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LETTER XX.

Miss AR. HARLOWE, To Miss CL. HARLOWE.

In Answer to hers of Friday *July 21.* Let. V.

O my unhappy lost sister!

Thursday, *July 27.*

WHAT a miserable hand have you made of your romantic and giddy expedition! — I pity you at my heart.

You may well grieve and repent! — Lovelace has left you! — In what way or circumstances, you know best.

I wish your conduct had made your case more pitiable. But 'tis your own seeking!

God help you! — For you have not a friend will look upon you! — Poor, wicked, undone creature! — Fallen, as you are, against warning, against expostulation, against duty!

But it signifies nothing to reproach you. I weep over you.

My poor mother! — Your rashness and folly have made her more miserable than you can be. — Yet she has besought my father to grant your request.

My uncles joined with her; for they thought there was a little more modesty in your letter, than in the letters of your pert advocate: and my father

is pleased to give me leave to write; but only these words for him, and no more: "That he withdraws the curse he laid upon you, at the first hearing of your wicked flight, so far as it is in his power to do it; and hopes that your present punishment may be all that you will meet with. For the rest, he will never own you, nor forgive you; and grieves he has such a daughter in the world."

All this, and more, you have deserved from him, and from all of us: but what have you done to this abandoned libertine, to deserve what you have met with at his hands? — I fear, I fear, sister! — But no more! — A blessed four months work have you made of it.

My brother is now at Edinburgh, sent thither by my father (though he knows not this to be the motive) that he may not meet your triumphant deluder.

We are told he would be glad to marry you: but why, then, did he abandon you? He had kept you till he was tired of you, no question; and it is not likely he would wish to have you but upon the terms you have already without all doubt been his.

You ought to advise your friend Miss Howe to concern herself less in your matters than she does, except she could do it with more decency. She has written three letters to me: very insolent ones. Your favorer, poor Mrs. Norton, thinks you know nothing of the pert creature's writing. I hope you don't. But then the more impertinent the writer. But, believing the fond woman, I sat down the more readily to answer your letter; and I write

with less severity I can tell you, than otherwise I should have done, if I had answered it at all.

Monday last was your birth-day. Think, poor, ungrateful wretch, as you are! How we all used to keep it; and you will not wonder to be told, that we ran away from one another that day. But God give you true penitence, if you have it not already! And it will be true, if it be equal to the shame and the sorrow you have given us all.

Your afflicted sister,

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

Your cousin Morden is every day expected in England. He, as well as others of the family, when he comes to hear what a blessed piece of work you have made of it, will wish you never had had a being.

LETTER XXI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Sunday, July 30.

YOU have given me great pleasure, my dearest friend, by your approbation of my reasonings, and of my resolution founded upon them, never to have Mr. Lovelace. This approbation is so right a thing, give me leave to say, from the nature of the case, and from the strict honor and true dignity

of mind, which I always admired in my Anna Howe, that I could hardly tell to what, but to my evil destiny, which of late would not let me please any body, to attribute the advice you gave me to the contrary.

But let not the ill state of my health, and what that may naturally tend to, sadden you. I have told you, that I will not run away from life, nor avoid the means that may continue it, if God see fit: and if he do not, who shall repine at his will?

If it shall be found, that I have not acted unworthy of your love, and of my own character, in my greater trials, that will be a happiness to both on reflection.

The shock which you so earnestly advise me to try to get above, was a shock, the greatest that I could receive. But, my dear, as it was not occasioned by my fault, I hope, I am already got above it. I hope I am.

I am more grieved (at times however) for others, than for myself. And so I ought. For as to myself I cannot but reflect, that I have had an escape, rather than a loss, in missing Mr. Lovelace for a husband — even had he not committed the vilest of all outrages.

Let any one, who knows my story, collect his character from his behaviour to me, before that outrage; and then judge, whether it was in the least probable that such a man should make me happy. But to collect his character from his principles with regard to the sex in general, and from his enterprises upon many of them, and to consider

the cruelty of his nature, and the sportiveness of his invention, together with the high opinion he has of himself, it will not be doubted that a wife of his must have been miserable; and more miserable if she loved him, than she could have been were she to be indifferent to him.

A twelvemonth might very probably have put a period to my life; situated as I was with my friends; persecuted and harassed as I had been by my brother and sister; and my very heart torn in pieces by the wilful, and (as it is now apparent) premeditated suspenses of the man, whose gratitude I wished to engage, and whose protection I was the more entitled to expect, as he had robbed me of every other, and reduced me to an absolute dependence upon himself. Indeed, I once thought that it was all his view to bring me to this (as he hated my family); and uncomfortable enough for me, if it had been all.

Can it be thought, my dear, that my heart was not more than half-broken (happy as I was before I knew Mr. Lovelace) by such a grievous change in my circumstances? — Indeed it was. Nor, perhaps, was the wicked violence wanting to have cut short, though possibly not so very short, a life that he has sported with.

Had I been his but a month, he must have possessed the estate on which my relations had set their hearts; the more to their regret, as they hated him as much as he hated them.

Have I not reason, these things considered, to think myself happier without Mr. Lovelace than I

could have been with him? — My will too unviolated; and very little, nay, not any thing as to him, to reproach myself with?

But with my relations it is otherwise. They, indeed, deserve to be pitied. They are, and no doubt will long be, unhappy.

To judge of their resentments, and of their conduct, we must put ourselves in their situation: — and while they think me more in fault than themselves (whether my favorers are of their opinion, or not) and have a right to judge for themselves, they ought to have great allowances made for them; my parents especially. They stand at least self-acquitted (that cannot I); and the rather, as they can recollect to their pain, their past indulgencies to me, and their unquestionable love.

Your partiality for the friend you so much value, will not easily let you come into this way of thinking. But only, my dear, be pleased to consider the matter in the following light.

“ Here was my MOTHER, one of the most prudent persons of her sex, married into a family, not, perhaps, so happily tempered as herself; but every one of which she had the address, for a great while, absolutely to govern as she pleased by her directing wisdom, at the same time that they knew not but her prescriptions were the dictates of their own hearts; such a sweet art had she of conquering by seeming to yield. Think, my dear, what must be the pride and the pleasure of such a mother, that in my brother she could give a son to the family she distinguished with her love, not unworthy

of their wishes; a daughter, in my sister, of whom she had no reason to be ashamed; and in me, a second daughter, whom every body complimented (such was their partial favor to me) as being the still more immediate likeness of herself? How, self-pleased, could she smile round upon a family she had so blessed! What compliments were paid her upon the example she had given us, which was followed with such hopeful effects! With what a noble confidence could she look upon her dear Mr. Harlowe, as a person made happy by her: and be delighted to think, that nothing but purity streamed from a fountain so pure!

“ Now, my dear, reverse, as I daily do, this charming prospect. See my dear mother, sorrowing in her closet; endeavouring to suppress her sorrow at her table, and in those retirements where sorrow was before a stranger: hanging down her pensive head: smiles no more beaming over her benign aspect: her virtue made to suffer for faults she could not be guilty of: her patience continually tried (because she has more of it than any other) with repetitions of faults she is as much wounded by, as those can be from whom she so often hears of them: taking to herself, as the fountain-head, a taint which only had infected one of the under-currents: afraid to open her lips (were she willing) in my favor, lest it should be thought she has any bias in her own mind to failings that never could have been suspected in her: robbed of that pleasing merit, which the mother of well-nurtured and hopeful children may glory in: every one who

visits her, or is visited by her, by dumb show, and looks that mean more than words can express, condoling where they used to congratulate: the affected silence wounding: the compassionating look reminding: the half-suppressed sigh in them, calling up deeper sighs from her; and their averted eyes, while they endeavour to restrain the rising tear, provoking tears from her, that will not be restrained.

“When I consider these things, and, added to these, the pangs that tear in pieces the stronger heart of my FATHER, because it cannot relieve itself by those tears which carry the torturing grief to the eyes of softer spirits: the overboiling tumults of my impatient and uncontrollable BROTHER, piqued to the heart of his honor, in the fall of a sister, in whom he once gloried: the pride of an ELDER SISTER, who had given unwilling way to the honors paid over her head to one born after her: and, lastly, the dishonor I have brought upon two UNCLES, who each contended which should most favor their then happy niece: — when, I say, I reflect upon my fault in these strong, yet just lights, what room can there be to censure any body but my unhappy self? And how much reason have I to say, If I justify myself, mine own heart shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse?

Here permit me to lay down my pen for a few moments.

* * *

You are very obliging to me, intentionally, I know, when you tell me, It is in my power to

hasten the day of Mr. Hickman's happiness. But yet, give me leave to say, that I admire this kind assurance less than any other paragraph of your letter.

In the first place you know it is not in my power to say when I can dismiss my physician; and you should not put the celebration of a marriage intended by yourself, and so desirable to your mother, upon so precarious an issue. Nor will I accept of a compliment, which must mean a slight to her.

If any thing could give me a relish for life, after what I have suffered, it would be the hopes of the continuance of the more than sisterly love, which has, for years, uninterruptedly bound us together as one mind. — And why, my dear, should you defer giving (by a tie still stronger) another friend to one, who has so few?

I am glad you have sent my letter to Miss Montague. I hope I shall hear no more of this unhappy man.

I had begun the particulars of my tragical story: but it is so painful a task, and I have so many more important things to do, and, as I apprehend, so little time to do them in, that, could I avoid it, I would go no farther in it.

Then, to this hour, I know not by what means several of his machinations to ruin me were brought about; so that some material parts of my sad story must be defective, if I were to sit down to write it. But I have been thinking of a way that will answer the end wished for by your mother and you full as well; perhaps better.

Mr. Lovelace, it seems, has communicated to his friend Mr. Belford all that has passed between himself and me, as he went on. Mr. Belford has not been able to deny it. So that (as we may observe by the way) a poor young creature, whose indiscretion has given a libertine power over her, has a reason she little thinks of, to regret her folly; since these wretches, who have no more honor in one point than in another, scruple not to make her weakness a part of their triumph to their brother-libertines.

I have nothing to apprehend of this sort, if I have the justice done me in his letters, which Mr. Belford assures me I have: and, therefore, the particulars of my story, and the base arts of this vile man, will, I think, be best collected from those very letters of his (if Mr. Belford can be prevailed upon to communicate them); to which I dare appeal with the same truth and fervor as he did, who says, "O that one would hear me! and that mine adversary had written a book! — Surely, I would take it upon my shoulders, and bind it to me as a crown! For I covered not my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom."

There is one way, which may be fallen upon to induce Mr. Belford to communicate these letters; since he seems to have (and declares he always had) a sincere abhorrence of his friend's baseness to me: but that, you'll say, when you hear it, is a strange one. Nevertheless, I am very earnest upon it at present.

It is no other than this:

I think to make Mr. Belford the executor of my last will (don't be surpris'd): and with this view I permit his visits with the less scruple: and every time I see him, from his concern for me, am more and more inclined to do so. If I hold in the same mind, and if he accept the trust, and will communicate the materials in his power, those, joined with what you can furnish, will answer the whole end.

I know you will start at my notion of such an executor: but pray, my dear, consider, in my present circumstances, what I can do better, as I am empowered to make a will, and have considerable matters in my own disposal.

Your mother, I am sure, would not consent that you should take this office upon you. It might subject Mr. Hickman to the insults of that violent man. Mrs. Norton cannot, for several reasons respecting herself. My brother looks upon what I ought to have, as his right: my uncle Harlowe is already one of my trustees (as my cousin Morden is the other) for the estate my grandfather left me: but you see I could not get from my own family the few guineas I left behind me at Harlowe-Place; and my uncle Antony once threatened to have my grandfather's will controverted. My father! — To be sure, my dear, I could not expect that my father would do all I wish should be done: and a will to be executed by a father for a daughter (parts of it, perhaps, absolutely against his own judgment) carries somewhat daring and prescriptive in the very word.

If, indeed, my cousin Morden were to come in

time, and would undertake this trust — but even him it might subject to hazards; and the more, as he is a man of great spirit; and as the other man (of as great) looks upon me (unprotected as I have long been) as his property.

Now Mr. Belford, as I have already mentioned, knows every thing that has passed. He is a man of spirit, and, it seems, as fearless as the other, with more humane qualities. You don't know, my dear, what instances of sincere humanity this Mr. Belford has shown, not only on occasion of the cruel arrest, but on several occasions since. And Mrs. Lovick has taken pains to inquire after his general character; and hears a very good one of him, for justice and generosity in all his concerns of *Meum* and *Tuum*, as they are called: he has a knowledge of law-matters; and has two executors upon him at this time, in the discharge of which his honor is unquestioned.

All these reasons have already in a manner determined me to ask this favor of him; although it will have an odd sound with it to make an intimate friend of Mr. Lovelace my executor.

This is certain: my brother will be more acquiescent a great deal in such a case with the articles of my will, as he will see that it will be to no purpose to controvert some of them, which else, I dare say, he would controvert, or persuade my other friends to do so. And who would involve an executor in a law-suit, if they could help it? — Which would be the case, if any body were left, whom my brother could hope to awe or control;

since my father has possession of all, and is absolutely governed by him. (Angry spirits, my dear, as I have often seen, will be overcome by more angry ones, as well as sometimes be disarmed by the meek.) — Nor would I wish, you may believe, to have effects torn out of my father's hands: while Mr. Belford, who is a man of fortune and a good oeconomist in his own affairs, would have no interest but to do justice.

Then he exceedingly presses for some occasion to show his readiness to serve me: and he would be able to manage his violent friend, over whom he has more influence than any other person.

But, after all, I know not, if it were not more eligible by far, that my story, and my Self too, should be forgotten as soon as possible. And of this I shall have the less doubt, if the character of my parents (you will forgive me, my dear) cannot be guarded against the unqualified bitterness, which, from your affectionate zeal for me, has sometimes mingled with your ink — a point that ought, and (I insist upon it) must be well considered of, if any thing be done which your mother and you are desirous to have done. The generality of the world is too apt to oppose a duty — and general duties, my dear, ought not to be weakened by the justification of a single person, however unhappily circumstanced.

My father has been so good as to take off the heavy malediction he laid me under. I must be now solicitous for a last blessing; and that is all I shall presume to petition for. My sister's letter,

communicating this grace, is a severe one: but as she writes to me as from every body, how could I expect it to be otherwise?

If you set out to-morrow, this letter cannot reach you till you get to your aunt Harman's. I shall, therefore, direct it thither, as Mr. Hickman instructed me.

I hope you will have met with no inconveniencies in your little journey and voyage; and that you will have found in good health all whom you wish to see well.

If your relations in the little Island join their solicitations with your mother's commands, to have your nuptials celebrated before you leave them, let me beg of you, my dear, to oblige them. How grateful will the notification that you have done so, be to

Your ever faithful and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HARLOWE.

Saturday, *July 29.*

I REPINE not, my dear sister, at the severity you have been pleased to express in the letter you favored me with; because that severity was accompanied with the grace I had petitioned for; and because the reproaches of mine own heart are stronger than any other person's reproaches can be: and yet I am not half so culpable as I am imagined to be: as would be allowed, if all the circumstances of my unhappy story were known; and which I shall be ready to communicate to Mrs. Norton, if she be commissioned to inquire into them; or to you, my sister, if you can have patience to hear them.

I remembered with a bleeding heart what day the 24th of July was. I began with the eve of it; and I passed the day itself — as it was fit I should pass it. Nor have I any comfort to give to my dear and ever-honored father and mother, and to you, my Bella, but this — That, as it was the first unhappy anniversary of my birth, in all probability, it will be the last.

Believe me, my dear sister, I say not this, merely to move compassion; but from the best grounds. And as, on that account, I think it of the highest importance to my peace of mind to obtain one further favor, I would chuse to owe to your intercession,

as my sister, the leave I beg, to address half a dozen lines (with the hope of having them answered as I wish) to either or to both my honored parents, to beg their last blessing.

This blessing is all the favor I have now to ask: It is all I dare to ask: yet am I afraid to rush at once, though by letter, into the presence of either. And if I did not ask it, it might seem to be owing to stubbornness and want of duty, when my heart is all humility and penitence. Only, be so good as to embolden me to attempt this task — Write but this one line, “Clary Harlowe, you are at liberty to write as you desire.” This will be enough — and shall, to my last hour be acknowledged as the greatest favor, by

Your truly penitent sister,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Mrs. NORTON, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

My dearest young Lady,

Monday, *July 31.*

I MUST, indeed, own, that I took the liberty to write to your mother, offering to inclose to her, if she gave me leave, yours of the 24th: by which I thought she would see what was the state of your mind; what the nature of your last troubles was, from the wicked arrest; what the people are where you lodge; what proposals were made you from Lord M...’s family; also your sincere penitence; and how much Miss Howe’s writing to them, in the terms she wrote in, disturbed you — But, as you have taken the matter into your own hands, and forbid me, in your last, to act in this nice affair unknown to you, I am glad the letter was not required of me — and, indeed, it may be better that the matter lie wholly between you and them; since my affection for you is thought to proceed from partiality.

They would chuse, no doubt, that you should owe to themselves, and not to my humble mediation, the favor for which you so earnestly sue, and of which I would not have you despair: for I will venture to assure you, that your mother is ready to take the first opportunity to show her maternal

tendernefs: and this I gather from feveral hints I am not at liberty to explain myfelf upon.

I long to be with you, now I am better, and now my fon is in a fine way of recovery. But is it not hard, to have it fignified to me, that at prefent it will not be taken well, if I go? — I fuppofe, while the reconciliation, which I hope will take place, is negotiating by means of the correpondence fo newly opened between you and your fifter. But if you would have me come, I will rely on my good intentions, and risk every one's difpleafure.

Mr. Brand has bufinefs in town; to follicit for a benefice which it is expected the incumbent will be obliged to quit for a better preferment: and when there, he is to inquire privately after your way of life, and of your health.

He is a very officious young man; and, but that your uncle Harlowe (who has chofen him for this errand) regards him as an oracle, your mother had rather any body elfe had been fent.

He is one of thofe puzzling, over-doing gentlemen, who think they fee farther into matters than any body elfe, and are fond of discovering myfteries where there are none, in order to be thought fhrewd men.

I can't fay I like him, either in the pulpit, or out of it: I who had a father one of the foundeft divines and fineft fcholars in the kingdom; who never made an oftentation of what he knew; but loved and venerated the gospel he taught, preferring it to all other learning; to be obliged to hear a young man depart from his text as foon as he has named it (fo contrary, too, to the example fet him by his

learned and worthy principal (*), when his health permits him to preach); and throwing about, to a christian and country audience, scraps of Latin and Greek from the pagan classics; and not always brought in with great propriety neither (if I am to judge by the only way given me to judge of them, by the English he puts them into); is an indication of something wrong, either in his head, or his heart, or both; for, otherwise, his education at the university must have taught him better. You know, my dear Miss Clary, the honor I have for the cloth: it is owing to that, that I say what I do.

I know not the day he is to set out; and as his inquiries are to be private, be pleased to take no notice of this intelligence. I have no doubt, that your life and conversation are such, as may defy the scrutinies of the most officious inquirer.

I am just now told, that you have written a second letter to your sister: but am afraid they will wait for Mr. Brand's report, before further favor will be obtained from them; for they will not yet believe you are so ill as I fear you are.

But you would soon find, that you have an indulgent mother, were she at liberty to act according to her own inclination. And this gives me great hopes, that all will end well at last: for I verily think you are in the right way to a reconciliation. God give a blessing to it, and restore your health, and you to all your friends, prays

Your ever-affectionate

JUDITH NORTON.

(*) Dr. Lewen.

Your good mother has privately sent me five guineas: she is pleased to say, to help us in the illness we have been afflicted with; but, more likely, that I might send them to you, as from myself. I hope, therefore, I may send them up, with ten more I have still left.

I will send you word of Mr. Morden's arrival, the moment I know it.

If agreeable, I should be glad to know all that passes between your relations and you.

LETTER XXIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, To MRS. NORTON.

Wednesday, *Aug. 2.*

YOU give me, my dear Mrs. Norton, great pleasure in hearing of yours and your son's recovery. May you continue, for many, many years, a blessing to each other!

You tell me, that you did actually write to my mother, offering to inclose to her mine of the 24th past: and you say, it was not required of you. That is to say, although you cover it over as gently as you could, that your offer was rejected; which makes it evident, that no plea will be heard for me. Yet, you bid me hope, that the grace I sued for, would, in time, be granted.

The grace I then sued for was, indeed, granted: but you are afraid, you say, that they will wait for Mr. Brand's report, before favor will be obtained in return to the second letter which I wrote to my sister: and you add, that I have an indulgent

mother, were she at liberty to act according to her own inclination; and that all will end well at last.

But what, my dear Mrs. Norton, what is the grace I sue for in my second letter? — It is not that they will receive me into favor — If they think it is, they are mistaken. I do not, I cannot expect that: nor, as I have often said, should I, if they would receive me, bear to live in the eye of those dear friends whom I have so grievously offended. 'Tis only, simply, a blessing I ask: a blessing to die with; not to live with. — Do they know that? And do they know, that their unkindness will, perhaps, shorten my date? So that their favor, if ever they intend to grant it, may come too late?

Once more, I desire you not to think of coming to me. I have no uneasiness now, but what proceeds from the apprehension of seeing a man I would not see for the world, if I could help it; and from the severity of my nearest and dearest relations: a severity entirely their own, I doubt; for you tell me, that my brother is at Edinburgh! You would, therefore, heighten their severity, and make yourself enemies besides, if you were to come to me — Don't you see that you would?

Mr. Brand may come, if he will. He is a clergyman, and must mean well; or I must think so, let him say of me what he will. All my fear is, that, as he knows I am in disgrace with a family whose esteem he is desirous to cultivate; and as he has obligations to my uncle Harlowe and to my father; he will be but a languid acquitter — Not that I am afraid of what he, or any body in the world, can

hear as to my conduct. You may, my reverend and dear friend, indeed you may, rest satisfied, that that is such as may warrant me to challenge the inquiries of the most officious.

I will send you copies of what passes, as you desire, when I have an answer to my second letter. I now begin to wish, that I had taken the heart to write to my father himself; or to my mother, at least; instead of to my sister; and yet I doubt my poor mother can do nothing for me of herself. A strong confederacy, my dear Mrs. Norton (a strong confederacy, indeed!) against a poor girl, their daughter, sister, niece! — My brother, perhaps, got it renewed before he left them. He needed not — his work is done; and more than done.

Don't afflict yourself about money-matters on my account. I have no occasion for money. I am glad my mother was so considerate to you. I was in pain for you, on the same subject. But heaven will not permit so good a woman to want the humble blessings she was always satisfied with. I wish every individual of our family were but as rich as you! — O my mamma Norton, you are rich! You are rich, indeed! — The true riches are such content as you are blessed with. — And I hope in God, that I am in the way to be rich too.

Adieu, my ever-indulgent friend. You say, all will be at last happy — and I know it will — I confide that it will, with as much security, as you may, that I will be to my last hour

Your ever-grateful and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, Aug. 1.

I AM most confoundedly chagrined and disappointed: for here, on Saturday, arrived a messenger from Miss Howe, with a letter to my cousins (*); which I knew nothing of till yesterday; when Lady Sarah and Lady Betty were procured to be here, to sit in judgment upon it with the old Peer, and my two kinswomen. And never was bear so miserably baited as thy poor friend! — And for what? — Why, for the cruelty of Miss Harlowe: for have I committed any new offence? And would I not have reinstated myself in her favor upon her own terms, if I could? And is it fair to punish me for what is my misfortune, and not my fault? Such event-judging fools as I have for my relations! I am ashamed of them all.

In that of Miss Howe was inclosed one to her from Miss Harlowe (**), to be transmitted to my cousins, containing a final rejection of me; and that in very vehement and positive terms; yet she pretends, that in this rejection she is governed more by principle than passion — (damn'd lie, as ever was told!) And, as a proof that she is, says, that she can forgive me, and does, on this one condition, that

(*) See Let. xv.

(**) See Let. xi.

I will never molest her more — The whole letter so written, as to make herself more admired, me more detested.

What we have been told of the agitations and workings, and sighings and fobblings, of the French prophets among us formerly, was nothing at all to the scene exhibited by these maudlin souls, at the reading of these letters; and of some affecting passages extracted from another of my fair implacable's to Miss Howe — Such lamentations for the loss of so charming a relation! Such applaudings of her virtue, of her exaltedness of soul and sentiment! Such menaces of dis-inherisons! I, not needing their reproaches to be stung to the heart with my own reflections, and with the rage of disappointment; and as sincerely as any of them admiring her — “What the devil, cried I, is all this for? Is it not enough to be despised and rejected? Can I help her implacable spirit? — Would I not repair the evils I have made her suffer?” — Then was I ready to curse them all, herself and Miss Howe for company: and heartily I swore, that she should yet be mine.

I now swear it over-again to thee — “Were her death to follow in a week after the knot is tied, by the Lord of heaven, it shall be tied, and she shall die a Lovelace.” — Tell her so, if thou wilt: but, at the same time, tell her, that I have no view to her fortune; and that I will solemnly resign that, and all pretensions to it, in whose favor she pleases, if she resign life issueless. — I am not so low-minded a wretch, as to be guilty of any sordid views to her fortune. — Let her judge for herself then, whether

it be not for her honor rather to leave this world a Lovelace than a Harlowe.

But do not think I will entirely rest a cause so near my heart, upon an advocate, who so much more admires his client's adversary, than his client. I will go to town in a few days, in order to throw myself at her feet: and I will carry with me, or have at hand, a resolute, well-prepared parson; and the ceremony shall be performed, let what will be the consequence.

But if she will permit me to attend her for this purpose at either of the churches mentioned in the licence (which she has by her, and, thank heaven! has not returned me with my letters); then will I not disturb her; but meet her at the altar in either church, and will engage to bring my two cousins to attend her, and even Lady Sarah and Lady Betty; and my Lord M. . . in person shall give her to me.

Or, if it will be still more agreeable to her, I will undertake, that either Lady Sarah or Lady Betty, or both, shall go to town, and attend her down; and the marriage shall be celebrated in their presence, and in that of Lord M. . . either here or elsewhere, at her own choice.

Do not play me booty, Belford; but sincerely and warmly use all the eloquence thou art master of, to prevail upon her to chuse one of these three methods. One of them she must chuse — by my foul, she must!

Here is Charlotte tapping at my closet-door for admittance. What a devil wants Charlotte? — I will bear no more reproaches! — Come in, girl

* * *

My cousin Charlotte, finding me writing on with too much earnestness to have any regard for politeness to her, and guessing at my subject, besought me to let her see what I had written.

I obliged her. And she was so highly pleased on seeing me so much in earnest, that she offered, and I accepted her offer, to write a letter to Miss Harlowe; with permission to treat me in it as she thought fit.

I shall inclose a copy of her letter.

When she had written it, she brought it to me, with apologies for the freedom taken with me in it. But I excused it; and she was ready to give me a kiss for joy of my approbation: and I gave her two for writing it; telling her, I had hopes of success from it; and that I thought she had luckily hit it off.

Every one approves of it, as well as I; and is pleased with me for so patiently submitting to be abused, and undertaken for. — If it do not succeed, all the blame will be thrown upon the dear creature's perverseness: her charitable or forgiving disposition, about which she makes such a parade, will be justly questioned; and the pity of which she is now in full possession, will be transferred to me.

Putting, therefore, my whole confidence in this letter, I postpone all my other alternatives, as also my going to town, till my empress send an answer to my cousin Montague.

But if she persist, and will not promise to take time to consider of the matter, thou mayest communicate to her what I had written, as above, before

my cousin entered; and, if she be still perverse, assure her, that I must and will see her — but this with all honor, all humility: and, if I cannot move her in my favor, I will then go abroad, and, perhaps, never more return to England.

I am sorry thou art, at this critical time, so busily employed, as thou informest me thou art, in thy Watford affairs, and in preparing to do Belton justice. If thou wantest my assistance in the latter, command me. Though engrossed by this perverse beauty, and plagued as I am, I will obey thy first summons.

I have great dependence upon thy zeal and thy friendship: hasten back to her, therefore, and resume a task so interesting to me, that it is equally the subject of my dreams, as of my waking hours.

LETTER XXVI.

Miss MONTAGUE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Dearest Madam,

Tuesday, *Aug. 1.*

ALL our family is deeply sensible of the injuries you have received at the hands of one of it, whom you only can render in any manner worthy of the relation he stands in to us all: and if, as an act of mercy and charity, the greatest your pious heart can show, you will be pleased to look over his past wickedness and ingratitude, and suffer yourself

to be our kinswoman, you will make us the happiest family in the world: and I can engage, that Lord M... and Lady Sarah Sadleir, and Lady Betty Lawrence, and my sister, who are all admirers of your virtues, and of your nobleness of mind, will for ever love and reverence you, and do every thing in all their powers to make you amends for what you have suffered from Mr. Lovelace. This, Madam, we should not, however, dare to petition for, were we not assured, that Mr. Lovelace is most sincerely sorry for his past villainy to you; and that he will, on his knees, beg your pardon, and vow eternal love and honor to you.

Wherefore, my dearest cousin (how you will charm us all, if this agreeable style may be permitted!) for all our sakes, for his soul's sake (you must, I am sure, be so good a Lady, as to wish to save a soul!) and allow me to say, for your own fame's sake, condescend to our joint request: and if, by way of encouragement, you will but say, you will be glad to see, and to be as much known personally, as you are by fame, to Charlotte Montague, I will, in two days time from the receipt of your permission, wait upon you, with or without my sister, and receive your further commands.

Let me, our dearest cousin (we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of calling you so) let me entreat you to give me your permission for my journey to London; and put it in the power of Lord M... and of the Ladies of the family, to make you what reparation they can make you, for the injuries which a person of the greatest merit in the world

has received from one of the most audacious men in it; and you will infinitely oblige us all; and particularly her, who repeatedly presumes to style herself,

Your affectionate cousin, and obliged servant,

CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE.

LETTER XXVII.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Thursday Morning, *Aug. 3.* Six o'Clock.

I HAVE been so much employed in my own and Belton's affairs, that I could not come to town till last night; having contented myself with sending to Mrs. Lovick, to know, from time to time, the state of the Lady's health; of which I received but very indifferent accounts, owing, in a great measure, to letters or advices brought her from her implacable family.

I have now completed my own affairs; and, next week, shall go to Epsom, to endeavour to put Belton's sister into possession of his own house, for him; after which, I shall devote myself wholly to your service, and to that of the Lady.

I was admitted to her presence last night; and found her visibly altered for the worse. When I went home, I had your letter of Tuesday last put

into my hands. Let me tell thee, Lovelace, that I insist upon the performance of thy engagement to me that thou wilt not personally molest her.

Mr. Belford dates again on Thursday morning ten o'clock; and gives an account of a conversation which he had just held with the Lady upon the subject of Miss Montague's letter to her, preceding, and upon Mr. Lovelace's alternatives, as mentioned in Letter xxv. which Mr. Belford supported with the utmost earnestness. But, as the result of this conversation will be found in the subsequent letters, Mr. Belford's pleas and arguments in favor of his friend, and the Lady's answers, are omitted.

LETTER XXVIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, To MISS MONTAGUE.

Dear Madam,

Thursday, *Aug. 3.*

I AM infinitely obliged to you for your kind and condescending letter. A letter, however, which heightens my regrets, as it gives me a new instance of what a happy creature I might have been in an alliance so much approved of by such worthy Ladies; and which, on their accounts, and on that of Lord M... would have been so reputable to myself, and was once so desirable.

But indeed, indeed, Madam, my heart sincerely repulses the man, who, descended from such a family, could be guilty, first, of such premeditated violence as he has been guilty of; and, as he knows, further intended me, on the night previous to the day he set out for Berkshire; and, next, pretending to spirit, could be so mean, as to wish to lift into that family a person he was capable of abasing into a companionship with the most abandoned of her sex.

Allow me then, dear Madam, to declare with fervor, that I think I never could deserve to be ranked with the Ladies of a family so splendid and so noble, if, by vowing love and honor at the altar to such a violator, I could sanctify, as I may say, his unprecedented and elaborate wickedness.

Permit me, however, to make one request to my good Lord M... and to Lady Betty and Lady Sarah, and to your kind Self, and your sister — It is, that you will all be pleased to join your authority and interests to prevail upon Mr. Lovelace not to molest me further.

Be pleased to tell him, that, if I am designed for life, it will be very cruel in him to attempt to hunt me out of it; for I am determined never to see him more, if I can help it. The more cruel, because he knows, that I have nobody to defend me from him: nor do I wish to engage any body to his hurt, or to their own.

If I am, on the other hand, destined for death, it will be no less cruel, if he will not permit me to die in peace — since a peaceable and happy end I wish him. Indeed I do.

Every worldly good attend you, dear Madam, and every branch of the honorable family, is the wish of one, whose misfortune it is, that she is obliged to disclaim any other title, than that of,

Dear Madam,

Your and their obliged and faithful seryant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXIX.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Thurfday Afternoon, *Aug. 3.*

IAM just now agreeably surpris'd by the following letter, delivered into my hands by a messenger from the Lady. The letter she mentions, as inclosed (*), I have returned, without taking a copy of it. The contents of it will soon be communicated to you, I presume, by other hands. They are an absolute rejection of thee — Poor Lovelace! —

(*) See Miss Harlowe's Letter xxviii.

To

TO JOHN BELFORD Esq.

S I R,

Aug. 3.

YOU have frequently offered to oblige me in any thing that shall be within your power: and I have such an opinion of you, as to be willing to hope, that at the times you made these offers, you meant more than mere compliment.

I have, therefore, two requests to make to you: the first I will now mention; the other, if this shall be complied with; otherwise not.

It behoves me to leave behind me such an account as may clear up my conduct to several of my friends, who will not at present concern themselves about me: and Miss Howe, and her mother, are very solicitous that I will do so.

I am apprehensive that I shall not have time to do this; and you will not wonder that I have less and less inclination to set about such a painful task; especially as I find myself unable to look back with patience on what I have suffered; and shall be too much discomposed by the retrospection, were I obliged to make it, to proceed with the requisite temper in a task of still greater importance which I have before me.

It is very evident to me that your wicked friend has given you, from time to time, a circumstantial account of all his behaviour to me, and devices against me; and you have more than once assured

me, that he has done my character all the justice I could wish for, both by writing and speech.

Now, Sir, if I may have a fair, a faithful specimen from his letters or accounts to you, written upon some of the most interesting occasions, I shall be able to judge, whether there will or will not be a necessity for me, for my honor's sake, to enter upon the solicited task.

You may be assured, from my inclosed answer to the letter which Miss Montague has honored me with (and which you'll be pleased to return me as soon as read) that it is impossible for me ever to think of your friend in the way I am importuned to think of him: he cannot, therefore, receive any detriment from the requested specimen: and I give you my honor, that no use shall be made of it to his prejudice, in law, or otherwise. And that it may not, after I am no more, I assure you, that it is a main part of my view that the passages you shall oblige me with shall be always in your own power, and not in that of any other person.

If, Sir, you think fit to comply with my request, the passages I would wish to be transcribed (making neither better nor worse of the matter) are those which he has written to you, on or about the 7th and 8th of June, when I was alarmed by the wicked pretence of a fire; and what he has written from Sunday June 11. to the 19th. And in doing this you will much oblige

Your humble servant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Now, Lovelace, since there are no hopes for thee of her returning favor — since some praise may lie for thy ingenuouſneſs, having never offered (as more diminutive - minded libertines would have done) to palliate thy crimes, by aſperſing the Lady, or her ſex — ſince ſhe may be made eaſier by it — ſince thou muſt fare better from thine own pen, than from hers — And, finally, ſince thy actions have maniſeſted, that thy letters are not the moſt guilty part of what ſhe knows of thee — I ſee not why I may not oblige her, upon her honor, and under the reſtrictions, and for the reaſons ſhe has given; and this without breach of the confidence due to friendly communications; eſpecially, as I might have added, ſince thou glorieſt in thy pen, and in thy wickedneſs, and canſt not be aſhamed.

But, be this as it may, ſhe will be obliged before thy remonſtrances or clamors againſt it can come: ſo, prythee now, make the beſt of it, and rave not; except for the ſake of a pretence againſt me, and to exerciſe thy talent of execration: — and, if thou likeſt to do ſo for theſe reaſons, rave and welcome.

I long to know what the ſecond requeſt is: but this I know, that if it be any thing leſs than cutting thy throat, or endangering my own neck, I will certainly comply; and be proud of having it in my power to oblige her.

And now I am actually going to be buſy in the extracts.

LETTER XXX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Madam,

Aug. 3, 4.

YOU have engaged me to communicate to you, upon honor (making neither better nor worse of the matter) what Mr. Lovelace has written to me, in relation to yourself, in the period preceding your going to Hamstead, and in that between the 11th and 19th of June: and you assure me, you have no view in this request, but to see if it be necessary for you, from the account he gives, to touch the painful subjects yourself, for the sake of your own character.

Your commands, Madam, are of a very delicate nature, as they may seem to affect the secrets of private friendship: but as I know you are not capable of a view, the motives to which you will not own; and as I think the communication may do some credit to my unhappy friend's character, as an ingenuous man; though his actions by the most excellent woman in the world have lost him all title to that of an honorable one; I obey you with the greater chearfulness.

He then proceeds with his extracts, and concludes them with an address to her in his friend's behalf, in the following words;

“ And now, Madam, I have fulfilled your commands; and, I hope, have not disserved my friend with you; since you will hereby see the justice he does to your virtue in every line he writes. He does the same in all his letters, though to his own condemnation: and give me leave to add, that if this ever-amiable sufferer can think it in any manner consistent with her honor to receive his vows at the altar, on his truly penitent turn of mind, I have not the least doubt, but that he will make her the best and tenderest of husbands. What obligation will not the admirable Lady hereby lay upon all his noble family, who so greatly admire her! and, I will presume to say, upon her own, when the unhappy family-aversion (which certainly has been carried to an unreasonable height against him) shall be got over, and a general reconciliation takes place! For who is it, that would not give these two admirable persons to each other, were not his morals an objection?”

However this be, I would humbly refer to you, Madam, whether, as you will be mistress of very delicate particulars from me his friend, you should not in honor think yourself concerned to pass them by, as if you had never seen them; and not to take any advantage of the communication, not even in argument, as some, perhaps, might lie, with respect to the premeditated design he seems to have had, not against you, as you; but as against the sex; over whom (I am sorry I can bear witness myself) it is the villanous aim of all libertines to triumph: and I would not, if any misunderstanding should

arise between him and me, give him room to reproach me, that his losing of you, and, (through his usage of you) of his own friends, were owing to what, perhaps, he would call breach of trust, were he to judge rather by the event than by my intention.

I am, Madam, with the most profound veneration,

Your most faithful humble servant,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXXI.

Miss CL. HARLOWE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

S I R,

Friday, *Aug 4.*

I HOLD myself extremely obliged to you for your communications. I will make no use of them, that you shall have reason to reproach either yourself or me with. I wanted no new lights to make the unhappy man's premeditated baseness to me unquestionable, as my answer to Miss Montague's letter might convince you (*).

I must own in his favor, that he has observed some decency in his accounts to you of the most indecent and shocking actions. And if all his

(*) See Let. xxviii.

strangely-communicative narrations are equally decent, nothing will be rendered criminally odious by them, but the vile heart that could meditate such contrivances as were much stronger evidences of his inhumanity, than of his wit: since men of very contemptible parts and understanding may succeed in the vilest attempts, if they can once bring themselves to trample on the sanctions which bind man to man; and sooner upon an innocent person than upon any other; because such a one is apt to judge of the integrity of others' hearts, by its own.

I find I have had great reason to think myself obliged to your intention in the whole progress of my sufferings. It is, however, impossible, Sir, to miss the natural inference on this occasion, that lies against his predetermined baseness. But I say the less, because you shall not think I borrow, from what you have communicated, aggravations that are not needed.

And now, Sir, that I may spare you the trouble of offering any future arguments in his favor, let me tell you, that I have weighed every thing thoroughly — all that human vanity could suggest — all that a desirable reconciliation with my friends, and the kind respects of his own, could bid me hope for — the enjoyment of Miss Howe's friendship, the dearest consideration to me, now, of all worldly ones — all these I have weighed: and the result is, and was before you favored me with these communications, that I have more satisfaction in the hope, that, in one month, there will be an end of all with me, than in the most agreeable things that could happen

from an alliance with Mr. Lovelace, although I were to be assured he would make the best and tenderest of husbands. But as to the rest; If, satisfied with the evils he has brought upon me, he will forbear all further persecutions of me, I will, to my last hour, wish him good: although he hath overwhelmed the fatherless, and digged a pit for his friend: fatherless may she well be called, and motherless too, who has been denied all paternal protection, and motherly forgiveness.

* * *

And now, Sir, acknowledging gratefully your favor in the extracts, I come to the second request I had to make you; which requires a great deal of courage to mention: and which courage nothing but a great deal of distress, and a very destitute condition, can give. But, if improper, I can but be denied; and dare to say, I shall be at least excused. Thus, then, I preface it:

“ You see, Sir, that I am thrown absolutely into the hands of strangers, who, although as kind and compassionate as strangers can be wished to be, are nevertheless persons from whom I cannot expect any thing more than pity and good wishes; nor can my memory receive from them any more protection than my person, if either should need it.

If then I request it, of the only person possessed of materials that will enable him to do my character justice;

And who has courage, independence, and ability to oblige me;

To be the protector of my memory, as I may say;

And to be my executor; and to see some of my dying requests performed;

And if I leave it to him to do the whole in his own way, manner, and time; consulting, however, in requisite cases, my dear Miss Howe;

I presume to hope, that this my second request may be granted.

And if it may, these satisfactions will accrue to me from the favor done me, and the office undertaken.

It will be an honor to my memory, with all those who shall know, that I was so well satisfied of my innocence, that, having not time to write my own story, I could intrust it to the relation which the destroyer of my fame and fortunes has given of it.

I shall not be apprehensive of involving any one in troubles or hazards by this task, either with my own relations, or with your friend; having dispositions to make, which perhaps my own friends will not be so well pleased with as it were to be wished they would be; as I intend not unreasonable ones: but you know, Sir, where Self is judge, matters, even with good people, will not always be rightly judged of.

I shall also be freed from the pain of recollecting things, that my soul is vexed at; and this at a time when its tumults should be allayed, in order to make way for the most important preparation.

And who knows, but that Mr. Belford, who already, from a principle of humanity, is touched at my misfortunes, when he comes to revolve the

whole story, placed before him in one strong light; and when he shall have the catastrophe likewise before him; and shall become in a manner, interested in it; who knows, but that, from a still higher principle, he may so regulate his future actions as to find his own reward in the everlasting welfare which is wished him by his

Obliged servant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXII.

Mr. BELFORD, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Madam,

Friday, *Aug.* 4.

I AM so sensible of the honor done me in yours of this day, that I would not delay for one moment the answering of it. I hope you will live to see many happy years; and to be your own executrix in those points which your heart is most set upon. But, in case of survivorship, I most cheerfully accept of the sacred office you are pleased to offer me; and you may absolutely rely upon my fidelity, and, if possible, upon the literal performance of every article you shall enjoin me.

The effect of the kind wish you conclude with,

has been my concern ever since I have been admitted to the honor of your conversation. It shall be my whole endeavour that it be not vain. The happiness of approaching you, which this trust, as I presume, will give me frequent opportunities of doing, must necessarily promote the desirable end; since it will be impossible to be a witness of your piety, equanimity, and other virtues, and not aspire to emulate you. All I beg is, that you will not suffer any future candidate, or event, to displace me; unless some new instances of unworthiness appear either in the morals or behaviour of,

Madam,

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Friday Night, *Aug. 4.*

I HAVE actually delivered to the Lady the extracts she requested me to give her from your letters. I do assure you that I have made the very best of the matter for you, not that conscience, but that friendship, could oblige me to make. I have changed or omitted some free words. The warm description of

her person in the fire-scene, as I may call it, I have omitted. I have told her, that I have done justice to you, in the justice you have done to her unexampled virtue. But take the very words which I wrote to her immediately following the extracts:

“ And now, Madam, ” — See the paragraph marked with inverted commas p. 149.

The Lady is extremely uneasy at the thoughts of your attempting to visit her. For heaven's sake (your word being given) and for pity's sake (for she is really in a very weak and languishing way) let me beg of you not to think of it.

Yesterday afternoon she received a cruel letter (as Mrs. Lovick supposes it to be, by the effect it had upon her) from her sister, in answer to one written last Saturday, entreating a blessing and forgiveness from her parents.

She acknowledges, that if the same decency and justice are observed in all your letters, as in the extracts I have obliged her with (as I have assured her they are) she shall think herself freed from the necessity of writing her own story: and this is an advantage to thee which thou oughtest to thank me for.

But what thinkest thou is the second request she had to make to me? No other than that I would be her executor! — Her motives will appear before thee in proper time; and then, I dare to answer, will be satisfactory.

You cannot imagine how proud I am of this trust. I am afraid I shall too soon come into the execution of it. As she is always writing, what a melancholy

pleasure will the perusal and disposition of her papers afford me! Such a sweetness of temper, so much patience and resignation, as she seems to be mistress of; yet writing of and in the midst of present distresses! How much more lively and affecting, for that reason, must her style be; her mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty (the events then hidden in the womb of fate) than the dry, narrative, unanimated style of persons, relating difficulties and dangers surmounted; the relator perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own story, not likely greatly to affect the reader!

Saturday Morning, Aug. 5.

I am just returned from visiting the Lady, and thanking her in person for the honor she has done me; and assuring her, if called to the sacred trust, of the utmost fidelity and exactness.

I found her very ill. I took notice of it. She said, she had received a second hard-hearted letter from her sister; and she had been writing a letter (and that on her knees) directly to her mother; which, before, she had not had the courage to do. It was for a last blessing, and forgiveness. No wonder, she said, that I saw her affected. Now that I had accepted of the last charitable office for her (for which, as well as for complying with her other request, she thanked me) I should one day have all these letters before me: and could she have a kind one in return to that she had been now

writing, to counterbalance the unkind one she had from her sister, she might be induced to show me both together — otherwise, for her sister's sake, it were no matter how few saw the poor Bella's letter.

I knew she would be displeased if I had censured the cruelty of her relations: I, therefore, only said, that surely she must have enemies, who hoped to find their account in keeping up the resentments of her friends against her.

It may be so, Mr. Belford, said she: the unhappy never want enemies. One fault, wilfully committed, authorizes the imputation of many more. Where the ear is opened to accusations, accusers will not be wanting; and every one will officiously come with stories against a disgraced child, where nothing dare be said in her favor. I should have been wise in time, and not have needed to be convinced, by my own misfortunes, of the truth of what common experience daily demonstrates. Mr. Lovelace's baseness, my father's inflexibility, my sister's reproaches, are the natural consequences of my own rashness; so I must make the best of my hard lot. Only as these consequences follow one another so closely, while they are new, how can I help being anew affected?

I asked, If a letter written by myself, by her doctor or apothecary, to any of her friends, representing her low state of health, and great humility, would be acceptable? Or if a journey to any of them would be of service, I would gladly undertake it in person, and strictly conform to her orders, to whomsoever she would direct me to apply.

She earnestly desired, that nothing of this sort might be attempted, especially without her knowledge and consent. Miss Howe, she said, had done harm by her kindly-intended zeal; and if there were room to expect favor by mediation, she had ready at hand a kind friend, Mrs. Norton, who for piety and prudence had few equals; and who would let slip no opportunity to endeavour to do her service.

I let her know, that I was going out of town till Monday: she wished me pleasure; and said, she should be glad to see me on my return.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXIV.

Miss ARAB. HARLOWE, To Miss CL. HARLOWE.

In answer to hers of July 29. See Let. XXII.

Sister CLARY,

Thursday Morn. Aug. 3.

I WISH you would not trouble me with any more of your letters. You had always a knack at writing; and depended upon making every one do what you would when you wrote. But your wit and your folly have undone you. And now, as all naughty creatures do, when they can't help themselves, you come begging and praying, and make others as uneasy as yourself.

When I wrote last to you, I expected that I should not be at rest.

And so you'd creep on, by little and little, till you'll want to be received again.

But you only hope for forgiveness, and a blessing, you say. A blessing for what, sister Clary? Think for what! — However, I read your letter to my father and mother.

I won't tell you what my father said — One who has the true sense you boast to have of your misdeeds, may guess, without my telling you, what a justly-incensed father would say on such an occasion.

My poor mother — O wretch! What has not your ungrateful folly cost my poor mother! — Had you been less a darling, you would not, perhaps, have been so graceless: but I never in my life saw a cockered favorite come to good.

My heart is full, and I can't help writing my mind; for your crimes have disgraced us all; and I am afraid and ashamed to go to any public or private assembly or diversion: and why? — I need not say why; when your actions are the subjects either of the open talk or of the affronting whispers of both sexes at all such places.

Upon the whole, I am sorry I have no more comfort to send you: but I find nobody willing to forgive you.

I don't know what time may do for you; and when it is seen that your penitence is not owing more to disappointment than to true conviction: for it is too probable, Miss Clary, that, had you gone on as swimmingly as you expected, and had
not

not your feather-headed villain abandoned you, we should have heard nothing of these moving supplications; nor of any thing but defiance from him, and a guilt gloried in from you. And this is every one's opinion, as well as that of

Your grieved sister,

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

I send this by a particular hand, who undertakes to give it you or leave it for you by to-morrow night.

LETTER XXXV.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To her Mother.

Honored Madam,

Sat. Aug. 5.

NO self-convicted criminal ever approached her angry and just judge with greater awe, nor with a truer contrition, than I do you by these lines.

Indeed, I must say, that if the matter of my humble prayer had not respected my future welfare, I had not dared to take this liberty. But my heart is set upon it, as upon a thing next to God Almighty's forgiveness necessary for me.

Had my happy sister known my distresses, she would not have wrung my heart, as she has done

by a severity, which I must needs think unkind and unfilterly.

But complaint of any unkindness from her belongs not to me: yet, as she is pleased to write, that it must be seen that my penitence is less owing to disappointment, than to true conviction, permit me, Madam, to insist upon it, that, if such a plea can be allowed me, I am actually entitled to the blessing I sue for; since my humble prayer is founded upon a true and unfeigned repentance: and this you will the readier believe, if the creature who never, to the best of her remembrance, told her Mamma a wilful falsehood, may be credited, when she declares, as she does, in the most solemn manner, that she met the seducer, with a determination not to go off with him: that the rash step was owing more to compulsion than to infatuation: and that her heart was so little in it, that she repented and grieved from the moment she found herself in his power; and for every moment after, for several weeks before she had any cause from him to apprehend the usage she met with.

Wherefore, on my knees, my ever-honored Mamma, (for on my knees I write this letter) I do most humbly beg your blessing: say but, in so many words (I ask you not, Madam, to call me your daughter) — Lost, unhappy wretch, I forgive you! and may God bless you! — This is all! Let me, on a blessed scrap of paper, but see one sentence to this effect, under your dear hand, that I may hold it to my heart in my most trying struggles, and I shall think it a passport to heaven. And, if I do

not too much presume, and it were We instead of I, and both your honored names subjoined to it, I should then have nothing more to wish. Then would I say, "Great and merciful God! thou seest here in this paper thy poor unworthy creature absolved by her justly offended parents: O join, for my Redeemer's sake, thy all-gracious *Fiat*, and receive a repentant sinner to the arms of thy mercy!"

I can conjure you, Madam, by no subject of motherly tenderness, that will not, in the opinion of my severe censurers (before whom this humble address must appear) add to my reproach: let me, therefore, for God's sake, prevail upon you to pronounce me blest and forgiven, since you will thereby sprinkle comfort through the last hours of

YOUR CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS MONTAGUE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

In answer to hers of *Aug. 3.* See Let. XXVIII.

Dear Madam,

Monday, *Aug. 7.*

WE were all of opinion before your letter came, that Mr. Lovelace was utterly unworthy of you, and deserved condign punishment, rather than to

be blessed with such a wife: and hoped far more from your kind consideration for us, than any we supposed you could have for so base an injurer. For we were all determined to love you, and admire you, let his behaviour to you be what it would.

But, after your letter, what can be said?

I am, however, commanded to write in all the subscribing names, to let you know, how greatly your sufferings have affected us: to tell you, that my Lord M... has forbid him ever more to enter the doors of the apartments where he shall be: and as you labor under the unhappy effects of your friends' displeasure, which may subject you to inconveniences, his Lordship, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, beg of you to accept, for your life, or, at least, till you are admitted to enjoy your own estate, of one hundred guineas per quarter, which will be regularly brought you by an especial hand, and of the inclosed bank-bill for a beginning. And do not, dearest Madam, we all beseech you, do not think you are beholden (for this token of Lord M... 's and Lady Sarah's and Lady Betty's love to you) to the friends of this vile man; for he has not one friend left among us.

We each of us desire to be favored with a place in your esteem; and to be considered upon the same foot of relationship, as if what once was so much our pleasure to hope would be, had been. And it shall be our united prayer, that you may recover health and spirits, and live to see many happy years: and, since this wretch can no more be pleaded for, that, when he is gone abroad, as he now is preparing to

do, we may be permitted the honor of a personal acquaintance with a Lady who has no equal. These are the earnest requests, dearest young Lady, of

Your affectionate friends,

and most faithful servants,

M.

SARAH SADLEIR.

ELIZ. LAWRANCE.

CHARL. MONTAGUE.

MARTH. MONTAGUE.

You will break the hearts of the three first-named more particularly, if you refuse them your acceptance. Dearest young Lady, punish not them for his crimes. We send by a particular hand, which will bring us, we hope, your accepting favor.

Mr. Lovelace writes by the same hand; but he knows nothing of our letter, nor we of his: for we shun each other; and one part of the house holds us, another him, the remotest from each other.