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LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sat. Aug. 5.

I AM so excessively disturbed at the contents of Miss Harlowe's answer to my cousin Charlotte's letter of Tuesday last (which was given her by the same fellow that gave me yours) that I have hardly patience or consideration enough to weigh what you write.

She had need, indeed, to cry out for mercy herself from her friends, who knows not how to show any! She is a true daughter of the Harlowes! — By my soul, Jack, she is a true daughter of the Harlowes! Yet has she so many excellencies, that I must love her; and, fool that I am, love her the more for her despising me.

Thou runnest on with thy cursed nonsensical reformado-rote, of dying, dying, dying! and, having once got the word by the end, canst not help foisting it in at every period! The devil take me, if I don't think thou wouldst give her poison with thy own hands, rather than she should recover, and rob thee of the merit of being a conjurer!

But no more of thy cursed knell; thy changes upon death's candlestick turned bottom-upwards. She'll live to bury me; I see that: for, by my soul, I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep, nor, what is still worse, love any woman in the world but her.

Nor care I to look upon a woman now. On the contrary, I turn my head from every one I meet; except by chance an eye, an air, a feature, strikes me resembling hers in some glancing-by face; and then I cannot forbear looking again; though the second look recovers me; for there can be nobody like her.

But surely, Belford, the devil's in this woman! The more I think of her nonsense and obstinacy, the less patience I have with her. Is it possible she can do herself, her family, her friends, so much justice any other way, as by marrying me? Were she sure she should live but a day, she ought to die a wife. If her Christian Revenge will not let her wish to do so for her own sake, ought she not for the sake of her family, and of her sex, which she pretends sometimes to have so much concern for? And if no sake is dear enough to move her Harlowe-spirit in my favor, has she any title to the pity thou so pitifully art always bespeaking for her?

As to the difference which her letter has made between me and the stupid family here (and I must tell thee we are all broke in pieces) I value not that of a button. They are fools to anathematize and curse me, who can give them ten curses for one, were they to hold it for a day together.

I have one half of the house to myself; and that the best; for the great enjoy that least which costs them most. Grandeur and use are two things: the common part is theirs; the state part is mine: and here I lord it, and will lord it, as long as I please; while the two purisy sister, the old gouty brother,

and the two musty nieces, are stived up in the other half, and dare not stir for fear of meeting me: whom (that's the jest of it) they have forbidden coming into their apartments, as I have them into mine. And so I have them all prisoners, while I range about as I please. Pretty dogs and doggeffes, to quarrel and bark at me, and yet, whenever I appear, afraid to pop out of their kennels; or if out before they see me, at the sight of me run growling in again, with their flapt ears, their sweeping dewlaps, and their quivering tails curling inwards.

And here, while I am thus worthily waging war with beetles, drones, wasps, and hornets, and am all on fire with the rage of slighted love, thou art regaling thyself with phlegm and rock-water, and art going on with thy reformation-scheme, and thy exultations in my misfortunes!

The devil take thee for an insensible dough-baked varlet! I have no more patience with thee than with the Lady; for thou knowest nothing either of love or friendship, but art as unworthy of the one, as incapable of the other; else wouldst thou not rejoice, as thou dost under the grimace of pity, in my disappointments.

And thou art a pretty fellow, art thou not, to engage to transcribe for her some parts of my letters written to thee in confidence? Letters that thou shouldest sooner have parted with thy cursed tongue, than have owned thou ever hadst received such: yet these are now to be communicated to her! But I charge thee, and woe be to thee if it be too late! that thou do not oblige her with a line of mine.

If thou hast done it, the least vengeance I will take, is to break through my honor given to thee not to visit her, as thou wilt have broken through thine to me, in communicating letters written under the seal of friendship.

I am now convinced, too sadly for my hopes, by her letter to my cousin Charlotte, that she is determined never to have me.

Unprecedented wickedness, she calls mine to her. But how does she know what love, in its flaming ardor, will stimulate men to do? How does she know the requisite distinctions of the words she uses in this case? — To think the worst, and to be able to make comparisons in these very delicate situations, must she not be less delicate than I had imagined her to be? — But she has heard, that the devil is black; and having a mind to make one of me, brays together, in the mortar of her wild fancy, twenty chimney-sweepers, in order to make one footier than ordinary rise out of the dirty mass.

But what a whirlwind does she raise in my soul, by her proud contempts of me! Never, never, was mortal man's pride so mortified! How does she sink me, even in my own eyes! — “Her heart sincerely repulses me, she says, for my MEANNESS” — Yet she intends to reap the benefit of what she calls so! — Curse upon her haughtiness, and her meanness, at the same time! — Her haughtiness to me, and her meanness to her own relations; more unworthy of kindred with her, than I can be, or I am mean indeed.

Yet who but must admire, who but must adore

her. O that cursed, cursed house! But for the women of that! — Then their damn'd potions! But for those, had her unimpaired intellects, and the majesty of her virtue, saved her, as once it did by her humble eloquence (*), another time by her terrifying menaces against her own life (**).

Yet in both these to find her power over me, and my love for her, and to hate, to despise, and to refuse me! — She might have done this with some show of justice, had the last-intended violation been perpetrated: — But to go away conqueress and triumphant in every light! — Well may she despise me for suffering her to do so.

She left me low and mean, indeed! — And the impression holds with her. — I could tear my flesh, that I gave her not cause — that I humbled her not indeed; — or that I staid not in town to attend her motions instead of Lord M...s, till I could have exalted myself, by giving to myself a wife superior to all trial, to all temptation.

I will venture one more letter to her, however; and if that don't do, or procure me an answer, then will I endeavour to see her, let what will be the consequence. If she get out of my way, I will do some noble mischief to the vixen girl whom she most loves, and then quit the kingdom for ever.

And now, Jack, since thy hand is in at communicating the contents of private letters, tell her this, if thou wilt. And add to it, that if SHE abandon me, GOD will: and what then will be the fate of

Her LOVELACE!

(*) In the fire-scene, Vol. IV. p. 460, & seq.

(**) Vol. VI. p. 77, & seq. in the penknife-scene.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MR. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

In answer to his of *Aug. 4.* See Let. XXXIII.Monday, *Aug. 7.*

AND so you have actually delivered to the fair implacable extracts of letters written in the confidence of friendship! Take care — take care, Belford — I do, indeed, love you better than I love any man in the world: but this is a very delicate point. The matter is grown very serious to me. My heart is bent upon having her. And have her I will, though I marry her in the agonies of death.

She is very earnest, you say, that I will not offer to molest her. That, let me tell her, will absolutely depend upon herself, and the answer she returns, whether by pen and ink, or the contemptuous one of silence, which she bestowed upon my last four to her: and I will write it in such humble, and in such reasonable terms, that, if she be not a true Harlowe, she shall forgive me. But as to the Executorship which she is for conferring upon thee — thou shalt not be her Executor: let me perish if thou shalt. — Nor shall she die. Nobody shall be any thing, nobody shall dare to be any thing, to her, but I — Thy happiness is already too great, to be admitted daily to her presence; to look upon her, to talk to her, to hear her talk, while I am

forbid to come within view of her window — What a reprobation is this, of the man who was once more dear to her than all the men in the world! — And now to be able to look down upon me, while her exalted head is hid from me among the stars, sometimes with scorn, at other times with pity, I cannot bear it.

This I tell thee, that if I have not success in my effort by letter, I will overcome the creeping folly that has found its way to my heart, or I will tear it out in her presence, and throw it at hers, that she may see how much more tender than her own that organ is, which she, and you, and every one else, have taken the liberty to call callous.

Give notice to the people who live back and edge, and on either hand, of the cursed mother, to remove their best effects, if I am rejected: for the first vengeance I shall take, will be to set fire to that den of serpents. Nor will there be any fear of taking them when they are in any act that has the relish of salvation in it, as Shakespeare says — so that my revenge, if they perish in the flames I shall light up, will be complete as to them.

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. LOVELACE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday, *Aug. 7.*

LITTLE as I have reason to expect either your patient ear, or forgiving heart, yet cannot I forbear to write to you once more (as a more pardonable intrusion, perhaps, than a visit would be) to beg of you to put it in my power to atone, as far as it is possible to atone, for the injuries I have done you.

Your angelic purity, and my awakened conscience, are standing records of your exalted merit, and of my detestable baseness: but your forgiveness will lay me under an eternal obligation to you — Forgive me then, my dearest life, my earthly good, the visible anchor of my future hope! — As you (who believe you have something to be forgiven for) hope for pardon yourself, forgive me, and consent to meet me, upon your own conditions, and in whose company you please, at the holy altar, and to give yourself a title to the most repentant and affectionate heart that ever beat in a human bosom.

But, perhaps, a time of probation may be required. It may be impossible for you, as well from indisposition as doubt, so soon to receive me to absolute favor as my heart wishes to be received. In this case, I will submit to your pleasure; and there shall be no penance which you can impose, that I will not chearfully undergo, if you will be

pleased to give me hope, that, after an expiation, suppose of months, wherein the regularity of my future life and actions shall convince you of my reformation, you will at last be mine.

Let me beg the favor then of a few lines, encouraging me in this conditional hope, if it must not be a still nearer hope, and a more generous encouragement.

If you refuse me this, you will make me desperate. But even then I must, at all events, throw myself at your feet, that I may not charge myself with the omission of any earnest, any humble effort, to move you in my favor: for in You, Madam, in YOUR forgiveness, are centred my hopes as to both worlds: since to be reprobated finally by you, will leave me without expectation of mercy from above! — For I am now awakened enough to think, that to be forgiven by injured innocents is necessary to the divine pardon; the Almighty putting into the power of such (as is reasonable to believe) the wretch who causelessly and capitally offends them. And who can be entitled to this power, if You are not?

Your cause, Madam, in a word, I look upon to be the cause of virtue, and, as such, the cause of God. And may I not expect, that he will assert it in the perdition of a man, who has acted by a person of the most spotless purity, as I have done, if you, by rejecting me, show that I have offended beyond the possibility of forgiveness?

I do most solemnly assure you, that no temporal or worldly views induce me to this earnest address. I deserve not forgiveness from you. Nor do my

Lord M. . . and his sisters from me. I despise them from my heart for presuming to imagine, that I will be controlled by the prospect of any benefits in their power to confer. There is not a person breathing, but yourself, who shall prescribe to me. Your whole conduct, Madam, has been so nobly principled, and your resentments are so admirably just, that you appear to me even in a divine light; and in an infinitely more amiable one at the same time, than you could have appeared in, had you not suffered the barbarous wrongs, that now fill my mind with anguish and horror at my own recollected villany to the most excellent of women.

I repeat, that all I beg for the present, is a few lines, to guide my doubtful steps; and (if possible for you so far to condescend) to encourage me to hope, that, if I can justify my present vows by my future conduct, I may be permitted the honor to style myself

Eternally yours,

ROBERT LOVELACE.

LETTER XL.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Lord M . . .
and to the Ladies of his House.

In Reply to Miss Montague's of *Aug. 7.* See
Let. XXXVI.

Tuesday, *Aug. 8.*

EXCUSE me, my good Lord, and my ever-honored Ladies, from accepting of your noble quarterly bounty; and allow me to return, with all grateful acknowledgment, and true humility, the included earnest of your goodness to me. Indeed, I have no need of the one, and cannot possibly want the other: but, nevertheless, have such a sense of your generous favor, that, to my last hour, I shall have pleasure in contemplating upon it, and be proud of the place I hold in the esteem of such venerable persons, to whom I once had the ambition to hope to be related.

But give me leave to express my concern, that you have banished your kinsman from your presence and favor: since now, perhaps, he will be under less restraint than ever; and since I, in particular, who had hoped by your influences to remain unmolested for the remainder of my days, may be again subjected to his persecutions.

He has not, my good Lord, and my dear Ladies, offended against you, as he has against me; and yet you could all very generously intercede for him
with

with me: and shall I be very improper, if I desire for my own peace-sake; for the sake of other poor creatures, who may be still injured by him, if he be made quite desperate; and for the sake of all your worthy family; that you will extend to him that forgiveness which you hoped for from me? and this the rather, as I presume to think, that his daring and impetuous spirit will not be subdued by violent methods; since I have no doubt, that the gratifying of a present passion will be always more prevalent with him, than any future prospects, however unwarrantable the one, or beneficial the other.

Your resentments on my account are extremely generous, as your goodness to me is truly noble: but I am not without hope, that he will be properly affected by the evils he has made me suffer; and that, when I am laid low and forgotten, your whole honorable family will be enabled to rejoice in his reformation; and see many of those happy years together, which, my good Lord, and my dear Ladies, you so kindly wish to

Your ever-grateful and obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLI.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Thursday Night, *Aug. 10.*

YOU have been informed by Tourville, how much Belton's illness and affairs have engaged me, as well as Mowbray and him, since my former. I called at Smith's on Monday, in my way to Epsom.

The Lady was gone to chapel: but I had the satisfaction to hear she was not worse; and left my compliments, and an intimation that I should be out of town for three or four days.

I refer myself to Tourville, who will let you know the difficulty we had to drive out this meek mistress, and frugal manager, with her cubs, and to give the poor fellow's sister possession for him of his own house; he skulking mean while at an inn at Croydon, too dispirited to appear in his own cause.

But I must observe, that we were probably but just in time to save the shattered remains of his fortune from this rapacious woman, and her accomplices: for, as he cannot live long, and she thinks so, we found she had certainly taken measures to set up a marriage, and keep possession of all for herself and her sons.

Tourville will tell you how I was forced to chastise the quondam hostler in her fight, before I could drive him out of the house. He had the insolence to lay hands on me: and I made him take

but one step from the top to the bottom of a pair of stairs. I thought his neck and all his bones had been broken. And then, he being carried out neck-and-heels, Thomafine thought fit to walk out after him.

Charming consequences of keeping; the state we have been so fond of extolling! — Whatever it may be thought of in strong health, sickness and declining spirits in the keeper, will bring him to see the difference.

She should soon have him, she told a confident, in the space of six foot by five; meaning his bed: and then she would let nobody come near him but whom she pleased. The hostler-fellow, I suppose, would then have been his physician; his will ready made for him; and widow's weeds, probably ready provided; who knows, but she to appear in them in his own sight? as once I knew an instance in a wicked wife, insulting a husband she hated, when she thought him past recovery: though it gave the man such spirits, and such a turn, that he got over it, and lived to see her in her coffin, dressed out in the very weeds she had insulted him in.

So much, for the present, for Belton, and his Thomafine.

* * *

I begin to pity thee heartily, now I see thee in earnest, in the fruitless love thou exprestest to this angel of a woman; and the rather, as, say what thou wilt, it is impossible she should get over her illness, and her friends' implacableness, of which she has had fresh instances.

I hope thou art not, indeed, displeased with the extracts I have made from thy letters for her. The letting her know the justice thou hast done to her virtue in them, is so much in favor of thy ingenuousness (a quality, let me repeat, that gives thee a superiority over common libertines) that I think in my heart I was right; though to any other woman, and to one who had not known the worst of thee that she could know, it might have been wrong.

If the end will justify the means, it is plain, that I have done well with regard to ye both; since I have made her easier, and thee appear in a better light to her, than otherwise thou wouldst have done.

But if, nevertheless, thou art dissatisfied with my having obliged her in a point, which I acknowledge to be delicate, let us canvass this matter at our first meeting: and then I will show thee what the extracts were, and what connexions I gave them in thy favor.

But surely thou dost not pretend to say what I shall, or shall not do, as to the executorship.

I am my own man, I hope. I think thou shouldst be glad to have the justification of her memory left to one, who, at the same time, thou mayest be assured, will treat thee, and thy actions, with all the lenity the case will admit.

I cannot help expressing my surprise at one instance of thy self-partiality; and that is, where thou sayest, she had need, indeed, to cry out for mercy herself from her friends, who knows not how to show any.

Surely thou canst not think the cases alike — for she, as I understand, desires but a last blessing, and a last forgiveness, for a fault in a manner involuntary, if a fault at all; and does not so much as hope to be received; thou, to be forgiven premeditated wrongs (which, nevertheless, she forgives, on condition to be no more molested by thee); and hopest to be received into favor, and to make the finest jewel in the world thy absolute property in consequence of that forgiveness.

I will now briefly proceed to relate what has passed since my last, as to the excellent Lady. By the account I shall give thee, thou wilt see, that she has troubles enough upon her, all springing originally from thyself, without needing to add more to them by new vexations. And as long as thou canst exert thyself so very cavalierly at M... Hall, where every one is thy prisoner, I see not but the bravery of thy spirit may be as well gratified in domineering there over half a dozen persons of rank and distinction, as it could be over an helpless orphan, as I may call this Lady, since she has not a single friend to stand by her, if I do not; and who will think herself happy, if she can refuge herself from thee, and from all the world, in the arms of death.

My last was dated on Saturday.

On Sunday, in compliance with her doctor's advice, she took a little airing. Mrs. Lovick, and Mr. Smith and his wife, were with her. After being at Highgate chapel at divine service, she treated them with a little repast; and in the afternoon was at

Issington church, in her way home; returning tolerably chearful.

She had received several letters in my absence, as Mrs. Lovick acquainted me, besides yours. Yours, it seems, much distressed her; but she ordered the messenger, who pressed for an answer, to be told, that it did not require an immediate one.

On Wednesday she received a letter from her uncle Harlowe (*), in answer to one she had written to her mother on Saturday on her knees. It must be a very cruel one, Mrs. Lovick says, by the effects it had upon her: for, when she received it, she was intending to take an afternoon-airing in a coach; but was thrown into so violent a fit of hysterics upon it, that she was forced to lie down; and, being not recovered by it, to go to bed about eight o'clock.

On Thursday morning she was up very early; and had recourse to the Scriptures to calm her mind, as she told Mrs. Lovick: and, weak as she was, would go in a chair to Lincoln's-inn chapel, about eleven. She was brought home a little better; and then sat down to write to her uncle. But was obliged to leave off several times — to struggle, as she told Mrs. Lovick, for an humble temper. "My heart, said she to the good woman, is a proud heart, and not yet, I find, enough mortified to my condition; but, do what I can, will be for prescribing repenting things to my pen."

I arrived in town from Belton's this Thursday evening; and went directly to Smith's. She was

(*) See Letter xliv.

too ill to receive my visit. But on sending up my compliments, she sent me down word, that she should be glad to see me in the morning.

Mrs. Lovick obliged me with the copy of a meditation collected by the Lady from the Scriptures. She has entitled it, "Poor mortals the cause of their own misery;" so entitled, I presume, with intention to take off the edge of her repinings at hardships so disproportioned to her fault, were her fault even as great as she is inclined to think it. We may see by this, the method she takes to fortify her mind, and to which she owes, in a great measure, the magnanimity with which she bears her undeserved persecutions.

M E D I T A T I O N.

Poor mortals the cause of their own misery.

- „ SAY not thou, it is through the Lord that I
 „ fell away, for thou oughtest not to do the thing
 „ that he hateth.
 „ Say not thou, he hath caused me to err; for
 „ he hath no need of the sinful man.
 „ He himself made man from the beginning, and
 „ left him in the hand of his own counsel.
 „ If thou wilt, to keep the commandments, and
 „ to perform acceptable faithfulness.
 „ He hath set fire and water before thee: stretch
 „ forth thine hand to whether thou wilt.
 „ He hath commanded no man to do wickedly:
 „ neither hath he given any man licence to sin.

„ And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is only in thee.

„ Deliver me from all my offences; and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish.

„ When thou with rebuke dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man, therefore, is vanity.

„ Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

„ The troubles of my heart are enlarged. O bring thou me out of my distresses!

* * *

Mrs. Smith gave me the following particulars of a conversation that passed between herself and a young clergyman, on Tuesday afternoon, who, as it appears, was employed to make inquiries about the Lady by her friends.

He came into the shop in a riding-habit, and asked for some Spanish snuff; and finding only Mrs. Smith there, he desired to have a little talk with her in the back-shop.

He beat about the bush in several distant questions, and at last began to talk more directly about Miss Harlowe.

He said, He knew her before her fall (that was his impudent word); and gave the substance of the following account of her, as I collected it from Mrs. Smith.

“ She was then, he said, the admiration and delight of every body: he lamented, with great solemnity, her backsliding; another of his phrases. Mrs. Smith said, he was a fine scholar; for he

spoke several things she understood not; and either in Latin or Greek, she could not tell which; but was so good as to give her the English of them without asking. A fine thing, she said, for a scholar to be so condescending!"

He said, "Her going off with so vile a rake had given great scandal and offence to all the neighbouring Ladies, as well as to her friends."

He told Mrs. Smith "How much she used to be followed by every one's eye, whenever she went abroad, or to church; and praised and blessed by every tongue, as she passed; especially by the poor: that she gave the fashion to the fashionable, without seeming herself to intend it, or to know she did: that, however, it was pleasant to see Ladies imitate her in dress and behaviour, who, being unable to come up to her in grace and ease, exposed but their own affectation and awkwardness, at the time that they thought themselves secure of a general approbation, because they wore the same things, and put them on in the same manner, that she did, who had every-body's admiration; little considering, that were her person like theirs, or if she had had their defects, she would have brought up a very different fashion; for that nature was her guide in every thing, and ease her study; which, joined with a mingled dignity and condescension in her air and manner, whether she received or paid a compliment, distinguished her above all her sex.

"He spoke not, he said, his own sentiments only on this occasion, but those of every body: for that the praises of Miss Clarissa Harlowe were such a

favorite topic, that a person who could not speak well upon any other subject, was sure to speak well upon that; because he could say nothing but what he had heard repeated and applauded twenty times over."

Hence it was, perhaps, that this Novice accounted for the best things he said himself; though I must own that the personal knowledge of the Lady which I am favored with, made it easy to me to lick into shape what the good woman reported to me, as the character given her by the young Levite: for who, even now, in her decline of health, sees not that all these attributes belong to her?

I suppose he has not been long come from College, and now thinks he has nothing to do, but to blaze away for a scholar among the ignorant; as such young fellows are apt to think those who cannot cap verses with them, and tell us how an ancient author expressed himself in Latin on a subject, upon which, however, they may know how, as well as that author, to express themselves in English.

Mrs. Smith was so taken with him, that she would fain have introduced him to the Lady, not questioning but it would be very acceptable to her, to see one who knew her and her friends so well. But this he declined for several reasons, as he called them; which he gave. One was, that persons of his cloth should be very cautious of the company they were in, especially where sex was concerned, and where a woman had flurred her reputation — (I wish I had been there when he gave himself these airs).

Another, that he was desired to inform himself of her present way of life, and who her visitors were; for, as to the praises Mrs. Smith gave the Lady, he hinted, that she seemed to be a good-natured woman, and might (tho' for the Lady's sake he hoped not) be too partial and short-sighted to be trusted to, absolutely, in a concern of so high a nature as he intimated the talk was which he had undertaken; nodding out words of doubtful import, and assuming airs of great significance (as I could gather) throughout the whole conversation. And when Mrs. Smith told him, that the Lady was in a very bad state of health, he gave a careless shrug "She may be very ill, says he: her disappointments must have touched her to the quick: but she is not bad enough, I dare say, yet, to atone for her very great lapse, and to expect to be forgiven by those whom she has so much disgraced."

A starch'd conceited coxcomb! What would I give he had fallen in my way?

He departed, highly satisfied with himself, no doubt, and assured of Mrs. Smith's great opinion of his sagacity and learning: but bid her not say any thing to the Lady about him, or his inquiries. And I, for very different reasons, enjoined the same thing.

I am glad, however, for her peace of mind's sake, that they begin to think it behoves them to inquire about her.

LETTER XLII.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Friday, *Aug. 11.*

MR. Belford acquaints his friend with the generosity of Lord M... and the Ladies of his family; and with the Lady's grateful sentiments upon the occasion. He says, that in hopes to avoid the pain of seeing him (Mr. Lovelace), she intends to answer his letter of the 7th, tho' much against her inclination.

She took great notice, says Mr. Belford, of that passage in yours, which makes necessary to the divine pardon, the forgiveness of a person causelessly injured.

Her grandfather, I find, has enabled her at eighteen years of age to make her Will, and to devise great part of his estate to whom she pleases of the family, and the rest out of it (if she die single) at her own discretion; and this to create respect to her; as he apprehended that she would be envied: and she now resolves to set about making her will out of hand.

Mr. Belford insists upon the promise he had made him not to molest the Lady: and gives him the contents of her answer to Lord M... and the Ladies of his Lordship's family, declining their generous offers. See Let. xl.

LETTER XLIII.

Miss CL. HARLOWE, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Friday, Aug. 11.

IT is a cruel alternative to be either forced to see you, or to write to you. But a will of my own has been long denied me; and to avoid a greater evil, nay, now I may say, the greatest, I write.

Were I capable of disguising or concealing my real sentiments, I might safely, I dare say, give you the remote hope you request, and yet keep all my resolutions. But I must tell you, Sir, (it becomes my character to tell you) that, were I to live more years than, perhaps, I may weeks, and there were not another man in the world, I could not, I would not, be yours.

There is no merit in performing a duty.

Religion enjoins me, not only to forgive injuries, but to return good for evil. It is all my consolation, and I bless God for giving me that, that I am now in such a state of mind with regard to you, that I can cheerfully obey its dictates. And, accordingly, I tell you, that, wherever you go, I wish you happy. And in this I mean to include every good wish.

And now having, with great reluctance I own, complied with one of your compulsory alternatives, I expect the fruits of it.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLIV.

MR. JOHN HARLOWE, To Miss CL. HARLOWE.

In answer to hers to her Mother. See Let. XXXV.

Monday, *Aug. 7.*

Poor ungrateful naughty Kinfwoman.

YOUR mother neither caring, nor being permitted, to write, I am desired to set pen to paper, tho' I had resolv'd against it.

And so I am to tell you, that your letters, joined to the occasion of them, almost break the hearts of us all.

Were we sure you had seen your folly, and were truly penitent, and, at the same time, that you were so very ill as you pretend, I know not what might be done for you. But we are all acquainted with your moving ways when you want to carry a point.

Unhappy girl! how miserable have you made us all! We, who used to visit with so much pleasure, now cannot endure to look upon one another.

If you had not known, upon an hundred occasions, how dear you once was to us, you might judge of it now, were you to know how much your folly has unhinged us all.

Naughty, naughty girl! You see the fruits of preferring a rake and libertine to a man of sobriety and morals. Against full warning, against better

knowledge. And such a modest creature too, as you were! How could you think of such an unworthy preference?

Your mother can't ask, and your sister knows not in modesty how to ask; and so I ask you, if you have any reason to think yourself with child by this villain? — You must answer this, and answer it truly, before any thing can be resolved upon about you.

You may well be touched with a deep remorse for your misdeeds. Could I ever have thought that my doating piece, as every one called you, would have done thus? To be sure I loved you too well. But that is over now. Yet, tho' I will not pretend to answer for any body but myself, for my own part say, God forgive you! And this is all from

Your afflicted Uncle,

JOHN HARLOWE.

The following MEDITATION was stitched to the bottom of this letter, with black silk.

MEDITATION.

„ **O** THAT thou wouldst hide me in the grave!
 „ That thou wouldst keep me secret, till thy wrath
 „ be past!
 „ My face is foul with weeping; and on my eye-
 „ lid is the shadow of death.

- „ My friends scorn me ; but mine eye poureth
„ out tears unto God.
„ A dreadful sound is in my ears ; in prosperity
„ the destroyer came upon me !
„ I have sinned ! What shall I do unto thee, O thou
„ Preserver of men ! Why hast thou set me as a mark
„ against thee ; so that I am a burden to myself !
„ When I say, my bed shall comfort me ; my
„ couch shall ease my complaint ;
„ Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest
„ me thro' visions.
„ So that my soul chuseth strangling, and death
„ rather than life.
„ I loath it ! I would not live alway !— Let me
„ alone ; for my days are vanity !
„ He hath made me a bye-word of the people ; and
„ aforetime I was as a tabret.
„ My days are past, my purposes are broken off,
„ even the thoughts of my heart.
„ When I looked for good, then evil came unto me ;
„ and when I waited for light, then came darkness.
„ And where now is my hope ? —
„ Yet all the days of my appointed time will I
„ wait, till my change come.”

LETTER XLV.

Miss CL. HARLOWE, To JOHN HARLOWE, Esq;

Honored Sir,

Thursday, Aug. 10.

IT was an act of charity I begged: only for a last blessing; that I might die in peace. I ask not to be received again, as my severe sister (O! that I had not written to her!) is pleased to say, is my view. Let that grace be denied me when I do.

I could not look forward to my last scene with comfort, without seeking, at least, to obtain the blessing I petitioned for; and that with a contrition so deep, that I deserved not, were it known, to be turned over from the tender nature of a mother, to the upbraiding pen of an uncle! and to be wounded by a cruel question, put by him in a shocking manner; and which a little, a very little time, will better answer than I can: for I am not either a hardened or shameless creature: if I were, I should not have been so solicitous to obtain the favor I sued for.

And permit me to say, that I asked it as well for my father and mother's sake, as for my own; for I am sure, they at least will be uneasy, after I am gone, that they refused it to me.

I should still be glad to have theirs, and yours, Sir, and all your blessings, and your prayers: but denied

in such a manner, I will not presume again to ask it: relying entirely on the Almighty's; which is never denied, when supplicated for with such true penitence as I hope mine is.

God preserve my dear uncle, and all my honored friends! prays

Your unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLVI.

Miss HOWE, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, Monday, *Aug. 7.*

My dearest creature,

I CAN write just now but a few lines. I cannot tell how to bear the sound of that Mr. Belford for your Executor, cogent as your reasons for that measure are: and yet I am firmly of opinion, that none of your relations should be named for the trust. But I dwell the less upon this subject, as I hope (and cannot bear to apprehend the contrary) that you will still live many, many years.

Mr. Hickman, indeed, speaks very handsomely of Mr. Belford. But he, poor man! has not much penetration.—If he had, he would hardly think so well of me as he does.

I have a particular opportunity of sending this by a friend of my aunt Harman's; who is ready to set out for London (and this occasions my hurry) and is to return out of hand. I expect, therefore, by him a large packet from you; and hope and long for news of your amended health: which heaven grant to the prayers of

Your ever-affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XLVII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Friday, *Aug. 11.*

I WILL send you a large packet, as you desire and expect; since I can do it by so safe a conveyance: but not all that is come to my hand — for I must own that my friends are very severe; too severe for any body who loves them not, to see their letters. You, my dear, would not call them my friends, you said, long ago, but my relations: indeed, I cannot call them my relations, I think! — But I am ill; and, therefore, perhaps, more peevish than I should be. It is difficult to go out of ourselves to give a judgment against ourselves; and yet, oftentimes, to pass a just judgment, we ought.

I thought I should alarm you in the choice of my

Executor. But the sad necessity I am reduced to must excuse me.

I shall not repeat any thing I have said before on that subject: but if your objections will not be answered to your satisfaction by the papers and letters I shall inclose, marked 1, 2, 3, 4, to 9, I must think myself in another instance unhappy; since I am engaged too far (and with my own judgment too) to recede.

As Mr. Belford has transcribed for me, in confidence, from his friend's letters, the passages which accompany this, I must insist, that you suffer no soul but yourself to peruse them; and that you return them by the very first opportunity; that so no use may be made of them that may do hurt either to the original writer, or to the communicator. You'll observe I am bound by promise to this care. If thro' my means any mischief should arise, between this humane and that inhuman libertine, I should think myself utterly inexcusable.

I subjoin a list of the papers or letters I shall inclose. You must return them all when perused (*).

- (*) 1. A letter from Miss Montague, dated — — — Aug. 1.
 2. A copy of my answer — — — — — Aug. 3.
 3. Mr. Belford's letter to me, which will show }
 you what my request was to him, and his } Aug. 3. 4.
 compliance with it; and the desired extracts }
 from his friend's letters — — — — — }
 4. A copy of my answer, with thanks; and }
 requesting him to undertake the executor- } Aug. 4.
 ship — — — — — }
 5. Mr. Belford's acceptance of the trust — — — Aug. 4.

I am very much tired and fatigued—with—I don't know what—with writing, I think—but most with myself, and with a situation I cannot help aspiring to get out of, and above!

O, my dear, the world we live in is a sad, a very sad world!—While under our parents' protecting wings, we know nothing at all of it. Book-learned and a scribbler, and looking at people as I saw them as visitors or visiting, I thought I knew a great deal of it. Pitiabie ignorance!—Alas! I knew nothing at all!

With zealous wishes for your happiness, and the happiness of every one dear to you, I am, and will ever be,

Your gratefully affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 6. Miss Montague's letter, with a generous offer from Lord M... and the Ladies of that family — — — — — | } Aug. 7. |
| 7. Mr. Lovelace's to me — — — — — | |
| 8. Copy of mine to Miss Montague, in answer to hers of the day before — — — — — | } Aug. 8. |
| 9. Copy of my answer to Mr. Lovelace — — — — — | |

You will see by these several letters, written and received in so little a space of time (to say nothing of what I have received and written which I cannot show you) how little opportunity of leisure I can have for writing my own story.

LETTER XLVIII.

Mr. ANTONY HARLOWE, To Miss CL. HARLOWE.

In reply to hers to her uncle HARLOWE, of
Thursday, *Aug. 10.*

Unhappy girl !

Aug. 12.

AS your uncle Harlowe chuses not to answer your pert letter to him ; and as mine written to you before (*), was written as if it were in the spirit of prophecy, as you have found to your sorrow ; and as you are now making yourself worse than you are in your health, and better than you are in your penitence, as we are very well assured, in order to move compassion ; which you do not deserve, having had so much warning : for all these reasons, I take up my pen once more ; tho' I had told your brother, at his going to Edinburgh, that I would not write to you, even were you to write to me, without letting him know. So, indeed, had we all ; for he prognosticated what would happen, as to your applying to us, when you knew not how to help it.

Brother John has hurt your niceness, it seems, by asking you a plain question, which your mother's

(*) See Vol. I. p. 266.

heart is too full of grief to let her ask; and modesty will not let your sister ask, tho' but the consequence of your actions — and yet it must be answered, before you'll obtain from your father and mother, and us, the notice you hope for, I can tell you that.

You lived several guilty weeks with one of the vilest fellows that ever drew breath, at bed, as well as board, no doubt—for is not his character known?—and pray don't be ashamed to be asked after what may naturally come of such free living. This modesty, indeed, would have become you for eighteen years of your life—you'll be pleased to mark that—but makes no good figure compared with your behaviour since the beginning of April last. So pray don't take it up, and wipe your mouth upon it, as if nothing had happened.

But, may-be, I likewise am too shocking to your niceness!—O, girl, girl! your modesty had better been shown at the right time and place!—Every body but you believed what the rake was: but you would believe nothing bad of him—What think you now?

Your folly has ruined all our peace. And who knows where it may yet end?—Your poor father but yesterday showed me this text: with bitter grief he showed it me, poor man! And do you lay it to your heart:

„ A father waketh for his daughter, when no man knoweth; and the care for her taketh away his sleep—When she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age (and you know what proposals were made to you at different times): and, being married,

lest she should be hated: in her virginity, lest she should be defiled, and gotten with child in her father's house (I don't make the words, mind that): and, having an husband, lest she should misbehave herself." And what follows? "Keep a sure watch over a shameless daughter (yet no watch could hold you!) lest she make thee a laughing-stock to thine enemies (as you have made us all to this cursed Lovelace,) and a bye-word in the city, and a reproach among the people, and make thee ashamed before the multitude." Eccles. xlii 9, 10, &c.

Now will you wish you had not written pertly? Your sister's severities!—Never, girl, say that is severe, that is deserved. You know the meaning of words. Nobody better. Would to the Lord you had acted up but to one half of what you know! Then had we not been disappointed and grieved, as we all have been: and nobody more than him who was

Your loving uncle,

ANTONY HARLOWE.

This will be with you to morrow. Perhaps, you may be suffered to have some part of your estate, after you have smarted a little more. Your pertly-answered uncle John, who is your trustee, will not have you be destitute. But we hope all is not true that we hear of you.—Only take care, I advise you, that, bad as you have acted, you act not still worse, if it be possible to act worse. Improve upon the hint.

LETTER XLIX.

Miss CL. HARLOWE, To ANT. HARLOWE, Esq;

Honored Sir,

Sunday, *Aug.* 13.

I AM very sorry for my pert letter to my uncle Harlowe. Yet I did not intend it to be pert. People new to misfortune may be too easily moved to impatience.

The fall of a regular person, no doubt, is dreadful and inexcusable. It is like the sin of apostasy. Would to heaven, however, that I had had the circumstances of mine inquired into!

If, Sir, I make myself worse than I am in my health, and better than I am in my penitence, it is fit I should be punished for my double dissimulation: and you have the pleasure of being one of my punishers. My sincerity in both respects will, however, be best justified by the event. To that I refer.—May heaven give you always as much comfort in reflecting upon the reprobation I have met with, as you seem to have pleasure in mortifying a poor creature, extremely mortified; and that from a right sense, as she presumes to hope, of her own fault!

What you have heard of me I cannot tell. When the nearest and dearest relations give up an unhappy wretch, it is not to be wondered at, that those who

are not related to her are ready to take up and propagate slanders against her. Yet I think I may defy calumny itself, and (excepting the fatal, tho' involuntary step of April 10.) wrap myself in my own innocence, and be easy. I thank you, Sir, nevertheless, for your caution, mean it what it will.

As to the question required of me to answer, and which is allowed to be too shocking either for a mother to put to a daughter, or a sister to a sister; and which, however, you say, I must answer:— O Sir!— And must I answer?— This then be my answer:— “Little time, a much less time than is imagined, will afford a more satisfactory answer to my whole family, and even to my brother and sister, than I can give in words.”

Nevertheless, be pleased to let it be remembered, that I did not petition for a restoration to favor. I could not hope for that. Nor yet to be put in possession of any part of my own estate. Nor even for means of necessary subsistence from the produce of that estate—but only for a blessing; for a last blessing!

And this I will further add, because it is true, that I have no wilful crime to charge against myself: no free living at bed and at board, as you phrase it!

Why, why, Sir, were not other inquiries made of me, as well as this shocking one?—Inquiries that modesty would have permitted a mother or a sister to make; and which, if I may be excused to say so, would have been still less improper, and more charitable, to have been made by uncles

(were the mother forbidden, or the sister not inclined, to make them) than those they have made.

Altho' my humble application has brought upon me so much severe reproach, I repent not that I have written to my mother (altho' I cannot but wish that I had not written to my sister;) because I have satisfied a dutiful consciousness by it, however unanswered by the wished-for success. Nevertheless, I cannot help saying, that mine is, indeed, a hard fate, that I cannot beg pardon for my capital error, without doing it in such terms, as shall be an aggravation of the offence.

But I had best leave off, lest, as my full mind, I find, is rising to my pen, I have other pardons to beg, as I multiply lines, where none at all will be given.

God Almighty bless, preserve, and comfort my dear, sorrowing, and grievously offended father and mother! — And continue in honor, favor, and merit, my happy sister! — May God forgive my brother, and protect him from the violence of his own temper, as well as from the destroyer of his sister's honor! — And may you, my dear uncle, and your no less now than ever dear brother, my second papa, as he used to bid me call him, be blessed and happy in them, and in each other! — And, in order to this, may you all speedily banish from your remembrance for ever

The unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER L.

Mrs. NORTON, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday, *Aug.* 14.

ALL your friends here, my dear young Lady, now seem set upon proposing to you to go to one of the plantations. This, I believe, is owing to some misrepresentations of Mr. Brand; from whom they have received a letter.

I wish with all my heart, that you could, consistently with your own notions of honor, yield to the pressing requests of all Mr. Lovelace's family in his behalf. This, I think, would stop every mouth; and, in time, reconcile every body to you. For your own friends will not believe that he is in earnest to marry you; and the hatred between the families is such, that they will not condescend to inform themselves better; nor would believe him, if he were ever so solemnly to avow that he is.

I should be very glad to have in readiness, upon occasion, some brief particulars of your sad story under your own hand. But let me tell you, at the same time, that no misrepresentations, nor even your own confession, shall lessen my opinion either of your piety, or of your prudence in essential points; because I know it was always your humble way to make light faults heavy against yourself: and well might you, my dearest young Lady, aggravate your own failings, who have ever had

so few; and those few so slight, that your ingenuoufness has turned most of them into excellencies.

Nevertheless, let me advise you, my dear Miss Clary, to discountenance any visits, which, with the censorious, may affect your character. As that has not hitherto suffered by your wilful default, I hope you will not, in a desponding negligence (satisfying yourself with a consciousness of your own innocence) permit it to suffer. Difficult situations, you know, my dear young Lady, are the tests not only of prudence, but of virtue.

I think, I must own to you, that, since Mr. Brand's letter has been received, I have a renewed prohibition to attend you. However, if you will give me leave, that shall not detain me from you. Nor would stay for that leave, if I were not in hopes, that, in this critical situation, I may be able to do you service here.

I have often had messages and inquiries after your health from the truly reverend Dr. Lewen, who has always expressed, and still expresses, infinite concern for you. He entirely disapproves of the measures of the family with regard to you. He is too much indisposed to go abroad. But, were he in good health, he would not, as I understand, visit at Harlowe-Place; having some time since been unhandfomely treated by your brother, on his offering to mediate for you with your family.

* * *

I am just now informed that your cousin Morden is arrived in England. He is at Canterbury, it seems, looking after some concerns he has there; and

is soon expected in these parts. Who knows what may arise from his arrival?—God be with you, my dearest Miss Clary, and be your comforter and sustainer. And never fear but He will; for I am sure, I am very sure, that you put your whole trust in Him.

And what, after all, is this world, on which we so much depend for durable good, poor creatures that we are!—When all the joys of it, and (what is a balancing comfort) all the troubles of it, are but momentary, and vanish like a morning-dream?

And be this remembered, my dearest young Lady, that worldly joy claims no kindred with the joys we are bid to aspire after. These latter we must be fitted for by affliction and disappointment. You are, therefore, in the direct road to glory, however thorny the path you are in. And I had almost said, that it depends upon yourself, by your patience, and by your resignedness to the dispensation (God enabling you, who never fails the true penitent, and sincere invoker) to be an heir of a blessed immortality.

But this glory, I humbly pray, that you may not be permitted to enter into, ripe as you are so soon likely to be for it, till with your gentle hand (a pleasure I have so often, as you know, promised to myself) you have closed the eyes of

Your maternally-affectionate

JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER LI.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Mrs. NORTON.

Thursday, *Aug. 17.*

WHAT Mr. Brand, or any body, can have written or said to my prejudice, I cannot imagine; and yet some evil reports have gone out against me; as I find by some hints in a very severe letter written to me by my uncle Antony. Such a letter as I believe was never written to any poor creature, who, by ill health of body, as well as of mind, was before tottering on the brink of the grave. But my friends may possibly be better justified than the reporters — for who knows what they may have heard?

You give me a kind caution, which seems to imply more than you express, when you advise me against countenancing visitors that may discredit me. You should, in so tender a point, my dear Mrs. Norton, have spoken quite out. Surely, I have had afflictions enow to strengthen my mind, and to enable it to bear the worst that can now happen. But I will not puzzle myself by conjectural evils; as I might, perhaps, do, if I had not enow that were certain. I shall hear all, when it is thought proper that I should. Mean time, let me say, for your satisfaction, that I know not that I have any thing criminal or disreputable to answer for either in word or deed, since the fatal 10th of April last.

You desire an account of what passes between me and my friends; and also particulars or brief heads of my sad story, in order to serve me as occasions shall offer. My dear good Mrs. Norton, you shall have a whole packet of papers, which I have sent to my Miss Howe, when she returns them; and you shall have likewise another packet (and that with this letter) which I cannot at present think of sending to that dear friend for the sake of my own relations; whom, without seeing that packet, she is but too ready to censure heavily. From these you will be able to collect a great deal of my story. But for what is previous to these papers, and which more particularly relates to what I have suffered from Mr. Lovelace, you must have patience; for at present I have neither head nor heart for such subjects. The papers I send you with this will be those mentioned in the margin (*). You must restore them to me as soon as perused; and upon your honor make no use of them; or of any intelligence you have from me, but by my previous consent.

- (*) 1. A copy of mine to my sister, begging off } dated July 21.
 my father's malediction — — — — — }
 2. My sister's answer — — — — — dated July 27.
 3. Copy of my second letter to my sister dated July 29.
 4. My sister's answer — — — — — dated Aug. 3.
 5. Copy of my letter to my mother — dated Aug. 5.
 6. My uncle Harlowe's letter — — — dated Aug. 7.
 7. Copy of my answer to it — — — dated the 10th.
 8. Letter from my uncle Antony — — dated the 12th.
 9. And, lastly, the copy of my answer to it dated the 13th.

These

These communications you must not, my good Mrs. Norton, look upon as appeals against my relations. On the contrary, I am heartily sorry, that they have incurred the displeasure of so excellent a divine as Dr. Lewen. But you desire to have every thing before you; and I think you ought; for who knows, as you say, but you may be applied to at last to administer comfort from their conceding hearts, to one that wants it; and who, sometimes, judging by what she knows of her own heart, thinks herself entitled to it?

I know that I have a most indulgent and sweet-tempered mother; but, having to deal with violent spirits, she has too often forfeited that peace of mind which she so much prefers, by her over-concern to preserve it.

I am sure she would not have turned me over for an answer to a letter written with so contrite and fervent a spirit, as was mine to her, to a masculine spirit, had she been left to herself.

But, my dear Mrs. Norton, might not, think you, the revered Lady have favored me with one private line? — If not, might not you have written by her order, or connivance, one softening, one motherly line, when she saw her poor girl, whom once she dearly loved, borne so hard upon?

O no, she might not! — Because her heart, to be sure, is in their measures! — And if she think them right, perhaps they must be right! — At least knowing only what they know, they must! — And yet they might know all, if they would! — And possibly, in their own good time, they

think to make proper inquiry. — My application was made to them but lately. — Yet how deeply will it afflict them, if their time should be out of time!

When you have before you the letters I have sent to Miss Howe, you will see, that Lord M... and the Ladies of his family, jealous as they are of the honor of their house (to express myself in their language) think better of me than my own relations do. You will see an instance of their generosity to me which at the time extremely affected me, and, indeed, still affects me. Unhappy man! Gay, inconsiderate, and cruel! What has been his gain by making unhappy a creature who hoped to make him happy! And who was determined to deserve the love of all to whom he is related! — Poor man! — But you will mistake a compassionate and placable nature for love! — He took care, great care, that I should rein - in betimes any passion that I might have had for him, had he known how to be but commonly grateful or generous! — But the Almighty knows what is best for his poor creatures.

Some of the letters in the same packet will also let you into the knowledge of a strange step which I have taken (strange you will think it); and, at the same time, give you my reasons for taking it (*).

It must be expected, that situations uncommonly difficult will make necessary some extraordinary steps, which but for those situations would be hardly excusable. It will be very happy, indeed, and somewhat wonderful, if all the measures I have been

(*) She means that of making Mr. Belford her Executor.

driven to take should be right. A pure intention, void of all undutiful resentment, is what must be my consolation, whatever others may think of those measures, when they come to know them: which, however, will hardly be till it is out of my power to justify them, or to answer for myself.

I am glad to hear of my cousin Morden's safe arrival. I should wish to see him methinks: but I am afraid, that he will sail with the stream; as it must be expected, that he will hear what they have to say first. — But what I most fear, is, that he will take upon himself to avenge me — Rather than he should do so, I would have him look upon me as a creature utterly unworthy of his concern; at least of his vindictive concern.

How soothing to the wounded heart of your Clarissa, how balmy, are the assurances of your continued love and favor! — Love me, my dear mamma Norton, continue to love me, to the end! — I now think, that I may, without presumption, promise to deserve your love to the end. And when I am gone, cherish my memory in your worthy heart; for in so doing you will cherish the memory of one who loves and honors you more than she can express.

But when I am no more, get over, I charge you, as soon as you can, the smarting pangs of grief that will attend a recent loss; and let all be early turned into that sweetly-melancholy regard to MEMORY, which, engaging us to forget all faults, and to remember nothing but what was thought amiable, gives more pleasure than pain to survivors

— especially if they can comfort themselves with the humble hope, that the divine mercy has taken the dear departed to itself.

And what is the space of time to look backward upon, between an early departure and the longest surivance? — And what the consolation attending the sweet hope of meeting again, never more to be separated, never more to be pained, grieved, or asperfed! — But mutually blessing, and being blessed, to all eternity!

In the contemplation of this happy state, in which I hope, in God's good time, to rejoice with you, my beloved Mrs. Norton, and also with my dear relations, all reconciled to, and blessing the child against whom they are now so much incensed, I conclude myself

Your ever dutiful and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER LII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday, *Aug.* 13.

I DON'T know what a devil ails me; but I never was so much indisposed in my life. At first, I thought some of my blessed relations here had got a dose administered to me, in order to get the whole house

to themselves. But, as I am the hopes of the family, I believe they would not be so wicked.

I must lay down my pen. I cannot write with any spirit at all. What a plague can be the matter with me!

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Lord M. . . paid me just now a cursed gloomy visit to ask how I do after bleeding. His sisters both drove away yesterday, God be thanked. But they asked not my leave; and hardly bid me good-bye. My Lord was more tender, and more dutiful, than I expected. Men are less unforgiving than women. I have reason to say so, I am sure. For, besides implacable Miss Harlowe, and the old Ladies, the two Montague apes han't been near me yet.

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Neither eat, drink, nor sleep! — A piteous case, Jack! If I should die like a fool now, people would say Miss Harlowe had broken my heart. — That she vexes me to the heart, is certain.

Confounded squeamish! I would fain write it off. But must lay down my pen again. It won't do. Poor Lovelace! — What a devil ails thee?

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Well, but now let's try for't — Hoy — hoy — hoy! Confound me for a gaping puppy; how I yawn! — Where shall I begin? At thy Executorship? — Thou shalt have a double office of it: for I really think thou may'st send me a coffin and a shroud. I shall be ready for them by the time they can come down.

What a little fool is this Miss Harlowe! I warrant

she'll now repent that she refused me. Such a lovely young widow — what a charming widow would she have made! How would she have adorned the weeds! To be a widow in the first twelve months is one of the greatest felicities that can befall a fine woman. Such pretty employment in new dismals, when she had hardly worn round her blazing joy-fuls! Such lights, and such shades! How would they set off one another, and be adorned by the wearer! —

Go to the devil! — I will write! — Can I do any thing else?

They would not have me write, Belford. — I must be ill, indeed, when I can't write. —

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But thou seemest nettled, Jack! Is it because I was stung? It is not for two friends, any more than for man and wife, to be out of patience at one time. — What must be the consequence if they are? — I am in no fighting mood just now, but as patient and passive as the chickens that are brought me in broth — for I am come to that already.

But I can tell thee, for all this, be thy own man, if thou wilt, as to the Executorship, I will never suffer thee to expose my letters. They are too ingenuous by half to be seen. And I absolutely insist upon it, that, on receipt of this, thou burn them all.

I will never forgive thee that impudent and unfriendly reflection, of my cavaliering it here over half a dozen persons of distinction. Remember, too, thy words "Poor helpless orphan!" These reflections are too serious, and thou art also too serious, for

me to let these things go off as jesting; notwithstanding the Roman style (*) is preserved; and, indeed, but just preserved. By my soul, Jack, if I had not been taken thus egregiously crop-sick, I would have been up with thee, and the Lady too, before now.

But write on, however: and send me copies, if thou canst, of all that passes between our Charlotte and Miss Harlowe. I'll take no notice of what thou communicatest of that sort. I like not the people here the worse for their generous offer to the Lady. But you see she is as proud as implacable. There's no obliging her. She'd rather sell her cloaths, than be beholden to any body, although she would oblige by permitting the obligation.

Oh Lord! Oh Lord! — Mortal ill — Adieu, Jack!

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I was forced to leave off, I was so ill, at this place. And what dost think? Why Lord M. . . brought the parson of the parish to pray by me; for his chaplain is at Oxford. I was lain down in my night-gown over my waistcoat, and in a doze: and, when I opened my eyes, who should I see, but the parson kneeling on one side the bed; Lord M. . . on the other; Mrs. Greme, who had been sent for to tend me, as they call it, at the feet! God be thanked, my Lord, said I, in an ecstasy! — Where's Miss? — For I supposed they were going to marry me.

(*) For what these gentlemen mean by the Roman style, see Vol. I. p. 240. in the Note.

They thought me delirious, at first; and prayed louder and louder.

This roused me: off the bed I started; slid my feet into my slippers; put my hand in my waistcoat pocket, and pulled out thy letter with my beloved's meditation in it: My Lord, Dr. Wright, Mrs. Greme, you have thought me a very wicked fellow: but, see! I can read you as good as you can read me.

They stared at one another. I gaped, and read, Poor mo--or--tals the cau--o--ause of their own — their own mis--fer--ry.

It is as suitable to my case, as to the Lady's, as thou'lt observe, if thou readest it again (*). At the passage where it is said, that when a man is chastened for sin, his beauty consumes away, I stepped to the glass: A poor figure, by Jupiter, cried I! — And they all praised and admired me; lifted up their hands and their eyes; and the doctor said, he always thought it impossible, that a man of my sense could be so wild as the world said I was. My Lord chuckled for joy; congratulated me; and, thank my dear Miss Harlowe, I got high reputation among good, bad, and indifferent. In short, I have established myself for ever with all here. — But, O Belford, even this will not do! — I must leave off again.

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A visit from the Montague sisters, led in by the hobbling Peer, to congratulate my amendment and reformation both in one. What a lucky event this illness with this meditation in my pocket; for we

(*) See pag. 183. 184.

were all to pieces before ! Thus, when a boy, have I joined with a crowd coming out of church, and have been thought to have been there myself.

I am incensed at the insolence of the young Levite. Thou wilt highly oblige me, if thou'lt find him out, and send me his ears in thy next letter.

My beloved mistakes me, if she thinks I proposed her writing to me, as an alternative that should dispense with my attendance upon her. That it shall not do, nor did I intend it should, unless she had pleased me better in the contents of her letter than she has done. Bid her read again. I gave no such hopes. I would have been with her in spite of you both, by to-morrow, at farthest, had I not been laid by the heels thus, like a helpless miscreant.

But I grow better and better every hour, I say: the doctor says not: but I am sure I know best: and I will soon be in London, depend on't. But say nothing of this to my dear, cruel, and implacable Miss Harlowe.

A — dieu — u, Ja — aack — what a gaping puppy (Yaw — n! yaw — n! yaw — n!)

Thy LOVELAŒE.