Lafayette August 1987

THE SCHOOL FOR FATHERS;

OR, THE

VICTIM OF A CURSE.

A NOVEL.



CONTAINING

AUTHENTIC MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES,

WITH

HISTORICAL FACTS.

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THE SCHOOL FOR FATHERS.

THE CALAMITIES OF CIVIL WAR, CONTINUED BY ELWINA TO ALFRED.

MRS. Wellers would by no means be left out of the conference, when Mr. Pleydel was to begin his narration concerning his imprisonment, and escape from the hands of his persecutors.

His confinement was of the most rigorous kind, when Congress discovered that to bring him over to their principles was

totally impoſſible. Some of theſe infatuated perſons had formerly lived in the habits of friendſhip with him; but ſo zealous now were they in the new cauſe, that they became his bittereſt enemies; and more eſpecially one who had pledged himſelf to Congreſs that he ſhould have ſufficient influence over him, to induce him to join their party; and, from the nature of his late employment, being in poſſeſſion of ſuch documents from government, as would give them a greater inſight into its meaſures and intentions, his acquieſcence was of the utmoſt conſequence to their well doing. Fortunately Mr. Pleydel had notice time enough to deſtroy ſeveral of the government papers, which, had they fallen into their hands, would have been detrimental in an important degree to its operations.

When

When this ſtrenuous advocate for liberty made his attack, which he meant for a *coup de main*, Mr. Pleydel inveighed againſt his treachery, in ſo cruelly availing himſelf of their former intimacy and friendſhip, to draw him into meaſures ſo ſubverſive of their duty to their ſovereign, and, as it would prove in the end, of their own happineſs, and the rights they enjoyed under the beſt-formed government in the world. He abjured his acquaintance, and rejected the offer of friendſhip and protection from men, whom he looked on as movers of ſedition, and inſtigators of rebellion. This language, warm from the heart of an honeſt man, and a friend of his country, was treated as inſolent, and was, perhaps, impolitic in a priſoner. But Pleydel was a man of the ſtricteſt honour, and firmly attached to the king and his laws. He,

therefore, expreſſed his ſentiments of contempt for this ſelf-created tribunal of petty tyrants, who, as he ſaid, could only take his life, which he ſcorned to hold under their dominion, or accept on their baſe conditions.

"My life," ſaid he, when he was brought out before them—"My life "and property are, by the ſhameful abuſe "of power, both in your hands—diſpoſe "of them as you pleaſe, whether by a "formal proceſs of your new laws, ille-"gally obtained, or by actual force, or "even torture, ſtill you ſhall find me firm, "and, to the laſt moment of my exiſtence, "declaiming againſt your ſelf-aſſumed "authority, and exulting in my own in-"tegrity. We were all born the ſubjects "of one king; from him we have received

"pro-

" protection, and we lived happily un-
" der his mild reign. Look to the cauſe
" of this innovation of his rights and pri-
" vileges; examine who were the firſt in-
" ſurgents, and candidly investigate the
" principles on which they have formed
" themſelves into this cabal. Ye ſeek to
" diſmember yourſelves from your mother
" country; and anarchy, with all its conſe-
" quent evils, will ſooner or later over-
" take you. Bear me to bonds or death, it
" is equal to me; but fully not my clear
" fame, by believing, for one moment, ye
" can convince or intimidate me. I repeat
" you may deprive me of life; but my
" honour is my own, and ſhall never be
" taken from me. Heaven only grant, as
" a reward for my fidelity to my king, that
" my wife and children may be enabled to
" hold their faith as ſtrong, and that they

"may rejoice in the prospect of death, "which will remove them from the habi- "tation of evil and tyranny, as I do. I ask "that blessing from Heaven!—Of the "disturbers of peace on earth, and the "abettors of treason, I ask nothing——I "will accept of nothing."

More enraged than ever, the court remanded him to prison, where the severities of his treatment were increased ten fold; nay, to so much rigour they extended, that he requested the hour of his execution might be forwarded, to be rid of the importunity he was daily exposed to, together with the barbarous insults he experienced. Not that he found his fidelity wavering, but it was irksome to him to be forced to confer with such wretches, and to be constrained to listen to their

treaſonable converſation, and abuſe of a government and monarch reſpected by him.



His ears, too, were continually wounded by the accounts they brought him of his wife and family: they told him ſhe joined her intreaties with Congreſs, that he would at laſt open his eyes to the true ſalvation of his country, and aid it to eſtabliſh a government and dominion of its own. Theſe mean artifices were of little avail.

"Although," ſaid he, "I had not time "to enforce the duties of their ſtation up- "on them, yet I know the principles I "have ever inculcated, have made too "laſting an impreſſion even on the minds "of my children to be eraſed. Of my "wife, I have not the ſmalleſt apprehen-

"ſion. Did I believe ſhe could ſo far for-
"get ſhe was born a Briton, I would re-
"queſt her to be brought before me, and
"theſe arms, whoſe greateſt happineſs it
"has been to enfold her, ſhould now daſh
"her from me; that hand, which united
"me to her, ſhould plunge a dagger in
"her boſom, ere ſhe ſhould live a traitor,
"or nouriſh a race of traitors!"

Finding him ſtill ſo obſtinate, as they ſtyled him, they were ſeriouſly determined to make him a public example of their tyrannic power, and a victim to their revenge. But there were ſtill ſome weighty reaſons that operated againſt their reeking their vengeance on him in the city of Boſton, and for that purpoſe he was removed to Charleſtown.

It is hardly poſſible to conceive the taunts and acrimonious inſults he received during his march thither; he was heavily ironed, and chained to the tail of a cart, decorated with the thirteen ſtripes, branded with infamous titles, and expoſed to a licentious mob—thoſe ſacred patrons and preſervers of liberty! When arrived, he was thrown into the common gaol, to await the final deciſion of his tyrants: here he continued ſeveral weeks longer; whether they could not agree on his mode of puniſhment, or whether ſtill he had ſome friends left, who miſtakenly meant to preſerve his life, at the expence of honour, he could not learn; but every week the order for his death was countermanded. Many times was he led out for execution (the ſentence of which, on his mock trial, was hanging and quarter-

ing), and then freſh orders would conduct him back again to his priſon, or rather dungeon. He often obſerved his keeper would look on him with the utmoſt compaſſion; that he not unfrequently dropped a tear when he led him forth to the gibbet, and as he apprehended to death, and the joy that would flaſh in his eyes when he conducted him back again unhurt. One night, after the hour that it was uſual to lock him in the inner cell, the keeper entered his room, and, ſhutting the door, begged to have a little converſation with him: he lamented the dire neceſſity he had been under, of treating ſo reſpectable a gentleman with ſuch rigour, which, however, he had mitigated as much as poſſible. Mr. Pleydel thanked him, and declared he thought he had ſuffered as few hardſhips as any perſon ſo circumſtanced; the

the greateſt of which was the continual hope of an end being put to his miſeries having been ſo often fruſtrated. "Have "you then ever entertained a hope of eſ- "caping?" aſked the keeper eagerly. "Yes," anſwered Mr. Pleydel, "by the "wretch's laſt and beſt friend, death."

"Oh, Sir," he replied, "I think ſome "way may be yet thought of to preſerve "you from ſo cruel a remedy of your "ſufferings."

"Such as they are," ſaid Mr. Pleydel ſternly, "leave me to them, and do not "add the inſolence of office, to the duty "you owe your new maſters."

The keeper vindicated himſelf from the charge of inſolence, with a modeſt firm-

neſs, that induced the priſoner to liſten to him with more attention than he was firſt inclined to do. He recollected the looks of the man on the many occaſions enumerated, when they were certainly unequivocal. "I have laboured and beat "about," continued the keeper, "to find "out ſome ſure method of procuring "your enlargement from this horrid con- "finement. Do not think it is merely "from diſintereſted motives that I ſeek to "accompliſh this buſineſs; it is from the "principle of gratitude: you know not "my perſon; but that I am exiſting, is "owing to your goodneſs and generoſity. "My family have been, and are ſtill in- "debted to you for every advantage they "enjoy. I would freely die to ſerve you, "and I *will* die to prove the truth of my "aſſertion. Let me intreat you to ex-

"change

"change dreſſes with me—follow the di-
"rections I ſhall have the honour of giving
"you, and by theſe means alone you will
"eſcape the hands of your cruel enemies."

"And what is to become of my generous
"benefactor?" interrupted Mr. Pleydel.

"No matter; they can but hang me in
"your room," ſaid he.

"Pardon me," replied Pleydel, "if from
"the inſtances I have ſo lately received of
"the turpitude of human nature, when de-
"generated by treaſon, I, for a moment,
"queſtion a zeal ſo very exalted. Would
"you then loſe your life to preſerve mine?
"Nature would revolt againſt it, even if
"your principles were ſtrong enough to
"bear you to an object you now contem-
"plate

"plate at a distance. I have long made "myself familiar with it, and yet the hopes "of life will cling round the heart, and the "soul rejoices at continuing the union "with the body a little longer. Could "the escape be effected without dan-"ger to you, or dishonour to my prin-"ciples, I should greatly err not to embrace "the opportunity.—Let us consult toge-"ther. Is there not a possible chance of "our both sharing the same fate, and mu-"tually assisting each other?"

They now entered seriously into the matter, and it was agreed that the keeper the next night should bring in a dress similar to and concealed under his own. It had the desired effect, and as their size was nearly the same, they passed, one some time

time after the other, unſuſpected by any perſon.

They met when clear of the town, and purſued their way to the woods, which ſurround almoſt every ſettlement in America.

The fugitives were forced to lie by in the day concealed in the woods, and travel as faſt as they could in the interior parts of the country in the night. One morning when they were juſt going to encamp for the day in a thick plantation, they were beſet by four Indians of a very ferocious tribe. They had furniſhed themſelves with fire-arms and ammunition, yet they were unwilling to expoſe themſelves to the neceſſity of uſing them, leſt their report ſhould cauſe any alarm in the country. They attempted a treaty with theſe Indians,

dians, who prepared for a conteſt with great eagerneſs. Mr. Pleydel made good uſe of his fuſée without diſcharging it, and knocked down one of the ſavages; Clemſon, the keeper, followed his example, but was inſtantly chopped down with a hatchet: his death was immediately revenged by Mr. Pleydel, who, fixing his back againſt a large tree, ſhot the miſcreant through the head; and then drawing out a piſtol, diſcharged it at the remaining Indian, and brought him to the ground. This was all the work of a moment. On inſpection, he found the two Indians were not dead, but ſtunned with the contuſion each had received from the butt ends of the guns. Self preſervation urged the neceſſity of putting an end to their exiſtence; but human nature and compaſſion pleaded for the two men now unable to defend themſelves.

themſelves. The conflict between prudence and mercy was but ſhort; mercy prevailed. He dragged the bodies, juſt recovering to life, to the neareſt trees, and bound them at ſome diſtance from each other, which would prevent their purſuit of him for ſome time.—Then ſtripping the dead Indians, he habited himſelf in their clothing, ſtained his ſkin with ſome berries with which the woods abound, dropped a haſty tear over the fate of his faithful companion Clemſon, and ſet off as faſt as he could to ſome ſafe retreat. He was fearful of going to any ſettlement, either of Indians or white men; ſo his cuſtom was to lie by whenever he happened to be near any, till the fall of night, when he went onward. All this time he ſubſiſted on what the woods afforded, hardly enough to ſuſtain life. He flattered himſelf,

himſelf, if he could reach Albany undiſcovered, he might there obtain ſome intelligence of his wife and children, who he had heard from Clemſon were driven from Boſton, and poſſibly they had ſought an aſylum with his aunt.

Some miles from Tuſcarora, he fell in with a party of Indians, whom he found friendly to the white men, and of a neutral tribe. Though they ſoon diſcovered he was a white man, yet they expreſſed no impertinent curioſity, which would have laid him under the neceſſity of quitting them, or telling more of his hiſtory than ſuited the exigencies of his ſituation. They journeyed together with very little converſation, till happily they arrived at that ſpot where the unfortunate Pleydel and Matilda were doomed to meet each other,

other, to compare their ſeveral diſaſters, and to weep over their mutual misfortunes.

Albany was however no abiding place for the fugitive; even the circumſtance of an Indian chief being received and entertained at the houſe of a widow, would have occaſioned a great deal of unpleaſant ſpeculation, which it was their intereſt to avoid as much as poſſible. It became very neceſſary to call a council among themſelves, and that ſome plan ſhould be formed, by which, probably, they might make a ſafe retreat from the danger

danger to which a diſcovery would infallibly expoſe them.

The head quarters of the royal army were now at New York; to that province Mr. Pleydel was moſt inclined to proceed; my ſiſter rather wiſhed to quit the fatal continent, and ſeek refuge in her native country, and the arms of her relations; ſhe uſed ſuch powerful arguments in favour of her predilection, that her huſband abandoned his former reſolution. Indeed he had not much to oppoſe to her reaſoning.

The world was all before them,
Where to chaſe.———

He had no poſſeſſions, nor could he exerciſe any profeſſion, as it behoved him to lie concealed; the fate of the unhappy

conteſt

conteſt being as much undetermined as at the beginning, and who ſhould conquer equally uncertain. A proſcription had gone forth, both againſt him and his wife, and a large price ſet on their heads, whereby he was precluded from applying to any perſon, leſt, under the ſemblance of friendſhip, they ſhould be tempted to betray him into the hands of his mercileſs enemies. Should he reach the army in ſafety, he might indeed obtain protection while they were victorious, but he ſtood little chance of ſupport. The poſts were all filled; and, perhaps, it would be only exchanging one place where he ſhould ſtarve, to another where he could not ſubſiſt.

As his employment had been in the civil line, and he had, by doing his duty

in

in his ſtation, incurred ruin on himſelf and family, he hoped, by ſtating his misfortunes to government, he ſhould meet with relief, at leaſt it was worth the trial.

Theſe matters being arranged, the next ſtep was to put them in execution, and that without delay. My ſiſter, happy in the proſpect of once more taſting the bleſſings of peace in her own land, loſt not a moment in making every neceſſary preparation; but here many difficulties aroſe ſufficient to have overthrown the ſtrongeſt reſolution. There was, however, no alternative—the die was caſt, and whether they ſhould ſucceed or fail depended no longer on themſelves; they relied on that Being who had hitherto preſerved them, and truſted in his power for all the future.

The night following a ſmall tumbril was engaged to carry the wanderers they hardly knew whither. In this were placed their ſlender baggage, and the two little children, the eldeſt only three years of age. The bleſſings and prayers of Mrs. Wellers attended them, with what ſuccours of proviſions and money ſhe could afford them. On mature deliberation they judged it more proper to go to the army at New York, as from thence they ſtood the beſt chance of getting ſhipping to England. Painful and tedious was their journey through thick woods, deep defiles, and moſtly an uninhabited country; this laſt, indeed, was a circumſtance they rather rejoiced in, as the countenance of each perſon they met ſeemed hoſtile to their cauſe, and filled their boſoms with alarms. Sometimes they were obliged to reſt whole days, leſt

their

their poor beaſt ſhould be unable to accompliſh the march; the even providing forage for him in a country that had been ravaged by war, was attended with difficulty: for themſelves, they barely ſuſtained life, beſtowing what they could ſpare on the poor children, who were much the beſt off in the whole party, as their infant ſtate rendered them inſenſible of the dangers and diſtreſſes to which their unfortunate parents were hourly expoſed. At length, almoſt ſpent with fatigue and hard living, they happily reached King's-Bridge; where the firſt buſineſs of Mr. Pleydel was to ſend to the commanding officer, with whom he luckily had ſome acquaintance. Nothing could equal this gentleman's ſurpriſe, when, in the perſons of an Indian chief and his ſquaw, he recognized the ——— of America, and his wife.

He received them with great cordiality, and ſupplied their neceſſities as well as he could; but as the army was then ſtriving to bring on an engagement, it was thought better to remove them to New York: they were ſent under an eſcort, and a lodging appointed for them, till ſome conveyance could be found for their ſailing to the mother country.

They took the firſt opportunity of writing an account of their diſtreſſed ſituation both to government and to my father, with the reſolution they had taken, by the advice of their friends, of coming to England as ſoon as poſſible. In a few weeks after a veſſel laden with merchandize ſailed from New York, in which this forlorn family took their paſſage. Now they began to breathe freely; in the proſpect of being

ſoon in a country of reſt and liberty, they almoſt forgot the hardſhips they had ſo recently experienced. They looked not for affluence; they aſked not for plenty; any eſtabliſhment that would juſt ſupply them with the common neceſſaries of life was the utmoſt of their ambition, the extent of their wiſhes.

But fortune, or ſome more malignant being, had not yet emptied the quiver of adverſity on their devoted heads. There was another arrow by which they were to be wounded almoſt to death. The veſſel, juſt off Scilly, was attacked by an American privateer. Though altogether unequal to the combat, yet the little merchantman was inclined to withſtand its force, hoping, by making a running fight of it, they ſhould be ſo fortunate as to eſcape. Mr.

Pleydel was very ready to second this resolution, as he foresaw nothing but destruction to his hopes should he be taken, as he had been proclaimed a traitor to the United States. What a scene was this for my sister! One moment she ran into the cabin, clasping her dear infants to her almost frantic bosom, and the next rushing on deck to learn the fate of the crew, and wishing to shield her beloved husband in the hour of danger.

The weight of the privateer's metal was too much for them to oppose with any hopes of success, and the wind falling calm, made it impossible to contend longer. On examination they found she had received several shot between wind and water, and it was agreed on all hands (poor Pleydel having been forced to leave the deck

from the wounds he had received) that it would be the wiſer way to ſtrike, and call for quarter.—They were inſtantly boarded, and the bill of lading called for. One of the American lieutenants inſpected the veſſel, which he reported to be much injured from the number of ſhot that had raked her; and almoſt all her rigging deſtroyed. They next proceeded to pillage her of every thing valuable, and conveyed it on board their own veſſel, which had not ſuffered a little from the ſpirit with which the captive ſhip had engaged her. While they were removing the cargo, a ſail came in view, which they perceived to be an Engliſh frigate. Its force appeared to be much ſuperior to their own; beſides, king's ſhips are not that kind of game theſe marauders are in queſt of. Security was now their only aim—to accompliſh which they piped

all hands on board, and after boring holes in the hull of the unfortunate merchantman (it being too disabled to sail as fast as they wanted), they left the remainder of the wretched crew (taking only a few to supply their own loss) to the mercy of the waves, or rather to a certain death.

Continuation.

Here, as my sister pathetically says in her relation, the distress of the surrounding unfortunate wretches in general, and her own in particular, became too bad for language to describe. Two-thirds of the crew were either killed or wounded, and half of those that remained unhurt were forced on board the privateer, which was

now ſteering from them with all the ſail they could carry. The frigate which had ſtruck terror in the captors, was a great way off, and they could perceive her giving chace to the enemy. No hopes preſented themſelves to the unhappy creatures, but of getting out the long boat as ſpeedily as poſſible, as there was no chance of the ſhip keeping much longer above water. Matilda, reſigned to her fate, was ſupporting her huſband, whoſe wounds had been dreſſed, and both the children lying on the bed, when a ſeaman ran into the cabin, bidding them come along that moment if they wiſhed to ſave their lives, as the ſhip was ſinking, and the long boat would be filled and off before they could get to her. Some others ran in out of compaſſion, and actually dragged my ſiſter by force away from her huſband, whom ſhe was

clinging

clinging to.—One man ſnatched up the children, and threw them, at the hazard of being trampled to death, into the boat. The horror, which now ſeized poor Matilda at the idea of abandoning her wounded huſband, is not to be expreſſed: ſhe reſiſted their efforts as long as ſhe could, while Pleydel beſought her with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to conſent to her own preſervation for the ſake of her wretched children, and to leave him to his fate, which a few minutes would decide. Her ſenſes were almoſt gone, and in a ſtate more dead than alive they lifted her into the boat. She had juſt recollection enough to know the mate (the captain being killed), who had now the command, and, throwing herſelf at his feet, implored his interference, that ſhe might not be ſeparated from her dying huſband; if he would not conſent to her

returning to the ſinking veſſel, or mercifully give orders for his being brought thither, ſhe would not ſurvive his deſtiny, but ſeek him in the ocean. She actually ran to the boat's ſide, and would have precipitated herſelf into the ſea, had he not aſſured her he would lie by, till two ſailors had endeavoured to bring Pleydel on board. With great difficulty this taſk was effected, and ſhe had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing her beloved huſband, at leaſt in a ſituation of ſharing her fortune bad as it was; and happily by her means and perſuaſion (for being the only woman ſhe had perhaps more influence) ſeveral of the poor wounded men were lifted on board, who, but for her, would have been left to ſink with the ſhip, which circumſtance happened in a very few minutes after they had got in three or four caſks of proviſion, and had

rowed

rowed the boat ſome diſtance off: which laſt was very neceſſary, leſt the influx ſhould have involved them in its vortex.

To add to the meaſure of their misfortunes, a ſtorm of wind, with thunder and lightning, came on at night, and early the next morning they were driven on ſhore off St. Mary's on the rocks of Scilly. Here a freſh matter of grief preſented itſelf, for one of the dear little children was daſhed to pieces before the eyes of his diſtracted parents, who were unable to afford him the leaſt ſuccour. With the utmoſt hazard they at laſt got on ſhore, reduced to the loweſt pitch of poverty and deſpair; for what little matter of money they had carried on board with them was now loſt, except the trifle each had in their pockets; and clothes they had

none, but thoſe on their backs, as nothing could be ſaved out of the ſhip. Perſons who look no farther than the bare preſervation of their lives, only provide for their ſuſtenance; they think of nothing elſe. Of the wounded part of the crew, not one eſcaped to land but Mr. Pleydel; nor would he, probably, but from the hopes of the mate, that as he had filled a public character in America, his name would procure them ſome advantages from the governor, when his former rank ſhould be made known. This idea, whether well or ill founded, operated in favour of Mr. Pleydel, whoſe life was preſerved in conſequence of it. He was carried to a houſe in the ſuburbs, being too much exhauſted to bear more fatigue; thither my poor ſiſter followed him, preſſing her now only child to her boſom,

boſom, and bathing its innocent face with her fruitleſs tears.

Happily Mr. Pleydel was of the ſociety of free-maſons, which was of ſingular ſervice to him and all his diſtreſſed companions. There is a kind of magnetic ſympathy, one would ſuppoſe, or intuitive preſcience among maſons; for he inſtantly diſcovered the maſter of the houſe to be one alſo, who at the ſame time expreſſed that kind of rapture at ſeeing him, as if they had been intimate friends. The beſt advice and aſſiſtance of all ſorts were directly afforded him, and every maſon in Scilly flocked to ſee their brother, and procure him all the comforts in their power.

There cannot, I think, be a more forcible argument in favour of maſonry, than that it unites all the world, as it were, in one family. So many have experienced the advantages reſulting from it, that I almoſt wonder any man ſhould object to belong to one or other of the lodges of that order; particularly thoſe whoſe profeſſions lead them to travel.

Perhaps you did not expect an advocate for free-maſonry in a woman, who is by preſcription for ever debarred from being a member. But in my patriotiſm I forget my ſex; and in its real utility overlook its only imperfection, a want of liberality of ſentiment, in ſuppoſing no woman could preſerve its ſecrets. If I was a man I would undoubtedly be a free-maſon. I revere its inſtitution, though

though a woman; but yet feel no more inclination to be inſtructed in its myſteries, than I do in the guidance of the balloon, which is juſt now the faſhionable topic both here and at Paris; they being equally out of my ſphere and character.

But to have done with my obſervations, and return to the forlorn party at St. Mary's. The wounds of Mr. Pleydel (being much irritated by the various ſucceeding accidents he had encountered) had thrown him into a violent fever, which laſted five weeks; during the greater part of that time his life was not expected. At laſt he did recover ſlowly, and my ſiſter began to grow very impatient to get to England. As ſoon as Mr. Pleydel was able to bear motion, and a paſſage could be procured, they once more committed themſelves to the

the waves, and in a ſhort time landed at Falmouth; from thence they made the beſt of their way up to London, to the arms of their almoſt deſpairing friends, who had given up all thoughts of ever ſeeing them again.

Good God! what a meeting it was! I ſhall never have the ſcene out of my memory. It would be too touching to expatiate on, particularly too, as I have already been ſo minute, which I did not intend to be, when I began the relation. I ſhould fear I had almoſt fatigued you: and indeed nothing but the deſire of obliging you in it, could have induced me to enter upon it at all.

Mr. Pleydel loſt no time in laying his caſe before the Miniſter, who perhaps attended

tended rather more alertly to the buſineſs, as my brother's vote was wanted on ſome particular meaſure. Government made him an appointment, which although extremely inadequate to his loſſes, was exceedingly welcome; and I believe Matilda would gladly have relinquiſhed every proſpect of grandeur, for the certainty of paſſing the reſt of her days in a quiet cottage at home. I thought of her when you drew the picture of the Denniſons; and even wiſh they were in poſſeſſion of ſuch a "bleſt retreat." The miniſtry, however, thought otherwiſe for them: and about eighteen months ſince, Mr. Pleydel was appointed to a very good poſt in New-York, though by no means ſo lucrative as that he before poſſeſſed.

He

He thought himſelf too young a man to devote himſelf entirely to a life of idleneſs, and perhaps flattered himſelf that Great Britain would yet ſubdue her rebellious children, and he ſhould ſtand a chance of recovering ſome of his patrimony. America too is his native country, and we have an inſenſible partiality to a place, ſimply from having been born there. We talk of being coſmopolites, and citizens of the world, but we ſtill feel, if we do not acknowledge, that there is *one* little ſpot more dear to us than any other, that we never think of without an emotion, to which we can ſcarcely give a name; or quit, without caſting "a long-"ing, lingering look."

All places, however (in contradiction to

to my assertion), were equal to my sister; though I am certain her own choice would have led her to remain in England: but she always suited herself to the occasion, and is of a most happy frame of mind, neither meeting, or sinking under misfortunes; still looking forward with hope; and if the prospect is clouded over in this world, so that the visual orb cannot pierce the gloom, she can extend her views beyond it, to that state where virtue and constancy in right doing will most assuredly be rewarded!

Few women have had such occasions for the exertion of fortitude as herself. But had I never heard the relation of her misfortunes, and only had seen what she suffered on the loss of her last, and perhaps most-loved child, which happened by the measles

meaſles about two months before they left us, I ſhould not have believed it poſſible ſhe could have ſupported the many afflictions ſhe had gone through.

The mind is not equally ſtrong at all times. This is a common, but a very true obſervation, which a ſlight knowledge of mankind will ſhew us. My ſiſter was almoſt worn to a ſhadow by her anxiety during the illneſs of the infant, and her grief when it was no more. The troubles ſhe had before experienced, called for extraordinary exertions; they were uncommon, and of a nature that ſeldom attacks the generality of perſons. Providence might infuſe a greater portion of fortitude (as it is ſaid to "temper the "wind to the ſhorn lamb") to enable her to ſupport herſelf and others, during thoſe

trials.

trials. Her ſpirits were kept in a ſtate of agitation for a length of time, and every preſent diſtreſs called for reſiſtance, as ſtill worſe it was to be dreaded would follow. They had now ſubſided into a calm, and ſhe formed to herſelf a life of quietneſs and mediocrity; devoting the remainder of her days to the making her little dwelling-place pleaſing to her huſband, and giving up the chief of her time to the education of her only child. This laſt ſtroke ſtole upon her in the hour of fancied ſecurity, and found her boſom defenceleſs. It opened afreſh all her wounds; it renewed all her ſufferings. "Still is the "cup of affliction unexhauſted!" ſhe cried.—Again ſhe ſaw each of her darlings expire; again her maternal heart bled at every vein!

We

We wiſhed Mr. Pleydel would leave her behind him, till he was ſettled in his new ſtation, and time had ſoftened the aſperity of her grief; but this, though he would have conſented to, ſhe would not bear the thought of. Our parting was a mournful one; my father and mother now looked on it as eternal, and indeed ſo we may all, for there is little probability of their ever returning to England: unleſs, which Heaven forbid, we ſhould loſe every thing in America. Fatal conteſt! unhappy, unnatural war! How much have they to anſwer for who were the firſt inſtigators of it! Surely there is a retribution to be made, and heavy it will fall on ſome!

And now will not Alfred allow I have given him a counterpart to his hiſtory of the Denniſons? Alas! I doubt almoſt every family in that unhappy country might furniſh out a mournful ſtory that would but too well accord with thoſe that have fallen more immediately within our knowledge. How long will this fatal deluſion continue, that thus divides families, and plunges nations in endleſs ruin? This unnatural war, carried on by prejudice and faction, how will it read in the annals of hiſtory? A child reſiſting and flying in the face of its parent. A parent perhaps too rigorous in aſſerting its claim to obedience. It is dreadful for the public: it is ſtill more ſo for the individual!

I neither

I neither aſk or wiſh to know your political principles. I know your heart is benevolent, and that it ſympathizes in the diſtreſſes of your fellow creatures, which your hand fails not to relieve to the utmoſt of your power. Theſe are *traits* which I ſee, and admire. I glory in ſaying they are congenial to the ſentiments of Elwina. But if I was inſenſible to thoſe amiable virtues, I ſhould be unworthy to be called the friend of Alfred! the title I aſpire to, and hope ever to retain.

An amiable, ſenſible and candid friend, is in the place of a ſecond conſcience. We feel a wiſh of acquitting ourſelves to them, as if they had a preſcient knowledge of all we do. Since I have had the happineſs of your acquaintance, I fancy

you

you take an intereſt in all that concerns me, however trifling or minute. "I will prac-"tiſe this leſſon," I cry, "becauſe it is "quite in Alfred's taſte. Alfred admired "theſe ribbands; they ſhall adorn my "hat: theſe are the books he pointed "out to me; they ſhall form a part of "my library. This myrtle is ſacred to "Alfred; can I then omit my care of "it? My drawings he has commended; "I will not fail to employ ſuch a portion "of time as will make me a proficient in "that art." By this kind of mental machinery, Alfred is preſent with me wherever I go, or however employed. And is he ſenſible of theſe "follies of friend-"ſhip?" Does the idea of Elwina mix in his ſtudies? Does ſhe accompany him in his evening walks? Why do I make it a queſtion? Has he not ſaid, that even

in

in his ſleep, ſhe is the heroine of his dreams? Yes, Alfred, I ſometimes dream too. But philoſophers ſay, all this life is but a dream. I wiſh ſometimes it were ſo indeed. Enough, however, of all this. I am in reality moſt ſincerely yours,

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

HOW ſhall I ſufficiently thank my ſweet biographer for the pathetic relation her elegant pen has tranſcribed for me? What charming reflections and delightful language you have employed throughout the whole! What greater honour could Alfred wiſh for, than that Elwina ſhould write his hiſtory!

O Elwina, how much are you my ſuperior in every thing! But ſo far am I from envying your excellencies, that I feel the utmoſt exultation, as if the praiſe due to you, reflected honour on your humble, faithful friend.

The hiſtory of your amiable ſiſter, and of the Denniſons too plainly prove the deſtructive "Calamities of Civil War." Of the former I ſhould ſay a great deal, and have felt a great deal, even had ſhe not an infinite claim to my intereſt in being the ſiſter of Elwina. I admire her fortitude; but I muſt adore her very elegant panegyriſt and hiſtorian. I have read it over and over with an increaſe of delight and ſatisfaction, though yet painful reflections. Did not the tears ſteal down the cheek of Elwina while ſhe

traced the melancholy events? I know it could not be otherwiſe; it could not be written without ſuch proofs of amiable ſympathy; nor could it be read unmoved. Happy Pleydel! Yes, amidſt all thy misfortunes let me ſtyle thee ſo. Oh, how wert thou beloved! I wiſh I could behold this Matilda. Should I be able to trace out the family features of the charming Elwina? I fancy each moment ſhe muſt be like you. I even pictured to myſelf, ſo abſorbed was I in the ſtory, that you were indeed the perſon whoſe misfortunes you related. Elwina, it was dangerous to my peace. I threw down the paper with an agony I cannot deſcribe; I traverſed the room almoſt in a phrenzy. It was ſome time before I could collect my ſcattered ſenſes; my weakneſs made me aſhamed; I bluſhed although alone, and determined.

to read on in a mere matter of fact manner, ſtriving even to forget whoſe charming hand had penned the hiſtory.

How liberal your elogium on maſonry! How much do I admire you for it! Were I not intended for a clerical life, I ſhould certainly become a brother of the order, as you recommend it ſo ſtrongly: I have not the leaſt idea of its myſteries, though I ſee, and acknowledge its uſes, as you juſtly obſerve, particularly to all men that travel.

Is it not temerity in me to ſay, I am convinced I ſhould preſerve its ſecrets inviolably? I could have no temptation to tell them, as I am certain Elwina would never preſs to have them diſcovered, and no one but herſelf could influence me.

There

There have been women admitted, I believe, one for certain, the renowned queen of Sheba. Solomon, who was the wiſeſt of all men, had not ſuch narrow prejudices as his deſcendants. And I think I have heard our virgin queen Elizabeth was of the number. It is an illiberal idea, that a woman cannot keep a ſecret. I doubt the fault lies in the men making improper confidants. A woman of virtue and ſenſe, we every day experience, is capable of exerting the nobleſt faculties, and diſplaying ſtrength of mind, courage, fortitude, (and though a more paſſive, not leſs a virtue) patience and conſtancy. How noble and elevated above almoſt any man, was that lady, whom we read of in hiſtory, whoſe huſband, through her means, had eluded the vigilance of Cromwell. When ſhe was

apprehended, ſhe was threatened with death, unleſs ſhe diſcovered where ſhe had hidden him; but with ſafe conduct to her home if ſhe would reveal the place. "In my heart," ſhe cried, "he lies con-"cealed: there ſearch for him; my "tongue ſhall never betray him."

Perſons are, however, too ready in diſcloſing ſecrets, to prove that ſome one has been miſtaken enough in their character to believe them capable of confidence. But what deſcription are ſuch perſons of? As Shakeſpear ſays,

Let no ſuch man be truſted.

Secrets are frequently told in the firſt ardours of kindneſs or of love; and I have heard a very ſenſible, and I believe

experienced

experienced man ſay, for he was a married one, that there are ſome ſoft moments, when it is impoſſible to refuſe any thing to a woman. It would be churliſh to refuſe a woman at any time ſuch ſatisfactions which a man could grant with honour; but ſurely no man can ſay his honour will allow him in any caſe to diſcloſe a ſecret, the divulging of which would injure his friend, or ſociety in general. I have ſo high an idea of a virtuous, prudent wife, that I believe ſhe would rather revere the ſteadineſs that refuſed, than the weakneſs which complied with her requeſt.

I think Samſon ſhewed his head not equal in ſtrength to his body in diſcloſing the ſecret of the lock of hair to his

wife Dalilah. Nor was his prudence very conſpicuous in making choice of ſuch a wife, whoſe principles, if ſhe had any, muſt have devoted her to her native Philiſtia.

It is ſaid, and with ſome degree of truth, that two friends have but one ſoul between them; and therefore telling a ſecret to a friend (who has a right to know all that the other is informed of) is not extending the knowledge of it. I believe it is Montaigne to whom we are indebted for this convenient exemption from preſerving inviolate the ſecrets which are communicated to us. It is a curious maxim certainly, that to tell a ſecret to a friend is no breach of fidelity, becauſe the number of perſons truſted is not multiplied,

tiplied, a man and his friend being virtually the ſame. But an ideot may ſee the fallacy of this reaſoning, as, with this latitude, confidence may run on without end; the ſecond perſon may tell the ſecret to a third, on the ſame principle as he received it from the firſt, *ad infinitum*.

Now will Elwina ſuppoſe this is premiſed in caſe I ſhould ever become a member of the laudable fraternity of maſons? You ſee I am pre-determined not to diſcloſe the ſecret, even to the choſen friend of my heart; my more than ſecond ſelf! But before I am enrolled, I will be convinced that there is nothing that would militate againſt the vow of loyalty I have taken to my liege lady and ſovereign of all my hopes and fears, to whom I have ſworn

everlasting fealty and homage to my life's end; and whom I shall soon, thank Heaven, have the happiness of assuring from my own lips, how very much I am her faithful servant and friend,

ALFRED.

LET-

LETTER XVIII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

WHERE ſlept my guardian angel this day, that it whiſpered not to Elwina, that Alfred would take the wings of the morning, aided by the tendereſt, pureſt friendſhips, to antedate the happineſs which the party from L—— purpoſe enjoying next Thurſday?

I have begged a ſheet of paper to tell you how extremely I am mortified. My too prophetic heart ſunk when I ſaw the

track of coach wheels in the road turning out of your gates; I feared then, what really had happened, that the carriage to which thoſe wheels belonged, had conveyed Elwina from her home.

The ſervants are very kind in offering me refreſhments. I have no *goût* for groſs aliment. I languiſh for the moſt delicate repaſt, an hour of your delightful converſation. They preſſed me to walk in the garden. Alas! I ſhould wander about like the firſt man, who found himſelf unbleſt in Paradiſe. Every thing would be wanting while the beauteous Eve was abſent. I wiſh to my ſoul I could find out on which chair you had laſt been ſeated. I feel as if I was on hallowed ground: but could I diſcover a trace of that ſpot on which Elwina ſat

or

or ſtood, I ſhould rivet myſelf to it. Ha! I ſee a netting box: by your leave I muſt look into it; perchance it is Elwina's.

Will you forgive me, Elwina? I have ſtolen a card out of it, on which is written your name; there is ſome ſilk wound on it. I have ſlipped it aſide, to place the name of Alfred with yours; thus are they joined;—I ſhall put it among my relics;—I will ſhew them to you one day; but you ſhall promiſe me, never to form the idea of reclaiming them.—No, while I have life and ſenſe they ſhall be preſerved moſt ſacredly; and when I breathe my laſt, I will requeſt Elwina to ſee them laid in order in my coffin.

What

What a ſweet ſituation is this! But how much more charming ſhall I think it on Thurſday! You muſt ſhew me all your favourite haunts. And to add to my collection of drawings, I ſhall intreat you to take ſome view which we will fix on together. You ſhall only deſign it. I will not allow you to bend the fineſt eyes in the world on paper, when they can "bleſs me, even me," with their heavenly beams.

I can hardly give a name to my feelings, when I reflect that I am writing in a room which, two hours ſince, contained the loveliest of women! But I muſt check my rapture, leſt I create ſuſpicions in your

your ſervants by my long ſtay; for I could dwell here for ever. It was very kind in them to ſuffer me to enter at all, as I am ſo totally unknown to them. I however aſſured them I had a letter from Mrs. M—— to you, and even ſhewed the addreſs, which one of them ſaid, ſhe knew directly: I can give her credit, for there are not many perſons who write in the manner of Mrs. M——.

I arrived at L—— but laſt night, and hardly ſlept a minute from the agitation of my heart that flattered itſelf it would this day have the felicity of ſeeing you. I know not how to leave off, but I dare not aſk for more paper, and I have got to the end of this. It is ſome comfort that I am in the place which your preſence has enlivened, and will ſoon embelliſh again.

Adieu!

Adieu! moſt amiable, moſt revered of women! Next Thurſday! Oh, Elwina, if my hand trembles and my heart flutters thus, how ſhall I be able to acquit myſelf with any degree of confidence, when I behold you? Your loved preſence muſt inſpire, muſt ſtrengthen me. From you I expect every thing;—without you I am nothing!

ALFRED.

LET-



LETTER XIX.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

HOW do I hate myſelf for not having ſome kind of *preſentiment* of the happineſs that was in ſtore for me this morning, had I not fooliſhly have caſt it away. Cruel fate! thou haſt robbed me of two hours of felicity which ought to have been in my life; and perhaps while that life laſts, I ſhall have occaſion ever to regret!

It

It is ſo provoking! I had no buſineſs to make this viſit. Yes, I muſt exclaim againſt fate; for I dare ſay I was ſtruck with the whim of accompanying my mother, even while your generous heart was anticipating the agreeable ſurpriſe you kindly meant for Elwina. Fooliſh Elwina, what haſt thou loſt! two hours at leaſt of happineſs; and ſuch happineſs as thou haſt ſo true a taſte for enjoying!

For Heaven's ſake come early on Thurſday, that we may repair the injury done to friendſhip, as much as poſſible. Do worry Mrs. M—— to get out ſoon; I know too well how dilatory ſhe is apt to be on ſuch occaſions; and yet ſhe will be hurrying away in the evening for fear of robbers, though we have no ſuch

kind

kind of beings on our road. Yet why ſhould I captiouſly complain of her? I ought to intreat her forgiveneſs, and acknowledge my obligation to her. Will ſhe not bring the amiable Mrs. Harley and Alfred with her? I ſhall write to her tomorrow, and I commiſſion you to deliver the compliments of the family to your dear mother. I have made honourable report of you; they all are deſirous of your acquaintance.

I am more fortunate than you; though you was only a temporary inhabitant, I know the chair on which you were ſeated. It remained cloſe by the little table where I am now writing; you may ſuppoſe I puſhed it aſide to reach another; I would not ſit in it for the world, *to be ſure*.

Oh!

Oh! I ſhall really quarrel with you. Only think of committing a robbery the firſt time you came into the houſe! Now I dare ſay, you are thinking of the little card of ſilk. Indeed that was a ſpecies of burglary, but I doubt you will get off, becauſe it happened in the broad day. I muſt digreſs a moment from the ſubject I was upon, to obſerve a little on the abſurdity of our laws, as if a crime committed at noon-day were not as wicked as at twelve o'clock at night. How different is the idea in Milton's eſtimation: on another occaſion he ſays,

'Tis only *day-light* that makes ſin.

Whereas in reality, becauſe you ſteal my goods while the ſun ſhines, an Engliſh jury, inſtructed by an Engliſh judge, will aſſuredly

aſſuredly acquit you. This may be *law*, but I deſy the moſt learned caſuiſt to prove it *juſtice*. Now to proceed; you have actually purloined the hearts of both the female ſervants who happened to ſee you; had the reſt fallen within the vortex of your eye-beams, they would have ſurrendered, *without* diſcretion, to the all-powerful enemy: even the thrice-encompaſſed heart of old Martha felt a pull that almoſt diſlodged it from its ancient domain. She declared, "ſhe never ſaw ſo "handſome a gentleman, and ſo polite and "well-ſpoken." Oh! ſhe warranted how much all his own ſervants loved him: well, to be ſure, ſhe never ſaw ſuch a pair of eyes in any one's head; ſhe doubted not they had made many a heart ach: and yet he looked ſo gentle and ſo ſweetly, as if he would be ſorry to do miſchief too. She

ſhall never forget, what a ſweet voice and pretty look he had, when he deſired her to be certain of giving her young lady the letter. And a great deal more that I cannot tell you now. But you are ſuch a favourite! I readily agreed with them, that "it was a thou-"ſand and a thouſand pities I was not at "home."

I cannot ſend this till to-morrow; and if it goes by the poſt, you will not get it till the next day. But there are more ways than one; I ſhall give it to the errand-man, and he ſhall carry it to the ſtage, which ſets off for L—— at one o'clock, and thereby you will have it ſo much the ſooner. "I do bear a brain."

I am

I am happy you are pleaſed with my performance in the hiſtorical way. I had ſome merit, to be ſure, in compiling the materials; it was a long taſk. I knew not what I had undertaken, till I had got too far in the ſtory to recede. You do me great honour by your encomiums, and really I feel myſelf ſo flattered and delighted by your praiſes, that I fear I ſhall grow ſo vain that I ſhall be good for nothing; and what then will become of me? You will be like ſome of the idol-makers of old. You will deſpiſe the work of your own hands.

Adieu!—Yours moſt ſincerely,

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XX.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

JUST after I had dispatched my last by our little Mercury, I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Maria. I have spoken of her to you; and I shall soon have the pleasure of introducing my amiable friends to each other. She informs me she is on her return to England, and that her excellent father is much benefited by the use of the *Barege* waters. They mean to take a house in our neighbourhood;

bourhood; and I am on the wing to look at a dwelling, which I think will ſuit them admirably. I feel all alive; I love Maria to my ſoul; and I have not ſeen her above theſe eighteen months. Her acquaintance will give you much pleaſure: why do I ſay her acquaintance only? you will poſſeſs her friendſhip. What a charming little knot of amity ſhall we three make! I feel the joy by anticipation. Your name is not wholly unknown to her; I have made honourable mention of you in my letters, which will not fail to procure an intereſt in her gentle boſom for my amiable Alfred. One hour's converſation with you will do all the reſt. She could not be my friend, if ſhe did not entertain a regard for you. Adieu! I cannot ſtay to write any more, as I muſt go to look over the future manſion of my

Maria: I really would not quit my pen on any other conſideration: yes, I muſt detain it a moment longer. Pray did you examine the contents of the netting-box; and did you take notice of a purſe? It was nearly finiſhed; and on Thurſday I ſhall preſent it to Alfred, as a ſmall token of friendſhip from

ELWINA.

LET-



LETTER XXI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

IN a ſhort time after you receive this, Alfred will preſent himſelf before the moſt amiable of women. But Elwina, dare I own to you, I feel a jealouſy in my heart reſpecting the extreme warmth of your affection for Maria? who is this boaſted Maria?—what charms does ſhe poſſeſs?—She is the friend of Elwina, and, as ſuch, I owe her great regard; but *I* am the friend of Elwina too,—I want not,—I aſpire not to the poſſeſſion of any other's

friendſhip,—give me but Elwina's, I aſk no other. You poſſeſs mine entire—I—alas! I find I have but half yours. Why does Maria return to rob me of the dear privilege, I flattered myſelf I had gained, of being the firſt on the liſt of Elwina's friends?—Sweet flatterer! Did you mean to deceive me?—Did you not ſay I had gained that envied pre-eminence? Ah, Elwina! but then your Maria was far diſtant: *I* juſt ſupplied the place of an abſent friend, and now muſt give way to her more exalted worth. Forgive me, Elwina, I know not what I ſay, or hardly what I would expreſs; only this I know, and I *will* take courage to ſay, that I wiſh not for life one moment longer than I am dear to Elwina.

ALFRED.

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and it has been ſaid before you too, *it is not a ſet of features I admire*; I love expreſſion, which is the ſoul of beauty. Whether I poſſeſs it in the degree your good mother ſays I do, I know not; but this I know, I allow no one handſome without it, and almoſt every body more than handſome who really does poſſeſs it. But I muſt now endeavour to expreſs how much, and ſincerely I am yours.

P. S. I forgot to mention *our* friend Maria. I am pleaſed with your adopting her; and I ſhall never preſume in future to call her excluſively mine. But I will not allow her to ſay *our* Alfred. So do not expect it.

The houſe I have fixed on for her, will ſuit them in point of ſize and ſituation;

tion; but I wish it was nearer to us; being almost a mile off from our domain. However, that circumstance will operate sometimes in my favour, as I shall take up my abode with her now and then for a day or two, and I shall hope she will do the same by me. Her conversation is too great a treat not to make one wish for the continuance of it.

Adieu.

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I WILL anſwer to the queſtion you put to me, juſt as I was going to take horſe, after ſpending one of the happieſt days of my life. I do indeed admire Maria, *our Maria*. She is juſt the kind of being I ſhould have ſuppoſed her to be; and I ſhould have been able to have picked her out from a thouſand, for the approved friend of the elegantly-diſcriminating Elwina. She is gentle, affectionate, and unreproving; that is, ſhe looks

as

as if ſhe would pity and abſolve the weakneſs, which perhaps ſhe never felt. I could tell her every ſecret of my heart, and ſhould expect comfort and conſolation from the ſympathetic ſoftneſs that appears in her agreeable, though not handſome face. All this I could do if I had not the ſuperior happineſs of being acquainted with one to whom all other women muſt bow the knee. You, Elwina, are as much above Maria, as ſhe is above the common routine of females. Nay, I know not whether her excellence is not rendered more conſpicuous by being placed near yours. The moon, our favourite planet, ſhines but by reflection from the reſplendent ſun.

How delightfully did the minutes roll away laſt Monday! Oh! if each day was

thus to be paſſed, I ſhould look for no other heaven! I doubt that laſt expreſſion is not ſufficiently orthodox for one who ſoon will become a Chriſtian divine: but *out of the abundance of the heart, &c.* And I really could not help that "effuſion "of friendſhip and fancy" breaking out, when I recalled to my imagination the hours replete with happineſs that I ſpent *à trio* with you and our Maria. I was particularly fortunate, as I was a volunteer, to find the two amiables by themſelves. But why do I ſay *recall?* Each moment is ever in my memory; I live over the whole day, which had more of felicity in it, than many years could furniſh to ſome people.

I was with you by eight in the morning. Good God! twelve hours I ſpent with Elwina!

I could almoſt exclaim with the rapturous Toriſmond—

I have lived enough!—

I do not mean to purſue the ſpeech any further, only to ſay, if I had died directly, and my memory retained the circumſtances of that day alone, I ſhould, ſo deceived, "think all my life had been "bleſt!"

And, indeed, what could a reaſonable man wiſh for, more than I enjoyed on that day? The ſociety and friendſhip of two charming women.—I had ſenſe, elegance, beauty, and harmony to lift me above the race of earthly beings.—Do you think the Grand Signior ever paſſed ſuch a day in his life? No; the greateſt voluptuary that ever exiſted never experienced ſuch ineffable pleaſure (which reflection even

height-

heightens) as did on that day the highly-favoured Alfred! Oh, may this "charming little knot of amity" never be broken or divided!

I did not get home till paſt the hour that my dear mother uſually goes to her chamber; for, you know, it was impoſſible to gallop away from Elwina, although I did not ſpare my horſe in going to her—It was after eleven when I reached home; and I could find by the manner of that beſt of parents receiving me, that her fond heart had endured ſome pangs, leſt any accident had happened to me. This was ſome allay to my paſt happineſs. I could almoſt wiſh ſhe did not love me quite ſo well, or that ſhe had ſome one to divide her affection with. Oh, if the charming Elwina lived under the

ſame roof, we ſhould between us ſhare her love, and ſhe would not as now give up her ſoul to a thouſand anxieties, while, in looking on me, ſhe ſees all that remains of mother, brother, and huſband. She kindly ſat up an hour longer, to allow me the opportunity of talking of you, and our amiable friend: without ſuch a relief I know not what I ſhould have done, for my ſpirits were too much alive to have gone quietly to bed; and, notwithſtanding the early hour I roſe at in the morning, I could not compoſe myſelf to ſleep. I courted its gentle influence for ſome time; but it was in vain. Elwina and Maria had between them "murdered "ſleep;" ſo I gave up the conteſt, and riſing, ſtruck a light, and ſat down to the only employment worthy of concluding ſuch a day, reading over your charming

letters.

letters. Believe me, every time I peruſe them I diſcover freſh beauties; they are ſuperior to any thing I ever read in any language, and I ſhould pronounce them moſt finiſhed performances, were I to meet with them in the hands of any one. What then muſt be my opinion of the dear lines, when the writer is ſo well known, ſo admired as is Elwina; and when I can whiſper to my grateful heart, that it is to Alfred they are addreſſed! What a happineſs for me that we were born in the ſame age! I ſhould have been like the Perſian prince, had I found ſuch elegant letters in my father's treaſury, and certainly have ſet out on my travels to diſcover the lovely writer. I am ſure you remember the ſtory.

Adieu—I am going to inſpect my workman, who, by the bye, is but a bungler; however, as I know a little of turning myſelf, I ſhall hope the cabinet will have ſome little merit independent of the donor.

Yours moſt faithfully,

ALFRED.

LETTER XXVII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I AM by no means the perfect creature your too partial fancy thinks me. But I will tell you all my faults; and as I feel contrition for them, I hope it will prove a ſtep towards amendment.

I was, really I could not help it, I was hurt at the former part of your laſt letter. I thought you expreſſed yourſelf more warmly in your elaborate praiſe of Maria, than I ſhould have done by any friend you

had introduced me to. I felt piqued—I feared I had loſt ſome intereſt with you; however I took myſelf to taſk before I went on with the letter, and laid it down, determining not to finiſh the peruſal of it, while ſo ſelfiſh a ſentiment predominated in my unjuſt boſom. It was that expreſſion of yours which I was particularly pained by, *I could tell her every ſecret of my heart, and I ſhould expect comfort and conſolation from her ſympathetic ſoftneſs.* "Ah, poor "Elwina!" I could not help exclaiming, "thou art not worthy of ſuch confidence." That very ſentiment proved I was not; but, as I ſaid, I took myſelf to taſk, and when I had expiated my offence, I again peruſed the letter, and, perhaps, was as reprehenſible for being enraptured with the latter part of your elegant epiſtle, as I was for the chagrin the former had occaſioned.

I ex-

I experienced the truth of your aſſertion, that *Maria would pity and abſolve the weakneſs which ſhe never felt*; for I owned all my folly to her, and indeed gave her your letter to read. Do you allow of ſuch things? And ſhall I uſe the ſophiſtical reaſoning of Montaigne, to prove to you, that your letter being ſeen by her, is juſt the ſame as if I alone had peruſed it? She is, indeed, my ſecond ſelf; her faith is tried and known; and I dare believe you would not wiſh I ſhould ſecrete from her confidence the perfect eſteem and friendſhip I feel for you: To her alone I talk of you—indeed, in a general way I ſpeak of you in the family—and, *apropos*, I had like to have forgotten the meſſage: My mother hopes you will not fail to come hither next Tueſday; we are to have a little muſical party, and ſhe has ſet you down for a

performer, so you must, *nolens volens*, send your baggage, as it will be too late to return to L—— afterwards; and then your excellent mother will be free from the anxious fears that invaded her gentle bosom last Monday evening.

Do me the favour to practise that charming *duo* in *Orfeo*—I mean to have the pleasure of singing it with you—You will be with us by dinner of course—And do not forget your cremona—send it, well packed up, by the errand man, with your *odds and ends*. When you will get the violin back again, I will not pretend to say—It would be no bad plan to lay an embargo upon it; as it might be an inducement to your oftener coming to us; I think I shall adopt it.

Our

Our Maria is ſtill with us, and I ſhall keep her till after the concert, and as long after that (to expreſs myſelf elegantly) as ever I can.

I have been laying your ſweet letters in order, that I may loſe as little time as poſſible in placing them in the ſacred repoſitory when it arrives. You may ſay what you will of mine, and I hope you will not abridge me of the ſame privilege; but if the merit of writing is to be eſtimated by the pleaſure they afford in the peruſal, it will be a ſharp conteſt between us which is the beſt. Maria ſhall be umpire one of theſe days—We will lay our ſeveral claims before her, and ſhe ſhall decide upon them.

Adieu.

ELWINA.

LETTER XXVIII.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

I REGRETTED your abſence leſs than I ſhould have done, had yeſterday been a day at all to your taſte; you well know it was not ſo to mine. I hate theſe magnificent doings—It might be truly ſtyled a cabinet dinner, and was calculated to delight my brother—Indeed my father was delighted too; but it was eaſy to ſee that he almoſt groaned under his dignities; and now and then feeling what he calls his inferiority, he looked as diſconcerted as

he does when my mother orders almonds and raiſins, with French plums, in the deſſert, which, he ſays, are "the relicks of the "old leaven of trade."

You know how I hate theſe politicians, and great men—I think the aſſortment a vile one; and happy was I when we females were allowed to withdraw, and leave them to their conferences.

You may be certain, my dear Maria, there is ſome point to be gained, or theſe lords, and members of the miniſtry, would never take the pains to viſit ſuch little folks as we are. But why trouble you with theſe matters, when I have a ſubject of ſo much more moment to enlarge upon?—But it is a ſubject I hardly know how to diſcuſs. You aſk me if Alfred is my lover?

It is a very ſimple queſtion, and could, one ſhould think, be eaſily anſwered; and yet, the more I reflect upon it, the leſs able am I to give you ſatisfaction on that head.

We muſt firſt inquire, what does the declaration of love conſiſt in? Is it words or actions that denote the paſſion? And is there no other method of a man convincing you he loves you but thoſe few words, which I have heard from ſo many men, who, I dare ſay, know no more of the *Sweet Paſſion of Love*, than a broom-ſtick; "You are a ſweet girl, and I love you." If ſo—then I declare, upon my honour, Alfred never uſed that expreſſion to me; and it is ſo common-place a way of making love, that, I as freely declare, I ſhould be very ſorry he ever ſhould. But that I am the being moſt dear to him on earth,

it

it would be hereſy and treaſon to deny my belief of. I am thoroughly perſuaded I am —but I muſt own too, marriage has never been his ſubject. Perhaps, for from my Maria I will conceal no ſecret working of my heart; perhaps I have ſometimes wiſhed him to be more explicit on that theme, and more ſo ſince I ſee he is ſo well receiv-ed by all my family—I ſay *all*; as even my eldeſt brother treats him with a civility he does not uniformly practiſe to untitled men. In the courſe of the narration I made him of Matilda, I mentioned, though without deſign, the fortune my fa-ther gave her, and what we were to expect. From the reſpect, even to veneration, he had been accuſtomed to ſhew me, I ſome-times fancied (as he knew the ſtyle we lived in, and from ſome other circumſtances) he thought we rather looked for high alliances;

alliances; but his conduct is exactly the same as it ever was. You owned you were struck with it, and made this remark in addition; that the same attention from any other man would either give him the constrained air of ceremony or over-officiousness; but that it was all grace in him, and peculiarly his own.

Again, I have thought that it would not suit him to marry a woman without a larger fortune than he now expects with me; but then I must do him the justice to believe, as a man of honour, he would not have striven to gain my affections; and that he is sole master of them, I doubt, can be no more a secret to him than it is to you. And another thing, he is not an ambitious man; he talks of the dear delights of domestic ease, where one lives

the

the life of reaſon, not that of ſacrificing all one's comforts to the whims and caprices of the world. His *maternal* fortune, as I may call it, is three thouſand pounds; his living five hundred per ann. and his mother's preſent income two hundred a year. She is ſtill in the prime of life, being but juſt forty two, and, therefore, may live a long while—ſhe is one of the ſweeteſt tempers in the world, and I am a very great favourite with her, which I ſhould think rather an argument in favour of his fixing on me for a wife, as I am ſure he would be happy in not ſeparating from her, and ſome women would not chooſe to have a mother-in-law part of her family. With my poor three thouſand pounds I cannot expect any very great match; and from the reception he has met with from my father and mother, I am convinced they

would

would not think it an unſuitable one. Surely, we might live the life of reaſon and happineſs, if not of grandeur, as between us there would be ſome proviſion for a family.—Theſe things (as they will ſometimes occur to me) throw a myſtery over his conduct that I cannot develope; but I am fearful of urging an explication of the enigma—both becauſe he is upon many occaſions extremely unreſerved (and theſe may be family reaſons which keep him for the preſent ſilent), and becauſe I dread loſing his acquaintance. While I conſider him as a friend alone, I may freely enjoy his ſociety; but ſhould he be urged to declare his future intentions, I may loſe him for ever as a friend; and his loſs, I own to my dear Maria, is an evil I cannot anticipate the danger of without the utmoſt horror. I do not wiſh to marry,

and,

and, therefore, why ſeek to interrupt an intercourſe productive of the higheſt delight to me?

I never knew him ſo lively as he was on that Monday that we paſſed together; there was an *enjoüement* about him that day, which rendered him wonderfully pleaſing; and yet what a chaſte delicacy, if I may uſe the expreſſion, amidſt all his *gaieté de cœur*—The former he has always preſerved through the whole of our acquaintance; never making the leaſt advances towards familiarity——ever tender and reſpectful. I remember (can I ever forget it?) the circumſtance which firſt led me to ſuppoſe he loved me. Mrs. M——'s look diſcovered one morning that the houſe was in danger

danger of having been burnt down by careleſſneſs, in ſome work that had been done to a chimney, and which had not been properly ſecured. At the time we knew of it the danger was over; but had the flames got vent in the night, from the ſituation of Mrs. M——'s chamber and mine, we muſt have been burnt in our beds. Alfred had heard ſomething of the ſtory, and flew to the houſe to be better informed. Mrs. M——— had ſome family engagement, and requeſted me to give him an account of the imminent danger we had eſcaped. In the courſe of my relation, I ſaid it was a great chance he ſaw me again, for had the fire broke out a few hours ſooner we muſt have periſhed. While I pronounced the word, he ſnatched my hand with both his, and carrying it quickly to his lips, impreſſed a fervent kiſs upon it.

His

His face, which was pale before, from the ſhock of my ſtory, was in that inſtant crimſoned over. I believe I looked fooliſh enough, but took no notice of the freedom of the action, and went on with my account as well as I could.—From that moment, till the end of my life, I have devoted that hand to Alfred.

From the frequency of his viſits to Mrs. M——'s, which ſhe really encouraged by ſome means or other, ſo that ſcarce a day paſſed without my ſeeing him; we inſenſibly attached ourſelves to each other; a conformity of opinion, a parity of years, and many other little nameleſs circumſtances and incidents, contributed to our marking out each other as congenial minds. You know, ſince the affair of Mr. D——, I had determined againſt ſuffering my heart

to

to be attached; and I am clearly of opinion, had Alfred, in the early part of our acquaintance, profeſſed a paſſion for me, I ſhould have rejected it. He took a more effectual method; he ſtole into my affections by the mere amiableneſs of his character; and the only method he uſed in the art of making love, was, by his actions to prove how worthy he was of being beloved. He challenged my eſteem, and intereſted my judgment before he alarmed my ſenſibility. After the little incident I mentioned, I muſt have been blind not to ſee his preference, and I muſt have been more than inſenſible not to be impreſſed by it. I may ſay to you that it is no great triumph to be admired in the preſence of Mrs. M——. However, let who would be of the party he had neither eye or ears, or hardly a tongue

for any one elſe. His firſt letter, which I ſhewed you, gave me a ſenſation of delight (though it contained very little information that was new to me), which no one I ever received before had excited; but notwithſtanding that and every ſucceeding one has been tender and affectionate, he has never ſtepped beyond the limitation I gave him of friendſhip. If he ever means to be nearer—(I think no connection can make him dearer to me) it remains a ſecret in his own boſom; let him uſe his own diſcretion; I ſhall never ſeek an explanation which may, as I ſaid before, deſtroy that happineſs I now enjoy, and which more than contents me. Whether I have contented you, my dear Maria, I know not; but you have my whole heart before you.—Never ſhall it conceal a ſentiment from ſo true, ſo valuable a friend.

You

You poſſeſs, and have a right to my moſt unbounded confidence; and to you I can write and talk of all that intereſts a heart, which you, my beloved Maria, and my amiable Alfred ſhare between you. Adieu.

Yours ever,

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

MARIA TO ELWINA.

WHATEVER may be the cauſe which prevents a more explicit conduct in Alfred, I ſhall ever regret, my beloved Elwina, that it does exiſt. You ſeem ſo thoroughly formed for each other's happineſs, that I cannot but wiſh from my ſoul your union was perfected. Never did I ſee veneration heightened by ſo glowing an affection, as appears in his eyes when he beholds you. Oh, ſuch ardent gazes muſt be proofs that he loves to as great a degree,

as that paſſion can be carried; and my deareſt Elwina lags not far behind. Heaven grant I may ſoon congratulate you both on being more intimately acquainted with each other's ſentiments. But, my Elwina, you have loſt much of your charming vivacity. On that Monday, indeed, you were all alive, for then Alfred was with you. You ſay you are contented—more than contented. Why then are you leſs cheerful than you uſed to be? For your peace of mind, I hope he will ſoon explain himſelf, or I ſhall wiſh—forgive me, Elwina, my love for you prompts the wiſh—that you had never ſeen him.

For my own part, I have no idea of theſe friendſhips between the ſexes. It is not in nature that they ſhould be able to keep within its narrow bounds, though it

ſeems

ſeems ſo eaſy to preſcribe them. Should it proceed for years, as it has continued for ſome months, it would devote you both to a life of celibacy; for how cold muſt his vows be to any other woman! and how could you ever give your hand to another man? I am not an advocate for declarations of paſſion being made, till there has been ſome opportunity given of becoming a little acquainted with the diſpoſitions of each other. Many unhappy marriages are, I am convinced, the conſequence of perſons being ignorant of the tempers of thoſe whom they have too ſuddenly addreſſed. But here has been a ſufficient length of time; Alfred is too amiable to trifle with your happineſs, and yet he muſt be blind to his own attractions, and your ſenſibility, if he ſees not that he is the ſole object of

your tenderneſs. Alas! alas! every thing ſhews it but too plainly.

I grieve the more, my ſweet Elwina, becauſe I ſee in Alfred the amiable counterpart of your dear ſelf.

Mr. D—— was unworthy of you, and I am certain he never would have been the object of your *free* choice. That you even had a good opinion of him was the conſequence of his deep diſſimulation, which effectually concealed for a long time the natural bent of his diſpoſition. You acted nobly throughout the whole buſineſs; but on examination, my dear, you will find your pride, more than your ſenſibility, was wounded by the detection of his profligacy.—I am happy it was ſo; you could not have acquired ſo ſoon the indifference

you

you have felt for him this long time. The match was looked on in a ſuitable light by your family—I mean ſuitable to their wiſhes in point of circumſtances. His fortune was much ſuperior to yours, and I know too your delicate mind was gratified, by having the ſanction of all your friends in the diſpoſal of your hand. All this operated to inſpire a kind of liking for Mr. D——, which his conduct, as it appeared to the face of the world, certainly juſtified. But even while in proſpect he had the idea of being the huſband of Elwina, to give way to a licentious paſſion for ſo low a creature as the bar-maid of a coffee-houſe; it debaſed him beneath every thing, but the contempt with which my charming friend treated him, when he could not clear himſelf from the charge you brought againſt him. But tell me, Elwina,

is not the affection you feel for Alfred different from that you experienced for Mr. D——? Could you break this *friendly connection* with that firmneſs of philoſophy you did one that was ſo near becoming a matrimonial one? Yet why ſhould I ſeek to probe a heart which you have laid open to my view? It is unfriendly—it is ungenerous.

The time will ſoon arrive when Alfred will be in poſſeſſion of his living; if, then, he does not make an offer of his hand, Elwina, he is not worthy of you. Then will my beloved friend promiſe me to exert all the ſtrength of her excellent underſtanding (which I never yet ſaw equalled), to combat an attachment that muſt otherwiſe be deſtructive of her felicity? Heaven ſend you may never have the ſad fortune

to

to endeavour to drive a too beloved image from your bosom. But his conduct must very soon be the criterion of his merit. I love you too well, my Elwina, to be at ease while your amiable heart is a prey to any suspense.

Ever yours,

MARIA.

LETTER XXX.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

"WHOM the Lord loveth he chaſteneth:" and out of love to Elwina does her beloved Maria plant a crown of roſes on her head, which, while they adorn, certainly wound her temples with the thorns. You have forced me to examine my heart. You have conſtrained me too to make ſtrictures on Alfred's conduct. I feel pain from it; if I have deceived myſelf, my error made me happy, and I

am

am weak enough to wiſh it could have continued to my life's end.

I thought, Maria, you knew enough of mankind not to be ignorant, that it is the worſt way in the world to raiſe people's ſpirits by telling them they have loſt their vivacity. I have obſerved a hundred times, when any perſon has looked grave in company, that on another's obſerving it, they have ſunk by degrees into melancholy: whereas, if they had been left a few minutes to themſelves, they might have regained their former good ſpirits. But when this remark is made, it is natural to attempt a vindication from the charge, by unmeaning ſmiles, at the ſame time that the imagination is flying to the heart, the natural ſeat of inquietude, to trace out the cauſe for dejection ſtealing on the features;

and the common reſult is a conſtrained behaviour the reſt of the day.

So you have fixed the criterion of Alfred's merit—may he be able to paſs the *ordeal*.

Should he prove a delinquent, I promiſe you, my deareſt Maria, to do the beſt I can to eſtabliſh the character of a philoſopher; if you will allow me in the mean time to give way to the dear delight of thinking him worthy my moſt tender affections.....Thus then this bargain is ſettled.

You lament my being in a ſtate of ſuſpenſe. No, I rather think it is a ſtate of expectation, which is quite a different matter, my dear; one is ſeated near the con-

fines

ſines of deſpair; the other is gilded with hope. But whatever name it may be called by, I feel too much ſatisfaction in it, not to tremble at a change, leſt it ſhould not be productive of an equal ſhare of happineſs.

In the letter he wrote, after ſpending the day with us, you recollect he ſays, *he never was ſo happy in his life.* He certainly expreſſed more affection for me by words, than ever he had done, and I talked with more freedom to him; but the conduct of both, I am convinced, was actuated by the ſame principle; namely, your being with us: our converſation would not have been ſo gallant, had we been *tête-à-tête.* There is a tender ſoftneſs in his addreſs when alone; but it is more in his manner than his language; and for

his letters---what ſhall I ſay of them! They have all the ſpirit of love, if they are not the expreſs thing itſelf. But you obſerve, he never ſtyles himſelf any thing but *my friend....the object of his eſteem, &c.* When I write to him, I am ſometimes forced to check my pen, leſt I ſhould expreſs myſelf too tenderly; and when I have ſealed my letter, I have condemned myſelf for having written too nearly the ſentiments of my heart, which laſts but till I have again peruſed his, and then, if I could ſtrike my pen acroſs the word *friendſhip*, and ſubſtitute love, oh, how delightful and exquiſitely tender they would be!——God forgive me, but I have often thought of them, as Mr. H----- uſed to ſay of ſome of the methodiſts hymns; "Put but the "name of Damon in the room of Jeſus,

"and

"and they would make the prettieſt love "ſongs in the world."

Now, my beloved friend, I hope you will think my loſs of vivacity purely accidental, and that I ſhall *badiner* with my pen as I uſed to do; and do not attribute it ſolely to the expectation that to-morrow Alfred is to dine here. I dare ſay your affectionate heart at this line will exclaim, "Heaven grant ſome incident may ariſe "to induce him to declare his real inten- "tions towards Elwina!" My dear Maria, ſhe wiſhes it too; but that muſt all be left to chance. I could never plot a ſcheme in my life on any occaſion, much leſs on this important buſineſs: Accident may do ſomething. If he waits for an opportunity, I doubt to-morrow will not furniſh him with one. For we have other company, and,

and, I dare ſay, I ſhall not ſee him, but ſurrounded with a crowd, which will not leave us till after the hour of his departure. Moſt likely he will not be near me the whole day; and at table he will

Drink to me only with *his* eyes.

Thoſe eyes! Good God! if only friendſhip is expreſſed by them, who could ſuſtain their effulgence when enlightened by love? Oh! it would be the ſtory of Semele revived---No mortal could ſtand ſuch a fire.

Adieu, my beloved, my true friend.

I am moſt faithfully yours,

ELWINA.

LETTER XXXI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

WHO would ever believe it poſſible that the day paſſed in Elwina's company could be called an unpleaſant one by Alfred? But could I be ſaid to be in Elwina's company? I ſaw her indeed; but ſurrounded with a crowd of beings who ſeemed created for no other purpoſe than to interpoſe between me and the moſt amiable of women. I heard her voice too; but it was to others it was directed, and had not her friendly eye ſometimes turned towards the forlorn Alfred, he would have

have "sat like his grandsire cut in ala-"baster." For heaven's sake, Elwina, oppose in future these oppressive civilities of your good mother in inviting me to parties so little suited to my taste. Oh, one day, nay, one hour spent like that happy Monday, is better than thousands such as yesterday! And then that barbarous custom of the women retiring from the table, and leaving a set of dissolute or stupid men together. Never let me have the honour of filling up a place at your table, which some great man may aspire to, and which I have not *gusto* enough to enjoy. We are eager to copy our neighbours on the continent. Why then do we not adopt their manners at table? They have no separations immediately after dinner, or rather seclusions of the lovely sex. In my own family, I am determined to abolish so ab-

surd

ſurd and deteſtable a cuſtom, founded on Gothiciſm, and ignorance. And if I am bleſt with a companion of ſentiments ſimilar to my own, ſome little ſcheme may be fixed on, which, I doubt not, the majority of the company will prefer, to the mere paſſing the toaſt in a dull *routine*, or noiſy intemperate mirth. I really feel chagrined ---I have loſt a day, in which I had promiſed myſelf much delight; and my mortification is but in proportion to the pleaſing enjoyment I had anticipated. Indeed it was too bad to have heaven in my view, with ſuch a gulph between.

There was but one white ſpeck of good, and that I am grateful for. I ſaw with what care you guarded my favourite myrtle from the hands of the officious baronet, who methought was full of

of conſequence from his new aſſumed title. Can you believe, Elwina, I ſhall ever part with the ſingle leaf you afterwards picked from the beloved ſhrub, and with a look—oh! that would have overpaid a thouſand ills, gave it into my happy hand? Did you obſerve the kiſs I imprinted on it? I hope no one elſe did---I blamed myſelf afterwards for being ſo little maſter of myſelf, as to act as if I had been alone. Sweet pledge of Elwina's friendſhip and eſteem; Alfred ſhall never loſe thee! How inexpreſſibly dear to me is every ſuch attention you honour me with!

When do you go to town for the winter? But why do I aſk that queſtion? No doubt that motion will be regulated by thoſe of the polite world. Mrs. M----- ſays, there is no one to ſee in town

till

till after Chriſtmas. Indeed, I think, there is very little worth ſeeing at any time, ſo partial am I to the country; and yet I wiſh you was to be in town ſoon, as I ſhould oftener have the happineſs of ſeeing you, the diſtance being ſo much leſſened. I however regard not the ſhortneſs of the days. What is darkneſs to him whoſe mind is illumined with the brightneſs of Elwina's eſteem?

But thoſe charming days, when ſome hour of each was embelliſhed by ſpending it in your ſociety at L——; will they not return? Oh, Elwina, ſurely they might. Mrs. M—— often regrets your abſence—The leaſt hint that you ſhould like to paſs ſome time there, would be moſt gladly attended to; why may I not propoſe it?

Will you do me the honour of beſpeaking

ing a place in your mother's museum for two or three little natural productions, which an acquaintance of mine sent to me the other day. I am happy to have it in my power to make even this poor return for the civilities I have received, and which my heart acknowledges with gratitude. I shall send them next week with your cabinet, and perchance a letter also; for I shall not miss so fair an opportunity of adding one to the collection, which you have promised to place in that little repository sacred to friendship.

I have never had any conversation with you on the subject of your having shewn my letters to our Maria. It is well she is *our* Maria, or I should have a thousand objections to it. My letters, and I trust yours, are written from the heart, and

not

not for the judgment to criticiſe upon. They are the effuſions of friendſhip, not the productions of genius. I own I feel a ſingular kind of pleaſure that my eye alone has ſeen the elegant tranſcript of Elwina's mind—that her letters come immediately from her heart to ſpeak to mine —I even feel an ecſtaſy in being certain that my eye follows her in the peruſal, as if I was ſenſible that moment of her divine preſence. I have no friend in the world to whom I think I have a right to ſhew your letters. As your goodneſs and condeſcenſion is infinite, in honouring me with your correſpondence, I ſhould look on it as profanation to let any eye but mine behold them. I am far from perfection, but that of a vain boaſter ſhall never be laid to my charge. Yet, my fair friend, do not infer from hence, that I blame you for

acting

acting differently from me in this particular. You have a right to act according to your principles. It would be arrogance in me to prescribe rules for your conduct; and I think circumstances render our situations so very different; that what would be reprehensible in me, is quite the contrary in you.

I admit Montaigne's sophistry in this instance. Maria and you are but as one, and an undue and unusual reserve to her, would look like a breach of friendship which you have mutually vowed to each other—Though I know her (both from observation, and character, as drawn by the elegant pen of the amiable Elwina) gentle and unreproving, yet I dread her strictures. You see the boldness of Alfred, even in his humility. I trust to

the partial friendſhip you have long ſhewn me, or ſhould I not fear your judgment, in which you are as ſuperior as you are in every thing elſe to any perſon I ever yet knew? Shew then every letter (and pray let this be one) to our good Maria. Your own excellent heart will be more ſatisfied by doing ſo, and I ſhall forget that circumſtance when I am writing to you. What, indeed, can I think of, but the charming object to whom I devote my pen? but if ſhe is ſatisfied, whoſe criticiſm need I fear? I know I am guilty of inaccuracies, from the rapidity with which I write.—One reaſon is, I hardly know any expreſſion in any language which can give a proper idea of the high ſenſe I have of your ſuperlative merit, or in what degree I am yours,

ALFRED.

LETTER XXXII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I AGREE with you—I hate ſuch formal doings as we had when laſt I had the pleaſure of ſeeing you, and will take care you ſhall not be expoſed to ſuch mortifications in future. It was really well meant of my mother, and I am ſure Alfred thinks ſo. There were but few of the party that I liked, and ſome were quite ſtrangers to me, among whom was Sir Thomas K——, whoſe honours, as you ſay, ſat rather uneaſily upon him. Indeed he looks as if they were not made to fit him;

him; but he will grow to them in time, as ſome œconomical mothers ſay when they have ordered their ſons clothes too large. Hang the man! why take up my paper with him? I really owe him a ſpite for his almoſt impertinent freedom about the dear myrtle. It was owing to Iſabella ſaying unneceſſarily, that it was my favourite employment to nurſe that little plant.—I hope he did not ſee what *I* did, the greeting you gave the leaf, haply inſenſible of its happineſs. I admire your delicate remorſe on the occaſion; and ſo I do your argument about the difference of our ſhewing the letters each receives; yet I think I have rather wrung your conſent from you, than obtained it as a free gift. But Maria is truly your friend, and admires your letters, though they are not beheld, perhaps, in that charming light as if they were addreſſed

to herſelf.—So that in fact you may place more dependence on her praiſe than mine, and be proportionably flattered by it.

My mother requeſts me to aſſure you, ſhe ſhall think her collection, which you dignify with the title of a muſeum (but you are apt to rate perſons and things too high) very much embelliſhed by any article you think worthy a place. I am glad ſhe has taken to be a *virtu*; it is a very innocent and pleaſing employment for a woman no longer young; and ſhe has as much pleaſure and ſatisfaction in examining a dead moth (ſhe would not run a pin through it though on any account), as a gay beauty has in fixing on a birth-day ſuit. She is not yet ſo mad in the ſcience as to give up her judgment as many *virtus* do, who really deceive themſelves ſo

groſsly, that one can but wonder at, and pity their credulity, when, with their ſolemn faces, they aſſert ſuch marvellous things as ſhock one's faith.

I know one of this claſs who ſhews a drinking glaſs of a date long before the invention of ſuch veſſels; and yet he poſitively affirms it to be a known fact; whereas, was he to be aſked the year when the art of making glaſs was diſcovered, he would accurately tell you the preciſe time. My brother was going one day to refute him on his own grounds, but waved his triumph, from, indeed, a principle of good nature, that it would be cruel to rob him of ſo valuable a part of his collection, by deſtroying the antiquity of it.

You have promiſed to give value to your

preſent, by incloſing a letter in it; and who knows but ſome future *virtu* in the family may ſhew it centuries hence, as the ſacred repoſitory of letters from the elegant Alfred to the faithful Elwina.

As to the event of leaving our *villa*; as you ſuppoſe, we ſhall be regulated by faſhion. My brother, who tells us now and then how they proceed in the great world, always lets us know thoſe matters, that we may not run the hazard of making him ridiculous by our plebeian fancies. He mentioned ſome time ſince, he wiſhed my father would take a houſe in another quarter of the town, as Bedford-ſquare was ſtigmatized with the odious appellation of the *citizens perch*. You would have laughed—No, you would have been ſorry, as I was, to have ſeen the effect it had

inſtantly on my poor father: "Pray, ſon," ſaid he, "do look out for a houſe in any "other part you like beſt. Indeed I never "was very fond of this ſituation, but your "mother thought it airy."

"Yes, anſwered the parliament man, "and ſo it is, compared to Watling-ſtreet." The very ſound of that dreadful place is worſe than the filing of ſaws, or marrow-bones and cleavers to my father's ears, as it is replete with the ideas of compting-houſes, ledgers and bills of parcels. "Oh! fie, fie!" he cries, "do not "remind me of my misfortunes." I could not help remarking, that a ſtranger would ſuppoſe he had appeared in the Gazette, inſtead of doing honour to the commerce of our country, and ſupporting with credit the glory of our nation in the character

of a fair dealer. My father ſhook his head, and my brother, with a ſneer of contempt, aſked me, "If I felt an attachment to any little ſmug-faced grocer or haberdaſher, that I was ſo great an advocate for trade?" I returned for anſwer (for I own I wiſhed to pique him a little), "If I had an attachment to a worthy man, I ſhould not reject him becauſe he was in trade, if it was only out of a principle of gratitude for being indebted to it, for having a member of parliament for my brother." He turned upon his heel, and ſaid "I was very ſaucy, but good company might teach me better." Poor Clodio! how inſignificant does this *little* pride make its ſlaves appear!

The houſe which Maria's father has taken is now nearly put in repair, and they will

will come into it before Chriſtmas. We ſhall certainly not go to town before that feſtival. I could wiſh it, though no more a friend to that place itſelf than you are; but theſe ſhort days and long evenings I feel more anxiety almoſt, than I receive pleaſure by ſeeing you, on account of the length of the way and darkneſs. I feel too on your mother's account; I know ſhe ſuffers extremely from her fears, leſt any accident ſhould happen to her treaſure. Whenever you can take a ride over in a morning, I ſhall have infinite ſatisfaction in ſeeing you; but without that is convenient, I will be content to view you "in "my mind's eye, Horatio," till a more favourable ſeaſon.

It will not be quite the thing to pay a viſit to Mrs. M——; I could not do it

for many reaſons, and a very powerful one, which I will tell you, is the circumſtance of Maria coming to ſettle among us.—She being *my* particular friend (abſtracted from my wiſh to have the happineſs of her ſociety), I could not now leave H— on any account, without being guilty of an impropriety, which I know you have too much regard for me to wiſh I ſhould ever incur.

We may meet, as you ſay in one of your letters; and I hope Alfred will not look on this as my forbidding our *often meeting*, if fate permit it. Before I go to town I ſhall ſend home your books; I have peruſed them, and by way of payment for the pleaſure they have afforded me, I ſhall, at the ſame time, ſend you two drawings in chalk, which I have juſt received

ceived from the frame makers; they are from the two views which you pointed out when Maria was ſitting beſide us, under the oak where we dined. One is a morning, the other an evening landſcape. That they are the production of Elwina's pencil will, I am convinced, inſure them a welcome reception from Alfred; nor will they loſe their value by bringing to his memory a day, which he has declared was *one of the happieſt of his life.* Elwina can only wiſh that every day may be marked with felicity that is added to the life of Alfred.

I am very ſincerely yours,

ELWINA.

LETTER XXXIII.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

AT last I have an opportunity of sending the long talked of box to Elwina; and, perhaps, I should have had the happiness of presenting this "offering "to the shrine of friendship" in person; but from indisposition, trifling indeed in itself, but not so in the eye of a fond mother. My amiable friend, I know, will pardon my attention to my mother's request of not leaving the house for a few

days.

days. My diſorder is only a ſlight ſore throat: but as I once in my life was attacked by a very alarming one, the leaſt ſymptom of a return fills her tender boſom with a thouſand fears, which, I aſſure you, are totally groundleſs.

You cannot think how I was flattered yeſterday by a viſit from your brother William. Finding me an invalid, he excuſed himſelf from returning to Mrs. M——'s, and good naturedly paſſed the day with me. As we are both deſigned for the ſame profeſſion, it was natural to fall upon the topic of ordination. *My* time will ſoon come; *his*, from being two years younger, is yet at a diſtance. I laughed, and told him he ſhould not have the trouble of ſeeking for a curacy (which appointment is neceſſary previous to the being ordained), as

by that time I ſhould have it in my power to offer him one. Mr. T— is ſo good as to name me for his, and of courſe I ſhall, in his church, deliver my maiden ſermon. I doubt I ſhall feel awkward on the occaſion, and, perhaps, acquit myſelf as ill. Thank Heaven there will be no one who knows me in that pariſh; and the circumſtance of my being a novitiate will be kept a ſecret.

And will you do me the favour of accepting a lock of hair, when *the flowing honours of my head* are ſomewhat abridged? I muſt conſult with you how it ſhall be ſet, and to what purpoſe adapted.

I muſt return to William once more, and tell you how extremely I like his converſation. I have a hope that he rather entertains

tertains a regard for me; I think his behaviour proved it. He has promiſed to paſs ſome time with me at the rectory. Oh, Elwina, my charming friend, I look forward to the time of forming my eſtabliſhment there with hope, anxiety, and a thouſand thouſand trembling expectations; either I ſhall be happy or miſerable, and that in the ſuperlative degree. The die will ſoon be caſt which ſtamps all my future days with one or other. There is no medium—I muſt be all or nothing.

Yours ever faithfully,

ALFRED.

LETTER XXXIV.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

WHEN the bosom of a mother is filled with a thousand fears, can that of a friend be perfectly at ease? Oh, no, Alfred, it cannot; I feel it cannot. For pity's sake then, let me hear by the carrier, who will bring this to you, as I shall then have so much earlier intelligence than by the post. Indeed sore throats always require much attention. You have the best of nurses in your dear mother, and good

advice

advice, if you have ſent for Mr. L——, which I truſt your mother has done, even ſhould you have thought it unneceſſary.

I thank you moſt intirely for the very elegant repoſitory; but your letter threw me into too much agitation to ſuffer me to examine all its beauties and conveniences. It is really *multum in parvo*: I ſhall have great pleaſure in arranging it by and bye, which will be when my anxieties give me leave, by being themſelves leſſened; as you once ſaid of me, *I cannot bear theſe inſtances of mortality in you.* Our friendſhip, I truſt, is immortal: why then ſhould theſe machines be ſo vulnerable?

I am pleaſed William ſhewed ſo much attention to you. It is highly flattering to my heart, that my favourite brother ſhould

ſhould eſteem my favourite friend. He was to ſet off from London to Cambridge, ſo that I have not yet heard from him, how he liked his viſit; but doubt not ſufficiently ſo to induce him to accept your invitation to the rectory. I cannot divine why the being fixed there is to decide the happineſs or miſery of your life. I have ſometimes ſaid you were inexplicable; but it is no part of friendſhip to ſeek into the receſſes of another's boſom. I have read ſomewhere that, "although confi-"dence is the baſis, curioſity is the bane "of friendſhip; and there are ſome ſecrets "too ſacred even for the boſom of friend-"ſhip." There is more ſolidity in this maxim than in a hundred of Montaigne's.

Adieu!—Heaven ſend you health and happineſs in the extreme, ſincerely prays

ELWINA.

I shall send this by our gardener, who luckily goes up to town this morning, and returns in the evening. Spare me the mortification of hearing a negative to the first question I shall ask. Need I tell you what that will be? If you do not know, you have very little sensibility; and if you suffer me to be disappointed, I shall think you have less friendship.

LET-

LETTER XXXV.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

I HOPE this ſpeedy anſwer to my fair friend will acquit me of thoſe charges ſhe threatens to allege againſt me: charges which, I truſt, whatever are my imperfections, will never be founded in juſtice; and then I am convinced Elwina will not allow them to have weight in her amiable and friendly boſom.

I have but juſt time to inform you of my amendment, and I hope in a few days to

to have the very great happineſs of ſeeing you. Mrs. M—— has propoſed paying you a morning viſit before you quit H——, and has had the goodneſs to offer me a ſeat in her coach. I ſhall keep her to the text, or I ſhall be inclined to make unpleaſant comments on the verſatility of ſome people's principles.

Am I inexplicable, Elwina? Would you could ſee every movement in my heart; a heart that knows not how to prize too highly all your excellencies; but it trembles, while—Here is the carrier—he cannot wait, Betty ſays.-----

Adieu! Adieu!

ALFRED.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

My ever dear Maria,

FOR your inſpection I ſhall ſend you two letters from Alfred. I wiſh they may amuſe you, and ſatisfy your generous heart more than they have done mine. I wonder what he would have added, had not the abominable carrier come in a moment, that you muſt allow was a very critical one. I ſhall not make many comments upon them. If you do not

not come down on Saturday, ſend them by the poſt, that I may lay them in order in a beautiful box which he ſent me. It is really elegant, and I doubt has coſt him a mint of money. There is every convenience for writing, and it is furniſhed with the neceſſary implements. On a ſlip of paper he writes thus:

"Half the pens I have ſtolen, whoſe ſervice I dedicate to my lovely friend. I have ſhared a quire of paper too. I hope you will find nothing wanting but a *knife*, and that is an interdicted preſent; unleſs, indeed, I had the muſe of Mr. Biſhop, who wrote thoſe elegant and tender lines to his wife on that ſubject. If I was ſo happy, I might be inſpired with the ſame powers."

I did

I did not see this little prose impromptu, till after I had written to him, which, my Maria may be certain, I did on the first instant, as I was anxious to know how the poor youth's throat went on.

Do not you think, Maria, in the latter end of the letter which I have marked No. 1, that he had an opportunity of being more explicit? *But the die will soon be cast that will fix either my happiness or misery*, whatever it does by his. It will be no punishment to devote myself to a life of celibacy, for whatever are his intentions, I am firmly determined never to be the wife of any other man.

But with a new leaf let us change the gloomy subject, or I shall fill the gentle bosom of my Maria with a thousand fancies

cies that really have no exiſtence. I give not way to ſad ideas; but reſolve to look forward to pleaſing proſpects. You ſee what a philoſopher I am; never anticipating evil, and diſpoſed to meet the bleſſings of life half way at leaſt.

I have finiſhed reading the books I had from L——, and have returned them. I muſt tell you one little *trait* of your friend's weakneſs. One evening I was reading ſome of Fitzoſborne's Letters, after I had gone up to my chamber, and a ſmall pin dropped out of my handkerchief between the leaves: I was juſt going to take it out; "No," cried I, checking myſelf, "no, there thou ſhalt remain: and oh! "how bleſt ſhall I be, if in ſome future "time I ſhall again behold thee!"

Maria,

Maria, you know there is but one event can make that circumſtance poſſible; and that I ſhall ſoon know. The time for your paſſing your judgment will arrive ſhortly. But will you recommend me to tear him quite from my heart? to ſink it into the worſt of ſtates, indifference? Oh! I cannot comply;—I cannot picture to myſelf any thing ſo dreadful, as ceaſing to think of one, who has for ſo many months engroſſed all my affections. I will never mention him; he ſhall not be the ſubject of my letters. But, Maria, you muſt not, indeed you muſt not, forbid my thinking of him. Why have I conjured up ſuch terrific ideas? He will, I know he will, be every thing we wiſh him.

Did I tell you, the laſt time I ſaw him was when we had a large and diſagreeable party.

party to dinner? no, I remember I wrote to you the day before I expected him. It proved, as I ſuppoſed it would, by no means pleaſant to him. Yeſterday we had the ſame ſet, Alfred excepted. Theſe politicians are not ſo deep, but they may be fathomed even by a young female. I have diſcovered one of their ſecrets; and, though I think it rather againſt the ſtate, I ſhall not ſcruple to inform you of it. You know, Maria, by a new and neceſſary arrangement, a contractor cannot ſit in the Houſe; ſo my poor father is to be the oſtenſible perſon, in a contract for furniſhing the army with ſome certain proviſions, while Sir Thomas K———, and my brother will ſhare the greateſt part of the profit. I hate theſe under-hand doings; theſe, I think, cannot be called *pious frauds*.

I know not how it is, but I have taken an invincible prejudice againſt this Baronet; I think he has in a great meaſure perverted the principles of my brother. It is not poſſible, that one man can always be in the right: but now my brother votes conſtantly with the miniſter; and obeys his ſummons as readily as if every thing depended on his obedience: indeed, poor man, he is obliged to ſtrain every nerve to keep himſelf in his ſeat. Heaven knows whether it be better for our poor diſtracted country, that he ſhould remain at the helm or not. But I wiſh for peace and quietneſs.

Alfred has acquired great credit with my mother, by ſending her ſome natural curioſities. You would have been delighted to have ſeen her happy counte-

nance,

nance, while she was examining them, one by one, through her spectacles. They are really beautiful; some of them being pebbles that exhibit almost a regular landscape. I have taken two or three draughts from their designs; which I shall send perhaps one day or other to Alfred; if not, they will remain locked up from mortal eye.

Heaven bless you, my dearest Maria,

I am ever most affectionately yours,

ELWINA.

LETTER XXXVII.

To the same.

YOU said a declaration of love would be the criterion by which you should judge of merit. I have then a formal declaration to send you of that sublime passion; if you consider the persons and sentiments of the *inspirer* or *inspired*, you will be better enabled to judge how delighted your friend was on the occasion. It is a pity I cannot keep you in suspense a little longer; but the secret must shew itself. It was not Al-

fred, my dear; "Oh no," as Scrub says, "clear another sort of man." What do you think of the great Sir Thomas K——? "Aye," you cry, "*fits the "wind in that quarter*?" It is an ill wind indeed that blows good to none; and I doubt this will prove such an one.

Certainly no surprise could equal mine: no, not more if my amiable friend had quitted that character to assume the lover; though then my delight would have been somewhat greater. But for the declaration; it was so much in my own way too, that it was particularly delightful on that account.

He called this morning, and my mother displayed to him her collection, which he has as much taste for, as I have for

him, or you for a cricket match. However the courtier was all admiration, and approbation: and then he begged to look at the conservatory; which I, "nothing "loth," not conceiving the political design of the Baronet, very good-humouredly offered to shew him. While we were examining the different plants; and I was very busy in "shewing the lions," he stopped me in the midst of my description of the night-blowing Cereus, by snatching the hand *sacred to Alfred*, and pressing it with vehemence to his lips, uttered those words, which I think no music could make harmonious to my ears; no hardly, if proceeding from the mouth of Alfred himself; "you are a sweet girl, and I love "you."

I drew

I drew my hand away, and looked at him with all the aſtoniſhment that really ſeized me.

"You ſeem ſurpriſed, my dear Miſs "B——," again offering to take my hand.

"I am not a little ſo indeed," I anſwered, "at your being poſſeſſed of ſuch penetra- "tion to diſcover already qualities in me "to juſtify your partiality in my favour, "and the ſudden avowal of it."

"Oh! I ſaw your amiable diſpoſition "in a moment; and, as I had eyes, I ſaw "too your lovely perſon. I fixed in my own "mind, that I would never have any other "woman for my wife, the firſt time I was "in your company."

"You do me a great deal of honour, "Sir Thomas, but"—— "You make "me the happieſt of men! I have not a "doubt of your father's concurrence; and "my rent-roll will ſatisfy any views he "may have for you in the article of ſettle-"ment."

"This is proceeding too faſt, Sir Tho-"mas; there is ſomething elſe neceſſary "to be ſettled firſt. That I was ſurpriſed "at your abrupt declaration, you plainly "ſaw; but I am not dazzled by the "ſplendid eſtabliſhment you offer "me. I hope the reſolution you made "of having no other wife, will laſt no "longer than till I aſſure you that "honour can never be mine. Unpre-"pared as you have found me, I truſt "you will have the goodneſs to excuſe

"the

"the freedom and ſincerity which I have "uſed in declining your generous offer. "There are many, and very amiable "women, who may add ſenſibility to the "reſt of their charms; without which I "am convinced you could receive no "pleaſure in a connection for life. Your "acquaintance with me (for this is only "the fourth time I have had the honour "of ſeeing you) is too ſhort to have made "the impreſſion (though perhaps a live-"ly) a very deep one; therefore, the re-"linquiſhing an idea, ſo lately taken up, "and upon no foundation neither, I hope "will not be a very difficult taſk."

You ſee, Maria, by the tenor of my ſpeech, I could not help bantering; but he, with his wonderful penetration, diſcovered it not. He began a kind of ha-

rangue which all rejected lovers of his deſcription uſe; and which I ſhall neither puniſh you or myſelf by repeating; it concluded too as uſual, complaining of cruelty and hardſhips, and truſting much to time, aſſiduity, perſeverance, and a doleful &c. My replication too was quite in rule; and ſuch as has been uſed, time out of mind, by all *hard-hearted* damſels, whoſe affections are pre-engaged. However, that was a ſecret which I did not think my new ſlave intitled to be informed of; and indeed there was a ſelf-ſufficiency and conſequence in his manner, that by no means laid me under the neceſſity of ſoftening my ſentence, by gently hinting that

Had I earlier known thy matchleſs worth,
Thou excellent young man, &c.

Oh,

Oh, to be ſure I would have made ſuch a ſpeech! Not I, believe me: no, I only wiſhed him better ſucceſs; and as a friend, adviſed him never to ſubject himſelf to a ſimilar diſappointment in future; but to truſt more to judgment than fancy. At leaſt that was the ſubſtance of my concluding argument, though I dreſſed it up with all the grace and elegance I could, as I led him towards the houſe; where he ſtaid but a little time, and then took his leave, with a ſmall abatement of that happy arrogance he generally aſſumes on moſt occaſions.

Now you muſt know, I dare not ſay a word about this at home: I hope to heaven he will not to my brother. I ſhould think he would have no great *guſto* for recounting his diſcomfiture.

I am convinced my dear Maria is thoroughly assured I should have had grace to refuse Sir Thomas, if such a man as Alfred had never been called into existence. And I am assured too, that you would have condemned me, had I suffered a disengaged heart to be dazzled with his title and fortune. You know his character even better than I do. And with all my penetration, I cannot discover one estimable quality he is possessed of. But yet, I fear, he would have many attracting ones in the eyes of my family; particularly that part of it who are too much inclined to sacrifice to pomp and splendour all those dear little comforts so necessary to happiness.—I fancy my *friend* Alfred, though he wishes me so well, would not be very well pleased at such an establishment for me. I have a presentiment

the

the truth of the old ſong would then be proved;

That friendſhip with woman, is ſiſter to love.

If it is not the very thing itſelf.

Confeſs now, my dear Maria, that the continuation of my letter has diſappointed the hope I raiſed in the beginning. Oh! if that bleſt event had happened, I queſtion whether the tranſport of my heart would have allowed me ſtrength to have made a calm relation of the *ſaid he's* and *ſaid I's*. In the language of Clariſſa Harlowe, and the reſt of the novel Miſſes, I muſt have waited "for quieter fingers;" as I ſuppoſe I ſhould, according to ancient cuſtom, have trembled like one of the ſhaking Mandarins on an old-faſhioned chimney-piece.

Adieu! moſt truly yours.

LETTER XXXVIII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I WOULD not return my amiable friend's books without a letter; not to apologize for having kept them so long; the terms we are upon, I hope, renders such formal business unnecessary; but to inquire when Mrs. M—— means to take this airing that you flattered me with an age ago; and which, if not put into execution soon, will be delayed too long, as we go up to town sooner than we intended. Pray use all your rhetoric on this occasion, as I look back

back over ſo many worſe than blank leaves in my pocket book, that my ſpirits are lowered by it.

Our Maria is now fixed in her habitation; and I have the happineſs of ſeeing her excellent father much improved in his looks. I laugh and tell him, that travelling has improved him wonderfully, and that I believe I ſhall become Maria's mamma. He has often declared he would never give her another, if I refuſed him. But whether I am at liberty or not I cannot abſolutely determine; for I muſt tell you a very important piece of news, which, as my friend, I am ſure you will be much intereſted in: I have received a moſt ſplendid offer from your acquaintance Sir Thomas K——. "Only think of that, "Maſter Brook!" ſuch ſettlements! Oh!

enough to turn the heads of half the girls in the kingdom. But for the ſequel of the ſtory, I muſt refer you to my next; for I have not time now to aſſure you how much I am, &c.

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

OH, Elwina, what have you done? and what will become of the wretched Alfred, whoſe misfortunes are falling quick upon him! In one fatal day his worldly and mental proſpects are clouded over: they are blaſted for ever! Elwina, I am a beggar! Ever unworthy of the honour and happineſs to which I aſpired, I but the moment before I received your letter, which has ſealed my doom—I had but the moment before juſt ſtrength of mind enough to rejoice that I had,

had, though so painfully, placed a padlock on my lips, and never told you how dear, how inexpreſſibly dear, you were to my fond heart, which might have prevailed on you to pity me, and perhaps generouſly have promiſed you would one day be mine. Now, Elwina! dear, much loved Elwina, you are free from every engagement. May you be bleſt! And I add to that prayer, which comes with ſincerity from my burſting heart, may Alfred never, by making his miſeries known, interrupt your happineſs!

Now does the curſe of my grandſire begin to operate. I never felt it till now; it never fell upon me till this wretched day!

I am

I am distracted! I know not what I write, or for what purpose! You will not be able to understand my meaning. Dr. Taylor has refused to resign the rectory to me; I have had counsel on the matter, but find there is no redress, as I am not in possession of any written agreement between Mr. Nelson and him. Indeed it is his own defence, that there never was one; and the heirs of Mr. Nelson disclaim their knowledge of any such document being found among his papers. But oh! Elwina, what is the loss of worldly wealth to him who has lost every thing in losing her whom his soul adored? Fond, foolish, self-deceived heart! why didst thou give thyself up to the flattering hope that thou hadst sufficient interest in the bosom of the almost divine Elwina, to prevent her giving thee up for another; and

that

that one so very unworthy of her! But, alas! who is worthy of her? Am I, an outcast---a beggar! I will fly from you; you shall never more see or hear from the wretched, ruined, lost

ALFRED.

LET-

LETTER XL.

Elwina to Alfred.

TOO credulous; too apprehenſive Alfred! Is Elwina a woman to beſtow her hand without her heart? And is ſhe yet ſo little known to you? Oh! do her more juſtice: do yourſelf more juſtice. Has then inſenſibility marked her brow, that you could not read her ſentiments of Alfred? Or have my letters been ſo cold as to create a doubt that he did not poſſeſs, indeed all the intereſt he could wiſh in Elwina's heart?

Could but my Alfred: yes, though unauthorized, I will yet call you ſo; could but my Alfred have ſeen the agitation of my boſom, on reading his dear melancholy,

and

and half-distracted letter, he would yet find this comfort cling round his wretched heart, that the world contains not a being half so dear to me as Alfred. Why must the real sentiments of our hearts be made known to each other at such a sad moment, but to cheer us in this reverse of fortune? Oh! then if it is any consolation to the most amiable, most esteemed (away with the inexpressive term, we have used it too long), the most loved of men, assure yourself the hand of Elwina shall never be given to any other man than Alfred.

I hate my levity in having written in so trifling a manner of the offer from the ever-detested Sir Thomas K——. But you know you always talked of friendship alone; and I could not resist a little female

male folly, which has torn the heartſtrings of a man who is the only one of his ſex that is dear and eſtimable to me! I ſent for my dear Maria, and have got the letter I wrote to her on the ſubject of this offer; it will prove to you how dear Alfred is to me.

Be not then caſt down, my excellent, my more than friend: we are yet young, and fortune may do ſomething for us. At leaſt let us have the happineſs of cheriſhing the idea, that we were born to form each other's felicity; and that many years will not elapſe before that period arrives when our hopes may be accompliſhed. What are riches compared to happineſs; the happineſs which I feel (to the excluſion of every care) of being beloved by Alfred!

ELWINA.

LETTER XLI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

MISFORTUNES falling ſo thick upon me, certainly bereft me of my ſenſes, or I ſhould not have dared to write to the moſt adored of women in ſuch a ſtyle. But reaſon and reflection have reſtored me. Yes, my beloved Elwina, thy Alfred ſhall never take a baſe advantage of your angelic goodneſs; nor ſteal into your gentle affections, to betray you to miſery. I can ſupport my own ſhare of wretchedneſs; but who ſhall give me ſtrength to bear that which I ſhould excite in her, who is dearer to me than the vital air I breathe? How

ſhall

ſhall I ever repay, even a part of the obligation I owe you? Oh! am I then ſo bleſt as to be beloved by Elwina! Will not that dear conſideration repay every unfortunate event in my life, with double and treble ſatisfaction? Moſt aſſuredly it ought, and will, when I can ſufficiently regulate my deſires by the rules of prudence.

Am I not puniſhed, my Elwina, for my too eager wiſhes after a competency, ſuch as might authorize me to offer my hand to the loveliest of her ſex? I looked forward to the time, which would put me in poſſeſſion of ſuch a competency, as if there was no other object in the world. It is taken from me, and all my fond hopes, too much indulged hopes, are over-blown for ever! My dear mother too: Oh! Elwina, how would you pity her! The diſ-

appointment of her darling ſon ſits more heavily on her heart than any thing ſhe has yet experienced. Affections grow proportionably ſtronger (as weighty bodies increaſe in ponderoſity), as they deſcend. Her love for me is of the moſt exquiſite kind; as every relative duty and affection centres in me alone. All I can ſay on the occaſion (for I have not words to deſcribe what we felt), is that my diſtreſs could only be equalled by hers. She has been ſtriving ever ſince to obtain my conſent in order for the diſpoſal of her ſecond annuity. But I have ſolemnly ſworn if ſhe does, ſo far from availing myſelf of her miſtaken generoſity, I will ſeek out ſome means of living, where ſhe ſhall never hear from me.

Oh!

Oh! my Elwina, I have been obliged to talk in this cruel and unfilial manner to the beſt of mothers, to prevent her reducing herſelf to beggary, that ſhe might add a few more comforts to my life, which would be for ever embittered with the reflection of ſuffering a parent, like the pelican, to tear away her vitals to ſupport me!

I cannot yet form any plan for my future eſtabliſhment, or how I ſhall improve the ſingle talent placed in my hands: only this I am determined upon, not to enter the pale of the church.

I may now venture to tell you, what I before would ſcarce whiſper to myſelf, that had I been allowed a choice, the

gown would never have been the election of my heart. Yet, I truſt, I ſhould have done my duty, though preſſed into the ſervice, as well as if I had been a volunteer. Happily, both from education and natural principles, beſides having good examples and excellent precepts, I ſhould not have found the taſk a difficult one which had been allotted for me, by thoſe who had a right to ſettle me as they pleaſed. I could eaſily have conformed to all the ordinances of the church, and was reſolved to do credit to the character of a pariſh prieſt. But the caſe is entirely changed. My whole proſpect now is bounded by the poſſeſſion of a country curacy of perhaps forty pounds a year, in a diſtant village; where no ſociety, congenial to the ſphere of life I have been accuſtomed to, can be procured, but

at

at the expence of my probity and principles: I now and then might be admitted to a great 'ſquire's table, to liſten, if I did not join in licentious diſcourſe and illiberal reflections. No, Elwina, the man who once aſpired to the dear delight of calling you by the fondeſt and tendereſt of all titles, ſhall never thus debaſe himſelf! I am but juſt in the prime of youth; the world is all before me; the field of glory is open; my country calls for the exertion of her ſons! In the vineyard of the Lord, there are too many uſeleſs labourers already; Alfred ſhall not add to the number.

But whither has the exuberance of my fancy carried me? How much beyond the ſober limitations of reaſon! Can I, in purſuit of the viſionary ſcheme my imagination was this moment filled with,

can I trample over the dying boſom of my honoured, my only parent? And can I be inſenſible to the horror which ſeized her when I even hinted my predilection for arms? Unhappy Alfred, every way! What ſhall I then turn my thoughts to? Perhaps time may ſoften the terrors which at preſent ſeem ſo dreadful to my mother's feelings: I muſt not, however, decide at preſent. Let me then quit all conſideration of to-morrow, and look up to my angelic Elwina; and in contemplation of her excellence and ſweetneſs, loſe all reflection, but that one, that I am dear to her. How exquiſitely kind to ſend me thoſe two letters you had ſo lately written to *our* Maria! What conſolation to my almoſt broken heart! Oh, Maria, kind and tender Maria, ſoothe all the ſorrows that invade the heart of my gentle love! So

may

may thy bosom never know a grief or feel a misfortune, in the thousandth degree equal to those, which in spite of reason, religion and philosophy, at this moment tear the heartstrings of

ALFRED.

LETTER XLII.

ELWINA TO ALFRED.

I HARDLY know in what words to addreſs my Alfred, that may have the happy means of ſoothing to peace his care-ſhaken boſom. But I will not have you deſpair, my moſt excellent friend. Surely ſome path may be ſtruck into, from whence you will yet find a proſpect which leads to happineſs.

What is grandeur, what are riches? Do we ſee the poſſeſſors happy? No, my Alfred,

fred, their cares and anxieties are drawbacks on their felicity, and which thoſe who live in a middle ſtate are not liable to. Theſe obſervations are ſo common, that you muſt have made them often. Yet, perhaps, now you ſee yourſelf deprived of a more than comfortable ſubſiſtence, like ſummer friends, they fly from you---Oh, that thy Elwina had a fortune to prove to her heart's choſen how dear he is to her! Alas, ſhe has no other way than by words, which even the inſincere may uſe, to convince her Alfred how much ſhe is devoted to him. But he knows he may rely upon her. Yes, that conviction ſupports me. My faith, my truth are yours, and whatever is your ſtation in life, I ſwear to ſhare it!

How much do I lament (and Heaven

grant we have not cauſe to regret it for ever!) that my Alfred's timidity prevented him from making a declaration of the love he bore Elwina ſome time ſince to my father. Your proſpect of future eſtabliſhment, and the growing partiality I was delighted to behold in almoſt each part of my family towards you, would have ſufficiently operated in our favour, to have obtained his conſent for an union. Then, from a ſenſe of honour, my father would have ratified an agreement, which now I almoſt fear, from prudential motives, he would refuſe to your requeſt. But he will be content with a negative voice; and I ſhall never be tired of repeating, that I will never be the wife of any other than Alfred.

The perſuaſion that we were born for

each

each other is all that keeps hope alive. And if our union ſhould not be perfected in this world, the Being that formed our congenial ſouls, will proportion our joys in heaven to thoſe we ſhall miſs on earth. Will not this reflection convey ſome conſolation to the boſom of Alfred? I beſeech you to let it have weight with you, to enable you to bear up againſt this trial of your conſtancy. Conſider it in no other light than that it will ſerve to prove the ſtrength of our affection, and that we ſhall be rewarded at laſt. I am determined to purſue the doctrine I teach, and will reſume my former vivacity that I may increaſe yours.

Shall I not ſoon have the happineſs of ſeeing you in Bedford Square? We go thither the end of the week; or ſhould you,

like better to come here? Why ſhould the reverſe of fortune cauſe any alteration in your conduct? I truſt you will find no difference in the behaviour of your acquaintance, or thoſe you have honoured with the appellation of your friends.

Our kind Maria has been every thing your affectionate heart could wiſh her. She has been a ſecond Alfred for tenderneſs. Oh, that we were all together! In ſo ſweet a ſociety I ſhould forget there was any thing wanting; or rather what could be wanting to conſtitute the happineſs of your ever faithful, ever affectionate

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

Bedford Square.

MY deareſt Maria, I have once more ſeen the moſt beloved of the ſons of men. He came this morning—my mother was from home; and as he only aſked for her and me, he was ſhewn into the little drawing room. Oh, how my heart fluttered when James told me who was below. However, by waiting I could not have gained more compoſure, and I flew down as faſt as I could, not ſtaying for the form of being announced, leſt the ſervant ſhould obſerve more than I wiſhed. Oh! good God, how did I find him altered!

Maria,

Maria, your gentle heart would have melted, had you ſeen the havock grief had made in his ſweet face. I held out my hand; for the world I could not ſpeak. He preſſed it to his lips, and I felt his tears drop upon it. I endeavoured to extract courage from his weakneſs, and as I led him to a ſeat, tenderly chid him for giving way to grief, when he ſhould, like me, look forward to fairer proſpects, and enjoy the preſent moment, which had given us the felicity of ſeeing each other uninterrupted. "How will your dear mother, "how can your Elwina, be able to ſup-"port this exceſs of melancholy in their "equally beloved Alfred?" Alas! the more I ſtrove to cheer him, the leſs effect it ſeemed to have; and if I had not exerted all the ſtrength I had, I ſhould have followed his example. But I knew it

was

was not a time to waſte in unavailing tears. With as much firmneſs as I could muſter, I ſaid to him, after ſome pauſe, "Alfred, "what would you have me do? I hope "and believe I may truſt your honour and "affection as guardians of mine. I have "by my pen, and I now with my lips at-"teſt Heaven to liſten to my ſacred vow of "being yours alone. I have ſaid I will "ſhare your fortunes let them be what "they may. Every thing but diſhonour "and diſgrace, which your conduct will "never expoſe me to, I will brave with "courage for your ſake. What is there "conſiſtent with innocence, which Elwina "would not do to reſtore peace to the "wounded boſom of her amiable Alfred?"

"Oh! cried he, I ought rather to wiſh "you had never ſeen me; had it not been "for

" for me, my Elwina would not have had
" cauſe for ſhedding ſuch precious tears,
" which contradict the ſemblance of forti-
" tude ſhe kindly aſſumes to ſupport me.
" Believe me, moſt adored Elwina, the
" bitter reflection that my misfortunes
" are ſhared with you and my beloved
" mother, ſo far from leſſening, only
" ſharpens the arrow of adverſity, and
" makes grief rankle deeper in my boſom.
" Why am I doomed to give anguiſh to
" thoſe ſo dear to me? It is there I feel
" myſelf weak—weaker than the weakeſt
" woman."

I aſſured him no circumſtance ſhould ever have power to make me ceaſe bleſſing the hour that firſt brought me acquainted with his worth. And that he might reſt ſatisfied, that the firſt moment

which

which made me miſtreſs of myſelf, ſhould unite me to him if he ſhould then requeſt it.

"Good God! he exclaimed, how ſhould "I dare to accept your lovely hand, and "draw down ruin and poverty upon you! "No, Elwina, I am not yet ſo loſt to a "ſenſe of honour. My purpoſe is—how "ſhall I ſpeak it?—to abſolve you from "your fatal too raſh vow." He roſe and went to the window; his voice was almoſt choked with ſobs; I was too much overcome to articulate a word. After a minute or two he a little recovered himſelf, and ſtrove to attain a degree of compoſure; then coming up to me, and taking my hand, "My amiable Elwina," ſaid he, "a "conſciouſneſs of acting right will ſupport us through every exigence. I, alas! "have

" have no other way to enable me to com-
" bat evils, which I have in no ſhape
" brought on myſelf.

" I am the victim of a curſe! Can I
" then make *you* the partner of my for-
" tune? Shall I, too generous Elwina,
" avail myſelf of your affection to ex-
" poſe you to poverty and diſtreſs? Oh!
" no—Though giving up the dear hope of
" having ſuch a companion through life, is
" worſe than the keeneſt dagger to my
" heart, I muſt—I muſt do it!—Yes,
" Elwina! dear lovely Elwina—Alfred,
" the moſt forlorn of men, pronounces it,
" while it tears his vitals—You are for ever
" free."

" Am I then renounced for ever, Al-
" fred?" I aſked in an agony I could no
longer

longer reſtrain or conceal. "Is it your ad-
"vice that I ſhould forget you?"

"Yes," he replied, "if by forgetting me
"you can forget the unhappineſs I have
"occaſioned."

"It is impoſſible; but you ſay I am
"free. I aſked not your concurrence when
"I made the vow, which is long ſince re-
"giſtered in heaven, and there it ſhall ever
"remain to manifeſt againſt any breach of
"my faith. But tell me, Alfred, have
"you made a vow, that if any reverſe of
"fortune was to take place, you will never
"unite your fate with Elwina's?"

"Can my Elwina think me ſuch a
"wretch? The honour which impels me
"to leave *you* free, binds *me* ten thouſand
"times cloſer. Never ſhall the vows of your

"Alfred

" Alfred be paid at any other ſhrine than
" where he firſt offered them—You are
" my firſt, my laſt, my only love. No-
" thing ſhall ever ſever you from my heart:
" it is devoted to you for ever. But I
" have no other method of proving my-
" ſelf worthy of the high honour I once
" aſpired to, than thus convincing you
" your happineſs and welfare is dearer to
" me than my own."

" There can be no happineſs---I can
" wiſh for none, which you do not ſhare.
" Let me have ſtill the comfort of cheriſh-
" ing my tenderneſs for you. Do not ren-
" der me miſerable by urging me to give
" you up. I will not take any ſtep that
" even the hard-judging world would call
" imprudent. I will not act againſt my
" duty to my parents. Be you not then

" more

"more ſevere than they would be. They "would not reſtrain my thoughts and "wiſhes; nor will my amiable Alfred do "ſo when he is convinced, which, ſurely, "he muſt be, that all my happineſs de- "pends on the hope of being one day his, "or at leaſt of preſerving his image ſacred "in my boſom till I deſcend into my "grave."

I gained my cauſe at laſt, my dear Maria, and I am certain ſent my Alfred away much more at eaſe (notwithſtanding the philoſophical and unnatural plan he ſet out upon was intirely overthrown) than he has been for ſome time paſt.

I would not part with him, till he had promiſed to dine with us one day next week; I wiſh to ſee how he is received. I repeat

peat to you as I wrote to him; I ſhall never ceaſe regretting his backwardneſs. Had he been received as a lover ſome months ſince, I know my father has ſuch a ſenſe of honour, he would not have thought the alteration in Alfred's circumſtances a ſufficient plea for a breach of promiſe, and then ſome intereſt might have been employed, which perhaps would have brought this unjuſt Dr. Taylor to terms of compromiſe at leaſt.

I have intreated Alfred to talk the *matter* over to my father. Not of our affection, Maria, but of this treacherous buſineſs. No, that other muſt reſt, at leaſt for a good while. Well—we are young—and ten years hence we ſhall not be old. Oh, how ſwiftly would ten years glide away, if I was certain I ſhould ſpend the remainder of my life with Alfred!

After dinner I told my mother who had called and left a compliment for her. She inquired very kindly after his health. My father too ſpoke very good-naturedly of his diſappointment, and aſked me what plan he had fixed on: I replied, I had taken the liberty of aſſuring him our family would be happy in his company one day at dinner, which he accepted, and ſaid he ſhould be happy in having an opportunity of conſulting with Mr. ——— on that ſubject.

"What does he ſuppoſe my father can "do?" aſked my brother.

"The advice of a perſon who has ſeen "the world," I anſwered, "can never be "unacceptable to a young man who would "be happy in following it."

"Aye,

"Aye, aye, said my father, he is right;
"I shall be glad to see him at all times."

I could have kissed him out of mere gratitude, and my poor heart felt lighter the remainder of the day, which has enabled me to sit up to a late hour, in order to give you an account of our melancholy conference.

Adieu, my beloved Maria, If your wishes could succeed for us, I am well assured we should be the happiest, as we will (I am determined on my side at least) be the most faithful pair in the world.

Yours most sincerely,

ELWINA.

LETTER XLIV.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

WHAT became of all my ſtoiciſm and reſolution, which I bore with ſo much anguiſh to Bedford Square? Before the lovely Elwina, they were quickly loſt. No, my adorable girl, I was no longer able to oppoſe your generoſity; and I feel ſo much happier than I did yeſterday, that I am almoſt inclined to think you have taken the wiſer part.

My dear mother obſerved with pleaſure how much better I looked when I returned, than I did when I quitted her this morning. Elwina, you are hardly dearer to me than you are to her: ſhe ſays (and, oh! may ſhe be prophetic) "that ſuch love and

"conſtancy as yours muſt be rewarded;" and her partial affection thinks no one ſo qualified to reward it as the highly-honoured Alfred.

I will certainly dine with you next Monday, if you on mature deliberation forbid it not. Mrs. M—— is ſo good as to ſay ſhe will take me in her hand; and, I think, it will be a relief to have her countenance the firſt time the humbled Alfred approaches your father and mother.

Oh, my beloved, when I ſaw the elegance and ſplendour of your houſe, how my poor heart ſunk at the idea of drawing you from thence, to unite you to poverty! But, indeed, I had taken up the reſolution before I ſet off from home, of ſtrengthening your heart to enable it to renounce me. What a falſe heroiſm! You,

my angelic Elwina, have convinced me. Yet no power ſhall ever prevail on me to accept your noble generous offer, till I can lift you to an eminence ſomething higher than I have yet to ſhare with you. My mother conceives hopes from Mr. Harley, the younger brother of my unhappy father; ſhe is reſolved to apply to him. My heart, was it not filled with your dear image, would reject the meaſure with ſcorn,—with an honeſt ſcorn. But I wave all conſiderations of pride: though I will not be meanly condeſcending, even to obtain Elwina. No, ſhe ſhall not have the mortification of thinking ſhe has honoured an unprincipled wretch with her affection and pity.

My uncle may have ſome intereſt (if he will not conſider me in the light of his

eldeſt brother's only child) that may be ſerviceable to me in procuring me a place under government, which is the hope of my mother; but I will not give way to ſanguine expectation; and yet how prone is youth to dreſs up a fond idea till we almoſt think the ſhadow is become ſubſtantial; and then when we extend our arms to embrace the phantom, it diſſolves in air, leaving "not a wreck behind." Yet why ſhould I complain? For, where my treaſure is, I am ſecure. On the faith of my Elwina I rely with confidence. How could I ever form the cruel idea that I ſhould be happier if you had forgot me? Oh, no! all my bliſs depends on your affection, and rich in that I cannot be poor. That cordial drop of happineſs will ſweeten the cup of life to the very dregs. Heaven would not have inſpired ſuch tender-

neſs

neſs but to reward it, and I ſhall yet be happy with my adored Elwina.

For ever, for ever yours wholly,

ALFRED.

LETTER XLV.

Elwina to Maria.

YOU would not have expected, my dear Maria, to be addreſſed by me from L——, but ſo it is. On Saturday I received a very friendly letter from Mrs. M—— to ſay ſhe would dine with us on Monday, and ſhould requeſt the favour of my company to paſs a week with her, for ſhe ſhould be quite forlorn, as her youngeſt boy was then to go to ſchool; "and you "know," ſhe adds, "what a fooliſh creature

"I am—I ſhall cry my eyes out if you do "not comfort me, and ſcold me too, both "which you are well qualified to do. I "ſhall take no denial. So you muſt have "your matters ready packed up, and which "we take in the coach. To obviate "every fear of danger of our purſes, I "ſhall bring Alfred to guard us."

This plea my father could not reſiſt; you know he has a high regard for Captain M——, and wiſhes to ſhew every civility to his wife. Alfred wrote me word he ſhould dine with us, and Mrs. M—— would convey him thither; but he knew nothing of the improved part of the plan till evening. It was a ſweet moon-light night, and I had the happineſs of contemplating that beauteous planet at the ſame moment he did. I had the further

pleaſure

pleaſure too of half an hour's converſation with him when we arrived at L——, for Mrs. M— ran directly to the nurſery; where, indeed, ſhe ſhines with the utmoſt credit, if ſhe did not ſpoil the little creatures.

This morning Alfred fetched me to viſit his dear mother. How much did her affectionate manner ſoften me! how inexpreſſibly ſweet were the tears we mingled together! "Oh, my beloved children," ſaid ſhe, taking each of our hands, "may ye "be bleſt in each other, and may the "Being that formed you ſhed his benign "influence over your heads, and ſtrew "your path with flowers that never grew in "mine, or at beſt juſt ſhewed themſelves "to *bloom and fade*."

My dear Maria, had but the united bleſſings of my own dear father and mother been added, how freely would your Elwina have given up all the pomp and buſtle of the world. A humble cottage, with a ſufficient quantity of land to ſupply my family, and my Alfred to ſhare my little comforts, would be the boundary of my wiſhes. The only alloy would be the fear leſt he ſhould not be ſo unaſpiring as myſelf. I ſhould fear for him, or elſe, could we not on the intereſt of our fortunes (for I ſuppoſe my father would give me the ſame portion he did Matilda)—could we not then on the intereſt of ſix thouſand pounds find reſources even for little elegancies? How often, through a ſleepleſs night, have I formed eſtimates of the expences that would come within three hundred a year! I could be content. Oh, how poor a word is that, how

how inadequate to the happineſs an union with Alfred upon theſe terms would give me! Yet for a man of his elegant education to be ſunk into a little farmer, and, perhaps, be deſpiſed by beings every way but one his inferiors—Oh, if that ſhould happen to wound his ſpirit, then I ſhould be a wretch indeed. No, then, let us remain as we are; while I am aſſured of his tender affection I am bleſt, and I will not incur the cenſure of my own heart, by riſking the loſs of the world's eſteem. My affection is laudable while it is under the direction of prudence; nor will I ſwerve from its dictates, while it enjoins not the renunciation of Alfred. He is, he ever ſhall be dear to my heart—I will never give him up—No, no, Maria, no force or power ſhall ever make me reſign Alfred, who (with yourſelf) is ſo inexpreſſibly dear to the

Ever faithful

ELWINA.

LETTER XLVI.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

WHAT a week of exquiſite felicity have I paſſed! And is it poſſible Mrs. M—— ſhould not ſuſpect my ardent paſſion, and that the adored Elwina has allowed me ſometimes to ſpeak of it? I could hardly think it any other than illuſion. How will the remembrance of this happy week enrich all my future hours! it will ſoften the aſperity of my diſappointment, even if my mother's application, the anſwer to which we are hourly expecting, ſhould prove fruitleſs. And yet how can I rave thus? If that application ſucceeds, it may lead to my enjoying, not only weeks, but years, long years of the greateſt

greateſt happineſs that can fall to the lot of man. Oh! my Elwina, it may lead me to your dear arms; and repay, in one ſoft moment, all my ſufferings! But I dare not give way to that hope, the accompliſhment of which, I think, would nearly deprive me of my ſenſes from exquiſite tranſport. I will check my pen, if I cannot my ardour; which I doubt my ever delicate and ſweet Elwina would condemn. And yet your own heart is not more pure than the paſſion you have inſpired in the boſom of your ever faithful

ALFRED.

LETTER XLVII.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

I AM now returned to town, my deareſt Maria, after paſſing a week, which wanted only the ſanction of my dear father and mother, and a proſpect, though even a diſtant one, of being united to my Alfred, to have been the happieſt I ever enjoyed. Oh! my friend, how much has he riſen in my eſteem and affection, for his conduct ſince I have ſo openly declared how dear he is to me! Such delicacy, ſuch tenderneſs, and ſo much goodneſs of heart, as have rivetted me ſtill cloſer to him!

You

You perhaps will be ſurpriſed (yet I do not think you will condemn me) when I tell you I have not made Mrs. M—— my confidant. I ſhould think I paid an ill compliment to my family, if I ſuffered other people to know my engagements before they even ſuſpected an attachment. You, my love, are my ſecond ſelf, and as well I might endeavour to conceal my intentions from myſelf, as from your penetration: nay, it would be an injury to your merit, and my ſenſe of it. But Mrs. M—— is quite another thing. She ſhall not incur blame by and by, for encouraging a clandeſtine correſpondence, as this may be ſtyled, ſhould it meet the diſapprobation of my parents; and as yet ſhe is free from blame, for I verily believe ſhe does not ſee his attachment; though how he avoids betraying it to her,

I can-

I cannot tell; for without oppreſſing one with his ardent gazing, I know not how it is, but his eyes are never off me. One thing is in our favour, ſhe hardly ever looks at any perſon unleſs they ſpeak to her, her children engroſſing moſt of her attention.

I was exceſſively abaſhed one day, by a very trifling incident, but it paſſed off tolerably. Alfred had the morning before been playing with little Henrietta, who is a ſweet child, not four years old. I ſat at the other end of the room. He kiſſed the child, and out of a *galant badiner*, bid her carry it with his love to Elwina. She ran immediately to me to deliver the meſſage, which, you may be ſure, I accepted, with all the playful mirth it deſerved. As I ſaid, the following afternoon,

noon, there happened to be company, and I was engaged at cards. Alfred, who had cut out, was, with his little playfellow, in a window, where he had placed himself, that he might see me without being observed. A kiss was again given to Henrietta; when, with the most infantine naivetè, she looked up in his face, saying, "Pray "Sir, shall I carry this kiss to Elwina?" Oh! I suppose no crimson exceeded the hue of Alfred's cheeks. Mine, I fancy, from the glow I felt, was pretty near the same tinge: yet, notwithstanding, I could hardly forbear laughing at the beautiful simplicity of the dear child, and the look she gave him. "A pretty little proxy "you have got, madam," said a gentleman, who was playing with me. "But "if I was Alfred, I would deal only with "principals." There was not much more

said

ſaid on the occaſion; but the delicacy of Alfred was wounded, leſt it ſhould be ſuſpected that he had taken a liberty not conſiſtent with our ſituation.

I aſſure you they have not been idle in town ſince I left them to themſelves. Iſabella has had a very good offer from a Mr. G——, who is pretty high in the profeſſion of the law, and is a great friend to my brother George, and as great a favourite with Clodio. I have ſeen him once or twice at our grand dinners at H——; and I think him a ſenſible well-behaved man. I am not clear as to her ſentiments of him, but hope ſhe has no doubts herſelf.

She has accepted him, and though ſo little time has paſſed away ſince the declara-

claration, they talk of the buſineſs being concluded by Eaſter, after he has been the circuit.

I hope, my beloved Maria, your good father feels no return of his complaints; I much fear this cold weather will make him confeſs himſelf ſtill an invalid.

"The ſpring ſhould be warm:" But it is not as it ſhould be, for it is dreadfully cold. Adieu! my dear—no change of climate, weather, or any thing elſe, can change the true regard with which I am

Yours,

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER XLVIII.

MARIA TO ELWINA.

INDEED, my deareſt friend, I wiſh moſt cordially you had the ſanction of your father (your mother's, I am ſure, would follow of courſe) in your engagement to Alfred. It is a moſt ſolemn one you have entered into. That the object is worthy your higheſt regard, I know full well; but, my dear girl, where is the proſpect of your ever being able to fulfil it, without ruin to yourſelf?

I wept over the eſtimates you ſay you have made in many a ſleepleſs night. My Elwina, they are falſe eſtimates which would

would plunge you in painful exigencies! How can you fancy you ſhall be content; nay, happy you ſay you ſhall be, deprived of ſo many luxuries, which, from frequent uſe and long habit, are, unfortunately for too many, become the neceſſaries of life? And yet my viſionary friend has contracted every thing within the limitation of three hundred a year: and that *ſplendid* income too, on the ſtill more viſionary hope, that your father will ever conſign you to ſuch a ſtate of comparative indigence, and give you the portion he allots for ſuch daughters as marry equal to his views. Oh, my excellent friend, do not blindly follow ſo imperfect and deluſive a guide as romantic fancy!

This counſel, I am convinced, my Elwina would not fail to beſtow on her Maria,

ria, did ſhe ſee her purſuing the ſame trackleſs path, covered with thorns and briars, and encompaſſed with pit-falls.

Conſider, my dear, I am a little qualified to judge how hardly a life of comparative poverty is ſupported by thoſe who have been accuſtomed to the pomp and vanities of the world. But how much more ſhould I feel my change of ſituation, if I was ſurrounded by a little family: and ſuch, moſt likely, will be your caſe. Then to have all your proſpects repreſſed by "chill penury;" and (for we know not how ſuch ſtruggles may ſour the ſweeteſt tempers) perhaps be expoſed to the miſery of ſeeing your beloved Alfred repining at the obſcurity of his life, when even in all the vigour of enjoying the pleaſures of

the

the world, a too hasty indulgence of inclination has for ever secluded him from them!

Weigh but these reflections, my beloved Elwina; turn them but for a moment in your mind, and what will be the result? Oh, my dear! even you can hardly feel more on the representation, than does your ever faithful and affectionate

MARIA.

LETTER XLIX.

ELWINA TO MARIA.

WHAT a subject for a drawing in the sombre shade has my dearest Maria given me! I almost blotted out your letter.

letter with my tears; but I have not washed away the excellent warning contained in it. No, my Maria, it has sunk on my heart, and impressed it with the deepest gratitude for the kindness which induced you to place so melancholy a picture before me. But happily, my dear, I hope the evils you hint at (and which I own I am not so romantic but that I see too plainly would be bad to bear, and dangerous to hazard) will not fall so heavily as you predict. And with true thankfulness I offer my acknowledgments to Heaven, for having a little enlivened the prospect to my view, before your letter reached me!

Yesterday morning my mother came into the powder-room, while my maid was dressing my hair, and desired, as soon as that was finished, I would defer the rest of

my

my dreſſing, as ſhe wanted to have a little converſation with me. I thought I ſaw a ſolemnity in her manner, though ſhe did not look angry; but you know

Conſcience makes cowards of us all.

And I began to entertain ſome unpleaſant ſurmiſes which I dreaded to hear confirmed; but yet not to keep her waiting, I hurried Jenny as much as I could. I pulled off my powdering gown, and attended my mother into her dreſſing room, with my knees trembling as I deſcended the ſtairs.

"Elwina," ſaid ſhe, "your father is "both ſurpriſed and diſpleaſed at finding "you have refuſed an offer of marriage "from Sir Thomas K——."

"Surely,

"Surely, madam, he will not be dif-
"pleaſed when he knows I felt ſo invin-
"cible a diſlike to Sir Thomas, that to
"have accepted him, would have made
"me miſerable."

"I cannot tell that, my dear; yet I
"hope your father would never wiſh to
"lay a reſtraint on the inclination of his
"children, much leſs force them. I own,
"Sir Thomas would not be the man of
"my choice, any more than yours; yet
"you ſhould not have rejected him with-
"out giving him a chance of improving
"on you by a nearer acquaintance; at
"leaſt, that is what your father is diſ-
"pleaſed with you for."

"Ah! my dear mother, but not to
"have peremptorily refuſed ſuch a man

"as

"as Sir Thomas, would have been en-
"couraging him to believe that time
"would have made an alteration in my
"sentiments favourable to him; which
"could never, never be. Besides, our
"acquaintance was so extremely short,
"that the disappointment of such slender
"hopes could not affect a man of his
"principles longer than the time which
"the conference took up."

"He declares himself exceedingly at-
"tached to you."

"As any other new face would attach
"him; and perhaps for no longer a
"period. He is known to have connec-
"tions with several women; and actually
"has one to whom he allows a fixed esta-
"blishment. But that I have nothing to

"do with. I would not, I could not,
"marry him for the world."

"Elwina, my dear, will you allow me
"to ask you one queſtion?"

I bowed aſſent. "Theſe are certainly,
"to a girl of your ſenſe and delicacy, very
"material objections; and which, nothing
"but making falſe eſtimations (making
"falſe eſtimates my dear Maria, is in the
"family way you ſee) of the worth of
"titles and riches, could have made your
"father and brother overlook. I doubt,
"and I am ſorry to ſay it, Iſabella would
"not have refuſed him on that ſcore; for
"I have heard but an indifferent charac-
"ter of Mr. G——— for morality, and
"ſhe knows it too. I am convinced you,
"my love, would not riſk your happineſs
"with

"with a libertine; and therefore I believe
"from my soul, that, free from prejudice
"or partiality, you would have refused
"your hand to Sir Thomas, as a man
"you could neither love or honour.
"But, Elwina, to the point. Had he
"been a man of unblemished reputation,
"as to gallantry I mean, and otherwise
"perfectly respectable, would he then have
"been as steadily rejected?"

"Oh yes," I answered quickly, "in-
"deed he would; I could not have mar-
"ried him; I would have died first."

"My dear child, then there must be a
"powerful predilection in your bosom for
"some one else?"

She fixed her eyes on me, as if she

meant to read all my ſoul; but at the ſame time, ſhe had ſo much maternal affection in her manner, that I vowed to myſelf, ſhe ſhould indeed read my whole ſoul. I threw myſelf on my knees, and burſting into tears, was unable for a few minutes to articulate a ſentence intelligibly; but her ſoothing careſſes recovered me ſufficiently to diſcloſe every *iota* (as my father ſays) of my attachment; aye, and engagement too, to Alfred. She kindly lamented with me, the difficulties which the alteration of his circumſtances might throw in the way of an union ſhe had herſelf wiſhed might take place, from the firſt of her acquaintance with him, from the parity of ſentiment ſhe ſaw between us. And from the converſations ſhe had had with my father, ſhe knew he would have given his conſent with the utmoſt

utmoſt ſatisfaction: that he ſincerely regretted the loſs Alfred had ſuſtained, and had actually intereſted himſelf in endeavouring to oblige Dr. Taylor to do him juſtice. "But you muſt not, my "dear," ſhe added, "flatter yourſelves "that now you will find the approving "voice of your father. Alfred loſes not "an atom of his reſpectability by his re-"verſe of fortune; but he is no longer in "a ſituation to ſupport a family with "common decency; and you muſt allow "that prudential motives alone would "urge your father to withhold that con-"ſent now, which paternal affection would "have inclined him then to grant."

Here was too much ſound argument for me to attempt a refutation of: I only ſaid, "I hoped I might ſtill rely on the

"parental love I had ever experienced,
"and which I hoped, too, I had never,
"even in this inſtance, abuſed; and that
"it would ſtill operate ſo much in my fa-
"vour as to prevent a force being put on
"my inclinations: and I begged my
"mother to believe herſelf, and aſſure my
"father the ſame, that I would never
"take one ſtep derogatory to my duteous
"regard for them both. I took occaſion
"at the ſame time to do juſtice to the ho-
"nour and probity of my amiable Alfred,
"whoſe intention it was to have made
"that viſit in Bedford-ſquare the laſt in-
"terview between us; and nothing, but
"the conviction that his total abſence
"muſt have been fatal in its conſe-
"quences to me, could have tempted
"him to remain in England. But that
"we were contented to wait till ſome for-

"tunate

" tunate alteration of circumſtances ſhould
" happen; and I wanted nothing to com-
" plete my felicity, but the aſſurances,
" that if ſuch a change ſhould take place,
" my father would, himſelf, beſtow my
" hand where my heart muſt ever remain
" unalterably fixed; or, at leaſt, that
" he would not make me miſerable, by
" obliging me to act contrary to the duty
" of a child in the article of obedience."

My mother kindly undertook to be the mediatrix between my father and me; and as I really now wiſhed to have no reſerves, I gave her the letter I had written to you, wherein that interview was related, and which, when you returned Alfred's laſt letters to me, you had by chance packed up with them. To my father ſhe inſtantly went. Oh! my dear Maria, what were

my feelings during her abſence! In the words of my dear Alfred, I exclaimed, "*The die is now caſt!* and what the conſe- "quence will be, who ſhall tell? Though "my fond heart dares not indulge itſelf "with the hope of approbation, Oh! "thou merciful Creator, ſpare thy poor "and afflicted ſervant the cruelleſt of evils, "reprobation!" In this tormenting ſtate I remained for more than an hour. How dreadfully tedious did that hour appear! and yet I trembled to that degree when I heard the door of my father's ſtudy open, that I was very near fainting, and the firſt object I beheld was my father.

I had not ſtrength to any more than ſink down on my knees to him, and ſay, "Oh!

"Oh, sir! oh, my dear father, will you "forgive me?"

He raised me up immediately, and kissing my cheek, said, in a voice that sounded like the greetings of an angel to a poor afflicted dying wretch, "Yes, my "dearest Elwina, I do forgive you, and "wish you happy. But remember the "condition on which I do forgive you, "and hold my sweet girl to the affec- "tionate bosom of her father. I rely on "you, my dear, to take no steps towards "an union with Alfred, unless I give my "free consent; and which I will not "withhold, when he is in circumstances "to maintain you. This, Elwina, is all "the concession you ought to expect from "me. But I will indulge you still more: Al- "fred shall ever be received here as a valu-

"able acquaintance; and I give you leave "to correſpond with him."

Oh! with what rapturous gratitude I embraced the honoured knees of my beloved father, and vowed on his dear hand a fixed obedience to his gentle commands. And now, my ſweet Maria, your faithful Elwina is the happieſt of all earthly beings: for to complete it, in the evening *my Alfred* (yes, by my father's permiſſion I may now call him ſo!) dropped in by chance. He came up to town to do ſome little buſineſs for Mrs. M——, and had the offer of a conveyance in a gentleman's coach, which carried him down again this afternoon.

There were none of the family at home but my father, mother, and William, which

which made the ſcale of happineſs ſtill more in our favour.

Iſabella was gone to the Opera with Mrs. A——, who is ſiſter to Mr. G——, and George was of the party; my brother was at the houſe; in ſhort, only congenial ſpirits were left at home.

When Alfred's name was announced (to me it was a needleſs ceremony—I would have ſworn to the rap, which vibrated on my heart), my father ſaid, "Before he "goes, we will give you an opportunity of "telling him on what conditions we ſhall "be glad to ſee him.

You may be ſure I laid hold on the firſt that offered. My mother aſked me to play, and I was to be accompanied by Al-

fred and William. I went into the music room, giving him a look which he well understood, as a signal to follow me; and in a few words I related to him what had passed; but that there was no occasion to take notice of it in the drawing room, only to give me authority to assure my father he assented to the conditions. Maria, you would have concluded the dear creature mad with joy: I thought so by his actions, for he caught me to his bosom, and gave me such a kiss as I believe never was given before. But recollecting the freedom, as well as violence of the attack, he begged pardon very submissively; and dropping on his knee, vowed by every thing sacred, he would never urge me to swerve in the smallest instance from the conditions, which offered more happiness than any man could almost deserve.

"No,

"No, my Elwina, my own Elwina," said he, "Alfred shall be the guardian of thy "honour and duty to the best of pa- "rents. He will not receive this dear "hand but from them. And never shall "his grateful heart cease to bless them "for this even unlooked-for happiness!"

It was very likely we should play in tune after such an overture; but we succeeded tolerably. Alfred staid supper: and I believe I may say, for many, many months, I never knew such peace of mind as this dear evening afforded.

But perhaps you will like to know how my rejection of the Baronet was discovered. I will inform you as well as I can; but it will be a wretched *after-piece* to the *entertainment* I have already given you.

My

My brother dined at Weltjie's two days since, with a large party, Sir Thomas one of them. A gentleman who sat next my brother, said, "If you was not here, I "would propose your sister as my toast."

"Which of them?" asked Clodio.

"Oh, Elwina! the beautiful Elwina, "you may be certain."

"The cruel, too, you should add," said Sir Thomas. When they were coming away, my brother told him, he should set him down; and when they were seated in the carriage, he demanded an explanation of the epithet "cruel:" on which the discomfited knight related the whole of the *attack* and *defeat*, and lamented very much the disappointment of his

his wiſhes, ſwearing I was the fineſt girl he had ever ſeen, and he ſhould have been the happieſt fellow in the world. My brother was full of the *eclat* ſuch an alliance would have given the family, for Sir Thomas has a ſiſter married to an Earl (ſo I ſhould have had a Counteſs for my ſiſter in law); and what is ſtill better, this Earl has a ſiſter likewiſe, whoſe fortune being ſmall, it is not improbable from the favourable repreſentation I might make of my brother's good qualities, ſhe might have been induced to do him the honour of taking him for an huſband. "Here are wheels within wheels" without end, my dear Maria; and I doubt Clodio will not be pleaſed at the preſent arrangement, which has turned his *viſionary ſchemes* bottom upwards. But for myſelf, I have no room for any thing but joy

and

and gratitude. My heart expands with each of thoſe ſentiments, and feels ſo eaſy, that it is quite delightful.

I hope ſome plan will be formed for the improvement of the *poor little ſingle talent*, which, Alfred ſays, is committed to his charge. Surely, with ſuch abilities, he may do ſomething. All I have to fear, is the pride of my brother: or I have thought, among many other things, that, ſo well accompliſhed as he is, he might undertake the tuition of a few young men of family. I am ſure, though I dare not whiſper it here, I do not think the daughter of a grocer would be diſgraced by ſuch a marriage. However, you know we are ſtyled the ſiſters of a Member of Parliament, and our preſent rank would operate

operate againſt ſuch a plan effectually, no doubt.

I think, my dear Maria, you will call this a pretty long letter. But I am ſure you will rejoice with your friend at matters being ſo agreeably ſettled. Adieu! Heaven bleſs you.

Ever yours,

ELWINA.

LET-

LETTER L.

ALFRED TO ELWINA.

OH! my beloved Elwina, what rapture fills the heart of thy happy Alfred on this occasion, of writing to you under the sanction and permission of your most excellent father! Never shall I cease thanking Heaven for allotting me such a portion of felicity to sweeten each moment of my future life! To love, to adore Elwina, was but the natural consequence of being admitted to her divine presence and conversation: to be dear to her, was the highest of human happiness; but to be allowed, by the authors of her being, to tell her I adore her, and to receive the

in-

ineffable delight of hearing the ſweet confeſſion of mutual love! Oh! it lifts me above mortality! It raiſes me to the heaven of heavens!

Forgive my rhapſodies, my ſweeteſt Elwina; but indeed ſuch uncommon felicities call for uncommon expreſſions.

How much does my dear mother rejoice on the occaſion of her ſon's reſtoration to happineſs! For even the certainty of my being beloved by my Elwina, left me but half bleſt, while it was thus neceſſarily kept ſecret: my ſoul diſdains all mean and dark diſguiſes; and that the paſſion, which above all others moſt ennobles and dignifies the ſoul, ſhould lead to diſſimulation, is a degradation, and even a contradiction of terms.

Allowe

Allowed to love you, and ſometimes to hear your ſweet voice, with frequently, I hope, being bleſt with your charming letters; may I not wait with patience for the event that can only exceed my preſent bliſs by rendering it permanent; at leaſt as our lives! Yes, Elwina, I will wait for that bleſt hour, when the voice of your reſpectable father ſhall pronounce us one: when, from his honoured hand I ſhall receive my Elwina's, and be then the lawful protector, the undivided partner of her days!

My mother, who would know no happineſs equal to that of ſeeing us united forever, has again written to Mr. Harley. I told you the reaſon of his not anſwering the former letter; which plea ſerved for ſome time, but which ſhould have made him

him the more eager to avail himſelf of the firſt opportunity of writing to her. But ſhe is writing, to wave the etiquette, and means to mention my happy proſpect of being united to the loveliest of women, to induce him to make a little reparation to the ſon, for the injury he did the father. My Elwina will join her prayers for ſucceſs, with thoſe of her Alfred.

I took your advice, as I will do in every thing, and informed Mrs. M——— of the honour I had received. That ſhe was ſurpriſed, you will not diſcredit: but that ſhe was diſpleaſed, I think you would, did any one but Alfred aſſert it.

She actually reddened, drew up, and looked more angry than I ever ſaw her, even with her ſervants. She aſſured me

how

how exceſſively ill ſhe took your conduct in the matter; and had ſhe known we had made her houſe a convenient place for carrying on ſuch an affair, ſhe would never have given the opportunity of being made ſuch a *cat's paw*.

I vindicated both you and myſelf: I ſhould ſay, I attempted it, for I left her unappeaſed at laſt, though in rather a better humour than I expected, from her firſt eſſay of paſſion. I felt piqued at ſome things ſhe ſaid, and therefore would not gratify her curioſity (which I could perceive was at work with her anger, and perhaps ſoon would have got the upper-hand) by informing her how the buſineſs had been brought about. She declared ſhe would write to your mother; for after ſuch a breach of friendſhip as we had both been guilty of,

ſhe knew not how far we might be attempting to deceive her now. I ſhall beg my mother to go to-morrow morning and ſtrive to mitigate her wrath. I thank Heaven moſt heartily we do not ſtand in need of her friendſhip, or need fear her enmity: yet I ſhould be ſorry to loſe her acquaintance, for I think ſhe means well, though her underſtanding is not adapted to give her meaning always the right turn. I beg, my dear Elwina, you will mention her intention to your good mother, and prepare her for the reception of this *threatening*, or rather *threatened* letter; for it is very likely her paſſion may have evaporated in words, of which it had a much larger portion than ſenſe; and ſhe may with the morning, have given up the night's reſolution. She is given to variation very much; but you know ſhe prides herſelf on never ſuffering

ſuffering *the ſun to go down upon her wrath*, or, "bearing malice to her pillow." However, the firſt had been down a good while before her rage commenced, and ſhe had hardly time to cool, before ſhe took counſel of the laſt.

Good night, my deareſt; may I not ſay my betrothed Elwina? the future wife of the happy, thrice happy

ALFRED.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.