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LETTER XIX.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday, *May* 16.

I THINK once more, we seem to be in a kind of train; but through a storm. I will give you the particulars,

I heard him in the diningroom at five in the morning. I had rested very ill, and was up too. But opened not my door till six: when Dorcas brought me his request for my company.

He approached me, and taking my hand, as I entered the diningroom, I went not to bed, Madam, till two, said he, yet slept not a wink. For God's sake, torment me not, as you have done for a week past.

He paused. I was silent.

At first, proceeded he, I thought your resentment of a curiosity, in which I had been disappointed, could not be deep; and that it would go off of itself: but when I found it was to be kept up till you knew the success of some new overtures which you had made, and which, complied with, might have deprived me of you for ever; how, Madam, could I support myself under the thoughts of having, with such an union of interests, made so little impression upon your mind in my favor?

He paused again. I was still silent. He went on.

I acknowledge that I have a proud heart, Madam. I cannot but hope for some instances of previous and preferable favor from the Lady I am ambitious to call mine; and that her choice of me should not appear, not flagrantly appear, directed by the perverseness of her selfish persecutors, who are my irreconcilable enemies.

More to the same purpose he said. You know, my dear, the room he had given me to recriminate upon him in twenty instances. I did not spare him.

Every one of these instances, said I (after I had enumerated them) convinces me of your pride indeed, Sir, but not of your merit. I confess, that I have as much pride as you can have, altho' I hope it is of another kind than that you so readily avow. But if, Sir, you have the least mixture in yours, of that pride which may be expected, and thought laudable, in a man of your birth, alliances, and fortune, you should rather wish, I will presume to say, to promote what you call my pride, than either to suppress it, or to regret that I have it. It is this my acknowledged pride, proceeded I, that induces me to tell you, Sir, that I think it beneath me to disown what have been my motives for declining, for some days past, any conversation with you, or visit from Mr. Mennell, that might lead to points out of my power to determine upon, until I heard from my uncle Harlowe; whom, I confess, I caused to be sounded, whether I might be favored with his interest, to obtain for me a reconciliation with my friends, upon terms which I had caused to be proposed.

I know not, said he, and suppose must not presume to ask, what these terms were. But I can but too well guess at them; and that I was to have been the preliminary sacrifice. But you must allow me, Madam, to say, that as much as I admire the nobleness of your sentiments in general, and in particular that laudable pride which you have spoken off; I wish that I could compliment you with such an uniformity in it, as had set you as much above all submission to minds implacable and unreasonable (I hope I may, without offence, say, that your brother's and sister's are such) as it has above all favor and condescension to me.

Duty and nature, Sir, call upon me to make the submissions you speak of: there is a father, there is a mother, there are uncles in the one case, to justify and demand those submissions—What, pray, Sir, can be pleaded for the condescension, as you call it?—Will you say, your merits, either with regard to them, or to myself, may?

This, Madam, to be said, after the persecutions of those relations! After what you have suffered! After what you have made me hope! Let me, my dearest creature, ask you (we have been talking of pride) what sort of pride must his be, which can dispense with inclination and preference in the Lady whom he adores?—What must be that love—

Love, Sir! who talks of love?—Was not merit the thing we were talking of?—Have I ever professed, have I ever required of you professions of a passion of that nature!—But there is no end of these debates; each so faultless, each so full of self—

I do

I do not think myself faultless, Madam:—But—

But what, Sir! — Would you evermore argue with me as if you were a child? — Seeking palliations, and making promises? — Promises of what, Sir? Of being in future the man it is a shame a gentleman is not? — Of being the man —

Good God! interrupted he, with eyes lifted up, if thou wert to be thus severe —

Well, well, Sir, (impatiently) I need only to observe, that all this vast difference in sentiments shows how unpaired our minds are — So let us —

Let us what, Madam! — My soul is rising into tumults! And he looked so wildly, that I was a good deal terrified — Let us what, Madam! —

I was, however, resolved not to desert myself — Why, Sir, let us resolve to quit every regard for each other — Nay, flame not out — I am a poor weak-minded creature in some things: but where what I should be, or not deserve to live, if I am not, is in the question, I have a great and invincible spirit, or my own conceit betrays me — Let us resolve to quit every regard for each other that is more than civil. This you may depend upon; I will never marry any other man. I have seen enough of your sex, at least of you. — A single life shall ever be my choice: while I will leave you at liberty to pursue your own.

Indifference, worse than indifference! said he, in a passion —

Interrupting him — Indifference let it be — You have not (in my opinion at least) deserved that it should be other: if you have in your own, you have

cause (at least your pride has) to hate me for misjudging you.

Dearest, dearest creature! snatching my hand with fierceness, let me beseech you to be uniformly noble! Civil regards, Madam!—Civil regards!—Can you so expect to narrow and confine such a passion as mine!

Such a passion as yours, Mr. Lovelace, deserves to be narrowed and confined. It is either the passion you do not think it, or I do not. I question whether your mind is capable of being so narrowed and so widened, as is necessary to make it be what I wish it to be. Lift up your hands and your eyes, Sir, in silent wonder, if you please: but what does that wonder express, what does it convince me of, but that we are not born for one another?

By my soul, said he, and grasped my hand with an eagerness that hurt it, we were born for one another: you must be mine—You shall be mine (and put his other arm round me) altho' my damnation were to be the purchase!

I was still more terrified—Let me leave you, Mr. Lovelace, said I; or do you begone from me. Is the passion you boast of, to be thus shockingly demonstrated?

You must not go, Madam! — You must not leave me in anger—

I will return—I will return—When you can be less violent — less shocking.

And he let me go.

The man quite frightened me; insomuch that when

I got into my chamber, I found a sudden flow of tears a great relief to me.

In half an hour, he sent a little billet, expressing his concern for the vehemence of his behaviour, and praying to see me.

I went. Because I could not help myself, I went.

He was full of his excuses.—O my dear, what would you, even you, do with such a man as this; and in my situation?

It was very possible for him now, he said, to account for the workings of a beginning phrensy. For his part, he was near distraction. All last week to suffer as he had suffered; and now to talk of civil regards only, when he had hoped from the nobleness of my mind —

Hope what you will, interrupted I; I must insist upon it, that our minds are by no means suited to each other. You have brought me into difficulties. I am deserted by every friend but Miss Howe. My true sentiments I will not conceal — It is against my will, that I must submit to owe protection from a brother's projects, which Miss Howe thinks are not given over, to you, who have brought me into these streights: not with own concurrence brought me into them; remember that —

I do remember that, Madam! — So often reminded, how can I forget it?

Yet will I owe to you this protection, if it be necessary, in the earnest hope, that you will shun rather than seek mischief, if any further inquiry after me be made. But what hinders you from

leaving me?—Cannot I send to you? The widow Fetchville, it is plain, knows not her own mind: the people here, indeed, are more civil to me every day than other: but I had rather have lodgings more agreeable to my circumstances. I best know what will suit them; and am resolved not to be obliged to any body. If you leave me, I will privately retire to some one of the neighbouring villages, and there wait my cousin Morden's arrival with patience.

I presume, Madam, replied he, from what you have said, that your application to Harlowe-place has proved unsuccessful: I therefore hope, that you will now give me leave to mention the terms in the nature of settlements, which I have long intended to propose to you; and which having till now delayed to do, through accidents not proceeding from myself, I had thoughts of urging to you the moment you entered upon your new house; and upon your finding yourself as independent in appearance as you are in fact. Permit me, Madam, to propose these matters to you—Not with an expectation of an immediate answer; but for your consideration.

Were not hesitation, a self-felt glow, a downcast eye, encouragement more than enough? And yet you will observe (as I now do on recollection) that he was in no great hurry to solicit for a day; since he had no thoughts of proposing settlements, till I had got into my new house; and now, in his great complaisance to me, he desired leave to propose his terms, not with an expectation of my

immediate answer; but for my consideration only. Yet, my dear, your advice was too much in my head at this time. I hesitated.

He urged on upon my silence: he would call God to witness to the justice, nay to the generosity of his intentions to me, if I would be so good as to hear what he had to propose to me, as to settlements.

Could not the man have fallen into the subject without this parade? Many a point, you know, is refused, and ought to be refused, if leave be asked to introduce it; and when once refused, the refusal must in honor be adhered to — Whereas, had it been slid in upon one, as I may say, it might have merited further consideration. If such a man as Mr. Lovelace knows not this, who should?

But he seemed to think it enough that he had asked my leave to propose his settlements. He took no advantage of my silence, as I presume men as modest as Mr. Lovelace would have done, in a like case: yet, gazing in my face very confidently, and seeming to expect my answer, I thought myself obliged to give the subject a more diffuse turn, in order to save myself the mortification of appearing too ready in my compliance, after such a distance as had been between us; and yet (in pursuance of your advice) I was willing to avoid the necessity of giving him such a repulse, as might again throw us out of the course. A cruel alternative to be reduced to!

You talk of generosity, Mr. Lovelace, said I; and you talk of justice; perhaps without having

considered the force of the words, in the sense you use them on this occasion.—Let me tell you what generosity is, in my sense of the word—True generosity is not confined to pecuniary instances: it is more than politeness: it is more than good faith: it is more than honor: it is more than justice: since all these are but duties, and what a worthy mind cannot dispense with. But true generosity is greatness of soul. It incites us to do more by a fellow creature, than can be strictly required of us. It obliges us to hasten to the relief of an object that wants relief; anticipating even such a one's hope or expectation. Generosity, Sir, will not surely permit a worthy mind to doubt of its honorable and beneficent intentions: much less will it allow itself to shock, to offend any one; and, least of all, a person thrown by adversity, mishap, or accident, into its protection.

What an opportunity had he to clear his intentions, had he been so disposed, from the latter part of this home observation!—But he ran away with the first, and kept to that.

Admirably defined! he said.—But who at this rate, Madam, can be said to be generous to you?—Your generosity I implore; while justice, as it must be my sole merit, shall be my aim. Never was there a woman of such nice and delicate sentiments!

It is a reflection upon yourself, Sir, and upon the company you have kept, if you think these notions either nice or delicate. Thousands of my sex are more nice than I; for they would have avoided the

devious path I have been surpris'd into : the consequences of which surpris'e have laid me under the sad necessity of telling a man, who has not delicacy enough to enter into those parts of the female character which are its glory and distinction, what true generosity is.

His divine monitress, he called me. He would endeavour to form his manners (as he had often promis'd) by my example. But he hop'd I would now permit him to mention briefly the justice he propos'd to do me, in the terms of the settlements; a subject so proper, before now, to have been enter'd upon; and which would have been enter'd upon long ago, had not my frequent displeasure (I am ever in fault, my dear!) taken from him the opportunity he had often wish'd for: but now having ventured to lay hold of this, nothing should divert him from improving it.

I have no spirits, just now, Sir, to attend to such weighty points. What you have a mind to propose, write to me: and I shall know what answer to return. Only one thing let me remind you of, that if you touch upon any subject, in which my father has a concern, I shall judge by your treatment of the father, what value you have for the daughter.

He look'd as if he would chuse rather to speak than write: but had he said so, I had a severe return to have made upon him; as possibly he might see by my looks.

* * *

In this way are we now: a sort of calm, as I

said, succeeding a storm. What may happen next, whether a storm or a calm, with such a spirit as I have to deal with, who can tell?

But be that as it will, I think, my dear, I am not meanly off: and that is a great point with me; and which I know you will be glad to hear: if it were only, that I can see this man without losing any of that dignity (what other word can I use, speaking of myself, that betokens decency, and not arrogance?) which is so necessary to enable me to look up, or rather with the mind's eye, I may say, to look down upon a man of this man's cast.

Altho' circumstances have so offered, that I could not take your advice as to the manner of dealing with him; yet you gave me so much courage by it, as has enabled me to conduct things to this issue; as well as determined me against leaving him: which before, I was thinking to do, at all adventures. Whether, when it came to the point, I should have done so, or not, I cannot say, because it would have depended upon his behaviour at the time.

But let his behaviour be what it will, I am afraid (with you) that, should any thing offer at last to oblige me to leave him, I shall not mend my situation in the world's eye, but the contrary. And yet I will not be treated by him with indignity while I have any power to help myself.

You, my dear, have accused me of having modesty away, as you phrase it, several opportunities of being—being what, my dear?—Why, the wife of a libertine: and what a libertine and his wife are, my cousin Morden's letter tells us.—Let

me here, once for all, endeavour to account for the motives of my behaviour to this man, and for the principles I have proceeded upon, as they appear to me upon a close self-examination.

Be pleased then to allow me to think, that my motives on this occasion, arise not altogether from maidenly niceness; nor yet from the apprehension of what my present tormentor, and future husband, may think of a precipitate compliance, on such a disagreeable behaviour as his: but they arise principally from what offers to my own heart; respecting, as I may say, its own rectitude, its own judgment of the fit and the unfit; as I would, without study, answer for myself to myself, in the first place; to him, and to the world, in the second only. Principles that are in my mind; that I found there; implanted, no doubt, by the first gracious Planter: which, therefore, impel me, as I may say, to act up to them, that thereby I may, to the best of my judgment, be enabled to comport myself worthily in both states (the single and the married) let others act as they will by me.

I hope, my dear, I do not deceive myself, and instead of setting about rectifying what is amiss in my heart, endeavour to find excuses for habits and peculiarities, which I am unwilling to cast off or overcome. The heart is very deceitful: do you, my dear friend, lay mine open (but surely it is always open before you!) and spare me not, if you think it culpable.

This observation, once for all, as I said, I thought proper to make, to convince you, that, to the best

of my judgment, my errors, in matters as well of lesser moment, as of greater, shall rather be the fault of my judgment, than of my will.

I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XX.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday Night, *May 16.*

MR. Lovelace has sent me, by Dorcas, his proposals, as follows:

“To spare a delicacy so extreme, and to obey you, I write: and the rather, that you may communicate this paper to Miss Howe, who may consult any of her friends you shall think proper to have intrusted on this occasion. I say, intrusted; because, as you know, I have given it out to several persons, that we are actually married.

“In the first place, Madam, I offer to settle upon you, by way of jointure, your whole estate: and moreover to vest in trustees such a part of mine in Lancashire, as shall produce a clear four hundred pounds a year, to be paid to your sole and separate use, quarterly.

“My own estate is a clear not nominal 2000 l.

per annum. Lord M. . proposes to give me possession either of that which he has in Lancashire (to which, by the way, I think I have a better title than he has himself) or that we call The Lawn in Hertfordshire, upon my nuptials with a Lady whom he so greatly admires; and to make that I shall chuse a clear 1000 l. per annum.

“ My too great contempt of censure has subjected me to much slander. It may not, therefore, be improper to assure you, on the word of a gentleman, that no part of my estate was ever mortgaged: and that altho’ I lived very expensively abroad, and made large draughts, yet that midsummer-day next will discharge all that I owe in the world. My notions are not all bad ones. I have been thought, in pecuniary cases, generous. It would have deserved another name, had I not first been just.

“ If, as your own estate is at present in your father’s hands, you rather chuse that I should make a jointure out of mine, tantamount to yours, be it what it will, it shall be done. I will engage Lord M. . to write to you, what he proposes to do on the happy occasion: not as your desire or expectation, but to demonstrate, that no advantage is intended to be taken of the situation you are in with your own family

“ To show the beloved daughter the consideration I have for her, I will consent, that she shall prescribe the terms of agreement in relation to the large sums, which must be in her father’s hands, arising from her grandfather’s estate. I have no

doubt, but he will be put upon making large demands upon you. All those it shall be in your power to comply with, for the sake of your own peace. And the remainder shall be paid into your hands, and be entirely at your disposal, as a fund to support those charitable donations, which I have heard you so famed for out of your family; and for which you have been so greatly reflected upon in it.

“As to clothes, jewels, and the like, against the time you shall chuse to make your appearance, it will be my pride, that you shall not be beholden for such of those as shall be answerable to the rank of both, to those who have had the stupid folly to renounce the daughter they deserved not. You must excuse me, Madam: you would mistrust my sincerity in the rest, could I speak of these people with less asperity, though so nearly related to you.

“These, Madam, are my proposals. They are such as I always designed to make, whenever you would permit me to enter into the delightful subject. But you have been so determined to try every method for reconciling yourself to your relations, even by giving me absolutely up for ever, that you have seemed to think it but justice to keep me at a distance, till the event of that your predominant hope could be seen. It is now seen!—And altho’ I have been, and, perhaps, still am, ready to regret the want of that preference I wished for from you as Miss Clarissa Harlowe; yet I am sure, as the husband of Mrs. Lovelace, I shall be more ready

to adore than to blame you for the pangs you have given to a heart, the generosity, or rather justice of which, my implacable enemies have taught you to doubt: and this still the readier, as I am persuaded, that those pangs never would have been given by a mind so noble, had not the doubt been entertained (perhaps, with too great an appearance of reason); and as I hope I shall have it to reflect, that the moment the doubt shall be overcome, the indifference will cease.

“ I will only add, that if I have omitted any thing, that would have given you further satisfaction; or if the above terms be short of what you would wish; you will be pleased to supply them as you think fit. And when I know your pleasure, I will instantly order articles to be drawn up conformably; that nothing in my power may be wanting to make you happy.

“ You will now, dearest Madam, judge, how far all the rest depends upon yourself.”

You see, my dear, what he offers. You see it is all my fault, that he has not made these offers before. I am a strange creature!—To be to blame in every thing, and to every body; yet neither intend the ill at the time, nor know it to be the ill till too late, or so nearly too late, that I must give up all the delicacy he talks of, to compound for my fault!

I shall now judge how far all the rest depends upon myself! So coldly concludes he such warm, and, in the main, unobjectible proposals! Would you not, as you read, have supposed, that the paper would conclude with the most earnest demand

of a day? — I own, I had that expectation so strong, resulting naturally, as I may say, from the premises, that without studying for dissatisfaction, I could not help being dissatisfied when I came to the conclusion.

But you say there is no help. I must, perhaps, make further sacrifices. All delicacy it seems is to be at an end with me! — But if so, this man knows not what every wise man knows, that prudence, and virtue, and delicacy of mind in a wife, do the husband more real honor in the eye of the world, than the same qualities (were she destitute of them) in himself, do him: as the want of them in her does him more dishonor: for are not the wife's errors the husband's reproach? How justly his reproach, is another thing.

I will consider this paper; and write to it, if I am able: for it seems now, all the rest depends upon myself.

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

L E T T E R X X I.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Wednesday Morning, *May 17.*

MR. Lovelace would fain have engaged me last night. But as I was not prepared to enter upon the subject of his proposals (intending to consider them maturely) and was not highly pleased with his conclusion, I desired to be excused seeing him till morning; and the rather, as there is hardly any getting from him in any tolerable time over night.

Accordingly, about seven o'clock we met in the diningroom.

I find, he was full of expectation that I should meet him with a very favorable, who knows but with a thankful aspect? And I immediately found by his fullen countenance, that he was under no small disappointment that I did not.

My dearest love, are you well? Why look you so solemn upon me? Will your indifference never be over? If I have proposed terms in any respect short of your expectation —

I told him that he had very considerably mentioned my showing his proposals to Miss Howe; and as I should have a speedy opportunity to send them to her by Collins, I desired to suspend any talk upon that subject till I had her opinion upon them.

Good God!—If there were but the least loophole! the least room for delay!—But he was writing a letter to Lord M. . to give him an account of his situation with me, and could not finish it so satisfactorily, either to my Lord or to himself, as if I would condescend to say, whether the terms he had proposed were acceptable or not.

Thus far, I told him, I could say, that my principal point was peace and reconciliation with my relations. As to other matters, the gentleness of his own spirit would put him upon doing more for me than I should ask, or expect. Wherefore, if all he had to write about was to know what Lord M. . would do on my account, he might spare himself the trouble; for that my utmost wishes, as to myself, were much more easily gratified than he, perhaps, imagined.

He asked me then, If I would so far permit him to touch upon the happy day, as to request the presence of Lord M. . on the occasion, and to be my father.

Father had a sweet and venerable sound with it, I said. I should be glad to have a father who would own me!

Was not this plain speaking, think you, my dear? Yet it rather, I must own, appears so to me on reflection, than was designed freely at the time. For I then, with a sigh from the bottom of my heart, thought of my own father; bitterly regretting, that I am an outcast from him and from my mother.

Mr. Lovelace I thought seemed a little affected,
at

at the manner of my speaking, and, perhaps, at the sad reflection.

I am but a very young creature, Mr. Lovelace, said I (and wiped my eyes as I turned away my face) altho' you have kindly, and in love to me, introduced so much sorrow to me already: so you must not wonder, that the word father strikes so sensibly upon the heart of a child ever dutiful till she knew you, and whose tender years still require the paternal wing.

He turned towards the window (rejoice with me, my dear, since I seem to be devoted to him, that the man is not absolutely impenetrable!) his emotion was visible; yet he endeavoured to suppress it. Approaching me again; again he was obliged to turn from me. Angelic something, he said: but then obtaining a heart more suitable to his wish, he once more approached me. — For his own part, he said, as Lord M. . was so subject to the gout, he was afraid, that the compliment he had just proposed to make him, might, if made, occasion a longer suspension than he could bear to think of: and if it did, it would vex him to the heart that he had made it.

I could not say a single word to this, you know, my dear. But you will guess at my thoughts of what he said — So much passionate love, lip-deep! So prudent, and so dutifully patient at heart to a relation he had till now so undutifully despised! — Why, why, am I thrown upon such a man, thought I!

He hesitated, as if contending with himself; and

after taking a turn or two about the room, He was at a great loss what to determine upon, he said, because he had not the honor of knowing when he was to be made the happiest of men— Would to God it might that very instant be resolved upon!

He stopped a moment or two, staring in his usual confident way, in my downcast face (did I not, O my beloved friend, think you, want a father or a mother just then?) but if he could not, so soon as he wished, procure my consent to a day; in that case, he thought the compliment might as well be made to Lord M. . as not— (see, my dear!) since the settlements might be drawn and engrossed in the intervenient time, which would pacify his impatience, as no time would be lost.

You will suppose how I was affected by this speech, by repeating the substance of what he said upon it; as follows.

—But, by his soul, he knew not, so much was I upon the reserve, and so much latent meaning did my eye import, whether, when he most hoped to please me, he was not farthest from doing so. Would I vouchsafe to say, whether I approved of his compliment to Lord M. . or not?

To leave it to me, to chuse whether the speedy day he ought to have urged for with earnestness, should be accelerated or suspended!— Miss Howe, thought I, at that moment, says, I must not run away from this man!

To be sure, Mr. Lovelace, if this matter be ever to be, it must be agreeable to me to have the full

approbation of one side, since I cannot have that of the other.

If this matter be ever to be! Good God! what words are these at this time of day! And full approbation of one side! Why that word approbation? When the greatest pride of all my family is, that of having the honor of so dear a creature for their relation? Would to Heaven, my dearest life, added he, that without complimenting any body, to morrow might be the happiest day of my life!—What say you, my angel? With a trembling impatience, that seemed not affected — What say you for to morrow?

It was likely, my dear, I could say much to it, or name another day, had I been disposed to the latter with such a hinted delay from him.

I was silent.

Next day, Madam, if not to morrow? —

Had he given me time to answer, it could not have been in the affirmative, you must think—But in the same breath, he went on—Or the day after that?—And taking both my hands in his, he stared me into a half-confusion—Would you have had patience with him, my dear?

No no, said I, as calmly as possible, you cannot think, that I should imagine there can be reason for such a hurry. It will be most agreeable, to be sure, for my Lord to be present.

I am all obedience and resignation, returned the wretch, with a self-pluming air, as if he had acquiesced to a proposal made by me, and had complimented me with a great piece of self-denial.

Is it not plain, my dear, that he designs to vex and teaze me? Proud, yet mean, and foolish man, if so!—But you say all punctilio is at an end with me. Why, why, will he take pains to make a heart wrap itself up in reserve, that wishes only, and that for his sake as well as my own, to observe due decorum?

Modesty, I think, required of me, that it should pass as he had put: did it not?—I think it did. Would to Heaven—but what signifies wishing?

But when he would have rewarded himself, as he had, heretofore, called it, for his self-supposed concession, with a kiss, I repulsed him with a just and very sincere disdain.

He seemed both vexed and surpris'd, as one who had made the most agreeable proposals and concessions, and thought them ungratefully returned. He plainly said, that he thought our situation would entitle him to such an innocent freedom: and he was both amazed and grieved to be thus scornfully repulsed.

No reply could be made by me on such a subject. I abruptly broke from him. I recollect, as I passed by one of the pier-glasses, that I saw in it his clenched hand offered in wrath to his forehead: the words, "Indifference, by his soul next to hatred," I heard him speak: and something of ice he mentioned: I heard not what.

Whether he intends to write to my Lord, or to Miss Montague, I cannot tell. But as all delicacy ought to be over with me now, perhaps, I am to blame to expect it from a man who may not know

what it is. If he does not, and yet thinks himself very polite, and intends not to be otherwise, I am rather to be pitied, than he to be censured.

And after all, since I must take him as I find him, I must: that is to say, as a man so vain and so accustomed to be admired, that, not being conscious of internal defect, he has taken no pains to polish more than his outside: and as his proposals are higher than my expectations; and as, in his own opinion, he has a great deal to bear from me; I will (no new offence preventing) sit down to answer them:—And, if possible, in terms as unobjectible to him, as his are to me.

But after all, see you not, my dear, more and more, the mismatch that there is in our minds?

However, I am willing to compound for my fault, by giving up (if that may be all my punishment) the expectation of what is deemed happiness in this life, with such a husband as I fear he will make. In short, I will content myself to be a suffering person through the state to the end of my life.—A long one it cannot be!—

This may qualify him (as it may prove) from stings of conscience from misbehaviour to a first wife, to be a more tolerable one to a second, though not, perhaps, a better deserving one: while my story, to all who shall know it, will afford it these instructions: That the eye is a traitor, and ought ever to be mistrusted: that form is deceitful: in other words; that a fine person is seldom paired by a fine mind; and that sound principles, and a good heart, are the only

bases on which the hopes of a happy future, either with respect to this world, or the other can be built.

And so much at present for Mr. Lovelace's proposals: of which I desire your opinion.

Four letters are written by Mr. Lovelace from the date of his last, giving the state of affairs between him and the Lady, pretty much the same as in hers in the same period, allowing for the humor in his, and for his resentments expressed with vehemence on her resolution to leave him, if her friends could be brought to be reconciled to her. — A few extracts from them will be only given.

What, says he, might have become of me, and of my projects, had not her father, and the rest of the implacables, stood my friends?

After violent threatenings of revenge, he says,

'Tis plain she would have given me up for ever: nor should I have been able to prevent her abandoning of me, unless I had torn up the tree by the roots to come at the fruit; which I hope still to bring down by a gentle shake or two, if I can but have patience to stay the ripening season.

Thus triumphing in his unpolite cruelty, he says,

After her haughty treatment of me, I am resolved she shall speak out. There are a thousand beauties

to be discovered in the face, in the accent, in the bush-beating hesitations of a woman who is earnest about a subject she wants to introduce, yet knows not how. Silly fellows, calling themselves generous ones, would value themselves for sparing a Lady's confusion: but they are silly fellows indeed; and rob themselves of prodigious pleasure by their forwardness; and at the same time deprive her of displaying a world of charms, which only can be manifested on these occasions.

I'll tell thee beforehand, how it will be with my charmer in this case—She will be about it, and about it, several times: but I will not understand her: at last, after half a dozen hem—ings, she will be obliged to speak out—I think, Mr. Lovelace—I think, Sir—I think you were saying some days ago—Still I will be all silence—her eyes fixed upon my shoe-buckles, as I sit over against her—Ladies when put to it thus, always admire a man's shoe-buckles, or, perhaps, some particular beauties in the carpet. I think you said, that Mrs. Fetchville—Then a crystal tear trickles down each crimson cheek, vexed to have her virgin pride so little assisted. But, come, my meaning dear, cry I to myself, remember what I have suffered for thee, and what I have suffered by thee! Thy tearful pausings shall not be helped out by me. Speak out, love!—O the sweet confusion! Can I rob myself of so many conflicting beauties by the precipitate charmer-pitying folly, by which a politer man (thou knowest, lovely, that I am no polite man!) betrayed by his own tenderness, and unused to female tears, would have

been overcome? I will feign an irresolution of mind on the occasion, that she may not quite abhor me—that her reflections on the scene in my absence may bring to her remembrance some beauties in my part of it: an irresolution that will be owing to awe, to reverence, to profound veneration; and that will have more eloquence in it, than words can have. Speak out then, love, and spare not.

Hard-heartedness, as it is called, is an essential of the libertine's character. Familiarized to the distresses he occasions, he is seldom betrayed by tenderness into a complaisant weakness unworthy of himself.

Mentioning the settlements, he says,

I am in earnest as to the terms. If I marry her (and I have no doubt but that I shall, after my pride, my ambition, my revenge, if thou wilt, is gratified) I will do her noble justice. The more I do for such a prudent, such an excellent oeconomist, the more shall I do for myself.—But, by my soul, Belford, her haughtiness shall be brought down to own both love and obligation to me. Nor will this sketch of settlements bring us forwarder than I would have it. Modesty of sex will stand my friend at any time. At the very altar, our hands joined, I would engage to make this proud beauty leave the parson and me, and all my friends who should be present, though twenty in number, to look like fools upon one another, while she took wing, and flew out of the church-door, or window

(if that were open, and the door shut); and this only by a single word.

He mentions his rash expression, that she should be his, altho' his damnation were to be the purchase.

At that instant, says he, I was upon the point of making a violent attempt; but was checked in the very moment, and but just in time to save myself, by the awe I was struck with on again casting my eye upon her terrified but lovely face, and seeing, as I thought, her spotless heart in every line of it.

O virtue, virtue! proceeds he, what is there in thee, that can thus against his will affect the heart of a Lovelace!—Whence these involuntary tremors, and fear of giving mortal offence?—What art thou, that acting in the breast of a feeble woman, canst strike so much awe into a spirit so intrepid! Which never before, no, not in my first attempt, young as I then was, and frightened at my own boldness (till I found myself forgiven) had such an effect upon me!

He paints, in lively colors, that part of the scene between him and the Lady, where she says, "The word Father, has a sweet and venerable sound with it."

I was exceedingly affected, says he, upon the occasion. But was ashamed to be surpris'd into such a fit of unmanly weakness—So ashamed, that I was resolv'd to subdue it at the instant, and to

guard against the like for the future. Yet, at that moment, I more than half regretted, that I could not permit her to enjoy a triumph which she so well deserved to glory in—Her youth, her beauty, her artless innocence, and her manner, equally beyond comparison or description. But her indifference, Belford!—That she could resolve to sacrifice me to the malice of my enemies; and carry on the design in so clandestine a manner—Yet love her, as I do, to phrensy!—Revere her, as I do, to adoration!—These were the recollections with which I fortified my recreant heart against her! Yet, after all, if she persevere, she must conquer!—Coward, as she has made me, that never was a coward before!

He concludes his fourth letter in a vehement rage, upon her repulsing him, when he offered to salute her; having supposed, as he owns, that she would have been all condescension on his proposals to her.

This, says he, I will for ever remember against her, in order to steel my heart, that I may cut thro' a rock of ice to hers; and repay her for the disdain, the scorn, which glowed in her countenance, and was apparent in her air, at her abrupt departure from me, after such obliging behaviour on my side, and after I had so earnestly pressed her for an early day. The women below say, She hates me; she despises me!—And 'tis true: she does; she must.—And why cannot I take their advice?—I will

not long, my fair one, be despised by thee, and laughed at by them!

Let me acquaint thee, Jack, adds he by way of postscript, that this effort of hers to leave me, if she could have been received; her sending for a coach on Sunday; no doubt, resolving not to return, if she had gone out without me (for did she not declare, that she had thoughts to retire to some of the villages about town, where she could be safe and private?) have, altogether, so much alarmed me, that I have been adding to the written instructions for my fellow and the people below, how to act in case she should elope in my absence: particularly letting Will. know what he shall report to strangers in case she shall throw herself upon any such with a resolution to abandon me. To these instructions I shall further add as circumstances offer.

LETTER XXII.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday, May 18.

I HAVE neither time nor patience, my dear friend, to answer every material article in your last letters just now received. Mr. Lovelace's proposals are all I like of him. And yet (as you do) I think, that he concludes them not with that warmth and earnestness which we might naturally have expected

from him. Never in my life did I hear or read of so patient a man, with such a blessing in his reach. But wretches of his cast, between you and me, my dear, have not, I fancy, those ardors that honest men have. Who knows, as your Bell once spitefully said, but he may have half a dozen creatures to quit his hands of before he engages for life?—Yet I believe you must not expect him to be honest on this side of his grand climacteric.

He, to suggest delay from a compliment to be made to Lord M. . and to give time for settlements! He, a part of whose character it is, not to know what complaisance to his relations is—I have no patience with him! You did, indeed, want an interposing friend on the affecting occasion which you mention in yours of yesterday morning. But, upon my word, were I to have been that moment in your situation, and been so treated, I would have torn his eyes out; and left it to his own heart, when I had done, to furnish the reason for it.

Would to Heaven to morrow, without complimenting any body, might be his happy day! — Villain! After he had himself suggested the compliment!—And I think he accuses you of delaying! Fellow, that he is!—How my heart is wrung—

But, as matters now stand betwixt you, I am very unseasonable in expressing my resentments against him.—Yet I don't know whether I am or not, neither; since it is the most cruel of fates, for a woman to be forced to have a man whom her heart despises. You must, at least, despise him; at times, however. His clenched fist offered to his

forehead on your leaving him in just displeasure — I wish it had been a pole-ax in the hands of his worst enemy.

I will endeavour to think of some method, of some scheme, to get you from him, and to fix you safely somewhere till your cousin Morden arrives — A scheme to lie by you, and to be pursued as occasion may be given. You are sure, that you can go abroad when you please? and that our correspondence is safe? I cannot, however (for the reasons heretofore mentioned respecting your own reputation) wish you to leave him while he gives you not cause to suspect his honor. But your heart I know would be the easier, if you were sure of some asylum in case of necessity.

Yet once more, I say, I can have no notion that he can or dare to mean your dishonor. But then the man is a fool, my dear — that's all.

However, since you are thrown upon a fool, marry the fool, at the first opportunity; and tho' I doubt that this man will be the most ungovernable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward: in short, as one given to convince you that there is nothing but imperfection in this life.

And what is the result of all I have written, but this? Either marry, my dear, or get from them all, and from him too.

You intend the latter, you'll say, as soon as you have opportunity. That, as above hinted, I hope quickly to furnish you with: and then comes on a trial between you and yourself.

These are the very fellows, that we women do not naturally hate. We don't always know what is, and what is not, in our power to do. When some principal point we have long had in view becomes so critical, that we must of necessity chuse or refuse, then perhaps we look about us; are affrighted at the wild and uncertain prospect before us; and after a few struggles and heart-achs, reject the untried new; draw in our horns, and resolve to snail on, as we did before, in a track we are acquainted with.

I shall be impatient till I have your next. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXIII.

Mr. BEEFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.

Wednesday, *May 17.*

I CANNOT conceal from you any thing that relates to yourself so much as the inclosed does. You will see what the noble writer apprehends from you, and wishes of you, with regard to Miss Harlowe, and how much at heart all your relations have it that you do honorably by her. They compliment me with an influence over you, which I

wish with all my soul you would let me have in this article.

Let me once more entreat thee, Lovelace, to reflect before it be too late (before the mortal offence be given) upon the graces and merits of this Lady. Let thy frequent remorse at last end in one effectual remorse. Let not pride and wantonness of heart ruin thy fairer prospects. By my faith, Lovelace, there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in our wilder schemes. As we grow older, we shall be wiser, and looking back upon our foolish notions of the present hour (our youth dissipated) shall certainly despise ourselves when we think of the honorable engagements we might have made: thou, more especially, if thou lettest such a matchless creature slide through thy fingers. A creature pure from her cradle. In all her actions and sentiments uniformly noble. Strict in the performance of all her even unrewarded duties to the most unreasonable of fathers, what a wife will she make the man who shall have the honor to call her his!

What apprehensions wouldst thou have had reason for, had she been prevailed upon by giddy or frail motives, for which one man, by importunity, might prevail, as well as another?

We all know what an inventive genius thou art master of: we are all sensible, that thou hast a head to contrive, and a heart to execute. Have I not called thine the plottingest heart in the universe? I called it so upon knowledge. What wouldst thou more? Why should it be the most villanous, as well as the most able? — Marry the Lady; and,

when married, let her know what a number of contrivances thou hadst in readiness to play off. Beg of her not to hate thee for the communication; and assure her, that thou gavest them up from remorse, and in justice to her extraordinary merit; and let her have the opportunity of congratulating herself for subduing a heart so capable of what thou callest glorious mischief. This will give her room for triumph; and even thee no less: she for hers over thee; thou, for thine over thyself.

Reflect likewise upon her sufferings for thee. Actually at the time thou art forming schemes to ruin her (at least in her sense of the word) is she not laboring under a father's curse laid upon her by thy means, and for thy sake? And wouldst thou give operation and completion to that curse, which otherwise cannot have effect?

And what, Lovelace, all the time is thy pride? Thou that vainly imaginest, that the whole family of the Harlowes, and that of the Howes too, are but thy machines, unknown to themselves, to bring about thy purposes, and thy revenge; what art thou more, or better, than the instrument even of her implacable brother, and envious sister, to perpetuate the disgrace of the most excellent of sisters, to which they are moved by vilely low and fordid motives? — Canst thou bear, Lovelace, to be thought the machine of thy inveterate enemy James Harlowe? — Nay, art thou not the cully of that still viler Joseph Leman, who serves himself as much by thy money, as he does thee by the double part he acts by thy direction? — And further still, art thou not the devil's

devil's agent, who only can, and who certainly will, suitably reward thee, if thou proceedest, and if thou effectest thy wicked purpose!

Could any man but thee put together upon paper the following questions with so much unconcern as thou seemest to have written them? — Give them a reperusal, O heart of adamant! "Whither can she fly to avoid me? Her parents will not receive her. Her uncles will not entertain her. Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot. Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend in town but me. Is entirely a stranger to the town." — What must that heart be that can triumph in a distress so deep, into which she has been plunged by thy elaborate arts and contrivances? And what a sweet, yet sad reflection was that, which had like to have had its due effect upon thee, arising from thy naming Lord M. . for her nuptial father! Her tender years inclining her to wish a father, and to hope a friend. — O my dear Lovelace, canst thou resolve to be, instead of the father thou hast robbed her of, a devil?

Thou knowest, that I have no interest, that I can have no view, in wishing thee to do justice to this admirable creature. For thy own sake, once more I conjure thee, for thy family's sake, and for the sake of our common humanity, let me beseech thee to be just to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

No matter whether these expostulations are in character from me, or not. I have been and am bad enough. If thou takest my advice, which is (as the inclosed will show thee) the advice of all thy

family, thou wilt, perhaps, have it to reproach me (and but perhaps neither) that thou art not a worse man than myself. But if thou dost not, and if thou ruinest such a virtue, all the complicated wickedness of ten devils, let loose among the innocent with full power over them, will not do so much vile and base mischief as thou wilt be guilty of.

It is said, that the prince on his throne is not safe, if a mind so desperate can be found, as values not its own life. So may it be said, that the most immaculate virtue is not safe, if a man can be met with, who has no regard to his own honor, and makes a jest of the most solemn vows and protestations.

Thou mayest by trick, chicane, and false colors, thou who art worse than a pickeroon in love, overcome a poor Lady so entangled as thou hast entangled her; so unprotected as thou hast made her: but consider, how much more generous and just to her, and noble to thyself, it is, to overcome thyself.

Once more, it is no matter, whether my past or future actions countenance my preachment, as, perhaps, thou'lt call what I have written: but this I promise thee, that whenever I meet with a woman of but one half of Miss Harlowe's perfections, who will favor me with her acceptance, I will take the advice I give, and marry. Nor will I offer to try her honor at the hazard of my own. In other words, I will not degrade an excellent creature in her own eyes, by trials, when I have no cause of suspicion. And let me add, with respect to thy eagleship's manifestation, of which thou boastest, in thy attempts upon the innocent and uncorrupted, rather

than upon those whom thou humorously comparest to wrens, wagtails, and phyl-tits, as thou callest them, that I hope I have it not once to reproach myself, that I ruined the morals of any one creature, who otherwise would have been uncorrupted. Guilt enough in contributing to the continued guilt of other poor wretches, if I am one of those who take care she shall never rise again, when she has once fallen.

Whatever the capital devil, under whose banner thou hast listed, will let thee do, with regard to this incomparable woman, I hope thou wilt act with honor in relation to the inclosed, between Lord M. . and me; since his Lordship, as thou wilt see, desires, that thou mayest not know he wrote on the subject; for reasons, I think, very far from being creditable to thyself: and that thou wilt take as meant, the honest zeal for thy service, of

Thy real friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXIV.

Lord M., To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

M. Hall, Monday, May 15.

SIR,

IF any man in the world has power over my nephew, it is you. I, therefore, write this, to beg you to interfere in the affair depending between him and the most accomplished of women, as every one says; and what every one says must be true.

I don't know that he has any bad designs upon her; but I know his temper too well, not to be apprehensive upon such long delays: and the Ladies here have been for some time in fear for her: Lady Sarah in particular, who (as you must know) is a wise woman, says, that these delays, in the present case, must be from him, rather than from the Lady.

He had always, indeed, a strong antipathy to marriage, and may think of playing his dog's tricks by her, as he has by so many others. If there's any danger of this, 'tis best to prevent it in time; for, when a thing is done, advice comes too late.

He has always had the folly and impertinence to make a jest of me for using proverbs: but as they are the wisdom of whole nations and ages collected

into a small compass, I am not to be shamed out of sentences, that often contain more wisdom in them, than the tedious harangues of most of our parsons and moralists. Let him laugh at them, if he pleases: you and I know better things, Mr. Belford.—Though you have kept company with a wolf, you have not learnt to howl of him.

But nevertheless, you must not let him know that I have written to you on this subject. I am ashamed to say it; but he has ever treated me as if I were a man of very common understanding; and would, perhaps, think never the better of the best advice in the world, for coming from me.—Those, Mr. Belford, who most love, are least set by.—But who would expect velvet to be made out of a sow's ear?

I am sure he has no reason, however, to slight me as he does. He may and will be the better for me, if he outlives me; though he once told me to my face, That I might do as I pleased with my estate; for that he, for his part, loved his liberty as much as he despised money. And at another time, twitting me with my phrases,—That the man was above control, who wanted not either to borrow or flatter.—He thought, I suppose, that I could not cover him with my wings, without pecking at him with my bill; though I never used to be pecking at him, without very great occasion: and, God knows, he might have my very heart, if he would but endeavour to oblige me, by studying his own good; for that is all I desire of him. Indeed, it was his poor mother that first spoiled

him; and I have been but too indulgent to him since. A fine grateful disposition, you'll say, to return evil for good! But that was always his way. It is a good saying, and which was verified by him with a witness—Children when little, make their parents fools; when great, mad.—Had his parents lived to see what I have seen of him, they would have been mad indeed.

This match, however, as the Lady has such an extraordinary share of wisdom and goodness, might set all to rights; and if you can forward it, I would enable him to make whatever settlements he could wish; and should not be unwilling to put him in possession of another pretty estate besides. I am no covetous man, he knows. And indeed, what is a covetous man to be likened to so fitly, as to a dog in a wheel which roasts meat for others? And what do I live for (as I have often said) but to see him and my two nieces well married and settled? May Heaven settle him down to a better mind, and turn his heart to more of goodness and consideration!

If the delays are on his side, I tremble for the Lady; and, if on hers (as he tells my niece Charlotte) I could wish she were apprised that delays are dangerous. Excellent as she is, she ought not to depend on her merits with such a changeable fellow, and such a professed marriage-hater, as he has been. Desert and reward, I can assure her, seldom keep company together.

But let him remember, that Vengeance though it comes with leaden feet, strikes with iron hands. If

he behaves ill in this case, he may find it so. What a pity it is, that a man of his talents and learning should be so vile a rake! Alas! alas! *Une poignée de bonne vie vaut mieux que plein muid de clergé*; a handful of good life is better than a whole bushel of learning.

You may throw in, too, as a friend, that, should he provoke me, it may not be too late for me to marry. My old friend Wycherly did so, when he was older than I am, on purpose to plague his nephew: and, in spite of this gout, I might have a child or two still. I have not been without some thoughts that way, when he has angered me more than ordinary: but these thoughts have gone off again hitherto, upon my considering, that the children of very young and very old men (though I am not so very old neither) last not long; and that old men when they marry young women, are said to make much of death: yet who knows but that matrimony might be good against the gouty humors I am troubled with?

No man is every thing—You, Mr. Belford, are a learned man. I am a Peer. And do you (as you best know how) inculcate upon him the force of these wise sayings which follow, as well as those which went before; but yet so discreetly, as that he may not know, that you borrow your darts from my quiver. These be they—Happy is the man who knows his follies in his youth. He that lives well, lives long. Again, He that lives ill one year, will sorrow for it seven. And again, as the Spaniards have it—Who lives well, sees afar off! Far off

indeed; for he fees into eternity, as a man may say. Then that other fine saying, He who perishes in needful dangers, is the devil's martyr. Another proverb I picked up at Madrid, when I accompanied Lord Lexington in his embassy to Spain, which might teach our nephew more mercy and compassion than is in his nature I doubt to show; which is this, That he who pities another, remembers himself. And this that is going to follow, I am sure he has proved the truth of a hundred times, That he who does what he will, seldom does what he ought. Nor is that unworthy of his notice, Young men's frolicks, old men feel. My devilish gout, God help me— But I will not say what I was going to say.

I remember, that you yourself, complimenting me for my taste in pithy and wise sentences, said a thing that gave me a high opinion of you; and it was this: "Men of talents, said you, are sooner to be convinced by short sentences than by long preachments, because the short sentences drive themselves into the heart, and stay there, while long discourses, though ever so good, tire the attention; and one good thing drives out another, and so on, till all is forgotten."

May your good counsels, Mr. Belford, founded upon these hints which I have given, pierce his heart, and incite him to do what will be so happy for himself, and so necessary for the honor of that admirable Lady whom I long to see his wife; and, if I may, I will not think of one for myself.

Should he abuse the confidence she has placed in

him, I myself shall pray, that vengeance may fall upon his head — *Raro* — I quite forget all my Latin, but I think it is, *Raro antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede pœna claudo* : where vice goes before, vengeance (sooner or later) will follow. But why do I translate these things for you?

I shall make no apologies for this trouble. I know how well you love him and me; and there is nothing in which you could serve us both more importantly, than in forwarding this match to the utmost of your power. When it is done, how shall I rejoice to see you at M. . Hall! Mean time, I shall long to hear that you are likely to be successful with him; and am,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

M. .

Mr. Lovelace having not returned an answer to Mr. Belford's expostulatory letter, so soon as Mr. Belford expected, he wrote to him expressing his apprehension, that he had disobliged him by his honest freedom. Among other things he says —

I pass my time here at Watford, attending my dying uncle, very heavily. I cannot, therefore, by any means, dispense with thy correspondence. And why shouldst thou punish me, for having more

conscience and more remorse than thyself? Thou, who never thoughtest either conscience or remorse an honor to thee. And I have, besides, a melancholy story to tell thee, in relation to Belton and his Thomazine; and which may afford a lesson to all the keeping class.

I have a letter from each of our three companions in the time. They have all the wickedness that thou hast, but not the wit. Some new rogueries do two of them boast of, which, I think, if completed, deserve the gallows.

I am far from hating intrigue upon principle. But to have awkward fellows plot, and commit their plots to paper, destitute of the seasonings, of the acumen, which is thy talent, how extremely shocking must their letters be! — But do thou, Lovelace, whether thou art, or art not, determined upon thy measures with regard to the fine Lady in thy power, enliven my heavy heart by thy communications; and thou wilt oblige

Thy melancholy friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXV.

MR. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Friday Night, *May* 19.

WHEN I have opened my views to thee so amply as I have done in my former letters; and have told thee, that my principal design is but to bring virtue to a trial; that, if virtue, it need not be afraid of; and that the reward of it will be marriage (that is to say, if, after I have carried my point, I cannot prevail upon her to live with me the life of honor; for that thou knowest is the wish of my heart); I am amazed at the repetition of thy wambling nonsense.

I am of opinion with thee, that some time hence, when I am grown wiser, I shall conclude, that there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in my present wild schemes. But what is this saying, but that I must be first wiser?

I do not intend to let this matchless creature slide through my fingers.

Art thou able to say half the things in her praise, that I have said, and am continually saying or writing?

Her gloomy father cursed the poor creature, because she put it out of his wicked power to compel her to have the man she hated. Thou knowest how little merit she has with me on this score.—And shall I not try the virtue I intend,

upon full proof, to reward, because her father is a tyrant? — Why art thou thus eternally reflecting upon so excellent a woman, as if thou wert assured she would fail in the trial? — Nay, thou declarest, every time thou writest on the subject, that she will, that she must yield, entangled as she is: and yet makest her virtue the pretence of thy sollicitude for her.

An instrument of the vile James Harlowe, dost thou call me? — O Jack! how I could curse thee! — I an instrument of that brother! of that sister! — But mark the end — And thou shalt see what will become of that brother, and of that sister!

Play not against me my own acknowledged sensibilities, I desire thee. Sensibilities, which at the same time that they contradict thy charge of an adamant heart in thy friend, thou hadst known nothing of, had I not communicated them to thee.

If I ruin such a virtue, sayest thou! — Eternal monotonist! — Again; “the most immaculate virtue may be ruined by men who have no regard to their honor, and who make a jest of the most solemn oaths, &c.” What must be the virtue that will be ruined without oaths? Is not the world full of these deceptions? And are not lovers’ oaths a jest of hundreds of years standing? And are not cautions against the perfidy of our sex, a necessary part of the female education?

I do intend to endeavour to overcome myself; but I must first try, if I cannot overcome this Lady. Have I not said, that the honor of her sex is concerned that I should try?

Whenever thou meetest with a woman of but half her perfections, thou wilt marry — Do, Jack.

Can a girl be degraded by trials, who is not overcome?

I am glad that thou takest crime to thyself, for not endeavouring to convert the poor wretches whom others have ruined. I will not recriminate upon thee, Belford, as I might, when thou flatterest thyself, that thou never ruinedst the morals of any young creature, who otherwise would not have been corrupted — The palliating consolation of an Hottentot heart, determined rather to gluttonize on the garbage of other foul feeders, than to reform. — But tell me, Jack, wouldst thou have spared such a girl as my Rosebud, had I not, by my example, engaged thy generosity? Nor was my Rosebud the only girl I spared: — When my power was acknowledged, who more merciful than thy friend?

It is resistance that inflames desire,
Sharpens the darts of Love, and blows its fire.
Love is disarm'd that meets with too much ease;
He languishes, and does not care to please.

The women know this as well as the men. They love to be addressed with spirit;

And therefore 'tis their golden fruit they guard
With so much care, to make possession hard.

Whence, for a by-reflection, the ardent, the complaisant gallant is so often preferred to the cold, the unadoring husband. And yet the sex do not consider, that variety and novelty give the ardor and the obsequiousness; and that, were the rake as much used to them as the husband is, he would be (and is to his own wife, if married) as indifferent to their favors, as their husbands are, and the husband, in his turn, would, to another woman, be the rake. Let the women, upon the whole, take this lesson from a Lovelace — “Always to endeavour to make themselves as new to a husband, and to appear as elegant and as obliging to him, as they are desirous to appear to a lover, and actually were to him as such; and then the rake, which all women love, will last longer in the husband, than it generally does.”

But to return: — If I have not sufficiently cleared my conduct to thee in the above; I refer thee once more to mine of the 13th of last month. And pr'ythee, Jack, lay me not under a necessity to repeat the same things so often. I hope thou readest what I write more than once.

I am not displeased that thou art so apprehensive of my resentment, that I cannot miss a day, without making thee uneasy. Thy conscience, 'tis plain, tells thee, that thou hast deserved my displeasure: and if it has convinced thee of that, it will make thee afraid of repeating thy fault. See that this be the consequence. Else, now that thou hast told me how I can punish thee, it is very likely that I do punish thee by my silence, altho' I have as much

pleasure in writing on this charming subject, as thou canst have in reading what I write.

When a boy, if a dog ran away from me through fear, I generally looked about for a stone, or a stick; and if neither offered to my hand, I skimmed my hat after him to make him afraid for something. What signifies power, if we do not exert it?

Let my Lord know that thou hast scribbled to me. But give him not the contents of thy epistle. Though a parcel of crude stuff, he would think there was something in it. Poor arguments will do, when brought in favor of what we like. But the stupid Peer little thinks that this Lady is a rebel to love. On the contrary, not only he, but all the world believe her to be a volunteer in his service. — So I shall incur blame, and she will be pitied, if any thing happen amiss.

Since my Lord's heart is so fet upon this match, I have written already to let him know, "That my unhappy character has given my beloved an ungenerous diffidence of me. That she is so mother-sick and father-fond, that she had rather return to Harlowe-place, than marry. That she is even apprehensive, that the step she has taken of going off with me, will make the Ladies of a family of such rank and honor as ours, think slightly of her. That, therefore, I desire his Lordship (though this hint, I tell him, must be very delicately touched) to write me such a letter as I can show her (let him treat me in it ever so freely, I shall not take it amiss, I tell him, because I know his Lordship

takes pleasure in writing to me in a corrective style). That he may make what offers he pleases on the marriage. That I desire his presence at the ceremony; that I may take from his hand the greatest blessing that mortal man can give me."

I have not absolutely told the Lady that I would write to his Lordship to this effect; yet have given her reason to think I will. So that without the last necessity I shall not produce the answer I expect from him. For I am very loth, I own, to make use of any of my family's names for the furthering of my designs. And yet I must make all secure, before I pull off the mask. Was not this my motive for bringing her hither?

Thus thou seest, that the old Peer's letter came very seasonably. I thank thee for it. But as to his sentences, they cannot possibly do me good. I was early suffocated with his wisdom of nations. When a boy, I never asked any thing of him, but outflowed a proverb; and if the tendency of that was to deny me, I never could obtain the least favor. This gave me so great an aversion to the very word, that, when a child, I made it a condition with my tutor, who was an honest parson, that I would not read my bible at all, if he would not excuse me one of the wisest books in it: to which, however, I had no other objection, than that it was called the proverbs. And as for Solomon, he was then a hated character with me, not because of his polygamy, but because I had conceived him to be such another musty old fellow as my uncle.

Well

Well but let us leave old saws to old men.—What signifies thy tedious whining over thy departing relation? Is it not generally agreed, that he cannot recover? Will it not be kind in thee to put him out of his misery? I hear, that he is pestered still with visits from doctors and apothecaries, and surgeons; that they cannot cut so deep as the mortification has gone; and that in every visit, in every scarification, inevitable death is pronounced upon him. Why then do they keep tormenting him? Is it not to take away more of his living fleece than of his dead flesh?—When a man is given over, the fee should surely be refused. Are they not now robbing his heirs?—What hast thou to do, if the Will be as thou'dst have it?—He sent for thee (did he not?) to close his eyes. He is but an uncle, is he?

Let me see, if I mistake not, it is in the Bible, or some other good book: can it be in Herodotus?—O I believe it is in Josephus; a half-sacred, and half-profane author. He tells us of a king of Syria, put out of his pain by his prime minister, or one who deserved to be so for his contrivance. The story says, if I am right, that he spread a wet cloth over his face, which killing him, he reigned in his place. A notable fellow! Perhaps this wet cloth in the original, is what we now call Laudanum; a potion that overspreads the faculties, as the wet cloth did the face of the royal patient; and the translator knew not how to render it.

But how like a forlorn varlet thou subscribest, “Thy melancholy friend, J. Belford!” Melancholy!

for what? To stand by, and see fair play between an old man and death? I thought thou hadst been more of a man; thou that art not afraid of an acute death, a sword's point, to be so plaguily hyped at the consequences of a chronical one!—What though the scarificators work upon him day by day? It is only upon a *caput mortuum*: and pr'ythee go to, to use the *styllum veterum*, and learn of the Royal Butchers; who for sport (a hundred times worse men than thy Lovelace) widow ten thousand at a brush, and make twice as many fatherless—Learn of them, I say, how to support a single death.

But art thou sure, Jack, it is a mortification?—My uncle once gave promises of such a root-and-branch distemper: but alas! it turned to a smart gout-fit; and I had the mortification instead of him—I have heard that Bark in proper doses will arrest a mortification in its progress, and at last cure it. Let thy uncle's surgeon know, that it is worth more than his ears, if he prescribe one grain of the Bark.

I wish my uncle had given me the opportunity of setting thee a better example: thou shouldst have seen what a brave fellow I had been. And had I had occasion to write, my conclusion would have been this: "I hope the old Trojan's happy. In that hope, I am so; and am

Thy rejoicing friend,

R. LOVELACE."

Dwell not always, Jack, upon one subject. Let me have poor Belton's story. The sooner the better. If I can be of service to him, tell him he may command me either in purse or person. Yet the former with a freer will than the latter, for how can I leave my goddeſs? But I'll iſſue my commands to my other vaſſals to attend thy ſummons.

If ye want head, let me know. If not, my quota, on this occaſion, is money.

LETTER XXVI.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Eſq.

Saturday, *May 20.*

NOT one word will I reply to ſuch an abandon'd wretch, as thou haſt ſhown thyſelf to be in thine of laſt night. I will leave the Lady to the protection of that power who only can work miracles; and to her own merits. Still I have hopes that theſe will ſave her.

I will proceed, as thou deſireſt, to poor Belton's caſe; and the rather, as it has thrown me into ſuch a train of thinking upon our paſt lives, our preſent courſes, and our future views, as may be of ſervice to both, if I can give due weight to the reflections that ariſe from it.

The poor man made me a viſit on Thursday, in this my melancholy attendance. He began with

complaints of his ill health and spirits, his hectic cough, and his encreased malady of spitting of blood; and then led to his story.

A confounded one it is; and which highly aggravates his other maladies: for it has come out, that his Thomazine (who, truly, would be new christened, you know, that her name may be nearer in found to the christian name of the man whom she pretended to dote upon) has for many years carried on an intrigue with a fellow who had been hostler to her father (an innkeeper at Darking); of whom, at the expense of poor Belton, she has made a gentleman; and managed it so, that having the art to make herself his cashier, she has been unable to account for large sums, which he thought forthcoming at demand, and had trusted to her custody, in order to pay of a mortgage upon his paternal estate in Kent, which his heart had run upon leaving clear; but which cannot now be done, and will soon be foreclosed. And yet she has so long passed for his wife, that he knows not what to resolve upon about her; nor about the two boys he was so fond of, supposing them to be his; whereas now he begins to doubt his share in them.

So keeping don't do, Lovelace. 'Tis not the eligible life. "A man may keep a woman, said the poor fellow to me, but not his estate! — Two interests! — Then, my tottering fabric!" pointing to his emaciated carcass.

We do well to value ourselves upon our liberty, or, to speak more properly, upon the liberties we take! We had need to run down matrimony as we

do, and to make that state the subject of our frothy jests; when we frequently render ourselves (for this of Tom's is not a singular case) the dupes and tools of women who generally govern us (by arts our wife heads penetrate not) more absolutely than a wife would attempt to do.

Let us consider this point a little; and that upon our own principles, as libertines, setting aside what is exacted from us by the laws of our country, and its customs; which, nevertheless, we cannot get over, till we have got over almost all moral obligations, as members of society.

In the first place, let us consider (we, who are in possession of estates by legal descent) how we should have liked to have been such naked destitute varlets, as we must have been, had our fathers been as wise as ourselves; and despised matrimony as we do—And then let us ask ourselves, If we ought not to have the same regard for our posterity, as we are glad our fathers had for theirs?

But this, perhaps, is too moral a consideration.—To proceed, therefore, to those considerations which will be more striking to us: how can we reasonably expect oeconomy or frugality (or any thing indeed but riot and waste) from creatures who have an interest, and must, therefore, have views, different from our own?

They know the uncertain tenure (our fickle humors) by which they hold: and is it to be wondered at, supposing them to be provident harlots, that they should endeavour, if they have the power, to lay up against a rainy day? or, if they have not

the power, that they should squander all they can come at, when they are sure of nothing but the present hour; and when the life they live, and the sacrifices they have made, put conscience and honor out of the question?

Whereas a wife having the same family interest with her husband, lies not under either the same apprehensions or temptations; and has not broken through (of necessity, at least, has not) those restraints which education has fastened upon her: and if she make a private purse, which we are told by anti-matrimonialists all wives love to do, and has children, it goes all into the same family at the long run.

Then, as to the great article of fidelity to your bed, are not women of family, who are well educated, under greater restraints, than creatures, who, if they ever had reputation, sacrifice it to sordid interest, or to more sordid appetite, the moment they give up to you? Does not the example you furnish, of having succeeded with her, give encouragement for others to attempt her likewise? For, with all her blandishments, can any man be so credulous, or so vain, as to believe, that the woman he could persuade, another may not prevail upon?

Adultery is so capital a guilt, that even rakes and libertines, if not wholly abandoned, and, as I may say, invited by a woman's levity, disavow and condemn it: but here, in a state of keeping, a woman is in no danger of incurring (legally, at least) that guilt; and you yourself have broken through and overthrown in her all the fences and boundaries of

moral honesty, and the modesty and reserves of her sex: and what tie shall hold her against inclination, or interest? And what shall deter an attempter?

While a husband has this security from legal sanctions, that if his wife be detected in a criminal conversation with a man of fortune (the most likely by bribes to seduce her) he may recover very great damages, and procure a divorce besides: which, to say nothing of the ignominy, is a consideration that must have some force upon both parties. And a wife must be vicious indeed, and a reflection upon a man's own choice, who, for the sake of change, and where there are no qualities to seduce, nor affluence to corrupt, will run so many hazards to injure her husband in the tenderest of all points.

But there are difficulties in procuring a divorce (and so there ought) — and none, says the rake, in parting with a mistress whenever you suspect her; or whenever you are weary of her, and have a mind to change her for another.

But must not the man be a brute indeed, who can cast off a woman whom he has seduced (if he take her from the town, that's another thing) without some flagrant reason; something that will better justify him to himself, as well as to her, and to the world, than mere power and novelty?

But I don't see; if we judge by fact, and by the practice of all we have been acquainted with of the Keeping Class, that we know how to part with them when we have them.

That we know we can if we will, is all we have for it: and this leads us to bear many things from a mistress which we would not from a wife. But, if we are good-natured and humane: if the woman has art (and what woman wants it, who has fallen by art? and to whose precarious situation art is so necessary?) If you have given her the credit of being called by your name: if you have a settled place of abode, and have received and paid visits in her company, as your wife: if she has brought you children—You will allow, that these are strong obligations upon you, in the world's eye, as well as to your own heart, against tearing yourself from such close connexions. She will stick to you as your skin: and it will be next to slaying of yourself to cast her off.

Even if there be cause for it, by infidelity, she will have managed ill, if she have not her defenders. Nor did I ever know a cause or a person so bad, as to want advocates, either from ill will to the one, or pity to the other: and you will then be thought a hard-hearted miscreant: and even were she to go off without credit to herself, she will leave you as little; especially with all those whose good opinion a man would wish to cultivate.

Well, then, shall this poor privilege, that we may part with a woman if we will, be deemed a balance for the other inconveniences? Shall it be thought by us, who are men of family and fortune, an equivalent for giving up equality of degree; and taking for the partner of our bed, and very probably more than the partner in our estates (to the breach of all family-rule

and order) a low-born, a low-educated creature, who has not brought any thing into the common stock; and can possibly make no returns for the solid benefits she receives, but those libidinous ones, which a man cannot boast of, but to his disgrace, nor think of, but to the shame of both?

Moreover, as the man advances in years, the fury of his libertinism will go off. He will have different aims and pursuits, which will diminish his appetite to ranging, and make such a regular life as the matrimonial and family-life, palatable to him, and every day more palatable.

If he has children, and has reason to think them his, and if his lewd courses have left him any estate, he will have cause to regret the restraint his boasted liberty has laid him under, and the valuable privilege it has deprived him of; when he finds, that it must descend to some relation, for whom, whether near or distant, he cares not one farthing; and who, perhaps (if a man of virtue) has held him in the utmost contempt for his dissolute life.

And were we to suppose his estate in his power to bequeath as he pleases; why should a man resolve, for the gratifying of his foolish humor only, to bastardize his race? Why should he wish to expose his children to the scorn and insults of the rest of the world? Why should he, whether they are sons or daughters, lay them under the necessity of complying with proposals of marriage, either inferior as to fortune, or unequal as to age? Why should he deprive the children he loves, who themselves may be guilty of no fault, of the respect they would wish to have, and to deserve;

and of the opportunity of associating themselves with proper, that is to say, with reputable company? And why should he make them think themselves under obligation to every person of character, who will vouchsafe to visit them? What little reason, in a word, would such children have to bless their father's obstinate defiance of the laws and customs of his country; and for giving them a mother, of whom they could not think with honor; to whose crime it was, that they owed their very beings, and whose example it was their duty to shun?

If the education and morals of these children are left to chance, as too generally they are (for the man who has humanity and a feeling heart, and who is capable of fondness for his offspring, I take it for granted, will marry); the case is still worse; his crime is perpetuated, as I may say, by his children: and the sea, the army, perhaps the highway, for the boys; the common for the girls; too often point out the way to a worse catastrophe.

What, therefore, upon the whole, do we get by treading in these crooked paths, but danger, disgrace, and a too late repentance?

And after all, do we not frequently become the cullies of our own libertinism; sliding into the very state with those half-worn-out doxies, which perhaps we might have entered into with their Ladies; at least with their superiors both in degree and fortune? And all the time, lived handsomely like ourselves; not sneaking into holes and corners; and, when we crept abroad with our women, looking

about us, and at every one that passed us, as if we were confessedly accountable to the censures of all honest people.

My cousin Tony Jenyns, thou knewest. He had not the actively mischievous spirit, that thou, Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and myself, have: but he imbibed the same notions we do, and carried them into practice.

How did he prate against wedlock! How did he strut about as a wit and a smart! And what a wit and a smart did all the boys and girls of our family (myself among the rest, then an urchin) think him, for the airs he gave himself? — “Marry! No, not for the world; what man of sense would bear the insolences, the petulances, the expensiveness of a wife! He could not for the heart of him think it tolerable, that a woman of equal rank and fortune, and, as it might happen, superior talents to his own, should look upon herself to have a right to share the benefit of that fortune which she brought him.”

So, after he had fluttered about the town for two or three years, in all which time he had a better opinion of himself than any body else had, what does he do, but enter upon an affair with his fencingmaster’s daughter?

He succeeds; takes private lodgings for her at Hackney; visits her by stealth; both of them tender of reputations that were extremely tender, but which neither had quite given up; for rakes of either sex are always the last to condemn or cry down themselves: visited by nobody, nor visiting:

the life of a thief, or of a man beset by creditors, afraid to look out of his own house, or to be seen abroad with her. And thus went he on for twelve years, and, though he had a good estate, hardly making both ends meet; for, though no glare, there was no œconomy; and besides, he had every year a child, and very fond of his children was he. But none of them lived above three years: and being now, on the death of the dozenth, grown as dully sober, as if he had been a real husband, his good Mrs. Thomas (for he had not permitted her to take his own name) prevailed upon him to think the loss of their children a judgment upon the parents for their wicked way of life (a time will come, Lovelace, if we live to advanced years, in which reflection will take hold of the enfeebled mind); and then it was not difficult for his woman to induce him, by way of compounding with heaven, to marry her. When this was done, he had leisure to sit down, and contemplate; and to recollect the many offers of persons of family and fortune which he had declined in the prime of life: his expenses equal at least: his reputation not only less, but lost: his enjoyments stolen: his partnership unequal, and such as he had always been ashamed of. But the women said, that after twelve or thirteen years cohabitation, Tony did an honest thing by her. And that was all my poor cousin got by making his old mistress his new wife — Not a drum, not a trumpet, not a fife, not a tabret, nor the expectation of a new joy, to animate him on!

What Belton will do with his Thomafine, I know not; nor care I to advise him: for I see the poor fellow does not like that any body should curse her but himself. This he does very heartily. And so low is he reduced, that he blubbers over the reflection upon his past fondness for her cubs, and upon his present doubts of their being his: "What a damn'd thing is it, Belford, if Tom and Hal should be the hostler dog's puppies, and not mine!"

Very true! and I think the strong health of the chubby-faced muscular whelps confirms the too great probability. But I say not so to him.

You, he says, are such a gay, lively mortal, that this sad tale would make no impression upon you: especially now, that your whole heart is engaged as it is. Mowbray would be too violent upon it: he has not, he says, a feeling heart. Tourville has no discretion: and, a pretty jest! although he and his Thomafine lived without reputation in the world (people guessing that they were not married, notwithstanding she went by his name) yet "he would not too much discredit the cursed ingrate neither!"

Could a man act a weaker part, had he been really married; and were he sure he was going to separate from the mother of his own children?

I leave this as a lesson upon thy heart, without making any application: only, with this remark, "That after we libertines have indulged our licentious appetites, reflecting (in the conceit of our vain hearts) both with our lips and by our lives, upon our ancestors, and the good old ways, we find

out, when we come to years of discretion, if we live till then (what all who knew us found out before, that is to say;) we find out our own despicable folly; that those good old ways would have been best for us, as well as for the rest of the world; and that in every step we have deviated from them, we have only exposed our vanity, and our ignorance at the same time. ”

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXVII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Saturday, *May* 20.

I AM pleased with the sober reflection with which thou concludest thy last; and I thank thee for it.

Poor Belton! — I did not think his Thomazine, would have proved so very a devil. But this must everlastingly be the risks of a keeper, who takes up with a low-bred girl. This I never did. Nor had I occasion to do it. Such a one as I, Jack, needed only, till now, to shake the stateliest tree, and the mellowed fruit dropt into my mouth: always of Montaigne's taste, thou knowest, thought it a glory to subdue a girl of family. — More truly delightful to me the seduction-progress than the crowning act: for that's a vapor, a bubble! And most