells her he has it in his
power to advance the fortune of his nephew,
in a way he hopes the young man can-
not object to : and then proceeds to de-
scribe a lady, who will have an immense
fortune, and who has great possessions al-
ready. From the style of the letter I
immediately saw through it, and at my
request Alfred wrote an answer rather in-
clining to acquiescence, and it proves as I
thought. The lady wants to be married
in great haste ; *lest, as an old author says,*
she should have a child for her cradle, before
she has an husband for her bed. Here is a
provident uncle for you ! Indeed he knows
not Alfred, and, perhaps, thinks his soul
as base as his own. The lady is the
daughter of a baronet ; we all knew what
she was as soon as her name was mention-
ed. This is not the first accident she has
met with in consequence of an illicit in-
trigue with a near relation.

To a man of Alfred's principles, starving, or the worst of deaths, would be preferable to even accepting an independence from one who has dared to think so meanly of him. He has written him a letter, of which I took a copy, and will one day shew it to you. If the wretch has not the most callous heart in the world, I think it will sting him through and through. So that hold has given way; and now we must look out for some other, whereby to hang our hopes on for a little while, to prove, I fear, that the offspring of *hope* is *disappointment*.

I am sorry to see these repeated perverse circumstances have an alarming effect on Mrs. Harley. She is equally sanguine with her son, but she bears not the frustration of her hopes with the philosophy she used to do at a much earlier age. Her mind loses daily much of that elastic tone and firmness, which makes us naturally spring forward to some future hope and
expect-

expectation. Heaven prolong her life, and add to its comforts as the likeliest means: she declares she wishes for life more than ever, as on that circumstance depends now more than half Alfred's income. At her death he will have nothing but his poor three thousand pounds, which he was so eager to lay out to good advantage lately.

I think of this unfortunate sacrifice to the villainy of her guardian with a constant concern. I tell Alfred I fancy his uncle must be the man. I should be happy to know there were not two such characters in the world.

Had my Alfred been disengaged, he might have pursued the business, and extricated the poor damsel from the base hands of worse than a giant, who has kept her in thrall, only to deliver her to, perhaps, a worse wretch than himself. I shall ever regret not searching into the business directly; but my Alfred finding his hopes

overfet, thought at that moment of nothing but communicating his disappointment to one who was so much interested in his success.

There is another thing too, which you will allow sufficient to make me uneasy. I see Alfred chagrined at being thus confined to a life of idleness, without any pursuit; yet he carries it off with as much hilarity as possible, to save his mother from feeling anguish. But it is deplorable for a man just turned of twenty-four to be condemned to vegetate in a little village, and perhaps be called an idle young fellow, who might do something for his living.

That idea of every one's being able to *do something* is very prevalent, and easily adopted; but the greatest difficulty is being able to find *something to do*. A man who can dig, or is not ashamed to beg, may sometimes find employment for both his talents; but a man trained up, and educated

cated as Alfred has been, cannot so readily find a suitable establishment. He had the other day an offer of going abroad with two young men, the sons of Lord —, as their travelling tutor. But what a life is that!—The real bear-leader is a much happier (and as tutors are looked on in general, a much more respectable) being, if he has a taste for the noble sciences of music and dancing. No, I would not consent to that expedient of being kept from starving; nor would he, I am convinced. A most unthankful office indeed, and rewarded (most commonly as it deserves) with neglect, if not contempt.

All my comfort is, we have a large field to look over, and something may start to-morrow, if we are out of luck to-day. So "*Courage, mes filles!*" "The world is all before us, where to choose," and we may pick here and there; no danger of not finding some herb to keep us from quite perishing.

A quiet cottage, with an income that would allow us something to spare to the still more indigent than ourselves, would, with Alfred, be all my unaspiring heart could wish for. "Elegant retirement and poetic ease," is sung forth by all the lovers of the muses. In such a situation, I have no idea of being tired or dull. We each of us have had an education that would furnish out a fund of employment for our hands and heads. Music, drawing, reading, working—Oh, we should never be tired—never find the day too long. I do not say I should be happy to sip nothing else than the clear bubbling brook, which echoed to our vows of love and constancy; or that the herbs of the field, over which we "tripped with light fantastic toe," or the berries of the hedges, would be sufficient food; the arch of heaven our canopy, and the fragrant earth our bed.—This is too romantic, and I could never picture happiness in the maddest of my hours in such "a wilderness
" of

“ of wee.” Yet I do think love in a cottage, provided *the cabin was convenient*, with a plan of œconomy, which I could easily reduce to practice, would be productive of the utmost felicity to two persons of a right turn of mind. I hate forms and ceremonies, and I see how heavily they sit on those who are obliged to practise them. What a slavish fatiguing life is that of a fine lady ! half the day is spent in striving to recruit for the excesses and extravagance of the other half ; vapoured all the morning, and rioting all the night—is not this one of the worst kinds of suicide—killing ourselves by inches ? Oh, my dear Maria, your friend was never cast in such a mould. I hate it. How readily would I fly from the contagion for ever to love and a cottage !—Adieu.

I am ever yours,

ELWINA.

LETTER LV.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

OUR dear Maria has sustained a very heavy loss in the death of Mrs. N——, her aunt, who resided with her father and self. She was an excellent woman, and much beloved by our amiable friend, who sincerely laments her, in a letter I yesterday received from her. What she had been able to save from not a very liberal jointure, she has left to Maria. But as she pathetically says, “all the goods that fortune had bestowed on her, I had the free enjoyment of while it was hers. The being possessor of all she could bestow, is now embittered by the reflection that I have lost her for ever—she was a kind benevolent friend, and a sweet companion to my dear father, who has now only poor Maria to sustain his infirm age. My beloved aunt a sist-
ed

“ ed me cheerfully in the pleasing task
“ of striving to make an old man forget
“ his better days, and beguile the hours of
“ indigence with smiles.”

I feel most sensibly, my dear Alfred, the distress of Maria, and will certainly go to her soon as possible. Does she not deserve some sacrifice, and am I not going to make her a great one?—for I fear I shall miss the happiness of seeing you. *Virtue is its own reward*, it is said; but you might lend a helping hand towards doing that good office yourself. Can you not contrive to come and sympathize with your Elwina, in the sweet employment of drying Maria's tears. And yet how can it be done without fatigue, and difficulty to your dear self? No, I will not expect it—It would be too much.

I think the character of Maria never rises higher in my esteem than when I contemplate her supporting her spirits so nobly.

nobly, and administering comforts to her beloved father, who by a too implicit faith in the honour of another, has totally ruined his child's prospects. He was once possessed of an affluent fortune, and Maria his declared heir, having no other children. It is but a very few years since he was prevailed on to become bound for a designing wretch, who drew him in to set his name to papers, after having altered the bonds to a much larger sum; by which he got great credit, and amassed a considerable fortune, for which he rewarded his friend's credulity, by absconding to America, the place of his birth, and leaving him to the mercy of his incensed creditors, who all came upon him at once, loudly demanding their dues from him. Half distracted at the discovery of a villain he never once suspected, he gave up the whole of his fortune to a set of rapacious harpies, who, after dividing and subdividing it as they thought fit, left him a bare subsistence, only an annuity of three hundred

hundred a year for his life, and at his death one hundred per ann. for Maria.

It was a fatal precipitancy in the injured old gentleman to give up his fortune and effects : had he called his friends about him, some better measures would have been adopted, for it is much suspected, even the principal creditors, and the real contractor of the debts, divided the pillage of his fortune amongst them. The consequence was very dreadful, and for some time he was totally deprived of his senses. My charming friend behaved like an angel on this trying occasion, and Heaven gave her strength to combat the heaviest of afflictions, to soothe and comfort her father. She had been addressed by a young man of rank and fortune, to whom she was very much attached ; but the failure of her expectations from her father's losses, put an entire stop to the match, which had been in some degree of forwardness. The family of her lover

broke it off in a manner, that left in her bosom no other sentiment than that of the utmost contempt. He endeavoured to palliate the rude and illiberal conduct of his parents; and when she assured him she separated him from them in her own idea, he availed himself of this tender confession to strive to draw her into an engagement injurious to her fame and honour. This last outrage restored peace to her bosom at once. A perfect indifference soon succeeded to an affection so ill-placed, and, I believe, her heart has never since felt any passion but friendship.

At last, after many months, her dear father recovered the use of his senses; but he continued ill a long time. A physician recommended the waters of Barege as the best restorative, and Mrs. N——, then newly become a widow, joined her little stock to theirs, and they set off directly for those salubrious springs. They passed two seasons there, by which I think he will live many years with comfort.

Mrs.

Mrs. N—— has left two thousand pounds to Maria, which, though not a great, is a comfortable addition to her little income. And she has the generosity to say she shall take the earliest opportunity of making her will in favour of me, and my children, if ever I should have any.

I shall stay with her but a few days, as on Tuesday in Easter week Isabella quits her father's house for a husband's, and my company at the wedding could not be dispensed with. However, I am not to go into the country with the new-married folks. My brothers accompany them, and Mr. G——'s sister.

I hope Mrs. M—— has convinced you she is appeased at last, and is as cordial as ever. I should think it particularly well behaved in her, if she would ask me to spend a week or two at L—— before I go for the summer to H——. But I must not look forward to that hope, as I think

it very likely my father would object to the proposition, and perhaps it would not be right. These are little trials, my amiable Alfred, we must submit patiently to, to fit us for the happiness we promise ourselves, in one day having it in our power to pass our lives together. Now and then a necessary acquiescence to the will of others, not intirely conformable with our inclinations, will make us easily bear the natural frailties of human nature, and be more indulgent to the little foibles a nearer intimacy may disclose to us in each other. "To bear, and forbear," is not a bad motto, and a useful lesson may be learnt from it. But, "the pleasure of pleasing," is my favourite definition of a tender affection. May we never lose the delight that bestowing happiness derives to the giver, and then I think we shall continue to please for our own sakes, if we had not a more laudable motive. Adieu, my dear Alfred; I am most faithfully your own

ELWINA.

[Maria would not have placed this letter in the collection offered to the public, as she felt herself sufficiently gratified by the integrity of her own heart, and the private eulogium of her beloved friend. But the sarcasms thrown on her by the family of Elwina, made it necessary to do this justice to her character, both to clear it of the illiberal odium, as well as to give every letter written by Elwina, as she pledged herself to do.]

LETTER LVI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I AM determined not to leave poor virtue to the contingent chance of rewarding itself, when it is in my power to have the supreme happiness of dispensing the reward. Mr. W—— goes up to town on Wednesday very early, on particular busi-

business; and, still better, has promised me a bed at his house in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. I can be with my beloved Elwina by ten o'clock in the morning, and you may be sure I shall not leave the village of H— till late in the evening; so that I shall have many charming hours with you, and our excellent friend Maria, to whom I offer my sincere regard, and sympathy in her griefs, which it shall be my tender care, joined to that of my loved Elwina, to hush into peace. Tell her how much I thank her for her kind provision for our progeny. I must certainly come in for my share, Elwina, of *your children*. But I echo the wish of my dear future companion, and hope our Maria will live long enough to see our children's children provided for. What a pleasing addition to our little household would be such a friend as Maria! Oh, when will that happy time arrive—that period which my soul even sickens for, when we shall indeed be “all

“to each other” in the most enlarged sense? What scenes of endless delight do I frequently picture to myself when our union is made perfect. Yet I do not romantically think all our paths are to be strewn with ever-blooming flowers. I allow for the little draw-backs, which will, in spite of the soft delirium, convince us we are the son and daughter of Adam. But with *you* to sweeten the common ills of life—Oh, how easily they may be borne!—I shall only feel for my Elwina, lest the task of sustaining those evils should affect her too much.

And yet, my sweetest friend, you shall know *all* my weakness.—Though I seek not or wish for affluence—I dread no state but that of poverty. I can live without the superfluities of life; but there are some certain little enjoyments that I could neither dispense with in myself, nor see you (who are much dearer to me than myself) deprived of, without the severest pangs, because I may call them your birth-right.

You

You have now a servant to yourself, a carriage, and a table of elegancies. We may say, a person is quite happy without these externals, and indeed without the two last they may do better than to give up the first. But by what right do I draw you away from such a state, to place you in comparative indigence? That you would submit to these abridgments, in order to make me blest, is a proof of your excellence; but leaves that principle far behind, if not quite out of my character, should I, to gratify my affection, expose you to all the consequent difficulties of a too limited fortune. It is these reflections, my Elwina, that burst upon my too lively fancy, and tell me I am seeking to injure her whom I love. Why have I not a kingdom to bestow on my Elwina? Why am I deprived of the most exquisite delight, that of shewing to the world how dear she is to me? Dear lovely Elwina; never was woman dearer to man than thou art to me! While this sometimes sad heart beats, it will be thine; and thine alone

A L F R E D.

LETTER LVII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I DENY your position, both major and minor, as the logicians say. I have not a servant intirely to myself, for she dresses Isabella as well as me.—Falsehood the first.—And that a servant in that line is necessary to my happiness, I deny with both hands; the very hands that dressed my hair, when I first became acquainted with a certain youthful sceptic, who will not believe people can be happy without a thousand silly parades. In my faultless form did you perceive any thing wanting? And when I shall have the happiness of dressing for the eyes of Alfred alone—Oh, I shall adorn myself *comme une ange*! As to your *table of delicacies*, one would think you meant to affront my father for having lived in the city. I do
assure

assure you, sir, he never was even a common council-man.

Whenever I marry, I hope to live in the country, and then I shall not want a coach... an humble gig will content me, and I do think we might arrive at that piece of luxury, if we had some land to our house, which would maintain our horses; for I really have that kind of ambition about me, that I should like *one* out-rider in our *suite*.

I remember once seeing the sweetest little spot in the world, long before my acquaintance with you gave me a higher taste for rural felicity; yet I could not pass it without feeling an extreme interest in it; nor could I quit it without saying, "How
" happily would my life pass with a man
" of similar disposition in this charming
" retirement! Here I would place my
" harpsichord; in that recess, my simple
" sideboard; here my books should find
" room, and those whited walls I would
" adorn

“ adorn with my drawings. Near this
 “ purling stream I would make an harbour
 “ of woodbine and jessamine, still more
 “ perfumed with the blushing rose. Under
 “ that spreading elm, when it suited me
 “ to dine on cold meats, would I make
 “ the repast. A neat garden should sup-
 “ ply the fallad, and a cheering glass of
 “ currant wine.” I feel myself too much
 piqued now to tell you how often in those
 silly hours, when even the most sober fe-
 male wanders in the flowery fields of
 fancy, I have painted the rational realiza-
 tion of a scene of rural happiness, which
 affected me with so much delight when not
 more than eighteen. But Alfred is made
 for the world; it is pity that the world is
 not made for him. I should, however, be a
 very unsuitable partner on the throne of the
 kingdom you wished for. I fancy I should
 be like the cat turned into the lady. Na-
 ture would soon discover itself. Alfred, I
 will venture to say it, because my resolu-
 tion is now fixed, never to be yours till
 our

our circumstances may preclude every dreadful idea of poverty (which you know, like wealth, or even happiness, is comparative), that I know of no situation which I would not embrace that would give me the chance of passing my life with you, provided you had the same kind of affection for me, I feel I possess for you. But as for your royal doings, I give you leave to have as many wives and concubines as the great Solomon himself, with all my heart and soul; as for me,

“I would not queen it” for the world.

To be the wife of Alfred would be the delight, the happiness of my life—plain Alfred—King Alfred must woo another kind of mate. His pomp, his pageantry would be disclaimed and rejected by ELWINA.

LETTER LVIII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I HARDLY gave myself time to read your letter with attention, ere I set

set off to lay myself, and recantation of my heretical errors, at your feet. I bribed one of the coachmen to let me drive his horses (I believe the passengers were never so well driven in their lives), so eager was your Alfred (will you not allow me to use that expression?) to prove to his ever dear Elwina that she has conquered.

I deserved some punishment, and I have had it; for when I arrived in Bedford-square I found you had set out for H—— an hour before. Elwina was gone, and I felt I had no business there; and leaving a compliment for the family, I posted away to the Bedford Arms Coffee-house, where I am writing and retracting all I said in my former letter. I will be with you on Wednesday. The very forming the letters which compose that word, reminds me of that dear *Wednesday*, when my Elwina sweetly pronounced forgiveness to the presumptuous Alfred. Ah, may not the penitent Alfred look forward to

a repetition of lenity? Let me in pity to my feelings have a letter from you; it may reach me on Tuesday at farthest. Doubt every thing but my love, my unchangeable love for my Elwina! I would have made the best of my way to H—— after you; but that I came from L——, without apprizing my mother of my intention; and she would have had a thousand unquiet minutes, as I could not get back till late at night.

Do not think your arrows pierced less deep for being ornamented with flowers; I may truly adopt the lines of Prior to them :

Th' adorning them with so much art
Was but a barbarous skill;
Twas like the pois'ning of a dart,
Too apt before to kill.

Oh, my sweetest girl, that we could realize the scenes your elegant fancy has drawn in such bewitching colours! Thy
Alfred

Alfred has not been behind-hand. It was his humility that dared not think he deserved so great a sacrifice. I will abdicate my throne to live the life of love, of reason and philosophy with Elwina. In short, any life she chooses, for without her there is no happiness, no comfort, no peace for her ever faithful and devoted

ALFRED.

LETTER LIX.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

NO, Alfred, *I am not a man that I should repent*; but a woman who finds no difficulty in keeping the resolution she once has had the strength to form. A time may come when I may acknowledge you are right; at present, I can only say, you are superior to me in the article of prudence. I think I beat you a bar's length in love still; but of that hereafter. I shall not blush at finding myself outdone there too—The man should always give the lead.

You

You may come on Wednesday; Maria will be your advocate. I would not oblige her to condemn you unheard, so I brought your letter, not to plead *your* cause, but to justify *my* condemnation. She is a good creature; besides, to tell you the truth, it is rather in her own style of colouring; for I can shew you a letter from her that was near breaking my heart, because it awakened me too suddenly from one of those pretty *day dreams* you found me so deeply engaged in: that was, however, a long time since; and I still went dreaming on.

You are “proud of heart,” like poor mad Tom, or you would not have disdained to have been driven to town, instead of taking the whip. I think you were very fortunate if you had not a shower, for it rained when I set off for H———. I should be sorry your health should suffer for the errors of your mind, and hope you have not got a cold. I never wish you to feel those kind of sympathies with
me.

me. I have been quite disordered by that almost universal complaint, but am now getting better.

I am glad there is time enough to settle our differences before we meet. Heaven knows that circumstance happens so seldom, that we had not need spend our time in quarrelling. So I forgive you, Alfred, though I own you must be very civil and observant, before I forget it; not that my wrath is much kindled against you neither; you own your fault, and are likely enough to be punished for it: it was an error in judgment; and we are not wise at all times. You see how sententious you have made me.

But let us change this subject for a better, though not a more cheerful one—my dear Maria. I found her full of affliction, and I united the tears of friendship with those of duty. Mrs. N—'s death is much to be lamented; while she lived, our

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Maria could, now and then, have varied her life by little absences from home; but now, I dare say, she will never be prevailed on to leave her father. How happy then am I (since, most likely, I shall have many years to reside at H——) that they have fixed their residence there: it is truly a most fortunate circumstance in my favour.

Maria requests me to give her love to you, and to assure you your company will be very acceptable to her. Her father unites in the same compliment. And now what shall I say? Nothing! “Nothing can come of nothing,” as old Lear says. In short, I can say no more than I have said a thousand times, that

I am yours,

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER LX.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

Tuesday.

I HARDLY think my peace is yet made. Indeed, my Elwina, I see plainly you are inexorable. "But Maria is my advocate." Kind Maria! And yet, I fear, though unintentionally, she has irritated my charming judge against me; for if she has laboured to prove me guiltless, she deprives you of that triumph of tenderness, extending mercy to a criminal. She should rather, as I have done myself, throw me on the clemency of the court, and tell you I submit to any punishment you can inflict; any thing, but such severe reproofs as you couch in words, that take upon them the properties of daggers.

D 2

daggers. Oh! my dear, may the contest never be decided, which of us loves the other the best! And never will I disturb a dream of my Elwina's again, till I can awaken her to real rapture and happiness!

To be sure I could not feel your cruel meaning, when you congratulate yourself on Maria's living at H——, "where in all likelihood you are destined to remain many years." You did not mean to wound me to the soul in that sentence. But I have offended, and must submit to my lovely tyrant, and "kiss the rod." I hope you will allow me to kiss the hand which dealt the blow; that dear hand, that you once said *was sacred to Alfred*.

You will get this to night, and may my friendly genius visit you in "airy dreams," and plead the cause of love and Alfred! No, indeed; so seldom as we meet, we ought not to waste the precious hours

hours in wrangling. Heaven forbid we should ever find that method necessary to fill up the time! And yet this kind of *paper-work* may not sometimes be amiss; at least to those cold-hearted lovers who want a degree of fanning to keep the flame alive, as reconciliation allows tender familiarities that are so dear, and which a woman of such delicacy as my Elwina knows so well to grant or deny, that the first will never let me presume on her indulgence, or the last despair from her refusals. Thus it is to act with propriety; in which none is better versed than Elwina; and notwithstanding a little faucy stricture on poor *prudence*, who possesses a greater share than Elwina? May I not subscribe your name thus to every social and moral, positive and relative virtue? Yes, surely I might, and do you but bare justice. I would say too, that no one can be better acquainted with the passion of love, and that no heart in the world is more actuated by that noble sentiment.

But here, I should speak truth, though not all the truth, for my heart tells me, in its fond and tumultuous beatings, that under the article of love I must place the name of

ALFRED.

LETTER LXI.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

THE wedding is over. Yesterday my sister commenced the title of matron. Oh! may she be happy! It is truly an awful sacred ceremony. For the universe I would not give my hand to any other man than Alfred! How can any one approach the altar from principles of avarice, pride, or any other motive than love? How can they be insensible of that charge, *As ye shall answer at the last day, &c?* Oh, Alfred, even when supported by you I think my heart will
 sink

sink when those soul-searching words are put to me with the energy I heard them pronounced yesterday! I looked at Isabella: I looked at Mr. G——. A calm insipidity sat on her features; an absolute indifference on his. Understand me. I do not mean an indifference towards his wife, but a total inattention to the ceremony, as if it had been spoken in an unknown tongue, instead of the language of God and human laws.

As it was first proposed, the married folks returned to our house; took their chocolate, and set off for Mr. A——'s seat in Buckinghamshire. You know Mrs. A—— is sister to the bridegroom. I believe I told you my brothers Clodio and George were of the party, and will stay there during the remainder of the recess. It would be rather charitable if you would come and congratulate us on the occasion. In truth the house looks a little dull.

I have sent you a piece of bride-cake ; which, if your faith is strong, you may suppose has passed nine times through the bride's wedding-ring ; though if I could assure you the fact had happened under my eye, you would not think the camel, or rather the *cable* I believe you learned commentators call it, passing through the eye of a needle quite such an impossibility. But you will not be secluded from your inheritance in the kingdom of heaven by your possessions on earth. Yet we are to be judged by our actions, not our possessions, as wealth is entirely comparative ; and a little well spent may be riches, while a great deal thrown away may make the possessor poorer than the poorest.

Will you come to-morrow ? My father desired me to ask you, and I dare believe you will not refuse me ; particularly since you vowed and swore at H——, that for the future you would be guided solely by your Elwina : aye, and she will keep
you

you up to your agreement you may assure yourself.

And pray do me the favour of going to your neighbour Mrs. M——, with all our loves and compliments, and inform her, the remains of our disjointed family wish to have the pleasure of dining with her on Saturday. You must charge yourself with her answer. I hope, and do think she will engage your dear mother to meet us, and her *quondam* chaplain to say grace; and *grace* the bottom of her table. You will come to-morrow to dinner, that is settled. And why should you not stay till Saturday morning? We shall be but four in the coach with you. Now do be good-natured for once and comply. You may have a bed at the coffee-house. I know my father will be pleased with your company; and the longer he sees you, the more he will love you. You, who are fond of extracting hints from expressions, cannot you elaborate

something from that in your favour?
Adieu, my ever amiable Alfred; I am
your own

ELWINA.

L E T T E R LXII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

THE last coachman promised to deliver this at your house. Will I come? Oh! can my dear Elwina doubt it for a moment? Yes, I will come; and will stay (unless your father turns me out of doors) till I have the happiness of accompanying you to Mrs. M——, who will be quite happy to see people who have so lately been at a wedding. My sweet Elwina—But I must suppress my feelings till we meet.

Mrs.

Mrs. M——— has given me a commission to send her a dish of fish, for I told her I should not return till Saturday: but this you are to know nothing of, but suppose the turbot grew upon the farm. I should not mention this, if you did not know her foible of wishing to have it thought her table is supplied from her poultry-yard, ponds, and garden; when we, who have sometimes peeped *behind the curtain*, have seen the pigeons, ducks, &c. and the asparagus and cucumbers unpacked from the London markets.

My dearest mother truly rejoices in the pleasing expectation of seeing the object in the world most beloved, except her son. Oh, when will the time arrive when she will love us both in one!

Adieu, my best, my only love!

ALFRED.

LETTER LXIII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

AM I not a Machiavel in politics? and did you not feel the truth of this assertion during your dwelling with us? How much are my father and mother charmed with you! I knew they would. Oh, my amiable, my heart's-chosen Alfred, how do my eyes fill with tears of tenderness, when I re-trace the affection I discovered in them towards you. Why will not my father complete our happiness? or rather, why did he tie up his own hands? He said to me this morning, "My dear Elwina, if I could give you twenty thousand pounds this moment, I know no man on earth who should have you and your fortune so freely as Alfred. He is every

“ every thing the fondest parent can wish
 “ for the most amiable child.” I could
 not express my love and gratitude other-
 wise, than throwing my arms round his
 neck, and bathing his cheeks with my
 tears accompanied with kisses. He pressed
 me affectionately to his bosom. My mo-
 ther, dear kind mother! dropped tears too;
 and wiping them away, said, “ My dear
 “ Mr. ———, why cannot something
 “ be done; some means found out to
 “ make our dear children happy? They
 “ are not ambitious or aspiring; I am sure
 “ a little would content them. You have
 “ always said you meant to make an addi-
 “ tion to your children’s fortunes at your
 “ death; why not make that addition
 “ now? abridge the very ample allowance
 “ you make me; or I will agree to give
 “ up the half to them. Why should not
 “ the sweetest and most dutiful of all our
 “ children be made happy, when the man
 “ of her choice would do honour to the
 “ first family in the kingdom?” My Al-
 fred,

fred, I expect your sympathizing heart will melt as mine did. Oh! every thing might be done, if it was not for my ambitious brother. My father has indeed tied up his hands from dispensing happiness to his children. His other children—my brother has enough to purchase happiness, if there was a market where that commodity was sold.

My mother has told me since morning, that my father has made such additions to his son's fortune, that he could do no more for us than he has done, but that she had brought him to consent to allow me two hundred a year, over and above my three thousand pounds, till you could get a place under government amounting to that income, or more. However, she was sorry to add, my brother had said he would oppose your advancement, to punish me for refusing his friend Sir Thomas K——. My mother too, most kindly said, she would strive to keep up this good

good resolution in my father; and when the house broke up, my brother talked of going to Spa with Mr. and Mrs. G——, and then she hoped to prevail on my father to give my hand to you: “Your brother,” she added, “will be very angry at first; but you need not mind it; your father will find some way to appease him, and the annuity will not be felt, as we shall make some imperceptible diminution in our housekeeping, which will make that quite easy.”

I should be quite easy I am sure, but from the tormenting idea that we are to stand in awe of this proud senator. I could almost wish you had been within call at the time; perhaps, then, the matter could have been settled beyond any machinations of my brother; for I still fear my father's want of resolution. I know his parental affection, and that it would induce him to do every thing to make me happy; but then the influence he has acquired

quired over him, more by forcible than pleasant methods, can undo all in a moment.

I know very well my father would rather allow me four hundred a year, if he could do it without danger of my brother's knowing it, than fifty with his acquaintance of the measure. This sounds odd, but it is too true notwithstanding.

If my dear mother should keep my father to his promise, let me see, how much should we then muster together *to keep the wolf from the door*? The interest of our respective fortunes, when joined, is three hundred a year, and the added two will make five. And then, surely, between us we may, by making it happier, lengthen out the life of your—let me say our dear mother, for many years to come: and as she must and shall live with us (I will have you on no other condition), that will
be

be two hundred more. In all seven hundred a year!

Come strike hands and take the offer;
Farther on you may fare worse.

My heart feels as light as the gossamer's feathers. Will not this intelligence convey an infinity of happiness to my Alfred? Oh, I am sure it will.

I was exceedingly happy on Saturday to see Mrs. M——— had quite forgiven us both: and pray assure her how much she has obliged me, by kindly intreating my father to let me pass a few days with her. I shall most certainly avail myself very soon of their indulgence: but I am very selfish, and while my brother is absent, I know you will feel more pleasure in your visits to town; and when he returns, I will go down to L———. I shall not be in the way to put him out of humour, and my mother will labour to bring every thing about for us. My Alfred, you little

the thought what a thread was fabricating for you! Oh! may no adverse event happen to overthrow this dear scheme of happiness;—this life of reason, improved by tender affection!

My mother has been looking over her hoards, and finds many things which she puts aside, saying, “Well, Elwina, I think you shall have this, and this.” I assure you I shall not come away empty handed; and you know I have been employing myself lately in making useful and ornamental furniture. I have finished a pair of screens, and painted a beautiful fringe for the ornament of a glass. Pray make yourself thoroughly acquainted with agriculture and gardening. You shall not “eat the bread of idleness.” We will, like the first pair, have our separate employment: with her example before my eyes, I shall not be led astray as Eve was. Though by the by I seem as confident in my own strength as she was. But I have
more

more reason. She had never heard the voice of flattery, but from one man. I, you know, have heard a thousand pretty fellows talk soft nonsense. I am too old a bird to be taken with the chaff, when I am in possession of the grain itself. Oh! what a paradisaical dwelling will ours be! We will not be a great way from London; and (if you please, I might say) on the H—— side. We may look out for some little place in Hertfordshire: some *dear* spot. *Pardon me for being jocular*, cheap will suit us better: but endeared to us it will be, as it will unite in the most sacred bonds, two hearts formed for each other. My Alfred, I now look forward with hope that the day is not far distant when I shall indeed be your

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

MAY the choicest blessings Heaven has in store be showered down on the reverend heads of the authors of my Elwina's being, and Alfred's happiness!

Now, indeed, does my heart look forward to delight. To what a delirium of delight has Elwina opened the view! To live for ever with you—to call you mine,—to see you each hour of the blissful day! I think no one ever knew happiness before—It seems given to Alfred alone to be blest.

Your whole letter my delighted mother read, and wept over. Did not the heart

heart of your Alfred melt? Yes; tears of love, veneration and gratitude, bedewed his cheeks. Not to have felt most exquisitely would have proved me unworthy the heavenly blessing I now anticipate, with all the trembling of expecting and approaching felicity.

I will be with you, my angel, to-morrow by dinner time; but I could not stop the effusion of my love and gratitude bursting forth. It was highly necessary to give this vent to my feelings. How shall I address your excellent father and mother? Oh! Elwina, they are—they will be mine too! *Are you the sweetest and most dutiful of their children?*

Alfred shall copy, shall emulate you. — We will strive, as you sweetly say, “to lengthen their lives by making them happier.” Each day which is added to their being, shall they have cause to bless the

the hour they bestowed the most amiable and lovely of women, on their and her grateful

ALFRED.

LETTER LXV.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

WHILE I enjoyed your dear society through the favour of our joint friends, I thought there could be no alloy to my happiness. But alas! on my return to town, I see too plainly our cruel enemy (I am sorry to use that epithet when writing of my brother) has gained so much advantage of my father, that at present we must lay aside our plan of felicity, which the near prospect we had of realizing it, had justified us in dwelling upon so delightfully. My mother still
says,

says, "she shall not give up her point, but
 "that we must wait a little longer."
 Wait! I could wait seven years, if, at
 the end of that period, I should be certain
 no envious dæmon, or proud brother,
 would have the power of stepping in be-
 tween, and blasting all my hopes. I am
 in no hurry to be married, even to my
 Alfred; no improper hurry I mean: but
 to have my happiness bandied about by
 the caprice and injustice of one, to whom,
 in my parents life, I owe no obedience,
 and from whom I have never been repaid
 the tenth of the love I had for him, is
 surely cause enough for my complaint:
 yet, in compliance with my dear mother's
 earnest request, I will be patient, as *Patient*
Grizzle herself, but not so meanly servile
 as she was neither.

He, my brother I mean, thinks he
 mortifies me by repeating the splendour of
 Isabella's establishment, for they have now
 got to their country house. Well, let
 them

them be splendid; I want only to be happy; and they have surely no right to take from me the better part which I have chosen. Ah! how little does he know my heart, if he supposes it ever cherished a wish for grandeur of equipage or dress! If his does, he has the large means of supplying it with the species of happiness he has a soul to enjoy. But let him not break in upon my peace; let me in my blest retirement taste uninterruptedly the real charms of life—of happiness—of love! of which I am sure he has no more idea, than of a sixth sense. He is to me an object of pity, not envy. For he is deprived (by his want of feeling) of the truest delight that humanity can experience. Peace to him! I say, if he will not seek to disturb mine!

There are great preparations making for the *entré* of Mrs. G——. She is to be presented next week; and a new and elegant dress is planning for the birth-day, which

you know is to be kept next Monday. Thank Heaven, I am out of the list of those, who are *to strut and fret their little hour* on that day. Sir Thomas K——'s sister, the Countess of ——, is to introduce the bride, and takes her likewise on Monday. Calm and quiet as Isabella seemed, yet I assure you her heart would always dance as fast as it could, on any occasion of exhibiting her person in public. How wisely and providentially arranged are the allotments of the universe! I should be less happy even with Alfred, if he was in such a style of living as would subject me to all this parade. As little would Isabella have a relish for those nameless satisfactions I anticipate in our dear retirement. May I not say, the great Artificer of the world has fitted each for the station they are destined to fill? Destined! Oh! yes, let me think that Heaven destined me for Alfred! For once the congenial souls, which the adverse winds too frequently dis sever—for once these

kindred minds have met, and their heaven-designed union will be perfected on earth!

As I have nothing to do in the great world, I shall accompany my father and mother to H——, for the summer season. We leave town to-morrow. Adieu, my amiable, my beloved Alfred.

I am ever yours,

ELWINA.

LETTER LXVI.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

Saturday, 3d June, 1780.

I LIKE not these doings, Alfred. Surely this ungovernable mob will do an infinity of mischief. What can that mad wretch mean? By his enthusiasm he will set fire to a train he may labour in vain to extinguish.

extinguish. My brother, among many score members, yesterday, had very near been torn to pieces. He has written an account to my father of the danger they were in, and says, had it not been from the fear the vile incendiary had lest his cousin should put his threats against him in execution, he doubts not, the mob would have broken into the houses of parliament. Oh! Heaven shield us from these threatening calamities! But it is not possible so many thousand persons assembled, can disperse (even if their petition was granted, which I hope never will, when so insolently enforced), without doing a number of outrageous actions. Deluded wretches! they know not at present what they do, or what may be the fatal consequence.

I am heartily glad I am out of London; the very sight of so many posting from hence, and the environs, to assemble in St. George's Fields, turned my heart quite

sick with apprehension. I predicted all the mischief they have already done, and pray to Heaven it may end here!

I rejoice too that my Alfred is not in town; though, believe me, I grieve at the occasion that keeps you confined at home; but I hope your dear mother's indisposition is but a casual one, and that in a few days it will leave her intirely. My most respectful love to her. I wish to my heart I could share your task of nursing her. Why may I not fly to testify my love and duty to the best of women? How silly are the customs of the world! If you, who are to be my protector, my guardian, my husband, was not there, I might then attend on your dear mother. Or if, with all your amiable virtues, I could be insensible of your worth, or you saw nothing in me to love, I might even then shew my attention to her. But I must not come near your dwelling now; because, by and by, you will be nearer to me (as you have

have long been dearer) than all the world beside. Oh, 'tis absurd doctrine. As Sterne says, *They order these things better in France.*

I must conclude with my most cordial wishes for your dear mother, and your dear self, for the sake of your own

ELWINA.

LETTER LXVII.

To the same.

Tuesday, June 6.

WHAT a dreadful day was yesterday! And how was the anniversary of the best of kings celebrated! By riot, confusion, and anarchy. I think I never

felt such a sensation of sickly horror, if I may be allowed the expression, as to hear the bells ringing in our village, and at the same time to behold the conflagration in London ! To us, every part of the town appeared in flames ; and the consternation with which all orders of people were seized, cannot be described. Yet for myself, I felt not so much fear as indignation ; and I lost all patience on seeing several of our neighbours coming from town, with their servants and horses ornamented, or rather stigmatized with the ensigns of disorder and tumult. Some of our servants were putting blue cockades in their hats ; but I could not help tearing them out, and throwing them into the kitchen fire. My father said, we must comply with the times. But I reasoned on the matter thus : “ By this tame compliance, the de-
“ luded mob believe they have the wishes
“ of the people. In these cases you must
“ take a decided part, and shew what
“ principles you are of. The wearing a
“ blue

“blue ribband evidently encourages these
“infatuated wretches, and will contribute
“to the increase of them.” How my spirit rises ! I know if I was a man, I should either kill or be killed ; I could not stand by like a coward, and see my dearest rights taken from me, without striving to secure them. Poor Maria and I have been together all this day : I do not like to see any body, we hear such dreadful accounts ; many I hope are exaggerated. The common people love to make the worst of every thing ; and it is really alarming to see the insolence of many of them : they are so stupid as to suppose, by levelling all the rich, their situation will be more elevated ; and the gardener told Jenny, “that in a day or two, perhaps, I might
“be glad to put on the ribbands I had
“burnt, in order to save myself from
“outrage.”

All this while my heart is with Alfred. Where is my amiable friend, and how will

he be able to keep himself out of the way of affording succour, or receiving injury?

Pray let me hear from you soon, or I shall give way to a thousand shocking ideas. Any government but a mob, I beg of Heaven to give us! These madmen may drive government to arbitrary measures, and an absolute monarchy; for who could lose a moment in deciding which is best? Here are some few catholics among us; good, peaceable, quiet and respectable people; they are almost terrified out of their lives and senses. They fly about, afraid to stay in their houses, yet not knowing where to go for security. Very much in this way, my sister used to say, the riots of Boston began. How can any be wicked, or even weak enough, to give encouragement or tacit countenance to such outrages?

I cannot write—I know not how to refrain—I dread any one approaching the house, lest I should hear accounts still worse

worse than those of yesterday: and this morning, I think every body seems panic-struck; they seem to have made no opposition to the insurgents.

Heaven preserve you, my dearest Alfred, and send us all peace at the last!

Yours most truly,

ELWINA.

LETTER LXVIII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

June 7.

THESE are dreadful times indeed, my Elwina, when every man's hand seems lifted up against his neighbour, and even families are divided. Not to have taken an active part, would have stamped your Alfred with the name of

coward for ever. He would have been unworthy of the high title he one day hopes to obtain, of being Elwina's protector. Protection she could never receive from the hand of a coward. No, my Elwina, I felt a martial spark kindle up in my veins, and I hastened up to town, in hopes that my feeble arm might do some service to my distressed brethren. I had the happiness of preventing some mischief; and, I do think, a little well-shewn courage would have done very much. I am of opinion had the keepers of our prisons had resolution enough to put their sense of personal danger out of the question, and shot the first leader who demanded the keys, Newgate and the King's-bench would never have been injured, and the numbers of wretches let loose on mankind would now have been in confinement. I had the good luck to secure three or four principal ones out of a party, who were going to demolish the house of our good neighbour Sir Robert

B—,

B——, only because he is a catholic. His family, particularly his wife and children, were in the greatest horror. The mob had got into the house, levying contributions, and a great deal of the furniture was brought out to be burnt. I seized one fellow, who was going to set fire to the pile, and swore I would shoot him through the head. I had a pistol cocked in my hand. My resolution saved both house and goods, and I dragged away three of the miscreants to a justice, nor left them till they were safely lodged in a prison. You know me too well, my dearest Elwina, to believe I relate this out of ostentation, or any affectation of bravery more than men have in common; but you may infer from this what a few resolute minds might have done to stem the torrent of a mob. I made the servants, whom I was obliged likewise to threaten, take in all the goods to the worthy Baronet's house, and we watched before the door under arms the whole night.

Lady B——, with the children, went down to L—— under the most dreadful apprehensions lest these insurgents should attack that house also : all this, you will observe, was before the military had power to act.

Your letter, my Elwina, I have just received, dated Tuesday. How much more dreadful were the conflagrations of that night ! No eye, but that which saw them, will hereafter credit the reports of this day's events. Surely it was one of the most horrid spectacles this country ever witnessed. Let those who were not spectators judge what the inhabitants felt, when they beheld at the same instant, the flames ascending, and rolling in clouds from the King's-bench and Fleet prisons ; from Newgate, Bridewell ; from the toll-gates on Blackfriar's bridge, and from numerous houses in every quarter of the town ; and particularly from your neighbour's town-house and warehouses, where the conflagration

gration was dreadful beyond all description. They say, there were six and thirty houses blazing at one time, and which might be seen at once from many parts of the town. When the foldiers were allowed to act, the explosion of their arms, joined to the tremendous noise of the authors of these disturbances, served to impress the mind with the most horrid ideas of universal anarchy and approaching desolation. How happy is it the rioters did not first attempt the bank ! The consequence of that being the first object of their fury, fills one with a dismay, which the knowledge of its security even now can hardly repress. What numbers have fallen victims to the intemperate zeal of a madman ! But mad let him be : I hope from my soul he will be brought to condign punishment. Yet what punishment, that our laws can inflict, will be adequate to his crime ? He must have been worse than an idiot to have believed he could once set fire to a train, and then stop the progress of it with his breath.

breath. But his breath served to inflame them the more. I really felt such rage kindle in my veins, that I forgot every thing, but the desire of stopping the effects as much as my single arm and voice could do.

I admire your spirit, my Elwina, in not suffering your servants to wear blue cockades, although it was ever my favourite colour, and you, my only favourite, looked so uncommonly lovely in those ribbands. It will be a long time before I shall be reconciled to them, or believe they can be cleansed from the impurity of treasonable rioting. No, I would have lost the last drop of my blood before I would have injured the real cause of religion and liberty, by placing one of those detestable signals of rebellion in my hat.

A man, and he had the appearance of a gentleman too, observed to me I had not a ribband in my hat. "That man should
" not

“not live an hour,” I replied, “who should dare to accuse me of the principles of those who disgrace their country by wearing them.” There is nothing like talking and looking fierce, Elwina, on those occasions. “What can one do?” he asked; “one must be governed by the majority.”

“Perish the majority!” I exclaimed. “If you are not an abettor of rebellion in its worst state, throw that indignant badge away, and join with a true friend to his religion and country.” He saw I was both able and willing to defend him, and he actually trampled the commission of a scoundrel under his feet. This proves how many, from a pusillanimous compliance with the mob, wore an appearance contrary to their real principles. The man who fears to lose his life in such a cause, deserves not to hold it on any terms.

Thank

Thank Heaven, this day the citizens begin to recover from their panic, which will fix an everlasting stigma on them, at least as long as this strange event is remembered in the annals of history. Nay, indeed, some at the west end of the town are as much to blame. They well knew the meeting was called, and they should have made it unlawful for such numbers to assemble. But states, like individuals, grow wise only by experience.

It is impossible to ascertain the number of wretches who lost their lives already on this dreadful occasion. Many have fallen victims to powder and ball ; but still more by inebriation ; as at the distilleries in Holborn, I suppose hundreds were killed by spirituous liquors, and the houses falling in. Nay, I am told, for I was not present, that when the warehouses were set on fire by the monsters on the outside, there were scores plundering and drinking within, who, when the flames drove them to

the entrance, were restrained by the soldiers bayonets, and thus became the victims of their crimes. The mangled bodies were without number, which, half consumed, tumbled into the ruins.

They have not yet taken the prime author of this mischief into custody ; but I suppose they soon mean to do it. If he had ten thousand lives, he could not repay his country the distresses he has brought upon it. If such be the tenets of protestantism, the pagan is a better friend to society. " No man can be a Christian," the excellent Lord Littleton said, " who would persecute his fellow creature for being a Jew." What Christian must he be who would persecute with fire and sword another Christian, because he differs in his mode of worship ?

It is wonderful, Elwina, that through the whole of this fatal business, so little should have been done effectually to stop the progress,

gress, or above all prevent the mischief. For six days successively, from Friday the 2d till this day, Thursday the 7th, the cities of London and Westminster have been given up into the hands of an unarmed nameless mob, to be plundered at their discretion. It really will read very odd some years hence, and we shall hardly be able to make our children conceive it possible, that a parcel of boys and women (for the incendiaries were little more) could be permitted to grow to such an alarming height.

My poor mother suffered, as you may suppose, all the terrors that a fond mother could feel. I begged Lady B—— to have the goodness to send to her, that her anxiety on my account might be relieved. She kindly went herself, and passed two nights in her house.

Sir Robert is full of acknowledgments to me for the succour I was so happy to afford him. He has been most profuse in his
offers

F O R

offers of friendship, and
 tily by the hand, wished
 that I had a regiment of as brave
 myself. He talked this evening
 on a subject that I own has ever been
 my heart. The life of arms I should have
 chosen in preference to any other. The
 church, you know, was the wish of those
 who had a right to form my fortunes, and I
 submitted. But it is plain I was not de-
 signed for it. And, my Elwina, what a
 shame for a man at my time of life to be
 living like a drone at home, when so many
 of my compeers in age are planting lau-
 rels to adorn their brows, and lay at their
 mistresses feet. Elwina, I have yet done
 nothing to merit your love. My country
 calls me, and no voice ought to lure me
 from its service. I believe you have so
 much true patriotism, that you would not
 object to my drawing a sword against our
 foes: but I fear my mother has not a grain
 of martial valour; she has shewn courage
 and fortitude in supporting numerous dis-
 tresses,

early age: But the
 ary for the claims made on
 y, have certainly brought on
 ure old age, and rendered her less
 to bear disappointment than most
 young people. Equally sanguine with
 youth, she sinks under any scheme that is
 frustrated, and so many of ours have fallen
 to the ground, that they bear her down
 with them---she has no longer strength of
 mind or body to combat with them. This,
 my dearest Elwina, you will believe, af-
 fects me extremely; and lest I should be
 the cause of accelerating her death, I wave
 the flattering prospect Sir Robert B——
 holds up to my view.

I have been perfectly ingenuous with
 him, informing him of my hope, the
 only hope that endears life to me, of one
 day calling you mine. He knows and ad-
 mires you. Indeed I think him a friend
 whose acquaintance is worth cultivating;
 but at present he is so much taken up with
 his

his own affairs (it not yet being settled how the catholics are to proceed), that he cannot enter on any scheme for my advantage. But if professions may be depended upon, I have some foundation for hope from that quarter. Thus,

Hope leads us on, nor quits us till we die.

I find I shall be subpoena'd to attend at the trials of those miscreants whom I secured. I shall join my voice towards their condemnation with less remorse than I would kill a rat, as I think I am doing the public a service in bringing those to punishment who have violated its laws, and committed depredations of the most atrocious kind on their fellow subjects.

I wish I could give you any good account of my poor mother. My heart bled to see the visible alteration two or three days had made in her whole frame. Her fever is returned more violently than
ever,

ever, and though there is a regular intermission, the bark does not prevent its return. I have prevailed on her to send for a physician, and he writes for her to-morrow. Heaven send his assistance may restore her to health. I keep up my spirits before her; but now that I am alone, and conversing freely with my Elwina, I give way to a thousand alarming presages, that cling about my heart, and depress me to the utmost weakness. Indeed I must take my own fatigue into the account too, for I have not been in bed these four nights, and nothing but writing to the beloved of my soul could have prevailed on me to take my pen in hand. I know not how to quit it; it is like leaving you—but your dear image remains still with me wherever I go. That loved idea can never one moment be absent from me. My concern for my dear mother's illness tears me not from you; ye are both too dear to me; ye mix for ever in the heart and thoughts of your faithful

ALFRED.

LETTER LXIX.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I GRUDGED every line my Alfred had written, when he told me he *had not been in bed for four nights*. Oh, my amiable friend, I fear you too will be ill, and then who can attend your dear mother? I echo your piteous prayer to Heaven to restore her to health, and to see the happiness of her beloved son and his faithful Elwina. As to my patriotism, I will not say a great deal in its favour. I have yet had no trial of its strength, and I should blush to be proved a vain boaster. But I love your heroic spirit from my soul : you have all the principles of a hero, and only want the lance and shield to be the god of war himself. My Alfred, my destiny is interwoven with yours ; and when the word of command is given, I will obey it the best I can. You

4 have

have vowed only to receive my hand from my father—I have ratified it—I hope if arms should in future be your profession, he will give me leave to march with you. When once I am really yours, no situation or danger shall part us.

Thank Heaven, that vile monster Lord G. G—— is at last safe in the Tower. I almost think I could see his head taken off, and exulting cry, “Behold, let all traitors “be thus punished!” I should have looked on it as doing my duty to my country, were I a man, to have plunged a dagger in his heart, if that would have stopped the effusion of more blood. How can that wretch know any future peace of mind, when he reflects on the numbers of miserable beings he has made, and the numbers whose lives he has been the cause of ending with infamy and wretchedness! What gaps in society has he occasioned, and how many thousand hearts has he torn with grief! All the villages adjacent to London,

don, I find are in the same terror of the banditti, that have been let loose upon us, as we are. Here is a nightly patrol of gentlemen to protect us. What a state of anarchy and desolation ! I think the king will see his true friends, and every sensible man must feel the blessing of his mild government with double satisfaction. The public being a little more at peace, I must now return to the subject so near and dear to my heart. Your mother is still uppermost in my mind—I wish much to see her. Do, my dear Alfred, assure her I do, and let me know if she has any objection. I can contrive to come—I will take a chaise from hence, and our Maria shall accompany me. I feel quite anxious to pay my duty to her. Is she not *my* mother, as well as yours ? And shalt we be deprived of the mutual satisfaction we promised ourselves of jointly contributing to her happiness ? Will Heaven rob us of so true a delight as affording her every comfort ?

As soon as you give me notice, most assuredly I will come to you. I have mentioned it to my mother, and she kindly acquiesces in my wishes. Maria too will gladly be my companion. I can pass some hours with you, and dine with Mrs. M—.

I doubt not but you procure every thing you can for the best of mothers, and I know your good Betty is an excellent nurse; yet I hope she has another, that she may not be left a moment. Oh, how thankfully would I accept the office, to soothe the dear patient, and help to relieve the anxieties, and share the fatigue, of my Alfred! Adieu.

Ever your own

ELWINA.

LETTER LXX.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

ALAS! my dearest Elwina, thy affection, and my duteous love, will no longer

longer be of service to the best of mothers. I am doomed to see that dear parent sink into her grave at an age when we might have hoped to be long blessed with her society.

I hardly know how to write; and yet to write to you is all the consolation my poor heart can taste. Oh, my best, my only love, this letter is but preparatory to the last cruel intelligence. The doctor has given up all hopes for his patient. Good God! what a sound for a son, who never had another parent to share his filial regard! No man ever owed more to a mother than I do to her. And shall I be deprived of her? Oh, my Elwina, that you were here, that we might mingle our tears together, and that I might in your tenderness feel something to hold my heart together, and whisper in the midst of my afflictions, that I am not deprived of every comfort. How much, how very much do I stand in need of consolation! I have not

fat down so long these three days, as I have now since I have taken my pen. I cannot rest a moment in a place—I walk about like a troubled ghost, *seeking rest, but finding none*. No, my dearest love, it would be to no purpose your coming hither. In the midst of my distress I feel the force of propriety, and feel too that the scene of death, so new to us both, would but wound your exquisite sensibility, and add fresh stings to mine. It is the lot of mortals, and I must submit. Heaven give me strength to act the part allotted me, with a proper sense of its dispensations. That I have your prayers, thou best beloved of my soul, I well know. Oh, that they might be efficacious for my excellent mother! Yet why? to continue her longer in a scene of woe? for what else has her whole life been? save but the comfort it has been my good fortune to bestow upon her; and yet I fear her tender anxiety, her unequalled affection for me has rather hastened her approaching death.

Alas!

Alas ! I much fear it has ; she has struggled with a delicate constitution to live for my sake ; all other inducement, as she pathetically said last night, was buried in the grave of her beloved husband. No son ever loved a mother more than I have done. Why are my filial duties so soon torn from me ? Heaven wills, and man must obey. Adieu, my ever dear Elwina ; you will soon be all that remains on earth to bless

ALFRED.

LETTER LXXI.

From the same to the same.

June 15.

YES, Elwina is now *all* that remains to Alfred : the hour of death is past. This fatal morning the best of mothers and of women—Oh, my Elwina, what a sentence to finish !——She is gone for ever !

F 3.

Sir

Sir Robert B—— has insisted on taking me from the dreadful scene. I opposed it for some time, but at last I consented. Yet what do I fly from? Will not the awful scene still follow me? Is it not the author of my being I leave? Ah! dear, respectable, even though but clay. Why should I turn my weeping eyes from thy breathless corse? I allow their arguments have too much weight—I feel too forcibly that I can no longer be of service to thee; that my tears, my groans, cannot restore a life so exquisitely dear to me. No, thou art gone for ever. We shall go to her, my Elwina: no more will she bless our eyes; no more shall we hear her affectionate prayers for our mutual happiness. She blessed you, my Elwina, with her latest breath; she united in one petition to Heaven the names of her beloved Elwina and

ALFRED.

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LETTER LXXII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

TO soothe the sorrows of my beloved Alfred, what would not his Elwina do? Oh, my Alfred, and have we really lost our dear mother? What a chasm is now made in the gay prospect we had flattered ourselves with enjoying! Dear, most affectionate parent, thou art now reaping the fulness of joy, and bendeſt thy benign eyes on thy children, who are not allowed the ſweet conſolation of mingling their tears for thy irreparable loſs. Oh, be thou our guardian angel—inſtruct us—guide us through the devious path of life, that we may reach in one day that manſion of bliſs, where thou art now rejoicing with *righteous men made perfect*. Amen.

Am I now all the world to my Alfred?
Oh, that I had one little ſpot of that
F 4 globe

globe I could strictly call my own to lead you to, where, by my faithful love and tender assiduities, I might repay you all your griefs, and hush them into peace.

I congratulate Sir Robert B—— on the delight he must feel in having it in his power to be of service to Alfred. It was kind and considerate to take you from the scene of death. I am not however of opinion, that persons do right in general in flying from their dwellings on these melancholy occasions; but that house will not be an abiding place for you; and the change of place and objects will sooner restore your tranquillity, than to sit brooding over your sorrows. If, indeed, your Elwina could be with you, we would sit and indulge in all the luxury of grief, and visit the dear body, that was once informed by the gentlest, the best of souls. Oh, may I but be endued with resolution to follow her bright example! Patient, meek, and unoffending; charitable in the most enlarged

larged sense ; religious, moral, and instructive—she was a sweet companion, and I had promised myself years of delight in her society ; but we are deprived of her ; she is blessed for ever.

My Alfred, we must mourn ; but do not let us grieve like those without hope. She is now rewarded for all her sufferings, and they were many. My Alfred was the only cordial drop that Heaven ordained to be mixed with her bitter potion. Her love for you surpassed most mothers love ; your dutious affection for her was equally exemplary, and must convey the sincerest consolation to your excellent heart. Write to me constantly. I am sure it will communicate ease to your mind, and I have no other comfort than the hope of seeing the peace of my Alfred re-established. Heaven, that permitted the stroke, will heal the wound. My sympathizing heart re-echoes your sighs, and my eyes are half blinded with the tears of duty, love, and tender affection.

affection. All now centre in you. Be careful of your health, which is so unutterably dear to your

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXIII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

WHAT a balm to my wounded mind was my Elwina's dear letter ! Yet I might have anticipated all she said, knowing her affection as I have the happiness of doing.—Yes, my beloved, I will look up to the blissful state of my almost-adored mother, and in contemplation of her endless felicity forget my own sufferings---sufferings which my Elwina shares with me.

Sir Robert is the kindest of friends ; he has taken every care off my hands, and

leaves

leaves me as much alone as I wish to be. All the trouble so necessary on these mournful occasions, and which those so immediately concerned are unfit for, he has executed with the utmost generosity and goodness. He tells me he owes me more than these trifling services can repay.

No, my beloved, this is no abiding place for me. Even blest with my Elwina, the melancholy walls would repeatedly tell me what I have lost; and it would be too expensive, and too far from you, to suit me in any respect.

I sent a certificate of my dear mother's death to Mr. Nelson, who paid the annuity. He has behaved with great liberality and politeness, having inclosed an hundred pound bank note in a letter of condolence. The half year would have been due, had she survived till Midsummer-day; and it was very considerate, knowing the narrowness of my finances, and the consequent

F 6

expences

expences I should incur. I am furrounded with kind friends ; for Sir Robert will not allow me to see a bill that has not a receipt to it ; and yet he does it in a manner that adds not to the weight of sorrow, which, my Elwina, I must long feel.

Mrs. M——'s servant told me he saw you in mourning. My dearest love, how much I am indebted to you for this evident mark of your affection !

Will you do me the favour of accepting my (why do I not adopt your sweet expression *our* ?) dear mother's gold watch ? It is of value, and was given her by her ever-lamented husband as soon as they married. Oh, would to Heaven I had the same right to bestow it on you ! Will not your good parents soon consent to an event that is now more than ever necessary to my happiness ? Does your brother still hold his purpose of going to Spa ? and may we not hope, during that period, that every adverse

verse obstacle will be removed? Alas! my sweet girl, how has the calculation you made of our annual income been cruelly abridged! Surely my distresses on that account will not be increased by any further objections and delays in your family. My Elwina, I feel the diminution of happiness so extreme by the loss of my dear mother, that I am doubly anxious to secure what remains with you. I will not give way to the gloomy melancholy, which, in spite of reason, overwhelms me. *I will not mourn like one without hope.* But till I can call you mine, irrevocably mine, no peace or comfort will visit my sad presaging heart.

I will soon see my beloved, and I will bring my dear mother's legacy with me. It was her own request that you should have it. You remember the picture which hung to it? I had one of my mother, and shall have them both set together. I had a likeness taken some years ago, at her desire:

fire; and that I shall take the liberty of fastening to the chain. Oh, when shall I be bound in the chain of wedlock to my beloved Elwina?—soft, blissful, and permanent chain!

I trust our dear and tender Maria is as much with my gentle love as possible, and kindly dries your tears, or sympathizes with you. Tell her how much my grateful heart thanks her. Your own dear mother too, I doubt not, speaks comfortable things to her sweet daughter. Her endeavours may help to heal our sorrows, by allowing us the free participation of them in each other's society.

Shall I say, my love, I rather expected an invitation? But I shall not wait for it. Where can I hope for a relief from my distresses, but in the consolation bestowed on me by my heart's treasure?

Thursday.

Sir Robert B—— has, this moment, even forced upon me an ensigncy in the

— regiment of foot. My Elwina, what do you say to it? Till I know what effect it will have on you, I hardly can tell whether to rejoice or be sorry for this mark of his kind regard. On you depends every thing. Yet, as my name is now enrolled in the king's service, how shall I be able to retract? I now shall not dare to approach you, till I have had a letter from my beloved. At least I have now *some* profession, though it is late to begin a fresh school at the age of twenty-four. My brain feels all confusion. Till I hear from you it will not be settled. In all situations I am faithfully yours,

ALFRED.

 LETTER LXXIV.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I FEAR, Alfred, my letter will not have the charm of composing your

COR-

confused brain. I must say, the latter part of yours has completely deranged mine. Alfred is a foldier, and how do I feel on the occasion? This is a question your Elwina has put to herself an hundred times, hardly knowing what answer to make to it. I have ever determined in the article of profession to leave you unbiaffed, and to be satisfied with whatever you should choofe. This of arms has, I know, ever been a favourite one with you. It is a life of enterprize and activity, and as fuch fuits the vivacity of your fpirit, which I have long feen languifhing for want of employment. It is an honourable profefion, and at this time your country more particularly calls for the exertion of her fons.

I flatter myfelf, my dear Alfred, I have now, in taking your fide of the queftion, advanced as much in its favour as you could wifh or expect. And what have I to oppofe to all this? Alas! only a weak wo-

4 man's

man's *fears*, that will sometimes, in defiance of her reason, take the lead. Oh! think not then of me! While I see you happy and satisfied, I will not breathe the gentlest wish, that you had chosen a less hazardous, though more obscure, life. I never could know a moment's ease, unless I saw you happy; and, in whatever station you are in, I am yours eternally. I never loved you with a selfish love. Your honour, your advantage were ever dear to me. Nor should my voice condemn you to a life of inglorious ease for the world. It would poison all my delights. Oh! may the laurel adorn thy brows, and the triumph of victory cheer thy heart!

I wish, however, my mother's acquiescence followed your choice as freely as mine does. I am sorry to say, she is not pleased at your becoming a soldier. She has a terrible notion of red-coats and cockades: but I hope she will be able to discriminate; and then the result must be in favour

favour of Alfred. Surely he is not changed with the colour of his clothes. "You might," she says, "as well have accepted of a curacy for the present; your income could not have been less than an ensigncy: and in the clerical line they might have been able to do something for you; but in the military we know nobody."

This is talking strangely, by the by. For you know when we made your profession the subject of conversation, both my father and mother exclaimed against the church, as there was no likelihood of rising in it without purchasing, which would not produce common interest for your money. However, I hope she will soon be reconciled to the idea of seeing her daughter the wife of an officer; for none but Alfred, in whatever state he may be, shall ever be the husband of Elwina.

This

This interesting subject has engrossed me so much, that I was near closing up my letter without taking notice of any other part of yours. My beloved Alfred, I shall accept and treasure up the legacy of our angel mother. Received from your dear hand, it will be stamped with double value. I wish above all things to see you; my tears will be less bitter, when united with yours. Adieu.

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXV.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I Am happy to tell you, my mother does not think you quite so formidable as she apprehended, and commends your modesty in not paying your first visit *a la militaire*; though, woman-like, you will say, she wonders how your soldier's garb becomes you.

I shall

I shall find no other fault with the profession, than that I foresee I shall have much less of Alfred's company. You are no longer master of your own time. The duties and necessary employments of your new life will engage you too much to leave you leisure to trip frequently to H——. But to this I must and will submit with all the grace in the world, and with the magnanimity of a woman who means to follow the drum.

And whenever it beats I'll be ready.

I have a degree of martial spirit about me, and had I been a man, would most certainly have chosen the navy or army. I love activity.

When do you join the regiment? I hear it is encamped in Hyde Park. Oh, what a martial age is this! Nothing but gun practice going forward. Every haberdasher must now trail a pike, or at least learn the manual exercise.

My

My mother took me this evening to Finchley Common camp; and I assure you she said, "It would have been very convenient for Alfred, if his regiment had been fixed there." I really could not say I should have disliked such an arrangement; and was not a little pleased to find her become a convert to the cause. But versatility is not confined to my father alone. Yet I will not complain, since it sometimes operates in our favour.

I shall be glad to hear the disagreeable business of swearing against those unhappy wretches the rioters, is well over; and as you prevented the mischief from being perpetrated, I hope they will escape with less than the loss of their lives. Enough have, and are likely to lose theirs, in consequence of their rashness.

How will the survivors execrate their leader, if he should get off! I still feel the utmost indignation against him, as the
prime

prime cause of the dreadful mischief and confusion. And yet, perhaps but for this you would never have been *en train* to become a generalissimo.

Adieu, my dearest friend and best loved.

Yours for ever,

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXVI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

MY Elwina may indeed see less of her Alfred, for some time—but, “thou art with me, wherever I go;” in the field, in the camp; for ever you are in my heart, and it wishes to beat no longer than while it is yours.

I have given up the idea of going to Lochie’s academy, to learn military tactics. I really think I should look too ridiculous, to be in a school with a parcel
of

of boys, like Gulliver learning the Lilliputian exercise. I have got some very good books on the subject, and an excellent old sergeant, who will teach me to march, wheel, shoulder, and fire, with the best of them. Indeed there is not much for a man to learn who has had the education of a gentleman, in order to make a soldier. Thank Heaven I have a constitutional kind of courage, and at the same time am very cool. So I hope if I do not arrive at being *generalissimo*, I shall not disgrace the *corps* as a subaltern.

I shall not join, till after the trial of the delinquents—and I own, now my wrath is a little abated, I shall be better pleased to find they have not transgressed the laws so much as to preclude them from mercy. I intend to propose, as they are good stout lads, that they should offer themselves to serve in the army or navy, that their country may be benefited by the strength they were so improperly using against her.

You have the advantage of me—I have not yet seen a camp, though they are now so thickly sown in and about town. But my time is fully taken up, and so it will for some time, as I shall not like to exhibit till I am pretty tolerably versed in the business, for fear of getting sent back to the drill sergeant, having no ambition to figure in the *awkward Squad*.

I said I had got some books on military subjects—and as my library is too voluminous for a soldier, I have exchanged some, which now will be of little use to me, for such as my profession makes necessary. Indeed I have sold a great many, as I had several double sets, which I found when I got them all together; and I have picked out a few, which I shall beg of you to take care of for me. I have no property in which you have not at least an equal share; so you may as well take these books *for better and for worse*. Oh! my loved angel, when shall I be permitted to take
you

you on those terms? That event would be
 “crowning my brows with laurels indeed,
 “and cheering my heart, my enraptured
 “heart, with the triumph of victory.” My
 Elwina, in all situations I am wholly and
 eternally yours,

ALFRED.

LETTER LXXVII.

To the same.

THE trials are over, my dear Elwina ;
 the sentence was five years labour on
 the Thames. But I begged hard for them,
 and at last have obtained my wish—they
 are to be sent to the Savoy, to be initiated
 in the duties of a soldier's life, and to be
 entered in the regiment I belong to. The
 poor fellows seemed so sensible of their
 errors, and so penitent, that I feel doubly
 happy at the lenity of the judge. And
 now they may repair their mischiefs, by ex-
 Vol. III. G erting

erting their strength against the foes of their country, instead of committing depredations on it.

I can never enough express my gratitude to Sir Robert B——; he has behaved with the kindness of a father to me, and supplies, as well as he can, the dear parent I have lost, and shall ever lament. He tells me, whenever I wish to purchase, only to give him an opportunity of serving me. So that there is really a chance of your being one day the captain's lady. I shall live in as saving a manner as I can, not to injure the reputation of the *corps*; but indeed they are a set of very well disposed young men; and the regulations for the mess are so well planned, we cannot go beyond a certain expence. I eat as well as my colonel, and only pay in proportion to my commission. Every guinea I can lay by will add to the general stock, and at least shorten the tediousness of our separation a day or two.

I shall

I shall be able to pass a couple of hours with you next Thursday, and Sir Robert has insisted on my sending to his stable for a horse; which indulgence you may be assured I shall avail myself of, as it will bring me so much sooner to her, in whose presence alone I am blest.

Your mother shall see how my hat is improved by a piece of black ribbon in the loop; but I cannot ride on horseback with a regimental coat; it looks too much like silly parade. However, I trust she will give her opinion on the camp in Hyde Park; most people like that in St. James's best, but I think it looks too confined. The *petite* camp in the Museum Gardens seems to bear the bell. I hear it is much admired, because it looks like a scene in a play. A great recommendation to a camp truly! Oh! it is a fine time for the masters and misses! You would be surprised to see the crowds that flock every day, and all the day, to see these raree shews. Vauxhall

and Ranelagh are almost deserted; or at least, no one thinks of going there till the camp's entertainment is over. You must come,—and I hope Maria will be of the party. Indeed not to make the tour of the camps, is really to be quite out of the world, and sufficient to make you be looked on as an odd body, that nobody knows.

Besides, I have the hope of making your good mother quite a convert to the charms of a soldier's life; which, by the by, we are able to form a very inadequate idea of, I fancy, from what we see here. However, I am prepared for its hardships, and feel myself equal to every thing, but the loss of my Elwina; while blest with her, all ills would be trifling. Adieu, my ever loved Elwina.

I am faithfully yours,

ALFRED.

LET-

LETTER LXXVIII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

IT was really a political manœuvre of yours to get my mother to camp; she declares she was never so well pleased in her life; and protests if it had been the first time of seeing you, and I had not surrendered my heart, she should have thought me the most insensible of beings. Never did she see any one look so brilliantly handsome as you did. And I must on my own part acknowledge, that I could not but remark to myself, that your head all together looked infinitely better than it would have done with a tight round curl, and a rose in your hat. Your elegant shape is seen to advantage now, which would have been lost in a gown and cassock. I am not used to flatter; and indeed sometimes I think I am too backward in giving praise where it is due. But I must say, I

never saw you look so well as yesterday——You did in truth look exquisitely handsome, particularly when you put on your hat; it shewed you in a different character to what I had ever seen you.——Oh, how you rivalled your picture! Do you know, I think that portrait wants animation——and I have a great mind to desire you to sit again. A good way that of laying up guineas to be sure. But I am not satisfied with this, and I will have it drawn when I am present; so prepare yourself: you know the expence of mounting will be saved, as the same will do. I have told my mother this moment of my design, and she approves of it so much, that she insists on being at the whole expence. So you have only to inquire which is the best painter, and set your sweet features in order.

My mother, Maria, and myself intend going to town on Monday; if you can spare an hour or two, we will call for you at Jeffery's in Pall Mall—as he shall re-
set

set the resemblance of the most amiable (which is better than saying the handsomest) of men. You can certainly have leave of absence for a few hours; and I hope you will make the best use of your time, to examine which of the painters you think most likely to succeed—and then when we meet, let us know where we are to go. I must have the likeness well done—if possible like that which is stamped by the hand of love, in the faithful bosom of your own

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXIX.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

NEVER has the heart of Alfred known so much true delight as in this last happy week. Oh, how rich is my memory stored with the charming recollec-

tion of the blissful, thrice blissful hours—
nay, whole days, I have passed with you!

To see your father and mother reconciled
to the steps I have taken to advance my
fortunes; oh, what satisfaction it has af-
forded me!

I have the good fortune, too, to be very
much in favour with my colonel; and he
prophecies great things for the young sol-
dier, when he has seen a little more of ser-
vice. My Elwina, what shall I not atchieve
when I have so glorious a reward in view,
as the possession of all that elegant desire
and tender affection can wish for in wo-
man! all which I shall possess in my loved
Elwina, more dear as more she is known.

Let me hope no envious demon will
now interfere to rob me of felicity—a
felicity which must be permanent when
insured by such excellence as yours.

And

And will you give me your beauteous portrait? Oh, how shall I adore the image of my beloved! how talk to it, how press it to my bosom and lips, nor expect to be chidden, as my sometimes too rigid Elwina is apt to do. Yet pardon me, my love, I know you act with delicate propriety, and my reason can never condemn you, though my affection often languishes for a return of tenderness. That you love me I know; it is the delight, the bliss of my life to think so; but there is a maiden coyness in all your actions, that sometimes gives you an air of coldness, which I do not think altogether in your heart; as your letters, written immediately from that heart, glow with an affection, warm, though not so impetuous as mine. But perhaps---and you may be right, a little distance on your side may be necessary, to check the ardour which is apt to express itself too rapturously when my heart beats

What falt'ring, trembling, dying
Language would but cannot tell.

But why do you turn away your lovely eyes from my impassioned glances? And why did my beloved, when I would have stolen a tender kiss the last evening, why did she disappoint me? Trust me, I hardly closed my eyes the whole night; and the mortification was the more sensibly felt, as I was obliged to set off at so early an hour, that I had no chance of seeing you: I had really planned that little manœuvre to obtain a heavenly kiss from your lovely lips, and it was too cruel to refuse me when on the point of succeeding. I felt your balmy breath when you snatched your dear face from me; and the kiss was lost for ever. I shall never forget it, nor shall I forgive you, if you do not make me large amends next time we meet. I will not let you off without paying interest. You must allow it was practising on my sensibility too severely, to admit me to the gate of heaven, only to close it upon me at the instant; and I dare say, if Maria had been present, she would have given it against you, as
usurping

usurping a too tyrannic power over your slave.

I shall expect some concession in my favour when next I have the happiness of a letter from your dear hand; and, my sweet girl, do remember, that I have never presumed on any instance of indulgence you have thought me worthy of receiving——nor will I ever——You may trust me at all times; I never have for one moment lost sight of my respect and veneration, as well as love, which I believe is more firmly fixed than ever man's was on a lovely woman. I know you pretend to say your affection is superior to mine; but I believe you not. I know my inferiority to you---and therefore the object being less deserving, cannot inspire so much tenderness as I feel for you, who are superior to every other being in the world, in the eyes and heart of us all.

ALFRED.

LETTER LXXX.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I HAVE rather an idea that I am a little favourite too with your colonel---no impediment to your advancement you know---on the contrary, it is in your favour, as a handsome wife or sister oftentimes secures promotion. I assure you he said some very gallant things to me when we walked together to the coach. I think him a very pleasant agreeable man; and if you continue at all refractory in my service, I shall lodge my complaint with him.

As to the affair of the *kiss rejected*, I hardly know what to say to it; it was the effect of a moment, and rather foolish on both sides---I know not which was in fault, and we will settle it when we meet, I hope to our mutual satisfaction; we will not fall out about such a trifle neither. As you
7 say,

say, if Maria had been by, she would have given it against me; and I will just whisper very softly in your ear, that perhaps I should not have been so scrupulous in her presence. A third person is a sanction to a delicate minded woman; and I have felt the force of it a thousand times—for I can talk and act with fifty times the freedom to you before her, or indeed any third person, than when we are alone. I know not whether you have made the observation. It will not be always so I suppose—I cannot tell.

I agree with you, that few weeks ever passed more happily since that distinction of time was invented, than the last. Why should not each succeeding year of our lives be spent in the same way, giving and receiving proofs of the most faithful affection? In such a manner——

As angels might behold, or virgins tell.

Yes,

Yes, Alfred, while memory holds its seat in my brain, I shall retrace with delight those blissful hours I wore away with you. You left me, and, as you thought, too early in the morning to expect to see me. Why did you take that idea into your head? I hoped you would have just tapped at my door, and I should have followed you into the drawing room in a moment, for I was up and dressed, perhaps before you had opened your eyes. Did you think I lost in dull sleep the last night that Alfred was to be our guest? Thank Heaven I am not quite so stupid. I waited, not without the flutter of expectation that you would steal away without saying "good morning to you." At last the clock struck six, and I ventured forth, becoming then apprehensive you would be too late for muster. I saw one of the housemaids, and on my asking her if you had been called, she sent me back to my room, with something very like a sigh, by telling me, you had been gone almost an hour. *Sure my good genius*

slept, though I was waking. Adieu, my dear Alfred. I am most truly yours,

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXXI.

To the same.

I WISH I had better news for you, my dear Alfred---my brother is returned from his excursion, and the first words he said to me were, "You are quite delighted, no doubt, with the idea of a scarlet coat and cockade---to carry the knapsack will suit your delicate notions; and to follow the camp, will not fatigue your fine limbs. Your prudent choice is now decidedly a proper one. Your lover has the privilege of starving according to act of parliament, and the laws of his country."

I looked on all this as much too low to
be

be answered, and therefore I sat like the statue of "patience on a monument;" but I believe my smile was rather a contemptuous one, which was not quite in character. He then began on my father and mother, for their shameful indulgence to a passion which ought to have been stifled in its birth---an attachment productive of nothing but poverty and beggary. When my mother spoke (which, Heaven bless her, she did most nobly) of your worth and character, "Let him carry his virtues into any other family," said he, "and I will allow them as much weight as you do---but you all know I had other views for the girl; she knew it herself---views which would have raised us to grandeur, not depressed us to poverty, and divided the family."

"Yes," I replied, "I do plainly see what were your views; but they corresponded not with my inclination, and therefore I rejected them. I had my father's

“ father’s sanction for what I have done,
 “ and to him I will submit in all things—
 “ to him I owe obedience, and to him
 “ alone.”

This speech, to be sure, was not likely to soften matters much; and he muttered to himself, he should find a way to make me obedient to others, or he was much mistaken. But I care not; he cannot alter my mind with regard to its sentiments for you---nor do I think he will be able to prevail on my father to forego his late resolution. I am certain he never need know of my father’s kind intention of making an addition to my fortune; and my views in life are really so free from ambition, that what would content you, would be affluence to me.

I hope to Heaven this turbulent brother will not stay long with us. But I intreat you, for my sake, not to come hither till I apprize you of his departure. I see he is disposed

disposed to quarrel with you, and nothing would so nearly disturb my peace for ever as such an event. Therefore, my dear and faithfully beloved Alfred, keep your temper if you ever should meet, for the sake of your

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXXII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

HAVE I not cause, my dearest Elwina, to complain of the hardness of my fate? And to what farther ills may I not be exposed, by being doubly wounded through your side? I begin to fear I have paid a too implicit obedience to your father, whom I respected as if he had been my own. Will then the honour and faith I reposed in his, be so cruelly abused? You say, my love, you hope your brother will not be able to effect his purpose. Too
surely,

surely he has, or your father would have taken pains to quiet your mind, by fresh assurances; and you would have eased my aching heart by communicating them to me. Yes, this proud senator has gained his cause---I see it plainly. How shall I then repent my rash vow, never to receive the hand of Elwina, but as the gift of her father! He is your father, Elwina, and Heaven and you can witness, I never breathed a wish that you should act otherwise than became the most dutious of daughters. But let the scornful heir of the family beware how he rouses a spirit unused to give or receive injuries. Tamely I will never receive them. I have frequently remarked his averted eye, and supercilious air; but which I never hinted before, lest I should give my Elwina pain. He is unworthy the name of brother---unworthy the kind consideration with which you so industriously sought to make me believe he treated me with more civility than any one else, who had not a title, or
some

some such trifling, empty advantage over a man of honour. For your sake, my Elwina, I have been deaf as well as blind; but he shall never find me insensible of injuries, or contemptuous treatment. I have borne a great deal, which I hoped you did not see, and which my affection for you kept me silent under. I will still bear as much as a man ought to bear, because he is the son of my Elwina's parents. But you would despise me, as I ought to be despised, if I should put up with insult; which I plainly see he means to use towards me, from the sentiments he dared to utter to you.

The indignity offered me by this unworthy brother of the sweetest of women, has had its use, since it has awakened a spirit, which perhaps from its lying dormant, he little thought I possessed; but let him again, I say it, let him beware kindling it to a flame!

Be assured, my best, my only love, I
feel

feel the utmost transport in believing you will never be another's. I am as confident in your truth, as I am of my own existence. All my apprehensions result from the dread of what you may suffer in persecutions from those of your family whom I have been so unfortunate as to offend, without knowing how. But will your dear mother give up the interest she promised us? Will your father falsify his word, given as sacredly as mine to him? Oh, my Elwina, is it not dangerous sophistry to say, his breach will absolve me? Alas! I fear it is; and what would be the consequence of such doctrine? Perhaps everlasting reprobation from your family. Good God! what a fate is ours! I hope I am anticipating an evil, that Heaven, in pity to our constant affection, will avert. But your letter has added sharp points to the arrow that has already wounded my heart. You have suffered more, my Elwina, I am convinced you have, than you have allowed yourself to express. What has the insolent

Clodio

Clodio dared to do? My soul is all up in arms, when I reflect on his invidious sneers and taunts to the loveliest, best of women. Am I not your protector; and shall I stand coldly by and see such excellence ill-used? Oh, no Elwina—I must be deprived of strength, of sense, of every sentiment of honour and feeling, ere I could betray so much stupidity.

Yet I will be calm---I hope there will be no occasion to shew my resentment. Though he is not a man to my taste, I would for your sake court his acquaintance. But then let him treat me as I am entitled by birth, like a gentleman—not like a base beggar, who would meanly steal the treasure that had been refused to my intreaty. Why did our wayward fortune send Clodio in the way so soon? And why is your father a mere machine, to be wound up, or stopped, just as that brother pleases? Why will he not have an opinion of his own, and give way to the transport his heart would

would feel in making my charming Elwina happy, with the man that adores her?

Excuse me, my Elwina, if I disobey you—I will come to see you. It would look very strange in me, after the reception and invitations I have so lately received, not to visit at your house. They then might have some plea against me.—I ask not when your brother will be from home—I will neither seek or avoid him; nor will I quarrel with him if I can help it. These concessions, my Elwina, I will make to you—but expect no more; I would sooner die—or, what is infinitely worse than death, lose all chance of being united to you, who are dearer to me than any thing but honour, rather than be guilty of meanness to him, or any man in the world.

I am, with all truth and sincerity, for ever
yours

ALFRED.

LET -

LETTER LXXXIII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

HOW shall I apologize to my ever amiable Alfred, how palliate the strange behaviour he met with yesterday? Alas! what is come to each branch of my family, and why will they urge me to wish we had not been so scrupulously attentive to our part of the agreement, when they seem to have so totally forgotten theirs?

My mother is now quite changed by my brother's arguments; and declares, she shall be miserable from the idea of my marrying an officer. My father says, he was not intitled to give his consent without the concurrence of his son—and he sees occasion for withdrawing it. His son!—Is then my happiness and well-doing to depend on the capricious and unjust will of a haughty, imperious brother? Ah, my dear

dear Alfred, the reason of his pique is, because I refused the addresses of his friend—his favourite, Sir Thomas K—. Had I been prevailed on to sacrifice myself to him, a match languished for by my brother would then perhaps have been accomplished, between him and Lady Anne T—, whose brother married Sir Thomas's sister—and I find he had promised to use all his interest to engage her to consent:—the smallness of her fortune might have been an inducement on her side to mix her patrician blood with our plebeian race. However, the baronet is not enough his friend to do him a kindness for nothing—and I was to be the purchase of his favour. It is from this disappointment my brother has become so much your enemy. But *I'll be revenged, and love you better for it*; and nothing shall ever shake my fixed resolve. The coldness of my father's behaviour shocked me very much—and I had the courage, after you left us, to remonstrate against his cruelty, and even

dared to say he was unjust. He was extremely angry at my boldness—but, as I always do for a little time, I brought him to hear reason; however, I am sorry to say there is so much versatilitv in his composition, that he is turned by a straw—and in five minutes my brother's haughty threats will do more, than an hour of my intreaty.

I repeat to you what I told you, I would die a thousand deaths rather than you should act meanly, or make any undue submission. I feel how much I am indebted to you for the forbearance you practised to my father. That to him was a mark of respect, which to my brother would have been an unmanly degradation. No, for my sake you shall never be subject to insult—I cannot bear the idea—nothing is so repugnant to my sentiments. Your offer of keeping or resigning your commission, was surely concession enough; and ought to have been more graciously attended to.

Surely

Surely 'tis I alone who am to experience the inconvenience of such a situation, and not them. My brother has often declared he would see me sink under the poverty I have chosen, rather than extend an arm to save me. Is it thus they seek to weaken my attachment to the most amiable, most loved of men? Ah, how weak would be their strongest efforts to effect such a purpose!

I told my father his word and honour once passed, could never be recalled; and I was bound to act as if it was still his will as much as it had been. I would not indeed marry you without his consent—but I could never forget that he had given it. He says that it was conditionally. I allow it—and have most religiously adhered to the conditions. He cannot make the least objection either to your character or morals—and this acceptance of a commission is now held up, as the only thing which operates against you; when but a

few months since they seemed almost dissatisfied because you could not find something to do.

My dear Alfred, we must have recourse to our old support, hope. Time may lessen the difficulties, and may bring us together. I swear, on all my expectations of future happiness, no time or circumstances shall ever change my sentiments for you. I rely on the strength of your affection, as the greatest comfort this world can afford me—Either I shall be yours or none other's ; as I have lived, so will I die, yours only

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXXIV.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

MY beloved friend, must I ever be doomed to lament the fickleness of my father's disposition? Sometimes
he

he seems inclined to favour the affection of my amiable Alfred, and the next day he is more averse to him than ever. This unfortunate acceptance of a commission is the only plea they can any of them hang a shadow of reason upon; and yet, how have they condemned him for not seeking some profession! They really almost wear out my patience. They are all against me; even my once kind mother is altered. I can no longer see my Alfred with pleasure; I dread his having some gross affront put upon him, which I am sure his spirit would not submit to; and shall hardly be surprised if his visits are forbidden. Was it not for our strict adherence to rigid honour, we should not now be lamenting each other's absence. But why do I talk this wildly? I would rather die than subject him to pecuniary difficulties. Oh! would to Heaven Sir Robert B—— had never given him the fatal commission! My mother declares, she never would have rested till she had

obtained her point; but now, she says, she will oppose, with all her influence, a marriage that can be productive of nothing but misery and distress. Why will she persist in arguing thus? Is he not the same tender, affectionate, amiable Alfred, he was? Can the colour of his coat change his sentiments? Has he not tried various means, and made various attempts, all fruitless ones, to advance his fortune? And why misery and distress? I must run the chance of thousands who marry men in the army. Oh, Maria, I would run any chance with my Alfred; yet I am not so silly as to think we can live without the means of subsistence; or would I brave my father's reprobation. My Alfred calls himself *the victim of a curse!* Heaven shield me from such an inheritance! No, I will still persist in acting right. I will adhere to my duty thus far; that I will not marry Alfred, without my father's consent, or a prospect of our living with some degree of credit. But I will never, no
never,

never, resign him. Nothing shall ever prevail on me to promise that I will not marry him at all, or that I will marry another.

My unworthy brother speaks of him in the most contemptible terms. I own I dread to hear his name mentioned; and this morning I begged my mother would call another subject. "We are all obstinate alike," I said—"or, if that is too free a declaration, all too steady. I despair of bringing my brother over to my opinion, and I will die before he makes me a convert to his. My father can no more depart from his word, with honour, than I can. He once allowed of my engagement to the most amiable man in the world, and he cannot retract from it. I am destined to Alfred with his voice; and whatever influence my brother may now assume, he cannot recall the sentence."

All my hope is, that they may not meet any where by chance ; if they should, I dread the consequence. I can rely on Alfred for never seeking ; but I am likewise as certain he will never avoid him. Neither will he give or receive an insult. Oh ! Heaven defend him from either ! My mind is never one moment at ease ; I tremble lest Alfred should come when my turbulent brother is from home ; and I am still more terrified when that brother is in town, lest they should encounter each other, when I am not by to soften matters. I am sure I could prevail on my Alfred to bear any thing that was not derogatory to a man of honour ; his tender affection for me would oblige him to bear more from Clodio than any other man. But insult and contemptuous language !—Oh ! I could not myself support the idea of the man I loved being thus grossly treated.

Indeed, my dear Maria, my situation is most truly a pitiable one ; and I know not
when

when there is any probable chance of my case being better. I have no one to befriend me; only you, my Maria, and my amiable Alfred. How dreadful to have all my own family unite against me! and for what offence in me? For being sensible of the many perfections of one of the best of men, and the one, who but a few weeks before, both my father and mother declared they would give me to, in preference to all others. Am I the only one of my race who is possessed of constancy of opinion?

I must now leave off. I did intend coming to you this day, notwithstanding the heat of the weather; but I am prevented. My mother told me we were to have company to dinner: and what do you think she added? "I wish, Elwina, you
 " would lay aside that dress. I do not
 " like to see you in mourning." I begged to be excused: I could not in decency put it off. Nor could I help say-

ing, with a tear starting into my eye,
“ You, madam, have given me sufficient
“ cause to have a mourning heart;
“ why then may not my outward habit
“ correspond with the colour of my
“ mind ?”

I now can tell you why my mother wished me to appear in colours to-day; the disagreeable Sir Thomas K—— dined here; our odious *cabinet* dinners have begun again.

I scarcely opened my lips during the dinner. He sat next me, and took abundance of pains to render himself agreeable. In the deffert there were melons; and he fancies no one cuts up a melon equal to himself. He offered me a piece; and, on my refusing him (you know it is a fruit I never eat), he said, he recollected I refused him last year. I looked at him, and as I wished to repay him some scorn for the
ill-

ill-timed gallantry he had persecuted me with the whole dinner time, I answered ; “ I am very steady in my taste as well as “ sentiments ; what I have once refused, “ I never accept.” He plainly understood me, and so did my brother, who seemed all attention to each word I uttered. I fancy but little that I said pleased him. Thank Heaven, as there were no ladies, my mother made the motion for quitting the room very early. The bold Baronet attempted to take my hand, but I prevented him, and even longed to repel his freedom less gently than I did. However, he whispered, “ I shall beg a dish of coffee in the drawing-room before I go.” I bowed slightly. My mother called to me, for I was really tripping up to my own room. She had likewise noticed my reply to Sir Thomas, and chid me very unkindly I thought, and I could not restrain my tears nor remonstrances. My eyes still shewed I had been weeping when Sir Thomas came up : I discovered a scheme in this

directly. He approached me with an air, he meant to be tender, and with a softened voice inquired to what cause my dejection was owing. I felt a strong inclination to say, "Thou art the man!" My mother said something which too plainly proved we had had an altercation. He begged he might be mediator.—I refused his interference—assuring him he had nothing to do between my mother and me. I rang for coffee, and kept the servant in the room till some gentlemen came in: and I prevented his coming near me, by placing myself quite in the corner of the room, and the table being a pretty large one kept him off admirably. Nor would I suffer the servants to remove it when the tea and coffee were done with, as I called for my netting-box. My industry, and the work I was about, called forth many choice witticisms from the men: which, however, I am not going to treat you with: they were too much in the common-place style; such as *nets to ensnare hearts, thief-nets*, and a

thousand of these kind of nothings, that serve no other purpose, than to fatigue the hearers, and shew the white teeth of the speakers.

Oh, how happy was I when they were gone! And then I told my mother, I really could bear no more chiding this evening; and I hasted up to my pen, to relieve my anxious mind, by venting its sorrows to my beloved Maria.

Do come to-morrow, if you can, or send to me to pass the day with you. Jenny will carry this to you, and I shall bid her wait till you have perused it.

It is full late to send her; but she will get one of the gardeners to accompany her. She is now waiting. Adieu, my ever dear friend; I know your gentle heart feels most keenly the griefs of your

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXXV.

To the same.

OH! my dear, dear friend, the evil I dreaded has in part fallen upon me! I told you yesterday all my fears, lest Alfred, my dear Alfred, and my headstrong brother should meet, and a quarrel be the consequence. Oh, Maria! I am just told that there has been a rencontre between my Alfred and Sir Thomas K——. You may be certain, from the quarter I heard it, all the fault was Alfred's. I will not, cannot believe it: I am sure the affront was first given to him. Thank Heaven (oh, on my knees have I offered my acknowledgments to Heaven), there is no mischief on either side. Even his adversaries could not avoid doing him justice in his conduct during the duel. But this fatal business has made all matters worse. My brother told my father in my presence,

“ If

“ If he did not now espouse the cause of
 “ *his* friend, he must no longer consider
 “ *him* as his son : he should separate him-
 “ self totally from the family, and never
 “ be an inmate of the house again.”

“ Good God !” cried my father, “ I be-
 “ lieve you will kill me between you.
 “ What a world it is ! Nothing but dis-
 “ sension in every part of it : and now my
 “ own family are all at variance. One
 “ pulling one way, one another. You
 “ say, you will renounce your family, un-
 “ less I espouse the cause of your friend ;
 “ and your sister will be ready to renounce
 “ her family, if I do : for Heaven’s sake
 “ find some middle way by which I may con-
 “ duct myself ; I am more than half dis-
 “ tracted !”

“ She may act as she pleases ; but by”—
 and most irreverently he swore, “ I shall
 “ still retain my resolution of giving you
 “ all up.”

Did you ever, Maria, hear such insolence to a father, so much too good as his has been ?

“Heaven forbid,” I cried, with some emotion I could not suppress, “that I should renounce, or be renounced ! All I presume to request is, that I may not be persecuted with the addresses of a man whom I should have refused, even if my heart had been disengaged ; I have repeatedly said, I will never marry without my father’s consent, or unless I am driven to it as my last resource.”

“All this is pretty jargon, to be sure,” said the unnatural creature, “about *hearts*, *persecutions*, *addresses*, and *last resources* ; great persecution, to be prevented from marrying a beggarly fellow in a red coat, who thinks himself intitled, on the presumption of wearing a cockade, to be impertinent to gentlemen.”

“When-

“Whenever, Sir,” said I, addressing myself to my father, “you authorize that illiberal man, whom I blush to call brother, to use such language before me; you will excuse my remaining in the same room.” On which I went up to my own chamber; nor shall I go down when I can possibly avoid it.

Thus, my dear Maria, is your poor friend situated. I beg of Heaven that these dissensions in our family may cease; and wish, as my poor deluded father says, *some middle way may be found out*, or I know not to what extremities they may drive me. When I have a letter from my Alfred, I will either send or carry it to you. I long to have a little conversation that is more congenial to my soul than what has passed lately.

My mother has just been in, and told me it has been proposed from my sister G——, that I should spend a few weeks with

with her. But I answered, "I could
" foresee no good intended me in that visit,
" as it is in the neighbourhood of Lord
" T——; and in all likelihood Sir
" Thomas was to be their frequent guest,
" which would infallibly oblige me to
" pursue measures that were at present fo-
" reign to my intentions, and which I hoped
" I should never be forced to fly to, as a
" remedy against usurped authority." How
my refusal will be taken, I know not, but
I will not go, I am resolved, let what
will be the consequence. My dear Ma-
ria, I now languish for your sweet consol-
ing company more than ever. William
will take this to you; do say you will
come to your faithful and afflicted

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

MY best, my only love, I feel impatient to vindicate myself in your eyes, for appearing so careless of a life you honour with taking such a tender interest in. But I know you love me too well to wish me to hold it on any other terms than that of a man of honour. And I much rather would have had the tears of my Elwina flow over the cold body of her faithful Alfred, than call a blush on her cheek for having loved a man who proved himself a scoundrel.

I know not how the transaction has been related to you; I hope in no manner that reflects on my conduct; I have witnesses of it, and of the most respectable kind. Sir Robert B——— did me the honour of attending me to the field; and his word must

be

be believed, if I could be thought capable of giving a partial account.

I paid, my dearest Elwina, the utmost attention to your charge, to avoid each circumstance of quarrel, if possible. I told you how much I would bear for your sake and peace sake; but that I could go no step farther. On Tuesday morning I was on guard in Hyde-park; and in the evening, while still on duty, I was walking with Captain L—— of the same corps, looking at the variety of company, which the novelty of a camp in the neighbourhood of London brings every night to the roll-call, and to hear the music. I did not see your brother and Sir Thomas K—— till they were close upon me. I bowed to both, and spoke to your brother. I declare, upon my honour, I did this, that he might not suppose I felt any resentment against him. His return was as distant as possible. The Baronet took off his hat; and looking in my face with a super-

supercilious air, sung a line from Shakespeare's Jubilee.

He wou'd be a soldier, the sweet Willy O.

Happily the remembrance of H——k, who challenged a man for looking at his red stock, just struck in my mind ; and as I certainly should not have quarrelled with a stranger for singing any thing he pleased, I was determined not to take notice of this behaviour in him. I therefore continued walking. Afterwards, my friend, Sir Robert B—— joined me ; and we were in conversation at the entrance of my marquée, when the gentlemen passed again : they both stopped, when they had got a few paces from us, and fixing their eyes full upon me, burst forth into a fit of laughter. Though piqued, because I knew they wished to oblige me to begin a quarrel, I still commanded myself ; still your dear image, my Elwina, and the dread of consequences to you, kept my indignation from breaking out. They stood still some moments : Sir Robert B—— asked me “ If
 “ I knew

“I knew who those very merry gentlemen were?” I replied in the affirmative. He observed it was very singular behaviour. “I wonder,” said he, “what they mean by it.” “I am more than half inclined,” I answered, “to ask them; and if I forbear, it is in consideration of one dearer to me than life.” I then informed him who they were, and the reason I had to believe they meant to affront me, and the caution I was determined to use; but at the same time, said I would not put up with much more provocation. However, they soon after walked off to another part of the camp, and I did not follow them.

The next day I had promised to meet Sir Robert at the sword-blade coffee-house, and he was to take me home to dine with him. I got there before him, and taking up a newspaper, I saw some lines which attracted my notice; I took out my pocket book, and was writing them with my

my pencil, thinking you would like to see them. While I was thus employed, the inseparables came in, and walked up immediately to the box where I was sitting. Though it was extremely evident what was my employment, Sir Thomas very rudely snatched up the paper; or rather while he was in the act, I laid my hand gently on it, and told him, in a minute or two it should be at his service; at present it was in mine. He swore, "by G— I " had always the advantage of being be- " forehand with him." I finished the lines, and then presented the paper to him, which he tossed away with an air of disdain, and ordered the waiter to bring him another. Finding my offer refused so ungraciously, I resumed it again, looking over the paragraphs. He began a conversation with your brother and another gentleman who came in, about the late riot; and the *eclat* the officers assumed on the occasion of being called in. On the stranger's observing the crowds which the
camps

camps brought up to town, and the variety of associations;—" Oh, yes," said Sir Thomas, " every little jackanapes is
" now ambitious of mounting a cockade to
" look smart in the eyes of their charmers,
" and are foolish enough to fancy a red-
" coat and sword will make them gentle-
" men. It is difficult even to get a seat
" in a coffee-house, or a newspaper from
" some of these military heroes." I laid down the paper, and gave him a look, for which I would disown my eyes for ever, if they conveyed not all the contempt and indignation I felt. At that instant of time Sir Robert B—— came into the room: your brother's Baronet saw him not. He demanded what I meant by that damned impertinent glance at him. " To shew," said I, coolly, " that I both understand
" and despise your behaviour of last night
" and this morning. It is not from the
" *eclat* of my cockade and red coat, that I
" tell Sir Thomas K——, by birth and
" sentiments I am much his superior; and
" if

“ if he again presumes on his newly-ac-
 “ quired dignity to treat me in a manner
 “ unbecoming my character, I shall chastise his insolence.”

“ Very pretty !” he swore, “ very pretty,
 “ that men of his consequence should be
 “ bullied by such insignificant fellows !”
 “ If you have any thing further to say to
 “ me,” I replied, “ you know where to
 “ find me.” On which I took the arm of
 my friend B. and left the coffee-house im-
 mediately. I proposed going back to
 camp early in the evening. Sir Robert
 accompanied me, together with his Lady
 and sister. My servant gave me a letter
 which, he said, required an immediate an-
 swer. I opened it, and found a formal
 challenge from K. for the next morning
 early, in Kensington gravel-pits. The let-
 ter informed me where he should be found
 to settle preliminaries. I took Sir Robert
 aside and shewed him the contents. As
 we had discussed the matter together, we

were neither of us surpris'd at the invitation; which I own I was glad to accept of. I propos'd our going directly to the Mount Coffee-house, from whence the billet was dated. We excus'd ourselves to the Ladies, putting them under the protection of some officers of their acquaintance, and proceeded to the Mount. There every thing was presently adjust'd, and pistols were to be the weapons. I told your brother I was happy in his not being a principal in the affair, as I should have been sorry to lift my arm against one so nearly allied to the most amiable of women. "I am as much your enemy, notwithstanding, as Sir Thomas is," was his answer.

As we return'd, Sir Robert B. told me, he thought I had better settle any accounts I might have left unfinished. I replied, "I never left any thing of that kind to be done in a hurry—that all my worldly affairs had been long settled—and he saw I had not fought this rencontre,

I " though

“ though it was impossible to avoid it.” When I was left to myself, I own to you, my beloved Elwina, your idea rushed so strongly on my mind, that I walked about my tent in an agony I can scarcely express. I told Sir Robert all my worldly affairs were settled; and so they were, as to making my will, which I did within the week of my dear mother’s death. When I lost her, there was but one in the world to whom I had a wish to leave any thing; but that that *one* might suffer from the event of the next morning, I could neither mitigate or prevent. I implored Heaven to fortify your mind and render it happy, and then dispose of me as it thought fit. I went to bed; but the agitation and conflict of my mind between affection for you and resentment against my adversary, prevented me from closing my eyes. When the Horse-guard clock struck four I rose, and dressed myself for the appointment. I sent my servant to the place where Sir Robert promised to meet me, and then I proceed-

I. 2 ed

ed to him; we met, and walked together to the ground. I had requested the surgeon of our regiment to follow at some distance. It was a satisfaction to me to be the first at the appointed spot. We waited ten minutes; the time seemed very long; for I believe I took out my watch above a dozen times. I was going to intrust Sir Robert with a tender adieu for my Elwina, in case I was destined to behold her no more; but the sound of your loved name died on my lips. At last the opponents arrived. Very little time was necessary; the ground was marked, the pistols examined, and a guinea tossed up to decide who should stand the first fire. As it proved, it was my chance to give it. I fired, and the ball took off a small part of his hat. He returned it immediately, and my left shoulder was just marked with his ball grazing along the point of it. I then desired Sir Robert to ask him if he was satisfied? "No, fire away, and be damned," cried he. On which I discharged my se-

second pistol in the air. He said he was confused, and did not observe my proceeding; but let that be as it may, he directly fired on a level with me, though his agitation and passion caused him to miss me, so that I received no injury. The seconds now thought we had done enough; and Sir Thomas acknowledged I had acted very honourably, and like a gentleman. I declared myself very well satisfied with this concession; and so we parted very civilly on all sides. This, my beloved Elwina, is the strict truth of the commencement and conclusion of our rencontre. I know not what misrepresentation may have been made. I am happy to see by the papers, that the duel is said to be in consequence of some political altercation. I should have been distressed beyond every thing had a lady been alleged as the cause, as then the name of my adored Elwina might have been brought forward, which could not have wounded your delicacy more than my feelings.

Will you permit me to wait upon you, my beloved Elwina? I must see you. ° If you think it would be improper to come to your house, I will take the liberty of expecting that happiness at our Maria's. She, I doubt not, will allow me to pass an hour or two with my soul's treasure. Let me have the comfort of a line or two under your dear hand. I cannot know one moment's peace, till I am assured from you that you are not displeased with me.

This letter was written for your inspection alone; yet if you think it will remove any prejudices against the partiality you so kindly feel for me, and which now seems unpleasant to your father and mother, you have my free permission to shew it to them.

Adieu, my dearest Elwina!

I am for ever most affectionately

and faithfully yours,

ALFRED.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

THAT Heaven has protected my Alfred, is an unceasing call upon Elwina for praises and thanksgivings. I feel my obligation to you too for your great forbearance; so provoked, you could not act otherwise. I took your advice—nay, as a proof of the coincidence of our opinions, I had determined to shew your letter before I discovered your permission to do so.

Alfred, I must say your adversaries had done you justice; that is, I plainly perceived the fault was theirs, and yet they seem altogether as much dissatisfied as before, perhaps because they find your courage equal to your other good qualities. I think your letter, however, has done no disservice to our cause. I enforced your request of being permitted to wait on me

at home; and I have the happiness to tell you, if you can call to-morrow or next day we shall be glad to see you. That is the message from my father. But what does Elwina say? Oh! how shall I be able, my Alfred, to behold you, without the utmost emotions of mixed delight and a thousand nameless sensations, known only to those who feel the excess of tenderness that fills my faithful bosom! Oh! come then, my friend, my lover, my much loved Alfred! come! and if possible, inspire my father with the kind of regard he ought to feel for one so amiable!

Their allowing you to visit me after some sharp doings on all sides, is to be a happy presage that we shall gain some points over them between us. Hope still cheers me, and I encourage it, though it may be delusive.

“Delusive hope still points to future good.”

But it serves to sweeten the present, by
anticipating

anticipating still more delight. "My bosom's lord sits highly on my breast." Oh! may it be a blessed prognostic of permanent felicity to my Alfred and his faithful

ELWINA.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

OH! my Maria, where is that pleasing delusive hope, which I flattered myself when I saw you this morning! My overbearing brother has undone every thing. How transported was I with the more than civil reception my Alfred met with yesterday from my father; and how pleasing must have been the ideas which accompanied him on his return to town! I find Clodio met him; happily my brother was in his chariot, so could have no opportunity of speaking to him. But he came in quite in a heat of passion, and

flew out most indecently before the servants, on my father's shameful weakness and neglect of his children's happiness and advantage.

He insisted on his being forbidden the house; and if I did not promise never to have any future intercourse with him, he imprecated the bitterest wishes on my head. He was in so great a fury, that I really was fearful of irritating him, as I knew not whether he would not have beaten me, and then I know my father would have interfered, which might have been productive of fatal consequences. But nature must have vent some way, and suppressing my speech threw me into a state of suffocation, and brought on a violent hysteric fit, which the cruel author of my affliction sneered at as a woman's artifice. However, it answered this good purpose, I was taken out of the room. But why do I say *good purpose*? As it gave him more opportunity of strengthening my father's prejudices;

dices ; or rather, I may say, he availed himself of that point of time to work on my father's irresolution. My mother staid in the room by way of mediatrix : by which means I learnt what had been doing. My father, too condescendingly to his imperious son, sought to justify his conduct by the moderation Alfred had shewn, and the ready acquiescence with which he promised to wait, till some favourable opportunity or turn of fortune should enable him to support me without being burthensome to my family. " This was ringing the changes over again," he said ; " here nothing was to be obtained. Why did not my father at once do as he ought, and tell the undutiful disobedient creature, that he would turn her out of doors if she did not give him up."

" She is not disobedient," my mother ventured to say, " they have both renewed their promise of never marrying without our consent."

“Then he would be curst,” he said, “if ever they had it; so we might as well give up the idea of ever coming together.” He then inveighed against me, my mother said, in a most ungentleman-like manner, and swore he hated the sight of me, for I had blasted all his hopes. This, my mother says, seemed rather to have escaped him unawares; for he looked even spitefully chagrined at having thus discovered the secret spring of his rancour. My father could not appease him by any means, but by giving the strongest assurances that Alfred should no longer visit here; but he could not, he said, prevent my seeing or corresponding with him.

Good Heaven! what will Alfred think of this variableness? How despicable shall we appear in his eyes! All civility to him one minute, the next all rudeness, and never doing justice to his merit.

My father has been up stairs to me. He
said

said " We had made him, from the happi-
 " est, the most miserable of men; that all
 " the dignity of our family depended on his
 " keeping terms with my brother, and
 " therefore he had bound himself by a
 " most solemn oath, never to give or leave
 " me a shilling if I married Alfred; nor
 " would he ever see me from that moment.
 " I could have no love or respect for him
 " if I could not conquer my inclination.
 " It had been long since he had been al-
 " lowed to have any himself. He had lived
 " but for his children, and they between
 " them were striving to break his heart."

His tears touched me, though I felt very
 keenly the cruelty of making me every
 way the sacrifice to my brother's ill-na-
 ture and baseness of heart. I was too much
 agitated to speak, and my father left the
 room quite sobbing.

Oh Maria! how shall I relate this to
 Alfred? My heart is bursting with grief.
 I now shall be a beggar indeed! No, I
 never

never can unite him to such distress—I will never be his, unless, by some means unforeseen by me at present, we should be enabled to live above want. Mediocrity would content me; but poverty has so many ills attending it, that I should be less wretched in giving him up, than to expose him to share it with me. Can I suppress the agony of my mind to talk calmly of giving up Alfred? Oh no, Maria! I cannot, I know his generosity, his tender affection; and I feel as much for his distress as my own. How can my father think he is intitled by love and respect to such a sacrifice as he demands from me? But it is not to him, but to my cruel brother the sacrifice is to be made. The dignity of our family! Oh! my good God! would to Heaven the rage of making a family had never entered my poor weak father's brain! Then this gentleman would not have been a man of so much consequence.

Jenny

Jenny says, he is so enraged because I will not go to Mrs. G——s. He swore if he had me there, if I could not live, I should die the wife of Sir Thomas K. I fancy he would be foiled at his own weapon in that particular. However he shall not have an opportunity of persecuting me out of this house; for if I do leave it, it will not be to go thither. Yet what do I rave about? Indigent as I now am, what could I do if I was forced from my father's house by their united ill treatment? And what room for censure should I give the world?

I must write to Alfred; and yet I know not in what words to convey this last fatal intelligence. It is refining on torture; for I am convinced his dear affectionate heart is this moment planning a thousand little schemes of elegant delight in future for his Elwina.

Oh! my Maria, let me intreat you to go to him. It will be much better than my
writing

writing at present. Say all your gentle heart can suggest to soften the asperity of our fortune; tell him how inexpressibly dear he is to me, and will ever remain; but that, circumstanced as I am, I should do him the greatest injury to become his wife. How my heart bleeds for the anguish I shall plant in his. I would die to prove my love and constancy to him; and I do prove it, in thus striving to tear myself from the long indulged hope of being his. Tell him with what zeal I swear never to cease loving him. And if ever either of us should be in possession of an income to secure us from wretched want, that my hand shall be his on his first demand. But that at present it would be madness and the height of folly. No, no, we must not think of it. Time may yet have some happy hours for my beloved Alfred and his faithful Elwina.

Dearest Maria, yours ever

E L W I N A.

L E T.

LETTER LXXXIX.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

MARIA, the generous excellent Maria has just left me! Oh! Elwina, can you expect any thing short of distraction from your Alfred, after he has been informed of the transactions in your family?

Indeed I stand in need of all the resolution I can muster to enable me to bear our misfortunes like a reasonable creature. That they are called *our misfortunes*, makes them still more difficult to be supported; that you, my beloved, should suffer, and your Alfred not be permitted to sooth your distress, adds tortures to my soul. Alas! how can we be censured for placing our happiness in wealth, since the privation of that shining dross is the cause of our misery! But can I ever forget the goodness of our amiable Maria?—"The addition," she said, "which the death of my aunt has
"made

“ made to my fortune, I have devoted to
“ Elwina on my demise ; why should I wait
“ till a time, when I should not enjoy the de-
“ light of seeing it contribute to her happi-
“ ness? It shall be yours from this mo-
“ ment. It will add more than a hundred
“ a year to your income ; and let me have
“ the felicity of uniting your hands. From
“ our confined way of life we lay up mo-
“ ney every year ; and when death has
“ taken my father from me, I will reside
“ with you and our dear Elwina, and our
“ joint incomes will support us with con-
“ tent, if not affluence.” Oh ! my beloved
Elwina, what a friend is this ! But ought
we to avail ourselves of such unexampled
generosity ? I doubt, nay am sure we ought
not. I feel as if it would be taking ad-
vantage of her love in a manner that would
reflect upon ourselves dishonour and re-
proach. Oh my soul’s treasure, I must not,
I dare not accept your hand on terms that
would disgrace my feelings as a man ! Our
joys must not be poisoned with remorse or
self-

self-condemnation. These sentiments, I hope, for the honour of human nature, are not singular; I am convinced they are yours. Yet *I* may feel more scruples on the occasion than most other men. *I*, whose poverty is in consequence of parental disobedience. Oh! Elwina, when I reflect that my own father was a sacrifice to the dying curses of his, by the instigation of an unnatural brother, may I not dread the vindictiveness of yours will work on your parents to load you with the same. What wrath from Heaven should I then draw on my guilty head! I shudder at the idea, and shrink like a coward from the danger I should involve her in, who is dearer to me than life!

A calm acquiescence for some time to these hard measures, may harmonize the hearts which seem to have lost their natural affection. By a little submission to their harsh decrees, we may avert the evil, in which a too rash resolution might otherwise involve us. Let us then,
for

for some months at least, continue to cherish in our bosoms the hope of better times. But never never cease to love, to remember each other. Believe me, my Elwina, it is the excess and sincerity of my love that enables me thus to resign you for a little time; that when it shall please Heaven to allot us the supremest happiness it can bestow, no bitter reflections may arise to wound our hearts, and lessen that rational esteem and love, which cannot subsist where either has forfeited their claim to probity and honour. How would the peace which I look forward to enjoy with my Elwina, when age has silvered o'er our brows, be interrupted, if we could charge ourselves with shortening the days of those to whom my beloved is indebted for her being! Oh! no! that inward rectitude, that *peace which goodness bosoms ever*, would flee from us. And how could we expect love and reverence in our offspring? Thy exquisite delicacy, my love, would start into madness at the bare idea. If we are not happy, my loved

Elwina,

Elwina, we will yet deserve to be so. My truth, my constancy, you can never doubt. I rest with the same confidence in yours; and when fortune puts it in my power, I will then accept its greatest blessing with all the holy rapture that a dying saint meets the joys of Heaven! Adieu, thou best loved of women! while life remains I will be most faithfully yours,

ALFRED.

LETTER XC.

To the same.

SINCE I saw my beloved, I have had an offer of going abroad; and as, in our late conversation, you said you thought you should be easier in your mind if such a circumstance was to happen, I am less scrupulous in accepting it.

There are some companies going out to
relieve

relieve the different garrisons; and I find there is a young man in one of the regiments destined for Minorca, who had rather stay at home. He is a lieutenant, and for a trifle of money I can get exchanged into his corps. I mentioned it to my friend Sir Robert, and he highly commends my resolution. I trust your unnatural brother will not continue to use you so unworthily, when the hated Alfred is removed from the possibility of seeing his beloved Elwina. I shall, by this means too, gain rank, and may sooner get a company, the height now of my ambition, since the pay of a captain would enable me to remove you from a family that no longer affords you the peaceful asylum it ought.

The camps will break up soon; and the relief is ordered for the latter end of the year.

As I am forbid to see you at your father's house, I think it subjecting your character

character to so much indignity, by soliciting you, to clandestine meetings, that my spirit recoils at it. I agree then with you, that an honourable absence is less afflicting than the difficulties we at present labour under. But then, to be deprived of the means of frequent correspondence; that, I own, fills me with the greatest grief; I shall so seldom have the happiness of hearing from my beloved: yet shall I not know that I am ever in her thoughts? That she lives for me? and that we may yet indulge the dear hope of one day being united? Oh! may such assurances cheer our hearts, and enable us to look forward to that time, when remembrance of past troubles will endear present delight! When we shall even think them over-paid! Yes, my Elwina! my soul seems prophetic;—we shall yet be happy!

Yours eternally,

A L F R E D.

LET-

LETTER XCI.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

MY Alfred, I see your good sense and propriety in every action of your life. I revere you as much, if possible, as I love you; and I will emulate your example. Your Elwina shall prove she has a soul fit for a soldier's wife. Go then, Alfred, where thy honour calls thee, and may the God of battles protect thee! Oh, may his sheltering arm sustain you in the day of conflict, and may his righteous spirit enable thy Elwina to support thy absence! Did I then counsel it? Alas! I looked on it at a distance—what am I saying, and where is the fortitude I ought to assume? Oh, my Alfred, for one moment then suffer the weakness of a woman who loves like me. But I have said I would not be weak. No, I will
con-

conquer it.—Go then, my hero. Yet still think of Elwina ; still let her image accompany you—I know it will, and in this necessary absence, I shall have no other grief to combat, but the loss of you, or other fear than your danger. Oh, on your safe return hangs all the comfort of poor Elwina.

My generous, kind Maria has been with me ; we have been jointly weeping over your letter, and she has most affectionately striven to strengthen my mind ; my almost wavering mind. Yet think better of me, my loved Alfred, than that I could be so weak as to hesitate about the propriety of your going abroad. No, I see it—I acknowledge it---I counselled it---I am convinced it is for the best, and I will, indeed I will, reconcile myself to it. I do not for some days wish to see you. I shall soon be better able to bear the thoughts of parting from the object of all my hopes, wishes, fears, and affections. Adieu, Vol. III. K adieu.

adieu. Oh, how soon shall I say adieu, perhaps, for ever!

ELWINA.

LETTER XCII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I WILL not comment on my loved Elwina's letter, as I doubt I should not strengthen your mind much, by telling you the effect it had on me. I made a very unsoldier-like appearance for some time;—but courage, my dearest girl, all will be well yet. The prospect of war to a female mind, though superior to most of her sex's weakness, is certain to inspire terrors that are allowable. But let me intreat you to look forward to the hour of our meeting, and remember that hour will approach, and the felicity of it will repay our separation. I then shall have done something to deserve Elwina. You
used

used to say you had a *martial spirit*; exert it then, my Elwina, for my sake, as well as for your own. I shall be but half valiant if you are a coward. You see how much of my glory depends on you---let not my laurels be tarnished. I will see you to-morrow, and do not let the hour of parting embitter the few I can spend with you. And now I am on the subject, tell me, do you wish I should take leave of you? Can you support with firmness the last look? I will be guided by you entirely. To-morrow will not be the last time, nor probably some time yet. I shall most certainly know when I see you for the last time, and I will not deceive you into the belief of my coming again, unless you particularly desire it; but I think you will not wish to deceive yourself; it is a proof of a weak mind, to avoid one evil by running into a greater. Let us mutually forget the time and distance, with every other unpleasant circumstance, and fix our eyes and thoughts on that period when we shall

meet to part no more. But to-morrow I shall have the happiness of seeing you—I will spend the day at Maria's. The chaste moon will light me to town.

Adieu. Ever your own

ALFRED.

LETTER XCIII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

Bedford Square.

O H, how frightfully do the hours hurry on, and how soon will the day arrive of my taking the *last look* of my Alfred---my Alfred, the delight of my eyes, the sole comfort of my heart, and the constant companion of my waking and sleeping thoughts.

It is a great indulgence that I am permitted to be in town, as I may, by that means, see you to the latest hour before
your

your final departure. Yes, my Alfred, you shall see with what fortitude I will bid adieu to my valiant foldier. My reason has gained a victory over my sensibility, which had nearly degenerated into weakness, and would have rendered me unworthy of Alfred's esteem. But I am now armed for the event, and I will nobly sustain it. I feel some triumph on the occasion of making this sacrifice to my country in the time of such threatening danger. I have given to its aid, my best, my only treasure; for take my Alfred from me, and I am *poor indeed*, Adieu. I need not repeat "Let me see you as often as you can."

Yours for ever,

ELWINA.

LETTER XCIV.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

AS I crossed the square last night, I turned to look once more at the

house that contained all my earthly good. Oh, my Elwina, a last look, how interesting it is! A light appeared in the second floor: I raised my eyes—my God! it was my lovely Elwina's chamber. I saw you, my heavenly maid; you approached the window---I saw you draw your dear hand across your eyes. I could discover the traces of grief on your loved countenance. You stood still as if looking out. Ah! was not Alfred, the wretched Alfred in your thoughts? Yes, I know he was---your bosom heaved with sighs---I would have given worlds to have spoken to you---I was almost tempted to have knocked at the door. Yet why subject my beloved, as well as myself, to a repetition of the agony we had just overcome? Hardly knowing what I did, I took up a small pebble, and was in the act of throwing it up, that you might know there was some one below, and perchance open your window.—“Stop, rash Alfred,” I exclaimed, “whom are you going thus rudely to expose to the licentious comments of the
“ passers

“ passers by? Amid thy own sufferings
 “ respect the object of thy love, and never
 “ seek to draw on her the censure of her
 “ own heart, by forcing it to act unworthy
 “ of the veneration she ought to inspire.”

I leaned against the rails, with my eyes
 fixed on the adored Elwina, till she re-
 tired, and then sought out my solitary
 lodging in a frame of mind “ that beggars
 “ all description.” The chaise soon ar-
 rived, and I threw myself into it, to be
 carried away from all my soul holds dear.
 This was a struggle indeed—but it is over.
 Heaven restore your comforts, my loved
 Elwina! You will never be absent from
 my thoughts; they will for ever dwell on
 thy sweetnesss, love and truth.

I will write to you by every opportunity,
 and shall expect the same satisfaction from
 you: your letters will be my only joy and
 solace, and till I receive fresh, these, which
 are my constant companions, shall impart

consolation to my heart, as they contain such proofs that I am dear to you. Adieu, my soul's fondest hope! I am now going on board. Adieu, adieu.

Eternally your own,

ALFRED.

LETTER XCV.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

MARIA, I have lost him! Last night I parted from Alfred! Merciful Heaven! perhaps never again to bless my eyes with viewing his loved face. If so, what will become of Elwina? How shall she find strength to support herself? Oh, no, rather let me hope that I may not survive him.

Now will my inexorable brother be at ease. He has driven from his country
and

and friends, the most deserving, the love-liest of men, and he will be answerable for the consequences.

Alfred came early in the afternoon. He said he had passed two hours with you. He blessed you, and called you *our true, our generous friend*, and told me how tenderly he had recommended his loved Elwina to your care. We settled the mode of our correspondence; and I gave him the tooth-pick-case in which my portrait is set. He received it with a transport that was too much for words....Oh! his looks I can never forget; I would not wish to forget them. I really behaved most heroically---I talked sometimes of things quite foreign to the sad purpose of our meeting; but it was impossible to hold it. The blow was to be struck, and there was no avoiding it. The hour at last arrived that was to separate us. I struggled for resolution---Thank God I obtained it! I believe I was hardly in my senses. My head felt confused to the

utmost degree. At last he found he could stay no longer, and approaching me, he would have spoken, but the words died away before they reached his trembling lips. He threw his arms round me---and---here was no time for silly reserve---I felt mine clasp him to my bosom ; my bosom, which, alas ! was the next moment to have all it loved torn from it ! Our emotion was too great for expression. “ He gave but one kiss, and tore himself away.” As soon as I heard the street door shut, I ran up into my room, lest the servants should see the distress I could no longer conceal. Yet it was some time before I could give vent to my grief by tears. I stood some time at the window, hardly knowing what I did, or where I was. Oh, my God ! to tell myself he is gone---that I shall see him no more---that he is going into the midst of danger ! Alas ! Maria, how wretched must I be till I hear of his safety ! and yet, at the time I am reading under his dear hand, that he is well
and

and happy---Oh, at that moment he may be dying. My prayers to Heaven will never cease for him. My Maria, I am certain yours will be united with those of the poor unhappy

ELWINA.

LETTER XCVI.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

IT would be too cruel, my dear Alfred, to revive in your mind the grief I felt, and still must feel, at parting with you. We know each other's sufferings on the melancholy occasion; but I promised to behave heroically, and I think I acted bravely. I shall strive, for your sake, to be in as good spirits as possible. If I can not assume a little gaiety when I am writing to you, when shall I smile? for never can I be so pleasingly employed as in conversing with the beloved of my heart. I hope you

have had a pleasant sail to the Downs—I find you are still there—I shall inquire about the winds every day, that I may know to a certainty how long you may remain in that quarter. But, alas! you are as effectually absent now as if at Minorca, only that you are safe.

I shall go to H—— to-morrow. I was determined to give a few days to all the luxury of grief, and it has been of wonderful service to me. And as this is Sunday, and, consequently, no post goes from hence, I shall take my letter to finish, after having seen our good friend Maria. God bless you, my Alfred, and good night!

H——, *Monday 2 o'clock.*

My most excellent Alfred, how does my regard rise on each instance of your worth!—Maria and I have been shedding the sweetest tears together. She has informed me of the various charges you have given
her

her concerning your Elwina. Oh, thou ever loved of my heart, may Heaven ordain that we meet again, and in its mercy spare thy Elwina the bitter task of receiving the proofs of thy love, when thou art become insensible of hers. No, my Alfred, I am convinced you will never cease to love me. I thank you for delivering these affectionate, and truly affecting messages to Maria. I think you would have found a voice impossible for so much tenderness when you was with me—And what would have become of me? I should have died of excess of grief, of love, and a thousand conflicting passions. Our loved Maria is now sitting by me, for I brought her home to dinner.

My mother has behaved very kindly to me, and I endeavour, indeed I do, my Alfred, strive as much as I can not to think hardly of her; but what avails all her kindness now, when she has forced away the only man in the world who could
make

make me happy? Of what use is civility to me, when they have deprived my heart of all it loves, and every comfort is driven from my bosom?

However, I will pay more attention to your wishes, and indeed it has ever been my rule to look upward, rather than pore upon the ground. I know I shall recover my spirits in a little time, and then I shall hope to entertain you with my pen, as in happier times I have done. May every blessing from heaven attend my Alfred! Maria joins her voice with the prayer of

ELWINA.

LETTER XCVII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

At Sea.

HOW happy I think myself to have received a letter from my beloved! It reached me just as we were going to weigh anchor.

anchor. Yes, my sweet girl, we are too fully acquainted with what each has suffered, and we will not sadden our hearts with repeating the anguish that has, and still does possess them; but turn our eyes to that blessed hour when we shall again meet, and be united for ever.

I shall make but half a soldier, if you do not inspire me with courage. I know you will—you have no weakness but what is amiable, and laudable too.

I am but a fresh-water sailor, and, therefore, was extremely indisposed by sea-sickness. I am now more accustomed to the element, and like it very much, only that it bears me far away from her I love. Yet I am thoroughly convinced it is better for the present that we should suffer a little, that we may be made large amends some time hence.

I feel impatient to get to our destined

tined port. I think the life of action will suit me very well; but I am not fond of the idea of acting on the defensive only. I hope the general is a man of spirit, that we may cut out warm work for the Spaniards. However, do not expect accounts of the siege from my pen. I am too young in the service to pretend to give my opinion, and I believe my Elwina will be better satisfied to hear of my health, and how I pass the dull hours, than of guns, and all the long train of "horrid war."

The time goes off very pleasantly on board, as there are a great many ships in the fleet, and we visit from one to the other. I am convinced of the liberality of my Elwina's heart, and that you will be pleased on finding I can amuse myself. I am determined to adopt the advice you gave me, of keeping up my spirits, to enable me to enjoy good fortune when it falls to my share.

I shall

I shall finish this when I arrive at Minorca, which will now very soon happen, as we are taking leave of the grand fleet destined to relieve the garrison of Gibraltar. I wish they may fall in with our combined enemies, and give a good account of them by beating them soundly, if not "handsomely." Adieu for the present, my best, my only love.

Minorca.

We landed all our troops yesterday in good order, without any accident happening. You will not expect I can at present give you any information respecting either the garrison or country. I am told we shall have great plenty of every thing, except vegetables, which have failed on the island, and the resources **are cut off** which used to supply the market. This will be one of the hardships to me who am so fond of the produce of a garden—but it will give me a keener relish for the production of our dear garden, when we are happily settled, far from the rumours of war.

I have

I have an opportunity of sending this, as a vessel is going off with dispatches. .

Rest assured, my dearest Elwina, you shall hear from me as often as possible; and I know your good sense will keep your tender heart from sinking into despair, by suggesting probable reasons for my not being able to convey my sentiments to you so frequently as I could wish. I like my brother officers extremely, and am very much pleased with the reception I have met with. Things go on very well; and your Alfred is as happy as he can be, divided from all that is lovely in his eyes, and dear to his heart—that heart in which my beloved Elwina's image is indelibly impressed. I remain ever most faithfully yours,

ALFRED.

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FOR FATHERS.

LETTER XCVIII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I WELL know how happy my beloved Elwina must be at any opportunity of hearing from her faithful Alfred; happy too is he when any such offers—and how exquisitely happy will he be when he can bless his eyes with a letter from her dear hand! However, I wait with patience; well knowing that the delay is in some other quarter, and far from being her fault.

I have now been several months from you, my beloved Elwina; but what are months, or any period of time, to the heart that loves so truly as mine? It still beats—it still is anxious to hear of you...and so it would, had not a day intervened since the last sight of my best beloved had taken place. Oh, no time or place can change my affections

THE SCHOOL

fections—they are unalterably fixed on you for ever.

I am sure you will receive pleasure from knowing I enjoy a good state of health; which is rather a singular circumstance—for notwithstanding the natural healthiness of the situation, there are a great many invalids, from the failure of the vegetables (which I mentioned to you before). The scurvy, and of a most inveterate kind, has got amongst a set of as brave fellows as a man would wish to share a victory with. The fortress has been so closely invested ever since I have been here, that all communication with the country is cut off; and there are a great many of the troops who have been ten or eleven years in garrison, whose health declines very fast. We shall enjoy the freedom of fresh air when we get from so confined a place. I, however, am determined never to be among the number of complainants—and indeed at present I have no occasion.

The

The forces against us are very considerable; but I suppose they have but an indifferent opinion of their prowess, since the commanding officer has departed so much from the dignity of a soldier and man of honour, as to conceive it necessary to try the strength of our general's principles. It was indeed by the express desire of the Spanish king; but certainly the Duc de Crillon forgot his own rank, and paid an ill compliment to his own understanding, when he condescended to be an instrument in such a business. Every man of honour must revere the conduct of our general, for the spirit with which he refused the base offer to betray his country—the message was treated with that mixture of haughty, but dignified disdain, that shewed how he felt and resented the insult.

The enemy keeps up a very brisk fire upon us, and which too often takes effect; as must be expected in the situation we are in. However, our shot does execution too;
and

and whatever is the event of the contest, they will have reason to remember the defenders of Minorca.

You will naturally suppose, my Elwina, some mischief must be done to our troops, when I tell you, a hundred and nine pieces of cannon, and thirty-six heavy mortars, act continually against us, cooped up as we are. But want of health carries more to the grave than the fire of the enemy. What grieves me most is, that really the works are not half manned. They are too extensive for the small number that are in garrison, even if all were in health, and capable of acting. However, we must do the best we can—the mother country cannot supply each place that is attacked, with such force as shall insure victory. I trust if we have the misfortune to lose the place, it will not be given away; and for the rest, we must place our confidence in that Power to whom alone victory is owing, and who can turn a defeat into a triumph.

My dearest girl, I am really impatient to hear from you. I know there must be letters on the way; and I feel gratitude by anticipation for your kindness. I hope you will tell me a thousand particulars; and, remember I cannot trip away to you, to have any obscure passages explained. A letter now from you would be the highest of all treats. Adieu, my only love—while life lasts

I am wholly yours,

ALFRED.

LETTER XCIX.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

WHAT a tedious time must clapse before I can have any answer, or even intelligence from the beloved of my heart! I have had but two letters since your departure, my Alfred—and, alas! how long a time is that! and still how much longer may it be! I will not tell you I repent my

acquiescence to your quitting your native country, because I will not fill your dear bosom with uneasiness. But, oh, that I could have accompanied you! that I will venture to say; then what danger should I have dreaded? Oh! none---none, while I had a chance of relieving, or securing the object of my love from any fatigue; or at least sharing it with him.

All other hardships I can bear,
But living from my love.

Yet, my Alfred, I *must* bear it. To hear you are well and happy, gives me the only comfort I can expect to taste, till you are restored to me again; and when that blest hour arrives, Alfred, we will part no more. I see it will answer very little purpose waiting and waiting; I have gained no point by the sacrifice I have made to the will of my parents, or rather to the *ill* will of my haughty brother. But why make you unhappy about it? You cannot prevent, or at present remedy my distress. However,

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any state with you would be preferable to living separated from you. I should not perhaps say this, if there was a chance of seeing you soon; but absence and distance make me bolder than I should be if you was present. Was present! are you then ever absent from me? No, you are with me every where. Your loved image dwells in my heart; and my ideas are filled with you alone.

Last week I went to spend a few days with Mrs. M——. I could hardly summon up resolution enough to go thither:

Alas! where with you I have stray'd,
Could I wander with pleasure alone?

But it was the first time I had seen her since the return of the captain; and Maria thought a little change of air would be serviceable to me; not that I am ill, do not think that. I went, and great was the struggle. But you know I do not willingly give way to weaknesses, although

you kindly call mine only amiable ones. Every one, however, has not the same indulgence for Elwina, that her loved Alfred has---and indeed I knew I should not be softened by meeting sympathy; on the contrary, that very likely whenever your name should be mentioned, it would be in a kind of way that would rouse my resentment, rather than melt me with grief; at least for the moment.

The view of each place brought you so forcibly before my eyes, that I could not resist a gush of tears; but they are the last I will shed before Mrs. M——: she is either too happy, or too insensible to feel for others; and she strove to make me an object of ridicule to Captain M——, who, though a good sort of man, has no more delicacy than you would expect from a boatswain; so the poor lovesick Elwina, as I was called, you will believe, had not much comfort in her visit.

The last evening, I stole away from them, it was the full moon. It happened to be my birth day. I walked pensively up to that dear spot from whence I took the view you so well remember, and so highly prized. Oh, Alfred, what a crowd of ideas filled my mind! I fixed my eyes on the once dear dwelling of my heart's sole joy. There was an unspeakable solemnity in the scene before me, which I shall never forget. I was lost in *reverie*. I called on the blessed shade of *our* dear mother. I invoked her aid and protection for her beloved son. A delirium seemed to possess me. I wept, but they were delicious tears. I took out your picture, and could hardly refrain from chiding your dear resemblance for not joining its tears with mine. I know not how long I should have remained in this frame of mind, had I not been awakened from my dream by the sound of voices. Mrs. M—— had sent after me, on finding I did not return at the usual hour for supper. I hastened home as fast

as I could, and strove to compose my agitated spirits, that I might not subject myself to mortifying remarks from those who know not how to feel the woes that press on the heart of sensibility, or have decency enough to respect them. I underwent some coarse jokes from the captain, which excited an infinity of mirth in his wife; and I thought it better to avail myself of a pretence of fatigue, and leave these happy people to themselves.

As Mrs. M—— predicted, I got a very bad cold from my evening's amusement; for I was not aware of the dews falling, and the tears I shed contributed not a little to the cause of my indisposition. I wish, sometimes, that Maria was at a greater distance from me, as I should then perhaps, spend more time with her. I really find no satisfaction at home; I am sorry to say it, but it is a truth. My imperious brother looks on me as a disgrace to the family: but I might still purchase his favour,

your, by shewing a partiality to *his* friend and our too constant visitor K——. I think it a peculiar hardship that they have deprived me of the only society that can form my happiness, and will force upon me the company of a wretch whom I detest on a thousand accounts. Can I forgive him for having attempted the life of my Alfred? I cannot acquit him in that affair so easily as you have done; or believe he acted like a man of honour. However, nothing can prevail on me to treat him with an equal civility with the rest of our visitants, notwithstanding my brother's wrath and threats. He has done me all the despite he can, having bound my father by such strong ties, never to look on me as related to him if I do not renounce my Alfred. What can he do more, but urge him to turn me out of doors, because he has not power over my will? And if he was to proceed to that harsh usage of a child, who was once thought the most dutiful of all, I could not be more un-

happy than they have already made me. And perhaps to work for my daily bread would amuse my mind much better than any thing here can do.

But why do I transgress the rules I prescribed to myself! My Alfred, I will never write you such letters in future. Yet have I not ever written from my heart? and I know not how to conceal any of its emotions from him who is the absolute master of it. Indeed it is now more than commonly depressed by a recent proof how the affections of all my relations are turned from me. I received a letter yesterday by the mail from New York, written by my sister Pleydel; in consequence, she says, of the information she has received from my mother, brothers, and sister G——, all complaining of my headstrong opposition to their wills. They do not, indeed, pretend to say, that the person whom I prefer is unworthy of me, but he is a beggar, and it would be ruin, absolute ruin

ruin into which I would plunge myself; and which they are endeavouring to preserve me from. She then labours to prove how difficult I should find it to keep my romantic passion alive in a state of penury, and which she is so well qualified to enlarge upon, having once been reduced so low, as almost to wish she had never been indulged in her inclination for Mr. Pleydel, since the connection had been productive of such distresses. I think her character seems quite altered too, as well as some others in our family. But interest will do much, and perhaps my brother has awakened hers, by telling her how advantageous it would be to have such an alliance as Sir Thomas K——, for she expatiates much on the splendid offer I have been so weak as to reject; and earnestly requests me not to throw away the good things that are held out to my acceptance: adding, if the man I have fixed my affections on is guided by a principle of honour, he would rather advise me

to listen to the persuasions of my true friends, than the suggestions of a delusive passion, which must make me miserable, and justify my family in renouncing me. She concludes by saying, I must give her credit for being my sincere friend, and well wisher, and not look on her as my enemy, as I have done all my other advisers. She glances too, very severely, on a pretended friend, who can have no good view in encouraging disobedience to the will of the best of parents, and the most affectionate and prudent of brothers.

This letter, you will believe, my dear Alfred, is not of a nature to calm my mind much, as I must see how inflexibly they are all fixed to gain their point against me. I have certainly done as much as I can by way of concession to my father and mother—more I cannot do. It would be absolute weakness in me, and cruelty to you. My heart will ever remain sensible of what it owes to you; nor shall
any

any circumstances induce it to alter its sentiments. Their persecutions cannot work any good to themselves, though it may add to the disagreeable situation of your ever faithful, and truly affectionate

ELWINA.

LETTER C.

To the same.

I AM happy that my gloomy letter will be accompanied with one of not quite such a sombre shade. I told you I would not write such another, and I will keep my word. It is an ill part in me to add to the troubles you must necessarily endure, by telling you of little disagreeable occurrences in the family way, which you cannot prevent. While I have such a faithful and affectionate friend as Maria at home, and I look forward to an union with such a man as Alfred, I will not give way to sorrow, which, you properly

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observe,

observe, unfits us for the support of the present evil, and renders us unworthy of the future good.

As to amusement of any kind, you must not expect accounts from me, but you shall have them from the public prints. I have sent you a collection of newspapers and magazines that you may know how we have been going on in this world. I have not been to one public place since your departure. I never had any great relish for them, and now my *gout* is saving money. I expend nothing, and shall grow rich merely from that circumstance. Maria has advised me to become an adventurer in the wheel of fortune: she is so sanguine in my success, that I have indulged her whim, and the few pounds that the ticket costs will not diminish much from our store, and there is a chance you know of its largely contributing to it. Heaven send us good luck! It is putting ourselves in the way

of

of fortune ; and she is very much in arrears with you. If she pays the debt to me, I do not think you will complain of her overlooking justice in order to be generous.

I feel much easier in my mind than I did, because my brother is absent, and consequently his friend does not visit here ; but I shall not avail myself of the former circumstance, to attempt gaining any points in my favour from my father and mother. I am sorry to say it, I have lost my confidence in them. No professions of kindness, or indulgence, will now expand my too credulous heart with delight and gratitude ; I have proved how empty all promises are, and I depend no longer on them. Only matter of fact shall obtain any credit with me for the future ; but if they will let me get through the day quietly, it is all I ask, and I will never provoke them by complaining. You must stay your time now, as you are a servant

as well as subject of the king, and I submit to his decree, hourly recommending you to the protection of Heaven. I have no friends on earth but Maria and you ; but surely ye are such, that few on earth could equal, and none can go beyond my love and affection for both.

How I wish I could transport some of the produce of our garden for your mess ! But why talk of wishing ? If wishes could avail, should I be at this moment deploring your absence ? No, I should be telling you, instead of writing it, how infinitely dear you are to me ; yet, what a comfort it is, that this relief to our hearts is not withheld from us, and most thankfully do I acknowledge our particular obligation to the first former of letters. The “ wretch’s aid.” You are the “ banished lover,” and may I not be styled “ the captive maid,” as all my family wish to make me the worst of slaves, since they would tyrannize over my mind ?

I shall

I shall be extremely happy if I can obtain leave to stay this winter in the country with Maria; she intends to exert herself to the utmost to prevail on my father to allow me that indulgence; it is the only favour I shall strive for; all the rest must remain as they are for the present. It would really afford me the highest pleasure I can taste in your absence, for I naturally dislike London; and why should I be mortified by being there, at the same time that my company gives no delight to any one now? They will be much happier without me, and I shall be as happy as possible with my loved Maria, with whom I can converse freely of my dear and amiable Alfred. Yes, I trust we shall bring it about; and as they have long ceased to do things gracefully, I will not quarrel with them if this favour is accorded with no more than has lately accompanied their scanty indulgences.

I often wish I was a sylph, that I could
hover

hover around you, and inform you when danger was nigh. Oh ! what a delightful task to screen you from all ills ! My dearest Alfred, shall we not be the happiest of the happy, when we do meet, from the obstacles which have cruelly been thrown in the way of our union ? Yes, my best loved we shall, as you so sweetly said, endear the present moment of joy by repeating over the difficulties that are passed. If I thought I should not have affection enough to make you happy in the most enlarged sense, I would rather now die, and leave you forever. Your happiness is dearer to me than life, or any consideration that I can think of. That we shall meet and be rewarded for our constancy is the hope, and all the comfort of your faithful

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER CI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I CANNOT, my beloved Elwina, resist giving you an account of a very brilliant stroke of our general; and I had the good fortune to be one of the officers appointed for the expedition. I have already told you our works were too extensive, and from circumstances not to be avoided, too thinly manned. Indeed the upper works, from what cause it becomes not me to say, are in but an indifferent situation for defence, even if the garrison was in full health. We have not troops enough for the service. The knowledge of this weakness, probably, led the Duc de Crillon to lie rather more unguarded than he should have done in his head quarters at Cape Mola. The general saw the negligence of the enemy, and was induced to make a vigorous, and (as it generally
proves

proves when set about properly) successfully. We rushed forth in good order, surprised and routed the enemy; chasing the duke from his post, and secured ourselves so effectually in it, that notwithstanding he brought up his whole army to dislodge us, after much hesitation, he desisted from the attack. We could not continue there, so the next night we returned safe into garrison, bringing with us about an hundred prisoners, among whom are some officers of rank. This brisk action in our general will convince the duke of his spirit and bravery, and it will serve by way of rebuke to him for only fighting at a distance.

I think myself particularly fortunate to have been in this service. Till then I had only the theoretic knowledge of a soldier, now I have had a little practice, and am happy it was followed with so much *eclat*. It has put me in excellent spirits, and I now shall have more confidence in my
courage

courage than before I could have indulged without the imputation of vanity. I congratulate you likewise, my dearest love, on my safety, and yet continuing well in health, though almost all here feel the cruel effects of the scurvy, which rages intensely amongst the common men, but who will not breathe a complaint lest they should be sent to the hospital, which is the fullest of all our posts.

I have begged Captain ———, who carries the news of our *coup de main* (if that is not enlarging too much on it, though it really deserves great credit) to the secretary of war, to convey this letter to you; and as he does me the honour of professing great friendship for me, he has promised to deliver it with his own hand. Oh! how much shall I envy him; he will behold the loveliest of women! When will that blessing be allowed to Alfred? I flatter myself, that as the battalion I am in has been a long time here, that when this business

business is accomplished, or a peace takes place, I shall be able to return, or at least, surely I can get leave of absence for a few months, as a reward for my services. Ah! they little know what a reward indeed there would be in store for the then happy, thrice happy

ALFRED!

L E T T E R CII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

THE truest delight I could feel, I have this day experienced from seeing your good friend Captain — ; with what pleasure I looked on the face of a man whose eyes have beheld my Alfred! I trust you told him on what terms of tender affection and engagement we were, for else the man would think me mad. I asked him ten thousand questions, which he good naturedly and patiently answered. He says, there is a vessel going out with instructions to the general, by which

which he shall write : he added, " You may
 " be sure I had some few commissions
 " given me, which I must answer on the
 " faith of a soldier."

He is a very agreeable man ; but I believe I thought him more so, because you style him your friend. He gives a most noble character of you, and tells me, you are beloved by every one in the garrison. Ah ! who can doubt it ? All unprejudiced persons must love my Alfred. My letter will go by the same conveyance ; and I can tell you our ticket is yet in the wheel, and it is yet a very rich one ; however, our fate in that instance must soon be decided, as there is not much more than a fortnight longer to draw.

I cannot gain my favourite wish of staying with Maria. It was denied in such a manner as did not soften the refusal ; but I bore it with all becoming meekness ; for had I resented the non-compliance with
 the

the request, perhaps they would have interdicted my correspondence with her, and then probably a quarrel would have been the consequence, which, if possible, for a thousand reasons, I will carefully avoid.

I do congratulate myself indeed, my dear Alfred, on your brilliant success, and happy exemption from injury, from your brave exertion! Oh! may every action of your life be filled with honour, and may all your enemies behold your triumph!

My prayers are sent up hourly for you, and my grateful heart ceases not to thank Heaven for its signal mercies to me, in preserving your health and life among such dangers.

It is the opinion of the politicians here, that poor Minorca must soon be given up. How is it possible to withstand such a force as is brought against it, with so few men
to

to defend it?—Besides, though you are too prudent to notice it, the extreme dissensions between the general and his lieutenant is of great hurt to the safety of the garrison.

You know I am much in the habit of hearing the subject of politics discussed at our house, from the number of members of parliament and the council that frequent our parties. I now listen with avidity, and my heart is elated, or cast down, as I see their faces appear.

I would not tell you, but that I think it most likely Captain ——— will mention it to you, that he did not dine at our house. Maria was so kind as to invite him to her father's. Oh! Alfred, that house is more like my home than the one I used to delight in; there I meet with smiles and congenial minds.

He has promised to call upon me in town, if he is not ordered to return, which
he

he thinks it probable he shall not. And, indeed, it is now the received opinion, that you will not be able to defend yourselves much longer. Oh! may the God of all mercies take you under his protection, and soon allow us the felicity of meeting in safety and comfort! I am more and more anxious for that blest moment; and in spite of my resolution, I sometimes give myself up to the most frightful despair. Indeed, who can help trembling, when they feel as I do what a stake they have to lose?

I am ever most faithfully your own

ELWINA.

LETTER CHII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I HAVE just perused your letter, my ever loved Elwina; and I have just read a letter from my friend Captain —, which has filled my heart with concern

I and

and grief. I adjured him to tell me a thousand particulars, which I could not so well learn from your pen, though I know my love never meant to deceive her Alfred, but to spare his bosom from painful disquiet.

My friend informs me, you are extremely altered from the time your picture was taken, and which I shewed to him, and but one more beside has ever beheld its beauties. The dear portrait has been *sacred to Alfred*. They, however, are my particular intimates, and men that may be trusted. But to return to my subject. Oh! my beloved, has then the absence of thy Alfred robbed your lovely cheeks of their native hue? And is it to grief that the brilliancy of the finest eyes in the world has been sacrificed? Though your lovely and elegant person was but a second charm in my eye, yet I can but lament the cause by which your beauty is diminished. Elwina, you must not grieve and lament my
absence

absence so much; I shall write to Maria, and chide her for not keeping up your spirits as she promised she would.

I feel enraged against all your family, and shall bless the means which will afford me the happiness of taking you from them. Oh, how unworthy are they of the goodness you have shewn, and the sacrifice we have made to prudential motives! But my dearest girl, we will be happy in spite of them. I am not so high in my notions as I was; not so "proud of heart," as you humorously styled me; I can now see how much happier I could have been with my Elwina in a cottage, than to be forced to live far from her; not that I am tired of a soldier's life, or wish to share toils which you

Were born to soothe, but not endure;

But when peace arrives, with all her smiling train, I shall not be sorry to taste dear domestic ease with the loved object of my heart. But what enjoyment shall I lose, if
you,

you, my angel, are in ill health! Oh! I cannot support the idea of your being ill; for Heaven's sake have some advice, and do not attempt to deceive me; you will be laying a train for misfortune to overwhelm me indeed; for where am I to look for comfort, if I lose you? You promised me you would look forward to better days; meet them then, my beloved, with expecting smiles, do not wait their approach with anxious cares, robbing them of the dear delights they have undoubtedly in store for you.

My Elwina, you are not to learn how much the peace and happiness of thy Alfred is bound up in yours: you live secluded from society; you should not be so. Why did you generously tell me you should rejoice at any pleasure I should meet with, and to hear I could forget my cares, and smile? Do you think me so selfish then that I should not wish you to participate in those amusements which your sex

and age so well intitle you to engage in? Do not think the trifle you can save will be adequate to the loss of your health and spirits? Let us be frugal, my love, when we are in possession of the sweetest of treasures in each other; then we shall not want the idle pleasures of life to amuse us, who see in each other whatever is delightful and desirable.

But I would counsel you to vary your amusement, or you will lose that charming vivacity, that at once rendered you so pleasing and instructive to every one, by setting them a lesson, how they might go and charm likewise.

Mrs. M—— is not improved by the conversation of her husband. How cruel and unfeeling was her behaviour to my lovely girl! How could she join in laughing at your amiable sensibility?

My Elvina, such people have not souls.

As

As I have observed to you before, I think I am too young a soldier to presume to give my opinion; as my little knowledge arises solely from books, and what I can learn from the conversation of others; yet I will go so far as to tell you, if I should ever rise to the honour of commanding a fortress, and it is my fortune to have it invested, I should keep in mind a bad line in poetry, which has nevertheless good sound sense in it:

He comes too near, who comes to be denied.
This will stand good in tactics as well as morals. You should not suffer your enemy to come so near as to make a repulse necessary. I see many things which I should avoid, and which there are many here see as well as myself; but it is now too late, and the unhappy disagreement between two gallant and able officers, has done great injury to the service; you will easily believe each has his partizans, as it is difficult to avoid taking an opinion; and in all probability, if the general is not crown-

ed with success, more may be said of it hereafter. This is the private opinion of some, which makes every one cautious of speaking openly now, and their prudence is to be commended.

It is impossible, perhaps, for two officers to think exactly the same, when the eclat would be bestowed only on one. Where the fault lies I cannot pretend to say, but the effect is too visible, and is by no means pleasant. But these dissensions have ever been between commanders: Nor can we read of any engagement, whether successful or unfortunate, but what much more might have been done, had there been a coincidence of opinion, which, from the nature of men in general, is scarcely to be expected. For after all, they are but men, and cannot divest themselves of their self-love sufficiently to sacrifice their share of the glory to another. In short, to use a vulgar expression, they cannot submit "to beat the bush, while
" another

“another runs away with the game.” We are ambitious of fame, but are not patriots enough to suffer patiently another to build his merit on ours; and if we cannot appear in the foreground, are too apt to envy those that do, and blacken the canvass, that the figures may not look brilliant at our expence. “I cannot have the honour of this business ascribed to me, neither shall I labour under the imputation of having done wrong if we are unsuccessful.” This reflection, I think, would strike me forcibly, if I was second in command, like—to compare small things with great—my singing an underpart to my Elwina—Every one has commended the air, and given the praise to your performance, not considering, though I was not a principal, I still added to the harmony. And how often have you and I heard a duet beautiful in its parts, and sung by two good voices, yet quite spoiled by the second forgetting his subordinate station, and striving to shine, instead of

following and singing to the first. This is being ambitious in the wrong place. •

It should seem as if poor Minorca was a devoted sacrifice, for she is totally left to herself, and unprovided with the means of long holding out against the strength of so potent an enemy. But I will say the defence has been a gallant one, and will not read bad in history. It is unfortunate for me, on the outset of my career in the path of glory, to have been sent on the “forlorn hope;” and yet I am sometimes induced to look on our situation in that point of view. We have served to amuse the enemy, and divert them from attacking some place of more importance to the state of Great Britain; and if it should prove so, our sufferings are not in vain. In any case it is our duty to obey orders, and comply with the exigencies of the times, which, God knows, are bad enough. England against all the world, is rather an unequal match, and if we should lose the game at last,

last, there will be some merit due to us, however, for having stood our ground, and neither declining the challenge or dastardly running from the *rencontre*. These reflections, my Elwina, must console me if it is my fate to be one of those destined to swell the triumph of the enemy; but you know one comfort is, I am but a fly on the wheel, and not a presumptuous one neither. If our general is covered with laurels, I shall not have more than one leaf to my share; and if Fortune plays him a slippery trick, my name is too obscure to be tarnished.

Let the enemy take the garrison when they will, they cannot have much to boast of. It is a mere hospital. There are not absolutely men enough to relieve properly, so that many of the posts are intirely without defence; but we put the best face we can upon it, and this policy has served to intimidate the enemy, as they kept a most cautious distance in the construction and

progress of their works. Our gallant fellows, though sick and almost dying, still will have their jokes, and laughing, say, "The Spanish troops should be sent to school to learn to stand fire." However, they want no instruction in the art of giving it; for their vast and numerous artillery are so weighty, and the showers of shot and shells so incessant, that they have nearly demolished all the upper works, and I am sorry to add, have rendered many of our pieces of ordnance useless. The veteran officers say, they never saw in any service equal destruction. We may carry this business off, my dear Elwina, with all the composure in the world; but it is a mortifying circumstance to be cooped up here, to be shyed at like a poor cock on a Shrove Tuesday, and not have it in our power to stir by way of annoying the enemy—*Mais fortune la guerre, et je suis content.* It was no choice of mine, only I hope we shall not be censured by and by at home, for not having done all in our power.

power. We have had much more to combat than the enemy alone, and it would wring your gentle heart to see the squalid, emaciated soldiers “grin horridly a ghastly “smile” at any appearance of success, and stand cheerfully to their arms, till they drop with fatigue, never to rise again. It is very common to find them dying with disease, when the relief is going to mount the batteries; and yet you never hear the voice of complaint. But it cannot last long thus; either our ministers must send additional forces, or in pity to the few who remain, the general, I doubt, will be forced to capitulate.—I wish it could be avoided, and I am sure it will if possible.

But what signifies the hardships of war, or any other “ills that flesh is heir to,” if you my beloved Elwina will cheer your foldier with your endearing smiles, and soothe all his griefs? Yet my dearest girl, unless he can hear you are well and in

good spirits, where is he to look for comfort and consolation? For thy Alfred's sake then, my Elwina, keep up a good heart, and never lose sight of the hope (blessed above all other) that we shall soon meet, and soon be united in the delightful bands of holy wedded love. And when "sweet peace" will give us leave, we will imitate the Dennisons. We shall have a better income than they have, with not four children to set out with. "Oh! we shall grow rich by saving," as my angel says. But then you must be in perfect health, or our scheme will be entirely frustrated.—I will never forgive Maria for not exerting herself to amuse you; tell her how exceedingly angry I am, and that I shall soon come over and scold her heartily; then tell yourself, my beloved, that no being on earth is dear to me but your own dear self; that my heart and soul are devoted to you, while they can be called in the service of your dear and favourite sister.

.ALFRED.

L E T T E R CIV.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

IF the request of my beloved Alfred did not endear life to me, I should be the most unworthy of beings.—That your friend Captain——should find me altered from my picture, I do not wonder at; consider, my Alfred, the hopes that played round my heart, and the object I had before my eyes when that portrait was taken. When he saw the original, he beheld a poor weak creature, whose hopes were almost dead, and whose eyes were no longer blest with the sight of him alone who could now restore their brilliancy. I was very much indisposed too at that time. You remember my telling you of my sitting late in the evening, too late indeed for my health, on the favourite seat so well known to you. I then caught a very

severe cold, which settled on my lungs, and, I was too wretched in my mind to attend to the ailment of my body, so that I must own my disorder gained a greater height, than it would have done had I foreseen any thing worth living for; but I am much better now, indeed I am; and I will strive to recover as fast as I can. Care and attention will, I doubt not, very soon restore me to that state of health I used to enjoy. You must not be angry, even in jest, with our dear Maria; I am much indebted to her tenderness. I do not think I should have been living now, but for her kind care.—All the disturbances of my family are laid to my charge; and I am so repeatedly told, that if it was not for me, they should never have had a domestic quarrel, that I could not sometimes help joining in their wish, of having followed me to the grave some years since, when I had a dangerous fever, and was loved by every one. These are cutting things, my dear Alfred, to hear continually,

ginually, and when you were torn from me, made me less solicitous about my health than I ought to have been. It is not however too late, and if you are in earnest in your assurances of taking me from a home, which I am grieved to the soul to say, is now hateful to me, I shall be more earnest in my endeavours towards facilitating my recovery. You seemed always so much to dread a life of *comparative poverty*, that I was (as you know I have long declared) fully resolved never to be your wife, till we had an income that should enable us a little to keep pace with my family. But marry when I will, I shall be looked on as an outcast from them, therefore they will not be disgraced by our humble style of living; and according to my present mode, I shall not be very expensive to you, for I live wholly on vegetables; I wish I could send you some of my share. That diet has been ordered for me; and I find myself much benefited by so simple a regimen.

I hope,

I hope, my Alfred, we shall prove that happiness depends not on the exterior of shew and parade. I have at last, thank Heaven, made you a convert to my sober scheme of elegant retirement, and you will find more charms in a country life now than before you was put up in your coop. You will give me credit for being in tolerable spirits; your affectionate letters ought to have that good effect. I wish from my soul we could have an honourable peace, but I fear that is hardly possible while all the world is against "poor old England!" They do talk strongly of a change in the ministry; a change of men may produce a change of measures, and something new will be struck out. If they err, most probably they will choose a new path for their errors, and not that which has been so long trodden in vain. I sigh for peace—my soul sickens at the sound of war—Oh! my Alfred, a snug little cottage with you, and I will freely resign the pomps and vanities of the world to those
who

who have no taste for higher joys. Give
but Alfred to his faithful

ELWINA.

LETTER CV.

To the same.

MY best loved Alfred, I doubt our very
sober scheme of retirement will be
frustrated—and what means do you sup-
pose will have that effect? No less than
the most brilliant success in the wheel
of fortune! O, my Alfred, I congratulate
you on the smiles of the fickle goddess!
Yes, you will have both my letters to-
gether, and in this you will receive the
news of our ticket coming up a prize of
ten thousand pounds! Oh, Plutus! I am
half inclined to build temples to thy di-
vinity, thou art “the god of my idolatry!”
for thou art the blessed means of bestow-
ing all that I can wish for in Alfred!

Yes

Yes yes, I know I shall soon recover my bloom, and my vivacity is already returned. My Alfred, how shall I sufficiently adore “the Giver of all good things” for this benefit? Now shall we indeed be rewarded for all our sufferings—and I shall be able to relate a few hardships, which I have kept to myself, but which however you shall not know, till you have it in your power to hold me to your faithful bosom, and join with your Elwina in thanks to Heaven, that they are now all over for ever.

It was but yesterday I received the good news: I had registered the ticket, and requested the intelligence of its fate might be transmitted to Maria.

Oh! with what joy the dear girl posted up to me! She sent for a chaise directly, and that she might not delude me with false hopes, went immediately to the office where it was purchased, and had her
wishes

wishes and hopes confirmed : she then flew to me, and I have been so long disused to see faces burnished with smiles, that I could not avoid asking her by what magic she had got such a set of brilliant features ? She soon informed me whose wand had wrought so wonderful a change,—and,—but I will not pretend to say how I was affected, you know I have not been accustomed to have my heart tried by prosperity, and such a burst of happiness crowding on me at once, nearly overset my poor weak frame ; but comforted by a thousand delightful ideas, I bore the reverse of fortune tolerably. With her advice I went directly into the city, and taking an honest broker of her acquaintance with me, I soon changed my little bit of paper into substantial stock ; and now our property is invested in the three per cents. which being very low at this crisis, made it the best fund for our newly acquired fortune.—I was too much agitated to write yesterday, and indeed my heart
still

still flutters so much, that I can scarcely hold my pen; but lest excess of happiness should kill me, I was determined before I slept, that if I died in the night, I would first appoint my own heir, so I had an instrument drawn up, which made you sole proprietor of a sum, which I hope I shall have the felicity of sharing with you for many many years.

The affair of the ticket was an absolute secret in my own family, and I hardly knew how to bring out the intelligence: but chance sometimes does more than design. I found I could not get my matters of importance settled by dinner time; therefore dispatched a porter home to say I had accompanied Maria into the city on some particular business that would detain us till the evening. Mr. D. the broker, very civilly pressed us to partake of his family dinner, and I ate a potatoe with him, which is yet quite a meal for me; and on that day you will believe I had not
much

much appetite.—Indeed, the hurry and agitation of my spirits were so visible, that as soon as I got to Bedford-Square, Maria, ever attentive, insisted on my sending for a surgeon, as she thought it highly necessary I should submit to the operation of bleeding. My mother had some curiosity, no doubt, to know what had taken me from home, and supposed some accident had happened, as she found a surgeon had been sent for. She came up into my room while the business was doing; Maria had informed our surgeon of the cause of the tremor he had felt in my pulse, and he instantly disclosed the matter to my mother. You must imagine her surprise at the unexpected information. I thought the good man must have left my arm unbound, to run with his lancet to her to perform the same office.

She observed, she need not wish me joy of it, since, no doubt, I had already formed my plan for parting with it. I
assured

assured her I had : and was thankful for the means which Heaven had now put in my power of purchasing happiness,

And set all your friends at defiance.

I told her I could not now argue on the subject. They whom she called my friends had left me to the fate they had forced upon me ; and had taught me the painful lesson of discriminating between friends and relations : but that I still remembered where duty was due ; and when the olive branch was held out to me, I should most thankfully, on my knees, accept it. My tears flowed, and I fondly hoped I might soften her heart : but she coldly said, I knew on what terms peace might be restored, which my perverseness had interrupted.—Mr. S. observed, it would be better for me to be kept quite composed ; and my mother, taking the hint, withdrew. My dear Maria staid the night with me ; nor would suffer me to recall any unpleasant event, but urged me to look forward
to

to bright hope—still brighter by almost a certainty of happiness.—And surely, my Alfred, we shall be uncommonly happy—there will be but one alloy to its perfection; and I trust in Heaven that will soon be got over; for I never shall think myself debased by making the most humble advances towards a reconciliation with my parents, who were never severe to me but in this instance; and, perhaps, I was reprehensible, for entering into so solemn an engagement without their knowledge. How thankful then should I be to Providence, that the dear object of my love was the best and most amiable of men!—And how many young women are there whose engagements are productive of ruin to themselves, and disgrace to their families!—Your Elwina is happily an exception.—And I flatter myself, I should never have been caught by your fine form, had not the most handsome and elegant of men been likewise the most amiable!—My fancy might have been charmed, but my
judg-

judgment would have had nothing to do in the affair; consequently, your reign would have been very short, had not your interior merit even surpassed that exterior beauty which the coldest hearts must acknowledge you possess in an eminent degree. I should not say all this, if I did not know you are perfectly free from that kind of vanity which prizes itself on the possession of what a few years must certainly, and various accidents may, in an hour, deprive you of. I will now have done. Heaven send us peace! for that blessing will diffuse itself all around—and who shall have cause to rejoice in it more than you and I? Oh, blessed peace! restore to me all my comforts entire, by giving my Alfred to his faithful

ELWINA.

LETTER CVI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

THE “forlorn hope” still keeps its head above water—but how much

longer it will be able to hold out is uncertain. Oh! for five thousand idle fellows that only wear cockades to look brilliant in the eyes of their mistresses! Here we should find hot work for them; and they might stand in the room of better men, and save them: they would make excellent food for powder. My beloved Elwina, we seem cut off from all society.— A little object to be pelted at, with our hands tied behind us. It is almost as bad as standing in the pillory, only that no disgrace is annexed to our situation. That is all our comfort. Honour is all a soldier has to boast of: and it would be honour indeed to force the Dons to raise the siege. But our internal disagreements (I speak it in confidence to you, my love) hurts the cause more than any external circumstance. That fatal jealousy, and averfeness to follow a good hint, because an inferior proposes it, will be the ruin of every thing. There should be but one commanding officer—either of our generals, being sole, would

would do wonders—but as it is——well, it cannot be helped—and things, it is easy to foresee, will go worse and worse. I think there is something diabolic in the disposition that can rejoice at the misfortunes of our country, because their measures were not adopted. I am of no party—but that of uniformly wishing success to our arms—and when a shout is given at any little instance of superiority, I care not from which battery it comes, I will join it with all my heart. But when heads fall out, the rest will take their share; and, consequently, it makes many disputes, which end in quarrels, among those who really have no business to interfere in the matter. This, of course, renders the service disagreeable, as one half of the garrison is at variance with the other.

I should not be tired of my situation, but from these circumstances—I wish to be well with all, but that is scarcely possible—

ble—there will be murmurers and croakers—and one cannot always shut one's ears.

I think the time very long since I have had a letter from my ever loved Elwina; but I trust I shall now very soon have that happiness, as the wind is fair; and we are eagerly expecting some relief from our country, which, indeed, is necessary to our salvation as a fortress—and without it arrives speedily, we shall no longer be free subjects of Great Britain.

We have just commenced the new year, and the garrison is now so much reduced by sickness, that there are not more than six hundred and sixty men fit for duty in any degree; and out of them there are not more than a hundred that the surgeons pronounce free from scurvy: of the rest, there is no chance of their recovering to health, unless they could get fresh provisions and vegetables; so that every day we may expect large draughts for the

hospital. I wish each post was as well filled as those wards are—we should yet hold up our heads, and look with some confidence in the faces of the Dons.

It is only wonderful that the enemy does not attempt a *coup de main*, which was done in the former siege, when the fortress was defended by General Blakeney; and the garrison was many, many degrees stronger than it is at present.

Nothing can exceed the valour and constancy displayed by the garrison; and the behaviour of the common men is almost without example. There is not a day but numbers of the soldiers actually die on guard, who, from eagerness to do their duty in defending the place, conceal their illness to prevent their being sent to the hospital. Such nobleness of mind deserves better fortune:—and yet what greater honour can a soldier wish for, than bravely to die for his country! But we are quite forgotten

forgotten by our ministers at home, and left a prey to disease and anguish; which is worse than being gloriously slain in battle. The prospect of our tombs being decked with laurels, smooths the hard bed of death—but to be the sacrifice of neglect, or design, will add a keener edge to the sword of the enemy.

The officers, in point of health, are better off than the soldiery—but what can such an handful of men do without succours?....You will think, my dear love, I am grown a murmurer too. It is difficult to avoid the infection when one is surrounded with that tribe, and really feel there is too much reason for complaining. I have read a great deal on the subject of sieges, and gather as much information as I can from men who have grown grey in the service of their country in different wars and climates....and the result is....I am not thoroughly satisfied. But this I know, if I was high in rank, I would resign my

commission, before I would accept a command over a place that is devoted by the minister to be a *scape goat*, or a *tub* thrown out to amuse the whale. Whether we poor fellows are in that predicament, remains to be proved.

But I hope it will one day be inquired into; and likewise where the fault of some things lie. You are not a soldier, my Elwina, so I cannot at present explain myself to you—nor would it be proper; in five minutes I could illustrate it to you very clearly, if I was sitting by you like uncle Toby, fighting over my battles: and I know you could not help exclaiming, “Good God! was it possible to overlook that?” I know you would. There are some things so very obvious, that they ought to be taken notice of; and I sincerely wish they may. And if they meet with approbation....why then I am no soldier, and shall never make a general....but will be content to turn my sword into a plough-

ploughshare. I wish to have your letter in answer to my resolution of copying the plan of the Dennisons. I am certain of having the concurrence of my dearest girl in those little manœuvres. I long too to hear you have taken more care of your dear health. My love, that is a blessing which gives us a *gout* for all others; and, in short, no one can be said to enjoy happiness, when that is wanting.

And now, adieu! my ever loved Elwina. I feel more anxious impatience to get your next letters, than I have ever experienced since this tedious absence. It is now more than twelve months since I parted from my soul's treasure; and I eagerly pant for the transport of seeing her again. Dear as I ever prized your society, I am ready to condemn myself for not having been so sensible of it as I ought.—And yet of what do I accuse myself? Your loved conversation was dearer to me than life or breath. I never knew enjoyment or

delight but when you was by to dispense it to me. Oh, my love, how infinite are my obligations to you!—The longest life of tenderness could not repay all I owe you.

Again adieu, my ever loved Elwina!.....
I am yours, and yours alone,

ALFRED.

LETTER CVII.

LIEUT. M. TO MARIA.

MADAM,

AT the request of a very particular friend of mine, and a very deserving officer, I have the honour of addressing you on the melancholy event that has at once deprived me of a valuable acquaintance, and the service of a gallant soldier.

You will find inclosed, a letter, which, with great pain and difficulty, was written a very short time before his death. As he
spoke

spoke of you with the greatest friendship, there can be no one so proper to soften the cruel event to the lady, for whom the inclosed is addressed. I beg you to believe, that I feel the utmost pain on this occasion, as no one could know the lieutenant without entertaining a partiality for him. I had the honour of his more particular confidence, and feel most sensibly for the affliction which this intelligence will convey to the object of the most faithful and constant passion that woman could inspire.

It revives my sorrow to relate each circumstance that attended the last hours of my gallant friend; but I know it will be the only satisfaction his lamenting survivors can receive, to know that every thing possible was done for him, to soften the rigour of his fate.

Three days since, on the first of February, Lieutenant Harley mounted guard, and in about an hour afterwards, a shell

struck on the bastion, and he had not time to get into the casemate, which is bomb proof. The explosion of the shell cost several lives, and my excellent friend was mortally wounded. I happened very fortunately to be off duty, therefore had an opportunity of attending him as long as my zealous but useless services were necessary. The surgeons, who examined the wounds and fractures, immediately pronounced his recovery impossible. He received the fatal intelligence with as much constancy and courage as it was possible for a man, who, but the day before, had received letters from the beloved of his heart, which congratulated him on an accession of fortune, by which his happiness with her would have been insured. But the life of a soldier hangs by a thread at all times.

After the wounds were dressed, he intreated every one to leave him but me, and requested he might be furnished with materials

materials for writing. I supported him as well as I could, to enable him to pen the last letter to his beloved. It was an arduous task, and the agonies of his mind bore a full proportion to those of his body, while he was taking his final leave of all he loved in this world. Indeed, madam, it was a scene that would have melted a stoic. I own myself a man of sensibility, and I found it difficult to bear with that necessary firmness which served a little to support him.

When he had finished writing, he took up a toothpick-case, in which was the portrait of his Elwina, and he kissed it several times. He blessed and prayed for the dear original; he blessed you too, madam, calling you his and his loved Elwina's true and generous friend. He implored Heaven to endue you with strength to comfort and support his beloved, whom he must now leave for ever! He obliged me to accept his watch and

sword, with some other articles belonging to his regimentals; and particularly requested me to undertake the charge of delivering to you a small cabinet he had placed all his letters in, and in which, after a flood of tears, he deposited the picture of Elwina; declaring, he had now lost sight of every object he wished to behold! Then with the utmost fervor he addressed himself to that Power which alone dispenses life and death, and with the greatest heroism and patience bore his anguish, till human nature could support him no more. “Death came in an unfriendly hour, when circumstances had arisen to make him more tender of life than he had for some time been.” This was an observation he made a short time before his soul took its flight. Gallant, amiable youth! thy memory will long live in the minds of thy fellow foldiers!

May Heaven hear the dying prayer of the noble-minded Alfred! and may you, madam,

madam, be enabled to speak words of peace to the greatly afflicted lady ! You may rest assured, I shall punctually obey the dying injunction of my lamented friend ; and take the first opportunity of waiting on you, when I return to England, which will probably be in a short time ; as the garrison capitulated this day, and the troops will be sent home as soon as possible.

I have, madam, the honour of being

Your devoted humble servant,

G. M.

The inclosed Letter.

To my beloved Elwina,

DE A R to my heart as thou hast ever been, what anguish must I feel when I tell you this, my beloved Elwina, is the last letter you will ever receive from the man who adores you.

Yes, my Elwina, the die is now cast—our sweet schemes are indeed all frustrated,

and in the moment too when my too ignorant heart was rejoicing in the blessed hope of soon being united to you for ever. But it was sure never designed by that Heaven, which has for wise purposes divided us to all eternity. Alas! my Elwina, ere this reaches your loved hand, that of the hopeless writer will be cold; but while life holds out, it cannot resist telling you, these lines are dictated by the truest heart that ever was sensible of woman's love.

We must part, my Elwina! The pangs I now endure, and which make it difficult to tell you so, inform me but a little time will your Alfred be numbered with the living. He dies yours.

I congratulate you, my beloved, with my dying hand, on the accession of fortune, though your loved Alfred cannot share it with you. Ah! how delightful were the sensations which kept me waking
the

the last night my soul was doomed to pass in this earthly abode! This independence will enable you to live where, and how you please; and if in future times you should see any one whom you should think worthy of possessing a heart Alfred aspired to—Oh! may you be happy! may his tenderness be equal to that which now, and, while it beats, will fill my heart, my faithful heart! And for your sake, my Elwina, my ever-loved, may his fortune be more happy than mine; cut off in the prime of life, when such a prospect was opening to my view! I strive to consider it in the best light;—yet, yet 'tis hard,——Oh! Elwina, to part with you—I must not think of it.

May Heaven endue you with strength to support the blow!—for oh! I well know what will be your sufferings. But, my loved angel, we shall meet hereafter. Heaven will bless us at the last!

My

My dying breath blesses and prays for you. Maria ! dear, valuable friend, console my Elwina ; teach her to bear with fortitude this inevitable stroke.—I can no more ; the pangs of death press close upon me. May Heaven shower its blessings on you, my loved Elwina ! Dearest beloved Elwina, adieu for ever !

Here ends the correspondence of two of the most faithful and most unfortunate of lovers.

What a task for me, the poor forlorn Maria, to pour the balm of consolation on the wounds of the afflicted Elwina !

While I was weeping over the sad account, and distracted with the idea of beholding and informing my beloved friend of the dreadful news, a servant from her father's came to me, begging me to hasten

to his young lady, who, he feared, was dying.

I flew thither in all haste, and found her just recovering from a fit, into which she had been thrown by the brutality of her brother. He had not spoken to her for some months; but this morning, with an air of triumph, he gave her the Gazette to read, in which was the list of the killed and wounded at Minorca. Yes, Clodio! you meant to destroy her—and your evil purpose was effected!

“Take me from this house,” she said to me as soon as she recovered her speech; “I conjure you, my Maria, take me from this house.” There was a tremendous wildness in her eyes, and I told her mother she must answer for the consequences, unless she was indulged. She was carried down as soon as the carriage could be got ready; and I supported her weeping, but unable to speak to her. When
 she

she was in my room, to which she was conveyed, as soon as I could get her to my father's, she threw her arms round me, and said, "Now I can breathe better.—
"They have killed him at last; but no
"matter, they cannot part us: we shall
"yet meet."

I had sent for a surgeon, who bled her, and she was put to bed: she talked a good deal, but wandered very much; towards the middle of the night she grew more composed; that is, more rationally sensible of her loss, which she now deplored in such moving accents as tore my heart-strings to hear her. I knelt by her bedside, and could only unite my tears with hers, as my grief oppressed me too much for utterance; unable as I was to speak a word of comfort to her. Indeed, the utmost stretch of reason could not suggest any to the forlorn unhappy Elwina. She never closed her eyes the whole night, and by the morning discovered very strong symptoms

symptoms of a high fever; yet not the least delirium. After many painful efforts she accomplished the reading of his last dying letter; and the agonies this task cost her are not to be described. If any one has been in the same deplorable situation, and has had strength to survive it, they, and they only, can form an idea of her impassioned anguish.

In the morning her mother sent to inquire after her health: the message was brought up stairs; she was greatly agitated by it. "I hope she will not come to see me yet," she said. I assured her this house was her's, and she should see no one whom she wished not to receive. She thanked me with the most grateful acknowledgments. "You are now my only friend," said she, "my only comforter! My blessed Alfred bade you comfort me; and I know you would obey him if you could; but, alas! you weep too much to find words. And, oh! Maria,

“ in what words, or what language could
“ you speak comfort to such a wretch as
“ me? Yes, there are some words of
“ consolation too; *Come unto me all ye who*
“ *are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
“ In the tomb I shall be shortly laid, I
“ shall have rest—but on earth, never—
“ no never!”

At her request I sent for a gentleman in
the neighbourhood who was in the law.
He begged her not to give way to resentment
in the disposal of her fortune. She assured
me she would not. “ Why should I resent
“ their cruelty?” she said; “ by their means
“ I shall sooner join my heart’s treasure
“ Oh! how natural it is to wish to be where
“ one’s treasure is laid up. I will not, how
“ ever, be dictated to in the disposition
“ my fortune. My family have enough
“ too much perhaps, as it has made them
“ proud of heart, as I once said my be-
“ loved Alfred was. None of them was
“ wh

“what I have a right to give to whom I please.”

She chose to be alone with the lawyer, and she conversed with him some time, till the persons were wanted to witness her will. Her head was perfectly clear. Alas! she too sensibly felt her sorrows.

When Mr L. was gone, she pressed my hand, and told me she had held her pen to sign her name for the last time: “And oh! my best, my now only remaining friend!” she said, “may time soften the affliction I know you will feel at my departure. I know what it is to have lost the dearest of all friends, but I shall soon be united to him. Heaven takes compassion on my (dying as I hope I am, I will say) unmerited sufferings, and it will reunite me to my soul’s beloved.”

In the afternoon her mother came, and begged to see her. She calmly said she had

now

now no resentment, and should be glad to die in peace with her father and mother.—The interview was awful and affecting; but how vain now all their kindness, and fond expressions! Had they been employed some months sooner, my lovely friend might have still been reckoned among the happy on earth. Elwina spoke with so much composure, that her mother entertained hopes of her recovery, and surmounting her grief. On her saying it should be the future business of her life to make her as happy as possible, Elwina shook her head, and said,—“Professions
“are too late. They might once have
“answered the purpose of deceiving me,
“but now they lose their effect.”

Her father came in the evening, and with a flood of tears bewailed his wretchedness, in being one of the instruments of hurrying so lovely, and once so dutiful a child to the grave. She sweetly strove to reason him to himself, and declared how
freely