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me anew, by reporting to me the following expressions of the hideous creature, Solmes—"That he is sure of the coy girl; and that with little labor to himself. That be I ever so averse to him beforehand, he can depend upon my principles; and that it will be a pleasure to him to see by what pretty degrees I shall come to." (—Horrid wretch!) "That it was Sir Oliver's observation, who knew the world perfectly well, that fear was a better security than love, for a woman's good behaviour to her husband; altho', for his part, to such a fine creature (truly) he would try what love would do, for a few weeks at least; being unwilling to believe what the old Knight used to aver, that fondness spoils more wives than it makes good."

What think you, my dear, of such a wretch as this! tutored, too, by that old surly Misogynist, as he was deemed, Sir Oliver?—

LETTER XLI.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday, *March 21.*

HOW willingly would my dear mother show kindness to me, were she permitted! None of this persecution should I labor under, I am sure, if that regard were paid to her prudence and fine understanding, which they so well deserve. Whether owing to her, or to my aunt, or to both, that a

new trial was to be made upon me, I cannot tell; but this morning her Shorey delivered into my hand the following condescending letter:

My dear girl,

FOR so I must still call you; since dear you may be to me, in every sense of the word—We have taken into particular consideration, some hints that fell yesterday from your good Norton, as if we had not, at Mr. Solmes's first application, treated you with that condescension, wherewith we have in all other instances treated you. If it even had been so, my dear, you were not excusable to be wanting in your part, and to set yourself to oppose your father's will in a point into which he had entered too far, to recede with honor. But all yet may be well. On your single will, my child, depends all our happiness.

Your father permits me to tell you, that if you now at last comply with all his expectations, all past disobligations shall be buried in oblivion, as if they had never been. But withal, that this is the last time that that grace will be offered you.

I hinted to you, you must remember, that patterns of the richest silks were sent for. They are come. And as they are come, your father, to show how much he is determined, will have me send them up to you. I could have wished they might not have accompanied this letter—But there is no great matter in that. I must tell you, that your delicacy is

not to be quite so much regarded, as I had once thought it deserved to be.

These are the newest, as well as richest, that we could procure, answerable to our station in the world; answerable to the fortune, additional to your grandfather's estate, designed you; and to the noble settlements agreed upon.

Your father intends you six suits, three of them dressed suits, at his own expense. You have an entire new suit; and one besides, which I think you never wore but twice. As the new suit is rich, if you chuse to make that one of the six, your father will present you with a hundred guineas in lieu.

Mr. Solmes intends to present you with a set of jewels. As you have your grandmother's and your own, if you chuse to have the former new set, and to make them serve, his present will be made in money; a very round sum—which will be given in full property to yourself; besides a fine annual allowance for pin-money, as it is called. So that your objection against the spirit of a man you think worse of than it deserves, will have no weight; but you will be more independent than a wife of less discretion than we attribute to you, perhaps ought to be. You know full well, that I, who first and last brought a still larger fortune into the family than you will carry to Mr. Solmes, had not a provision made me of near this that we have made for you.—Where people marry to their liking, terms are the least things stood upon.—Yet should I be sorry if you cannot (to oblige us all) overcome a dislike.

Wonder not, Clary, that I write to you thus plainly

and freely upon this subject. Your behaviour hitherto has been such, that we have had no opportunity of entering minutely into the subject with you. Yet, after all that has passed between you and me in conversation, and between you and your uncles by letter, you have no room to doubt what is to be the consequence.—Either, child, we must give up our authority, or you your humor. You cannot expect the one. We have all the reason in the world to expect the other. You know I have told you more than once, that you must resolve to have Mr. Solmes, or never to be looked upon as our child.

The draught of the settlements you may see whenever you will. We think there can be no room for objection to any of the articles. There is still more in them in our family's favor, than was stipulated at first, when your aunt talked of them to you. More so, indeed, than we could have asked. If, upon perusal of them, you think any alteration necessary, it shall be made.—Do, my dear girl, send to me within this day or two, or rather ask me, for the perusal of them.

As a certain person's appearance at church so lately, and what he gives out every where, make us extremely uneasy, and as that uneasiness will continue while you are single, you must not wonder that a short day is intended. This day fortnight we design it to be; if you have no objection to make that I shall approve of. But if you determine as we would have you, and signify it to us, we shall not stand with you for a week or so.

Your fightlinefs of perfon may, perhaps, make fome think this alliance difparaging. But I hope you will not put fuch a perfonal value upon yourfelf; if you do, it will indeed be the lefs wonder that perfon fhould weigh with you, however weak the confideration! in another man.

Thus we parents, in juftice, ought to judge: That our two daughters are equally dear and valuable to us. If fo, why fhould Clariffa think that a difparagement, which Arabella would not (nor we for her) have thought any, had the addrefs been made to her? — You will know what I mean by this, without my explaining myfelf further.

Signify to tis, now, therefore, your compliance with our wifhes. And then there is an end of your confinement. An act of oblivion, as I may call it, fhall pafs upon all your former refractorinefs; and you will once more make us happy in you, and in one another. You may, in this cafe, directly come down to your father and me, in his ftudy; where we will give you our opinions of the patterns, with our hearty forgivenefs and bleffings.

Come, be a good child, as you ufed to be, my Clariffa. I have (notwithftanding your paff behaviour, and the hopelefsnefs which fome have expreffed of your compliance) undertaken this one time more for you. Difcredit not my hopes my dear girl. I have promifed never more to interfere between your father and you, if this my moft earneft application fucceed not. I expect you down, love. Your father expects you down. But be fure you don't let him fee any thing unchearful in your compliance. If

you come, I will clasp you to my fond heart, with as much pleasure as ever I pressed you to it in my whole life. You don't know what I have suffered within these few weeks past; nor ever will be able to guess, till you come to be in my situation, which is that of a fond and indulgent mother, praying night and day, and struggling to preserve, against the attempts of more ungovernable spirits, the peace and union of her family.

But you know the terms. Come not near us, if you resolve to be undutiful; but this after what I have written, I hope you cannot be.

If you come directly, and, as I said, chearfully, as if your heart was in your duty (and you told me it was free, you know) I shall then, as I said, give you the most tender proofs, how much I am

Your truly affectionate Mother.

Think for me, my dearest friend, how I must be affected by this letter; the contents of it so surprisingly terrifying, yet so sweetly urged!—O why cried I to myself, am I obliged to undergo this severe conflict between a command that I cannot obey, and language so condescendingly moving!—Could I have been sure of being struck dead at the altar before the ceremony had given the man I hate a title to my vows, I think I could have submitted to have been led to it. But to think of living with, and living for, a man one abhors, what a sad thing is that!

And then, how could the glare of habit and

ornament be supposed any inducement to one, who has always held, that the principal view of a good wife in the adorning of her person, ought to be to preserve the affection of her husband, and to do credit to his choice; and that she should be even fearful of attracting the eyes of others? — In this view, must not the very richness of the patterns add to my disgusts? — Great encouragement, indeed, to think of adorning one's self to be the wife of Mr. Solmes! —

Upon the whole, it was not possible for me to go down upon the prescribed condition. Do you think it was? — And to write, if my letter would have been read, what could I write that would be admitted, and after what I had said and written to so little effect?

I walked backward and forward. I threw down with disdain the patterns. Now to my closet retired I; then quitting it, threw myself upon the settee; then upon this chair, then upon that; then into one window, then into another — I knew not what to do! — And while I was in this suspense, having again taken up the letter to re-peruse it, Betty came in, reminding me, by order, that my papa and mamma waited for me in my father's study.

Tell my mamma, said I, that I beg the favor of seeing her here for one moment; or to permit me to attend her any where by herself.

I listened at the stairs-head — You see, my dear how it is, cried my father, very angrily; all your condescension, as your indulgence, heretofore, is thrown away. You blame your son's violence, as you call it (I had some pleasure in hearing this); but nothing

else will do with her. You shall not see her alone. Is my presence an exception to the bold creature?

Tell her, said my mother to Betty, she knows upon what terms she may come down to us. Nor will I see her upon any other.

The maid brought me this answer. I had recourse to my pen and ink; but I trembled so, that I could not write, nor knew I what to say, had I had steadier fingers. At last Betty brought me these lines from my father.

Undutiful and perverse Clarissa,

NO condescension, I see, will move you. Your mother shall not see you; nor will I. Prepare, however, to obey. You know our pleasure. Your uncle Antony, your brother, and your sister, and your favorite Mrs. Norton, shall see the ceremony performed privately at your uncle's chapel. And when Mr. Solmes can introduce you to us, in the temper we wish to behold you in, we may perhaps forgive his wife, altho' we never can, in any other character, our perverse daughter. As it will be so privately performed, clothes and equipage may be provided afterwards. So prepare to go to your uncle's for an early day in next week. We will not see you till all is over; and we will have it over the sooner, in order to shorten the time of your deserved confinement, and our own trouble in contending with such a rebel, as you have been of late. I will hear no pleas. I will receive no letter, nor expostulation. Nor shall
you

you hear from me any more till you have changed your name to my liking. This from

Your incensed Father.

If this resolution be adhered to, then will my father never see me more! — For I will never be the wife of that Solmes — I will die first! —

Tuesday evening.

HE, this Solmes, came hither soon after I had received my father's letter. He sent up to beg leave to wait upon me — I wonder at his assurance! —

I said to Betty, who brought me his message, let him restore an unhappy creature to her father and mother, and then I may hear what he has to say. But, if my friends will not see me on his account, I will not see him upon his own.

I hope, Miss, said Betty, you will not send me down with this answer. He is with your papa and mamma.

I am driven to despair, said I. I cannot be used worse. I will not see him.

Down she went with my answer. She pretended, it seems, to be loth to repeat it; so was commanded out of her affected reserves, and gave it in its full force.

O how I heard my father storm!

They were all together, it seems, in his study. My brother was for having me turned out of the house that moment, to Lovelace, and my evil destiny. My mother was pleased to put in a gentle word for

me : I know not what it was ; but thus she was answered — My dear , this is the most provoking thing in the world in a woman of your good sense ! — To love a rebel , as well as if she were dutiful . What encouragement for duty is this ? — Have I not loved her as well as ever you did ? And why am I changed ? Would to the Lord , your sex knew how to distinguish ! It is plain , that she relies upon her power over you . The fond mother ever made a hardened child !

She was pleased , however , to blame Betty , as the wench owned , for giving my answer its full force . But my father praised her for it .

The wench says , that he would have come up in his wrath , at my refusing to see Mr. Solmes , had not my brother and sister prevailed upon him to the contrary .

I wish he had ! — And , were it not for his own sake , that he had killed me !

Mr. Solmes condescended (I am mightily obliged to him , truly !) to plead for me .

They are all in tumults ! How it will end , I know not — I am quite weary of my life — So happy , till within these few weeks ! — So miserable now !

Well , indeed , might my mother say , that I should have severe trials .

P. S. The idiot (such a one am I treated like !) is begged , as I may say , by my brother and sister . They have desired , that I may be consigned over

entirely to their management. If it be granted (it is granted, on my father's part, I understand, but not yet on my mother's) what cruelty may I not expect from their envy, jealousy, and ill will! — I shall soon see, by its effects, if I am to be so con- signed — This is a written intimation privately dropt in my woodhouse-walk, by my cousin Dolly Hervey. The dear girl longs to see me, she tells me; but is forbidden till she see me as Mrs. Solmes, or as consenting to be his. I will take example by their perseverance! — Indeed I will! —

L E T T E R XLII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

AN angry dialogue, a scolding-bout rather, has passed between my sister and me. Did you think I could scold, my dear?

She was sent up to me, upon my refusal to see Mr. Solmes — Let loose upon me, I think! — No intention on their parts, to conciliate! It seems evident that I am given up to my brother and her, by general consent.

I will do justice to every thing she said against me, which carried any force with it. As I ask for your approbation or disapprobation of my conduct, upon the facts I lay before you, I should think it the sign of a very bad cause, if I endeavoured to mislead my judge.

She began with representing to me the danger I

had been in, had my father come up, as he would have done had he not been hindered— by Mr. Solmes, among the rest. She reflected upon my Norton, as if she encouraged me in my perverseness. She ridiculed me for my supposed esteem for Mr. Lovelace.— Was surprised that the witty, the prudent, nay, the dutiful and pious (so she sneeringly pronounced the word) *Clarissa Harlowe*, should be so strangely fond of a profligate man, that her parents were forced to lock her up, in order to hinder her from running into his arms. “Let me ask you, my dear, said she, how you now keep your account of the disposition of your time? How many hours in the twenty-four do you devote to your needle? How many to your prayers? How many to letter-writing? and how many to love?— I doubt, I doubt, my little dear, was her arch-expression, the latter article is like Aaron’s rod, and swallows up all the rest! — Tell me; is it not so?

To these I answered, that it was a double mortification to me to owe my safety from the effects of my father’s indignation to a man I could never thank for any thing. I vindicated the good Mrs. Norton with a warmth that was due to her merit. — With equal warmth I resented her reflections upon me on Mr. Lovelace’s account. As to the disposition of my time in the twenty-four hours, I told her it would better have become her to pity a sister in distress, than to exult over her — Especially, when I could too justly attribute to the disposition of some of her wakeful hours no small part of that distress.

She raved extremely at this last hint; but reminded me of the gentle treatment of all my friends, my

mother's in particular, before it came to this: She said, that I had discovered a spirit they never had expected; that, if they had thought me such a championess, they would hardly have ventured to engage with me; but that now, the short and the long was, that the matter had gone too far to be given up: That it was become a contention between duty and wilfulness; whether a parent's authority were to yield to a daughter's obstinacy, or the contrary: That I must therefore bend or break, that was all, child.

I told her, that I wished the subject were of such a nature, that I could return her pleasantries with equal lightness of heart; but that, if Mr. Solmes had such merit in every body's eyes, in hers particularly, why might he not be a brother to me, rather than a husband?

O child, says she, methinks you are as pleasant to the full as I am: I begin to have some hopes of you now. But do you think I will rob my sister of her humble servant? Had he first addressed himself to me, proceeded she, something might have been said; but to take my younger sister's refusal! No, no, child; it is not come to that neither! Besides, that would be to leave the door open in your heart for you know who, child, and we would fain bar him out, if possible. In short (and then she changed both her tone, and her looks) had I been as forward as somebody, to throw myself into the arms of one of the greatest profligates in England, who had endeavoured to support his claim to me through the blood of my brother, then might all my family join together to

save me from such a wretch, and to marry me as fast as they could, to some worthy man, who might opportunely offer himself. And now, Clary, all's out, and make the most of it.

Did not this deserve a severe return? Do, say it did, to justify my reply. — Alas, for my poor sister! said I — The man was not always so great a profligate. How true is the observation, that unrequited love turns to deepest hate!

I thought she would have beat me. But I proceeded — I have heard often of my brother's danger, and my brother's murderer. When so little ceremony is made with me, why should I not speak out? — Did he not seek to kill the other, if he could have done it? Would my brother have given Lovelace his life, had it been in his power? — The aggressor should not complain. — And, as to opportune offers, would to Heaven some one had offered opportunely to somebody! It is not my fault, Bella, the opportune gentleman don't come!

Could you, my dear, have shown more spirit? I expected to feel the weight of her hand. She did come up to me, with it held up; then, speechless with passion, ran down half way of the stairs, and came up again.

When she could speak — God give me patience with you!

Amen, said I: But you see, Bella, how ill you bear the retort you provoke. Will you forgive me; and let me find a sister in you, as I am sorry, if you have reason to think me unfisterly in what I have said?

Then did she pour upon me, with greater violence;

considering my gentleness as a triumph of temper over her. She was resolved, she said, to let every body know how I took the wicked Lovelace's part against my brother.

I wished, I told her, I could make the plea for myself, which she might for herself; to wit, that my anger was more inexcusable than my judgment. But I presumed she had some other view in coming to me, than she had hitherto acquainted me with. Let me, said I, but know (after all that has passed) if you have any thing to propose that I can comply with; any thing that can make my only sister once more my friend?

I had before, upon her ridiculing me on my supposed character of meekness, said, that altho' I wished to be thought meek, I would not be abject; altho' humble, not mean; and here, in a sneering way, she cautioned me on that head.

I replied, that her pleasantry was much more agreeable than her anger. But I wished she would let me know the end of a visit that had hitherto, between us, been so unsisterly.

She desired to be informed, in the name of every body, was her word, what I was determined upon? And whether to comply or not? — One word for all: My friends were not to have patience with so perverse a creature for ever.

This then I told her I would do: Absolutely break with the man they were all so determined against: Upon condition, however, that neither Mr. Solmes, nor any other, were urged to me with the force of a command.

And what was this, more than I had offered before? What, but ringing my changes upon the same bells, and neither receding nor advancing one tittle?

If I knew what other proposals I could make, I told her, that would be acceptable to them all, and free me from the address of a man so disagreeable to me, I would make them. I had indeed before offered, never to marry without my father's consent—

She interrupted me. That was because I depended upon my whining tricks to bring my father and mother to what I pleased.

A poor dependence! I said: She knew those who would make that dependence vain—

And I should have brought them to my own beck, very probably, and my uncle Harlowe too, as also my aunt Hervey, had I not been forbidden their fight, and thereby hindered from playing my pug's tricks before them.

At least, Bella, said I, you have hinted to me to whom I am obliged, that my father and mother, and every body else, treat me thus harshly. But surely you make them all very weak. Indifferent persons, judging of us two from what you say, would either think me a very artful creature, or you a very spiteful one—

You are indeed a very artful one, for that matter, interrupted she in a passion; one of the artfullest I ever knew! And then followed an accusation so low! so unfisterly!— That I half-bewitched people by my insinuating address: That nobody could be valued or respected, but must stand like cyphers wherever I came. How often, said she, have I and my brother

been talking upon a subject, and had every body's attention, till you came in, with your bewitching meek pride, and humble significance? And then have we either been stopped by references to Miss Clary's opinion, forsooth; or been forced to stop ourselves, or must have talked on unattended to by every body.

She paused. Dear Bella, proceed!

She indeed seemed only gathering breath.

And so I will, said she — Did you not bewitch my grandfather? Could any thing be pleasing to him, that you did not say or do? How did he use to hang, till he flabbered again, poor doting old man! on your silver tongue! Yet what did you say, that we could not have said? What did you do, that we did not endeavour to do? — And what was all this for? Why, truly, his last will showed what effect your smooth obligingness had upon him! — To leave the acquired part of his estate from the next heirs, his own sons, to a grandchild; to his youngest grandchild! a daughter too! — To leave the family pictures from his sons to you, because you could tiddle about them, and, though you now neglect their examples, could wipe and clean them with your dainty hands! The family plate too, in such quantities, of two or three generations standing, must not be changed, because his precious child *, humoring his old fal-lal taste, admired it, to make it all her own.

This was too low to move me: O my poor sister! said I; not to be able, or at least willing, to distinguish between art and nature! If I did oblige,

* Alluding to his words in the preamble to the clauses in his will. See p. 34.

I was happy in it: I looked for no further reward; my mind is above art, from the dirty motives you mention. I wish with all my heart my grandfather had not thus distinguished me: He saw my brother likely to be amply provided for out of the family, as well as in it; he desired that you might have the greater share of my father's favor for it; and no doubt but you both will. You know, Bella, that the estate my grandfather bequeathed me was not half the real estate he left.

What's all that to an estate in possession, and left you with such distinctions, as gave you a reputation of greater value than the estate itself?

Hence my misfortune, Bella in your envy, I doubt! — But have I not given up that possession in the best manner I could —

Yes, interrupting me, she hated me for that best manner. Specious little witch! she called me; your best manner, so full of art and design, had never been seen through, if you, with your blandishing ways, had not been put out of sight, and reduced to positive declarations! — Hindered from playing your little, whining tricks; curling, like a serpent, about your mamma; and making her cry to deny you any thing your little obstinate heart was set upon!

Obstinate heart, Bella!

Yes, obstinate heart! For did you ever give up any thing? Had you not the art to make them think all was right you asked, though my brother and I were frequently refused favors of no greater import?

I know not, Bella, that I ever asked any thing

unfit to be granted. I seldom asked favors for myself, but for others.

I was a reflecting creature for this.

All you speak of, Bella, was a long time ago. I cannot go so far back into our childish follies. Little did I think of how long standing this your late shown antipathy is.

I was a reflecter again! Such a saucy meekness; such a best manner; and such venom in words! — O Clary! Clary! Thou wert always a two-faced girl!

Nobody thought I had two faces, when I gave up all into my father's management; taking from his bounty, as before, all my little pocket-money, without a shilling addition to my stipend, or desiring it —

Yes, cunning creature! — And that was another of your fetches! — For did it not engage my fond father (as no doubt you thought it would) to tell you, that, since you had done so grateful and dutiful a thing, he would keep entire, for your use, all the produce of the estate left you, and be but your steward in it; and that you should be entitled to the same allowances as before? Another of your hook-in's, Clary! — So that all your extravagancies have been supported gratis.

My extravagancies, Bella! — But did my father ever give me any thing he did not give you?

Yes, indeed; I got more by that means, than I should have had the conscience to ask. But I have still the greater part to show! But you! What have you to show! — I dare say, not fifty pieces in the world!

Indeed I have not!

I believe you! — Your mamma Norton, I suppose — But mum for that! —

Unworthy Bella! — The good woman, altho' low in circumstance, is great in mind! Much greater than those who would impute meanness to a soul incapable of it.

What then have you done with the fums given you from infancy to squander? — Let me ask you (affecting archness) has, has, has Lovelace, has your rake, put it out at interest for you?

O that my sister would not make me blush for her! It is, however, out at interest! — And I hope it will bring me interest upon interest! — Better than to lie useless in my cabinet.

She understood me, she said. Were I a man, she should suppose I was aiming to carry the county — Popularity! A croud to follow me with their blessings as I went to and from church, and nobody else to be regarded, were agreeable things. House-top proclamations! I hid not my light under a bushel, she would say that for me. But was it not a little hard upon me, to be kept from blazing on a Sunday? — And to be hindered from my charitable ostentations?

This, indeed, Bella, is cruel in you, who have so largely contributed to my confinement. — But go on. You'll be out of breath by and by. I cannot wish to be able to return this usage. — Poor Bella! And I believe I smiled a little too contemptuously for a sister to a sister.

None of your saucy contempts (rising in her voice):

None of your poor Bella's, with that air of superiority in a younger sister!

Well then, rich Bella! courtesying — that will please you better — And it is due likewise to the hoards you boast of.

Look ye, Clary, holding up her hand, if you are not a little more abject in your meekness, a little more mean in your humility, and treat me with the respect due to an elder sister — you shall find —

Not that you will treat me worse than you have done, Bella! — That cannot be; unless you were to let fall your uplifted hand upon me — And that would less become you to do, than me to bear.

Good, meek creature! — But you were upon your overtures just now! — I shall surprise every body by tarrying so long. They will think some good may be done with you — And supper will be ready.

A tear would stray down my cheek — How happy have I been, said I, sighing, in the supper time conversations, with all my dear friends in my eye round their hospitable board!

I met only with insult for this — Bella has not a feeling heart. The highest joy in this life she is not capable of; but then she saves herself many griefs, by her impenetrableness — Yet, for ten times the pain that such a sensibility is attended with, would I not part with the pleasure it brings with it.

She asked me, upon my turning from her, if she should say any thing below of my compliances?

You may say, that I will do every thing they would have me to do, if they will free me from Mr. Solmes's addrefs.

This is all you desire at present, creeper on! insinuator! (What words she has!) But will not t'other man flame out, and roar most horribly, upon the snatching from his paws a prey he thought himself sure of?

I must let you talk in your own way, or we shall never come to a point. I shall not matter his roaring, as you call it. I will promise him, that, if I ever marry any other man, it shall not be till he is married. And if he be not satisfied with such a condescension, I shall think he ought; and I will give any assurances, that I will neither correspond with him, nor see him. Surely this will do.

But I suppose then you will have no objection to see and converse, on a civil foot, with Mr. Solmes — as your father's friend, or so?

No! I must be permitted to retire to my apartment whenever he comes. I would no more converse with the one, than correspond with the other. That would be to make Mr. Lovelace guilty of some rashness, on a belief, that I broke with him, to have Mr. Solmes.

And so, that wicked wretch is to be allowed such a control over you, that you are not to be civil to your father's friends, at his own house, for fear of incensing him! — When this comes to be represented, be so good as to tell me, what is it you expect from it?

Every thing, I said, or nothing, as she was pleased to represent it. — Be so good as to give it your interest, Bella; and say further, "That I will by any means I can, in the law or otherwise, make over to my father, to my uncles, or even to my brother,

all I am entitled to by my grandfather's will, as a security for the performance of my promises. And as I shall have no reason to expect any favor from my father, if I break them, I shall not be worth any body's having. And further still, unkindly as my brother has used me, I will go down to Scotland privately, as his housekeeper (I now see I may be spared here) if he will promise to treat me no worse than he would do a hired one — Or I will go to Florence, to my cousin Morden, if his stay in Italy will admit of it. In either case, it may be given out, that I am gone to the other; or to the world's end. I care not whither it is said I am gone, or do go."

Let me ask you, child, if you will give your pretty proposal in writing?

Yes, with all my heart. And I stept to my closet, and wrote to the purpose I have mentioned; and, moreover, the following lines to my brother.

My dear Brother,

I HOPE I have made such proposals to my sister, as will be accepted. I am sure they will, if you please to give them your sanction. Let me beg of you for God's sake, that you will. I think myself very unhappy in having incurred your displeasure. No sister can love a brother better than I love you. Pray do not put the worst, but the best constructions upon my proposals, when you have them reported to you. Indeed I mean the best. I have no subterfuges, no arts, no intentions, but to keep

to the letter of them. You shall yourself draw up every thing into writing, as strong as you can; and I will sign it; and what the law will not do to enforce it, my resolution and my will shall; so that I shall be worth nobody's address, that has not my papa's consent; nor shall any person, nor any consideration, induce me to revoke it. You can do more than any body to reconcile my parents and uncles to me. Let me owe this desirable favor to your brotherly interposition, and you will for ever oblige

Your afflicted Sister,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

And how do you think Bella employed herself while I was writing? — Why, playing gently upon my harpsichord; and humming to it, to show her unconcernedness.

When I approached her with what I had written, she arose with an air of levity — Why, love, you have not written already! — You have, I protest! — O what a ready penwoman! — And may I read it?

If you please. And let me beseech you, my dear Bella, to back these proposals with your good offices; and (folding my uplifted hands, tears, I believe, standing in my eyes) I will love you as never sister loved another.

Thou art a strange creature, said she; there is no withstanding thee.

She took the proposals and letter; and having read

read them, burst into an affected laugh; how wise-ones may be taken in! — Then you did not know, that I was jesting with you all this time! — And so you would have me carry down this pretty piece of nonsense?

Don't let me be surprised at your seeming unsisterliness, Bella. I hope it is but seeming. There can be no wit in such jesting as this.

The folly of the creature! — How natural is it for people, when they set their hearts upon any thing, to think every body must see with their eyes! — Pray, dear child, what becomes of your father's authority here? — Who stoops here, the parent, or the child? — How does this square with the engagements actually agreed upon between your father and Mr. Solmes? What security, that your rake will not follow you to the world's end? — Nevertheless, that you may not think that I stand in the way of a reconciliation on such fine terms as these, I will be your messenger this once, and hear what my papa will say to it; altho' beforehand I can tell you, these proposals will not answer the principal end.

So down she went. But, it seems, my aunt Hervey and my uncle Harlowe were gone away; and as they have all engaged to act in concert, messengers were dispatched to my uncle and aunt to desire them to be there to breakfast in the morning.

Monday night, 11 o'Clock.

I AM afraid I shall not be thought worthy—

Just as I began to fear I should not be thought worthy of an answer, Betty rapped at my door, and said, if I were not in bed, she had a letter for me. I had but just done writing the above dialogue, and stept to the door, with the pen in my hand—Always writing, Miss! said the bold wench; it is admirable how you can get away what you write—But the fairies, they say, are always at hand to help lovers.—She retired in so much haste, that, had I been disposed, I could not take the notice of this insolence which it deserved.

I inclose my brother's letter. He was resolved to let me see, that I should have nothing to expect from his kindness. But surely he will not be permitted to carry every point. The assembling of my friends to-morrow is a good sign; and I will hope something from that, and from proposals so reasonable. And now I will try if any repose will fall to my lot for the remainder of this night.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

(*Inclosed in the preceding.*)

YOUR proposals will be considered by your father and mother, and all your friends, to-morrow morning. What trouble does your shameful for-

wardness give us all! I wonder you have the courage to write to me, upon whom you are so continually emptying your whole female quiver. I have no patience with you; for reflecting upon me as the aggressor in a quarrel which owed its beginning to my consideration for you.

You have made such confessions in a villain's favor, as ought to cause all your relations to renounce you for ever. For my part, I will not believe any woman in the world, who promises against her avowed inclination. To put it out of your power to ruin yourself is the only way left to prevent your ruin. I did not intend to write, but your too kind sister has prevailed upon me. As to your going into Scotland, that day of grace is over. — Nor would I advise, that you should go to grandfather up your cousin Morden. Besides, that worthy gentleman might be involved in some fatal dispute, upon your account, and then be called the aggressor.

A fine situation you have brought yourself to, to propose to hide yourself from your rake, and to have falsehoods told, to conceal you! — Your confinement, at this rate, is the happiest thing that could befall you. Your bravo's behaviour at church, looking out for you, is a sufficient indication of his power over you, had you not so shamelessly acknowledged it.

One word for all — Your parents and uncles may do as they will; but if, for the honor of the family, I cannot carry this point, I will retire to Scotland, and never see the face of any one of it more.

JA. HARLOWE.

A a 2

There's a brother! — There's flaming duty to a father and mother, and uncles! — But he sees himself valued, and made of consequence, and he gives himself airs accordingly; — Nevertheless, as I said above, I will hope better things from those who have not the interest my brother has to keep open these unhappy differences.

LETTER XLIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Thursday, *March 21.*

WOULD you not have thought, my dear Miss Howe, as well as I, that my proposal must have been accepted; and that my brother, by the last article of his unbrotherly letter (where he threatens to go to Scotland if it should be hearkened to) was of opinion that it would.

For my part, after I had read the unkind letter over and over, I concluded, upon the whole, that a reconciliation upon terms so disadvantageous to myself, as hardly any other person in my case, I dare say, would have proposed, must be the result of this morning's conference. And in that belief I had begun to give myself new trouble in thinking (this difficulty over) how I should be able to pacify Lovelace on that part of my engagement, by which I undertook to break off all correspondence with him, unless my friends should be brought by

the interposition of his powerful friends, and any offers they might make (which it was rather his part to suggest, than mine to intimate) to change their minds.

Thus was I employed, not very agreeably, you may believe, because of the vehemence of the tempers I had to conflict with; when breakfasting time approached, and my judges began to arrive.

And oh! how my heart fluttered on hearing the chariot of the one, and then of the other, rattle through the court yard, and the hollow sounding foot-step giving notice of each person's stepping out, to take his place on the awful bench which my fancy had formed for them and my other judges!

That, thought I, is my aunt Hervey's! That my uncle Harlowe's! Now comes my uncle Antony! And my imagination made a fourth chariot for the odious Solmes, altho' it happened that he was not there.

And now, thought I, are they all assembled; and now my brother calls upon my sister to make her report! Now the hard hearted Bella interlards her speech with invective! Now has she concluded her report! Now they debate upon it! — Now does my brother flame! Now threaten to go to Scotland! Now is he chidden, and now soothed!

And then I ran through the whole conference in my imagination, forming speeches for this person and that, pro and con. till all concluded, as I flattered myself, in an acceptance of my conditions, and in giving directions to have an instrument drawn to tie me up to my good behaviour: While I supposed all

agreed to give Solmes a wife every way more worthy of him, and with her the promise of my grandfather's estate, in case of my forfeiture, or dying unmarried, on the righteous condition he proposes to entitle himself to it with me.

And now, thought I, am I to be ordered down to recognize my own proposals. And how shall I look upon my awful judges? How shall I stand the questions of some, the set furliness of others, the returning love of one or two? How shall I be affected!

Then I wept; then I dried my eyes; then I practised at my glass for a look more chearful than my heart.

And now, as any thing stirred, is my sister coming to declare the issue of all! Tears gushing again, my heart fluttering as a bird against its wires; drying my eyes again and again to no purpose.

And thus, my Nancy (excuse the fanciful prolixity) was I employed, and such were my thoughts and imaginations, when I found a very different result from the hopeful conference.

For about ten o'clock up came my sister, with an air of cruel triumph, waving her hand with a light flourish —

Obedience without reserve is required of you, Clary. My papa is justly incensed, that you should presume to dispute his will, and to make conditions with him. He knows what is best for you; and as you own matters are gone a great way between this hated Lovelace and you, they will believe

nothing you say, except you will give the one only instance, that will put them out of doubt of the sincerity of your promises.

What, child, are you surpris'd? — Cannot you speak? — Then, it seems, you had expected a different issue, had you? — Strange that you could! — With all your acknowledgments and confessions, so creditable to your noted prudence! —

I was indeed speechless for some time; my eyes were even fixed, and ceased to flow. But, upon the hard hearted Bella's proceeding with her airs of insult, indeed I was mistaken, said I, indeed I was! — For in you, Bella, I expected, I hoped for, a sister —

What! interrupted she, with all your mannerly flings, and your despising airs, did you expect, that I was capable of telling stories for you? — Did you think, that when I was asked my own opinion of the sincerity of your declarations, I could not tell them, how far matters had gone between you and your fellow? — When the intention is to bend that stubborn will of yours to your duty, do you think I would deceive them? — Do you think I would encourage them to call you down, to contradict all that I should have invented in your favor?

Well, well, Bella, I am the less obliged to you, that's all. I was willing to think, that I had still a brother and sister. But I find I am mistaken.

Pretty mopsa-eyed soul! was her expression! — And was it willing to think it had still a brother and sister? And why don't you go on, Clary? (mocking

my half weeping accent) I thought too I had a father, and mother, two uncles, and an aunt; but I am mis—taken, that's all — Come, Clary, say this, and it will in part be true, because you have thrown off their authority, and because you respect one vile wretch more than them all.

How have I deserved this at your hands, sister? — But I will only say, I pity you.

And with that disdainful air too, Clary! — None of that bridled neck! None of your scornful pity, girl! — I beseech you!

This sort of behaviour is natural to you, surely, Bella! — What new talents does it discover in you! — But proceed — if it be a pleasure to you, proceed, Bella. And since I must not pity you, I will pity myself; for nobody else will.

Because you don't, said she —

Hush, Bella, interrupting her, because I don't deserve it — I know you were going to say so. I will say as you say in every thing; and that's the way to please you.

Then say, Lovelace is a villain.

So I will, when I think him so.

Then you don't think him so?

Indeed I don't. You did not always, Bella.

And what, Clary, mean you by that? (bristling up to me) — Tell me what you mean by that reflection?

Tell me why you call it a reflection? — What did I say!

Thou art a provoking creature — But what say you to two or three duels of that wretch's?

I cannot tell what to say, unless I knew the occasions.

Do you justify duelling at all?

I do not; neither can I help his duelling.

Will you go down and humble that stubborn spirit of yours to your mamma.

I said nothing.

Shall I conduct your Ladyship down? (offering to take my declined hand).

What not vouchsafe to answer me?

I turned from her in silence.

What! turn your back upon me too!—Shall I bring up your mamma to you, love? (following me, and taking my struggling hand) What! not speak yet! Come, my fullen, silent dear, speak one word to me—You must say two very soon to Mr. Solmes, I can tell you that.

Then (gushing out into tears, which I could not hold in longer) they shall be the last words I will ever speak.

Well, well (insultingly wiping my averted face with her handkerchief, while her other hand held mine, in a ridiculing tone) I am glad any thing will make thee speak; then you think you may be brought to speak the two words—Only they are to be the last!—How like a gentle Lovyer from its tender bleeding heart was that!

Ridiculous Bella!

Saucy Clary! (changing her sneering tone to an imperious one) But do you think you can humble yourself to go down to your mamma?

I am tired with such stuff as this. Tell me, Bella, if my mamma will condescend to see me?

Yes if you can be dutiful at last.

I can. I will.

But what call you dutiful?

To give up my own inclinations—That's something more for you to tell of—in obedience to my parents commands; and to beg I may not be made miserable with a man that is fitter for any body than for me.

For me, do you mean, Clary?

Why not? since you have put the question. You have a better opinion of him than I have. My friends, I hope, would not think him too good for me, and not good enough for you. But cannot you tell me, Bella, what is to become of me, without insulting over me thus?—If I must be thus treated, remember, that if I am guilty of any rashness, the usage I meet with will justify it.

So, Clary, you are contriving an excuse, I find, for somewhat that we have not doubted has been in your head a great while.

If it were so, you seem resolved, for your part, and so does my brother for his, that I shall not want one.—But indeed, Bella, I can bear no longer this repetition of the worst part of yesterday's conversation; I desire I may throw myself at my father's and mother's feet, and hear from them what their sentence is. I shall at least avoid, by that means, the unfisterly insults I meet with from you.

Hey-day! What, is this you? Is it you, my meek sister Clary?

Yes, it is I, Bella, and I will claim the protection due to a child of the family, or to know why I am to be thus treated, when I offer only to preserve to myself the liberty of refusal, which belongs to my sex; and to please my parents, would give up my choice. I have contented myself till now to take second hand messengers, and first hand insults; you are but my sister; my brother is not my sovereign. And while I have a father and mother living, I will not be thus treated by a brother and sister, and their servants, all setting upon me, as it should seem, to make me desperate, and to do a rash thing. — I will know, in short, sister Bella, why I am to be constrained thus? — What is intended by it? — And whether I am to be considered as a child or a slave?

She stood aghast all this time, partly with real, partly with affected surprise.

And is it you? Is it indeed you?—Well, Clary, you amaze me! But since you are so desirous to refer yourself to your father and mother, I will go down, and tell them what you say. Your friends are not yet gone, I believe. They shall assemble again; and then you may come down, and plead your own cause in person.

Let me then. But let my brother and you be absent. You have made yourselves too much parties against me, to sit as my judges. And I desire to have none of yours or his interpositions. I am sure you could not have represented what I proposed fairly; I am sure you could not. Nor is it possible you should be commissioned to treat me thus.

Well, well, I'll call up my brother to you.—I will indeed.—He shall justify himself, as well as me.

I desire not to see my brother, except he will come as a brother, laying aside the authority he has unjustly assumed over me.

And so, Clary, it is nothing to him, or to me, is it? that our sister should disgrace her whole family?

As how, Bella, disgrace it?—The man whom you thus freely treat, is a man of birth and fortune; he is a man of parts, and nobly allied.—He was once thought worthy of you; and I wish to Heaven you had had him. I am sure it was not my fault you had not, altho' you treat me thus!

This set her into a flame: I wish I had forborn it. O how the poor Bella raved! I thought she would have beat me once or twice; and she vowed her fingers itched to do so—But I was not worth, her anger; yet she flamed on.

We were heard to be high.—And Betty came up from my mother to command my sister to attend her.—She went down accordingly, threatening me with letting every one know what a violent creature I had shown myself to be.

Tuesday Noon, *March 21.*

I have as yet heard no more of my sister. And have not courage enough to insist upon throwing myself at the feet of my father and mother, as I thought in my heat of temper I should be able to do. And I am now grown as calm as ever; and were Bella to come up again, as fit to be played upon as before.

I am indeed sorry that I sent her from me in such disorder. But my papa's letter threatening me with my uncle Antony's house and chapel, terrifies me strangely; and by their silence I am afraid some new storm is gathering.

But what shall I do with this Lovelace? I have just now, by the unsuspected hole in the wall (that I told you of in my letter by Hannah) got a letter from him—So uneasy is he for fear I should be prevailed upon in Solmes's favor; so full of menaces, if I am; so resenting the usage I receive (for, how I cannot tell, but he has undoubtedly intelligence of all that is done in the family); such protestations of inviolable faith and honor, such vows of reformation, such pressing arguments to escape from this disgraceful confinement—O my Nancy, what shall I do with this Lovelace?—

L E T T E R XLIV.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Wednesday Morning, 9 o'clock.

MY aunt Hervey lay here last night, and is but just gone from me. She came up to me with my sister. They would not trust my aunt without this ill natured witness. When she entered my chamber, I told her, that this visit was a high favor to a poor prisoner in her hard confinement. I kissed her

hand. She, kindly saluting me, said, why this distance to your aunt, my dear, who loves you so well?

She owned, that she came to expostulate with me, for the peace sake of the family; for that she could not believe it possible, if I did not conceive myself unkindly treated, that I, who had ever shown such a sweetness of temper, as well as manners, should be thus resolute, in a point so very near to my father, and all my friends. My mother and she were both willing to impute my resolution to the manner I had been begun with; and to my supposing, that my brother had originally more of a hand in the proposals made by Mr. Solmes, than my father or other friends. In short, said would my aunt have furnished me with an excuse to come off my opposition; Bella all the while humming a tune, and opening this book and that, without meaning; but saying nothing.

After having showed me, that my opposition could not be of signification, my father's honor being engaged, my aunt concluded with enforcing upon me my duty, in stronger terms than I believe she would have done (the circumstances of the case considered) had not my sister been present.

It would but be repeating what I have so often mentioned, to give you the arguments that passed on both sides. — So I will only recite what she was pleased to say, that carried with it a new face.

When she found me inflexible, as she was pleased to call it, she said, for her part, she could not but say, that if I were not to have either Mr. Solmes or Mr. Lovelace, and yet, to make my friends easy,

must marry, she should not think amiss of Mr. Wyerley. What did I think of Mr. Wyerley?

Ay, Clary, put in my sister, what say you to Mr. Wyerley?

I saw through this immediately. It was said on purpose, I doubted not, to have an argument against me of absolute prepossession in Mr. Lovelace's favor; since Mr. Wyerley every where avows his value, even to veneration, for me; and is far less exceptionable, both in person and mind, than Mr. Solmes; and I was willing to turn the tables, by trying how far Mr. Solmes's terms might be dispensed with; since the same terms could not be expected from Mr. Wyerley.

I therefore desired to know, whether my answer, if it should be in favor of Mr. Wyerley, would release me from Mr. Solmes?—For I owned, that I had not the aversion to him, that I had to the other.

Nay, she had no commission to propose such a thing. She only knew that my father and mother would not be easy till Mr. Lovelace's hopes were entirely defeated.

Cunning creature! said my sister.

And this, and her joining in the question before, convinced me, that it was a designed snare for me.

Don't you, dear Madam, said I, put questions that can answer no end, but to support my brother's schemes against me.—But are there any hopes of an end to my sufferings and disgrace, without having this hated man imposed upon me? Will not what I have offered be accepted? I am sure it ought—I will venture to say that.

Why, niece, if there be not any such hopes, I presume you don't think yourself absolved from the duty due from a child to her parents?

Yes, said my sister, I do not doubt but it is Miss Clary's aim, if she does not fly to her Lovelace, to get her estate into her own hands, and go to live at the grove, in that independence upon which she builds all her perverseness. And, dear heart! my little love, how will you then blaze away! Your mamma Norton, your oracle, with your poor at your gates, mingling so proudly and so meanly with the ragged herd! Reflecting, by your ostentation, upon all the Ladies in the county, who do not as you do. This is known to be your scheme! and the poor without doors, and Lovelace within, with one hand building up a name, pulling it down with the other! — O what a charming scheme is this! — But let me tell you, my pretty little flighty one, that your father's living Will shall control your grandfather's dead one; and that estate will be disposed of as your fond grandfather would have disposed of it, had he lived to see such a change in his favorite. In a word, Miss, it will be kept out of your hands, till my father sees you discreet enough to have the management of it, or till you can dutifully, by law, tear it from him.

Fie, Miss Harlowe! said my aunt; this is not pretty to your sister.

O Madam, let her go on. This is nothing to what I have borne from Miss Harlowe. She is either commissioned to treat me ill by her envy, or by an higher authority, to which I must submit. — As to
revoking

revoking the estate, what hinders, if I pleased? I know my power; but have not the least thought of exerting it. Be pleased to let my father know, that, whatever be the consequence to myself, were he to turn me out of doors (which I had rather he would do, than to be confined and insulted as I am) and were I to be reduced to indigence and want, I would seek no relief that should be contrary to his will.

For that matter, child, said my aunt, were you to marry, you must do as your husband will have you. If that husband be Mr. Lovelace, he will be glad of any opportunity of further embroiling the families. And, let me tell you, niece, if he had the respect for you which he pretends to have, he would not throw out defiance as he does. He is known to be a very revengeful man; and were I you, Miss Clary, I should be afraid he would wreak upon me that vengeance, though I had not offended him, which he is continually threatening to pour upon the family.

Mr. Lovelace's threatened vengeance is in return for threatened vengeance. It is not every body will bear insult, as, of late, I have been forced to bear it.

O how my sister's face shone with passion!

But Mr. Lovelace, proceeded I, as I have said twenty and twenty times, would be quite out of the question with me, were I to be generously treated!

My sister said something with great vehemence; but only raising my voice, to be heard, without minding her, pray, Madam (provokingly interrogated I) was he not known to have been as wild a

man, when he was at first introduced into our family, as he now is said to be? Yet then, the common phrases of wild oats, and black oxen, and such like, were qualifiers; and marriage, and the wife's discretion, were to perform wonders — But (turning to my sister) I find I have said too much.

O thou wicked reflecter! — And what made me abhor him, think you, but the proof of those villainous freedoms that ought to have had the same effect upon you, were you but half so good a creature as you pretend to be?

Proof, did you say, Bella! I thought you had not proof? — But you know best.

Was not this very spiteful, my dear?

Now, Clary, said she, would I give a thousand pounds to know all that is in thy little rancorous and reflecting heart, at this moment.

I might let you know for a much less sum, and not be afraid of being worse treated than I have been.

Well, young Ladies, I am sorry to see passion run so high between you. You know, niece (to me) you had not been confined thus to your apartment, could your mother by condescension, or your father by authority, have been able to move you. But how can you expect, when there must be a concession on one side, that it should be on theirs? If my Dolly, who has not the hundredth part of your understanding, were thus to set herself up in absolute contradiction to my will, in a point so material, I should not take it well of her — Indeed I should not.

I believe not, Madam; and if Miss Hervey had just such a brother, and just such a sister (you

may look, Bella!) and if both were to aggravate her parents, as my brother and sister do mine — then, perhaps, you might use her as I am used; and if she hated the man you proposed to her, and with as much reason as I do Mr. Solmes —

And loved a rake and libertine, Miss, as you do Lovelace, said my sister —

Then might she (continued I, not minding her) beg to be excused from obeying. But yet if she did, and would give you the most solemn assurances, and security besides, that she never would have the man you disliked, against your consent — I dare say, Miss Hervey's father and mother would sit down satisfied, and not endeavour to force her inclinations.

So! — (said my sister, with uplifted hands) father and mother now come in for their share!

But if, child, replied my aunt, I knew she loved a rake, and suspected that she sought only to gain time, in order to wire-draw me into a consent —

I beg pardon, Madam, for interrupting you; but if Miss Hervey could obtain your consent, what further would be to be said?

True, child; but she never should.

Then, Madam, it never would be.

That I doubt, niece.

If you do, Madam, can you think confinement and ill usage is the way to prevent the apprehended rashness?

My dear, this sort of intimation would make one but too apprehensive, that there is no trusting to yourself, when one knows your inclination.

That apprehension, Madam, seems to have been conceived before this intimation, or the least cause for it, was given. Why else the disgraceful confinement I have been laid under?—Let me venture to say, that my sufferings seem to be rather owing to a concerted design to intimidate me (Bella held up her hands, knowing there were too good grounds for my opposition) than to a doubt of my conduct; for, when they were inflicted first, I had given no cause of doubt; nor should there now be room for any, if my discretion might be trusted to.

My aunt, after a little hesitation, said, but, consider, my dear, what confusion will be perpetuated in your family, if you marry this hated Lovelace?

And let it be considered, what misery to me, Madam, if I marry that hated Solmes?

Many a young creature has thought she could not love a man, with whom she has afterwards been very happy. Few women, child, marry their first loves.

That may be the reason there are so few happy marriages.

But there are few first impressions fit to be encouraged.

I am afraid so too, Madam. I have a very indifferent opinion of light and first impressions. But, as I have often said, all I wish for, is, to have leave to live single.

Indeed you must not, Miss. Your father and mother will be unhappy till they see you married, and out of Lovelace's reach.—I am told, that you propose to condition with him (so far are matters

gone between you) never to have any man, if you have not him.

I know no better way to prevent mischief on all sides, I freely own it — And there is not, if he be out of the question, another man in the world, I can think favorably of. — Nevertheless, I would give all I have in the world, that he were married to some other person—Indeed I would, Bella, for all you put on that smile of incredulity.

May be so, Clary; but I will smile for all that.

If he be out of the question! repeated my aunt—
So, Miss Clary, I see how it is — I will go down—
(Miss Harlowe, shall I follow you? —) And I will endeavour to persuade your father to let my sister herself come up; and a happier event may then result.

Depend upon it, Madam, said my sister, this will be the case: My mother and she will be both in tears; but with this different effect; my mother will come down softened, and cut to the heart; but will leave her favorite hardened, from the advantages she will think she has over my mother's tenderness — Why, Madam, it is for this very reason the girl is not admitted into her presence.

Thus she ran on, as she went down stairs.

L E T T E R X L V .

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

MY heart fluttered with the hope and the fear of seeing my mother, and with the shame and the grief of having given her so much uneasiness. But it needed not; she was not permitted to come. But my aunt was so good as to return, yet not without my sister; and, taking my hand, made me sit down by her.

She came, she must own, officiously, she said, this once more; though against the opinion of my father; but knowing and dreading the consequence of my opposition, she could not but come.

She then set forth to me my friends expectations from me; Mr. Solmes's riches (three times as rich he came out to be, as any body had thought him); the settlements proposed; Mr. Lovelace's bad character; their aversion to him; all in a very strong light; but not in a stronger, than my mother had before placed them in. My mother, surely, could not have given the particulars of what had passed between herself and me; if she had, my aunt would not have repeated many of the same sentiments, as you will find she did, that had been still more strongly urged, without effect by her venerable sister.

She said it would break the heart of my father to have it imagined, that he had not a power over his

child ; and that , as he thought , for my own good ; a child too , whom they always had doted upon ! — Dearest , dearest Miss , concluded she , clasping her fingers , with the most condescending earnestness , let me beg of you , for my sake , for your own sake , for a hundred sakes , to get over this averfeness , to give up your prejudices , and make every one happy and easy once more . — I would kneel to you , my dearest niece — Nay , I will kneel to you ! —

And down she dropt , and I with her , kneeling to her , and beseeching her not to kneel ; clasping my arms about her , and bathing her worthy bosom with my tears .

O rise ! rise ! my beloved aunt , said I : You cut me to the heart with this condescending goodness .

Say then , my dearest niece , say then , that you will oblige all your friends ! — If you love us , I beseech you do —

How can I promise what I can sooner chuse to die than to perform ! —

Say then , my dear , you will consider of it . Say you will but reason with yourself . Give us but hopes . Don't let me entreat , and thus entreat , in vain . For still she kneeled , and I by her .

What a hard case is mine ! — Could I but doubt , I know I could conquer . — That which is an inducement to my friends , is none at all to me — How often , my dearest aunt , must I repeat the same thing ? — Let me but be single — Cannot I live single ? Let me be sent , as I have proposed , to Scotland , to Florence ; any whither ; let me be sent a

slave to the Indies; any whither—Any of these, I will consent to. But cannot, cannot think of giving my vows to a man I cannot endure!

Well then, rising (Bella silently, with uplifted hands, reproaching my supposed perverseness) I see nothing can prevail with you to oblige us.

What can I do, my dearest aunt Hervey? What can I do? Were I capable of giving a hope I meant not to enlarge, then could I say, I would consider of your kind advice. But I would rather be thought perverse than insincere. Is there, however, no medium? Can nothing be thought of? Will nothing do, but to have a man who is the more disgusting to me, because he is unjust in the very articles he offers?

Whom now, Clary, said my sister, do you reflect upon? Consider that.

Make not invidious applications of what I say, Bella. It may not be looked upon in the same light by every one. The giver and the acceptor are principally answerable, in an unjust donation. While I think of it in this light, I should be inexcusable to be the latter. But why do I enter upon a supposition of this nature?—My heart, as I have often, often said, recoils at the thoughts of the man, in every light.—Whose father, but mine, agrees upon articles, where there is no prospect of a liking? Where the direct contrary is avowed, all along avowed, without the least variation, or shadow of a change of sentiment?—But it is not my father's doing originally. O my cruel, cruel brother, to cause a measure to be forced upon me, which he would not behave tolerably under, were the like to be offered to him!

The girl is got into her altitudes, aunt Hervey, said my sister. You see, Madam, she spares nobody. Be pleased to let her know what she has to trust to. Nothing is to be done with her. Pray, Madam, pronounce her doom.

My aunt retired to the window, weeping, with my sister in her hand. I cannot, indeed I cannot, Miss Harlowe, said she softly, but yet I heard every word she said: There is great hardship in her case. She is a noble child, after all. What pity things are gone so far! — But Mr. Solmes ought to be told to desist.

O Madam, said my sister, in a kind of loud whisper, are you caught too by the little Siren! — My mother did well not to come up! — I question whether my father himself, after his first indignation, would not be turned round by her. Nobody but my brother can do any thing with her I am sure.

Don't think of your brother's coming up, said my aunt, still in a low voice — He is too furious. I see no obstinacy, no perverseness, in her manner! If your brother comes I will not be answerable for the consequences; for I thought twice or thrice she would have gone into fits.

O Madam, she has a strong heart! and you see there is no prevailing with her, though you were upon your knees to her.

My sister left my aunt musing at the window, with her back towards us; and took that opportunity to insult me still more barbarously; for,

stepping to my closet, she took up the patterns which my mother had sent me up, and bringing them to me, she spread them upon the chair by me; and, offering one, and then another, upon her sleeve and shoulder, thus she ran on, with great seeming tranquillity, but whisperingly, that my aunt might not hear her. This, Clary, is a pretty pattern enough; but this is quite charming! I would advise you to make your appearance in it. And this, were I you, should be my wedding night-gown — And this my second dressed suit! Won't you give orders, love, to have your grandmother's jewels new set? — Or will you think to show away in the new ones Mr. Solmes intends to present to you? He talks of laying out two or three thousand pounds in presents, child! Dear heart! — How gorgeously will you be arrayed! — What! silent, my dear! mamma Norton's sweet dear! What! silent still? — But, Clary, won't you have a velvet suit? It would cut a great figure in a country church, you know; and the weather may bear it for a month yet to come. Crimson velvet, suppose! Such a fine complexion as yours, how would it be set off by it! What an agreeable blush would it give you! — High-ho! (mocking me, for I sighed to be thus fooled with) and do you sigh, love? — Well then, as it will be a solemn wedding, what think you of black velvet, child? — Silent still, Clary! — Black velvet, so fair as you are, with those charming eyes, gleaming through a wintry cloud, like an April sun! — Does not Lovelace tell you they

are charming eyes!—How lovely will you appear to every one! What! silent still, love!—But about your laces, Clary!—

She would have gone on still further, had not my aunt advanced towards us, wiping her eyes—What! whispering Ladies! You seem so easy and so pleased, Miss Harlowe, with your private conference, that I hope I shall carry down good news.

I am only giving her my opinion of her patterns, here.—Unasked indeed, but she seems, by her silence, to approve of my judgment.

O Bella! said I, that Mr. Lovelace had not taken you at your word!—You had before now been exercising your judgment on your own account; and I had been happy, as well as you! Was it my fault, I pray you, that it was not so?—

O how she raved!

To be so ready to give, Bella, and so loth to take, is not very fair in you.

The poor Bella descended to call names.

Why, sister, said I, you are as angry, as if there were more in the hint, than possibly might be designed. My wish is sincere, for both our sakes!—for the whole family's sake!—And what, good now, is there in it?—Do not, do not, dear Bella, give me cause to suspect, that I have found a reason for your behaviour to me; and which till now was wholly unaccountable from sister to sister—

Fie, fie, Miss Clary! said my aunt.

My sister was more and more outrageous.

O how much fitter, said I, to be a jest, than a

jester! — But now, Bella, turn the glass to you, and see how poorly fits the robe upon your own shoulders, which you have been so unmercifully fixing upon mine!

Fie, fie, Miss Clary! repeated my aunt.

And, fie, fie, likewise, good Madam, to Miss Harlowe, you would say, were you to have heard her barbarous insults!

Let us go, Madam, said my sister, with great violence; let us leave the creature to swell till she bursts with her own poison. — The last time I ever will come near her, in the mind I am in!

It is so easy a thing, returned I, were I to be mean enough to follow an example that is so censurable in the setter of it, to vanquish such a teasing spirit as yours with its own blunt weapons, that I am amazed you will provoke me! — Yet, Bella, since you will go (for she had hurried to the door) forgive me, I forgive you. And you have a double reason to do so, both from eldership, and from the offence so studiously given to one in affliction. — But may you be happy, though I never shall! — May you never have half the trials I have had! Be this your comfort, that you cannot have a sister to treat you, as you have treated me! — And so God bless you!

O thou art a — and down she flung without saying what.

Permit me, Madam, said I to my aunt, sinking down, and clasping her knees with my arms, to detain you one moment — Not to say any thing

about my poor sister — she is her own punisher — Only to thank you for all your condescending goodness to me. I only beg of you, not to impute to obstinacy the immoveableness I have shown to so tender a friend; and to forgive me every thing I have said or done amiss in your presence, for it has not proceeded from inward rancor to the poor Bella. But I will be bold to say, that neither she, nor my brother, nor even my father himself, knows what a heart they have set a bleeding.

I saw, to my comfort, what effect my sister's absence wrought for me.—Rise, my noble minded niece!—charming creature! —(those were her kind words) Kneel not to me! —Keep to yourself what I now say to you.—I admire you more than I can express — And if you can forbear claiming your estate, and can resolve to avoid Lovelace, you will continue to be the greatest miracle I ever knew at your years.— But I must hasten down after your sister.—These are my last words to you: Conform to your father's will, if you possibly can. How meritorious will it be in you to do so! Pray to God to enable you to conform. You don't know what may be done.

Only, my dear aunt, one word, one word more (for she was going)—Speak all you can for my dear Mrs. Norton. She is but low in the world; should ill health overtake her, she may not know how to live without my mamma's favor. I shall have no means to help her; for I will want necessities before I will assert my right; and I do assure

you, she has said so many things to me in behalf of my submitting to my father's will, that her arguments have not a little contributed to make me resolve to avoid the extremities, which nevertheless I pray to God they do not at last force me upon. And yet they deprive me of her advice, and think unjustly of one of the most excellent of women.

I am glad to hear you say this; and take this, and this, and this, my charming niece (for so she called me almost at every word, kissing me earnestly, and clasping her arms about my neck); and God protect you, and direct you! But you must submit; indeed you must. Some one day in a month from this, is all the choice that is left you.

And this, I suppose, was the doom my sister called for; yet not worse than what had been pronounced upon me before.

She repeated these last sentences louder than the former. And remember, Miss, added she, it is your duty to comply — And down she went, leaving me with my heart full, and my eyes running over.

The very repetition of this fills me with almost equal concern, to that which I felt at the time.

I must lay down my pen. Mistineffes which give to my deluged eye the appearance of all the colors in the rainbow, will not permit me to write on.

Wednesday, 5 o'clock.

I will now add a few lines — My aunt, as she went down from me, was met at the foot of the stairs by my sister, who seemed to think she had staid a good while after her; and hearing her last words prescribing to me implicit duty, praised her for it, and exclaimed against my obstinacy. Did you ever hear of such perverseness, Madam? said she; could you have thought, that your Clarissa, and every body's Clarissa, was such a girl? — And who, as you said, is to submit, her father or she?

My aunt said something in answer to her, compassionating me, as I thought, by her accent; but I heard not the words.

Such a strange perseverance in a measure so unreasonable! — But my brother and sister are continually misrepresenting all I say and do; and I am deprived of the opportunity of defending myself! — My sister says, that had they thought me such a championess, they would not have engaged with me; and now, not knowing how to reconcile my supposed obstinacy with my general character, and natural temper, they seem to hope to tire me out, and resolve to vary their measures accordingly. My brother, you see, is determined to carry this point, or to abandon Harlowe-place, and never to see it more. — So they are to lose a son, or to conquer a daughter — the perversest and most ungrateful that ever parents had! — This is the light he places things in; and has undertaken,

it seems, to subdue me, if his advice be followed. It will be further tried, of that I am convinced; and what will be their next measure who can divine?

I shall dispatch, with this, my answer to yours of Sunday last, begun on Monday, but which is not yet quite finished. It is too long to copy; I have not time for it. In it I have been very free with you, my dear, in more places than one. I cannot say that I am pleased with all I have written—Yet will not now alter it.—My mind is not at ease enough for the subject.—Don't be angry with me. Yet, if you can excuse one or two passages, it will be, because they were written by

Your CLARISSA HARLOWE.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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