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The History Of Clarissa Harlowe

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[Letters 35 - 40]

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son for from what passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself) to perfect her scheme in relation to Mrs. Townsend. She concludes her letter in these words:

I should say something of your last favor (but a few hours ago received) and of your dialogue with your mother—Are you not very whimsical, my dear? I have but two things to wish for on this occasion.—The one, that your pleasantry had a better subject than that you find for it in this dialogue—The other, that my situation were not such, as must too often damp that pleasantry in you, and will not permit me to enjoy it, as I used to do. Be, however, happy in yourself, though you cannot in

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXV.

MR. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday Morn. *May 22.*

NO generosity in this Lady. None at all. Wouldst thou not have thought, that after I had permitted her to withdraw, primed for mischief as I was, she would meet me next morning early, and that with a smile, making me one of her best courtesies?

I was in the diningroom before six, expecting her. She opened not her door. I went up stairs and down; and hemm'd; and called Will; called Dorcas; threw the doors hard to; but still she opened not her door. Thus till half an hour after eight, fooled I away my time; and then (breakfast ready) I sent Dorcas to request her company.

But I was astonished, when (following the wench, as she did at the first invitation) I saw her enter dressed, all but her gloves, and those and her fan in her hand; in the same moment bidding Dorcas direct Will, to get her a chair to the door.

Cruel creature, thought I, to expose me thus to the derision of the women below!

Going abroad, Madam?

I am, Sir.

I looked curst silly, I am sure. You will breakfast, I hope, Madam; in a very humble strain; yet with an hundred tenter-hooks in my heart.

Had she given me more notice of her intention, I had perhaps wrought myself up to the frame I was in the day before, and begun my vengeance. And immediately came into my head all the virulence that had been transcribed for me from Miss Howes's letters, and in that letter which I had transcribed myself.

Yes, she would drink one dish; and then laid her gloves and fan in the window just by.

I was perfectly disconcerted. I hemm'd, and was going to speak several times; but knew not in what key. Who's modest now, thought I! Who's insolent now! — How a tyrant of a woman confounds

a bashful man! — She was acting Miss Howe, I thought; and I the spiritless Hickman.

At last, I will begin, thought I.

She a dish — I a dish.

Sip, her eyes her own, she; like an haughty and imperious sovereign, conscious of dignity, every look a favor.

Sip, like her vassal, I; lips and hands trembling, and not knowing that I sipp'd or tasted.

I was — I was — I sipp'd — (drawing in my breath and the liquor together, though I scalded my mouth with it) I was in hopes, Madam —

Dorcas came in just then. — Dorcas, said she, is a chair gone for?

Damn'd impertinence, thought I, thus to put me out in my speech! And I was forced to wait for the servant's answer to the insolent mistress's question.

William is gone for one, Madam.

This cost me a minute's silence before I could begin again. And then it was with my hopes, and my hopes, and my hopes that I should have been early admitted to —

What weather is it, Dorcas? said she, as regardless of me as if I had not been present.

A little lowering, Madam — The sun is gone in — It was very fine half an hour ago.

I had no patience. Up I rose. Down went the tea-cup, saucer and all — Confound the weather, the sunshine, and the wench! — Begone for a devil, when I am speaking to your Lady, and have so little opportunity given me.

Up rose the saucy-face, half-frighted; and snatched from the window her gloves and fan.

You must not go, Madam! — Seizing her hand — By my soul you must not —

Must not, Sir! — But I must — You can curse your maid in my absence, as well as if I were present — Except — except — you intend for me, what you direct to her.

Dearest creature, you must not go — You must not leave me — Such determined scorn! Such contempts! — Questions asked your servant of no meaning but to break in upon me — I cannot bear it!

Detain me not, struggling. I will not be withheld. I like you not, nor your ways. You fought to quarrel with me yesterday, for no reason in the world that I can think of, but because I was too obliging. You are an ungrateful man; and I hate you with my whole heart, Mr. Lovelace!

Do not make me desperate, Madam. Permit me to say, that you shall not leave me in this humor. Wherever you go, I will attend you. Had Miss Howe been my friend, I had not been thus treated. It is but too plain to whom my difficulties are owing. I have long observed, that every letter you receive from her, makes an alteration in your behaviour to me. She would have you treat me, as she treats Mr. Hickman, I suppose: but neither does that treatment become your admirable temper to offer, nor me to receive.

This startled her. She did not care to have me think hardly of Miss Howe.

But recollecting herself, Miss Howe, said she, is a friend to virtue, and to good men. If she like not you, it is because you are not one of those.

Yes, Madam, and therefore to speak of Mr. Hickman and myself, as you both, I suppose, think of each, she treats him as she would not treat a Lovelace.—I challenge you, Madam, to show me but one of the many letters you have received from her, where I am mentioned.

Miss Howe is just; Miss Howe is good, replied she. She writes, she speaks, of every body as they deserve. If you point me out but any one occasion, upon which you have reason to build a merit to yourself, as either just or good, or even generous, I will look out for her letter on that occasion (If such an occasion there be, I have certainly acquainted her with it), and will engage it shall be in your favor.

Devilish severe! And as indelicate as severe, to put a modest man upon hunting backward after his own merits.

She would have flung from me: I will not be detained, Mr. Lovelace. I will go out.

Indeed you must not, Madam, in this humor. And I placed myself between her and the door.—And then, fanning, she threw herself into a chair, her sweet face all crimsoned over with passion.

I cast myself at her feet.—Begone, Mr. Lovelace, said she, with a rejecting motion, her fan in her hand; for your own sake leave me!—My soul is above thee, man! with both her hands pushing me from her!—Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely

I think my soul above thee! — Thou hast in mine, a proud, a too proud heart, to contend with! — Leave me, and leave me for ever! — Thou hast a proud heart to contend with!

Her air, her manner, her voice, were bewitchingly noble, though her words were so severe.

Let me worship an angel, said I, no woman. Forgive me, dearest creature! — Creature if you be, forgive me! — Forgive my inadvertencies! Forgive my inequalities! — Pity my infirmities! — Who is equal to my Clarissa?

I trembled between admiration and love; and wrapt my arms about her knees, as she sat. She tried to rise at the moment; but my clasping round her thus ardently, drew her down again; and never was woman more affrighted. But free as my clasping emotion might appear to her apprehensive heart, I had not, at the instant, any thought but what reverence inspired. And till she had actually withdrawn (which I permitted under promise of a speedy return, and on her consent to dismiss the chair) all the motions of my heart were as pure as her own,

She kept not her word. An hour I waited before I sent to claim her promise. She could not possibly see me yet, was the answer. As soon as she could, she would.

Dorcas says, she still excessively trembled; and ordered her to give her hartshorn and water.

A strange apprehensive creature! Her terror is too great for the occasion. Evils are often greater in apprehension than in reality. Hast thou never observed,

that the terrors of a bird caught, and actually in the hand, bear no comparison to what we might have supposed those terrors would be, were we to have formed a judgment of the same bird by its shyness before it was taken?

Dear creature! — Did she never romp? Did she never from girlhood to now, hoyden? The innocent kinds of freedom taken and allowed on these occasions, would have familiarized her to greater. Sacrilege but to touch the hem of her garment! — Excess of delicacy! — O the consecrated beauty! how can she think to be a wife!

But how do I know till I try, whether she may not by a less alarming treatment be prevailed upon, or whether (day, I have done with thee!) she may not yield to nightly surprises? This is still the burden of my song, I can marry her when I will. And if I do, after prevailing (whether by surprise, or by reluctant consent) whom but myself shall I have injured?

* * *

It is now eleven o'clock. She will see me as soon as she can, she tells Polly Horton, who made her a tender visit, and to whom she is less reserved than to any body else. Her emotion, she assures her, was not owing to perverseness, to nicety, to humor; but to weakness of heart. She has not strength of mind sufficient, she says, to enable her to support her condition.

Yet what a contradiction! — Weakness of heart; says she, with such strength of will! — O Belford! she is a lion-hearted Lady, in every case where her

honor, her punctilio rather, calls for spirit. But I have had reason more than once in her case, to conclude, that the passions of the gentle, slower to be moved than those of the quick, are the most flaming, the most irresistible, when raised. — Yet her charming body is not equally organized. The unequal partners pull two ways; and the divinity within her tears her filken frame. But had the same soul informed a masculine body, never would there have been a truer hero.

Monday; two o'clock.

Not yet visible! — My beloved is not well. What expectations had she from my ardent admiration of her! — More rudeness than revenge apprehended. Yet, how my soul thirsts for revenge upon both these Ladies! I must have recourse to my master-strokes. This cursed project of Miss Howe and her Mrs. Townsend (if I cannot contrive to render it abortive) will be always a sword hanging over my head. Upon every little disobligation my beloved will be for taking wing; and the pains I have taken to deprive her of every other refuge or protection in order to make her absolutely dependent upon me, will be all thrown away. But, perhaps, I shall find out a smuggler to counterplot Miss Howe.

Thou rememberest the contention between the sun and the Northwind, in the fable; which should first make an honest traveller throw off his cloak.

Boreas began first. He puffed away most vehemently; and often made the poor fellow curve and stagger; but with no other effect, than to cause him to wrap his furtout the closer about him.

But when it came to Phœbus's turn, he so played upon the traveller with his beams, that he made him first unbutton, and then throw it quite off:—Nor left he, till he obliged him to take to the friendly shade of a spreading beech; where prostrating himself on the thrown-off cloak, he took a comfortable nap.

The victor-god then laughed outright, both at Boreas and the traveller, and pursued his radiant course, shining upon, and warming and cherishing a thousand new objects, as he danced along: and at night, when he put up his fiery coursers, he diverted his Thetis with the relation of his pranks in the passed day.

I, in like manner, will discard all my boistrous inventions: and if I can oblige my sweet traveller to throw aside, but for one moment, the cloak of her rigid virtue, I shall have nothing to do, but, like the sun, to bless new objects with my rays. But my chosen hours of conversation and repose, after all my peregrinations, will be devoted to my goddesses.

* * *

And now, Belford; according to my new system, I think this house of Mrs. Fetchville an embarrass upon me. I will get rid of it; for some time at least. Mennell, when I am out, shall come to her, inquiring for me. What for? thou'lt ask. What for!

for!—Hast thou not heard what has befallen poor Mrs. Fetchville?—Then I'll tell thee.

One of her maids, about a week ago, was taken with the small pox. The rest kept their mistress ignorant of it till Friday; and then she came to know it by accident. The greater half of the plagues poor mortals of condition are tormented with, proceed from the servants they take, partly for show, partly for use, and with a view to lessen their cares.

This has so terrified the widow, that she is taken with all the symptoms that threaten an attack from that dreadful enemy of fair faces.—So must not think of removing: yet cannot expect, that we should be further delayed on her account.

She now wishes, with all her heart, that she had known her own mind, and gone into the country at first when I treated about the house: this evil then had not happened! A cursed cross accident for us, too!—High ho! Nothing else, I think, in this mortal life! People need not study to bring crosses upon themselves by their petulancies.

So this affair of the house will be over; at least, for one while. But then I can fall upon an expedient which will make amends for this disappointment. I must move slow, in order to be sure. I have a charming contrivance or two in my head, even supposing my beloved should get away, to bring her back again.

But what is become of Lord M. . I trow, that he writes not to me, in answer to my invitation? If he would send me such a letter as I could show, it might go a great way towards a perfect reconciliation.

I have written to Charlotte about it. He shall soon hear from me, and that in a way he won't like, if he writes not quickly. He has sometimes threatened to disinherit me: but if I should renounce him, it would be but justice, and would vex him ten times more, than any thing he can do, will vex me. Then, the settlements unavoidably delayed, by his neglect! — How shall I bear such a life of procrastination! — I, who, as to my will, and impatience, and so forth, am of the true Lady make, and can as little bear control and disappointment as the best of them!

* * *

Another letter, from Miss Howe. I suppose it is that which she promises in her last to send her relating to the courtship between old Tony the uncle, and Annabella the mother. I should be extremely rejoiced to see it. No more of the smuggler-plot in it, surely! This letter, it seems, she has put in her pocket. But I hope I shall soon find it deposited with the rest.

Monday Evening.

At my repeated request she condescended to meet me in the diningroom to afternoon tea, and not before.

She entered with bashfulness, as I thought; in a pretty confusion, for having carried her apprehensions too far. Sullen and slow moved she towards the tea-table. — Dorcas present, busy in tea-cup

preparations. I took her reluctant hand, and pressed it to my lips—Dearest, loveliest of creatures, why this distance? Why this displeasure?—How can you thus torture the faithfulest heart in the world?

She disengaged her hand. Again I would have snatched it.

Be quiet peevishly withdrawing it: and down she sat; a gentle palpitation in the beauty of beauties indicating mingled fullness and resentment; her snowy handkerchief rising and falling, and a sweet flush overspreading her charming cheeks.

For God's sake, Madam!—And a third time I would have taken her repulsing hand.

And for the same sake, Sir, no more teasing.

Dorcas retired; I drew my chair nearer hers, and with the most respectful tenderness took her hand; and told her, that I could not forbear to express my apprehensions (from the distance she was so desirous to keep me at) that if any man in the world was more indifferent to her, to use no harsher a word, than another, it was the unhappy wretch before her.

She looked steadily upon me for a moment, and with her other hand, not withdrawing that I held, pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket; and by a twinkling motion urged forward a tear or two which having arisen in each sweet eye, it was plain by that motion, she would rather have dissipated: but answered me only with a sigh, and an averted face.

I urged her to speak; to look up at me; to bless me with an eye more favorable.

I had reason, she told me, for my complaint of her indifference. She saw nothing in my mind that was generous. I was not a man to be obliged or favored. My strange behaviour to her since Saturday night, for no cause at all that she knew of, convinced her of this. Whatever hopes she had conceived of me, were utterly dissipated: all my ways were disgustful to her.

This cut me to the heart. The guilty, I believe, in every case, less patiently bear the detecting truth, than the innocent do the degrading falsehood.

I bespoke her patience, while I took the liberty to account for this change, on my part.—I re-acknowledged the pride of my heart, which could not bear the thought of that want of preference in the heart of a Lady whom I hoped to call mine, which she had always manifested. Marriage, I said, was a state that was not to be entered upon with indifference on either side.

It is insolence, interrupted she, it is presumption, Sir, to expect tokens of value, without resolving to deserve them. You have no whining creature before you, Mr. Lovelace, overcome by weak motives, to love where there is no merit. Miss Howe can tell you, Sir, that I never loved the faults of my friend, nor ever wished her to love me for mine. It was a rule with us, not to spare each other. And would a man who has nothing but faults (for pray, Sir, what are your virtues?) expect that I should show a value for him? Indeed if I did, I should not deserve even his value; but ought to be despised by him.

Well have you, Madam, kept up to this noble

manner of thinking. You are in no danger of being despised for any marks of tenderness or favor shown to the man before you. You have been, perhaps, you'll think, laudably studious of making and taking occasions to declare, that it was far from being owing to your choice, that you had any thoughts of me. My whole soul, Madam, in all its errors, in all its wishes, in all its views, had been laid open and naked before you, had I been encouraged by such a share in your confidence and esteem, as would have secured me against your apprehended worst constructions of what I should from time to time have revealed to you, and consulted you upon. For never was there a franker heart; nor a man so ready to accuse himself (this, Belford, is true). But you know, Madam, how much otherwise it has been between us. Doubt, distance, reserve, on your part, begat doubt, fear, awe, on mine. How little confidence! as if we apprehended each other to be a plotter rather than a lover. How have I dreaded every letter that has been brought you from Wilton's! And with reason; since the last, from which I expected so much, on account of the proposals I had made you in writing, has, if I may judge by the effects, and by your denial of seeing me yesterday (though you could go abroad, and in a chair too, to avoid my attendance on you) set you against me more than ever.

I was guilty, it seems, of going to church, said the indignant charmer; and without the company of a man, whose choice it would not have been to go, had I not gone — I was guilty of desiring to have

the whole Sunday to myself, after I had obliged you against my will, at a play; and after you had detained me (equally to my dislike) to a very late hour over night.—These were my faults; for these I was to be punished: I was to be compelled to see you, and to be terrified when I did see you, by the most shocking ill humor that was ever shown to a creature in my circumstances, and not bound to bear it. You have pretended to find free fault with my father's temper, Mr. Lovelace: but the worst that he ever showed after marriage, was not in the least to be compared to what you have shown twenty times beforehand.—And what are my prospects with you, at the very best?—My indignation rises against you, Mr. Lovelace, while I speak to you, when I recollect the many instances, equally ungenerous and unpolite, of your behaviour to one whom you have brought into distress—And I can hardly bear you in my sight.

She then turned from me, standing up, and lifting up her folded hands, and charming eyes swimming in tears, O my father, said the inimitable creature, you might have spared your heavy curse, had you known how I have been punished, ever since my swerving feet led me out of your garden-doors to meet this man!—Then, sinking into her chair, a burst of passionate tears forced their way down her glowing cheeks.

My dearest life, taking her still folded hands in mine, who can bear an invocation so affecting, tho' so passionate?

And as I hope to live, my nose tingled, as I once,

when a boy, remember it did (and indeed once more very lately) just before some tears came into my eyes; and I durst hardly trust my face in view of hers.

What have I done to deserve this impatient exclamation?—Have I, at any time, by words, by deeds, by looks, given you cause to doubt my honor, my reverence, my adoration, I may call it, of your virtues? All is owing to misapprehension, I hope, on both sides. Condescend to clear up but your part, as I will mine, and all must speedily be happy.—Would to heaven I loved that Heaven as I love you! And yet, if I doubted a return in love, let me perish if I should know how to wish you mine! Give me hope, dearest creature, give me but hope, that I am your preferable choice!—Give me but hope, that you hate me not; that you do not despise me.

O Mr. Lovelace, we have been long enough together, to be tired of each others humors and ways; ways and humors so different, that, perhaps, you ought to dislike me, as much as I do you. I think, I think that I cannot make an answerable return to the value you profess for me. My temper is utterly ruined. You have given me an ill opinion of all mankind; of yourself in particular: and withal so bad a one of myself, that I shall never be able to look up, having utterly and for ever lost all that self-complacency, and conscious pride, which are so necessary to carry a woman through this life with tolerable satisfaction to herself.

She paused. I was silent. By my soul, thought I, this sweet creature will at last undo me!

She proceeded. — What now remains, but that you pronounce me free of all obligation to you? And that you hinder me not from pursuing the destiny that shall be allotted to me?

Again she paused. I was still silent; meditating whether to renounce all further designs upon her; whether I had not received sufficient evidence of a virtue, and of a greatness of soul, that could not be questioned or impeached.

She went on: Propitious to me be your silence, Mr. Lovelace! — Tell me, that I am free of all obligation to you. You know I never made you promises. You know that you are not under any to me. My broken fortunes I matter not —

She was proceeding — My dearest life, said I, I have been all this time, tho' you fill me with doubts of your favor, busy in the nuptial preparations. I am actually in treaty for equipage.

Equipage, Sir! — Trappings, tinsel! — What is equipage; what is life; what is any thing; to a creature sunk so low as I am in my own opinion! — Laboring under a father's curse! — Unable to look backward without self-reproach, or forward without terror! These reflections strengthened by every cross accident! And what but crosses accidents befall me! All my darling schemes dashed in pieces; all my hopes at an end; deny me not the liberty to refuge myself in some obscure corner, where neither the enemies you have made me, nor the few friends you have left me, may ever hear of the supposed rash one, till those happy moments are at hand, which shall expiate for all!

I had not a word to say for myself. Such a war in my mind had I never known. Gratitude, and admiration of the excellent creature before me, combating with villanous habit, with resolutions so premeditatedly made, and with views so much gloried in!—A hundred new contrivances in my head, and in my heart, that, to be honest, as it is called, must all be given up, by a heart delighting in intrigue and difficulty—Miss Howe's virulences endeavoured to be recollected—Yet recollection refusing to bring them forward with the requisite efficacy—I had certainly been a lost man, had not Dorcas come seasonably in, with a letter.—On the superscription written—Be pleased, Sir, to open it now.

I retired to the window—opened it—it was from Dorcas herself.—These the contents—"Be pleased to detain my Lady: a paper of importance to transcribe. I will cough when I have done."

I put the paper in my pocket, and turned to my charmer, less disconcerted, as she, by that time, had also a little recovered herself.—One favor, dearest creature—Let me but know, whether Miss Howe approves or disapproves of my proposals?—I know her to be my enemy. I was intending to account to you for the change of behaviour you accused me of at the beginning of this conversation; but was diverted from it by your vehemence. Indeed, my beloved creature, you were very vehement. Do you think, it must not be matter of high regret to me, to find my wishes so often delayed and postponed in favor of your predominant view

to a reconciliation with relations who will not be reconciled to you? — To this was owing your declining to celebrate our nuptials before we came to town, though you were so atrociously treated by your sister, and your whole family; and though so ardently pressed to celebrate by me. To this was owing the ready offence you took at my four friends; and at the unavailing attempt I made to see a dropt letter; little imagining from what two such Ladies could write to each other, that there could be room for mortal displeasure. To this was owing the week's distance you held me at, till you knew the issue of another application. But when they had rejected that, when you had sent my coldly-received proposals to Miss Howe for her approbation or advice, as indeed I advised; and had honored me with your company at the play on Saturday night (my whole behaviour unobjectible to the last hour); must not, Madam, the sudden change in your conduct the very next morning, astonish and distress me? And this persisted in with still stronger declarations, after you had received the impatiently expected letter from Miss Howe; must I not conclude, that all was owing to her influence; and that some other application or project was meditating, that made it necessary to keep me again at distance till the result were known, and which was to deprive me of you for ever? for was not that your constantly proposed preliminary? Well, Madam, might I be wrought up to a half-phrensy by this apprehension; and well might I charge you with hating me. — And now, dearest creature, let me

know, I once more ask you, what is Miss Howe's opinion of my proposals?

Were I disposed to debate with you, Mr. Lovelace, I could very easily answer your fine harangue. But at present, I shall only say, that your ways have been very unaccountable. You seem to me, if your meanings were always just, to have taken great pains to embarrass them. Whether owing in you to the want of a clear head, or a sound heart, I cannot determine; but it is to the want of one of them, I verily think, that I am to ascribe the greatest part of your strange conduct.

Curse upon the heart of the little devil, said I, who instigates you to think so hardly of the faithfullest heart in the world!

How dare you, Sir? — And there she stopt; having almost overshot herself; as I designed she should.

How dare I what, Madam? And I looked with meaning. How dare I what?

Vile man! — And do you — And there again she stopt.

Do I what, Madam? And why vile man?

How dare you to curse any body in my presence?

O the sweet receder! But that was not to go off so with a Lovelace.

Why then, dearest creature, is there any body that instigates you? If there be, again I curse them, be they whom they will.

She was in a charming pretty passion. — And this was the first time that I had the odds in my favor.

Well, Madam, it is just as I thought. And now I know how to account for a temper that I hope is not natural to you.

Artful wretch! And is it thus you would entrap me?—But know, Sir, that I receive letters from nobody but Miss Howe. Miss Howe likes some of your ways as little as I do, for I have set every thing before her. Yet she is thus far your enemy, as she is mine—She thinks I should not refuse your offers; but endeavour to make the best of my lot. And now you have the truth. Would to heaven you were capable of dealing with equal sincerity!

I am, Madam. And here, on my knee, I renew my vows, and my supplication, that you will make me yours—Yours for ever.—And let me have cause to bless you and Miss Howe in the same breath.

To say the truth, Belford, I had before begun to think, that the vixen of a girl, who certainly likes not Hickman, was in love with me.

Rise, Sir, from your too ready knees; and mock me not.

Too ready knees, thought I!—Though this humble posture so little affects this proud beauty, she knows not how much I have obtained of others of her sex, nor how often I have been forgiven for the last attempts, by kneeling.

Mock you, Madam! And I arose, and re-urged her for the day. I blamed myself at the same time, for the invitation I had given to Lord M. as it might subject me to delay from his infirmities: but told her, that I would write to him to excuse me, if she had no objection; or to give him the day she would

give me, and not wait for him, if he could not come in time.

My day, Sir, said she, is never. Be not surpris'd. A person of politeness judging between us, would not be surpris'd that I say so. But, indeed, Mr. Lovelace (and wept through impatience) you either know not how to treat with a mind of the least degree of delicacy, notwithstanding your birth and education, or you are an ungrateful man; and (after a pause) a worse than ungrateful one. But I will retire. I will see you again to morrow. I cannot before. I think I hate you — You may look — Indeed I think I hate you. And if, upon a re-examination of my own heart, I find I do, I would not for the world that matters should go on farther between us.

But I see, I see, she does not hate me! — How it would mortify my vanity, if I thought there was a woman in the world, much more this, that could hate me! — 'Tis evident, villain as she thinks me, that I should not be an odious villain, if I could but at last in one instance cease to be a villain! She could not hold it, determin'd as she had thought herself, I saw by her eyes, the moment I endeavour'd to dissipate her apprehensions, on my too ready knees, as she calls them. The moment the rough covering that my teasing behaviour has thrown over her affections is quite removed, I doubt not to find all silk and silver at bottom, all soft, bright, and charming.

I was, however, too much vexed, disconcerted,

mortified, to hinder her from retiring — And yet she had not gone, if Dorcas had not coughed.

The wench came in, as soon as her Lady had retired, and gave me the copy she had taken. And what should it be but of the answer the truly admirable creature had intended to give to my written proposals in relation to settlements?

I have but just dipt into this affecting paper. Were I to read it attentively, not a wink should I sleep this night. To morrow it shall obtain my serious consideration.

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday Morning, *May 23.*

THE dear creature desires to be excused seeing me till evening. She is not very well, as Dorcas tells me.

Read here, if thou wilt, the paper transcribed by Dorcas. It is impossible that I should proceed with my projects against this admirable woman, were it not that I am resolved, after a few trials more, if as nobly sustained as those she has already passed through, to make her (if she really hate me not) legally mine.

To Mr. LOVELACE.

“**W**HEN a woman is married, that supreme earthly obligation requires that in all instances where her husband's real honor is concerned, she should yield her own will to his. But, beforehand, I could be glad, conformably to what I have always signified, to have the most explicit assurances, that every possible way should be tried to avoid litigation with my father. Time and patience will subdue all things. My prospects of happiness are extremely contracted. A husband's right will be always the same. In my life-time I could wish nothing to be done of this sort. Your circumstances, Sir, will not oblige you to extort violently from him what is in his hands. All that depends upon me, either with regard to my person, to my diversions, or to the oeconomy that no married woman, of whatever rank or quality, should be above inspecting, shall be done, to prevent a necessity for such measures being taken. And if there will be no necessity for them, it is to be hoped that motives less excusable will not have force — Motives which must be founded in a littleness of mind, which a woman, who has not that littleness of mind, will be under such temptations as her duty will hardly be able at all times to check, to despise her husband for having; especially in cases where her own family, so much a part of herself, and which will have obligations

upon her (though then but secondary ones) from which she can never be freed, is intimately concerned.

“ This article, then, I urge to your most serious consideration, as what lies next my heart. I enter not here minutely into the fatal misunderstanding between them and you: the fault may be in both. But, Sir, yours was the foundation fault: at least, you gave a too plausible pretence for my brother’s antipathy to work upon. Condescension was no part of your study. You chose to bear the imputations laid to your charge, rather than to make it your endeavour to obviate them.

“ But this may lead into hateful recrimination — Let it be remembered, I will only say, in this place, that, in their eye, you have robbed them of a daughter they doted upon; and that their resentments on this occasion rise but in proportion to their love, and their disappointment. If they were faulty in some of the measures they took, while they themselves did not think so, who shall judge for them? You, Sir, who will judge every body as you please, and will let nobody judge you, in your own particular, must not be their judge.— It may, therefore, be expected, that they will stand out.

“ As for myself, Sir, I must leave it (so seems it to be destined) to your justice, to treat me as you shall think I deserve: but if your future behaviour to them is not governed by that harsh sounding implacableness, which you charge upon some of their tempers, the splendor of your family, and the

the excellent character of some of them (of all indeed, unless your own conscience furnishes you with one only exception) will, on better consideration, do every thing with them: for they may be overcome; perhaps, however, with the more difficulty, as the greatly prosperous less bear control and disappointment than others: for I will own to you, that I have often in secret lamented that their great acquirements have been a snare to them; perhaps as great a snare, as some other accidentals have been to you; which being less immediately your own gifts, you have still less reason than they to value yourself upon them.

“ Let me only, on this subject, further observe, that condescension is not meanness. There is a glory in yielding, that hardly any violent spirit can judge of. My brother perhaps is no more sensible of this than you. But as you have talents which he has not (who, however, has, as I hope, that regard for morals, the want of which makes one of his objections to you) I could wish it may not be owing to you, that your mutual dislikes to each other do not subside; for it is my earnest hope, that in time you may see each other, without exciting the fears of a wife and a sister for the consequence. Not that I should wish you to yield in points that truly concerned your honor: no, Sir; I would be as delicate in such, as you yourself: more delicate, I will venture to say, because more uniformly so. How vain, how contemptible, is that pride, which shows itself in standing upon

diminutive observances; and gives up, and makes a jest of, the most important duties!

“ This article being considered as I wish, all the rest will be easy. Were I to accept of the handsome separate provision you seem to intend me; added to the considerable sums arisen from my grandfather's estate since his death (more considerable, than perhaps you may suppose from your offer); I should think it my duty to lay up for the family good, and for unforeseen events, out of it: for, as to my donations, I would generally confine myself in them to the tenth of my income, be it what it would. I aim at no glare in what I do of that sort. All I wish for, is the power of relieving the lame, the blind, the sick, and the industrious poor, and those whom accident has made so, or sudden distress reduced. The common or bred beggars I leave to others, and to the public provision. They cannot be lower: perhaps they wish not to be higher: and, not able to do for every one, I aim not at works of supererogation. Two hundred pounds a year would do all I wish to do of the separate sort: for all above, I would content myself to ask you; except, mistrusting your own œconomy, you would give up to my management and keeping, in order to provide for future contingencies, a larger portion; for which, as your steward, I would regularly account.

“ As to clothes, I have particularly two suits, which, having been only in a manner tried on, would answer for any present occasion. Jewels I

have of my grandmother's, which want only new-setting: another set I have, which on particular days I used to wear. Altho' these are not sent me, I have no doubt, being merely personals, but they will, when I send for them in another name: till when I should not chuse to wear any.

"As to your complaints of my diffidences, and the like, I appeal to your own heart, if it be possible for you to make my case your own for one moment, and to retrospect some parts of your behaviour, words, and actions, whether I am not rather to be justified than censured: and whether, of all men in the world, avowing what you avow, you ought not to think so. If you do not, let me admonish you, Sir, from the very great mismatch, that then must appear to be in our minds, never to seek, nor so much as wish, to bring about the most intimate union of interests between yourself and

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

May 20.

The original of this charming paper, as Dorcas tells me, was torn almost in two. In one of her pets, I suppose! What business have the sex, whose principal glory is meekness, and patience, and resignation, to be in a passion, I trow? — Will not she, who allows herself such liberties as a maiden, take greater when married?

And a wife to be in a passion! — Let me tell the Ladies, it is an impudent thing, begging their pardon, and as imprudent, as impudent for a wife to be in a passion, if she mean not eternal separation, or wicked defiance, by it: for is it not rejecting at once all that expostulatory meekness, and gentle reasoning, mingled with sighs as gentle, and graced with bent knees, supplicating hands, and eyes lifted up to your imperial countenance, just running over, that should make a reconciliation speedy, and as lasting as speedy? Even suppose the husband is in the wrong, will not his being so, give the greater force to her expostulation?

Now I think of it, a man should be in the wrong now and then, to make his wife shine. Miss Howe tells my charmer, that adversity is her shining-time. 'Tis a generous thing in a man, to make his wife shine at his own expense: to give her leave to triumph over him by patient reasoning: for were he to be too imperial to acknowledge his fault on the spot, she will find the benefit of her duty and submission in future, and in the high opinion he will conceive of her prudence and obligingness — And so, by degrees, she will become her master's master.

But for a wife to come up with a kemboed arm, the other hand thrown out, perhaps with a pointing finger — Look ye here, Sir! — Take notice! — If you are wrong, I'll be wrong! — If you are in a passion, I'll be in a passion! — Rebuff, for rebuff, Sir! — If you fly, I'll tear! — If you swear, I'll curse! — And the same room, and the same bed, shall not hold us, Sir!

—For, remember, I am married, Sir! — I am a wife, Sir! — You can't help yourself, Sir! — Your honor, as well as your peace, is in my keeping! — And, if you like not this treatment, you may have worse, Sir!

Ah! Jack! Jack! What man, who has observed these things, either implied, or expressed, in other families, would wish to be a husband!

Dorcas found this paper in one of the drawers of her Lady's dressing-table. She was reperusing it, as she supposes, when the honest wench carried my message to desire her to favor me at the tea-table; for she saw her pop a paper into the drawer as she came in; and there, on her mistress's going to meet me in the diningroom, she found it; and to be this.

But I had better not to have had a copy of it, as far as I know: for, determined as I was before upon my operations, it instantly turned all my resolutions in her favor. Yet I would give something to be convinced, that she did not pop it into her drawer before the wench, in order for me to see it; and perhaps (if I were to take notice of it) to discover whether Dorcas, according to Miss Howe's advice, were most my friend, or hers.

The very suspicion of this will do her no good: for I cannot bear to be artfully dealt with. People love to enjoy their own peculiar talents in monopoly, as I may say. I am aware, that it will strengthen thy arguments against me in her behalf. But I know every tittle thou canst say upon it. Spare, therefore, thy wambling nonsense, I desire thee;

and leave this sweet excellence and me to our fate: that will determine for us, as it shall please itself: for, as Cowley says,

An unseen hand makes all our moves:
And some are great, and some are small;
Some climb to good, some from good fortune fall:
Some wise men, and some fools we call:
Figures, alas! of speech!—For destiny plays us all.

But after all, I am sorry, almost sorry (for how shall I do to be quite sorry, when it is not given to me to be so?) that I cannot, until I have made further trials, resolve upon wedlock.

I have just read over again this intended answer to my proposals: and how I adore her for it!

But yet; another yet! — She has not given it or sent it to me. — It is not, therefore, her answer. It is not written for me, though to me.

Nay, she has not intended to send it to me: she has even torn it, perhaps with indignation, as thinking it too good for me. By this action she absolutely retracts it. Why then does my foolish fondness seek to establish for her the same merit in my heart, as if she avowed it? Pr'ythee, dear Belford, once more, leave us to our fate; and do not thou interpose with thy nonsense, to weaken a spirit already too squeamish, and strengthen a conscience that has declared itself of her party.

Then again, remember thy recent discoveries, Lovelace! Remember her indifference, attended with all the appearance of contempt and hatred.

View her, even now, wrapt up in reserve and mystery; meditating plots, as far as thou knowest, against the sovereignty thou hast, by right of conquest, obtained over her. Remember, in short, all thou hast threatened to remember against this insolent beauty, who is a rebel to the power she has lifted under.

But yet, how dost thou propose to subdue thy sweet enemy? — Abhorred be force, be the necessity of force, if that can be avoided! There is no triumph in force — No conquest over the will — No prevailing, by gentle degrees, over the gentle passions! Force is the devil!

My cursed character, as I have often said, was against me at setting-out — Yet is she not a woman? Cannot I find one yielding or but half-yielding moment, if she do not absolutely hate me?

But with what can I tempt her? — Riches she was born to, and despises, knowing what they are. Jewels and ornaments, to a mind so much a jewel, and so richly set, her worthy consciousness will not let her value. Love — If she be susceptible of love, it seems to be so much under the direction of prudence, that one unguarded moment, I fear, cannot be reasonably hoped for: and so much vigilance, so much apprehensiveness, that her fears are ever aforehand with her dangers. Then her love of virtue seems to be principle, native principle, or, if not native, so deeply rooted, that its fibres have struck into her heart, and, as she grew up, so blended and twisted themselves with the strings of

life, that I doubt there is no separating of the one without cutting the others asunder.

What then can be done to make such a matchless creature get over the first tests, in order to put her to the grand proof, whether once overcome, she will not be always overcome?

Our mother and her nymphs say, I am a perfect craven, and no Lovelace: and so I think. But this is no simpering, smiling charmer, as I have found others to be, when I have touched upon affecting subjects at a distance; as once or twice I have tried to her, the mother introducing them (to make sex palliate the freedom to sex) when only we three together. She is above the affectation of not seeming to understand you. She shows by her displeasure, and a fierceness not natural to her eye, that she judges of an impure heart by an impure mouth, and darts dead at once even the embryo hopes of an encroaching lover, however distantly insinuated, before the meaning hint can dawn into double entendre.

By my faith, Jack, as I sit gazing upon her, my whole soul in my eyes, contemplating her perfections, and thinking, when I have seen her easy and serene, what would be her thoughts, did she know my heart as well as I know it; when I behold her disturbed and jealous, and think of the justness of her apprehensions, and that she cannot fear so much, as there is room for her to fear; my heart often misgives me.

And must, think I, O creature so divinely excellent, and so beloved of my soul, those arms, those

incircling arms, that would make a monarch happy, be used to repel brutal force; all their strength, unavailingly, perhaps, exerted to repel it, and to defend a person so delicately framed? Can violence enter into the heart of a wretch, who might entitle himself to all her willing, yet virtuous love, and make the blessings he aspires after, her duty to confer?—Begone villain purposes! Sink ye all to the hell that could only inspire ye! And I am then ready to throw myself at her feet, to confess my villanous designs, to avow my repentance, and to put it out of my power to act unworthily by such an excellence.

How then comes it, that all these compassionate, and, as some would call them, honest sensibilities go off?—Why, Miss Howe will tell thee: she says, I am the devil. By my conscience I think he has at present a great share in me.

There's ingenuousness!—How I lay myself open to thee! But seest thou not, that the more I say against myself, the less room is there for thee to take me to task?—O Belford, Belford! I cannot, cannot (at least at present) I cannot marry.

Then her family, my bitter enemies—To supple to them, or, if I do not, to make her as unhappy as she can be from my attempts—

Then does she not love them too much, me too little?

She now seems to despise me: Miss Howe declares, that she really does despise me. To be despised by a wife;—What a thought is that!—To be excelled by a wife too, in every part of praise-worthy

knowledge! To take lessons, to take instructions, from a wife! More than despise me, she herself has taken time to consider whether she does not hate me: I hate you, Lovelace, with my whole heart, said she to me but yesterday! My soul is above thee, man! Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely I think my soul above thee!—How poor, indeed, was I then; even in my own heart! So visible a superiority, to so proud a spirit as mine! And here from below, from below indeed! from these women! I am so goaded on—

Yet 'tis poor too, to think myself a machine in the hands of such wretches. I am no machine. Lovelace, thou art base to thyself, but to suppose thyself a machine.

But having gone thus far, I should be unhappy, if, after marriage, in the petulance of ill humor, I had it to reproach myself, that I did not try her to the utmost. And yet I don't know how it is, but this Lady, the moment I come into her presence, half-assimilates me to her own virtue. Once or twice (to say nothing of her triumph over me on Sunday night) I was prevailed upon to fluster myself, with an intention to make some advances, which, if obliged to recede, I might lay upon raised spirits: but the instant I beheld her, I was soberized into awe and reverence: and the majesty of her even visible purity first damped, and then extinguished, my double flame.

What a surprisingly powerful effect, so much and so long in my power, she: so instigated by some of her own sex, and so stimulated by

passion, I! — How can this be accounted for, in a Lovelace!

But, what a heap of stuff have I written! How have I been run away with! By what? Canst thou say, by what? — O thou lurking varlet of Conscience! Is it thou, that hast thus made me of party against myself? How camest thou in? In what disguise, thou egregious haunter of my more agreeable hours? Stand thou, with fate, but neuter in this controversy; and, if I cannot do credit to human nature, and to the female sex, by bringing down such an angel as this to class with and adorn it (for adorn it she does in her very foibles) then I am all yours, and never will resist you more.

Here I arose. I shook myself. The window was open. Away the troublesome bosom-visitor, the intruder, is flown. I see it yet! — I see it yet! And now it lessens to my aching eye! And now the cleft air is closed after it, and it is out of sight! And once more I am

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XXXVII.

MR. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, *May 23.*

WELL did I, and but just in time, conclude to have done with Mrs. Fetchville and the house: for here Mennell has declared, that he cannot in conscience and honor go any farther. He would not for the world be accessory to the deceiving of such a Lady! I was a fool to let either you or him see her; for ever since ye have both had scruples, which neither would have had, were a woman to have been in the question.

Well, I can't help it!

Mennell has, however, though with some reluctance, consented to write me a letter, provided I will allow it to be the last step he shall take in this affair.

I presumed, I told him, that if I could cause Mrs. Fetchville's woman to supply his place, he would have no objection to that.

None, he says. But is it not pity —

A pitiful fellow! Such a ridiculous kind of pity his, as those silly souls have, who would not kill an innocent chicken for the world, but when killed to their hands, are always the most greedy devourers of it.

Now this letter gives the servant the small pox: and she has given it to her unhappy vaporish Lady.

Vaporish people are perpetual subjects for diseases to work upon. Name but the malady, and it is theirs in a moment. Ever fitted for inoculation. The physical tribe's milch-cows. A vaporish or splenetic patient is a fiddle for the doctors; and they are eternally playing upon it. Sweet music does it make them. All their difficulty, except a case extraordinary happens (as poor Mrs. Fetchville's, who has realized her apprehensions) is but to hold their countenance, whilst their patient is drawing up a bill of indictment against himself; and when they have heard it, proceed to punish: the right word for prescribe. Why should they not, when the criminal has confessed his guilt? And punish they generally do with a vengeance.

Yet, silly toads too, now I think of it. For why, when they know they cannot do good, may they not as well endeavour to gratify, as to nauseate, the patient's palate?

Were I a physician, I'd get all the trade to myself: for Malmsey, and Cyprus, and the generous product of the Cape, a little disguised, should be my principal doses: as these would create new spirits, how would the revived patient covet the physic, and adore the doctor!

Give all the paraders of the faculty whom thou knowest this hint. There could but one inconvenience arise from it. The apothecaries would find their medicines cost them something: but the demand for quantities would answer that: since the honest nurse would be the patient's taster; perpetually requiring repetitions of the last cordial julap.

Well, but to the letter—Yet what need of further explanation after the hints in my former? The widow can't be removed; and that's enough: and Mennell's work is over; and his conscience left to plague him for his own sins, and not another man's: and very possibly, plague enough will it give him for those.

This letter is directed, "To Robert Lovelace, Esq; or, in his absence, To his Lady." She had refused dining with me, or seeing me; and I was out when it came. She opened it: so is my Lady by her own consent, proud and faucy as she is.

I am glad at my heart that it came before we entirely make up. She would else, perhaps, have concluded it to be contrived for a delay: and now, moreover, we can accommodate our old and new quarrels together; and that's contrivance, you know. But how is her dear haughty heart humbled to what it was when I knew her first, that she can apprehend any delays from me; and have nothing to do but to vex at them!

I came in to dinner. She sent me down the letter, desiring my excuse for opening it. Did it before she was aware. Lady-pride, Belford! Recollection, then retrogradation!

I requested to see her upon it that moment. But she desires to suspend our interview till morning. I will bring her to own, before I have done with her that she cannot see me too often.

My impatience was so great, on an occasion so unexpected, that I could not help writing, to tell her, "How much vexed I was at the accident: but

that it need not delay my happy day, as that did not depend upon the house (she knew that before, she'll think, and so did I): and as Mrs. Fetchville, by Mr. Mennell, so handsomely expressed her concern upon it, and her wishes, that it could suit us to bear with the unavoidable delay, I hoped, that going down to the Lawn for two or three of the summer-months, when I was made the happiest of men, would be favorable to all round."

The dear creature takes this incident to heart, I believe: she has sent word to my repeated request to see her notwithstanding her denial, that she cannot till the morning: it shall be then at six o'clock, if I please!

To be sure I do please!

Can see her but once a day now, Jack!

Did I tell thee, that I wrote a letter to my cousin Montague, wondering that I heard not from Lord M. . . as the subject was so very interesting? In it I acquainted her with the house I was about taking; and with Mrs. Fetchville's vaporish delays.

I was very loth to engage my own family, either man or woman, in this affair; but I must take my measures securely: and already they all think as bad of me as they well can. You observe by my Lord M.'s letter to yourself, that the well manner'd Peer is afraid I shall play this admirable creature one of my usual dog's tricks.

I have received just now an answer from Charlotte.

Charlotte i'n't well. A stomach-disorder!

No wonder a girl's stomach should plague her. A single woman; that's it. When she has a man to plague, it will have something besides itself to prey upon. Knowest thou not moreover, that man is the woman's sun; woman is the man's earth?—How dreary, how desolate, the earth, that the sun shines not upon!

Poor Charlotte! But I heard she was not well; that encouraged me to write to her; and to express myself a little concerned, that she had not of her own accord thought of a visit in town to my charmer.

Here follows a copy of her letter. Thou wilt see by it, that every little monkey is to catechise me. They all depend upon my good nature.

M. . Hall, *May 22.*

Dear cousin,

WE have been in daily hope for a long time, I must call it, of hearing that the happy knot was tied. My Lord has been very much out of order; and yet nothing would serve him, but he would himself write an answer to your letter. It was the only opportunity he should ever have, perhaps, to throw in a little good advice to you, with the hope of its being of any signification; and he has been several hours in a day, as his gout would let him, busied in it. It wants now only his last revival. He
hopes

hopes it will have the greater weight with you, if it appear all in his own hand-writing.

Indeed, Mr. Lovelace, his worthy heart is wrapt up in you. I wish you loved yourself but half as well. But I believe too, that if all the family loved you less, you would love yourself more.

His Lordship has been very busy, at the times he could not write, in consulting Pritchard about those estates, which he proposes to transfer to you on the happy occasion, that he may answer your letter in the most acceptable manner; and show, by effects, how kindly he takes your invitation. I assure you, he is mighty proud of it.

As for myself, I am not at all well, and have not been for some weeks past, with my old stomach disorder. I had certainly else before now have done myself the honor you wonder I have not done myself. Lady Betty, who would have accompanied me (for we had laid it all out) has been exceedingly busy in her law affair; her antagonist, who is actually on the spot, having been making proposals for an accommodation. But you may assure yourself, that when our dear relation-elect shall be entered upon the new habitation you tell me of, we will do ourselves the honor of visiting her; and if any delay arises from the dear Lady's want of courage (which, considering her man, let me tell you, may very well be) we will endeavour to inspire her with it, and be sponsors for you;—for, cousin, I believe you have need to be christened over again before you are entitled to so great a blessing. What think you?

Just now, my Lord tells me, he will dispatch a man on purpose with his letter to morrow: so I needed not to have written. But now I have, let it go, and by Empson, who sets out directly on his return to town.

My best compliments, and sister's, to the most deserving Lady in the world (you will need no other direction to the person meant) conclude me

Your affectionate cousin and servant,

CHARL. MONTAGUE.

Thou seest how seasonably this letter comes. I hope my Lord will write nothing but what I may shew to my beloved. I have actually sent her up this letter of Charlotte's; and hope for happy effects from it.

R. L.

The Lady, in her next letter, gives Miss Howe an account of what has passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself. She resents his behaviour with her usual dignity: but when she comes to mention Mr. Mennell's letter, she re-urges Miss Howe to perfect her scheme for her deliverance; being resolved to leave him. But, dating again, on his sending up to her Miss Montague's letter, she alters her

mind, and desires her to suspend for the present her application to Mrs. Townsend.

I had begun, says she, to suspect all he had said of Mrs. Fetchville and her house; and even Mr. Mennell himself, tho' so well appearing a man. But now that I find Mr. Lovelace had apprised his relations of his intention to take it, and had engaged some of the Ladies to visit me there; I could hardly forbear blaming myself for censuring him as capable of so vile an imposture. But may he not thank himself for acting so very unaccountably, and taking such needlessly-awry steps as he has done, embarrassing, as I told him, his own meanings, if they were good?

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Wednesday, *May 24.*

He gives his friend an account of their interview that morning; and of the happy effects of his cousin Montague's letter in his favor. Her reserves, however, he tells him, are not absolutely banished. But this he imputes to form.

IT is not in the power of woman, says he, to be altogether sincere on these occasions. But why?—Do they think it so great a disgrace to be found out to be really what they are?

I regretted the illness of Mrs. Fetchville; as the intention I had to fix her dear self in the house before the happy knot was tied, would have set her in that independance in appearance, as well as fact, which was necessary to show to all the world, that her choice was free; and as the Ladies of my family would have been proud to make their court to her there; while the settlements and our equipages were preparing. But on any other account, there was no great matter in it, since when my happy day was over, we could, with so much convenience, go down to the Lawn, to my Lord M.'s, and to Lady Sarah's or Lady Betty's, in turn; which would give full time to provide ourselves with servants, and other accommodations.

How sweetly the charmer listened!

I asked her, if she had had the small-pox?

Ten thousand pounds the worse in my estimation, thought I, if she has not; for not one of her charming graces can I dispense with.

'Twas always a doubtful point with her mother and Mrs. Norton, she owned. But altho' she was not afraid of it, she chose not unnecessarily to rush into places where it was.

Right, thought I—Else, I said, it would not have been amiss for her to see the house before she went into the country; for, if she liked it not, I was not obliged to have it.

She asked, if she might take a copy of Miss Montague's letter?

I said, she might keep the letter itself, and send

it to Miss Howe, if she pleased; for that, I supposed, was her intention.

She bowed her head to me.

There, Jack!—I shall have her courtesy to me by and by, I question not. What a devil had I to do, to terrify the dear creature by my termagant projects!—Yet it was not amiss, I believe, to make her afraid of me. She says, I am an unpolite man—And every polite instance from such a one, is deemed a favor.

Talking of the settlements, I told her, I had rather that Pritchard (mentioned by my cousin Charlotte) had not been consulted on this occasion. Pritchard, indeed, was a very honest man; and had been for a generation in the family; and knew the estates, and the condition of them, better than either my Lord or myself: but Pritchard, like other old men, was diffident and slow; and valued himself upon his skill as a draughtsman; and for the sake of that paltry reputation, must have all his forms preserved, were an imperial crown to depend upon his dispatch.

I kissed her unrepulsing hand no less than five times during this conversation. Lord, Jack, how my generous heart ran over!—She was quite obliging at parting.—She in a manner asked me leave to retire; to reprove Charlotte's letter.—I think she bent her knees to me; but I won't be sure.—How happy might we have both been long ago, had the dear creature been always as complaisant to me! For I do love respect, and, whether I deserved it or not, always had it, till I knew this proud beauty.

And now, Belford, are we in a train, or the deuce is in it. Every fortified town has its strong and its weak place. I had carried on my attacks against the impregnable parts. I have no doubt but I shall either shine or smuggle her out of her cloak, since she and Miss Howe have intended to employ a smuggler against me.—All we wait for now is my Lord's letter.

But I had like to have forgot to tell thee, that we have been not a little alarmed, by some inquiries that have been made after me and my beloved, by a man of good appearance; who yesterday procured a tradesman in the neighbourhood to send for Dorcas: of whom he asked several questions relating to us; and particularly (as we boarded and lodged in one house) whether we were married?

This has given my beloved great uneasiness. And I could not help observing upon it, to her, how right a thing it was, that we had given out below, that we were married. The inquiry, most probably, I said, was from her brother's quarter; and now, perhaps, that our marriage was owned, we should hear no more of his machinations. The person, it seems, was curious to know the day that the ceremony was performed. But Dorcas refused to give him any other particulars, than that we were married; and she was the more reserved, as he declined to tell her the motives of his inquiry.

LETTER XXXIX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

May 24.

THE devil take this uncle of mine! He has at last sent me a letter, which I cannot show, without exposing the head of our family for a fool. A confounded parcel of pop-guns has he let off upon me. I was in hopes he had exhausted his whole stock of this sort in his letter to you. To keep it back, to delay sending it, till he had recollected all this farrago of nonsense——Confound his wisdom of nations, if so much of it is to be scraped together, in disgrace of itself, to make one egregious simpleton!—But I am glad I am fortified with this piece of flagrant folly, however; since, in all human affairs, the convenient and inconvenient, the good and the bad, are so mingled, that there is no having the one without the other.

I have already offered the bill inclosed in it to my beloved; and read to her part of the letter. But she refused the bill: and as I am in cash myself, I shall return it. She seemed very desirous to peruse the whole letter. And when I told her, that were it not for exposing the writer, I would oblige her, she said, It would not be exposing his Lordship to show it to her; and that she always preferred the heart to the head. I knew her meaning; but did not thank her for it.

All that makes for me in it, I will transcribe for her—Yet hang it, she shall have the letter, and my soul with it, for one consenting kiss.

* * *

She has got the letter from me without the reward. Deuce take me, if I had the courage to propose the condition. A new character this of bashfulness in thy friend. I see, that a truly modest woman may make even a confident man keep his distance. By my soul, Belford, I believe, that nine women in ten, who fall, fall either from their own vanity, or levity, or for want of circumspection, and proper reserves.

* * *

I did intend to take my reward on her returning a letter so favorable to us both. But she sent it to me, sealed up, by Dorcas. I might have thought that there were two or three hints in it, that she would be too nice immediately to appear to. I send it to thee; and here will stop, to give thee time to read it. Return it as soon as thou hast perused it.

LETTER XL.

Lord M. . To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Tuesday, *May 23.*

IT is a long lane that has no turning—Do not despise me for my proverbs—You know I was always fond of them; and if you had been so too, it would have been the better for you, let me tell you. I dare swear, the fine Lady you are so likely to be soon happy with, will be far from despising them; for I am told, that she writes well, and that all her letters are full of sentences. God convert you! for nobody but He and this Lady can.

I have no manner of doubt now but that you will marry, as your father, and all your ancestors, did before you: else you would have had no title to be my heir; nor can your descendents have any title to be yours, unless they are legitimate; that's worth your remembrance, Sir!—No man is always a fool, every man sometimes.—But your follies, I hope, are now at an end.

I know, you have vowed revenge against this fine Lady's family: but no more of that, now. You must look upon them all as your relations; and forgive, and forget. And when they see you make a good husband and a good father (which God send, for all our sakes!) they will wonder at their nonsensical antipathy, and beg your pardon: but while they think you are a vile fellow, and a

rake, how can they either love you, or excuse their daughter?

And methinks I could wish to give a word of comfort to the Lady, who doubtless, must be under great fears, how she shall be able to hold-in such a wild creature, as you have hitherto been. I would hint to her, that, by strong arguments, and gentle words, she may do any thing with you; for though you are too apt to be hot, gentle words will cool you, and bring you into the temper that is necessary for your cure.

Would to God, my poor Lady, your aunt, who is dead and gone, had been a proper patient for the same remedy! God rest her soul! No reflections upon her memory!—Worth is best known by want!—I know hers now; and if I had went first, she would by this time have known mine.

There is great wisdom in that saying, God send me a friend, that may tell me of my faults: if not, an enemy; and he will. Not that I am your enemy; and that you well know. The more noble any one is, the more humble: so bear with me, if you would be thought noble.—Am I not your uncle? And do I not design to be better to you than your father could be? Nay, I will be your father too, when the happy day comes; since you desire it: and pray make my compliments to my dear niece; and tell her, I wonder much that she has so long deferred your happiness.

Pray let her know as that I will present her (not you) either my Lancashire seat, or the Lawn in Hertfordshire; and settle upon her a thousand pounds a

year penny-rents; to show her, that we are not a family to take base advantages: and you may have writings drawn, and settle as you will. — Honest Pritchard has the rent-roll of both these estates; and as he has been a good old servant, I recommend him to your Lady's favor. I have already consulted him: he will tell you what is best for you, and most pleasing to me.

I am still very bad with my gout; but will come in a litter, as soon as the day is fixed: it would be the joy of my heart to join your hands. And, let me tell you, if you do not make the best of husbands to so good a young Lady, and one who has had so much courage for your sake, I will renounce you; and settle all I can upon her and hers by you, and leave you out of the question.

If any thing be wanting for your further security, I am ready to give it; though you know, that my word has always been looked upon as my bond. And when the Harlowes know all this, let us see whether they are able to blush, and take shame to themselves.

Lady Sarah and Lady Betty want only to know the day, to make all the country round them blaze, and all their tenants mad. And, if any one of mine be sober upon the occasion, Pritchard shall eject him. And, on the birth of the first child, if a son, I will do something more for you, and repeat all our rejoicings.

I ought, indeed, to have written sooner. But I knew, that if you thought me long, and were in haste as to your nuptials, you would write and tell

me so. But my gout was very troublesome: and I am but a slow writer, you know, at best: for composing is a thing, that though formerly I was very ready at it (as my Lord Lexington used to say); yet having left it off a great while, I am not so now. And I chose, on this occasion, to write all out of my own head and memory; and to give you my best advice; for I may never have such an opportunity again. You have had (God mend you!) a strange way of turning your back upon all I have said: this once, I hope, you will be more attentive to the advice I give you for your own good.

I had still another end; nay, two other ends.

The one was, That now you are upon the borders of wedlock, as I may say, and all your wild oats will be sown, I would give you some instructions as to your public as well as private behaviour in life; which, intending you so much good as I do, you ought to hear; and, perhaps, would never have listened to, on any less extraordinary occasion.

The second is, That your dear Lady-elect (who is it seems herself so fine and so sententious a writer) will see by this, that it is not our faults, nor for want of the best advice, that you was not a better man than you have hitherto been.

And now, in few words, for the conduct I would wish you to follow in public, as well as in private, if you would think me worthy of advising.—It shall be short; so be not uneasy.

As to the private life: Love your Lady as she deserves. Let your actions praise you. Be a good

husband; and so give the lie to all your enemies; and make them ashamed of their scandals: and let us have pride in saying, that Miss Harlowe has not done either herself or family any discredit by coming among us. Do this; and I, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, will love you for ever.

As to your public conduct—This as follows is what I could wish: but I reckon your Lady's wisdom will put us both right—No disparagement, Sir; since, with all your wit, you have not hitherto shown much wisdom, you know.

Get into Parliament as soon as you can: for you have talents to make a great figure there. Who so proper to assist in making new holding laws, as those whom no law in being could hold?

Then, for so long as you will give attendance in St. Stephen's chapel—Its being called a chapel, I hope, will not disgust you: I am sure I have known many a riot there:—A Speaker has a hard time of it! But we Peers have more decorum—But what was I going to say?—I must go back.

For so long as you will give your attendance in Parliament, for so long will you be out of mischief; out of private mischief, at least: and may St. Stephen's fate be yours, if you wilfully do public mischief!

When a new election comes, you will have two or three Boroughs, you know, to chuse out of:—But if you stay till then, I had rather you were for the Shire.

You will have interest enough, I am sure; and being so handsome a man, the women will make their husbands vote for you.

I shall long to read your speeches. I expect you will speak, if occasion offer, the very first day. You want no courage; and think highly enough of yourself, and lowly enough of every body else, to speak on all occasions.

As to the methods of the House, you have spirit enough, I fear, to be too much above them: take care of that.—I don't so much fear your want of good manners. To men, you want no decency, if they don't provoke you: as to that, I wish you would only learn to be as patient of contradiction from others, as you would have other people be to you.

Altho' I would not have you to be a courtier; neither would I have you to be a malecontent. I remember (for I have it down) what my old friend Archibald Hutcheson said; and it was a very good saying—(to Mr. Secretary Craggs, I think, it was)—“I look upon an administration, as entitled to every vote I can with good conscience give it; for a House of Commons should not needlessly put drags upon the wheels of government: and, when I have not given it my vote, it was with regret: and, for my country's sake, I wished with all my heart, the measure had been such as I could have approved.”

And another saying he had, which was this; “Neither can an opposition, neither can a ministry, be always wrong. To be a plumb man, therefore, with either, is an infallible mark, that that man must mean more and worse than he will own he does mean.”

Are these sayings bad, Sir? Are they to be despised? — Well then, why should I be despised for remembering them, and quoting them, as I love to do? Let me tell you, if you loved my company more than you do, you would not be the worse for it. I may say so without any vanity; since it is other men's wisdom, and not my own, that I am so fond of.

But to add a word or two more, on this occasion; and I may never have such another; for you must read this through—Love honest men, and herd with them, in the house and out of the house; by whatever names they be dignified or distinguished: keep good men company, and you shall be of the number. But did I, or did I not, write this before? Writing at so many different times, and such a quantity, one may forget.

You may come in for the title when I am dead and gone — God help me! — So I would have you keep an equilibrium. If once you get the name of being a fine speaker, you may have any thing: and, to be sure, you have naturally a great deal of elocution, a tongue that would delude an angel, as the women say—To their sorrow, some of them, poor creatures! — A leading man in the House of Commons is a very important character; because that House has the giving of money: and money makes the mare to go; ay, and queens and kings too, sometimes, to go in a manner very different from what they might otherwise chuse to go, let me tell you.

However, methinks, I would not have you take

a place neither — It will double your value, and your interest, if it be believed, that you will not: for, as you will then stand in no man's way; you will have no envy, but pure sterling respect; and both sides will court you.

For your part, you will not want a place, as some others do, to piece up their broken fortunes. If you can now live reputably upon two thousand pounds a year, it will be hard if you cannot hereafter live upon seven or eight — Less you will not have, if you oblige me; as now by marrying so fine a Lady, very much you will — And all this, over and above Lady Betty's and Lady Sarah's favors! — What, in the name of wonder, could possibly possess the proud Harlowes! — That son, that son of theirs! — But, for his dear sister's sake, I will say no more of him.

I never was offered a place myself: and the only one I would have taken, had I been offered it, was Master of the Buckhounds; for I loved hunting when I was young; and it carries a good sound with it for us who live in the country. Often have I thought of that excellent old adage; He that eats the king's goose, shall be choked with his feathers. I wish to the Lord, this was thoroughly considered by place-hunters! It would be better for them, and for their poor families.

I could say a great deal more, and all equally to the purpose. But really I am tired; and so I doubt are you. And besides, I would reserve something for conversation.

My nieces Montague, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty,

Betty, join in compliments to my niece that is to be. If she would chuse to have the knot tied among us, pray tell her that we shall see it securely done: and we will make all the country ring and blaze for a week together. But so I believe I said before.

If any thing further may be needful toward promoting your reciprocal felicity, let me know it; and how you order about the day; and all that. The inclosed bill is very much at your service. 'Tis payable at sight, as whatever else you may have occasion for, shall be.

So God blefs you both; and make things as convenient to my gout as you can; though be it whenever it will, I will hobble to you; for I long to see you; and still more to see my niece; and am, in expectation of that happy opportunity,

Your most affectionate uncle,

M...

LETTER XLI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday, May 25.

THOU seest, Belford, how we now drive before the wind. — The dear creature now comes almost at the first word, whenever I desire the honor of her company. I told her last night, that, apprehending delay from Pritchard's slowness, I was de-