Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 8 eBook

Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 8 by Samuel Richardson

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Page 1

MY DEAREST CREATURE,

I can write but just now 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 on 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 II

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 enclose, 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 through 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 enclose. You must return them all when perused.*

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* 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 compliance with it; and the desired extracts from his friend's letters . . . . Aug. 3, 4.
4. A copy of my answer, with thanks; and requesting him to undertake the executorship . . . . . Aug. 4.
5. Mr. Belford's acceptance of the trust . . Aug. 4.
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 . . . . . Aug. 7.
8. Copy of mine to Miss Montague, in answer to her's of the day before . . . . . Aug. 8.
9. Copy of my answer to Mr. Lovelace . . . . Aug. 11.

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 or leisure I can have for writing my own story.

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 visiters or visiting, I thought I knew a great deal of it. Pitiable 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*.

LETTER III

Mr. *Antony Harlowe*, *to miss* CL. *Harlowe* [*in reply to her's to her uncle Harlowe*, *of Thursday*, *Aug*. 10.] *Aug*. 12.

UNHAPPY GIRL!

As your uncle Harlowe chooses 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; though 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.

* See Vol. I. Letter XXXII.

Brother John has hurt your niceness, it seems, by asking you a plain question, which your mother's heart is too full of grief to let her ask; and modesty will not let your sister ask; though 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.

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You lived several guilty weeks with one of the vilest fellows that ever drew breath, at bed, as well as at 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 to 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—[and 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.' Ecclus. 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. No body 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 IV

Miss CL. *Harlowe*, *to Antony Harlowe*, *Esq*.
Sunday, *Aug*. 13.

HONOURED SIR,

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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. is like the sin of apostacy. 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 young creature, extremely mortified; and that from a right sense, as she presumes to hope, of her own fault!

What you 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, though 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:—'A 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 favour. 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 farther 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 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.

Although my humble application has brought upon me so much severe reproach, I repent not that I have written to my mother, (although 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 errors without doing it in such terms as shall be an aggravation of the offence.

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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 honour, favour, 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 honour!—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 V

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 honour, 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 ingenuousness 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 I stay for that leave, if I were not in hopes that, in this critical situation, I may be able to do you service here.

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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 unhandsomely 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 to be for it, till, with your gentle hand, (a pleasure I have so often, as you now, promised to myself,) you have closed the eyes of

Your maternally-affectionate
Judith Norton.

LETTER VI

Miss Clarissa Harlowe, *to Mrs*. *Norton*
Thursday, *Aug*. 27.

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 visiters that may discredit me. You 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.

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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 occasion 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 honour 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 my father's malediction . . . . . dated July 21.
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 1oth.
8. Letter from my uncle Antony . . . . . dated the 12th.
9. And lastly, the copy of my answer to it. dated the 13th.

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 favoured 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!

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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 honour 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.*

* She means that of making Mr. Belford her executor.

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 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 favour;—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 honours you more than she can express.

But when I am no more, 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.

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And what is the space of time to look backward upon, between an early departure and the longest survivance!—and what the consolation attending the sweet hope of meeting again, never more to be separated, never more to be pained, grieved, or aspersed;—-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 VII

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!

***

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.

***

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?

***

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 mayest 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 befal a fine woman. Such pretty employment in new dismals, when she had hardly worn round her blazing joyfuls! 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 anything else?

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

***

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 cropsick, I would have been up with thee, and the lady too, before now.

* For what these gentlemen mean by the Roman style, see Vol. I. Letter XXXI. in the first note.

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 clothes than be beholden to any body, although she would oblige by permitting the obligation.

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

***

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.

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 mi—ser—ry.

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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 stept 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.

* See Vol. VII. Letter LXXXI.

***

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 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 the 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 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
Lovelace.

LETTER VIII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Monday, *Aug*. 15.

I am extremely concerned for thy illness. I should be very sorry to lose thee. Yet, if thou diest so soon, I could wish, from my soul, it had been before the beginning of last April: and this as well for thy sake, as for the sake of the most excellent woman in the world: for then thou wouldst not have had the most crying sin of thy life to answer for.

I was told on Saturday that thou wert very much out of order; and this made me forbear writing till I heard farther. Harry, on his return from thee, confirmed the bad way thou art in. But I hope Lord M. in his unmerited tenderness for thee, thinks the worst of thee. What can it be, Bob.? A violent fever, they say; but attended with odd and severe symptoms.

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I will not trouble thee in the way thou art in, with what passes here with Miss Harlowe. I wish thy repentance as swift as thy illness; and as efficacious, if thou diest; for it is else to be feared, that she and you will never meet in one place.

I told her how ill you are. Poor man! said she. Dangerously ill, say you?

Dangerously indeed, Madam!—So Lord M. sends me word!

God be merciful to him, if he die!—said the admirable creature.—Then, after a pause, Poor wretch!—may he meet with the mercy he has not shown!

I send this by a special messenger: for I am impatient to hear how it goes with thee.—If I have received thy last letter, what melancholy reflections will that last, so full of shocking levity, give to

Thy true friend,
John Belford.

LETTER IX

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Tuesday, *Aug*. 15.*

* Text error: should be Aug. 16.

Thank thee, Jack; most heartily I thank thee, for the sober conclusion of thy last!—I have a good mind, for the sake of it, to forgive thy till now absolutely unpardonable extracts.

But dost think I will lose such an angel, such a forgiving angel, as this?—By my soul, I will not!—To pray for mercy for such an ungrateful miscreant!—how she wounds me, how she cuts me to the soul, by her exalted generosity!—But *she* must have mercy upon me first!—then will she teach me a reliance for the sake of which her prayer for me will be answered.

But hasten, hasten to me particulars of her health, of her employments, of her conversation.

I am sick only of love! Oh! that I could have called her mine!—it would then have been worth while to be sick!—to have sent for her down to me from town; and to have had her, with healing in her dove-like wings, flying to my comfort; her duty and her choice to pray for me, and to bid me live for her sake!—O Jack! what an angel have I—

But I have not lost her!—I will not lose her! I am almost well; should be quite well but for these prescribing rascals, who, to do credit to their skill, will make the disease of importance.—And I will make her mine!—and be sick again, to entitle myself to her dutiful tenderness, and pious as well as personal concern!

God for ever bless her!—Hasten, hasten particulars of her!—I am sick of love!—such generous goodness!—By all that's great and good, I will not lose her!—so tell her!—She says, that she could not pity me, if she thought of being mine! This, according to Miss Howe's transcriptions to Charlotte.—But bid her hate me, and have me: and my behaviour to her shall soon turn that hate to love! for, body and mind, I will be wholly her's.

LETTER X

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Thursday, *Aug*. 17.

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I am sincerely rejoiced to hear that thou art already so much amended, as thy servant tells me thou art. Thy letter looks as if thy morals were mending with thy health. This was a letter I could show, as I did, to the lady.

She is very ill: (cursed letters received from her implacable family!) so I could not have much conversation with her, in thy favour, upon it.—But what passed will make thee more and more adore her.

She was very attentive to me, as I read it; and, when I had done, Poor man! said she; what a letter is this! He had timely instances that my temper was not ungenerous, if generosity could have obliged him! But his remorse, and that for his own sake, is all the punishment I wish him.— Yet I must be more reserved, if you write to him every thing I say!

I extolled her unbounded goodness—how could I help it, though to her face!

No goodness in it! she said—it was a frame of mind she had endeavoured after for her own sake. She suffered too much in want of mercy, not to wish it to a penitent heart. He seems to be penitent, said she; and it is not for me to judge beyond appearances.—-If he be not, he deceives himself more than any body else.

She was so ill that this was all that passed on the occasion.

What a fine subject for tragedy, would the injuries of this lady, and her behaviour under them, both with regard to her implacable friends, and to her persecutor, make! With a grand objection as to the moral, nevertheless;* for here virtue is punished! Except indeed we look forward to the rewards of *hereafter*, which, morally, she must be sure of, or who can? Yet, after all, I know not, so sad a fellow art thou, and so vile an husband mightest thou have made, whether her virtue is not rewarded in missing thee: for things the most grievous to human nature, when they happen, as this charming creature once observed, are often the happiest for us in the event.

* Mr. Belford's objections, That virtue ought not to suffer in a tragedy, is not well considered: Monimia in the Orphean, Belvidera in Venice Preserved, Athenais in Theodosius, Cordelia in Shakespeare's King Lear, Desdemona in Othello, Hamlet, (to name no more,) are instances that a tragedy could hardly be justly called a tragedy, if virtue did not temporarily suffer, and vice for a while triumph. But he recovers himself in the same paragraph; and leads us to look up to the *future* for the reward of virtue, and for the punishment of guilt: and observes not amiss, when he says, He knows not but that the virtue of such a woman as Clarissa is rewarded in missing such a man as Lovelace.

I have frequently thought, in my attendance on this lady, that if Belton's admired author, Nic. Rowe, had had such a character before him, he would have drawn another sort of

penitent than he has done, or given his play, which he calls The Fair Penitent, a fitter title. Miss Harlowe is a penitent indeed! I think, if I am not guilty of a contradiction in terms; a penitent without a fault; her parents' conduct towards her from the first considered.

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The whole story of the other is a pack of d——d stuff. Lothario, 'tis true, seems such another wicked ungenerous varlet as thou knowest who: the author knew how to draw a rake; but not to paint a penitent. Calista is a desiring luscious wench, and her penitence is nothing else but rage, insolence, and scorn. Her passions are all storm and tumult; nothing of the finer passions of the sex, which, if naturally drawn, will distinguish themselves from the masculine passions, by a softness that will even shine through rage and despair. Her character is made up of deceit and disguise. She has no virtue; is all pride; and her devil is as much within her, as without her.

How then can the fall of such a one create a proper distress, when all the circumstances of it are considered? For does she not brazen out her crime, even after detection? Knowing her own guilt, she calls for Altamont's vengeance on his best friend, as if he had traduced her; yields to marry Altamont, though criminal with another; and actually beds that whining puppy, when she had given up herself, body and soul, to Lothario; who, nevertheless, refused to marry her.

Her penitence, when begun, she justly styles the phrensy of her soul; and, as I said, after having, as long as she could, most audaciously brazened out her crime, and done all the mischief she could do, (occasioning the death of Lothario, of her father, and others,) she stabs herself.

And can this be the act of penitence?

But, indeed, our poets hardly know how to create a distress without horror, murder, and suicide; and must shock your soul, to bring tears from your eyes.

Altamont indeed, who is an amorous blockhead, a credulous cuckold, and, (though painted as a brave fellow, and a soldier,) a mere Tom. Essence, and a quarreler with his best friend, dies like a fool, (as we are led to suppose at the conclusion of the play,) without either sword or pop-gun, of mere grief and nonsense for one of the vilest of her sex: but the Fair Penitent, as she is called, perishes by her own hand; and, having no title by her past crimes to laudable pity, forfeits all claim to true penitence, and, in all probability, to future mercy.

But here is Miss *Clarissa Harlowe*, a virtuous, noble, wise, and pious young lady; who being ill used by her friends, and unhappily ensnared by a vile libertine, whom she believes to be a man of honour, is in a manner forced to throw herself upon his protection. And he, in order to obtain her confidence, never scruples the deepest and most solemn protestations of honour.

After a series of plots and contrivances, al baffled by her virtue and vigilance, he basely has recourse to the vilest of arts, and, to rob her of her honour, is forced first to rob her of her senses.

Unable to bring her, notwithstanding, to his ungenerous views of cohabitation, she over-awes him in the very entrance of a fresh act of premeditated guilt, in presence of the most abandoned of women assembled to assist his devilish purpose; triumphs over them all, by virtue only of her innocence; and escapes from the vile hands he had put her into.

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She nobly, not franticly, resents: refuses to see or to marry the wretch; who, repenting his usage of so divine a creature, would fain move her to forgive his baseness, and make him her husband: and this, though persecuted by all her friends, and abandoned to the deepest distress, being obliged, from ample fortunes, to make away with her apparel for subsistence; surrounded also by strangers, and forced (in want of others) to make a friend of the friend of her seducer.

Though longing for death, and making all proper preparations for it, convinced that grief and ill usage have broken her noble heart, she abhors the impious thought of shortening her allotted period; and, as much a stranger to revenge as despair, is able to forgive the author of her ruin; wishes his repentance, and that she may be the last victim to his barbarous perfidy: and is solicitous for nothing so much in this life, as to prevent vindictive mischief to and from the man who used her so basely.

This is penitence! This is piety! And hence distress naturally arises, that must worthily effect every heart.

Whatever the ill usage of this excellent woman is from her relations, she breaks not out into excesses: she strives, on the contrary, to find reason to justify them at her own expense; and seems more concerned for their cruelty to her for their sakes hereafter, when she shall be no more, than for her own: for, as to herself, she is sure, she says, God will forgive her, though no one on earth will.

On every extraordinary provocation she has recourse to the Scriptures, and endeavours to regulate her vehemence by sacred precedents. 'Better people, she says, have been more afflicted than she, grievous as she sometimes thinks her afflictions: and shall she not bear what less faulty persons have borne?' On the very occasion I have mentioned, (some new instances of implacableness from her friends,) the enclosed meditation will show how mildly, and yet how forcibly, she complains. See if thou, in the wicked levity of thy heart, canst apply it to thy cause, as thou didst the other. If thou canst not, give way to thy conscience, and that will make the properest application.

MEDITATION

How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words!

Be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

To her that is afflicted, pity should be shown from her friend.

But she that is ready to slip with her feet, is as a lamp despised in the thought of them that are at ease.

There is a shame which bringeth sin, and there is a shame which bringeth glory and grace.

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends! for the hand of God hath touched me.

If your soul were in my soul's stead, I also could speak as ye do: I could heap up words against you—

But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

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Why will ye break a leaf driven to and fro? Why will ye pursue the dry stubble? Why will ye write bitter words against me, and make me possess the iniquities of my youth?

Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction, as clouds of rain in the time of drought.

Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little—-before I go whence I shall not return; even to the land of darkness, and shadow of death!

Let me add, that the excellent lady is informed, by a letter from Mrs. Norton, that Colonel Morden is just arrived in England. He is now the only person she wishes to see.

I expressed some jealousy upon it, lest he should have place given over me in the executorship. She said, That she had no thoughts to do so now; because such a trust, were he to accept of it, (which she doubted,) might, from the nature of some of the papers which in that case would necessarily pass through his hands, occasion mischiefs between my friend and him, that would be worse than death for her to think of.

Poor Belton, I hear, is at death's door. A messenger is just come from him, who tells me he cannot die till he sees me. I hope the poor fellow will not go off yet; since neither his affairs of this world, nor for the other, are in tolerable order. I cannot avoid going to the poor man. Yet am unwilling to stir, till I have an assurance from you that you will not disturb the lady: for I know he will be very loth to part with me, when he gets me to him.

Tourville tells me how fast thou mendest: let me conjure thee not to think of molesting this incomparable woman. For thy own sake I request this, as well as for her's, and for the sake of thy given promise: for, should she die within a few weeks, as I fear she will, it will be said, and perhaps too justly, that thy visit has hastened her end.

In hopes thou wilt not, I wish thy perfect recovery: else that thou mayest relapse, and be confined to thy bed.

LETTER XI

Mr. *Belford*, *to miss Clarissa Harlowe*
sat. *Morn*. *Aug*. 19.

MADAM,

I think myself obliged in honour to acquaint you that I am afraid Mr. Lovelace will try his fate by an interview with you.

I wish to Heaven you could prevail upon yourself to receive his visit. All that is respectful, even to veneration, and all that is penitent, will you see in his behaviour, if you can admit of it. But as I am obliged to set out directly for Epsom, (to perform, as I apprehend, the last friendly offices for poor Mr. Belton, whom once you saw,) and as I think it more likely that Mr. Lovelace will not be prevailed upon, than that he will, I thought fit to give you this intimation, lest, if he should come, you should be too much surprised.

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He flatters himself that you are not so ill as I represent you to be. When he sees you, he will be convinced that the most obliging things he can do, will be as proper to be done for the sake of his own future peace of mind, as for your health-sake; and, I dare say, in fear of hurting the latter, he will forbear the thoughts of any farther intrusion; at least while you are so much indisposed: so that one half-hour's shock, if it will be a shock to see the unhappy man, (but just got up himself from a dangerous fever,) will be all you will have occasion to stand.

I beg you will not too much hurry and discompose yourself. It is impossible he can be in town till Monday, at soonest. And if he resolve to come, I hope to be at Mr. Smith's before him.

I am, Madam, with the profoundest veneration,

Your most faithful and most obedient servant,
J. *Belford*.

Letter XII
Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
[*In answer to his of Aug*. 17. *See letter* X. *Of this volume*.]
Sunday, *Aug*. 20.

What an unmerciful fellow art thou! A man has no need of a conscience, who has such an impertinent monitor. But if Nic. Rowe wrote a play that answers not his title, am I to be reflected upon for that?—I have sinned; I repent; I would repair—she forgives my sin: she accepts my repentance: but she won't let me repair—What wouldst thou have me do?

But get thee gone to Belton, as soon as thou canst. Yet whether thou goest or not, up I must go, and see what I can do with the sweet oddity myself. The moment these prescribing varlets will let me, depend upon it, I go. Nay, Lord M. thinks she ought to permit me one interview. His opinion has great authority with me—when it squares with my own: and I have assured him, and my two cousins, that I will behave with all the decency and respect that man can behave with to the person whom he most respects. And so I will. Of this, if thou choosest not to go to Belton mean time, thou shalt be witness.

Colonel Morden, thou hast heard me say, is a man of honour and bravery:— but Colonel Morden has had his girls, as well as you or I. And indeed, either openly or secretly, who has not? The devil always baits with a pretty wench, when he angles for a man, be his age, rank, or degree, what it will.

I have often heard my beloved speak of the Colonel with great distinction and esteem. I wish he could make matters a little easier, for her mind's sake, between the rest of the implacables and herself.

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Methinks I am sorry for honest Belton. But a man cannot be ill, or vapourish, but thou liftest up thy shriek-owl note, and killest him immediately. None but a fellow, who is for a drummer in death's forlorn-hope, could take so much delight, as thou dost, in beating a dead-march with thy goose-quills. Whereas, didst thou but know thine own talents, thou art formed to give mirth by thy very appearance; and wouldst make a better figure by half, leading up thy brother-bears at Hockley in the Hole, to the music of a Scot's bagpipe. Methinks I see thy clumsy sides shaking, (and shaking the sides of all beholders,) in these attitudes; thy fat head archly beating time on thy porterly shoulders, right and left by turns, as I once beheld thee practising to the horn-pipe at Preston. Thou remembrest the frolick, as I have done an hundred times; for I never before saw thee appear so much in character.

But I know what I shall get by this—only that notable observation repeated, That thy outside is the worst of thee, and mine the best of me. And so let it be. Nothing thou writest of this sort can I take amiss.

But I shall call thee seriously to account, when I see thee, for the extracts thou hast given the lady from my letters, notwithstanding what I said in my last; especially if she continue to refuse me. An hundred times have I myself known a woman deny, yet comply at last: but, by these extracts, thou hast, I doubt, made her bar up the door of her heart, as she used to do her chamber-door, against me.—This therefore is a disloyalty that friendship cannot bear, nor honour allow me to forgive.

LETTER XIII

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
London, *Aug*. 21, *Monday*.

I believe I am bound to curse thee, Jack. Nevertheless I won't anticipate, but proceed to write thee a longer letter than thou hast had from me for some time past. So here goes.

That thou mightest have as little notice as possible of the time I was resolved to be in town, I set out in my Lord's chariot-and-six yesterday, as soon as I had dispatched my letter to thee, and arrived in town last night: for I knew I could have no dependence on thy friendship where Miss Harlowe's humour was concerned.

I had no other place so ready, and so was forced to go to my old lodgings, where also my wardrobe is; and there I poured out millions of curses upon the whole crew, and refused to see either Sally or Polly; and this not only for suffering the lady to escape, but for the villanous arrest, and for their detestable insolence to her at the officer's house.

I dressed myself in a never-worn suit, which I had intended for one of my wedding-suits; and liked myself so well, that I began to think, with thee, that my outside was the best of me:

I took a chair to Smith's, my heart bounding in almost audible thumps to my throat, with the assured expectations of seeing my beloved. I clasped my fingers, as I was danced along: I charged my eyes to languish and sparkle by turns: I talked to my knees, telling them how they must bend; and, in the language of a charming describer, acted my part in fancy, as well as spoke it to myself.

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Tenderly kneeling, thus will I complain:
Thus court her pity; and thus plead my pain:
Thus sigh for fancy'd frowns, if frowns should rise;
And thus meet favour in her soft'ning eyes.

In this manner entertained I myself till I arrived at Smith's; and there the fellows set down their gay burden. Off went their hats; Will. ready at hand in a new livery; up went the head; out rushed my honour; the woman behind the counter all in flutters, respect and fear giving due solemnity to her features, and her knees, I doubt not, knocking against the inside of her wainscot-fence.

Your servant, Madam—Will. let the fellows move to some distance, and wait.

You have a young lady lodges here; Miss Harlowe, Madam: Is she above?

Sir, Sir, and please your Honour: [the woman is struck with my figure, thought I:] Miss Harlowe, Sir! There is, indeed, such a young lady lodges here—But, but—

But, what, Madam?—I must see her.—One pair of stairs; is it not?— Don't trouble yourself—I shall find her apartment. And was making towards the stairs.

Sir, Sir, the lady, the lady is not at home—she is abroad—she is in the country—

In the country! Not at home!—Impossible! You will not pass this story upon me, good woman. I must see her. I have business of life and death with her.

Indeed, Sir, the lady is not at home! Indeed, Sir, she is abroad!—

She then rung a bell: John, cried she, pray step down!—Indeed, Sir, the lady is not at home.

Down came John, the good man of the house, when I expected one of his journeymen, by her saucy familiarity.

My dear, said she, the gentleman will not believe Miss Harlowe is abroad.

John bowed to my fine clothes: Your servant, Sir,—indeed the lady is abroad. She went out of town this morning by six o'clock—into the country—by the doctor's advice.

Still I would not believe either John or his wife. I am sure, said I, she cannot be abroad. I heard she was very ill—she is not able to go out in a coach. Do you know Mr. Belford, friend?

Yes, Sir; I have the honour to know 'Squire Belford. He is gone into the country to visit a sick friend. He went on Saturday, Sir.

This had also been told from thy lodgings to Will. whom I sent to desire to see thee on my first coming to town.

Well, and Mr. Belford wrote me word that she was exceeding ill. How then can she be gone out?

O Sir, she is very ill; very ill, indeed—she could hardly walk to the coach.

Belford, thought I, himself knew nothing of the time of my coming; neither can he have received my letter of yesterday: and so ill, 'tis impossible she would go out.

Where is her servant? Call her servant to me.

Her servant, Sir, is her nurse: she has no other. And she is gone with her.

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Well, friend, I must not believe you. You'll excuse me; but I must go up stairs myself. And was stepping up.

John hereupon put on a serious, and a less respectful face—Sir, this house is mine; and —

And what, friend? not doubting then but she was above.—I must and will see her. I have authority for it. I am a justice of the peace. I have a search warrant.

And up I went; they following me, muttering, and in a plaguy flutter.

The first door I came to was locked. I tapped at it.

The lady, Sir, has the key of her own apartment.

On the inside, I question not, my honest friend; tapping again. And being assured, if she heard my voice, that her timorous and soft temper would make her betray herself, by some flutters, to my listning ear, I said aloud, I am confident Miss Harlowe is here: dearest Madam, open the door: admit me but for one moment to your presence.

But neither answer nor fluttering saluted my ear; and, the people being very quiet, I led on to the next apartment; and, the key being on the outside, I opened it, and looked all around it, and into the closet.

The mans said he never saw so uncivil a gentleman in his life.

Hark thee, friend, said I; let me advise thee to be a little decent; or I shall teach thee a lesson thou never learnedst in all thy life.

Sir, said he, 'tis not like a gentleman, to affront a man in his own house.

Then prythee, man, replied I, don't crow upon thine own dunghil.

I stept back to the locked door: My dear Miss Harlowe, I beg of you to open the door, or I'll break it open;—pushing hard against it, that it cracked again.

The man looked pale: and, trembling with his fright, made a plaguy long face; and called to one of his bodice-makers above, Joseph, come down quickly.

Joseph came down: a lion's-face grinning fellow; thick, and short, and bushy-headed, like an old oak-pollard. Then did master John put on a sturdier look. But I only hummed a tune, traversed all the other apartments, sounded the passages with my knuckles, to find whether there were private doors, and walked up the next pair of stairs, singing all the way; John and Joseph, and Mrs. Smith, following me up, trembling.

I looked round me there, and went into two open-door bed-chambers; searched the closets, and the passages, and peeped through the key-hole of another: no Miss Harlowe, by Jupiter! What shall I do!—what shall I do! as the girls say.—Now will she be grieved that she is out of the way.

I said this on purpose to find out whether these people knew the lady's story; and had the answer I expected from Mrs. Smith—I believe not, Sir.

Why so, Mrs. Smith? Do you know who I am?

I can guess, Sir.

Whom do you guess me to be?

Your name is Mr. Lovelace, Sir, I make no doubt.

The very same. But how came you to guess so well, dame Smith! You never saw me before, did you?

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Here, Jack, I laid out for a compliment, and missed it.

'Tis easy to guess, Sir; for there cannot be two such gentlemen as you.

Well said, dame Smith—but mean you good or bad?—Handsome was the least I thought she would have said.

I leave you to guess, Sir.

Condemned, thought I, by myself, on this appeal.

Why, father Smith, thy wife is a wit, man!—Didst thou ever find that out before?—But where is widow Lovick, dame Smith? My cousin John Belford says she is a very good woman. Is she within? or is she gone with Miss Harlowe too?

She will be within by-and-by, Sir. She is not with the lady.

Well, but my good dear Mrs. Smith, where is the lady gone? and when will she return?

I can't tell, Sir.

Don't tell fibs, dame Smith; don't tell fibs, chucking her under the chin: which made John's upper-lip, with chin shortened, rise to his nose. —I am sure you know!—But here's another pair of stairs: let us see: Who lives up there?—but hold, here's another room locked up, tapping at the door—Who's at home? cried I.

That's Mrs. Lovick's apartment. She is gone out, and has the key with her.

Widow Lovick! rapping again, I believe you are at home: pray open the door.

John and Joseph muttered and whispered together.

No whispering, honest friends: 'tis not manners to whisper. Joseph, what said John to thee?

John! Sir, disdainfully repeated the good woman.

I beg pardon, Mrs. Smith: but you see the force of example. Had you showed your honest man more respect, I should. Let me give you a piece of advice—women who treat their husbands irreverently, teach strangers to use them with contempt. There, honest master John; why dost not pull off thy hat to me?—Oh! so thou wouldst, if thou hadst it on: but thou never wearest thy hat in thy wife's presence, I believe; dost thou?

None of your fleers and your jeers, Sir, cried John. I wish every married pair lived as happily as we do.

I wish so too, honest friend. But I'll be hanged if thou hast any children.

Why so, Sir?

Hast thou?—Answer me, man: Hast thou, or not?

Perhaps not, Sir. But what of that?

What of that?—Why I'll tell thee: The man who has no children by his wife must put up with plain John. Hadst thou a child or two, thou'dst be called Mr. Smith, with a courtesy, or a smile at least, at every word.

You are very pleasant, Sir, replied my dame. I fancy, if either my husband or I had as much to answer for as I know whom, we should not be so merry.

Why then, dame Smith, so much the worse for those who were obliged to keep you company. But I am not merry—I am sad!—Hey-ho!—Where shall I find my dear Miss Harlowe?

My beloved Miss Harlowe! [calling at the foot of the third pair of stairs,] if you are above, for Heaven's sake answer me. I am coming up.

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Sir, said the good man, I wish you'd walk down. The servants' rooms, and the working-rooms, are up those stairs, and another pair; and nobody's there that you want.

Shall I go up, and see if Miss Harlowe be there, Mrs. Smith?

You may, Sir, if you please.

Then I won't; for, if she was, you would not be so obliging.

I am ashamed to give you all this attendance: you are the politest traders I ever knew. Honest Joseph, slapping him upon the shoulders on a sudden, which made him jump, didst ever grin for a wager, man?—for the rascal seemed not displeased with me; and, cracking his flat face from ear to ear, with a distended mouth, showed his teeth, as broad and as black as his thumb-nails.—But don't I hinder thee? What canst earn a-day, man?

Half-a-crown I can earn a-day; with an air of pride and petulance, at being startled.

There then is a day's wages for thee. But thou needest not attend me farther.

Come, Mrs. Smith, come John, (Master Smith I should say,) let's walk down, and give me an account where the lady is gone, and when she will return.

So down stairs led I. John and Joseph (thought I had discharged the latter,) and my dame, following me, to show their complaisance to a stranger.

I re-entered one of the first-floor rooms. I have a great mind to be your lodger: for I never saw such obliging folks in my life. What rooms have you to let?

None at all, Sir.

I am sorry for that. But whose is this?

Mine, Sir, chuffily said John.

Thine, man! why then I will take it of thee. This, and a bed-chamber, and a garret for one servant, will content me. I will give thee thine own price, and half a guinea a day over, for those conveniencies.

For ten guineas a day, Sir—

Hold, John! (Master Smith I should say)—Before thou speakest, consider—
I won't be affronted, man.

Sir, I wish you'd walk down, said the good woman. Really, Sir, you take—

Great liberties I hope you would not say, Mrs. Smith?

Indeed, Sir, I was going to say something like it.

Well, then, I am glad I prevented you; for such words better become my mouth than yours. But I must lodge with you till the lady returns. I believe I must. However, you may be wanted in the shop; so we'll talk that over there.

Down I went, they paying diligent attendance on my steps.

When I came into the shop, seeing no chair or stool, I went behind the compter, and sat down under an arched kind of canopy of carved work, which these proud traders, emulating the royal niche-fillers, often give themselves, while a joint-stool, perhaps, serves those by whom they get their bread: such is the dignity of trade in this mercantile nation!

I looked about me, and above me; and told them I was very proud of my seat; asking, if John were ever permitted to fill this superb niche?

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Perhaps he was, he said, very surlily.

That is it that makes thee looks so like a statue, man.

John looked plaguy glum upon me. But his man Joseph and my man Will. turned round with their backs to us, to hide their grinning, with each his fist in his mouth.

I asked, what it was they sold?

Powder, and wash-balls, and snuff, they said; and gloves and stockings.

O come, I'll be your customer. Will. do I want wash-balls?

Yes, and please your Honour, you can dispense with one or two.

Give him half a dozen, dame Smith.

She told me she must come where I was, to serve them. Pray, Sir, walk from behind the compter.

Indeed but I won't. The shop shall be mine. Where are they, if a customer shall come in?

She pointed over my head, with a purse mouth, as if she would not have simpered, could she have helped it. I reached down the glass, and gave Will. six. There—put 'em up, Sirrah.

He did, grinning with his teeth out before; which touching my conscience, as the loss of them was owing to me, Joseph, said I, come hither. Come hither, man, when I bid thee.

He stalked towards me, his hands behind him, half willing, and half unwilling.

I suddenly wrapt my arm round his neck. Will. thy penknife, this moment. D——n the fellow, where's thy penknife?

O Lord! said the pollard-headed dog, struggling to get his head loose from under my arm, while my other hand was muzzling about his cursed chaps, as if I would take his teeth out.

I will pay thee a good price, man: don't struggle thus? The penknife, Will.!

O Lord, cried Joseph, struggling still more and more: and out comes Will.'s pruning-knife; for the rascal is a gardener in the country. I have only this, Sir.

The best in the world to launch a gum. D——n the fellow, why dost struggle thus?

Master and Mistress Smith being afraid, I suppose, that I had a design upon Joseph's throat, because he was their champion, (and this, indeed, made me take the more notice of him,) coming towards me with countenances tragic-comical, I let him go.

I only wanted, said I, to take out two or three of this rascal's broad teeth, to put them into my servant's jaws—and I would have paid him his price for them.—I would by my soul, Joseph.

Joseph shook his ears; and with both hands stroked down, smooth as it would lie, his bushy hair; and looked at me as if he knew not whether he should laugh or be angry: but, after a stupid stare or two, stalked off to the other end of the shop, nodding his head at me as he went, still stroking down his hair; and took his stand by his master, facing about and muttering, that I was plaguy strong in the arms, and he thought would have throttled him. Then folding his arms, and shaking his bristled head, added, 'twas well I was a gentleman, or he would not have taken such an affront.

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I demanded where their rappee was? the good woman pointed to the place; and I took up a scollop-shell of it, refusing to let her weight it, and filled my box. And now, Mrs. Smith, said I, where are your gloves?

She showed me; and I chose four pair of them, and set Joseph, who looked as if he wanted to be taken notice of again, to open the fingers.

A female customer, who had been gaping at the door, came in for some Scots sniff; and I would serve her. The wench was plaguy homely; and I told her so; or else, I said, I would have treated her. She, in anger, [no woman is homely in her own opinion,] threw down her penny; and I put it in my pocket.

Just then, turning my eye to the door, I saw a pretty, genteel lady, with a footman after her, peeping in with a What's the matter, good folks? to the starers; and I ran to her from behind the compter, and, as she was making off, took her hand, and drew her into the shop; begging that she would be my customer; for that I had but just begun trade.

What do you sell, Sir? said she, smiling; but a little surprised.

Tapes, ribbands, silk laces, pins, and needles; for I am a pedlar: powder, patches, wash-balls, stockings, garters, snuffs, and pin cushions—Don't we, goody Smith?

So in I gently drew her to the compter, running behind it myself, with an air of great dilingence and obligingness. I have excellent gloves and wash-balls, Madam: rappee, Scots, Portugal, and all sorts of snuff.

Well, said she, in a very good humour, I'll encourage a young beginner for once. Here, Andrew, [to her footman,] you want a pair of gloves, don't you?

I took down a parcel of gloves, which Mrs. Smith pointed to, and came round to the fellow to fit them on myself.

No matter for opening them, said I: thy fingers, friend, are as stiff as drum-sticks. Push! —Thou'rt an awkward dog! I wonder such a pretty lady will be followed by such a clumsy varlet.

The fellow had no strength for laughing: and Joseph was mightily pleased, in hopes, I suppose, I would borrow a few of Andrew's teeth, to keep him in countenance: and, father and mother Smith, like all the world, as the jest was turned from themselves, seemed diverted with the humour.

The fellow said the gloves were too little.

Thrust, and be d——d to thee, said I: why, fellow, thou hast not the strength of a cat.

Sir, Sir, said he, laughing, I shall hurt your Honour’s side.

D——n thee, thrust I say.

He did; and burst out the sides of the glove.

Will. said I, where’s thy pruning-knife? By my soul, friend, I had a good mind to pare thy cursed paws. But come, here’s a larger pair: try them, when thou gettest home; and let thy sweetheart, if thou hast one, mend the other, so take both.

The lady laughed at the humour; as did my fellow, and Mrs. Smith, and Joseph: even John laughed, though he seemed by the force put upon his countenance to be but half pleased with me neither.

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Madam, said I, and stepped behind the compter, bowing over it, now I hope you will buy something for yourself. Nobody shall use you better, nor sell you cheaper.

Come, said she, give me six-penny worth of Portugal snuff.

They showed me where it was, and I served her; and said, when she would have paid me, I took nothing at my opening.

If I treated her footman, she told me, I should not treat her.

Well, with all my heart, said I: 'tis not for us tradesmen to be saucy— Is it, Mrs. Smith?

I put her sixpence in my pocket; and, seizing her hand, took notice to her of the crowd that had gathered about the door, and besought her to walk into the back-shop with me.

She struggled her hand out of mine, and would stay no longer.

So I bowed, and bid her kindly welcome, and thanked her, and hoped I should have her custom another time.

She went away smiling; and Andrew after her; who made me a fine bow.

I began to be out of countenance at the crowd, which thickened apace; and bid Will. order the chair to the door.

Well, Mrs. Smith, with a grave air, I am heartily sorry Miss Harlowe is abroad. You don't tell me where she is?

Indeed, Sir, I cannot.

You will not, you mean.—She could have no notion of my coming. I came to town but last night. I have been very ill. She has almost broken my heart by her cruelty. You know my story, I doubt not. Tell her, I must go out of town to-morrow morning. But I will send my servant, to know if she will favour me with one half-hour's conversation; for, as soon as I get down, I shall set out for Dover, in my way to France, if I have not a countermand from her, who has the sole disposal of my fate.

And so flinging down a Portugal six-and-thirty, I took Mr. Smith by the hand, telling him, I was sorry we had not more time to be better acquainted; and bidding farewell to honest Joseph, (who pursed up his mouth as I passed by him, as if he thought his teeth still in jeopardy,) and Mrs. Smith adieu, and to recommend me to her fair lodger, hummed an air, and, the chair being come, whipt into it; the people about the door seeming to be in good humour with me; one crying, a pleasant gentleman, I warrant him! and away I was carried to White's, according to direction.

As soon as I came thither, I ordered Will. to go and change his clothes, and to disguise himself by putting on his black wig, and keeping his mouth shut; and then to dodge about Smith’s, to inform himself of the lady’s motions.

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I give thee this impudent account of myself, that thou mayest rave at me, and call me hardened, and what thou wilt. For, in the first place, I, who had been so lately ill, was glad I was alive; and then I was so balked by my charmer's unexpected absence, and so ruffled by that, and by the bluff treatment of father John, that I had no other way to avoid being out of humour with all I met with. Moreover I was rejoiced to find, by the lady's absence, and by her going out at six in the morning, that it was impossible she should be so ill as thou representest her to be; and this gave me still higher spirits. Then I know the sex always love cheerful and humourous fellows. The dear creature herself used to be pleased with my gay temper and lively manner; and had she been told that I was blubbering for her in the back-shop, she would have despised me still more than she does.

Furthermore, I was sensible that the people of the house must needs have a terrible notion of me, as a savage, bloody-minded, obdurate fellow; a perfect woman-eater; and, no doubt, expected to see me with the claws of a lion, and the fangs of a tiger; and it was but policy to show them what a harmless pleasant fellow I am, in order to familiarize the Johns and the Josephs to me. For it was evident to me, by the good woman's calling them down, that she thought me a dangerous man. Whereas now, John and I have shaken hands together, and dame Smith having seen that I have the face, and hands, and looks of a man, and walk upright, and prate, and laugh, and joke, like other people; and Joseph, that I can talk of taking his teeth out of his head, without doing him the least hurt; they will all, at my next visit, be much more easy and pleasant to me than Andrew's gloves were to him; and we shall be as thoroughly acquainted, as if we had known one another a twelvemonth.

When I returned to our mother's, I again cursed her and all her nymphs together; and still refused to see either Sally or Polly! I raved at the horrid arrest; and told the old dragon that it was owing to her and her's that the fairest virtue in the world was ruined; my reputation for ever blasted; and that I was not married and perfectly happy in the love of the most excellent of her sex.

She, to pacify me, said she would show me a new face that would please me; since I would not see my Sally, who was dying with grief.

Where is this new face? cried I: let me see her, though I shall never see any face with pleasure but Miss Harlowe's.

She won't come down, replied she. She will not be at the word of command yet. She is but just in the trammels; and must be waited upon, I'll assure you; and courted much besides.

Ay! said I, that looks well. Lead me to her this instant.

I followed her up: and who should she be, but that little toad Sally!

O curse you, said I, for a devil! Is it you? is your’s the new face?

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O my dear, dear Mr. Lovelace! cried she, I am glad any thing will bring you to me!—and so the little beast threw herself about my neck, and there clung like a cat. Come, said she, what will you give me, and I'll be as virtuous for a quarter of an hour, and mimic your Clarissa to the life?

I was Belforded all over. I could not bear such an insult upon the dear creature, (for I have a soft and generous nature in the main, whatever thou thinkest;) and cursed her most devoutly, for taking my beloved's name in her mouth in such a way. But the little devil was not to be balked; but fell a crying, sobbing, praying, begging, exclaiming, fainting, that I never saw my lovely girl so well aped. Indeed I was almost taken in; for I could have fancied I had her before me once more.

O this sex! this artful sex! there's no minding them. At first, indeed, their grief and their concern may be real: but, give way to the hurricane, and it will soon die away in soft murmurs, thrilling upon your ears like the notes of a well-tuned viol. And, by Sally, one sees that art will generally so well supply the place of nature, that you shall not easily know the difference. Miss Clarisa Harlowe, indeed, is the only woman in the world I believe that can say, in the words of her favourite Job, (for I can quote a text as well as she,) But it is not so with me.

They were very inquisitive about my fair-one. They told me that you seldom came near them; that, when you did, you put on plaguy grave airs; would hardly stay five minutes; and did nothing but praise Miss Harlowe, and lament her hard fate. In short, that you despised them; was full of sentences; and they doubted not, in a little while, would be a lost man, and marry.

A pretty character for thee, is it not? thou art in a blessed way; yet hast nothing to do but to go on in it: and then what work hast thou to go through! If thou turnest back, these sorceresses will be like the czar's cossacks, [at Pultowa, I think it was,] who were planted with ready primed and cocked pieces behind the regulars, in order to shoot them dead, if they did not push on and conquer; and then wilt thou be most lamentably despised by every harlot thou hast made—and, O Jack, how formidable, in that case, will be the number of thy enemies!

I intend to regulate my motions by Will.'s intelligence; for see this dear creature I must and will. Yet I have promised Lord M. to be down in two or three days at farthest; for he is grown plaguy fond of me since I was ill.

I am in hopes that the word I left, that I am to go out of town to-morrow morning, will soon bring the lady back again.

Mean time, I thought I would write to divert thee, while thou art of such importance about the dying; and as thy servant, it seems, comes backward and forward every day,

perhaps I may send thee another letter to-morrow, with the particulars of the interview between the dear creature and me; after which my soul thirsteth.

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LETTER XIV

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Tuesday, *Aug*. 22.

I must write on, to divert myself: for I can get no rest; no refreshing rest. I awaked just now in a cursed fright. How a man may be affected by dreams!

'Methought I had an interview with my beloved. I found her all goodness, condescension, and forgiveness. She suffered herself to be overcome in my favour by the joint intercessions of Lord M., Lady Sarah, Lady Betty, and my two cousins Montague, who waited upon her in deep mourning; the ladies in long trains sweeping after them; Lord M. in a long black mantle trailing after him. They told her they came in these robs to express their sorrow for my sins against her, and to implore her to forgive me.

'I myself, I thought, was upon my knees, with a sword in my hand, offering either to put it up in the scabbard, or to thrust it into my heart, as she should command the one or the other.

'At that moment her cousin Morden, I thought, all of a sudden, flashed in through a window, with his drawn sword—Die, Lovelace! said he; this instant die, and be d——d, if in earnest thou repairest not by marriage my cousin's wrongs!

'I was rising to resent this insult, I thought, when Lord M. ran between us with his great black mantle, and threw it over my face: and instantly my charmer, with that sweet voice which has so often played upon my ravished ears, wrapped her arms around me, muffled as I was in my Lord's mantle: O spare, spare my Lovelace! and spare, O Lovelace, my beloved cousin Morden! Let me not have my distresses augmented by the fall of either or both of those who are so dear to me!

'At this, charmed with her sweet mediation, I thought I would have clasped her in my arms: when immediately the most angelic form I had ever beheld, all clad in transparent white, descended in a cloud, which, opening, discovered a firmament above it, crowded with golden cherubs and glittering seraphs, all addressing her with Welcome, welcome, welcome! and, encircling my charmer, ascended with her to the region of seraphims; and instantly, the opened cloud closing, I lost sight of her, and of the bright form together, and found wrapt in my arms her azure robe (all stuck thick with stars of embossed silver) which I had caught hold of in hopes of detaining her; but was all that was left me of my beloved Clarissa. And then, (horrid to relate!) the floor sinking under me, as the firmament had opened for her, I dropt into a hole more frightful than that of Elden; and, tumbling over and over down it, without view of a bottom, I awaked in a

panic; and was as effectually disordered for half an hour, as if my dream had been a reality.'

Wilt thou forgive my troubling thee with such visionary stuff? Thou wilt see by it only that, sleeping or waking, my Clarissa is always present with me.

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But here this moment is Will. come running hither to tell me that his lady actually returned to her lodgings last night between eleven and twelve; and is now there, though very ill.

I hasten to her. But, that I may not add to her indisposition, by any rough or boisterous behaviour, I will be as soft and gentle as the dove herself in my addresses to her.

> That I do love her, I all ye host of Heaven,
> Be witness.—That she is dear to me!
> Dearer than day, to one whom sight must leave;
> Dearer than life, to one who fears to die!

The chair is come. I fly to my beloved.

LETTER XV

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.

Curse upon my stars!—Disappointed again! It was about eight when I arrived at Smith's.—The woman was in the shop.

So, old acquaintance, how do you now? I know my love is above.—Let her be acquainted that I am here, waiting for admission to her presence, and can take no denial. Tell her, that I will approach her with the most respectful duty, and in whose company she pleases; and I will not touch the hem of her garment, without her leave.

Indeed, Sir, you are mistaken. The lady is not in this house, nor near it.

I'll see that.—Will.! beckoning him to me, and whispering, see if thou canst any way find out (without losing sight of the door, lest she should be below stairs) if she be in the neighbourhood, if not within.

Will. bowed, and went off. Up went I, without further ceremony; attended now only by the good woman.

I went into each apartment, except that which was locked before, and was now also locked: and I called to my Clarissa in the voice of love; but, by the still silence, was convinced she was not there. Yet, on the strength of my intelligence, I doubted not but she was in the house.

I then went up two pairs of stairs, and looked round the first room: but no Miss Harlowe.

And who, pray, is in this room? stopping at the door of another.

A widow gentlewoman, Sir.—Mrs. Lovick.

O my dear Mrs. Lovick! said I.—I am intimately acquainted with Mrs. Lovick's character, from my cousin John Belford. I must see Mrs. Lovick by all means.—Good Mrs. Lovick, open the door.

She did.

Your servant, Madam. Be so good as to excuse me.—You have heard my story. You are an admirer of the most excellent woman in the world. Dear Mrs. Lovick, tell me what is become of her?

The poor lady, Sir, went out yesterday, on purpose to avoid you.

How so? she knew not that I would be here.

She was afraid you would come, when she heard you were recovered from your illness. Ah! Sir, what pity it is that so fine a gentleman should make such ill returns for God's goodness to him!

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You are an excellent woman, Mrs. Lovick: I know that, by my cousin John Belford's account of you: and Miss Clarissa Harlowe is an angel.

Miss Harlowe is indeed an angel, replied she; and soon will be company for angels.

No jesting with such a woman as this, Jack.

Tell me of a truth, good Mrs. Lovick, where I may see this dear lady. Upon my soul, I will neither fright for offend her. I will only beg of her to hear me speak for one half-quarter of an hour; and, if she will have it so, I will never trouble her more.

Sir, said the widow, it would be death for her to see you. She was at home last night; I'll tell you truth: but fitter to be in bed all day. She came home, she said, to die; and, if she could not avoid your visit, she was unable to fly from you; and believed she should die in your presence.

And yet go out again this morning early? How can that be, widow?

Why, Sir, she rested not two hours, for fear of you. Her fear gave her strength, which she'll suffer for, when that fear is over. And finding herself, the more she thought of your visit, the less able to stay to receive it, she took chair, and is gone nobody knows whither. But, I believe, she intended to be carried to the waterside, in order to take boat; for she cannot bear a coach. It extremely incommoded her yesterday.

But before we talk any further, said I, if she be gone abroad, you can have no objection to my looking into every apartment above and below; because I am told she is actually in the house.

Indeed, Sir, she is not. You may satisfy yourself, if you please: but Mrs. Smith and I waited on her to her chair. We were forced to support her, she was so weak. She said, Whither can I go, Mrs. Lovick? whither can I go, Mrs. Smith?—Cruel, cruel man!—tell him I called him so, if he come again!—God give him that peace which he denies me!

Sweet creature! cried I; and looked down, and took out my handkerchief.

The widow wept. I wish, said she, I had never known so excellent a lady, and so great a sufferer! I love her as my own child!

Mrs. Smith wept.

I then gave over the hope of seeing her for this time, I was extremely chagrined at my disappointment, and at the account they gave of her ill health.

Would to Heaven, said I, she would put it in my power to repair her wrongs! I have been an ungrateful wretch to her. I need not tell you, Mrs. Lovick, how much I have

injured her, nor how much she suffers by her relations' implacableness, Mrs. Smith, that cuts her to the heart. Her family is the most implacable family on earth; and the dear creature, in refusing to see me, and to be reconciled to me, shows her relation to them a little too plainly.

O Sir, said the widow, not one syllable of what you say belongs to this lady. I never saw so sweet a temper! she is always accusing herself, and excusing her relations. And, as to you, Sir, she forgives you: she wishes you well; and happier than you will let her die in peace? 'tis all she wishes for. You don't look like a hard-hearted gentleman!—How can you thus hunt and persecute a poor lady, whom none of her relations will look upon? It makes my heart bleed for her.

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And then she wept again. Mrs. Smith wept also. My seat grew uneasy to me. I shifted to another several times; and what Mrs. Lovick farther said, and showed me, made me still more uneasy.

Bad as the poor lady was last night, said she, she transcribed into her book a meditation on your persecuting her thus. I have a copy of it. If I thought it would have any effect, I would read it to you.

Let me read it myself, Mrs. Lovick.

She gave it to me. It has an Harlowe-spirited title: and, from a forgiving spirit, intolerable. I desired to take it with me. She consented, on condition that I showed it to ’Squire Belford. So here, Mr. ’Squire Belford, thou mayest read it, if thou wilt.

ON BEING HUNTED AFTER BY THE ENEMY OF MY SOUL.

Monday, *Aug*. 21.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man.

Preserve me from the violent man.

Who imagines mischief in his heart.

He hath sharpened his tongue like a serpent. Adders’ poison is under his lips.

Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked. Preserve me from the violent man, who hath purposed to overthrow my goings.

He hath hid a snare for me. He hath spread a net by the way-side. He hath set gins for me in the way wherein I walked.

Keep me from the snares which he hath laid for me, and the gins of this worker of iniquity.

The enemy hath persecuted my soul. He hath smitten my life down to the ground. He hath made me dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me. My heart within me is desolate.

Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble.

For my days are consumed like smoke: and my bones are burnt as the hearth.

My heart is smitten and withered like grass: so that I forget to eat my bread.

By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness. I am like an owl of the desart.

I watch; and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.

I have eaten ashes like bread; and mingled my drink with weeping:

Because of thine indignation, and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass.

Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked: further not his devices, lest he exalt himself.

Why now, Mrs. Lovick, said I, when I had read this meditation, as she called it, I think I am very severely treated by the lady, if she mean me in all this. For how is it that I am the enemy of her soul, when I love her both soul and body?

She says, that I am a violent man, and a wicked man.—That I have been so, I own: but I repent, and only wish to have it in my power to repair the injuries I have done her.

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The gin, the snare, the net, mean matrimony, I suppose—But is it a crime in me to wish to marry her? Would any other woman think it so? and choose to become a pelican in the wilderness, or a lonely sparrow on the house-top, rather than have a mate that would chirp about her all day and all night?

She says, she has eaten ashes like bread—A sad mistake to be sure!—And mingled her drink with weeping—Sweet maudlin soul! should I say of any body confessing this, but Miss Harlowe.

She concludes with praying, that the desires of the wicked (meaning poor me, I doubt) may not be granted; that my devices may not be furthered, lest I exalt myself. I should undoubtedly exalt myself, and with reason, could I have the honour and the blessing of such a wife. And if my desires have so honourable an end, I know not why I should be called wicked, and why I should not be allowed to hope, that my honest devices may be furthered, that I *may* exalt myself.

But here, Mrs. Lovick, let me ask, as something is undoubtedly meant by the lonely sparrow on the house-top, is not the dear creature at this very instant (tell me truly) concealed in Mrs. Smith's cockloft?—What say you, Mrs. Lovick? What say you, Mrs. Smith, to this?

They assured me to the contrary; and that shew as actually abroad, and they knew not where.

Thou seest, Jack, that I would fain have diverted the chagrin given me not only by the women's talk, but by this collection of Scripture-texts drawn up in array against me. Several other whimsical and light things I said [all I had for it!] with the same view. But the widow would not let me come off so. She stuck to me; and gave me, as I told thee, a good deal of uneasiness, by her sensible and serious expostulations. Mrs. Smith put in now-and-then; and the two Jack-pudding fellows, John and Joseph, not being present, I had no provocation to turn the conversation into a farce; and, at last, they both joined warmly to endeavour to prevail upon me to give up all thoughts of seeing the lady. But I could not hear of that. On the contrary, I besought Mrs. Smith to let me have one of her rooms but till I could see her; and were it but for one, two, or three days, I would pay a year's rent for it; and quit it the moment the interview was over. But they desired to be excused; and were sure the lady would not come to the house till I was gone, were it for a month.

This pleased me; for I found they did not think her so very ill as they would have me believe her to be; but I took no notice of the slip, because I would not guard them against more of the like.

In short, I told them, I must and would see her: but that it should be with all the respect and veneration that heart could pay to excellence like her's: and that I would go round

to all the churches in London and Westminster, where there were prayers or service, from sun-rise to sun-set, and haunt their house like a ghost, till I had the opportunity my soul panted after.

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This I bid them tell her. And thus ended our serious conversation.

I took leave of them; and went down; and, stepping into my chair, caused myself to be carried to Lincoln's-Inn; and walked in the gardens till the chapel was opened; and then I went in, and staid prayers, in hopes of seeing the dear creature enter: but to no purpose; and yet I prayed most devoutly that she might be conducted thither, either by my good angel, or her own. And indeed I burn more than ever with impatience to be once more permitted to kneel at the feet of this adorable woman. And had I met her, or espied her in the chapel, it is my firm belief that I should not have been able (though it had been in the midst of the sacred office, and in the presence of thousands) to have forborne prostration to her, and even clamorous supplication for her forgiveness: a christian act; the exercise of it therefore worthy of the place.

After service was over, I stept into my chair again, and once more was carried to Smith's, in hopes I might have surprised her there: but no such happiness for thy friend. I staid in the back-shop an hour and an half, by my watch; and again underwent a good deal of preachment from the women. John was mainly civil to me now; won over a little by my serious talk, and the honour I professed for the lady. They all three wished matters could be made up between us: but still insisted that she could never get over her illness; and that her heart was broken. A cue, I suppose, they had from you.

While I was there a letter was brought by a particular hand. They seemed very solicitous to hide it from me; which made me suspect it was for her. I desired to be suffered to cast an eye upon the seal, and the superscription; promising to give it back to them unopened.

Looking upon it, I told them I knew the hand and seal. It was from her sister.* And I hoped it would bring her news that she would be pleased with.

* See Letter XXVI. of this volume.

They joined most heartily in the same hope: and, giving the letter to them again, I civilly took leave, and went away.

But I will be there again presently; for I fancy my courteous behaviour to these women will, on their report of it, procure me the favour I so earnestly covet. And so I will leave my letter unsealed, to tell thee the event of my next visit at Smith's.

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Thy servant just calling, I sent thee this: and will soon follow it by another. Mean time, I long to hear how poor Belton is: to whom my best wishes.

LETTER XVI

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Tuesday, *Aug*. 22.

I have been under such concern for the poor man, whose exit I almost hourly expect, and at the shocking scenes his illness and his agonies exhibit, that I have been only able to make memoranda of the melancholy passages, from which to draw up a more perfect account, for the instruction of us all, when the writing appetite shall return.

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It is returned! Indignation has revived it, on receipt of thy letters of Sunday and yesterday; by which I have reason to reproach thee in very serious terms, that thou hast not kept thy honour with me: and if thy breach of it be attended with such effects as I fear it will be, I shall let thee know more of my mind on this head.

If thou wouldst be thought in earnest in thy wishes to move the poor lady in thy favour, thy ludicrous behaviour at Smith's, when it comes to be represented to her, will have a very consistent appearance; will it not?—I will, indeed, confirm in her opinion, that the grave is more to be wished-for, by one of her serious and pious turn, than a husband incapable either of reflection or remorse; just recovered, as thou art, from a dangerous, at least a sharp turn.

I am extremely concerned for the poor unprotected lady. She was so excessively low and weak on Saturday, that I could not be admitted to her speech: and to be driven out of her lodgings, when it was fitter for her to be in bed, is such a piece of cruelty, as he only could be guilty of who could act as thou hast done by such an angel.

Canst thou thyself say, on reflection, that it has not the look of a wicked and hardened sportiveness, in thee, for the sake of a wanton humour only, (since it can answer no end that thou proposest to thyself, but the direct contrary,) to hunt from place to place a poor lady, who, like a harmless deer, that has already a barbed shaft in her breast, seeks only a refuge from thee in the shades of death.

But I will leave this matter upon thy own conscience, to paint thee such a scene from my memoranda, as thou perhaps wilt be moved by more effectually than by any other: because it is such a one as thou thyself must one day be a principal actor in, and, as I thought, hadst very lately in apprehension: and is the last scene of one of thy more intimate friends, who has been for the four past days labouring in the agonies of death. For, Lovelace, let this truth, this undoubted truth, be engraved on thy memory, in all thy gaieties, That the life we are so fond of is hardly life; a mere breathing space only; and that, at the end of its longest date,

> Thou must die, as well as Belton.

Thou knowest, by Tourville, what we had done as to the poor man's worldly affairs; and that we had got his unhappy sister to come and live with him (little did we think him so very near to his end): and so I will proceed to tell thee, that when I arrived at his house on Saturday night, I found him excessively ill: but just raised, and in his elbow-chair, held up by his nurse and Mowbray (the roughest and most untouched creature that ever entered a sick man's chamber); while the maid-servants were trying to make that bed easier for him which he was to return to; his mind ten times uneasier than that could be, and the true cause that the down was no softer to him.

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He had so much longed to see me, as I was told by his sister, (whom I sent for down to inquire how he was,) that they all rejoiced when I entered: Here, said Mowbray, here, Tommy, is honest Jack Belford!

Where, where? said the poor man.

I hear his voice, cried Mowbray: he is coming up stairs.

In a transport of joy, he would have raised himself at my entrance, but had like to have pitched out of the chair: and when recovered, called me his best friend! his kindest friend! but burst into a flood of tears: O Jack! O Belford! said he, see the way I am in! See how weak! So much, and so soon reduced! Do you know me? Do you know your poor friend Belton?

You are not so much altered, my dear Belton, as you think you are. But I see you are weak; very weak—and I am sorry for it.

Weak, weak, indeed, my dearest Belford, said he, and weaker in mind, if possible, than in body; and wept bitterly—or I should not thus unman myself. I, who never feared any thing, to be forced to show myself such a nursling!—I am quite ashamed of myself!—-But don't despise me; dear Belford, don't despise me, I beseech thee.

I ever honoured a man that could weep for the distresses of others; and ever shall, said I; and such a one cannot be insensible of his own.

However, I could not help being visibly moved at the poor fellow's emotion.

Now, said the brutal Mowbray, do I think thee insufferable, Jack. Our poor friend is already a peg too low; and here thou art letting him down lower and lower still. This soothing of him in his dejected moments, and joining thy womanish tears with his, is not the way; I am sure it is not. If our Lovelace were here, he'd tell thee so.

Thou art an impenetrable creature, replied I; unfit to be present at a scene, the terrors of which thou wilt not be able to feel till thou feelest them in thyself; and then, if thou hadst time for feeling, my life for thine, thou behavest as pitifully as those thou thinkest most pitiful.

Then turning to the poor sick man, Tears, my dear Belton, are no signs of an unmanly, but, contrarily of a humane nature; they ease the over-charged heart, which would burst but for that kindly and natural relief.

> Give sorrow words (says Shakspeare)
> —The grief that does not speak,
> Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

I know, my dear Belton, thou usedst to take pleasure in repetitions from the poets; but thou must be tasteless of their beauties now: yet be not discountenanced by this uncouth and unreflecting Mowbray, for, as Juvenal says, Tears are the prerogative of manhood.

'Tis at least seasonably said, my dear Belford. It is kind to keep me in countenance for this womanish weakness, as Mowbray has been upbraidingly calling it, ever since he has been with me: and in so doing, (whatever I might have thought in such high health as he enjoys,) has convinced me, that bottle-friends feel nothing but what moves in that little circle.

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Well, well, proceed in your own way, Jack. I love my friend Belton as well as you can do; yet for the blood of me, I cannot but think, that soothing a man's weakness is increasing it.

If it be a weakness, to be touched at great and concerning events, in which our humanity is concerned, said I, thou mayest be right.

I have seen many a man, said the rough creature, going up Holborn-hill, that has behaved more like a man than either of you.

Ay, but, Mowbray, replied the poor man, those wretches have not had their minds enervated by such infirmities of body as I have long laboured under. Thou art a shocking fellow, and ever wert.—But to be able to remember nothing in these moments but what reproaches me, and to know that I cannot hold it long, and what may then be my lot, if—but interrupting himself, and turning to me, Give me thy pity, Jack; 'tis balm to my wounded soul; and let Mowbray sit indifferent enough to the pangs of a dying friend, to laugh at us both.

The hardened fellow then retired, with the air of a Lovelace; only more stupid; yawning and stretching, instead of humming a tune as thou didst at Smith's.

I assisted to get the poor man into bed. He was so weak and low, that he could not bear the fatigue, and fainted away; and I verily thought was quite gone. But recovering, and his doctor coming, and advising to keep him quiet, I retired, and joined Mowbray in the garden; who took more delight to talk of the living Lovelace and levities, than of the dying Belton and his repentance.

I just saw him again on Saturday night before I went to bed; which I did early; for I was surfeited with Mowbray's frothy insensibility, and could not bear him.

It is such a horrid thing to think of, that a man who had lived in such strict terms of—-what shall I call it? with another; the proof does not come out so, as to say, friendship; who had pretended so much love for him; could not bear to be out of his company; would ride an hundred miles on end to enjoy it; and would fight for him, be the cause right or wrong: yet now, could be so little moved to see him in such misery of body and mind, as to be able to rebuke him, and rather ridicule than pity him, because he was more affected by what he felt, than he had seen a malefactor, (hardened perhaps by liquor, and not softened by previous sickness,) on his going to execution.

This put me strongly in mind of what the divine Miss *Harlowe* once said to me, talking of friendship, and what my friendship to you required of me: 'Depend upon it, Mr. Belford,' said she, 'that one day you will be convinced, that what you call friendship, is chaff and stubble; and that nothing is worthy of that sacred name,

‘That has not virtue for its base.’

Sunday morning, I was called up at six o’clock, at the poor man’s earnest request, and found him in a terrible agony. O Jack! Jack! said he, looking wildly, as if he had seen a spectre—Come nearer me!—Dear, dear Belford, save me! Then clasping my arm with both his hands, and rearing up his head towards me, his eyes strangely rolling, Save me! dear Belford, save me! repeated he.

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I put my other arm about him—Save you from what, my dear Belton! said I; save you from what? Nothing shall hurt you. What must I save you from?

Recovering from his terror, he sunk down again, O save me from myself! said he; save me from my own reflections. O dear Jack! what a thing it is to die; and not to have one comfortable reflection to revolve! What would I give for one year of my past life?—only one year—and to have the same sense of things that I now have?

I tried to comfort him as well as I could: but free-livers to free-livers are sorry death-bed comforters. And he broke in upon me: O my dear Belford, said he, I am told, (and I have heard you ridiculed for it,) that the excellent Miss Harlowe has wrought a conversion in you. May it be so! You are a man of sense: O may it be so! Now is your time! Now, that you are in full vigour of mind and body!—But your poor Belton, alas! your poor Belton kept his vices, till they left him—and see the miserable effects in debility of mind and despondency! Were Mowbray here, and were he to laugh at me, I would own that this is the cause of my despair—that God's justice cannot let his mercy operate for my comfort: for, Oh! I have been very, very wicked; and have despised the offers of his grace, till he has withdrawn it from me for ever.

I used all the arguments I could think of to give him consolation: and what I said had such an effect upon him, as to quiet his mind for the greatest part of the day; and in a lucid hour his memory served him to repeat these lines of Dryden, grasping my hand, and looking wistfully upon me:

> O that I less could fear to lose this being,
> Which, like a snow-ball, in my coward hand,
> The more 'tis grasped, the faster melts away!

In the afternoon of Sunday, he was inquisitive after you, and your present behaviour to Miss Harlowe. I told him how you had been, and how light you made of it. Mowbray was pleased with your impenetrable hardness of heart, and said, Bob. Lovelace was a good edge-tool, and steel to the back: and such coarse but hearty praises he gave you, as an abandoned man might give, and only an abandoned man could wish to deserve.

But hadst thou heard what the poor dying Belton said on this occasion, perhaps it would have made thee serious an hour or two, at least.

'When poor Lovelace is brought,' said he, 'to a sick-bed, as I am now, and his mind forebodes that it is impossible he should recover, (which his could not do in his late illness: if it had, he could not have behaved so lightly in it;) when he revolves his past mis-spent life; his actions of offence to helpless innocents; in Miss Harlowe's case particularly; what then will he think of himself, or of his past actions? his mind debilitated; his strength turned into weakness; unable to stir or to move without help; not one ray of hope darting in upon his benighted soul; his conscience standing in the

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place of a thousand witnesses; his pains excruciating; weary of the poor remnant of life he drags, yet dreading, that, in a few short hours, his bad will be changed to worse, nay, to worst of all; and that worst of all, to last beyond time and to all eternity; O Jack! what will he then think of the poor transitory gratifications of sense, which now engage all his attention? Tell him, dear Belford, tell him, how happy he is if he know his own dying happiness; how happy, compared to his poor dying friend, that he has recovered from his illness, and has still an opportunity lent him, for which I would give a thousand worlds, had I them to give!'

I approved exceedingly of his reflections, as suited to his present circumstances; and inferred consolations to him from a mind so properly touched.

He proceeded in the like penitent strain. I have lived a very wicked life; so have we all. We have never made a conscience of doing whatever mischief either force or fraud enabled us to do. We have laid snares for the innocent heart; and have not scrupled by the too-ready sword to extend, as occasions offered, the wrongs we did to the persons whom we had before injured in their dearest relations. But yet, I flatter myself, sometimes, that I have less to answer for than either Lovelace or Mowbray; for I, by taking to myself that accursed deceiver from whom thou hast freed me, (and who, for years, unknown to me, was retaliating upon my own head some of the evils I had brought upon others,) and retiring, and living with her as a wife, was not party to half the mischiefs, that I doubt they, and Tourville, and even you, Belford, committed. As to the ungrateful Thomasine, I hope I have met with my punishment in her. But notwithstanding this, dost thou not think, that such an action—and such an action—and such an action; [and then he recapitulated several enormities, in the perpetration of which (led on by false bravery, and the heat of youth and wine) we have all been concerned;] dost thou not think that these villanies, (let me call them now by their proper name,) joined to the wilful and gloried-in neglect of every duty that our better sense and education gave us to know were required of us as men and christians, are not enough to weigh down my soul into despondency?— Indeed, indeed, they are! and now to hope for mercy; and to depend upon the efficacy of that gracious attribute, when that no less shining one of justice forbids me to hope; how can I!—I, who have despised all warnings, and taken no advantage of the benefit I might have reaped from the lingering consumptive illness I have laboured under, but left all to the last stake; hoping for recovery against hope, and driving off repentance, till that grace is denied me; for, oh! my dear Belford! I can now neither repent, nor pray, as I ought; my heart is hardened, and I can do nothing but despair!—

More he would have said; but, overwhelmed with grief and infirmity, he bowed his head upon his pangful bosom, endeavouring to hide from the sight of the hardened Mowbray, who just then entered the room, those tears which he could not restrain.

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Prefaced by a phlegmatic hem; sad, very sad, truly! cried Mowbray; who sat himself down on one side of the bed, as I sat on the other: his eyes half closed, and his lips pouting out to his turned-up nose, his chin curdled [to use one of thy descriptions]; leaving one at a loss to know whether stupid drowsiness or intense contemplation had got most hold of him.

An excellent, however uneasy lesson, Mowbray! said I.—By my faith it is! It may one day, who knows how soon? be our own case!

I thought of thy yawning-fit, as described in thy letter of Aug. 13. For up started Mowbray, writhing and shaking himself as in an ague-fit; his hands stretched over his head—with thy hoy! hoy! hoy! yawning. And then recovering himself, with another stretch and a shake, What's o'clock? cried he; pulling out his watch—and stalking by long tip-toe strides through the room, down stairs he went; and meeting the maid in the passage, I heard him say—Betty, bring me a bumper of claret; thy poor master, and this d——d Belford, are enough to throw a Hercules into the vapours.

Mowbray, after this, assuming himself in our friend's library, which is, as thou knowest, chiefly classical and dramatical, found out a passage in Lee's Oedipus, which he would needs have to be extremely apt; and in he came full fraught with the notion of the courage it would give the dying man, and read it to him. 'Tis poetical and pretty. This is it:

> When the sun sets, shadows that show'd at noon
> But small, appear most long and terrible:
> So when we think fate hovers o'er our heads,
> Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds:
> Owls, ravens, crickets, seem the watch of death;
> Nature's worst vermin scare her godlike sons:
> Echoes, the very leavings of a voice,
> Grow babbling ghosts, and call us to our graves.
> Each mole-hill thought swells to a huge Olympus;
> While we, fantastic dreamers, heave and puff,
> And sweat with our imagination's weight.

He expected praises for finding this out. But Belton turning his head from him, Ah, Dick! (said he,) these are not the reflections of a dying man!—What thou wilt one day feel, if it be what I now feel, will convince thee that the evils before thee, and with thee, are more than the effects of imagination.

I was called twice on Sunday night to him; for the poor fellow, when his reflections on his past life annoy him most, is afraid of being left with the women; and his eyes, they tell me, hunt and roll about for me. Where's Mr. Belford?—But I shall tire him out, cries

he—yet beg of him to step to me—yet don't—yet do; were once the doubting and changeful orders he gave: and they called me accordingly.

But, alas! What could Belford do for him? Belford, who had been but too often the companion of his guilty hours; who wants mercy as much as he does; and is unable to promise it to himself, though 'tis all he can bid his poor friend rely upon!

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What miscreants are we! What figures shall we make in these terrible hours!

If Miss *Harlowe's* glorious example, on one hand, and the terrors of this poor man's last scene on the other, affect me not, I must be abandoned to perdition; as I fear thou wilt be, if thou benefittest not thyself from both.

Among the consolatory things I urged, when I was called up the last time on Sunday night, I told him, that he must not absolutely give himself up to despair: that many of the apprehensions he was under, were such as the best men must have, on the dreadful uncertainty of what was to succeed to this life. 'Tis well observed, said I, by a poetical divine, who was an excellent christian,* That

> Death could not a more sad retinue find,
> Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

* The Rev Mr. Norris, of Bremerton.

About eight o'clock yesterday (Monday) morning, I found him a little calmer. He asked me who was the author of the two lines I had repeated to him; and made me speak them over again. A sad retinue, indeed! said the poor man. And then expressing his hopelessness of life, and his terrors at the thoughts of dying; and drawing from thence terrible conclusions with regard to his future state; There is, said I, such a natural aversion to death in human nature, that you are not to imagine, that you, my dear Belton, are singular in the fear of it, and in the apprehensions that fill the thoughtful mind upon its approach; but you ought, as much as possible, to separate those natural fears which all men must have on so solemn an occasion, from those particular ones which your justly-apprehended unfitness fills you with. Mr. Pomfret, in his Prospect of Death, which I dipped into last night from a collection in your closet, which I put into my pocket, says, [and I turned to the place]

Merely to die, no man of reason fears;
For certainly we must,
As we are born, return to dust;
'Tis the last point of many ling-ring years;
But whither then we go,
Whither, we fain would know;
But human understanding cannot show.
This makes *us* tremble——

Mr. Pomfret, therefore, proceeded I, had such apprehensions of this dark state as you have: and the excellent divine I hinted at last night, who had very little else but human frailties to reproach himself with, and whose miscellanies fell into my hands among my uncle's books in my attendance upon him in his last hours, says,

It must be done, my soul: but 'tis a strange,
A dismal, and mysterious change,
When thou shalt leave this tenement of clay,
And to an unknown—somewhere—wing away;
When time shall be eternity, and thou
Shalt be—thou know'st not what—and live—
thou know'st not how!
Amazing state! no wonder that we dread
To think of death, or view the dead;
Thou'rt all wrapt up in clouds, as if to thee
Our very knowledge had antipathy.

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Then follows, what I repeated,

Death could not a more sad retinue find,
Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

Alas! my dear Belford [inferred the unhappy deep-thinker] what poor creatures does this convince me we mortals are at best!—But what then must be the case of such a profligate as I, who by a past wicked life have added greater force to these natural terrors? If death be so repugnant a thing to human nature, that good men will be startled at it, what must it be to one who has lived a life of sense and appetite; nor ever reflected upon the end which I now am within view of?

What could I say to an inference so fairly drawn? Mercy, mercy, unbounded mercy, was still my plea, though his repeated opposition of justice to it, in a manner silenced that plea: and what would I have given to have had rise in my mind, one good, eminently good action to have remembered him of, in order to combat his fears with it?

I believe, Lovelace, I shall tire thee, and that more with the subject of my letter, than even with the length of it. But really, I think thy spirits are so offensively up since thy recovery, that I ought, as the melancholy subjects offer, to endeavour to reduce thee to the standard of humanity, by expatiating upon them. And then thou canst not but be curious to know every thing that concerns the poor man, for whom thou hast always expressed a great regard. I will therefore proceed as I have begun. If thou likest not to read it now, lay it by, if thou wilt, till the like circumstances befall thee, till like reflections from those circumstances seize thee; and then take it up, and compare the two cases together.

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At his earnest request, I sat up with him last night; and, poor man! it is impossible to tell thee, how easy and safe he thought himself in my company, for the first part of the night: A drowning man will catch at a straw, the proverb well says: and a straw was I, with respect to any real help I could give him. He often awaked in terrors; and once calling out for me, Dear Belford, said he, Where are you!—Oh! There you are!—Give me your friendly hand!—Then grasping it, and putting his clammy, half-cold lips to it—-How kind! I fear every thing when you are absent. But the presence of a friend, a sympathising friend—Oh! how comfortable!

But, about four in the morning, he frighted me much: he waked with three terrible groans; and endeavoured to speak, but could not presently—and when he did,—Jack, Jack, Jack, five or six times repeated he as quick as thought, now, now, now, save me, save me, save me—I am going—going indeed!

I threw my arms about him, and raised him upon his pillow, as he was sinking (as if to hide himself) in the bed-clothes—And staring wildly, Where am I? said he, a little recovering. Did you not see him? turning his head this way and that; horror in his countenance; Did you not see him?

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See whom, see what, my dear Belton!

O lay me upon the bed again, cried he!—Let me not die upon the floor!— Lay me down gently; and stand by me!—Leave me not!—All, all will soon be over!

You are already, my dear Belton, upon the bed. You have not been upon the floor. This is a strong delirium; you are faint for want of refreshment [for he had refused several times to take any thing]: let me persuade you to take some of this cordial julap. I will leave you, if you will not oblige me.

He then readily took it; but said he could have sworn that Tom. Metcalfe had been in the room, and had drawn him out of bed by the throat, upbraiding him with the injuries he had first done his sister, and then him, in the duel to which he owed that fever which cost him his life.

Thou knowest the story, Lovelace, too well, to need my repeating it: but, mercy on us, if in these terrible moments all the evils we do rise to our frighted imaginations!—If so, what shocking scenes have I, but still what more shocking ones hast thou, to go through, if, as the noble poet says,

> If any sense at that sad time remains!

The doctor ordered him an opiate this morning early, which operated so well, that he dosed and slept several hours more quietly than he had done for the two past days and nights, though he had sleeping-draughts given him before. But it is more and more evident every hour that nature is almost worn out in him.

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Mowbray, quite tired with this house of mourning, intends to set out in the morning to find you. He was not a little rejoiced to hear you were in town; I believe to have a pretence to leave us.

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He has just taken leave of his poor friend, intending to go away early: an everlasting leave, I may venture to say; for I think he will hardly live till to-morrow night.

I believe the poor man would not have been sorry had he left him when I arrived; for ’tis a shocking creature, and enjoys too strong health to know how to pity the sick. Then (to borrow an observation from thee) he has, by nature, strong bodily organs, which those of his soul are not likely to whet out; and he, as well as the wicked friend he is going to, may last a great while from the strength of their constitutions, though so greatly different in their talents, if neither the sword nor the halter interpose.

I must repeat, That I cannot but be very uneasy for the poor lady whom you so cruelly persecute; and that I do not think that you have kept your honour with me. I was apprehensive, indeed, that you would attempt to see her, as soon as you got well enough to come up; and I told her as much, making use of it as an argument to prepare her for your visit, and to induce her to stand it. But she could not, it is plain, bear the shock of it: and indeed she told me that she would not see you, though but for one half-hour, for the world.

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Could she have prevailed upon herself, I know that the sight of her would have been as affecting to you, as your visit could have been to her; when you had seen to what a lovely skeleton (for she is really lovely still, nor can she, with such a form and features, be otherwise) you have, in a few weeks, reduced one of the most charming women in the world; and that in the full bloom of her youth and beauty.

Mowbray undertakes to carry this, that he may be more welcome to you, he says. Were it to be sent unsealed, the characters we write in would be Hebrew to the dunce. I desire you to return it; and I'll give you a copy of it upon demand; for I intend to keep it by me, as a guard against the infection of your company, which might otherwise, perhaps, some time hence, be apt to weaken the impressions I always desire to have of the awful scene before me. God convert us both!

LETTER XVII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Wednesday Morn. 11 *O'clock*.

I believe no man has two such servants as I have. Because I treat them with kindness, and do not lord it over my inferiors, and d—n and curse them by looks and words like Mowbray; or beat their teeth out like Lovelace; but cry, Pr'ythee, Harry, do this, and, Pr'ythee, Jonathan, do that; the fellows pursue their own devices, and regard nothing I say, but what falls in with these.

Here, this vile Harry, who might have brought your letter of yesterday in good time, came not in with it till past eleven at night (drunk, I suppose); and concluding that I was in bed, as he pretends (because he was told I sat up the preceding night) brought it not to me; and having overslept himself, just as I had sealed up my letter, in comes the villain with the forgotten one, shaking his ears, and looking as if he himself did not believe the excuses he was going to make. I questioned him about it, and heard his pitiful pleas; and though I never think it becomes a gentleman to treat people insolently who by their stations are humbled beneath his feet, yet could I not forbear to Lovelace and Mowbray him most cordially.

And this detaining Mowbray (who was ready to set out to you before) while I write a few lines upon it, the fierce fellow, who is impatient to exchange the company of a dying Belton for that of a too-lively Lovelace, affixed a supplement of curses upon the staring fellow, that was larger than my book—nor did I offer to take off the bear from such a mongrel, since, on this occasion, he deserved not of me the protection which every master owes to a good servant.

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He has not done cursing him yet; for stalking about the court-yard with his boots on, (the poor fellow dressing his horse, and unable to get from him,) he is at him without mercy; and I will heighten his impatience, (since being just under the window where I am writing, he will not let me attend to my pen,) by telling you how he fills my ears as well as the fellow's, with his—Hay, Sir! And G—d d—n ye, Sir! And were ye my servant, ye dog ye! And must I stay here till the mid-day sun scorches me to a parchment, for such a mangy dog's drunken neglect?—Ye lie, Sirrah!—Ye lie, I tell you—[I hear the fellow's voice in an humble excusatory tone, though not articulately] Ye lie, ye dog!—I'd a good mind to thrust my whip down your drunken throat: d—n me, if I would not flay the skin from the back of such a rascal, if thou wert mine, and have dog's-skin gloves made of it, for thy brother scoundrels to wear in remembrance of thy abuses of such a master.

The poor horse suffers for this, I doubt not; for, What now! and, Stand still, and be d—d to ye, cries the fellow, with a kick, I suppose, which he better deserves himself; for these varlets, where they can, are Mowbrays and Lovelaces to man or beast; and not daring to answer him, is flaying the poor horse.

I hear the fellow is just escaped, the horse, (better curried than ordinary, I suppose, in half the usual time,) by his clanking shoes, and Mowbray's silence, letting me know, that I may now write on: and so, I will tell thee that, in the first place, (little as I, as well as you, regard dreams,) I would have thee lay thine to heart; for I could give thee such an interpretation of it, as would shock thee, perhaps; and if thou askest me for it, I will.

Mowbray calls to me from the court-yard, that 'tis a cursed hot day, and he shall be fried by riding in the noon of it: and that poor Belton longs to see me. So I will only add my earnest desire, that you will give over all thoughts of seeing the lady, if, when this comes to your hand, you have not seen her: and, that it would be kind, if you'd come, and, for the last time you will ever see your poor friend, share my concern for him; and, in him, see what, in a little time, will be your fate and mine, and that of Mowbray, Tourville, and the rest of us—For what are ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty years, to look back to; in the longest of which periods forward we shall all perhaps be mingled with the dust from which we sprung?

LETTER XVIII

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Wednesday Morn. *Aug*. 23.

All alive, dear Jack, and in ecstacy!—Likely to be once more a happy man! For I have received a letter from my beloved Miss *Harlowe*; in consequence, I suppose, of that which I mentioned in my last to be left for her from her sister. And I am setting out for Berks directly, to show the contents to my Lord M. and to receive the congratulations of all my kindred upon it.

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I went, last night, as I intended, to Smith's: but the dear creature was not returned at near ten o'clock. And, lighting upon Tourville, I took him home with me, and made him sing me out of my megrims. I went to bed tolerably easy at two; had bright and pleasant dreams; (not such of a frightful one as that I gave thee an account of;) and at eight this morning, as I was dressing, to be in readiness against the return of my fellow, whom I had sent to inquire after the lady, I had the following letter brought to me by a chairman:

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. TUESDAY NIGHT, 11 O'CLOCK (AUG. 22.)

SIR,

I have good news to tell you. I am setting out with all diligence for my father's house, I am bid to hope that he will receive his poor penitent with a goodness peculiar to himself; for I am overjoyed with the assurance of a thorough reconciliation, through the interposition of a dear, blessed friend, whom I always loved and honoured. I am so taken up with my preparation for this joyful and long-wished-for journey, that I cannot spare one moment for any other business, having several matters of the last importance to settle first. So, pray, Sir, don't disturb or interrupt me—I beseech you don't. You may possibly in time see me at my father's; at least if it be not your own fault.

I will write a letter, which shall be sent you when I am got thither and received: till when, I am, &c.

Clarissa Harlowe.

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I dispatched instantly a letter to the dear creature, assuring her, with the most thankful joy, 'That I would directly set out for Berks, and wait the issue of the happy reconciliation, and the charming hopes she had filled me with. I poured out upon her a thousand blessings. I declared that it should be the study of my whole life to merit such transcendent goodness: and that there was nothing which her father or friends should require at my hands, that I would not for her sake comply with, in order to promote and complete so desirable a reconciliation.'

I hurried it away without taking a copy of it; and I have ordered the chariot-and-six to be got ready; and hey for M. Hall! Let me but know how Belton does. I hope a letter from thee is on the road. And if the poor fellow can spare thee, make haste, I command thee, to attend this truly divine lady. Thou mayest not else see her of months perhaps; at least, not while she is Miss *Harlowe*. And oblige me, if possible, with one letter before she sets out, confirming to me and accounting for this generous change.

But what accounting for it is necessary? The dear creature cannot receive consolation herself but she must communicate it to others. How noble! She would not see me in

her adversity; but no sooner does the sun of prosperity begin to shine upon her than she forgives me.

I know to whose mediation all this is owing. It is to Colonel Morden's. She always, as she says, loved and honoured him! And he loved her above all his relations.

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I shall now be convinced that there is something in dreams. The opening cloud is the reconciliation in view. The bright form, lifting up my charmer through it to a firmament stuck round with golden cherubims and seraphims, indicates the charming little boys and girls, that will be the fruits of this happy reconciliation. The welcomes, thrice repeated, are those of her family, now no more to be deemed implacable. Yet are they family, too, that my soul cannot mingle with.

But then what is my tumbling over and over through the floor into a frightful hole, descending as she ascends? Ho! only this! it alludes to my disrelish to matrimony: Which is a bottomless pit, a gulph, and I know not what. And I suppose, had I not awoke in such a plaguy fright, I had been soused into some river at the bottom of the hole, and then been carried (mundified or purified from my past iniquities,) by the same bright form (waiting for me upon the mossy banks,) to my beloved girl; and we should have gone on cherubiming of it and caroling to the end of the chapter.

But what are the black sweeping mantles and robes of Lord M. thrown over my face? And what are those of the ladies? O Jack! I have these too: They indicate nothing in the world but that my Lord will be so good as to die, and leave me all he has. So, rest to thy good-natured soul, honest Lord M.

Lady Sarah Sadleir and Lady Betty Lawrance, will also die, and leave me swinging legacies.

Miss Charlotte and her sister—what will become of the?—Oh! they will be in mourning, of course, for their uncle and aunts—that's right!

As to Morden's flashing through the window, and crying, Die, Lovelace, and be d——d, if thou wilt not repair my cousin's wrong! That is only, that he would have sent me a challenge, had I not been disposed to do the lady justice.

All I dislike is this part of the dream: for, even in a dream, I would not be thought to be threatened into any measure, though I liked it ever so well.

And so much for my prophetic dream.

Dear charming creature! What a meeting will there be between her and her father and mother and uncles! What transports, what pleasure, will this happy, long-wished-for reconciliation give her dutiful heart! And indeed now methinks I am glad she is so dutiful to them; for her duty to her parents is a conviction to me that she will be as dutiful to her husband: since duty upon principle is an uniform thing.

Why pr'ythee, now, Jack, I have not been so much to blame as thou thinkest: for had it not been for me, who have led her into so much distress, she could neither have

received nor given the joy that will now overwhelm them all. So here rises great and durable good out of temporary evil.

I know they loved her (the pride and glory of their family,) too well to hold out long!

I wish I could have seen Arabella's letter. She has always been so much eclipsed by her sister, that I dare say she has signified this reconciliation to her with intermingled phlegm and wormwood; and her invitation must certainly runs all in the rock-water style.

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I shall long to see the promised letter too when she is got to her father's, which I hope will give an account of the reception she will meet with.

There is a solemnity, however, I think, in the style of her letter, which pleases and affects me at the same time. But as it is evident she loves me still, and hopes soon to see me at her father's, she could not help being a little solemn, and half-ashamed, [dear blushing pretty rogue!] to own her love, after my usage of her.

And then her subscription: Till when, I am, *Clarissa Harlowe*: as much as to say, after that, I shall be, if not to your own fault, *Clarissa Lovelace*!

O my best love! My ever-generous and adorable creature! How much does this thy forgiving goodness exalt us both!—Me, for the occasion given thee! Thee, for turning it so gloriously to thy advantage, and to the honour of both!

And if, my beloved creature, you will but connive at the imperfections of your adorer, and not play the wife with me: if, while the charms of novelty have their force with me, I should happen to be drawn aside by the love of intrigue, and of plots that my soul delights to form and pursue; and if thou wilt not be open-eyed to the follies of my youth, [a transitory state;] every excursion shall serve but the more to endear thee to me, till in time, and in a very little time too, I shall get above sense; and then, charmed by thy soul-attracting converse; and brought to despise my former courses; what I now, at distance, consider as a painful duty, will be my joyful choice, and all my delight will centre in thee!

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Mowbray is just arrived with thy letters. I therefore close my agreeable subject, to attend to one which I doubt will be very shocking.

I have engaged the rough varlet to bear me company in the morning to Berks; where I shall file off the rust he has contracted in his attendance upon the poor fellow.

He tells me that, between the dying Belton and the preaching Belford, he shan't be his own man these three days: and says that thou addest to the unhappy fellow's weakness, instead of giving him courage to help him to bear his destiny.

I am sorry he takes the unavoidable lot so heavily. But he has been long ill; and sickness enervates the mind as well as the body; as he himself very significantly observed to thee.

LETTER XIX

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
WEDN. *Evening*.

I have been reading thy shocking letter—Poor Belton! what a multitude of lively hours have we passed together! He was a fearless, cheerful fellow: who'd have thought all that should end in such dejected whimpering and terror?

But why didst thou not comfort the poor man about the rencounter between him and that poltroon Metcalfe? He acted in that affair like a man of true honour, and as I should have acted in the same circumstances. Tell him I say so; and that what happened he could neither help nor foresee.

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Some people are as sensible of a scratch from a pin's point, as others from a push of a sword: and who can say any thing for the sensibility of such fellows? Metcalfe would resent for his sister, when his sister resented not for herself. Had she demanded her brother's protection and resentment, that would have been another man's matte, to speak in Lord M.'s phrase: but she herself thought her brother a coxcomb to busy himself undesired in her affairs, and wished for nothing but to be provided for decently and privately in her lying-in; and was willing to take the chance of Maintenon-ing his conscience in her favour,* and getting him to marry when the little stranger came; for she knew what an easy, good-natured fellow he was. And indeed if she had prevailed upon him, it might have been happy for both; as then he would not have fallen in with his cursed Thomasine. But truly this officious brother of her's must interpose. This made a trifling affair important: And what was the issue? Metcalfe challenged; Belton met him; disarmed him; gave him his life: but the fellow, more sensible in his skin than in his head, having received a scratch, was frighted: it gave him first a puke, then a fever, and then he died, that was all. And how could Belton help that? —But sickness, a long tedious sickness, will make a bugbear of any thing to a languishing heart, I see that. And so far was Mowbray a-propos in the verses from Nat. Lee, which thou hast described.

* Madam Maintenon was reported to have prevailed upon Lewis XIV. of France, in his old age, (sunk, as he was, by ill success in the field,) to marry her, by way of compounding with his conscience for the freedoms of his past life, to which she attributed his public losses.

Merely to die, no man of reason fears, is a mistake, say thou, or say thy author, what ye will. And thy solemn parading about the natural repugnance between life and death, is a proof that it is.

Let me tell thee, Jack, that so much am I pleased with this world, in the main; though, in some points too, the world (to make a person of it,) has been a rascal to me; so delighted am I with the joys of youth; with my worldly prospects as to fortune; and now, newly, with the charming hopes given me by my dear, thrice dear, and for ever dear *Clarissa*; that were I even sure that nothing bad would come hereafter, I should be very loth (very much afraid, if thou wilt have it so,) to lay down my life and them together; and yet, upon a call of honour, no man fears death less than myself.

But I have not either inclination or leisure to weigh thy leaden arguments, except in the pig, or, as thou wouldst say, in the lump.

If I return thy letters, let me have them again some time hence, that is to say, when I am married, or when poor Belton is half forgotten; or when time has enrolled the honest fellow among those whom we have so long lost, that we may remember them with more pleasure than pain; and then I may give them a serious perusal, and enter with thee as deeply as thou wilt into the subject.

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When I am married, said I?—What a sound has that!

I must wait with patience for a sight of this charming creature, till she is at her father's. And yet, as the but blossoming beauty, as thou tellest me, is reduced to a shadow, I should have been exceedingly delighted to see her now, and every day till the happy one; that I might have the pleasure of observing how sweetly, hour by hour, she will rise to her pristine glories, by means of that state of ease and contentment, which will take place of the stormy past, upon her reconciliation with her friends, and our happy nuptials.

LETTER XX

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.

Well, but now my heart is a little at ease, I will condescend to take brief notice of some other passages in thy letters.

I find I am to thank thee, that the dear creature has avoided my visit. Things are now in so good a train that I must forgive thee; else thou shouldst have heard more of this new instance of disloyalty to thy general.

Thou art continually giving thyself high praise, by way of opposition, as I may say, to others; gently and artfully blaming thyself for qualities thou wouldst at the same time have to be thought, and which generally are thought, praise-worthy.

Thus, in the airs thou assumest about thy servants, thou wouldst pass for a mighty humane mortal; and that at the expense of Mowbray and me, whom thou representest as kings and emperors to our menials. Yet art thou always unhappy in thy attempts of this kind, and never canst make us, who know thee, believe that to be a virtue in thee, which is but the effect of constitutional phlegm and absurdity.

Knowest thou not, that some men have a native dignity in their manner, that makes them more regarded by a look, than either thou canst be in thy low style, or Mowbray in his high?

I am fit to be a prince, I can tell thee, for I reward well, and I punish seasonably and properly; and I am generally as well served by any man.

The art of governing these underbred varlets lies more in the dignity of looks than in words; and thou art a sorry fellow, to think humanity consists in acting by thy servants, as men must act who are not able to pay them their wages; or had made them masters of secrets, which, if divulged, would lay them at the mercy of such wretches.

Now to me, who never did any thing I was ashamed to own, and who have more ingenuousness than ever man had; who can call a villany by its own right name, though practised by myself, and (by my own readiness to reproach myself) anticipate all reproach from others; who am not such a hypocrite, as to wish the world to think me other or better than I am— it is my part, to look a servant into his duty, if I can; nor will I keep one who knows not how to take me by a nod, or a wink; and who, when I smile, shall not be all transport; when I frown, all terror. If, indeed, I am out of the way a little, I always take care to rewards the varlets for patiently bearing my displeasure. But this I hardly ever am but when a fellow is egregiously stupid in any plain point of duty, or will be wiser than his master; and when he shall tell me, that he thought acting contrary to my orders was the way to serve me best.

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One time or other I will enter the lists with thee upon thy conduct and mine to servants; and I will convince thee, that what thou wouldst have pass for humanity, if it be indiscriminately practised to all tempers, will perpetually subject thee to the evils thou complainest of; and justly too; and that he only is fit to be a master of servants, who can command their attention as much by a nod, as if he were to pr'ythee a fellow to do his duty, on one hand, or to talk of flaying, and horse-whipping, like Mowbray, on the other: for the servant who being used to expect thy creeping style, will always be master of his master, and he who deserves to be treated as the other, is not fit to be any man's servant; nor would I keep such a fellow to rub my horse's heels.

I shall be the readier to enter the lists with thee upon this argument, because I have presumption enough to think that we have not in any of our dramatic poets, that I can at present call to mind, one character of a servant of either sex, that is justly hit off. So absurdly wise some, and so sottishly foolish others; and both sometime in the same person. Foils drawn from lees or dregs of the people to set off the characters of their masters and mistresses; nay, sometimes, which is still more absurd, introduced with more wit than the poet has to bestow upon their principals.—Mere flints and steels to strike fire with—or, to vary the metaphor, to serve for whetstones to wit, which, otherwise, could not be made apparent; or, for engines to be made use of like the machinery of the antient poets, (or the still more unnatural soliloquy,) to help on a sorry plot, or to bring about a necessary eclaircissement, to save the poet the trouble of thinking deeply for a better way to wind up his bottoms.

Of this I am persuaded, (whatever my practice be to my own servants,) that thou wilt be benefited by my theory, when we come to controvert the point. For then I shall convince thee, that the dramatic as well as natural characteristics of a good servant ought to be fidelity, common sense, cheerful obedience, and silent respect; that wit in his station, except to his companions, would be sauciness; that he should never presume to give his advice; that if he venture to expostulate upon any unreasonable command, or such a one a appeared to him to be so, he should do it with humility and respect, and take a proper season for it. But such lessons do most of the dramatic performances I have seen give, where servants are introduced as characters essential to the play, or to act very significant or long parts in it, (which, of itself, I think a fault;) such lessons, I say, do they give to the footmen's gallery, that I have not wondered we have so few modest or good men-servants among those who often attend their masters or mistresses to plays. Then how miserably evident must that poet's conscious want of genius be, who can stoop to raise or give force to a clap by the indiscriminate roar of the party-coloured gallery!

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But this subject I will suspend to a better opportunity; that is to say, to the happy one, when my nuptials with my Clarissa will oblige me to increase the number of my servants, and of consequence to enter more nicely into their qualifications.

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Although I have the highest opinion that man can have of the generosity of my dear Miss Harlowe, yet I cannot for the heart of me account for this agreeable change in her temper but one way. Faith and troth, Belford, I verily believe, laying all circumstances together, that the dear creature unexpectedly finds herself in the way I have so ardently wished her to be in; and that this makes her, at last, incline to favour me, that she may set the better face upon her gestation, when at her father's.

If this be the case, all her falling away, and her fainting fits, are charmingly accounted for. Nor is it surprising, that such a sweet novice in these matters should not, for some time, have known to what to attribute her frequent indispositions. If this should be the case, how I shall laugh at thee! and (when I am sure of her) at the dear novice herself, that all her grievous distresses shall end in a man-child; which I shall love better than all the cherubims and seraphims that may come after; though there were to be as many of them as I beheld in my dream; in which a vast expanse of firmament was stuck as full of them as it could hold!

I shall be afraid to open thy next, lest it bring me the account of poor Belton's death. Yet, as there are no hopes of his recovery—but what should I say, unless the poor man were better fitted—but thy heavy sermon shall not affect me too much neither.

I enclose thy papers; and do thou transcribe them for me, or return them; for there are some things in them, which, at a proper season, a mortal man should not avoid attending to; and thou seemest to have entered deeply into the shocking subject.—But here I will end, lest I grow too serious.

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Thy servant called here about an hour ago, to know if I had any commands; I therefore hope that thou wilt have this early in the morning. And if thou canst let me hear from thee, do. I'll stretch an hour or two in expectation of it. Yet I must be at Lord M.'s to-morrow night, if possible, though ever so late.

Thy fellow tells me the poor man is much as he was when Mowbray left him.

Wouldst thou think that this varlet Mowbray is sorry that I am so near being happy with Miss Harlowe? And, 'egad, Jack, I know not what to say to it, now the fruit seems to be within my reach—but let what will come, I'll stand to't: for I find I can't live without her.

LETTER XXI

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Wednesday, *three o’clock*.

I will proceed where I left off in my last.

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As soon as I had seen Mowbray mounted, I went to attend upon poor Belton; whom I found in dreadful agonies, in which he awoke, after he generally does.

The doctor came in presently after, and I was concerned at the scene that passed between them.

It opened with the dying man's asking him, with melancholy earnestness, if nothing—if nothing at all could be done for him?

The doctor shook his head, and told him, he doubted not.

I cannot die, said the poor man—I cannot think of dying. I am very desirous of living a little longer, if I could but be free from these horrible pains in my stomach and head. Can you give me nothing to make me pass one week—but one week, in tolerable ease, that I may die like a man, if I must die!

But, Doctor, I am yet a young man; in the prime of my years—youth is a good subject for a physician to work upon—Can you do nothing—nothing at all for me, Doctor?

Alas! Sir, replied his physician, you have been long in a bad way. I fear, I fear, nothing in physic can help you!

He was then out of all patience: What, then, is your art, Sir?—I have been a passive machine for a whole twelvemonth, to be wrought upon at the pleasure of you people of the faculty.—I verily believe, had I not taken such doses of nasty stuff, I had been now a well man—But who the plague would regard physicians, whose art is to cheat us with hopes while they help to destroy us?—And who, not one of you, know any thing but by guess?

Sir, continued he, fiercely, (and with more strength of voice and coherence, than he had shown for several hours before,) if you give me over, I give you over.—The only honest and certain part of the art of healing is surgery. A good surgeon is worth a thousand of you. I have been in surgeons' hands often, and have always found reason to depend upon their skill; but your art, Sir, what is it?—but to daub, daub, daub; load, load, load; plaster, plaster, plaster; till ye utterly destroy the appetite first, and the constitution afterwards, which you are called in to help. I had a companion once, my dear Belford, thou knewest honest Blomer, as pretty a physician he would have made as any in England, had he kept himself from excess in wine and women; and he always used to say, there was nothing at all but the pick-pocket parade in the physician's art; and that the best guesser was the best physician. And I used to believe him too—and yet, fond of life, and fearful of death, what do we do, when we are taken ill, but call ye in? And what do ye do, when called in, but nurse our distempers, till from pigmies you make giants of them? and then ye come creeping with solemn faces, when ye are ashamed to prescribe, or when the stomach won't bear its natural food, by reason of your poisonous

potions,—Alas, I am afraid physic can do no more for him!—Nor need it, when it has brought to the brink of the grave the poor wretch who placed all his reliance in your cursed slops, and the flattering hopes you gave him.

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The doctor was out of countenance; but said, if we could make mortal men immortal, and would not, all this might be just.

I blamed the poor man; yet excused him to the physician. To die, dear Doctor, when, like my poor friend, we are so desirous of life, is a melancholy thing. We are apt to hope too much, not considering that the seeds of death are sown in us when we begin to live, and grow up, till, like rampant weeds, they choke the tender flower of life; which declines in us as those weeds flourish. We ought, therefore, to begin early to study what our constitutions will bear, in order to root out, by temperance, the weeds which the soil is most apt to produce; or, at least, to keep them down as they rise; and not, when the flower or plant is withered at the root, and the weed in its full vigour, expect, that the medical art will restore the one, or destroy the other; when that other, as I hinted, has been rooting itself in the habit from the time of our birth.

This speech, Bob., thou wilt call a prettiness; but the allegory is just; and thou hast not quite cured me of the metaphorical.

Very true, said the doctor; you have brought a good metaphor to illustrate the thing. I am sorry I can do nothing for the gentleman; and can only recommend patience, and a better frame of mind.

Well, Sir, said the poor angry man, vexed at the doctor, but more at death, you will perhaps recommend the next succession to the physician, when he can do no more; and, I suppose, will send your brother to pray by me for those virtues which you wish me.

It seems the physician’s brother is a clergyman in the neighbourhood.

I was greatly concerned to see the gentleman thus treated; and so I told poor Belton when he was gone; but he continued impatient, and would not be denied, he said, the liberty of talking to a man, who had taken so many guineas of him for doing nothing, or worse than nothing, and never declined one, though he know all the time he could do him no good.

It seems the gentleman, though rich, is noted for being greedy after fees! and poor Belton went on raving at the extravagant fees of English physicians, compared with those of the most eminent foreign ones. But, poor man! he, like the Turks, who judge of a general by his success, (out of patience to think he must die,) would have worshipped the doctor, and not grudged thee times the sum, could he have given him hopes of recovery.

But, nevertheless, I must needs say, that gentlemen of the faculty should be more moderate in their fees, or take more pains to deserve them; for, generally, they only come into a room, feel the sick man’s pulse, ask the nurse a few questions, inspect the

patient's tongue, and, perhaps, his water; then sit down, look plaguy wise, and write. The golden fee finds the ready hand, and they hurry away, as if the sick man's room were infectious. So to the next they troll, and to the next, if men of great practice; valuing themselves upon the number of visits they make in a morning, and the little time they make them in. They go to dinner and unload their pockets; and sally out again to refill them. And thus, in a little time, they raise vast estates; for, as Ratcliffe said, when first told of a great loss which befell him, It was only going up and down one hundred pairs of stairs to fetch it up.

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Mrs. Sambre (Belton's sister) had several times proposed to him a minister to pray by him, but the poor man could not, he said, bear the thoughts of one; for that he should certainly die in an hour or two after; and he was willing to hope still, against all probability, that he might recover; and was often asking his sister if she had not seen people as bad as he was, who, almost to a miracle, when every body gave them over, had got up again?

She, shaking her head, told him she had; but, once saying, that their disorders were of an acute kind, and such as had a crisis in them, he called her Small-hopes, and Job's comforter; and bid her say nothing, if she could not say more to the purpose, and what was fitter for a sick man to hear. And yet, poor fellow, he has no hopes himself, as is plain by his desponding terrors; one of which he fell into, and a very dreadful one, soon after the doctor went.

***

WEDNESDAY, NINE O'CLOCK AT NIGHT.

The poor man had been in convulsions, terrible convulsions! for an hour past. O Lord! Lovelace, death is a shocking thing! by my faith it is!— I wish thou wert present on this occasion. It is not merely the concern a man has for his friend; but, as death is the common lot, we see, in his agonies, how it will be one day with ourselves. I am all over as if cold water were poured down my back, or as if I had a strong ague-fit upon me. I was obliged to come away. And I write, hardly knowing what.—I wish thou wert here.

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Though I left him, because I could stay no longer, I can't be easy by myself, but must go to him again.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

Poor Belton!—Drawing on apace! Yet was he sensible when I went in—too sensible, poor man! He has something upon his mind to reveal, he tells me, that is the worst action of his life; worse than ever you or I knew of him, he says. It must then be very bad!

He ordered every body out; but was seized with another convulsion-fit, before he could reveal it; and in it he lies struggling between life and death—but I'll go in again.

ONE O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

All now must soon be over with him: Poor, poor fellow! He has given me some hints of what he wanted to say; but all incoherent, interrupted by dying hiccoughs and convulsions.

Bad enough it must be, Heaven knows, by what I can gather!—Alas! Lovelace, I fear, I fear, he came too soon into his uncle’s estate.

If a man were to live always, he might have some temptation to do base things, in order to procure to himself, as it would then be, everlasting ease, plenty, or affluence; but, for the sake of ten, twenty, thirty years of poor life to be a villain—Can that be worth while? with a conscience stinging him all the time too! And when he comes to wind up all, such agonizing reflections upon his past guilt! All then appearing as nothing! What he most valued, most disgustful! and not one thing to think of, as the poor fellow says twenty and twenty times over, but what is attended with anguish and reproach!—

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To hear the poor man wish he had never been born!—To hear him pray to be nothing after death! Good God! how shocking!

By his incoherent hints, I am afraid 'tis very bad with him. No pardon, no mercy, he repeats, can lie for him!

I hope I shall make a proper use of this lesson. Laugh at me if thou wilt; but never, never more, will I take the liberties I have taken; but whenever I am tempted, will think of Belton's dying agonies, and what my own may be.

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THURSDAY, THREE IN THE MORNING.

He is now at the last gasp—rattles in the throat—has a new convulsion every minute almost! What horror is he in! His eyes look like breath-stained glass! They roll ghastly no more; are quite set; his face distorted, and drawn out, by his sinking jaws, and erected staring eyebrows, with his lengthened furrowed forehead, to double its usual length, as it seems. It is not, it cannot be the face of Belton, thy Belton, and my Belton, whom we have beheld with so much delight over the social bottle, comparing notes, that one day may be brought against us, and make us groan, as they very lately did him—-that is to say, while he had strength to groan; for now his voice is not to be heard; all inward, lost; not so much as speaking by his eyes; yet, strange! how can it be? the bed rocking under him like a cradle.

Four o'clock.

> Alas: he's gone! that groan, that dreadful groan,
> Was the last farewell of the parting mind!
> The struggling soul has bid a long adieu
> To its late mansion—Fled! Ah! whither fled?

Now is all indeed over!—Poor, poor Belton! by this time thou knowest if thy crimes were above the size of God's mercies! Now are every one's cares and attendance at an end! now do we, thy friends,—poor Belton!— know the worst of thee, as to this life! Thou art released from insufferable tortures both of body and mind! may those tortures, and thy repentance, expiate for thy offences, and mayest thou be happy to all eternity!

We are told, that God desires not the death, the spiritual death of a sinner: And 'tis certain, that thou didst deeply repent! I hope, therefore, as thou wert not cut off in the midst of thy sins by the sword of injured friendship, which more than once thou hadst braved, [the dreadfullest of all deaths, next to suicide, because it gives no opportunity for repentance] that this is a merciful earnest that thy penitence is accepted; and that thy long illness, and dreadful agonies in the last stages of it, were thy only punishment.

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I wish indeed, I heartily wish, we could have seen one ray of comfort darting in upon his benighted mind, before he departed. But all, alas! to the very last gasp, was horror and confusion. And my only fear arises from this, that, till within the four last days of his life, he could not be brought to think he should die, though in a visible decline for months; and, in that presumption, was too little inclined to set about a serious preparation for a journey, which he hoped he should not be obliged to take; and when he began to apprehend that he could not put it off, his impatience, and terror, and apprehension, showed too little of that reliance and resignation, which afford the most comfortable reflections to the friends of the dying, as well as to the dying themselves.

But we must leave poor Belton to that mercy, of which we have all so much need; and, for my own part (do you, Lovelace, and the rest of the fraternity, as ye will) I am resolved, I will endeavour to begin to repent of my follies while my health is sound, my intellects untouched, and while it is in my power to make some atonement, as near to restitution or reparation, as is possible, to those I have wronged or misled. And do ye outwardly, and from a point of false bravery, make as light as ye will of my resolution, as ye are none of ye of the class of abandoned and stupid sots who endeavour to disbelieve the future existence of which ye are afraid, I am sure you will justify me in your hearts, if not by your practices; and one day you will wish you had joined with me in the same resolution, and will confess there is more good sense in it, than now perhaps you will own.

SEVEN O’CLOCK, THURSDAY MORNING.

You are very earnest, by your last letter, (just given me) to hear again from me, before you set out for Berks. I will therefore close with a few words upon the only subject in your letter which I can at present touch upon: and this is the letter of which you give me a copy from the lady.

Want of rest, and the sad scene I have before my eyes, have rendered me altogether incapable of accounting for the contents of it in any shape. You are in ecstacies upon it. You have reason to be so, if it be as you think. Nor would I rob you of your joy: but I must say I am amazed at it.

Surely, Lovelace, this surprising letter cannot be a forgery of thy own, in order to carry on some view, and to impose upon me. Yet, by the style of it, it cannot though thou art a perfect Proteus too.

I will not, however, add another word, after I have desired the return of this, and have told you that I am

Your true friend, and well-wisher,
J. *Belford*.

LETTER XXII

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Aug. 24, *Thursday morning*.

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I received thy letter in such good time, by thy fellow's dispatch, that it gives me an opportunity of throwing in a few paragraphs upon it. I read a passage or two of it to Mowbray; and we both agree that thou art an absolute master of the lamentable.

Poor Belton! what terrible conflicts were thy last conflicts!—I hope, however, that he is happy: and I have the more hope, because the hardness of his death is likely to be such a warning to thee. If it have the effect thou declarest it shall have, what a world of mischief will it prevent! how much good will it do! how many poor wretches will rejoice at the occasion, (if they know it,) however melancholy in itself, which shall bring them in a compensation for injuries they had been forced to sit down contented with! But, Jack, though thy uncle's death has made thee a rich fellow, art thou sure that the making good of such a vow will not totally bankrupt thee?

Thou sayest I may laugh at thee, if I will. Not I, Jack: I do not take it to be a laughing subject: and I am heartily concerned at the loss we all have in poor Belton: and when I get a little settled, and have leisure to contemplate the vanity of all sublunary things (a subject that will now-and-then, in my gayest hours, obtrude itself upon me) it is very likely that I may talk seriously with thee upon these topics; and, if thou hast not got too much the start of me in the repentance thou art entering upon, will go hand-in-hand with thee in it. If thou hast, thou wilt let me just keep thee in my eye; for it is an up-hill work; and I shall see thee, at setting out, at a great distance; but as thou art a much heavier and clumsier fellow than myself, I hope that without much puffing and sweating, only keeping on a good round dog-trot, I shall be able to overtake thee.

Mean time, take back thy letter, as thou desirest. I would not have it in my pocket upon any account at present; nor read it once more.

I am going down without seeing my beloved. I was a hasty fool to write her a letter, promising that I would not come near her till I saw her at her father's. For as she is now actually at Smith's, and I so near her, one short visit could have done no harm.

I sent Will., two hours ago, with my grateful compliments, and to know how she does.

How must I adore this charming creature! for I am ready to think my servant a happier fellow than myself, for having been within a pair of stairs and an apartment of her.

Mowbray and I will drop a tear a-piece, as we ride along, to the memory of poor Belton:—as we ride along, said I: for we shall have so much joy when we arrive at Lord M.'s, and when I communicate to him and my cousins the dear creature's letter, that we shall forget every thing grievous: since now their family-hopes in my reformation (the point which lies so near their hearts) will all revive; it being an article of their faith, that if I marry, repentance and mortification will follow of course.

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Neither Mowbray nor I shall accept of thy verbal invitation to the funeral. We like not these dismal formalities. And as to the respect that is supposed to be shown to the memory of a deceased friend in such an attendance, why should we do any thing to reflect upon those who have made it a fashion to leave this parade to people whom they hire for that purpose?

Adieu, and be cheerful. Thou canst now do no more for poor Belton, wert thou to howl for him to the end of thy life.

LETTER XXIII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Sat. *Aug*. 26.

On Thursday afternoon I assisted at the opening of poor Belton's will, in which he has left me his sole executor, and bequeathed me a legacy of an hundred guineas; which I shall present to his unfortunate sister, to whom he has not been so kind as I think he ought to have been. He has also left twenty pounds a-piece to Mowbray, Tourville, thyself, and me, for a ring to be worn in remembrance of him.

After I had given some particular orders about the preparations to be made for his funeral, I went to town; but having made it late before I got in on Thursday night, and being fatigued for want of rest several nights before, and now in my spirits, [I could not help it, Lovelace!] I contented myself to send my compliments to the innocent sufferer, to inquire after her health.

My servant saw Mrs. Smith, who told him, she was very glad I was come to town; for that lady was worse than she had yet been.

It is impossible to account for the contents of her letter to you; or to reconcile those contents to the facts I have to communicate.

I was at Smith's by seven yesterday (Friday) morning; and found that the lady was just gone in a chair to St. Dunstan's to prayers: she was too ill to get out by six to Covent-garden church; and was forced to be supported to her chair by Mrs. Lovick. They would have persuaded her against going; but she said she knew not but it would be her last opportunity. Mrs. Lovick, dreading that she would be taken worse at church, walked thither before her.

Mrs. Smith told me she was so ill on Wednesday night, that she had desired to receive the sacrament; and accordingly it was administered to her, by the parson of the parish: whom she besought to take all opportunities of assisting her in her solemn preparation.

This the gentleman promised: and called in the morning to inquire after her health; and was admitted at the first word. He staid with her about half an hour; and when he came down, with his face turned aside, and a faltering accent, ‘Mrs. Smith,’ said he, ’you have an angel in your house.—I will attend her again in the evening, as she desires, and as often as I think it will be agreeable to her.’

Her increased weakness she attributed to the fatigues she had undergone by your means; and to a letter she had received from her sister, which she answered the same day.

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Mrs. Smith told me that two different persons had called there, one on Thursday morning, one in the evening, to inquire after her state of health; and seemed as if commissioned from her relations for that purpose; but asked not to see her, only were very inquisitive after her visiters: (particularly, it seems, after me: What could they mean by that?) after her way of life, and expenses; and one of them inquired after her manner of supporting them; to the latter of which, Mrs. Smith said, she had answered, as the truth was, that she had been obliged to sell some of her clothes, and was actually about parting with more; at which the inquirist (a grave old farmer-looking man) held up his hands, and said, Good God!—this will be sad, sad news to somebody! I believe I must not mention it. But Mrs. Smith says she desired he would, let him come from whom he would. He shook his head, and said if she died, the flower of the world would be gone, and the family she belonged to would be no more than a common family.* I was pleased with the man's expression.

* This man came from her cousin Morden; as will be seen hereafter, Letters LII. and LVI. of this volume.

You may be curious to know how she passed her time, when she was obliged to leave her lodging to avoid you.

Mrs. Smith tells me 'that she was very ill when she went out on Monday morning, and sighed as if her heart would break as she came down stairs, and as she went through the shop into the coach, her nurse with her, as you had informed me before: that she ordered the coachman (whom she hired for the day) to drive any where, so it was into the air: he accordingly drove her to Hampstead, and thence to Highgate. There at the Bowling-green House, she alighted, extremely ill, and having breakfasted, ordered the coachman to drive very slowly any where. He crept along to Muswell-hill, and put up at a public house there; where she employed herself two hours in writing, though exceedingly weak and low, till the dinner she had ordered was brought in: she endeavoured to eat, but could not: her appetite was gone, quite gone, she said. And then she wrote on for three hours more: after which, being heavy, she dozed a little in an elbow-chair. When she awoke, she ordered the coachman to drive her very slowly to town, to the house of a friend of Mrs. Lovick; whom, as agreed upon, she met there: but, being extremely ill, she would venture home at a late hour, although she heard from the widow that you had been there; and had reason to be shocked at your behaviour. She said she found there was no avoiding you: she was apprehensive she should not live many hours, and it was not impossible but the shock the sight of you must give her would determine her fate in your presence.

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’She accordingly went home. She heard the relation of your astonishing vagaries, with hands and eyes often lifted up; and with these words intermingled, Shocking creature! incorrigible wretch! And will nothing make him serious? And not being able to bear the thoughts of an interview with a man so hardened, she took to her usual chair early in the morning, and was carried to the Temple-stairs, where she had ordered her nurse before her, to get a pair of oars in readiness (for her fatigues the day before made her unable to bear a coach;) and then she was rowed to Chelsea, where she breakfasted; and after rowing about, put in at the Swan at Brentford-ait, where she dined; and would have written, but had no conveniency either of tolerable pens, or ink, or private room; and then proceeding to Richmond, they rowed her back to Mort-lake; where she put in, and drank tea at a house her waterman recommended to her. She wrote there for an hour; and returned to the Temple; and, when she landed, made one of the watermen get her a chair, and so was carried to the widow’s friend, as the night before; where she again met the widow, who informed her that you had been after her twice that day.

’Mrs. Lovick gave her there her sister’s letter;* and she was so much affected with the contents of it, that she was twice very nigh fainting away; and wept bitterly, as Mrs. Lovick told Mrs. Smith; dropping some warmer expressions than ever they had heard proceed from her lips, in relation to her friends; calling them cruel, and complaining of ill offices done her, and of vile reports raised against her.

* See Letter XXVI. of this volume.

’While she was thus disturbed, Mrs. Smith came to her, and told her, that you had been there a third time, and was just gone, (at half an hour after nine,) having left word how civil and respectful you would be; but that you was determined to see her at all events.

’She said it was hard she could not be permitted to die in peace: that her lot was a severe one: that she began to be afraid she should not forbear repining, and to think her punishment greater than her fault: but, recalling herself immediately, she comforted herself, that her life would be short, and with the assurance of a better.’

By what I have mentioned, you will conclude with me, that the letter brought her by Mrs. Lovick (the superscription of which you saw to be written in her sister’s hand) could not be the letter on the contents of which she grounded that she wrote to you, on her return home. And yet neither Mrs. Lovick, nor Mrs. Smith, nor the servant of the latter, know of any other brought her. But as the women assured me, that she actually did write to you, I was eased of a suspicion which I had begun to entertain, that you (for some purpose I could not guess at) had forged the letter from her of which you sent me a copy.

On Wednesday morning, when she received your letter, in answer to her’s, she said, Necessity may well be called the mother of invention—but calamity is the test of integrity.—I hope I have not taken an inexcusable step—And there she stopt a minute or two; and then said, I shall now, perhaps, be allowed to die in peace.

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I staid till she came in. She was glad to see me; but, being very weak, said, she must sit down before she could go up stairs: and so went into the back-shop; leaning upon Mrs. Lovick: and when she had sat down, 'I am glad to see you, Mr. Belford, said she; I must say so—let mis-reporters say what they will.'

I wondered at this expression;* but would not interrupt her.

* Explained in Letter XXVIII. of this volume.

O Sir, said she, I have been grievously harassed. Your friend, who would not let me live with reputation, will not permit me to die in peace. You see how I am. Is there not a great alteration in me within this week! but 'tis all for the better. Yet were I to wish for life, I must say that your friend, your barbarous friend, has hurt me greatly.

She was so weak, so short breathed, and her words and actions so very moving, that I was forced to walk from her; the two women and her nurse turning away their faces also, weeping.

I have had, Madam, said I, since I saw you, a most shocking scene before my eyes for days together. My poor friend Belton is no more. He quitted the world yesterday morning in such dreadful agonies, that the impression they have left upon me have so weakened my mind—

I was loth to have her think that my grief was owing to the weak state I saw her in, for fear of dispiriting her.

That is only, Mr. Belford, interrupted she, in order to strengthen it, if a proper use be made of the impression. But I should be glad, since you are so humanely affected with the solemn circumstance, that you could have written an account of it to your gay friend, in the style and manner you are master of. Who knows, as it would have come from an associate, and of an associate, it might have affected him?

That I had done, I told her, in such a manner as had, I believed, some effect upon you.

His behaviour in this honest family so lately, said she, and his cruel pursuit of me, give me but little hope that any thing serious or solemn will affect him.

We had some talk about Belton's dying behaviour, and I gave her several particulars of the poor man's impatience and despair; to which she was very attentive; and made fine observations upon the subject of procrastination.

A letter and packet were brought her by a man on horseback from Miss Howe, while we were talking. She retired up stairs to read it; and while I was in discourse with Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick, the doctor and apothecary both came in together. They confirmed to me my fears, as to the dangerous way she is in. They had both been

apprized of the new instances of implacableness in her friends, and of your persecutions: and the doctor said he would not for the world be either the unforgiving father of that lady, or the man who had brought her to this distress. Her heart's broken: she'll die, said he: there is no saving her. But how, were I either the one or the other of the people I have named, I should support myself afterwards, I cannot tell.

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When she was told we were all three together, she desired us to walk up. She arose to receive us, and after answering two or three general questions relating to her health, she addressed herself to us, to the following effect:

As I may not, said she, see you three gentlemen together again, let me take this opportunity to acknowledge my obligations to you all. I am inexpressibly obliged to you, Sir, and to you, Sir, [courtesying to the doctor and to Mr. Goddard] for your more than friendly, your paternal care and concern for me. Humanity in your profession, I dare say, is far from being a rare qualification, because you are gentlemen by your profession: but so much kindness, so much humanity, did never desolate creature meet with, as I have met with from you both. But indeed I have always observed, that where a person relies upon Providence, it never fails to raise up a new friend for every old one that falls off.

This gentleman, [bowing to me,] who, some people think, should have been one of the last I should have thought of for my executor—is, nevertheless, (such is the strange turn that things have taken!) the only one I can choose; and therefore I have chosen him for that charitable office, and he has been so good as to accept of it: for, rich as I may boast myself to be, I am rather so in right than in fact, at this present. I repeat, therefore, my humble thanks to you all three, and beg of God to return to you and yours [looking to each] an hundred-fold, the kindness and favour you have shown me; and that it may be in the power of you and of yours, to the end of time, to confer benefits, rather than to be obliged to receive them. This is a godlike power, gentlemen: I once rejoiced in it some little degree; and much more in the prospect I had of its being enlarged to me; though I have had the mortification to experience the reverse, and to be obliged almost to every body I have seen or met with: but all, originally, through my own fault; so I ought to bear the punishment without repining: and I hope I do. Forgive these impertinencies: a grateful heart, that wants the power it wishes for, to express itself suitably to its own impulses, will be at a loss what properly to dictate to the tongue; and yet, unable to restrain its overflowings, will force the tongue to say weak and silly things, rather than appear ungratefully silent. Once more, then, I thank ye all three for your kindness to me: and God Almighty make you that amends which at present I cannot!

She retired from us to her closet with her eyes full; and left us looking upon one another.

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We had hardly recovered ourselves, when she, quite easy, cheerful, and smiling, returned to us: Doctor, said she (seeing we had been moved) you will excuse me for the concern I give you; and so will you, Mr. Goddard, and you, Mr. Belford; for 'tis a concern that only generous natures can show: and to such natures sweet is the pain, if I may say so, that attends such a concern. But as I have some few preparations still to make, and would not (though in ease of Mr. Belford's future cares, which is, and ought to be, part of my study) undertake more than it is likely I shall have time lent me to perform, I would beg of you to give me your opinions [you see my way of living, and you may be assured that I will do nothing wilfully to shorten my life] how long it may possibly be, before I may hope to be released from all my troubles.

They both hesitated, and looked upon each other. Don't be afraid to answer me, said she, each sweet hand pressing upon the arm of each gentleman, with that mingled freedom and reserve, which virgin modesty, mixed with conscious dignity, can only express, and with a look serenely earnest, tell me how long you think I may hold it! and believe me, gentlemen, the shorter you tell me my time is likely to be, the more comfort you will give me.

With what pleasing woe, said the Doctor, do you fill the minds of those who have the happiness to converse with you, and see the happy frame you are in! what you have undergone within a few days past has much hurt you: and should you have fresh troubles of those kinds, I could not be answerable for your holding it—And there he paused.

How long, Doctor?—I believe I shall have a little more ruffling—I am afraid I shall—but there can happen only one thing that I shall not be tolerably easy under—How long then, Sir?—

He was silent.

A fortnight, Sir?

He was still silent.

Ten days?—A week?—How long, Sir? with smiling earnestness.

If I must speak, Madam, if you have not better treatment than you have lately met with, I am afraid—There again he stopt.

Afraid of what, Doctor? don't be afraid—How long, Sir?

That a fortnight or three weeks may deprive the world of the finest flower in it.

A fortnight or three weeks yet, Doctor?—But God's will be done! I shall, however, by this means, have full time, if I have but strength and intellect, to do all that is now upon

my mind to do. And so, Sirs, I can but once more thank you [turning to each of us] for all your goodness to me; and, having letters to write, will take up no more of your time —Only, Doctor, be pleased to order me some more of those drops: they cheer me a little, when I am low; and putting a fee into his unwilling hand—You know the terms, Sir! —Then, turning to Mr. Goddard, you'll be so good, Sir, as to look in upon me to-night or to-morrow, as you have opportunity: and you, Mr. Belford, I know, will be desirous to set out to prepare for the last office for your late friend: so I wish you a good journey, and hope to see you when that is performed.

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She then retired with a cheerful and serene air. The two gentlemen went away together. I went down to the women, and, inquiring, found, that Mrs. Lovick was this day to bring her twenty guineas more, for some other of her apparel.

The widow told me that she had taken the liberty to expostulate with her upon the occasion she had for raising this money, to such great disadvantage; and it produced the following short and affecting conversation between them.

None of my friends will wear any thing of mine, said she. I shall leave a great many good things behind me.—And as to what I want the money for —don't be surprised:—-But suppose I want it to purchase a house?

You are all mystery, Madam. I don't comprehend you.

Why, then, Mrs. Lovick, I will explain myself.—I have a man, not a woman, for my executor: and think you that I will leave to his care any thing that concerns my own person?—Now, Mrs. Lovick, smiling, do you comprehend me?

Mrs. Lovick wept.

O fie! proceeded the Lady, drying up her tears with her own handkerchief, and giving her a kiss—Why this kind weakness for one with whom you have been so little while acquainted? Dear, good Mrs. Lovick, don't be concerned for me on a prospect with which I have occasion to be pleased; but go to-morrow to your friends, and bring me the money they have agreed to give you.

Thus, Lovelace, it is plain she means to bespeak her last house! Here's presence of mind; here's tranquillity of heart, on the most affecting occasion—This is magnanimity indeed!—Couldst thou, or could I, with all our boisterous bravery, and offensive false courage, act thus?—Poor Belton! how unlike was thy behaviour!

Mrs. Lovick tells me that the lady spoke of a letter she had received from her favourite divine Dr. Lewen, in the time of my absence; and of an letter she had returned to it. But Mrs. Lovick knows not the contents of either.

When thou receivest the letter I am now writing, thou wilt see what will soon be the end of all thy injuries to this divine lady. I say when thou receivest it; for I will delay it for some little time, lest thou shouldest take it into thy head (under pretence of resenting the disappointment her letter must give thee) to molest her again.

This letter having detained me by its length, I shall not now set out for Epsom till to-morrow.

I should have mentioned that the lady explained to me what the one thing was that she was afraid might happen to ruffle her. It was the apprehension of what may result from a visit which Col. Morden, as she is informed, designs to make you.

LETTER XXIV

The Rev. *Dr*. *Lewen*, *to miss* CL. *Harlowe*
Friday, *Aug*. 18.

Presuming, dearest and ever-respectable young lady, upon your former favour, and upon your opinion of my judgment and sincerity, I cannot help addressing you by a few lines on your present unhappy situation.

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I will not look back upon the measures into which you have either been led or driven. But will only say as to those, that I think you are the least to blame of any young lady that was ever reduced from happy to unhappy circumstances; and I have not been wanting to say as much, where I hoped my freedom would have been better received than I have had the mortification to find it to be.

What I principally write for now is, to put you upon doing a piece of justice to yourself, and to your sex, in the prosecuting for his life (I am assured his life is in your power) the most profligate and abandoned of men, as he must be, who could act so basely, as I understand Mr. Lovelace has acted by you.

I am very ill; and am now forced to write upon my pillow; my thoughts confused; and incapable of method: I shall not therefore aim at method: but to give you in general my opinion—and that is, that your religion, your duty to your family, the duty you owe to your honour, and even charity to your sex, oblige you to give public evidence against this very wicked man.

And let me add another consideration: The prevention, by this means, of the mischiefs that may otherwise happen between your brother and Mr. Lovelace, or between the latter and your cousin Morden, who is now, I hear, arrived, and resolves to have justice done you.

A consideration which ought to affect your conscience, [forgive me, dearest young lady, I think I am now in the way of my duty;] and to be of more concern to you, than that hard pressure upon your modesty which I know the appearance against him in an open court must be of to such a lady as you; and which, I conceive, will be your great difficulty. But I know, Madam, that you have dignity enough to become the blushes of the most naked truth, when necessity, justice, and honour, exact it from you. Rakes and ravishers would meet with encouragement indeed, and most from those who had the greatest abhorrence of their actions, if violated modesty were never to complain of the injury it received from the villanous attempters of it.

In a word, the reparation of your family dishonour now rests in your own bosom: and which only one of these two alternatives can repair; to wit, either to marry the offender, or to prosecute him at law. Bitter expedients for a soul so delicate as your’s!

He, and all his friends, I understand, solicit you to the first: and it is certainly, now, all the amends within his power to make. But I am assured that you have rejected their solicitations, and his, with the indignation and contempt that his foul actions have deserved: but yet, that you refuse not to extend to him the christian forgiveness he has so little reason to expect, provided he will not disturb you farther.

But, Madam, the prosecution I advise, will not let your present and future exemption from fresh disturbance from so vile a molester depend upon his courtesy: I should think

so noble and so rightly-guided a spirit as your’s would not permit that it should, if you could help it.

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And can indignities of any kind be properly pardoned till we have it in our power to punish them? To pretend to pardon, while we are labouring under the pain or dishonour of them, will be thought by some to be but the vaunted mercy of a pusillanimous heart, trembling to resent them. The remedy I propose is a severe one: But what pain can be more severe than the injury? Or how will injuries be believed to grieve us, that are never honourably complained of?

I am sure Miss Clarissa Harlowe, however injured and oppressed, remains unshaken in her sentiments of honour and virtue: and although she would sooner die than deserve that her modesty should be drawn into question; yet she will think no truth immodest that is to be uttered in the vindicated cause of innocence and chastity. Little, very little difference is there, my dear young lady, between a suppressed evidence, and a false one.

It is a terrible circumstance, I once more own, for a young lady of your delicacy to be under the obligation of telling so shocking a story in public court: but it is still a worse imputation, that she should pass over so mortal an injury unresented.

Conscience, honour, justice, are on your side: and modesty would, by some, be thought but an empty name, should you refuse to obey their dictates.

I have been consulted, I own, on this subject. I have given it as my opinion, that you ought to prosecute the abandoned man—but without my reasons. These I reserved, with a resolution to lay them before you unknown to any body, that the result, if what I wish, may be your own.

I will only add that the misfortunes which have befallen you, had they been the lot of a child of my own, could not have affected me more than your's have done. My own child I love: but I both love and honour you: since to love you, is to love virtue, good sense, prudence, and every thing that is good and noble in woman.

Wounded as I think all these are by the injuries you have received, you will believe that the knowledge of your distresses must have afflicted, beyond what I am able to express,

Your sincere admirer, and humble servant,
Arthur Lewen.

I just now understand that your sister will, by proper authority, propose this prosecution to you. I humbly presume that the reason why you resolved not upon this step from the first, was, that you did not know that it would have the countenance and support of your relations.

LETTER XXV

Miss CL. *Harlowe*, *to the Rev*. *Dr*. *Lewen*
sat. *Aug*. 19.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I thought, till I received your affectionate and welcome letter, that I had neither father, uncle, brother left; nor hardly a friend among my former favourers of your sex. Yet, knowing you so well, and having no reason to upbraid myself with a faulty will, I was to blame, (even although I had doubted the continuance of your good opinion,) to decline the trial whether I had forfeited it or not; and if I had, whether I could not honourably reinstate myself in it.

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But, Sir, it was owing to different causes that I did not; partly to shame, to think how high, in my happier days, I stood in your esteem, and how much I must be sunk in it, since those so much nearer in relation to me gave me up; partly to deep distress, which makes the humbled heart diffident; and made mine afraid to claim the kindred mind in your's, which would have supplied to me in some measure all the dear and lost relations I have named.

Then, so loth, as I sometimes was, to be thought to want to make a party against those whom both duty and inclination bid me reverence: so long trailed on between hope and doubt: so little my own mistress at one time; so fearful of making or causing mischief at another; and not being encouraged to hope, by your kind notice, that my application to you would be acceptable:—apprehending that my relations had engaged your silence at least*—*these*—But why these unavailing retrospections now?—I was to be unhappy—in order to be happy; that is my hope!—Resigning therefore to that hope, I will, without any further preamble, write a few lines, (if writing to you, I can write but a few,) in answer to the subject of your kind letter.

* The stiff visit this good divine was prevailed upon to make her, as mentioned in Vol. II. Letter XXXI. (of which, however, she was too generous to remind him) might warrant the lady to think that he had rather inclined to their party, as to the parental side, than to her's.

Permit me, then, to say, That I believe your arguments would have been unanswerable in almost every other case of this nature, but in that of the unhappy Clarissa Harlowe.

It is certain that creatures who cannot stand the shock of public shame, should be doubly careful how they expose themselves to the danger of incurring private guilt, which may possibly bring them to it. But as to myself, suppose there were no objections from the declining way I am in as to my health; and supposing I could have prevailed upon myself to appear against this man; were there not room to apprehend that the end so much wished for by my friends, (to wit, his condign punishment,) would not have been obtained, when it came to be seen that I had consented to give him a clandestine meeting; and, in consequence of that, had been weakly tricked out of living under one roof with him for several weeks; which I did, (not only without complaint, but) without cause of complaint?

Little advantage in a court, (perhaps, bandied about, and jested profligately with,) would some of those pleas in my favour have been, which out of court, and to a private and serious audience, would have carried the greatest weight against him—Such, particularly, as the infamous methods to which he had recourse—

It would, no doubt, have been a ready retort from every mouth, that I ought not to have thrown myself into the power of such a man, and that I ought to take for my pains what had befallen me.

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But had the prosecution been carried on to effect, and had he even been sentenced to death, can it be supposed that his family would not have had interest enough to obtain his pardon, for a crime thought too lightly of, though one of the greatest that can be committed against a creature valuing her honour above her life?—While I had been censured as pursuing with sanguinary views a man who offered me early all the reparation in his power to make?

And had he been pardoned, would he not then have been at liberty to do as much mischief as ever?

I dare say, Sir, such is the assurance of the man upon whom my unhappy destiny threw me; and such his inveteracy to my family, (which would then have appeared to be justified by their known inveteracy to him, and by their earnest endeavours to take away his life;) that he would not have been sorry to have had an opportunity to confront me, and my father, uncles, and brother, at the bar of a court of justice, on such an occasion. In which case, would not (on his acquittal, or pardon) resentments have been reciprocally heightened? And then would my brother, or my cousin Morden, have been more secure than now?

How do these conditions aggravate my fault! My motives, at first, were not indeed blamable: but I had forgotten the excellent caution, which yet I was not ignorant of, That we ought not to do evil that good may come of it.

In full conviction of the purity of my heart, and of the firmness of my principles, [Why may I not, thus called upon, say what I am conscious of, and yet without the imputation of faulty pride; since all is but a duty, and I should be utterly inexcusable, could I not justly say what I do?— In this full conviction,] he has offered me marriage. He has avowed his penitence: a sincere penitence I have reason to think it, though perhaps not a christian one. And his noble relations, (kinder to the poor sufferer than her own,) on the same conviction, and his own not ungenerous acknowledgements, have joined to intercede with me to forgive and accept of him. Although I cannot comply with the latter part of their intercession, have not you, Sir, from the best rules, and from the divinest example, taught me to forgive injuries?

The injury I have received from him is indeed of the highest nature, and it was attended with circumstances of unmanly baseness and premeditation; yet, I bless God, it has not tainted my mind; it has not hurt my morals. No thanks indeed to the wicked man that it has not. No vile courses have followed it. My will is unviolated. The evil, (respecting myself, and not my friends,) is merely personal. No credulity, no weakness, no want of vigilance, have I to reproach myself with. I have, through grace, triumphed over the deepest machinations. I have escaped from him. I have renounced him. The man whom once I could have loved, I have been enabled to despise: And shall not charity complete my triumph? and shall I not enjoy it?—And where would be my triumph if he

deserved my forgiveness?—Poor man! he has had a loss in losing me! I have the pride to think so, because I think I know my own heart. I have had none in losing him.

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But I have another plea to make, which alone would have been enough (as I presume) to answer the contents of your very kind and friendly letter.

I know, my dear and reverend friend, the spiritual guide and director of my happier days! I know, that you will allow of my endeavour to bring myself to this charitable disposition, when I tell you how near I think myself to that great and awful moment, in which, and even in the ardent preparation to which, every sense of indignity or injury that concerns not the immortal soul, ought to be absorbed in higher and more important contemplations.

Thus much for myself.

And for the satisfaction of my friends and favourers, Miss Howe is solicitous to have all those letters and materials preserved, which will set my whole story in a true light. The good Dr. Lewen is one of the principal of those friends and favourers.

The warning that may be given from those papers to all such young creatures as may have known or heard of me, may be of more efficacy to the end wished for, as I humbly presume to think, than my appearance could have been in a court of justice, pursuing a doubtful event, under the disadvantages I have mentioned. And if, my dear and good Sir, you are now, on considering every thing, of this opinion, and I could know it, I should consider it as a particular felicity; being as solicitous as ever to be justified in what I may in your eyes.

I am sorry, Sir, that your indisposition has reduced you to the necessity of writing upon your pillow. But how much am I obliged to that kind and generous concern for me, which has impelled you, as I may say, to write a letter, containing so many paternal lines, with such inconvenience to yourself!

May the Almighty bless you, dear and reverend Sir, for all your goodness to me of long time past, as well as for that which engaged my present gratitude! Continue to esteem me to the last, as I do and will venerate you! And let me bespeak your prayers, the continuance, I should say, of your prayers; for I doubt not, that I have always had them: and to them, perhaps, has in part been owing (as well as to your pious precepts instilled through my earlier youth) that I have been able to make the stand I have made; although every thing that you prayed for has not been granted to me by that Divine Wisdom, which knows what is best for its poor creatures.

My prayers for you are, that it will please God to restore you to your affectionate flock; and after as many years of life as shall be for his service, and to your own comfort, give us a happy meeting in those regions of blessedness, which you have taught me, as well by example, as by precept, to aspire to!

Clarissa Harlowe.

LETTER XXVI

Miss Arab. *Harlowe*, *to miss* CL. *Harlowe* [*in answer to her's to her uncle Antony of Aug*. 13.*] *Monday*, *Aug*. 21.

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* See Letter IV. of this volume.

SISTER CLARY,

I find by your letters to my uncles, that they, as well as I, are in great disgrace with you for writing our minds to you.

We can’t help it, sister Clary.

You don’t think it worth your while, I find, a second time to press for the blessing you pretend to be so earnest about. You think, no doubt, that you have done your duty in asking for it: so you’ll sit down satisfied with that, I suppose, and leave it to your wounded parents to repent hereafter that they have not done theirs, in giving it to you, at the first word; and in making such inquiries about you, as you think ought to have been made. Fine encouragement to inquire after a run-away daughter! living with her fellow as long as he would live with her! You repent also (with your full mind, as you modestly call it) that you wrote to me.

So we are not likely to be applied to any more, I find, in this way.

Well then, since this is the case, sister Clary, let me, with all humility, address myself with a proposal or two to you; to which you will be graciously pleased to give an answer.

Now you must know, that we have had hints given us, from several quarters, that you have been used in such a manner by the villain you ran away with, that his life would be answerable for his crime, if it were fairly to be proved. And, by your own hints, something like it appears to us.

If, Clary, there be any thing but jingle and affected period in what proceeds from your full mind, and your dutiful consciousness; and if there be truth in what Mrs. Norton and Mrs. Howe have acquainted us with; you may yet justify your character to us, and to the world, in every thing but your scandalous elopement; and the law may reach the villain: and, could we but bring him to the gallows, what a meritorious revenge would that be to our whole injured family, and to the innocents he has deluded, as well as the saving from ruin many others!

Let me, therefore, know (if you please) whether you are willing to appear to do yourself, and us, and your sex, this justice? If not, sister Clary, we shall know what to think of you; for neither you nor we can suffer more than we have done from the scandal of your fall: and, if you will, Mr. Ackland and counselor Derham will both attend you to make proper inquiries, and to take minutes of your story, to found a process upon, if it will bear one with as great a probability of success as we are told it may be prosecuted with.

But, by what Mrs. Howe intimates, this is not likely to be complied with; for it is what she hinted to you, it seems, by her lively daughter, but not without effect;* so prudently in some certain points, as to entitle yourself to public justice; which, if true, the Lord have mercy upon you!

* See Vol. VI. Letter LXXII.

One word only more as to the above proposal:—Your admirer, Dr. Lewen, is clear, in his opinion, that you should prosecute the villain.

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But if you will not agree to this, I have another proposal to make to you, and that in the name of every one in the family; which is, that you will think of going to Pensylvania to reside there for some few years till all is blown over: and, if it please God to spare you, and your unhappy parents, till they can be satisfied that you behave like a true and uniform penitent; at least till you are one-and-twenty; you may then come back to your own estate, or have the produce of it sent you thither, as you shall choose. A period which my father fixes, because it is the custom; and because he thinks your grandfather should have fixed it; and because, let me add, you have fully proved by your fine conduct, that you were not at years of discretion at eighteen. Poor doting, though good old man!—Your grandfather, he thought—But I would not be too severe.

Mr. Hartley has a widow-sister at Pensylvania, with whom he will undertake you may board, and who is a sober, sensible, well-read woman. And if you were once well there, it would rid your father and mother of a world of cares, and fears, and scandal; and that I think is what you should wish for of all things.

Mr. Hartley will engage for all accommodations in your passage suitable to your rank and fortune; and he has a concern in a ship, which will sail in a month; and you may take your secret-keeping Hannah with you, or whom you will of your newer acquaintance. 'Tis presumed that your companions will be of your own sex.

These are what I had to communicate to you; and if you'll oblige me with an answer, (which the hand that conveys this will call for on Wednesday morning,) it will be very condescending.

Arabella Harlowe.

LETTER XXVII

Miss CL. *Harlowe*, *to miss Arab*. *Harlowe*
Tuesday, *Aug*. 22.

Write to me, my hard-hearted Sister, in what manner you please, I shall always be thankful to you for your notice. But (think what you will of me) I cannot see Mr. Ackland and the counselor on such a business as you mention.

The Lord have mercy upon me indeed! for none else will.

Surely I am believed to a creature past all shame, or it could not be thought of sending two gentlemen to me on such an errand.

Had my mother required of me (or would modesty have permitted you to inquire into) the particulars of my sad story, or had Mrs. Norton been directed to receive them from me, methinks it had been more fit: and I presume to think that it would have been more

in every one's character too, had they been required of me before such heavy judgment had been passed upon me as has been passed.

I know that this is Dr. Lewen's opinion. He has been so good as to enforce it in a kind letter to me. I have answered his letter; and given such reasons as I hope will satisfy him. I could wish it were thought worth while to request of him a sight of my answer.*

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* Her letter, containing the reasons she refers to, was not asked for; and Dr. Lewen's death, which fell out soon after he had received it, was the reason that it was not communicated to the family, till it was too late to do the service that might have been hoped for from it.

To your other proposal, of going to Pensylvania; this is my answer—If nothing happen within a month which may full as effectually rid my parents and friends of that world of cares, and fears, and scandals, which you mention, and if I am then able to be carried on board of ship, I will cheerfully obey my father and mother, although I were sure to die in the passage. And, if I may be forgiven for saying so (for indeed it proceeds not from a spirit of reprisal) you shall set over me, instead of my poor obliging, but really-unculpable, Hannah, your Betty Barnes; to whom I will be answerable for all my conduct. And I will make it worth her while to accompany me.

I am equally surprised and concerned at the hints which both you and my uncle Antony give of new points of misbehaviour in me!—What can be meant by them?

I will not tell you, Miss Harlowe, how much I am afflicted at your severity, and how much I suffer by it, and by your hard-hearted levity of style, because what I shall say may be construed into jingle and period, and because I know it is intended, very possibly for kind ends, to mortify me. All I will therefore say is, that it does not lose its end, if that be it.

But, nevertheless, (divesting myself as much as possible of all resentment,) I will only pray that Heaven will give you, for your own sake, a kinder heart than at present you seem to have; since a kind heart, I am convinced, is a greater blessing to its possessor than it can be to any other person. Under this conviction I subscribe myself, my dear Bella,

Your ever-affectionate sister,
CL. *Harlowe*.

LETTER XXVIII

Mrs. *Norton*, *to miss Clarissa Harlowe* [*in answer to her's of Thursday*, *Aug*. 17.*]
Tuesday, *Aug*. 22.

* See Letter VI. of this volume.

MY DEAREST YOUNG LADY,

The letters you sent me I now return by the hand that brings you this.

It is impossible for me to express how much I have been affected by them, and by your last of the 17th. Indeed, my dear Miss Clary, you are very harshly used; indeed you are! And if you should be taken from us, what grief and what punishment are not treasuring up against themselves in the heavy reflections which their rash censures and unforgivingness will occasion them!

But I find to what your uncle Antony's cruel letter is owing, as well as one you will be still more afflicted by, [God help you, my poor dear child!] when it comes to your hand, written by your sister, with proposals to you.*

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* See Letter XXVI. ibid.

It was finished to send you yesterday, I know; and I apprize you of it, that you should fortify your heart against the contents of it.

The motives which incline them all to this severity, if well grounded, would authorize any severity they could express, and which, while they believe them to be so, both they and you are to be equally pitied.

They are owning to the information of that officious Mr. Brand, who has acquainted them (from some enemy of your's in the neighbourhood about you) that visits are made you, highly censurable, by a man of a free character, and an intimate of Mr. Lovelace; who is often in private with you; sometimes twice or thrice a day.

Betty gives herself great liberties of speech upon this occasion, and all your friends are too ready to believe that things are not as they should be; which makes me wish that, let the gentleman's views be ever so honourable, you could entirely drop acquaintance with him.

Something of this nature was hinted at by Betty to me before, but so darkly that I could not tell what to make of it; and this made me mention to you so generally as I did in my last.

Your cousin Morden has been among them. He is exceedingly concerned for your misfortunes; and as they will not believe Mr. Lovelace would marry you, he is determined to go to Lord M.'s, in order to inform himself from Mr. Lovelace's own mouth, whether he intends to do you that justice or not.

He was extremely caressed by every one at his first arrival; but I am told there is some little coldness between them and him at present.

I was in hopes of getting a sight of this letter of Mr. Brand: (a rash officious man!) but it seems Mr. Morden had it given him yesterday to read, and he took it away with him.

God be your comfort, my dear Miss! But indeed I am exceedingly disturbed at the thoughts of what may still be the issue of all these things. I am, my beloved young lady,

Your most affectionate and faithful
Judith Norton.

LETTER XXIX

Mrs. *Norton*, *to miss Clarissa Harlowe*
Tuesday, *Aug*. 22.

After I had sealed up the enclosed, I had the honour of a private visit from your aunt Hervey; who has been in a very low-spirited way, and kept her chamber for several weeks past; and is but just got abroad.

She longed, she said, to see me, and to weep with me, on the hard fate that had befallen her beloved niece.

I will give you a faithful account of what passed between us; as I expect that it will, upon the whole, administer hope and comfort to you.

’She pitied very much your good mother, who, she assured me, is obliged to act a part entirely contrary to her inclinations; as she herself, she owns, had been in a great measure.

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’She said, that the poor lady was with great difficulty with-held from answering your letter to her; which had (as was your aunt’s expression) almost broken the heart of every one: that she had reason to think that she was neither consenting to your two uncles writing, nor approving of what they wrote.

’She is sure they all love you dearly; but have gone so far, that they know not how to recede.

’That, but for the abominable league which your brother had got every body into (he refusing to set out for Scotland till it was renewed, and till they had all promised to take no step towards a reconciliation in his absence but by his consent; and to which your sister’s resentments kept them up); all would before now have happily subsided.

’That nobody knew the pangs which their inflexible behaviour gave them, ever since you had begun to write to them in so affecting and humble a style.

’That, however, they were not inclined to believe that you were either so ill, or so penitent as you really are; and still less, that Mr. Lovelace is in earnest in his offers of marriage.

’She is sure, however, she says, that all will soon be well: and the sooner for Mr. Morden’s arrival: who is very zealous in your behalf.

’She wished to Heaven that you would accept of Mr. Lovelace, wicked as he has been, if he were now in earnest.

‘It had always,’ she said, ’been matter of astonishment to her, that so weak a pride in her cousin James, of making himself the whole family, should induce them all to refuse an alliance with such a family as Mr. Lovelace’s was.

’She would have it, that your going off with Mr. Lovelace was the unhappiest step for your honour and your interest that could have been taken; for that although you would have had a severe trial the next day, yet it would probably have been the last; and your pathetic powers must have drawn you off some friends—hinting at your mother, at your uncle Harlowe, at your uncle Hervey, and herself.’

But here (that the regret that you did not trust to the event of that meeting, may not, in your present low way, too much afflict you) I must observe, that it seems a little too evident, even from this opinion of your aunt’s, that it was not absolutely determined that all compulsion was designed to be avoided, since your freedom from it must have been owing to the party to be made among them by your persuasive eloquence and dutiful expostulation.

’She owned, that some of them were as much afraid of meeting you as you could be of meeting them:’—But why so, if they designed, in the last instance, to give you your way?

Your aunt told me, ’That Mrs. Williams* had been with her, and asked her opinion, if it would be taken amiss, if she desired leave to go up, to attend her dearest young lady in her calamity. Your aunt referred her to your mother: but had heard no more of it.

* The former housekeeper at Harlowe-place.

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‘Her daughter,’ (Miss Dolly,) she said, ’had been frequently earnest with her on the same subject; and renewed her request with the greatest fervour when your first letter came to hand.’

Your aunt says, ’That she then being very ill, wrote to your mother upon it, hoping it would not be taken amiss if she permitted Dolly to go; but that your sister, as from your mother, answered her, That now you seemed to be coming-to, and to have a due sense of your faults, you must be left entirely to their own management.

‘Miss Dolly,’ she said, ’had pined ever since she had heard of Mr. Lovelace’s baseness, being doubly mortified by it: first, on account of your sufferings; next, because she was one who rejoiced in your getting off, and vindicated you for it; and had incurred censure and ill-will on that account; especially from your brother and sister; so that she seldom went to Harlowe-place.’

Make the best use of these intelligences, my dearest young lady, for your consolation.

I will only add, that I am, with the most fervent prayers for your recovery and restoration to favour,

Your ever-faitful
Judith Norton.

LETTER XXX

Miss CL. *Harlowe*, *to Mrs*. *Judith Norton*
Thursday, *Aug*. 24.

The relation of such a conversation as passed between my aunt and you would have given me pleasure, had it come some time ago; because it would have met with a spirit more industrious than mine now is, to pick out remote comfort in the hope of a favourable turn that might one day have rewarded my patient duty.

I did not doubt my aunt’t good-will to me. Her affection I did not doubt. But shall we wonder that kings and princes meet with so little controul in their passions, be they every so violent, when, in a private family, an aunt, nay, even a mother in that family, shall choose to give up a once-favoured child against their own inclinations, rather than oppose an aspiring young man, who had armed himself with the authority of a father, who, when once determined, never would be expostulated with?

And will you not blame me, if I say, that good sense, that kindred indulgence, must be a little offended at the treatment I have met with; and if I own, that I think that great rigour has been exercised towards me! And yet I am now authorized to call it rigour by the judgment of two excellent sisters, my mother and my aunt, who acknowledge (as you

tell me from my aunt) that they have been obliged to join against me, contrary to their inclinations; and that even in a point which might seem to concern my eternal welfare.

But I must not go on at this rate. For may not the inclination my mother has given up be the effect of a too-fond indulgence, rather than that I merit the indulgence? And yet so petulantly perverse am I, that I must tear myself from the subject.

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All then that I will say further to it, at this time, is, that were the intended goodness to be granted to me but a week hence, it would possibly be too late—too late I mean to be of the consolation to me that I would wish from it: for what an inefficacious preparation must I have been making, if it has not, by this time, carried me above—But above what? — Poor mistaken creature! Unhappy self-deluder! that finds herself above nothing! Nor able to subdue her own faulty impatience!

But in-deed, to have done with a subject that I dare not trust myself with, if it come in your way, let my aunt Hervey, let my dear cousin Dolly, let the worthy Mrs. Williams, know how exceedingly grateful to me their kind intentions and concern for me are: and, as the best warrant or justification of their good opinions, (since I know that their favour for me is founded on the belief that I loved virtue,) tell them, that I continued to love virtue to my last hour, as I presume to hope it may be said; and assure them that I never made the least wilful deviation, however unhappy I became for one faulty step; which nevertheless was not owing to unworthy or perverse motives.

I am very sorry that my cousin Morden has taken a resolution to see Mr. Lovelace.

My apprehensions on this intelligence are a great abatement to the pleasure I have in knowing that he still loves me.

My sister’s letter to me is a most affecting one—so needlessly, so ludicrously taunting! —But for that part of it that is so, I ought rather to pity her, than to be so much concerned at it as I am.

I wonder what I have done to Mr. Brand—I pray God to forgive both him and his informants, whoever they be. But if the scandal arise solely from Mr. Belford’s visits, a very little time will confute it. Mean while, the packet I shall send you, which I sent to Miss Howe, will, I hope, satisfy you, my dear Mrs. Norton, as to my reasons for admitting his visits.

My sister’s taunting letter, and the inflexibleness of my dearer friends —But how do remoter-begun subjects tend to the point which lies nearest the heart!—As new-caught bodily disorders all crowd to a fractured or distempered part.

I will break off, with requesting your prayers that I may be blessed with patience and due resignation; and with assuring you, that I am, and will be to the last hour of my life,

Your equally grateful and affectionate
CL. *Harlowe*.

LETTER XXXI

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE [IN REPLY TO HER'S OF FRIDAY, AUG. 11.*] YARMOUTH, ISLE OF WIGHT, AUG. 23.

* See Letter II. of this volume.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I have read the letters and copies of letters you favoured me with: and I return them by a particular hand. I am extremely concerned at your indifferent state of health: but I approve of all your proceedings and precautions in relation to the appointment of Mr. Belford for an office, in which, I hope, neither he nor any body else will be wanted to act, for many, very many years.

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I admire, and so we do all, that greatness of mind which can make you so stedfastly [sic] despise (through such inducements as no other woman could resist, and in such desolate circumstances as you have been reduced to) the wretch that ought to be so heartily despised and detested.

What must the contents of those letters from your relations be, which you will not communicate to me!—Fie upon them! How my heart rises!—But I dare say no more—-though you yourself now begin to think they use you with great severity.

Every body here is so taken with Mr. Hickman (and the more from the horror they conceive at the character of the detestable Lovelace,) that I have been teased to death almost to name a day. This has given him airs: and, did I not keep him to it, he would behave as carelessly and as insolently as if he were sure of me. I have been forced to mortify him no less than four times since we have been here.

I made him lately undergo a severe penance for some negligences that were not to be passed over. Not designed ones, he said: but that was a poor excuse, as I told him: for, had they been designed, he should never have come into my presence more: that they were not, showed his want of thought and attention; and those were inexcusable in a man only in his probatory state.

He hoped he had been more than in a probatory state, he said.

And therefore, Sir, might be more careless!—So you add ingratitude to negligence, and make what you plead as accident, that itself wants an excuse, design, which deserves none.

I would not see him for two days, and he was so penitent, and so humble, that I had like to have lost myself, to make him amends: for, as you have said, resentment carried too high, often ends in amends too humble.

I long to be nearer to you: but that must not yet be, it seems. Pray, my dear, let me hear from you as often as you can.

May Heaven increase your comforts, and restore your health, are the prayers of

Your ever faithful and affectionate
Anna Howe.

P.S. Excuse me that I did not write before: it was owing to a little coasting voyage I was obliged to give into.

LETTER XXXII

Miss Clarissa Harlowe, *to miss Howe*
Friday, *Aug*. 25.

You are very obliging, my dear Miss Howe, to account to me for your silence. I was easy in it, as I doubted not that, among such near and dear friends as you are with, you was diverted from writing by some such agreeable excursion as that you mention.

I was in hopes that you had given over, at this time of day, those very sprightly airs, which I have taken the liberty to blame you for, as often as you have given me occasion to so do; and that has been very often.

I was always very grave with you upon this subject: and while your own and a worthy man's future happiness are in the question, I must enter into it, whenever you forget yourself, although I had not a day to live: and indeed I am very ill.

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I am sure it was not your intention to take your future husband with you to the little island to make him look weak and silly among those of your relations who never before had seen him. Yet do you think it possible for them (however prepared and resolved they may be to like him) to forbear smiling at him, when they see him suffering under your whimsical penances? A modest man should no more be made little in his own eyes, than in the eyes of others. If he be, he will have a diffidence, which will give an awkwardness to every thing he says or does; and this will be no more to the credit of your choice than to that of the approbation he meets with from your friends, or to his own credit.

I love an obliging, and even an humble, deportment in a man to the woman he addresses. It is a mark of his politeness, and tends to give her that opinion of herself, which it may be supposed bashful merit wants to be inspired with. But if the woman exacts it with an high hand, she shows not either her own politeness or gratitude; although I must confess she does her courage. I gave you expectations that I would be very serious with you.

O my dear, that it had been my lot (as I was not permitted to live single,) to have met with a man by whom I could have acted generously and unreservedly!

Mr. Lovelace, it is now plain, in order to have a pretence against me, taxed my behaviour to him with stiffness and distance. You, at one time, thought me guilty of some degree of prudery. Difficult situations should be allowed for: which often make seeming occasions for censure unavoidable. I deserved not blame from him who made mine difficult. And you, my dear, had I any other man to deal with, or had he but half the merit which Mr. Hickman has, would have found that my doctrine on this subject should have governed my practice.

But to put myself out of the question—I'll tell you what I should think, were I an indifferent by-stander, of those high airs of your's, in return for Mr. Hickman's humble demeanour. 'The lady thinks of having the gentleman, I see plainly, would I say. But I see as plainly, that she has a very great indifference to him. And to what may this indifference be owing? To one or all of these considerations, no doubt: that she receives his addresses rather from motives of convenience than choice: that she thinks meanly of his endowments and intellects; at least more highly of her own: or, she has not the generosity to use that power with moderation, which his great affection for her puts into her hands.'

How would you like, my dear, to have any of these things said?

Then to give but the shadow of a reason for free-livers and free speakers to say, or to imagine, that Miss Howe gives her hand to a man who has no reason to expect any share in her heart, I am sure you would not wish that such a thing should be so much as supposed. Then all the regard from you to come afterwards; none to be shown before;

must, should I think, be capable of being construed as a compliment to the husband, made at the expense of the wife’s and even of the sex’s delicacy!

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There is no fear that attempts could be formed by the most audacious [two Lovelaces there cannot be!] upon a character so revered for virtue, and so charmingly spirited, as Miss Howe's: yet, to have any man encouraged to despise a husband by the example of one who is most concerned to do him honour; what, my dear, think you of that? It is but too natural for envious men (and who that knows Miss Howe, will not envy Mr. Hickman!) to scoff at, and to jest upon, those who are treated with or will bear indignity from a woman.

If a man so treated have a true and ardent love for the woman he addresses, he will be easily overawed by her displeasure: and this will put him upon acts of submission, which will be called meanness. And what woman of true spirit would like to have it said, that she would impose any thing upon the man from whom she one day expects protection and defence, that should be capable of being construed as a meanness, or unmanly abjectness in his behaviour, even to herself?—Nay, I am not sure, and I ask it of you, my dear, to resolve me, whether, in your own opinion, it is not likely, that a woman of spirit will despise rather than value more, the man who will take patiently an insult at her hands; especially before company.

I have always observed, that prejudices in disfavour of a person at his first appearance, fix deeper, and are much more difficult to be removed when fixed, than that malignant principle so eminently visible in little minds, which makes them wish to bring down the more worthy characters to their own low level, I pretend not to determine. When once, therefore, a woman of your good sense gives room to the world to think she has not an high opinion of the lover, whom nevertheless she entertains, it will be very difficult for her afterwards to make that world think so well as she would have it of the husband she has chosen.

Give me leave to observe, that to condescend with dignity, and to command with such kindness, and sweetness of manners, as should let the condescension, while in a single state, be seen and acknowledged, are points, which a wise woman, knowing her man, should aim at: and a wise woman, I should think, would choose to live single all her life rather than give herself to a man whom she thinks unworthy of a treatment so noble.

But when a woman lets her lover see that she has the generosity to approve of and reward a well-meant service; that she has a mind that lifts her above the little captious follies, which some (too licentiously, I hope,) attribute to the sex in general: that she resents not (if ever she thinks she has reason to be displeased) with petulance, or through pride: nor thinks it necessary to insist upon little points, to come at or secure great ones, perhaps not proper to be aimed at: nor leaves room to suppose she has so much cause to doubt her own merit, as to put the love of the man she intends to favour upon disagreeable or arrogant trials: but let reason be the principal guide of her actions — she will then never fail of that true respect, of that sincere veneration, which she wishes to meet with; and which will make her judgment after marriage consulted,

sometimes with a preference to a man’s own; at other times as a delightful confirmation of his.

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And so much, my beloved Miss Howe, for this subject now, and I dare say, for ever!

I will begin another letter by-and-by, and send both together. Mean time, I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

[In this letter, the Lady acquaints Miss Howe with Mr. Brand's report; with her sister's proposals either that she will go abroad, or prosecute Mr. Lovelace. She complains of the severe letters of her uncle Antony and her sister; but in milder terms than they deserved.

She sends her Dr. Lewen's letter, and the copy of her answer to it.

She tells her of the difficulties she had been under to avoid seeing Mr. Lovelace. She gives her the contents of the letter she wrote to him to divert him from his proposed visit: she is afraid, she says, that it is a step that is not strictly right, if allegory or metaphor be not allowable to one in her circumstances.

She informs her of her cousin Morden's arrival and readiness to take her part with her relations; of his designed interview with Mr. Lovelace; and tells her what her apprehensions are upon it.

She gives her the purport of the conversation between her aunt Hervey and Mrs. Norton. And then add:]

But were they ever so favourably inclined to me now, what can they do for me? I wish, and that for their sakes more than for my own, that they would yet relent—but I am very ill—I must drop my pen—a sudden faintness overspreads my heart—excuse my crooked writing!—Adieu, my dear!—Adieu!

THREE O'CLOCK, FRIDAY.

Once more I resume my pen. I thought I had taken my last farewell to you. I never was so very oddly affected: something that seemed totally to overwhelm my faculties—I don't know how to describe it—I believe I do amiss in writing so much, and taking too much upon me: but an active mind, though clouded by bodily illness, cannot be idle.

I'll see if the air, and a discontinued attention, will help me. But, if it will not, don't be concerned for me, my dear. I shall be happy. Nay, I am more so already than of late I thought I could ever be in this life. —Yet how this body clings!—How it encumbers!

SEVEN O'CLOCK.

I could not send this letter away with so melancholy an ending, as you would have thought it. So I deferred closing it, till I saw how I should be on my return from my airing: and now I must say I am quite another thing: so alert! that I could proceed with as much spirit as I began, and add more preachment to your lively subject, if I had not written more than enough upon it already.

I wish you would let me give you and Mr. Hickman joy. Do, my dear. I should take some to myself, if you would.

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My respectful compliments to all your friends, as well to those I have the honour to know, as to those I do not know.

***

I have just now been surprised with a letter from one whom I long ago gave up all thoughts of hearing from. From Mr. Wyerley. I will enclose it. You'll be surprised at it as much as I was. This seems to be a man whom I might have reclaimed. But I could not love him. Yet I hope I never treated him with arrogance. Indeed, my dear, if I am not too partial to myself, I think I refused him with more gentleness, than you retain somebody else. And this recollection gives me less pain than I should have had in the other case, on receiving this instance of a generosity that affects me. I will also enclose the rough draught of my answer, as soon as I have transcribed it.

If I begin another sheet, I shall write to the end of it: wherefore I will only add my prayers for your honour and prosperity, and for a long, long, happy life; and that, when it comes to be wound up, you may be as calm and as easy at quitting it as I hope in God I shall be. I am, and will be, to the latest moment,

Your truly affectionate and obliged servant,
CL. *Harlowe*.

LETTER XXXIV

Mr. *Wyerley*, *to miss Clarissa Harlowe*
Wednesday, *Aug*. 23.

DEAREST MADAM,

You will be surprised to find renewed, at this distance of time, an address so positively though so politely discouraged: but, however it be received, I must renew it. Every body has heard that you have been vilely treated by a man who, to treat you ill, must be the vilest of men. Every body knows your just resentment of his base treatment: that you are determined never to be reconciled to him: and that you persist in these sentiments against all the entreaties of his noble relations, against all the prayers and repentance of his ignoble self. And all the world that have the honour to know you, or have heard of him, applaud your resolution, as worthy of yourself; worthy of your virtue, and of that strict honour which was always attributed to you by every one who spoke of you.

But, Madam, were all the world to have been of a different opinion, it could never have altered mine. I ever loved you; I ever must love you. Yet have I endeavoured to resign to my hard fate. When I had so many ways, in vain, sought to move you in my favour, I

sat down seemingly contented. I even wrote to you that I would sit down contented. And I endeavoured to make all my friends and companions think I was. But nobody knows what pangs this self-denial cost me! In vain did the chace, in vain did travel, in vain did lively company, offer themselves, and were embraced in their turn: with redoubled force did my passion for you renew my unhappiness, when I looked into myself, into my own heart; for there did your charming image sit enthroned; and you engrossed me all.

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I truly deplore those misfortunes, and those sufferings, for your own sake; which nevertheless encourage me to renew my old hope. I know not particulars. I dare not inquire after them; because my sufferings would be increased with the knowledge of what your's have been. I therefore desire not the know more than what common report wounds my ears with; and what is given me to know, by your absence from your cruel family, and from the sacred place, where I, among numbers of your rejected admirers, used to be twice a week sure to behold you doing credit to that service of which your example gave me the highest notions. But whatever be those misfortunes, of whatsoever nature those sufferings, I shall bless the occasion for my own sake (though for your's curse the author of them,) if they may give me the happiness to know that this my renewed address may not be absolutely rejected.—Only give me hope, that it may one day meet with encouragement, if in the interim nothing happen, either in my morals or behaviour, to give you fresh offence. Give me but hope of this—not absolutely to reject me is all the hope I ask for; and I will love you, if possible, still more than I ever loved you—and that for your sufferings; for well you deserve to be loved, even to adoration, who can, for honour's and for virtue's sake, subdue a passion which common spirits [I speak by cruel experience] find invincible; and this at a time when the black offender kneels and supplicates, as I am well assured he does, (all his friends likewise supplicating for him,) to be forgiven.

That you cannot forgive him, not forgive him so as to receive him again to favour, is no wonder. His offence is against virtue: this is a part of your essence. What magnanimity is this! How just to yourself, and to your spotless character! Is it any merit to admire more than ever a lady who can so exaltedly distinguish? It is not. I cannot plead it.

What hope have I left, may it be said, when my address was before rejected, now, that your sufferings, so nobly borne, have, with all the good judges, exalted your character? Yet, Madam, I have to pride myself in this, that while your friends (not looking upon you in the just light I do) persecute and banish you; while your estate is withheld from you, and threatened (as I know,) to be withheld, as long as the chicaning law, or rather the chicaneries of its practisers, can keep it from you: while you are destitute of protection; every body standing aloof, either through fear of the injurer of one family, or of the hard-hearted of the other; I pride myself, I say, to stand forth, and offer my fortune, and my life, at your devotion. With a selfish hope indeed: I should be too great an hypocrite not to own this! and I know how much you abhor insincerity.

But, whether you encourage that hope or not, accept my best services, I beseech you, Madam: and be pleased to excuse me for a piece of honest art, which the nature of the case (doubting the honour of your notice otherwise) makes me choose to conclude with —it is this:

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If I am to be still the most unhappy of men, let your pen by one line tell me so. If I am permitted to indulge a hope, however distant, your silence shall be deemed, by me, the happiest indication of it that you can give—except that still happier—(the happiest than can befall me,) a signification that you will accept the tender of that life and fortune, which it would be my pride and my glory to sacrifice in your service, leaving the reward to yourself.

Be your determination as it may, I must for ever admire and love you. Nor will I ever change my condition, while you live, whether you change your's or not: for, having once had the presumption to address you, I cannot stoop to think of any other woman: and this I solemnly declare in the presence of that God, whom I daily pray to bless and protect you, be your determination what it will with regard to, dearest Madam,

Your most devoted and ever affectionate and faithful servant, *Alexander Wyerley*.

LETTER XXXV

Miss CL. *Harlowe*, *to Alex*. *Wyerley*, *Esq*.
Sat. *Aug*. 26.

SIR,

The generosity of your purpose would have commanded not only my notice, but my thanks, although you had not given me the alternative you are pleased to call artful. And I do therefore give you my thanks for your kind letter.

At the time you distinguished me by your favourable opinion, I told you, Sir, that my choice was the single life. And most truly did I tell you so.

When that was not permitted me, and I looked round upon the several gentlemen who had been proposed to me, and had reason to believe that there was not one of them against whose morals or principles there lay not some exception, it would not have been much to be wondered at, if *fancy* had been allowed to give a preference, where *judgment* was at a loss to determine.

Far be it from me to say this with a design to upbraid you, Sir, or to reflect upon you. I always wished you well. You had reason to think I did. You had the generosity to be pleased with the frankness of my behaviour to you; as I had with that of your's to me; and I am sorry, very sorry, to be now told, that the acquaintance you obliged me with gave you so much pain.

Had the option I have mentioned been allowed me afterwards, (as I not only wished, but proposed,) things had not happened that did happen. But there was a kind of fatality by

which our whole family was impelled, as I may say; and which none of us were permitted to avoid. But this is a subject that cannot be dwelt upon.

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As matters are, I have only to wish, for your own sake, that you will encourage and cultivate those good motions in your mind, to which many passages in your kind and generous letter now before me must be owing. Depend upon it, Sir, that such motions, wrought into habit, will yield you pleasure at a time when nothing else can; and at present, shining out in your actions and conversation, will commend you to the worthiest of our sex. For, Sir, the man who is so good upon choice, as well as by education, has that quality in himself, which ennobles the human race, and without which the most dignified by birth or rank or ignoble.

As to the resolution you solemnly make not to marry while I live, I should be concerned at it, were I not morally sure that you may keep it, and yet not be detrimented by it: since a few, a very few days, will convince you, that I am got above all human dependence; and that there is no need of that protection and favour, which you so generously offer to, Sir,

Your obliged well-wisher, and humble servant,
CL. *Harlowe*.

LETTER XXXVI

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Monday noon, *Aug*. 28.

About the time of poor Belton's interment last night, as near as we could guess, Lord M., Mowbray, and myself, toasted once, To the memory of honest Tom. Belton; and, by a quick transition to the living, Health to Miss Harlowe; which Lord M. obligingly began, and, To the happy reconciliation; and then we stuck in a remembrance To honest Jack Belford, who, of late, we all agreed, is become an useful and humane man; and one who prefers his friend's service to his own.

But what is the meaning I hear nothing from thee?* And why dost thou not let me into the grounds of the sudden reconciliation between my beloved and her friends, and the cause of the generous invitation which she gives me of attending her at her father's some time hence?

* Mr. Belford has not yet sent him his last-written letter. His reason for which see Letter XXIII. of this volume.

Thou must certainly have been let into the secret by this time; and I can tell thee, I shall be plaguy jealous if there is to be any one thing pass between my angel and thee that is to be concealed from me. For either I am a principal in this cause, or I am nothing.

I have dispatched Will. to know the reason of thy neglect.

But let me whisper a word or two in thy ear. I begin to be afraid, after all, that this letter was a stratagem to get me out of town, and for nothing else: for, in the first place, Tourville, in a letter I received this morning, tells me, that the lady is actually very ill! [I am sorry for it with all my soul!]. This, thou'lt say, I may think a reason why she cannot set out as yet: but then I have heard, on the other hand, but last night, that the family is as implacable as ever; and my Lord and I expect this very afternoon a visit from Colonel Morden; who, undertakes, it seems, to question me as to my intention with regard to his cousin.

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This convinces me, that if she has apprized her friends of my offers to her, they will not believe me to be in earnest, till they are assured that I am so from my own mouth. But then I understand, that the intended visit is an officiousness of Morden's own, without the desire of any of her friends.

Now, Jack, what can a man make of all this? My intelligence as to the continuance of her family's implacableness is not to be doubted; and yet when I read her letter, what can one say?—Surely, the dear little rogue will not lie!

I never knew her dispense with her word, but once; and that was, when she promised to forgive me after the dreadful fire that had like to have happened at our mother's, and yet would not see me the next day, and afterwards made her escape to Hampstead, in order to avoid forgiving me: and as she severely smarted for this departure from her honour given, (for it is a sad thing for good people to break their word when it is in their power to keep it,) one would not expect that she should set about deceiving again; more especially by the premeditation of writing. Thou, perhaps, wilt ask, what honest man is obliged to keep his promise with a highwayman? for well I know thy unmannerly way of making comparisons; but I say, every honest man is—and I will give thee an illustration.

Here is a marauding varlet, who demands your money, with a pistol at your breast. You have neither money nor valuable effects about you; and promise solemnly, if he will spare your life, that you will send him an agreed-upon sum, by such a day, to such a place.

The question is, if your life is not in the fellow's power?

How he came by the power is another question; for which he must answer with his life when caught—so he runs risque for risque.

Now if he give you your life, does he not give, think you, a valuable consideration for the money you engage your honour to send him? If not, the sum must be exorbitant, or your life is a very paltry one, even in your own opinion.

I need not make the application; and I am sure that even thou thyself, who never sparest me, and thinkest thou knowest my heart by thy own, canst not possibly put the case in a stronger light against me.

Then, why do good people take upon themselves to censure, as they do, persons less scrupulous than themselves? Is it not because the latter allow themselves in any liberty, in order to carry a point? And can my not doing my duty, warrant another for not doing his?—Thou wilt not say it can.

And how would it sound, to put the case as strongly once more, as my greatest enemy would put it, both as to fact and in words—here has that profligate wretch Lovelace

broken his vow with and deceived Miss Clarissa Harlowe.—A vile fellow! would an enemy say: but it is like him. But when it comes to be said that the pious Clarissa has broken her word with and deceived Lovelace; Good Lord! would every one say; sure it cannot be!

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Upon my soul, Jack, such is the veneration I have for this admirable woman, that I am shocked barely at putting the case—and so wilt thou, if thou respectest her as thou oughtest: for thou knowest that men and women, all the world over, form their opinions of one another by each person's professions and known practices. In this lady, therefore, it would be unpardonable to tell a wilful untruth, as it would be strange if I kept my word.—In love cases, I mean; for, as to the rest, I am an honest, moral man, as all who know me can testify.

And what, after all, would this lady deserve, if she has deceived me in this case? For did she not set me prancing away, upon Lord M.'s best nag, to Lady Sarah's, and to Lady Betty's, with an erect and triumphing countenance, to show them her letter to me?

And let me tell thee, that I have received their congratulations upon it: Well, and now, cousin Lovelace, cries one: Well, and now, cousin Lovelace, cries t'other; I hope you will make the best of husbands to so excellent and so forgiving a lady!—And now we shall soon have the pleasure of looking upon you as a reformed man, added one! And now we shall see you in the way we have so long wished you to be in, cried the other!

My cousins Montague also have been ever since rejoicing in the new relationship. Their charming cousin, and their lovely cousin, at every word! And how dearly they will love he! What lessons they will take from her! And yet Charlotte, who pretends to have the eye of an eagle, was for finding out some mystery in the style and manner, till I overbore her, and laughed her out of it.

As for Lord M. he has been in hourly expectation of being sent to with proposals of one sort or other from the Harlowes; and still we have it, that such proposals will be made by Colonel Morden when he comes; and that the Harlowes only put on a fae of irreconcileableness, till they know the issue of Morden's visit, in order to make the better terms with us.

Indeed, if I had not undoubted reason, as I said, to believe the continuance of their antipathy to me, and implacableness to her, I should be apt to think there might be some foundation for my Lord's conjecture; for there is a cursed deal of low cunning in all that family, except in the angel of it; who has so much generosity of soul, that she despises cunning, both name and thing.

What I mean by all this is, to let thee see what a stupid figure I shall make to all my own family, if my Clarissa has been capable, as Gulliver in his abominable Yahoo story phrases it, if it were only that I should be outwitted by such a novice at plotting, and that it would make me look silly to my kinswomen here, who know I value myself upon my contrivances, it would vex me to the heart; and I would instantly clap a featherbed into a coach and six, and fetch her away, sick or well, and marry her at my leisure.

But Col. Morden is come, and I must break off.

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LETTER XXXVII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Monday night, *Aug*. 28.

I doubt you will be all impatience that you have not heard from me since mine of Thursday last. You would be still more so, if you knew that I had by me a letter ready written.

I went early yesterday morning to Epsom; and found every thing disposed according to the directions I had left on Friday; and at night the solemn office was performed. Tourville was there; and behaved very decently, and with greater concern than I thought he would every have expressed for any body.

Thomasine, they told me, in a kind of disguise, was in an obscure pew, out of curiosity (for it seems she was far from showing any tokens of grief) to see the last office performed for the man whose heart she had so largely contributed to break.

I was obliged to stay till this afternoon, to settle several necessary matters, and to direct inventories to be taken, in order for appraisement; for every thing is to be turned into money, by his will. I presented his sister with the hundred guineas the poor man left me as his executor, and desired her to continue in the house, and take the direction of every thing, till I could hear from his nephew at Antigua, who is heir at law. He had left her but fifty pounds, although he knew her indigence; and that it was owing to a vile husband, and not to herself, that she was indigent.

The poor man left about two hundred pounds in money, and two hundred pounds in two East-India bonds; and I will contrive, if I can, to make up the poor woman's fifty pounds, and my hundred guineas, two hundred pounds to her; and then she will have some little matter coming in certain, which I will oblige her to keep out of the hands of a son, who has completed that ruin which his father had very nearly effected.

I gave Tourville his twenty pounds, and will send you and Mowbray your's by the first order.

And so much for poor Belton's affairs till I see you.

I got to town in the evening, and went directly to Smith's. I found Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith in the back shop, and I saw they had been both in tears. They rejoiced to see me, however; and told me, that the Doctor and Mr. Goddard were but just gone; as was also the worthy clergyman, who often comes to pray by her; and all three were of opinion, that she would hardly live to see the entrance of another week. I was not so much surprised as grieved; for I had feared as much when I left her on Saturday.

I sent up my compliments; and she returned, that she would take it for a favour if I would call upon her in the morning by eight o'clock. Mrs. Lovick told me that she had fainted away on Saturday, while she was writing, as she had done likewise the day before; and having received benefit then by a little turn in a chair, she was carried abroad again. She returned somewhat better; and wrote till late; yet had a pretty good night: and went to Covent-garden church in the morning; but came home so ill that she was obliged to lie down.

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When she arose, seeing how much grieved Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith were for her, she made apologies for the trouble she gave them—You were happy, said she, before I came hither. It was a cruel thing in me to come amongst honest strangers, and to be sick, and die with you.

When they touched upon the irreconcileableness of her friends, I have had ill offices done me to them, said she, and they do not know how ill I am; nor will they believe any thing I should write. But yet I cannot sometimes forbear thinking it a little hard, that out of so many near and dear friends as I have living, not one of them will vouchsafe to look upon me. No old servant, no old friend, proceeded she, to be permitted to come near me, without being sure of incurring displeasure! And to have such a great work to go through by myself, a young creature as I am, and to have every thing to think of as to my temporal matters, and to order, to my very interment! No dear mother, said the sweet sufferer, to pray by me and bless me!—No kind sister to sooth and comfort me! —But come, recollected she, how do I know but all is for the best—if I can but make a right use of my discomforts?—Pray for me, Mrs. Lovick—pray for me, Mrs. Smith, that I may—I have great need of your prayers.—This cruel man has discomposed me. His persecutions have given mea pain just here, [putting her hand to her heart.] What a step has he made me take to avoid him!—Who can touch pitch, and not be defiled? He had made a bad spirit take possession of me, I think—broken in upon all my duties —and will not yet, I doubt, let me be at rest. Indeed he is very cruel —but this is one of my trials, I believe. By God's grace, I shall be easier to-morrow, and especially if I have no more of his tormentings, and if I can get a tolerable night. And I will sit up till eleven, that I may.

She said, that though this was so heavy a day with her, she was at other times, within these few days past especially, blessed with bright hours; and particularly that she had now and then such joyful assurances, (which she hoped were not presumptuous ones,) that God would receive her to his mercy, that she could hardly contain herself, and was ready to think herself above this earth while she was in it: And what, inferred she to Mrs. Lovick, must be the state itself, the very aspirations after which have often cast a beamy light through the thickest darkness, and, when I have been at the lowest ebb, have dispelled the black clouds of despondency?—As I hope they soon will this spirit of repining.

She had a pretty good night, it seems; and this morning went in a chair to St. Dunstan's church.

The chairmen told Mrs. Smith, that after prayers (for she did not return till between nine and ten) they carried her to a house in Fleet-street, whither they never waited on her before. And where dost think this was? —Why to an undertaker's! Good Heaven! what a woman is this! She went into the back shop, and talked with the master of it about half an hour, and came from him with great serenity; he waiting upon her to her chair with a respectful countenance, but full of curiosity and seriousness.

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’Tis evident that she went to bespeak her house that she talked of*—As soon as you can, Sir, were her words to him as she got into the chair. Mrs. Smith told me this with the same surprise and grief that I heard it.

* See Letter XXIII. of this volume.

She was very ill in the afternoon, having got cold either at St. Dunstan’s, or at chapel, and sent for the clergyman to pray by her; and the women, unknown to her, sent both for Dr. H. and Mr. Goddard: who were just gone, as I told you, when I came to pay my respects to her this evening.

And thus have I recounted from the good women what passed to this night since my absence.

I long for to-morrow, that I may see her: and yet it is such a melancholy longing as I never experienced, and know not how to describe.

TUESDAY, AUG. 29.

I was at Smith’s at half an hour after seven. They told me that the lady was gone in a chair to St. Dunstan’s: but was better than she had been in either of the two preceding days; and that she said she to Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith, as she went into the chair, I have a good deal to answer for to you, my good friends, for my vapourish conversation of last night.

If, Mrs. Lovick, said she, smiling, I have no new matters to discompose me, I believe my spirits will hold out purely.

She returned immediately after prayers.

Mr. Belford, said she, as she entered the back shop where I was, (and upon my approaching her,) I am very glad to see you. You have been performing for your poor friend a kind last office. ’Tis not long ago since you did the same for a near relation. Is it not a little hard upon you, that these troubles should fall so thick to your lot? But they are charitable offices: and it is a praise to your humanity, that poor dying people know not where to choose so well.

I told her I was sorry to hear she had been so ill since I had the honour to attend her; but rejoiced to find that now she seemed a good deal better.

It will be sometimes better, and sometimes worse, replied she, with poor creatures, when they are balancing between life and death. But no more of these matters just now. I hope, Sir, you’ll breakfast with me. I was quite vapourish yesterday. I had a very

bad spirit upon me. Had I not, Mrs. Smith? But I hope I shall be no more so. And to-day I am perfectly serene. This day rises upon me as if it would be a bright one.

She desired me to walk up, and invited Mr. Smith and his wife, and Mrs. Lovick also, to breakfast with her. I was better pleased with her liveliness than with her looks.

The good people retiring after breakfast, the following conversation passed between us:

Pray, Sir, let me ask you, if you think I may promise myself that I shall be no more molested by your friend?

I hesitated: For how could I answer for such a man?

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What shall I do, if he comes again?—You see how I am.—I cannot fly from him now—If he has any pity left for the poor creature whom he has thus reduced, let him not come. —But have you heard from him lately? And will he come?

I hope not, Madam. I have not heard from him since Thursday last, that he went out of town, rejoicing in the hopes your letter gave him of a reconciliation between your friends and you, and that he might in good time see you at your father's; and he is gone down to give all his friends joy of the news, and is in high spirits upon it.

Alas! for me: I shall then surely have him come up to persecute me again! As soon as he discovers that that was only a stratagem to keep him away, he will come up, and who knows but even now he is upon the road? I thought I was so bad that I should have been out of his and every body's way before now; for I expected not that this contrivance would serve me above two or three days; and by this time he must have found out that I am not so happy as to have any hope of a reconciliation with my family; and then he will come, if it be only in revenge for what he will think a deceit, but is not, I hope, a wicked one.

I believe I looked surprised to hear her confess that her letter was a stratagem only; for she said, You wonder, Mr. Belford, I observe, that I could be guilty of such an artifice. I doubt it is not right: it was done in a hurry of spirits. How could I see a man who had so mortally injured me; yet pretending a sorrow for his crimes, (and wanting to see me,) could behave with so much shocking levity, as he did to the honest people of the house? Yet, 'tis strange too, that neither you nor he found out my meaning on perusal of my letter. You have seen what I wrote, no doubt?

I have, Madam. And then I began to account for it, as an innocent artifice.

Thus far indeed, Sir, it is an innocent, that I meant him no hurt, and had a right to the effect I hoped for from it; and he had none to invade me. But have you, Sir, that letter of his in which he gives you (as I suppose he does) the copy of mine?

I have, Madam. And pulled it out of my letter-case. But hesitating— Nay, Sir, said she, be pleased to read my letter to yourself—I desire not to see his—and see if you can be longer a stranger to a meaning so obvious.

I read it to myself—Indeed, Madam, I can find nothing but that you are going down to Harlowe-place to be reconciled to your father and other friends: and Mr. Lovelace presumed that a letter from your sister, which he saw brought when he was at Mr. Smith's, gave you the welcome news of it.

She then explained all to me, and that, as I may say, in six words—A religious meaning is couched under it, and that's the reason that neither you nor I could find it out.

’Read but for my father’s house, Heaven, said she, and for the interposition of my dear blessed friend, suppose the mediation of my Saviour (which I humbly rely upon); and all the rest of the letter will be accounted for.’ I hope (repeated she) that it is a pardonable artifice. But I am afraid it is not strictly right.

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I read it so, and stood astonished for a minute at her invention, her piety, her charity, and at thine and mine own stupidity to be thus taken in.

And now, thou vile Lovelace, what hast thou to do (the lady all consistent with herself, and no hopes left for thee) but to hang, drown, or shoot thyself, for an outwitted boaster?

My surprise being a little over, she proceeded: As to the letter that came from my sister while your friend was here, you will soon see, Sir, that it is the cruellest letter she ever wrote me.

And then she expressed a deep concern for what might be the consequence of Colonel Morden's intended visit to you; and besought me, that if now, or at any time hereafter, I had opportunity to prevent any further mischief, without detriment or danger to myself, I would do it.

I assured her of the most particular attention to this and to all her commands; and that in a manner so agreeable to her, that she invoked a blessing upon me for my goodness, as she called it, to a desolate creature who suffered under the worst of orphanage; those were her words.

She then went back to her first subject, her uneasiness for fear of your molesting her again; and said, If you have any influence over him, Mr. Belford, prevail upon him that he will give me the assurance that the short remainder of my time shall be all my own. I have need of it. Indeed I have. Why will he wish to interrupt me in my duty? Has he not punished me enough for my preference of him to all his sex? Has he not destroyed my fame and my fortune? And will not his causeless vengeance upon me be complete, unless he ruin my soul too?—Excuse me, Sir, for this vehemence! But indeed it greatly imports me to know that I shall be no more disturbed by him. And yet, with all this aversion, I would sooner give way to his visit, though I were to expire the moment I saw him, than to be the cause of any fatal misunderstanding between you and him.

I assured her that I would make such a representation of the matter to you, and of the state of her health, that I would undertake to answer for you, that you would not attempt to come near her.

And for this reason, Lovelace, do I lay the whole matter before you, and desire you will authorize me, as soon as this and mine of Saturday last come to your hands, to dissipate her fears.

This gave her a little satisfaction; and then she said that had I not told her that I could promise for you, she was determined, ill as she is, to remove somewhere out of my knowledge as well as out of your's. And yet, to have been obliged to leave people I am

but just got acquainted with, said the poor lady, and to have died among perfect strangers, would have completed my hardships.

This conversation, I found, as well from the length as the nature of it, had fatigued her; and seeing her change colour once or twice, I made that my excuse, and took leave of her: desiring her permission, however, to attend her in the evening; and as often as possible; for I could not help telling her that, every time I saw her, I more and more considered her as a beatified spirit; and as one sent from Heaven to draw me after her out of the miry gulf in which I had been so long immersed.

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And laugh at me if thou wilt; but it is true that, every time I approach her, I cannot but look upon her as one just entering into a companionship with saints and angels. This thought so wholly possessed me, that I could not help begging, as I went away, her prayers and her blessing, with the reverence due to an angel.

In the evening, she was so low and weak, that I took my leave of her in less than a quarter of an hour. I went directly home. Where, to the pleasure and wonder of my cousin and her family, I now pass many honest evenings: which they impute to your being out of town.

I shall dispatch my packet to-morrow morning early by my own servant, to make thee amends for the suspense I must have kept thee in: thou'lt thank me for that, I hope; but wilt not, I am sure, for sending thy servant back without a letter.

I long for the particulars of the conversation between you and Mr. Morden; the lady, as I have hinted, is full of apprehensions about it. Send me back this packet when perused; for I have not had either time or patience to take a copy of it. And I beseech you enable me to make good my engagements to the poor lady that you will not invade her again.

LETTER XXXVIII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Wednesday, *Aug*. 30.

I have a conversation to give you that passed between this admirable lady and Dr. H. which will furnish a new instance of the calmness and serenity with which she can talk of death, and prepare for it, as if it were an occurrence as familiar to her as dressing and undressing.

As soon as I had dispatched my servant to you with my letters of the 26th, 28th, and yesterday the 29th, I went to pay my duty to her, and had the pleasure to find her, after a tolerable night, pretty lively and cheerful. She was but just returned from her usual devotions; and Doctor H. alighted as she entered the door.

After inquiring how she did, and hearing her complaints of shortness of breath, (which she attributed to inward decay, precipitated by her late harasses, as well from her friends as from you,) he was for advising her to go into the air.

What will that do for me? said she: tell me truly, good Sir, with a cheerful aspect, (you know you cannot disturb me by it,) whether now you do not put on the true physician; and despairing that any thing in medicine will help me, advise me to the air, as the last resource?—Can you think the air will avail in such a malady as mine?

He was silent.

I ask, said she, because my friends (who will possibly some time hence inquire after the means I used for my recovery) may be satisfied that I omitted nothing which so worthy and skilful a physician prescribed?

The air, Madam, may possibly help the difficulty of breathing, which has so lately attacked you.

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But, Sir, you see how weak I am. You must see that I have been consuming from day to day; and now, if I can judge by what I feel in myself, putting her hand to her heart, I cannot continue long. If the air would very probably add to my days, though I am far from being desirous to have them lengthened, I would go into it; and the rather, as I know Mrs. Lovick would kindly accompany me. But if I were to be at the trouble of removing into new lodgings, (a trouble which I think now would be too much for me,) and this only to die in the country, I had rather the scene were to shut up here. For here have I meditated the spot, and the manner, and every thing, as well of the minutest as of the highest consequence, that can attend the solemn moments. So, Doctor, tell me truly, may I stay here, and be clear of any imputations of curtailing, through wilfulness or impatiency, or through resentments which I hope I am got above, a life that might otherwise be prolonged?—Tell me, Sir; you are not talking to a coward in this respect; indeed you are not!— Unaffectedly smiling.

The doctor, turning to me, was at a loss what to say, lifting up his eyes only in admiration of her.

Never had any patient, said she, a more indulgent and more humane physician. But since you are loth to answer my question directly, I will put it in other words—You don't enjoin me to go into the air, Doctor, do you?

I do not, Madam. Nor do I now visit you as a physician; but as a person whose conversation I admire, and whose sufferings I condole. And, to explain myself more directly, as to the occasion of this day's visit in particular, I must tell you, Madam, that, understanding how much you suffer by the displeasure of your friends; and having no doubt but that, if they knew the way you are in, they would alter their conduct to you; and believing it must cut them to the heart, when too late, they shall be informed of every thing; I have resolved to apprize them by letter (stranger as I am to their persons) how necessary it is for some of them to attend you very speedily. For their sakes, Madam, let me press for your approbation of this measure.

She paused; and at last said, This is kind, very kind, in you, Sir. But I hope that you do not think me so perverse, and so obstinate, as to have left till now any means unessayed which I thought likely to move my friends in my favour. But now, Doctor, said she, I should be too much disturbed at their grief, if they were any of them to come or to send to me: and perhaps, if I found they still loved me, wish to live; and so should quit unwillingly that life, which I am now really fond of quitting, and hope to quit as becomes a person who has had such a weaning-time as I have been favoured with.

I hope, Madam, said I, we are not so near as you apprehend to that deplorable catastrophe you hint at with such an amazing presence of mind. And therefore I presume to second the doctor's motion, if it were only for the sake of your father and mother, that they may have the satisfaction, if they must lose you, to think they were first reconciled to you.

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It is very kindly, very humanely considered, said she. But, if you think me not so very near my last hour, let me desire this may be postponed till I see what effect my cousin Morden's mediation may have. Perhaps he may vouchsafe to make me a visit yet, after his intended interview with Mr. Lovelace is over; of which, who knows, Mr. Belford, but your next letters may give an account? I hope it will not be a fatal one to any body. Will you promise me, Doctor, to forbear writing for two days only, and I will communicate to you any thing that occurs in that time; and then you shall take your own way? Mean time, I repeat my thanks for your goodness to me.—Nay, dear Doctor, hurry not away from me so precipitately [for he was going, for fear of an offered fee]: I will no more affront you with tenders that have pained you for some time past: and since I must now, from this kindly-offered favour, look upon you only as a friend, I will assure you henceforth that I will give you no more uneasiness on that head: and now, Sir, I know I shall have the pleasure of seeing you oftener than heretofore.

The worthy gentleman was pleased with this assurance, telling her that he had always come to see her with great pleasure, but parted with her, on the account she hinted at, with as much pain; and that he should not have forborne to double his visits, could he have had this kind assurance as early as he wished for it.

There are few instances of like disinterestedness, I doubt, in this tribe. Till now I always held it for gospel, that friendship and physician were incompatible things; and little imagined that a man of medicine, when he had given over his patient to death, would think of any visits but those of ceremony, that he might stand well with the family, against it came to their turns to go through his turnpike.

After the doctor was gone, she fell into a very serious discourse of the vanity of life, and the wisdom of preparing for death, while health and strength remained, and before the infirmities of body impaired the faculties of the mind, and disabled them from acting with the necessary efficacy and clearness: the whole calculated for every one's meridian, but particularly, as it was easy to observe, for thine and mine.

She was very curious to know farther particulars of the behaviour of poor Belton in his last moments. You must not wonder at my inquiries, Mr. Belford, said she; For who is it, that is to undertake a journey into a country they never travelled to before, that inquires not into the difficulties of the road, and what accommodations are to be expected in the way?

I gave her a brief account of the poor man's terrors, and unwillingness to die: and, when I had done, Thus, Mr. Belford, said she, must it always be with poor souls who have never thought of their long voyage till the moment they are to embark for it.

She made other such observations upon this subject as, coming from the mouth of a person who will so soon be a companion for angels, I shall never forget. And indeed, when I went home, that I might engraft them the better on my memory, I entered them

down in writing: but I will not let you see them until you are in a frame more proper to benefit by them than you are likely to be in one while.

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Thus far had I written, when the unexpected early return of my servant with your packet (your's and he meeting at Slough, and exchanging letters) obliged me to leave off to give its contents a reading.—Here, therefore, I close this letter.

LETTER XXXIX

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Tuesday Morn. *Aug*. 29.

Now, Jack, will I give thee an account of what passed on occasion of the visit made us by Col. Morden.

He came on horseback, attended by one servant; and Lord M. received him as a relation of Miss Harlowe's with the highest marks of civility and respect.

After some general talk of the times, and of the weather, and such nonsense as Englishmen generally make their introductory topics to conversation, the Colonel addressed himself to Lord M. and to me, as follows:

I need not, my Lord, and Mr. Lovelace, as you know the relation I bear to the Harlowe family, make any apology for entering upon a subject, which, on account of that relation, you must think is the principal reason of the honour I have done myself in this visit.

Miss Harlowe, Miss Clarissa Harlowe's affair, said Lord M. with his usual forward bluntness. That, Sir, is what you mean. She is, by all accounts, the most excellent woman in the world.

I am glad to hear that is your Lordship's opinion of her. It is every one's.

It is not only my opinion, Col. Morden (proceeded the prating Peer), but it is the opinion of all my family. Of my sisters, of my nieces, and of Mr. Lovelace himself.

Col. Would to Heaven it had been always Mr. Lovelace's opinion of her!

Lovel. You have been out of England, Colonel, a good many years. Perhaps you are not yet fully apprized of all the particulars of this case.

Col. I have been out of England, Sir, about seven years. My cousin Clary was then about 12 years of age: but never was there at twenty so discreet, so prudent, and so excellent a creature. All that knew her, or saw her, admired her. Mind and person, never did I see such promises of perfection in any young lady: and I am told, nor is it to be wondered at, that, as she advanced to maturity, she more than justified and made good those promises.—Then as to fortune—what her father, what her uncles, and what

I myself, intended to do for her, besides what her grandfather had done—there is not a finer fortune in the country.

Lovel. All this, Colonel, and more than this, is Miss Clarissa Harlowe; and had it not been for the implacableness and violence of her family (all resolved to push her upon a match as unworthy of her as hateful to her) she had still been happy.

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Col. I own, Mr. Lovelace, the truth of what you observed just now, that I am not thoroughly acquainted with all that has passed between you and my cousin. But permit me to say, that when I first heard that you made your addresses to her, I knew but of one objection against you; that, indeed, a very great one: and upon a letter sent me, I gave her my free opinion upon that subject.* But had it not been for that, I own, that, in my private mind, there could not have been a more suitable match: for you are a gallant gentleman, graceful in your person, easy and genteel in your deportment, and in your family, fortunes, and expectations, happy as a man can wish to be. Then the knowledge I had of you in Italy (although, give me leave to say, your conduct there was not wholly unexceptionable) convinces me that you are brave: and few gentlemen come up to you in wit and vivacity. Your education has given you great advantages; your manners are engaging, and you have travelled; and I know, if you'll excuse me, you make better observations than you are governed by. All these qualifications make it not at all surprising that a young lady should love you: and that this love, joined to that indiscreet warmth wherewith my cousin's friends would have forced her inclinations in favour of men who are far your inferiors in the qualities I have named, should throw herself upon your protection. But then, if there were these two strong motives, the one to induce, the other to impel, her, let me ask you, Sir, if she were not doubly entitled to generous usage from a man whom she chose for her protector; and whom, let me take the liberty to say, she could so amply reward for the protection he was to afford her?

* See Vol. IV. Letter XIX.

Lovel. Miss Clarissa Harlowe was entitled, Sir, to have the best usage that man could give her. I have no scruple to own it. I will always do her the justice she so well deserves. I know what will be your inference; and have only to say, that time past cannot be recalled; perhaps I wish it could.

The Colonel then, in a very manly strain, set forth the wickedness of attempting a woman of virtue and character. He said, that men had generally too many advantages from the weakness, credulity, and inexperience of the fair sex: that their early learning, which chiefly consisted in inflaming novels, and idle and improbable romances, contributed to enervate and weaken their minds: that his cousin, however, he was sure, was above the reach of common seduction, and not to be influenced to the rashness her parents accused her of, by weaker motives than their violence, and the most solemn promises on my part: but, nevertheless, having those motives, and her prudence (eminent as it was) being rather the effect of constitution than experience, (a fine advantage, however, he said, to ground an unblamable future life upon,) she might not be apprehensive of bad designs in a man she loved: it was, therefore, a very heinous thing to abuse the confidence of such a woman.

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He was going on in this trite manner; when, interrupting him, I said, These general observations, Colonel, suit not perhaps this particular case. But you yourself are a man of gallantry; and, possibly, were you to be put to the question, might not be able to vindicate every action of your life, any more than I.

Col. You are welcome, Sir, to put what questions you please to me. And, I thank God, I can both own an be ashamed of my errors.

Lord M. looked at me; but as the Colonel did not by his manner seem to intend a reflection, I had no occasion to take it for one; especially as I can as readily own my errors, as he, or any man, can his, whether ashamed of them or not.

He proceeded. As you seem to call upon me, Mr. Lovelace, I will tell you (without boasting of it) what has been my general practice, till lately, that I hope I have reformed it a good deal.

I have taken liberties, which the laws of morality will by no means justify; and once I should have thought myself warranted to cut the throat of any young fellow who should make as free with a sister of mine as I have made with the sisters and daughters of others. But then I took care never to promise any thing I intended not to perform. A modest ear should as soon have heard downright obscenity from my lips, as matrimony, if I had not intended it. Young ladies are generally ready enough to believe we mean honourably, if they love us; and it would look lie a strange affront to their virtue and charms, that it should be supposed needful to put the question whether in your address you mean a wife. But when once a man make a promise, I think it ought to be performed; and a woman is well warranted to appeal to every one against the perfidy of a deceiver; and is always sure to have the world on her side.

Now, Sir, continued he, I believe you have so much honour as to own, that you could not have made way to so eminent a virtue, without promising marriage; and that very explicitly and solemnly—

I know very well, Colonel, interrupted I, all you would say. You will excuse me, I am sure, that I break in upon you, when you find it is to answer the end you drive at.

I own to you then that I have acted very unworthily by Miss Clarissa Harlowe; and I'll tell you farther, that I heartily repent of my ingratitude and baseness to her. Nay, I will say still farther, that I am so grossly culpable as to her, that even to plead that the abuses and affronts I daily received from her implacable relations were in any manner a provocation to me to act vilely by her, would be a mean and low attempt to excuse myself—so low and so mean, that it would doubly condemn me. And if you can say worse, speak it.

He looked upon Lord M. and then upon me, two or three times. And my Lord said, My kinsman speaks what he thinks, I'll answer for him.

Lovel. I do, Sir; and what can I say more? And what farther, in your opinion, can be done?

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Col. Done! Sir? Why, Sir, [in a haughty tone he spoke,] I need not tell you that reparation follows repentance. And I hope you make no scruple of justifying your sincerity as to the one or the other.

I hesitated, (for I relished not the manner of his speech, and his haughty accent,) as undetermined whether to take proper notice of it or not.

Col. Let me put this question to you, Mr. Lovelace: Is it true, as I have heard it is, that you would marry my cousin, if she would have you? —What say you, Sir?—

This wound me up a peg higher.

Lovel. Some questions, as they may be put, imply commands, Colonel. I would be glad to know how I am to take your's? And what is to be the end of your interrogatories?

Col. My questions are not meant by me as commands, Mr. Lovelace. The end is, to prevail upon a gentleman to act like a gentleman, and a man of honour.

Lovel. (briskly) And by what arguments, Sir, do you propose to prevail upon me?

Col. By what arguments, Sir, prevail upon a gentleman to act like a gentleman!—I am surprised at that question from Mr. Lovelace.

Lovel. Why so, Sir?

Col. *Why* so, Sir! (angrily)—Let me—

Lovel. (interrupting) I don't choose, Colonel, to be repeated upon, in that accent.

Lord M. Come, come, gentlemen, I beg of you to be willing to understand one another. You young gentlemen are so warm—

Col. Not I, my Lord—I am neither very young, nor unduly warm. Your nephew, my Lord, can make me be every thing he would have me to be.

Lovel. And that shall be, whatever you please to be, Colonel.

Col. (fiercely) The choice be your's, Mr. Lovelace. Friend or foe! as you do or are willing to do justice to one of the finest women in the world.

Lord M. I guessed, from both your characters, what would be the case when you met. Let me interpose, gentlemen, and beg you but to understand one another. You both shoot at one mark; and, if you are patient, will both hit it. Let me beg of you, Colonel, to give no challenges—

Col. Challenges, my Lord!—They are things I ever was readier to accept than to offer. But does your Lordship think that a man, so nearly related as I have the honour to be to the most accomplished woman on earth,—

Lord M. (interrupting) We all allow the excellencies of the lady—and we shall all take it as the greatest honour to be allied to her that can be conferred upon us.

Col. So you ought, my Lord!—

A perfect Chamont; thought I.*

* See Otway's Orphan.

Lord M. So we ought, Colonel! and so we do!—and pray let every one do as he ought! —and no more than he ought; and you, Colonel, let me tell you, will not be so hasty.

Lovel. (coolly) Come, come, Col. Morden, don't let this dispute, whatever you intend to make of it, go farther than with you and me. You deliver yourself in very high terms. Higher than ever I was talked to in my life. But here, beneath this roof, 'twould be inexcusable for me to take that notice of it which, perhaps, it would become me to take elsewhere.

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Col. That is spoken as I wish the man to speak whom I should be pleased to call my friend, if all his actions were of a piece; and as I would have the man speak whom I would think it worth my while to call my foe. I love a man of spirit, as I love my soul. But, Mr. Lovelace, as my Lord thinks we aim at one mark, let me say, that were we permitted to be alone for six minutes, I dare say, we should soon understand one another perfectly well.—And he moved to the door.

Lovel. I am entirely of your opinion, Sir; and will attend you.

My Lord rung, and stept between us: Colonel, return, I beseech you return, said he: for he had stept out of the room while my Lord held me— Nephew, you shall not go out.

The bell and my Lord's raised voice brought in Mowbray, and Clements, my Lord's gentleman; the former in his careless way, with his hands behind him, What's the matter, Bobby? What's the matter, my Lord?

Only, only, only, stammered the agitated peer, these young gentlemen are, are, are—-are young gentlemen, that's all.—Pray, Colonel Morden, [who again entered the room with a sedater aspect,] let this cause have a fair trial, I beseech you.

Col. With all my heart, my Lord.

Mowbray whispered me, What is the cause, Bobby?—Shall I take the gentleman to task for thee, my boy?

Not for the world, whispered I. The Colonel is a gentleman, and I desire you'll not say one word.

Well, well, well, Bobby, I have done. I can turn thee loose to the best man upon God's earth; that's all, Bobby; strutting off to the other end of the room.

Col. I am sorry, my Lord, I should give your Lordship the least uneasiness. I came not with such a design.

Lord M. Indeed, Colonel, I thought you did, by your taking fire so quickly. I am glad to hear you say you did not. How soon a little spark kindles into a flame; especially when it meets with such combustible spirits!

Col. If I had had the least thought of proceeding to extremities, I am sure Mr. Lovelace would have given me the honour of a meeting where I should have been less an intruder: but I came with an amicable intention; to reconcile differences rather than to widen them.

Lovel. Well then, Colonel Morden, let us enter upon the subject in your own way. I don't know the man I should sooner choose to be upon terms with than one whom Miss

Clarissa Harlowe so much respects. But I cannot bear to be treated, either in word or accent, in a menacing way.

Lord M. Well, well, well, well, gentlemen, this is somewhat like. Angry men make to themselves beds of nettles, and, when they lie down in them, are uneasy with every body. But I hope you are friends. Let me hear you say you are. I am persuaded, Colonel, that you don't know all this unhappy story. You don't know how desirous my kinsman is, as well as all of us, to have this matter end happily. You don't know, do you, Colonel, that Mr. Lovelace, at all our requests, is disposed to marry the lady?

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Col. At all your requests, my Lord?—I should have hoped that Mr. Lovelace was disposed to do justice for the sake of justice; and when at the same time the doing of justice was doing himself the highest honour.

Mowbray lifted up his before half-closed eyes to the Colonel, and glanced them upon me.

Lovel. This is in very high language, Colonel.

Mowbr. By my soul, I thought so.

Col. High language, Mr. Lovelace? Is it not just language?

Lovel. It is, Colonel. And I think, the man that does honour to Miss Clarissa Harlowe, does me honour. But, nevertheless, there is a manner in speaking, that may be liable to exception, where the words, without that manner, can bear none.

Col. Your observation in the general is undoubtedly just: but, if you have the value for my cousin that you say you have, you must needs think —

Lovel. You must allow me, Sir, to interrupt you—*if* I have the value I say I have—I hope, Sir, when I say I have that value, there is no room for that if, pronounced as you pronounced it with an emphasis.

Col. You have broken in upon me twice, Mr. Lovelace. I am as little accustomed to be broken in upon, as you are to be repeated upon.

Lord M. Two barrels of gunpowder, by my conscience! What a devil will it signify talking, if thus you are to blow one another up at every word?

Lovel. No man of honour, my Lord, will be easy to have his veracity called into question, though but by implication.

Col. Had you heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, you would have found, that my if was rather an if of inference, than of doubt. But 'tis, really a strange liberty gentlemen of free principles take; who at the same time that they would resent unto death the imputation of being capable of telling an untruth to a man, will not scruple to break through the most solemn oaths and promises to a woman. I must assure you, Mr. Lovelace, that I always made a conscience of my vows and promises.

Lovel. You did right, Colonel. But let me tell you, Sir, that you know not the man you talk to, if you imagine he is not able to rise to a proper resentment, when he sees his generous confessions taken for a mark of base-spiritedness.

Col. (warmly, and with a sneer,) Far be it from me, Mr. Lovelace, to impute to you the baseness of spirit you speak of; for what would that be but to imagine that a man, who has done a very flagrant injury, is not ready to show his bravery in defending it—

Mowbr. This is d——d severe, Colonel. It is, by Jove. I could not take so much at the hands of any man breathing as Mr. Lovelace before this took at your's.

Col. Who are you, Sir? What pretence have you to interpose in a cause where there is an acknowledged guilt on one side, and the honour of a considerable family wounded in the tenderest part by that guilt on the other?

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Mowbr. (whispering to the Colonel) My dear child, you will oblige me highly if you will give me the opportunity of answering your question. And was going out.

The Colonel was held in by my Lord. And I brought in Mowbray.

Col. Pray, my good Lord, let me attend this officious gentleman, I beseech you do. I will wait upon your Lordship in three minutes, depend upon it.

Lovel. Mowbray, is this acting like a friend by me, to suppose me incapable of answering for myself? And shall a man of honour and bravery, as I know Colonel Morden to be, (rash as perhaps in this visit he has shown himself,) have it to say, that he comes to my Lord M.'s house, in a manner naked as to attendants and friends, and shall not for that reason be rather borne with than insulted? This moment, my dear Mowbray, leave us. You have really no concern in this business; and if you are my friend, I desire you'll ask the Colonel pardon for interfering in it in the manner you have done.

Mowbr. Well, well, Bob.; thou shalt be arbiter in this matter; I know I have no business in it—and, Colonel, (holding out his hand,) I leave you to one who knows how to defend his own cause as well as any man in England.

Col. (taking Mowbray's hand, at Lord M.'s request,) You need not tell me that, Mr. Mowbray. I have no doubt of Mr. Lovelace's ability to defend his own cause, were it a cause to be defended. And let me tell you, Mr. Lovelace, that I am astonished to think that a brave man, and a generous man, as you have appeared to be in two or three instances that you have given in the little knowledge I have of you, should be capable of acting as you have done by the most excellent of her sex.

Lord M. Well, but, gentlemen, now Mr. Mowbray is gone, and you have both shown instances of courage and generosity to boot, let me desire you to lay your heads together amicably, and think whether there be any thing to be done to make all end happily for the lady?

Lovel. But hold, my Lord, let me say one thing, now Mowbray is gone; and that is, that I think a gentleman ought not to put up tamely one or two severe things that the Colonel has said.

Lord M. What the devil canst thou mean? I thought all had been over. Why thou hast nothing to do but to confirm to the Colonel that thou art willing to marry Miss Harlowe, if she will have thee.

Col. Mr. Lovelace will not scruple to say that, I suppose, notwithstanding all that has passed: but if you think, Mr. Lovelace, I have said any thing I should not have said, I suppose it is this, that the man who has shown so little of the thing honour, to a

defenceless unprotected woman, ought not to stand so nicely upon the empty name of it, with a man who is expostulating with him upon it. I am sorry to have cause to say this, Mr. Lovelace; but I would, on the same occasion, repeat it to a king upon his throne, and surrounded by all his guards.

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Lord M. But what is all this, but more sacks upon the mill? more coals upon the fire? You have a mind to quarrel both of you, I see that. Are you not willing, Nephew, are you not most willing, to marry this lady, if she can be prevailed upon to have you?

Lovel. D——n me, my Lord, if I'd marry my empress upon such treatment as this.

Lord M. Why now, Bob., thou art more choleric than the Colonel. It was his turn just now. And now you see he is cool, you are all gunpowder.

Lovel. I own the Colonel has many advantages over me; but, perhaps, there is one advantage he has not, if it were put to the trial.

Col. I came not hither, as I said before, to seek the occasion: but if it were offered me, I won't refuse it—and since we find we disturb my good Lord M. I'll take my leave, and will go home by the way of St. Alban's.

Lovel. I'll see you part of the way, with all my heart, Colonel.

Col. I accept your civility very cheerfully, Mr. Lovelace.

Lord M. (interposing again, as we were both for going out,) And what will this do, gentlemen? Suppose you kill one another, will the matter be bettered or worsted by that? Will the lady be made happier or unhappier, do you think, by either or both of your deaths? Your characters are too well known to make fresh instances of the courage of either needful. And, I think, if the honour of the lady is your view, Colonel, it can by no other way so effectually promoted as by marriage. And, Sir, if you would use your interest with her, it is very probable that you may succeed, though nobody else can.

Lovel. I think, my Lord, I have said all that a man can say, (since what is passed cannot be recalled:) and you see Colonel Morden rises in proportion to my coolness, till it is necessary for me to assert myself, or even he would despise me.

Lord M. Let me ask you, Colonel, have you any way, any method, that you think reasonable and honourable to propose, to bring about a reconciliation with the lady? That is what we all wish for. And I can tell you, Sir, it is not a little owing to her family, and to their implacable usage of her, that her resentments are heightened against my kinsman; who, however, has used her vilely; but is willing to repair her wrongs.—

Lovel. Not, my Lord, for the sake of her family; nor for this gentleman's haughty behaviour; but for her own sake, and in full sense of the wrongs I have done her.

Col. As to my haughty behaviour, as you call it, Sir, I am mistaken if you would not have gone beyond it in the like case of a relation so meritorious, and so unworthily injured. And, Sir, let me tell you, that if your motives are not love, honour, and justice, and if they have the least tincture of mean compassion for her, or of an uncheerful assent on your

part, I am sure it will neither be desired or accepted by a person of my cousin’s merit and sense; nor shall I wish that it should.

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Lovel. Don't think, Colonel, that I am meanly compounding off a debate, that I should as willingly go through with you as to eat or drink, if I have the occasion given me for it: but thus much I will tell you, that my Lord, that Lady Sarah Sadleir, Lady Betty Lawrance, my two cousins Montague, and myself, have written to her in the most solemn and sincere manner, to offer her such terms as no one but herself would refuse, and this long enough before Colonel Morden's arrival was dreamt of.

Col. What reason, Sir, may I ask, does she give, against listening to so powerful a mediation, and to such offers?

Lovel. It looks like capitulating, or else—

Col. It looks not like any such thing to me, Mr. Lovelace, who have as good an opinion of your spirit as man can have. And what, pray, is the part I act, and my motives for it? Are they not, in desiring that justice may be done to my Cousin Clarissa Harlowe, that I seek to establish the honour of Mrs. Lovelace, if matters can once be brought to bear?

Lovel. Were she to honour me with her acceptance of that name, Mr. Morden, I should not want you or any man to assert the honour of Mrs. Lovelace.

Col. I believe it. But still she has honoured you with that acceptance, she is nearer to me than to you, Mr. Lovelace. And I speak this, only to show you that, in the part I take, I mean rather to deserve your thanks than your displeasure, though against yourself, were there occasion. Nor ought you take it amiss, if you rightly weigh the matter: For, Sir, whom does a lady want protection against but her injurers? And who has been her greatest injurer?—Till, therefore, she becomes entitled to your protection, as your wife, you yourself cannot refuse me some merit in wishing to have justice done my cousin. But, Sir, you were going to say, that if it were not to look like capitulating, you would hint the reasons my cousin gives against accepting such an honourable mediation?

I then told him of my sincere offers of marriage: 'I made no difficulty, I said, to own my apprehensions, that my unhappy behaviour to her had greatly affected her: but that it was the implacableness of her friends that had thrown her into despair, and given her a contempt for life.' I told him, 'that she had been so good as to send me a letter to divert me from a visit my heart was set upon making her: a letter on which I built great hopes, because she assured me that in it she was going to her father's; and that I might see her there, when she was received, if it were not my own fault.

Col. Is it possible? And were you, Sir, thus earnest? And did she send you such a letter?

Lord M. confirmed both; and also, that, in obedience to her desires, and that intimation, I had come down without the satisfaction I had proposed to myself in seeing her.

It is very true, Colonel, said I: and I should have told you this before: but your heat made me decline it; for, as I said, it had an appearance of meanly capitulating with you. An abjectness of heart, of which, had I been capable, I should have despised myself as much as I might have expected you would despise me.

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Lord M. proposed to enter into the proof of all this. He said, in his phraseological way, That one story was good till another was heard; and that the Harlowe family and I, 'twas true, had behaved like so many Orsons to one another; and that they had been very free with all our family besides: that nevertheless, for the lady's sake, more than for their's, or even for mine, (he could tell me,) he would do greater things for me than they could ask, if she could be brought to have me: and that this he wanted to declare, and would sooner have declared, if he could have brought us sooner to patience, and a good understanding.

The Colonel made excuses for his warmth, on the score of his affection to his cousin.

My regard for her made me readily admit them: and so a fresh bottle of Burgundy, and another of Champagne, being put upon the table, we sat down in good humour, after all this blustering, in order to enter closer into the particulars of the case: which I undertook, at both their desires, to do.

But these things must be the subject of another letter, which shall immediately follow this, if it do not accompany it.

Mean time you will observe that a bad cause gives a man great disadvantages: for I myself thing that the interrogatories put to me with so much spirit by the Colonel made me look cursedly mean; at the same time that it gave him a superiority which I know not how to allow to the best man in Europe. So that, literally speaking, as a good man would infer, guilt is its own punisher: in that it makes the most lofty spirit look like the miscreant he is—a good man, I say: So, Jack, proleptically I add, thou hast no right to make the observation.

LETTER XL

Mr. *Lovelace* [*in continuation*.] *Tuesday afternoon*, *Aug*. 29.

I went back, in this part of our conversation, to the day that I was obliged to come down to attend my Lord in the dangerous illness which some feared would have been his last.

I told the Colonel, 'what earnest letters I had written to a particular friend, to engage him to prevail upon the lady not to slip a day that had been proposed for the private celebration of our nuptials; and of my letters* written to her on that subject;' for I had stepped to my closet, and fetched down all the letters and draughts and copies of letters relating to this affair.

* See Vol. VI. Letters XXXVII. XXXVIII. XXXIX. XLIII.

I read to him, 'several passages in the copies of those letters, which, thou wilt remember, make not a little to my honour.' And I told him, 'that I wished I had kept

copies of those to my friend on the same occasion; by which he would have seen how much in earnest I was in my professions to her, although she would not answer one of them;' and thou mayest remember, that one of those four letters accounted to herself why I was desirous she should remain where I had left her.*

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* See Vol. VI. Letter XXXVII.

I then proceeded to give him an account ’of the visit made by Lady Sarah and Lady Betty to Lord M. and me, in order to induce me to do her justice: of my readiness to comply with their desires; and of their high opinion of her merit: of the visit made to Miss Howe by my cousins Montague, in the name of us all, to engage her interest with her friend in my behalf: of my conversation with Miss Howe, at a private assembly, to whom I gave the same assurances, and besought her interest with her friend.’

I then read a copy of the letter (though so much to my disadvantage) which was written to her by Miss Charlotte Montague, Aug. 1,* entreating her alliance in the names of all our family.

* See Vol. VII. Letter LXVI.

This made him ready to think that his fair cousin carried her resentment against me too far. He did not imagine, he said, that either myself or our family had been so much in earnest.

So thou seest, Belford, that it is but glossing over one part of a story, and omitting another, that will make a bad cause a good one at any time. What an admirable lawyer should I have made! And what a poor hand would this charming creature, with all her innocence, have made of it in a court of justice against a man who had so much to say and to show for himself!

I then hinted at the generous annual tender which Lord M. and his sisters made to his fair cousin, in apprehension that she might suffer by her friends’ implacableness.

And this also the Colonel highly applauded, and was pleased to lament the unhappy misunderstanding between the two families, which had made the Harlowes less fond of an alliance with a family of so much honour as this instance showed ours to be.

I then told him, ’That having, by my friend, [meaning thee,] who was admitted into her presence, (and who had always been an admirer of her virtues, and had given me such advice from time to time in relation to her as I wished I had followed,) been assured that a visit from me would be very disagreeable to her, I once more resolved to try what a letter would do; and that, accordingly, on the seventh of August, I wrote her one.

’This, Colonel, is the copy of it. I was then out of humour with my Lord M. and the ladies of my family. You will, therefore, read it to yourself.’*

* See Vol. VII. Letter LXXIX.

This letter gave him high satisfaction. You write here, Mr. Lovelace, from your heart. ’Tis a letter full of penitence and acknowledgement. Your request is reasonable—To be

forgiven only as you shall appear to deserve it after a time of probation, which you leave to her to fix. Pray, Sir, did she return an answer to this letter?

She did, but with reluctance, I own, and not till I had declared by my friend, that, if I could not procure one, I would go up to town, and throw myself at her feet.

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I wish I might be permitted to see it, Sir, or to hear such parts of it read as you shall think proper.

Turning over my papers, Here it is, Sir.* I will make no scruple to put it into your hands.

This is very obliging, Mr. Lovelace.

He read it. My charming cousin!—How strong her resentments!—Yet how charitable her wishes!—Good Heaven! that such an excellent creature— But, Mr. Lovelace, it is to your regret, as much as to mine, I doubt not —

Interrupting him, I swore that it was.

So it ought, said he. Nor do I wonder that it should be so. I shall tell you by-and-by, proceeded he, how much she suffers with her friends by false and villanous reports. But, Sir, will you permit me to take with me these two letters? I shall make use of them to the advantage of you both.

I told him I would oblige him with all my heart. And this he took very kindly (as he had reason); and put them in his pocket-book, promising to return hem in a few days.

I then told him, 'That upon this her refusal, I took upon myself to go to town, in hopes to move her in my favour; and that, though I went without giving her notice of my intention, yet had she got some notion of my coming, and so contrived to be out of the way: and at last, when she found I was fully determined at all events to see her, before I went abroad, (which I shall do, said I, if I cannot prevail upon her,) she sent me the letter I have already mentioned to you, desiring me to suspend my purposed visit: and that for a reason which amazes and confounds me; because I don't find there is any thing in it: and yet I never knew her once dispense with her word; for she always made it a maxim, that it was not lawful to do evil, that good might come of it: and yet in this letter, for no reason in the world but to avoid seeing me (to gratify an humour only) has she sent me out of town, depending upon the assurance she had given me.'

Col. This is indeed surprising. But I cannot believe that my cousin, for such an end only, or indeed for any end, according to the character I hear of her, should stoop to make use of such an artifice.

Lovel. This, Colonel, is the thing that astonishes me; and yet, see here!—This is the letter she wrote me—Nay, Sir, 'tis her own hand.

Col. I see it is; and a charming hand it is.

Lovel. You observe, Colonel, that all her hopes of reconciliation with her parents are from you. You are her dear blessed friend! She always talked of you with delight.

Col. Would to Heaven I had come to England before she left Harlowe-place!—Nothing of this had then happened. Not a man of those whom I have heard that her friends proposed for her should have had her. Nor you, Mr. Lovelace, unless I had found you to be the man every one who sees you must wish you to be: and if you had been that man, no one living should I have preferred to you for such an excellence.

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My Lord and I both joined in the wish: and 'faith I wished it most cordially.

The Colonel read the letter twice over, and then returned it to me. 'Tis all a mystery, said he. I can make nothing of it. For, alas! her friends are as averse to a reconciliation as ever.

Lord M. I could not have thought it. But don't you think there is something very favourable to my nephew in this letter—something that looks as if the lady would comply at last?

Col. Let me die if I know what to make of it. This letter is very different from her preceding one!—You returned an answer to it, Mr. Lovelace?

Lovel. An answer, Colonel! No doubt of it. And an answer full of transport. I told her, 'I would directly set out for Lord M.'s, in obedience to her will. I told her that I would consent to any thing she should command, in order to promote this happy reconciliation. I told her that it should be my hourly study, to the end of my life, to deserve a goodness so transcendent.' But I cannot forbear saying that I am not a little shocked and surprised, if nothing more be meant by it than to get me into the country without seeing her.

Col. That can't be the thing, depend upon it, Sir. There must be more in it than that. For, were that all, she must think you would soon be undeceived, and that you would then most probably resume your intention— unless, indeed, she depended upon seeing me in the interim, as she knew I was arrived. But I own I know not what to make of it. Only that she does me a great deal of honour, if it be me that she calls her dear blessed friend, whom she always loved and honoured. Indeed I ever loved her: and if I die unmarried, and without children, shall be as kind to her as her grandfather was: and the rather, as I fear there is too much of envy and self-love in the resentments her brother and sister endeavour to keep up in her father and mother against her. But I shall know better how to judge of this, when my cousin James comes from Edinburgh; and he is every hour expected.

But let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, what is the name of your friend, who is admitted so easily into my cousin's presence? Is it not Belford, pray?

Lovel. It is, Sir; and Mr. Belford's a man of honour; and a great admirer of your fair cousin.

Was I right, as to the first, Jack? The last I have such strong proof of, that it makes me question the first; since she would not have been out of the way of my intended visit but for thee.

Col. Are you sure, Sir, that Mr. Belford is a man of honour?

Lovel. I can swear for him, Colonel. What makes you put this question?

Col. Only this: that an officious pragmatical novice has been sent up to inquire into my cousin's life and conversation: And, would you believe it? the frequent visits of this gentlemen have been interpreted basely to her disreputation.—Read that letter, Mr. Lovelace; and you will be shocked at ever part of it.

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This cursed letter, no doubt, is from the young Levite, whom thou, Jack, describest as making inquiry of Mrs. Smith about Miss Harlowe's character and visiters.*

* See Vol. VII. Letter LXXXI.

I believe I was a quarter of an hour in reading it: for I made it, though not a short one, six times as long as it is, by the additions of oaths and curses to every pedantic line. Lord M. too helped to lengthen it, by the like execrations. And thou, Jack, wilt have as much reason to curse it as we.

You cannot but see, said the Colonel, when I had done reading it, that this fellow has been officious in his malevolence; for what he says is mere hearsay, and that hearsay conjectural scandal without fact, or the appearance of fact, to support it; so that an unprejudiced eye, upon the face of the letter, would condemn the writer of it, as I did, and acquit my cousin. But yet, such is the spirit by which the rest of my relations are governed, that they run away with the belief of the worst it insinuates, and the dear creature has had shocking letters upon it; the pedant's hints are taken; and a voyage to one of the colonies has been proposed to her, as the only way to avoid Mr. Belford and you. I have not seen these letters indeed; but they took a pride in repeating some of their contents, which must have cut the poor soul to the heart; and these, joined to her former sufferings,—What have you not, Mr. Lovelace, to answer for?

Lovel. Who the devil could have expected such consequences as these? Who could have believe there could be parents so implacable? Brother and sister so immovably fixed against the only means that could be taken to put all right with every body?—And what now can be done?

Lord M. I have great hopes that Col. Morden may yet prevail upon his cousin. And, by her last letter, it runs in my mind that she has some thoughts of forgiving all that's past. Do you think, Colonel, if there should not be such a thing as a reconciliation going forward at present, that her letter may not imply that, if we could bring such a thing to bear with her friends, she would be reconciled with Mr. Lovelace?

Col. Such an artifice would better become the Italian subtilty than the English simplicity. Your Lordship has been in Italy, I presume?

Lovel. My Lord has read Boccaccio, perhaps; and that's as well, as to the hint he gives, which may be borrowed from one of that author's stories. But Miss Clarissa Harlowe is above all artifice. She must have some meaning I cannot fathom.

Col. Well, my Lord, I can only say that I will make some use of the letters Mr. Lovelace has obliged me with: and after I have had some talk with my cousin James, who is hourly expected; and when I have dispatched two or three affairs that press upon me; I will pay my respects to my dear cousin; and shall then be able to form a better judgment

of things. Mean time I will write to her; for I have sent to inquire about her, and find she wants consolation.

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Lovel. If you favour me, Colonel, with the d——d letter of that fellow Brand for a day or two, you will oblige me.

Col. I will. But remember, the man is a parson, Mr. Lovelace; an innocent one too, they say. Else I had been at him before now. And these college novices, who think they know every thing in their cloisters, and that all learning lies in books, make dismal figures when they come into the world among men and women.

Lord M. Brand! Brand! It should have been Firebrand, I think in my conscience!

Thus ended this doughty conference.

I cannot say, Jack, but I am greatly taken with Col. Morden. He is brave and generous, and knows the world; and then his contempt of the parsons is a certain sign that he is one of us.

We parted with great civility: Lord M. (not a little pleased that we did, and as greatly taken with Colonel) repeated his wish, after the Colonel was gone, that he had arrived in time to save the lady, if that would have done it.

I wish so too. For by my soul, Jack, I am every day more and more uneasy about her. But I hope she is not so ill as I am told she is.

I have made Charlotte transcribe the letter of this Firebrand, as my Lord calls him; and will enclose her copy of it. All thy phlegm I know will be roused into vengeance when thou readest it.

I know not what to advise as to showing it to the lady. Yet, perhaps, she will be able to reap more satisfaction than concern from it, knowing her own innocence; in that it will give her to hope that her friends' treatment of her is owing as much to misrepresentation as to their own natural implacableness. Such a mind as her's, I know, would be glad to find out the shadow of a reason for the shocking letters the Colonel says they have sent her, and for their proposal to her of going to some one of the colonies [confound them all—but, if I begin to curse, I shall never have done]—Then it may put her upon such a defence as she might be glad of an opportunity to make, and to shame them for their monstrous credulity—but this I leave to thy own fat-headed prudence—Only it vexes me to the heart, that even scandal and calumny should dare to surmise the bare possibility of any man sharing the favours of a woman, whom now methinks I could worship with a veneration due only to a divinity.

Charlotte and her sister could not help weeping at the base aspersion: When, when, said Patty, lifting up her hands, will this sweet lady's sufferings be at an end?—O cousin Lovelace!—

And thus am I blamed for every one's faults!—When her brutal father curses her, it is I. I upbraid her with her severe mother. The implacableness of her stupid uncles is all mine. The virulence of her brother, and the spite of her sister, are entirely owing to me. The letter of this rascal Brand is of my writing—O Jack, what a wretch is thy Lovelace!

***

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Returned without a letter!—This d——d fellow Will. is returned without a letter!—Yet the rascal tells me that he hears you have been writing to me these two days!

Plague confound thee, who must know my impatience, and the reason for it!

To send a man and horse on purpose; as I did! My imagination chained me to the belly of the beast, in order to keep pace with him!—Now he is got to this place; now to that; now to London; now to thee!

Now [a letter given him] whip and spur upon the return. This town just entered, not staying to bait: that village passed by: leaves the wind behind him; in a foaming sweat man and horse.

And in this way did he actually enter Lord M.'s courtyard.

The reverberating pavement brought me down—The letter, Will.! The letter, dog!—The letter, Sirrah!

No letter, Sir!—Then wildly staring round me, fists clenched, and grinning like a maniac, Confound thee for a dog, and him that sent thee without one!—This moment out of my sight, or I'll scatter thy stupid brains through the air. I snatched from his holsters a pistol, while the rascal threw himself from the foaming beast, and ran to avoid the fate which I wished with all my soul thou hadst been within the reach of me to have met with.

But, to be as meek as a lamb to one who has me at his mercy, and can wring and torture my soul as he pleases, What canst thou mean to send back my varlet without a letter?—I will send away by day-dawn another fellow upon another beast for what thou hast written; and I charge thee on thy allegiance, that thou dispatch him not back empty-handed.

POSTSCRIPT

Charlotte, in a whim of delicacy, is displeased that I send the enclosed letter to you—-that her handwriting, forsooth! should go into the hands of a single man!

There's encouragement for thee, Belford! This is a certain sign that thou may'st have her if thou wilt. And yet, till she has given me this unerring demonstration of her glancing towards thee, I could not have thought it. Indeed I have often in pleasantry told her that I would bring such an affair to bear. But I never intended it; because she really is a dainty girl; and thou art such a clumsy fellow in thy person, that I should as soon have wished her a rhinoceros for a husband as thee. But, poor little dears! they must stay till their time's come! They won't have this man, and they won't have that man, from seventeen to twenty-five: but then, afraid, as the saying is, that God has forgot

them, and finding their bloom departing, they are glad of whom they can get, and verify the fable of the parson and the pears.

LETTER XLI

Mr. *Brand*, *to John Harlowe*, *Esq*.
[*Enclosed in the preceding*.]

WORTHY SIR, MY VERY GOOD FRIEND AND PATRON,

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I arrived in town yesterday, after a tolerably pleasant journey (considering the hot weather and dusty roads). I put up at the Bull and Gate in Holborn, and hastened to Covent-garden. I soon found the house where the unhappy lady lodgeth. And, in the back shop, had a good deal of discourse* with Mrs. Smith, (her landlady,) whom I found to be so 'highly prepossessed'** in her 'favour,' that I saw it would not answer your desires to take my informations 'altogether' from her: and being obliged to attend my patron, (who to my sorrow,

* See Vol. VII. Letter LXXXI. ** Transcriber's note: Mr. Brand's letters are characterized by a style that makes excessive use of italics for emphasis. Although in the remainder of *Clarissa* I have largely disregarded italics for the sake of plain-text formatting, this style makes such emphatic use of italics that I have indicated all such instances in his letters by placing the italicized words and phrases in quotations, thus ' '.

'Miserum et aliena vivere quadra,')

I find wanteth much waiting upon, and is 'another' sort of man than he was at college: for, Sir, 'inter nos,' 'honours change manners.' For the 'aforesaid causes,' I thought it would best answer all the ends of the commission with which you honoured me, to engage, in the desired scrutiny, the wife of a 'particular friend,' who liveth almost over-against the house where she lodgeth, and who is a gentlewoman of 'character,' and 'sobriety,' a 'mother of children,' and one who 'knoweth' the 'world' well.

To her I applied myself, therefore, and gave her a short history of the case, and desired she would very particularly inquire into the 'conduct' of the unhappy young lady; her 'present way of life' and 'subsistence'; her 'visiters,' her 'employments,' and such-like: for these, Sir, you know, are the things whereof you wished to be informed.

Accordingly, Sir, I waited upon the gentlewoman aforesaid, this day; and, to 'my' very great trouble, (because I know it will be to 'your's,' and likewise to all your worthy family's,) I must say, that I do find things look a little more 'darkly' than I hoped the would. For, alas! Sir, the gentlewoman's report turneth out not so 'favourable' for Miss's reputation, as 'I' wished, as 'you' wished, and as 'every one' of her friends wished. But so it is throughout the world, that 'one false step' generally brings on 'another'; and peradventure 'a worse,' and 'a still worse'; till the poor 'limed soul' (a very fit epithet of the Divine Quarles's!) is quite 'entangled,' and (without infinite mercy) lost for ever.

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It seemeth, Sir, she is, notwithstanding, in a very 'ill state of health.' In this, 'both' gentlewomen (that is to say, Mrs. Smith, her landlady, and my friend's wife) agree. Yet she goeth often out in a chair, to 'prayers' (as it is said). But my friend's wife told me, that nothing is more common in London, than that the frequenting of the church at morning prayers is made the 'pretence' and 'cover' for 'private assignations.' What a sad thing is this! that what was designed for 'wholesome nourishment' to the 'poor soul,' should be turned into 'rank poison!' But as Mr. Daniel de Foe (an ingenious man, though a 'dissenter') observeth (but indeed it is an old proverb; only I think he was the first that put it into verse)

> God never had a house of pray'r
> But Satan had a chapel there.

Yet to do the lady 'justice,' nobody cometh home with her: nor indeed 'can' they, because she goeth forward and backward in a 'sedan,' or 'chair,' (as they call it). But then there is a gentleman of 'no good character' (an 'intimado' of Mr. Lovelace) who is a 'constant' visiter of her, and of the people of the house, whom he 'regaleth' and 'treateth,' and hath (of consequence) their 'high good words.'

I have thereupon taken the trouble (for I love to be 'exact' in any 'commission' I undertake) to inquire 'particularly' about this 'gentleman,' as he is called (albeit I hold no man so but by his actions: for, as Juvenal saith,

> —'Nobilitas sola est, atque unica virtus')

And this I did 'before' I would sit down to write to you.

His name is Belford. He hath a paternal estate of upwards of one thousand pounds by the year; and is now in mourning for an uncle who left him very considerably besides. He beareth a very profligate character as to 'women,' (for I inquired particularly about 'that,') and is Mr. Lovelace's more especial 'privado,' with whom he holdeth a 'regular correspondence'; and hath been often seen with Miss (tete a tete) at the 'window'—in no 'bad way,' indeed: but my friend's wife is of opinion that all is not 'as it should be.' And, indeed, it is mighty strange to me, if Miss be so 'notable a penitent' (as is represented) and if she have such an 'aversion' to Mr. Lovelace, that she will admit his 'privado' into 'her retirements,' and see 'no other company.'

I understand, from Mrs. Smith, that Mr. Hickman was to see her some time ago, from Miss Howe; and I am told, by 'another' hand, (you see, Sir, how diligent I have been to execute the 'commissions' you gave me,) that he had no 'extraordinary opinion' of this Belford at first; though they were seen together one morning by the opposite neighbour, at 'breakfast': and another time this Belford was observed to 'watch' Mr. Hickman's coming from her; so that, as it should seem, he was mighty zealous to 'ingratiate' himself with Mr. Hickman; no doubt to engage him to make a 'favourable report to Miss

Howe' of the 'intimacy' he was admitted into by her unhappy friend; who ('as she is very ill') may 'mean no harm' in allowing his visits, (for he, it seemeth, brought to her, or recommended, at least, the doctor and apothecary that attend her:) but I think (upon the whole) 'it looketh not well.'

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I am sorry, Sir, I cannot give you a better account of the young lady's 'prudence.' But, what shall we say?

'Uvaque conspecta livorem ducit ab uva,'

as Juvenal observeth.

One thing I am afraid of; which is, that Miss may be under 'necessities'; and that this Belford (who, as Mrs. Smith owns, hath 'offered her money,' which she, 'at the time,' refused) may find an opportunity to 'take advantage' of those 'necessities': and it is well observed by that poet, that

'AEgre formosam poteris servare puellam:
Nunc prece, nunc pretio, forma petita ruit.'

And this Belford (who is a 'bold man,' and hath, as they say, the 'look' of one) may make good that of Horace, (with whose writings you are so well acquainted; nobody better;)

'Audax omnia perpeti,
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.'

Forgive me, Sir, for what I am going to write: but if you could prevail upon the rest of your family to join in the scheme which 'you,' and her 'virtuous sister,' Miss Arabella, and the Archdeacon, and I, once talked of, (which is to persuade the unhappy young lady to go, in some 'creditable' manner, to some one of the foreign colonies,) it might not save only her 'own credit' and 'reputation,' but the 'reputation' and 'credit' of all her 'family,' and a great deal of 'vexation' moreover. For it is my humble opinion, that you will hardly (any of you) enjoy yourselves while this ('once' innocent) young lady is in the way of being so frequently heard of by you: and this would put her 'out of the way' both of 'this Belford' and of 'that Lovelace,' and it might, peradventure, prevent as much 'evil' as 'scandal.'

You will forgive me, Sir, for this my 'plainness.' Ovid pleadeth for me,

'——Adulator nullus amicus erit.'

And I have no view but that of approving myself a 'zealous well-wisher' to 'all' your worthy family, (whereto I owe a great number of obligations,) and very particularly, Sir,

Your obliged and humble servant,
Elias Brand.

WEDN. *Aug*. 9.

P.S. I shall give you ‘farther hints’ when I come down, (which will be in a few days;) and who my ‘informants’ were; but by ‘these’ you will see, that I have been very assiduous (for the time) in the task you set me upon.

The ‘length’ of my letter you will excuse: for I need not tell you, Sir, what ‘narrative,’ ‘complex,’ and ‘conversation’ letters (such a one as ‘mine’) require. Every one to his ‘talent.’ ‘Letter-writing’ is mine. I will be bold to say; and that my ‘correspondence’ was much coveted in the university, on that account, by ‘tyros,’ and by ‘sophs,’ when I was hardly a ‘soph’ myself. But this I should not have taken upon myself to mention, but only in defence of the ‘length’ of my letter; for nobody writeth ‘shorter’

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or ‘pithier,’
when the subject requireth ‘common forms’ only—but, in apologizing for my ‘prolixity,’ I am ‘adding’ to the ‘fault,’ (if it were one, which, however, I cannot think it to be, the ‘subject’ considered: but this I have said before in other words:) so, Sir, if you will excuse my ‘post-script,’ I am sure you will not find fault with my ‘letter.’

One word more as to a matter of ‘erudition,’ which you greatly love to hear me ‘start’ and ‘dwell upon.’ Dr. Lewen once, in ‘your’ presence, (as you, ‘my good patron,’ cannot but remember,) in a ‘smartish’ kind of debate between ‘him’ and ‘me,’ took upon him to censure the ‘paranthetical’ style, as I call it. He was a very learned and judicious man, to be sure, and an ornament to ’our function’: but yet I must needs say, that it is a style which I greatly like; and the good Doctor was then past his ‘youth,’ and that time of life, of consequence, when a ‘fertile imagination,’ and a ‘rich fancy,’ pour in ideas so fast upon a writer, that parentheses are often wanted (and that for the sake of ‘brevity,’ as well as ‘perspicuity’) to save the reader the trouble of reading a passage ‘more than once.’ Every man to his talent, (as I said before.) We are all so apt to set up our ‘natural biasses’ for ‘general standards,’ that I wondered ‘the less’ at the worthy Doctor’s ‘stiffness’ on this occasion. He ‘smiled at me,’ you may remember, Sir—and, whether I was right or not, I am sure I ’smiled at him.’ And ‘you,’ my ‘worthy patron,’ (as I had the satisfaction to observe,) seemed to be of ‘my party.’ But was it not strange, that the ‘old gentleman’ and ‘I’ should so widely differ, when the ‘end’ with ‘both’ (that is to say, ‘perspicuity’ or ‘clearness,’) was the same?—But what shall we say?—

‘Errare est hominis, sed non persistere.’

I think I have nothing to add until I have the honour of attending you in ‘person’; but I am, (as above,) &c. &c. &c.

E.B.

LETTER XLII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Wednesday night, *Aug*. 30.

It was lucky enough that our two servants met at Hannah's,* which gave them so good an opportunity of exchanging their letters time enough for each to return to his master early in the day.

* The Windmill, near Slough.

Thou dost well to boast of thy capacity for managing servants, and to set up for correcting our poets in their characters of this class of people,* when, like a madman, thou canst beat their teeth out, and attempt to shoot them through the head, for not bringing to thee what they had no power to obtain.

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* See Letter XX. of this volume.

You well observe* that you would have made a thorough-paced lawyer. The whole of the conversation-piece between you and the Colonel affords a convincing proof that there is a black and a white side to every cause: But what must the conscience of a partial whitener of his own cause, or blackener of another's, tell him, while he is throwing dust in the eyes of his judges, and all the time knows his own guilt?

* See Letter XL. of this volume.

The Colonel, I see, is far from being a faultless man: but while he sought not to carry his point by breach of faith, he has an excuse which thou hast not. But, with respect to him, and to us all, I can now, with the detestation of some of my own actions, see, that the taking advantage of another person's good opinion of us to injure (perhaps to ruin) that other, is the most ungenerous wickedness that can be committed.

Man acting thus by man, we should not be at a loss to give such actions a name: But is it not doubly and trebly aggravated, when such advantage is taken of an unexperienced and innocent young creature, whom we pretend to love above all the women in the world; and when we seal our pretences by the most solemn vows and protestations of inviolable honour that we can invent?

I see that this gentleman is the best match thou ever couldest have had, upon all accounts: his spirit such another impetuous one as thy own; soon taking fire; vindictive; and only differing in this, that the cause he engages in is a just one. But commend me to honest brutal Mowbray, who, before he knew the cause, offers his sword in thy behalf against a man who had taken the injured side, and whom he had never seen before.

As soon as I had run through your letters, and the copy of that of the incendiary Brand's, (by the latter of which I saw to what cause a great deal of this last implacableness of the Harlowe family is owing,) I took coach to Smith's, although I had been come from thence but about an hour, and had taken leave of the lady for the night.

I sent up for Mrs. Lovick, and desired her, in the first place, to acquaint the lady (who was busied in her closet,) that I had letters from Berks: in which I was informed, that the interview between Colonel Morden and Mr. Lovelace had ended without ill consequences; that the Colonel intended to write to her very soon, and was interesting himself mean while, in her favour, with her relations; that I hoped that this agreeable news would be means of giving her good rest; and I would wait upon her in the morning, by the time she should return from prayers, with all the particulars.

She sent me word that she should be glad to see me in the morning; and was highly obliged to me for the good news I had sent her up.

I then, in the back shop, read to Mrs. Lovick and to Mrs. Smith the copy of Brand's letter, and asked them if they could guess at the man's informant? They were not at a loss; Mrs. Smith having seen the same fellow Brand who had talked with her, as I mentioned in the former,* come out of a milliner's shop over against them; which milliner, she said, had also lately been very inquisitive about the lady.

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* See Vol. VII. Letter LXXXI.

I wanted no farther hint; but, bidding them take no notice to the lady of what I had read, I shot over the way, and, asking for the mistress of the house, she came to me.

Retiring with her, at her invitation, into her parlour, I desired to know if she were acquainted with a young country clergyman of the name of Brand. She hesitatingly, seeing me in some emotion, owned that she had some small knowledge of the gentleman. Just then came in her husband, who is, it seems, a petty officer of excise, (and not an ill-behaved man,) who owned a fuller knowledge of him.

I have the copy of a letter, said I, from this Brand, in which he has taken great liberties with my character, and with that of the most unblamable lady in the world, which he grounds upon information that you, Madam, have given him. And then I read to them several passages in his letter, and asked what foundation she had for giving that fellow such impressions of either of us?

They knew not what to answer: but at last said, that he had told them how wickedly the young lady had run away from her parents: what worthy and rich people they were: in what favour he stood with them; and that they had employed him to inquire after her behaviour, visiters, &c.

They said, 'That indeed they knew very little of the young lady; but that [curse upon their censoriousness!] it was but too natural to think, that, where a lady had given way to a delusion, and taken so wrong a step, she would not stop there: that the most sacred places and things were but too often made clokes for bad actions; that Mr. Brand had been informed (perhaps by some enemy of mine) that I was a man of very free principles, and an intimado, as he calls it, of the man who had ruined her. And that their cousin Barker, a manteau-maker, who lodged up one pair of stairs,' (and who, at their desire, came down and confirmed what they said,) 'had often, from her window, seen me with the lady in her chamber, and both talking very earnestly together; and that Mr. Brand, being unable to account for her admiring my visits, and knowing I was but a new acquaintance of her's, and an old one of Mr. Lovelace, thought himself obliged to lay these matters before her friends.'

This was the sum and substance of their tale. O how I cursed the censoriousness of this plaguy triumvirate! A parson, a milliner, and a mantua-maker! The two latter, not more by business led to adorn the persons, than generally by scandal to destroy the reputations, of those they have a mind to exercise their talents upon!

The two women took great pains to persuade me that they themselves were people of conscience;—of consequence, I told them, too much addicted, I feared, to censure other people who pretended not to their strictness; for that I had ever found

censoriousness, with those who affected to be thought more pious than their neighbours.

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They answered, that that was not their case; and that they had since inquired into the lady's character and manner of life, and were very much concerned to think any thing they had said should be made use of against her: and as they heard from Mrs. Smith that she was not likely to live long, they should be sorry she should go out of the world a sufferer by their means, or with an ill opinion of them, though strangers to her. The husband offered to write, if I pleased, to Mr. Brand, in vindication of the lady; and the two women said they should be glad to wait upon her in person, to beg her pardon for any thing she had reason to take amiss from them; because they were now convinced that there was not such another young lady in the world.

I told them that the least said of the affair to the lady, in her present circumstances, was best. That she was a heavenly creature, and fond of taking all occasions to find excuses for her relations on their implacableness to her: that therefore I should take some notice to her of the uncharitable and weak surmises which gave birth to so vile a scandal: but that I would have him, Mr. Walton, (for that is the husband's name,) write to his acquaintance Brand as soon as possible, as he had offered; and so I left them.

As to what thou sayest of thy charming cousin, let me know if thou hast any meaning in it. I have not the vanity to think myself deserving of such a lady as Miss Montague; and should not therefore care to expose myself to her scorn and to thy derision. But were I assured I might avoid both of these, I would soon acquaint thee that I should think no pains nor assiduity too much to obtain a share in the good graces of such a lady.

But I know thee too well to depend upon any thing thou sayest on this subject. Thou lovest to make thy friends the objects of ridicule to ladies; and imaginest, from the vanity, (and, in this respect, I will say littleness,) of thine own heart, that thou shinest the brighter for the foil.

Thus didst thou once play off the rough Mowbray with Miss Hatton, till the poor fellow knew not how to go either backward or forward.

LETTER XLIII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Thursday, 11 *o'clock*, *Aug*. 31.

I am just come from the lady, whom I left cheerful and serene.

She thanked me for my communication of the preceding night. I read to her such parts of your letters as I could read to her; and I thought it was a good test to distinguish the froth and whipt-syllabub in them from the cream, in what one could and could not read to a woman of so fine a mind; since four parts out of six of thy letters, which I thought entertaining as I read them to myself, appeared to me, when I should have read them to

her, most abominable stuff, and gave me a very contemptible idea of thy talents, and of my own judgment.

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She as far from rejoicing, as I had done, at the disappointment her letter gave you when explained.

She said, she meant only an innocent allegory, which might carry instruction and warning to you, when the meaning was taken, as well as answer her own hopes for the time. It was run off in a hurry. She was afraid it was not quite right in her. But hoped the end would excuse (if it could not justify) the means. And then she again expressed a good deal of apprehension lest you should still take it into your head to molest her, when her time, she said, was so short, that she wanted every moment of it; repeating what she had once said before, that, when she wrote, she was so ill that she believed she should not have lived till now: if she had thought she should, she must have studied for an expedient that would have better answered her intentions. Hinting at a removal out of the knowledge of us both.

But she was much pleased that the conference between you and Colonel Morden, after two or three such violent sallies, as I acquainted her you had had between you, ended so amicably; and said she must absolutely depend upon the promise I had given her to use my utmost endeavours to prevent farther mischief on her account.

She was pleased with the justice you did her character to her cousin.

She was glad to hear that he had so kind an opinion of her, and that he would write to her.

I was under an unnecessary concern, how to break to her that I had the copy of Brand's vile letter: unnecessary, I say; for she took it just as you thought she would, as an excuse she wished to have for the implacableness of her friends; and begged I would let her read it herself; for, said she, the contents cannot disturb me, be they what they will.

I gave it to her, and she read it to herself; a tear now and then being ready to start, and a sigh sometimes interposing.

She gave me back the letter with great and surprising calmness, considering the subject.

There was a time, said she, and that not long since, when such a letter as this would have greatly pained me. But I hope I have now go above all these things: and I can refer to your kind offices, and to those of Miss Howe, the justice that will be done to my memory among my friends. There is a good and a bad light in which every thing that befalls us may be taken. If the human mind will busy itself to make the worst of every disagreeable occurrence, it will never want woe. This letter, affecting as the subject of it is to my reputation, gives me more pleasure than pain, because I can gather from it, that had not my friends been prepossessed by misinformed or rash and officious persons,

who are always at hand to flatter or soothe the passions of the affluent, they could not have been so immovably determined against me. But now they are sufficiently cleared from every imputation of unforgivingness; for, while I appeared to them in the character of a vile hypocrite, pretending to true penitence, yet giving up myself to profligate courses, how could I expect either their pardon or blessing?

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But, Madam, said I, you'll see by the date of this letter, that their severity, previous to that, cannot be excused by it.

It imports me much, replied she, on account of my present wishes, as to the office you are so kind to undertake, that you should not think harshly of my friends. I must own to you, that I have been apt sometimes myself to think them not only severe but cruel. Suffering minds will be partial to their own cause and merits. Knowing their own hearts, if sincere, they are apt to murmur when harshly treated: But, if they are not believed to be innocent, by persons who have a right to decide upon their conduct according to their own judgments, how can it be helped? Besides, Sir, how do you know, that there are not about my friends as well-meaning misrepresenters as Mr. Brand really seems to be? But, be this as it will, there is no doubt that there are and have been multitudes of persons, as innocent as myself, who have suffered upon surmises as little probable as those on which Mr. Brand founds his judgment. Your intimacy, Sir, with Mr. Lovelace, and (may I say?) a character which, it seems, you have been less solicitous formerly to justify than perhaps you will be for the future, and your frequent visits to me may well be thought to be questionable circumstances in my conduct.

I could only admire her in silence.

But you see, Sir, proceeded she, how necessary it is for young people of our sex to be careful of our company. And how much, at the same time, it behoves young persons of your's to be chary of their own reputation, were it only for the sake of such of our's as they may mean honourably by, and who otherwise may suffer in their good names for being seen in their company.

As to Mr. Brand, continued she, he is to be pitied; and let me enjoin you, Mr. Belford, not to take any resentments against him which may be detrimental either to his person or his fortunes. Let his function and his good meaning plead for him. He will have concern enough, when he finds every body, whose displeasure I now labour under, acquitting my memory of perverse guilt, and joining in a general pity for me.

This, Lovelace, is the woman whose life thou hast curtailed in the blossom of it!—How many opportunities must thou have had of admiring her inestimable worth, yet couldst have thy senses so much absorbed in the *woman*, in her charming person, as to be blind to the *angel*, that shines out in such full glory in her mind! Indeed, I have ever thought myself, when blest with her conversation, in the company of a real angel: and I am sure it would be impossible for me, were she to be as beautiful, and as crimsoned over with health, as I have seen her, to have the least thought of sex, when I heard her talk.

THURSDAY, THREE O’CLOCK, AUG. 31.

On my re-visit to the lady, I found her almost as much a sufferer from joy as she had sometimes been from grief; for she had just received a very kind letter from her cousin Morden; which she was so good as to communicate to me. As she had already begun to answer it, I begged leave to attend her in the evening, that I might not interrupt her in it.

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The letter is a very tender one * * * *

[Here Mr. Belford gives the substance of it upon his memory; but that is
omitted; as the letter is given at length (see the next letter.)
And then adds:]

But, alas! all will be now too late. For the decree is certainly gone out—the world is unworthy of her.

LETTER XLIV

Colonel Morden, *to miss Clarissa Harlowe*
Tuesday, *Aug*. 29.

I should not, my dearest Cousin, have been a fortnight in England, without either doing myself the honour of waiting upon you in person, or of writing to you; if I had not been busying myself almost all the time in your service, in hopes of making my visit or letter still more acceptable to you—acceptable as I have reason to presume either will be from the unquestionable love I ever bore you, and from the esteem you always honoured me with.

Little did I think that so many days would have been required to effect my well-intended purpose, where there used to be a love so ardent on one side, and where there still is, as I am thoroughly convinced, the most exalted merit on the other!

I was yesterday with Mr. Lovelace and Lord M. I need not tell you, it seems, how very desirous the whole family and all the relations of that nobleman are of the honour of an alliance with you; nor how exceedingly earnest the ungrateful man is to make you all the reparation in his power.

I think, my dear Cousin, that you cannot now do better than to give him the honour of your hand. He says just and great things of your virtue, and so heartily condemns himself, that I think there is honorable room for you to forgive him: and the more room, as it seems you are determined against a legal prosecution.

Your effectual forgiveness of Mr. Lovelace, it is evident to me, will accelerate a general reconciliation: for, at present, my other cousins cannot persuade themselves that he is in earnest to do you justice; or that you would refuse him, if you believed he was.

But, my dear Cousin, there may possibly be something in this affair, to which I may be a stranger. If there be, and you will acquaint me with it, all that a naturally-warm heart can do in your behalf shall be done.

I hope I shall be able, in my next visits to my several cousins, to set all right with them. Haughty spirits, when convinced that they have carried resentments too high, want but a good excuse to condescend: and parents must always love the child they once loved.

But if I find them inflexible, I will set out, and attend you without delay; for I long to see you, after so many years' absence.

Mean while, I beg the favour of a few lines, to know if you have reason to doubt Mr. Lovelace's sincerity. For my part, I can have none, if I am to judge from the conversation that passed between us yesterday, in presence of Lord M.

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You will be pleased to direct for me at your uncle Antony's.

Permit me, my dearest Cousin, till I can procure a happy reconciliation between you and your father, and brother, and uncles, to supply the place to you of all those near relations, as well as that of

Your affectionate kinsman, and humble servant,
Wm. *Morden*.

LETTER XLV

Miss Clarissa Harlowe, *to Wm*. *Morden*, *Esq*.
Thursday, *Aug*. 31.

I most heartily congratulate you, dear Sir, on your return to your native country.

I heard with much pleasure that you were come; but I was both afraid and ashamed, till you encouraged me by a first notice, to address myself to you.

How consoling is it to my wounded heart to find that you have not been carried away by that tide of resentment and displeasure with which I have been so unhappily overwhelmed—but that, while my still nearer relations have not thought fit to examine into the truth of vile reports raised against me, you have informed yourself of my innocence, and generously credited the information!

I have not the least reason to doubt Mr. Lovelace's sincerity in his offers of marriage; nor that all his relations are heartily desirous of ranking me among them. I have had noble instances of their esteem for me, on their apprehending that my father's displeasure must have had absolutely refused their pressing solicitations in their kinsman's favour as well as his own.

Nor think me, my dear Cousin, blamable for refusing him. I had given Mr. Lovelace no reason to think me a weak creature. If I had, a man of his character might have thought himself warranted to endeavour to take ungenerous advantage of the weakness he had been able to inspire. The consciousness of my own weakness (in that case) might have brought me to a composition with his wickedness.

I can indeed forgive him. But that is, because I think his crimes have set me above him. Can I be above the man, Sir, to whom I shall give my hand and my vows, and with them a sanction to the most premeditated baseness? No, Sir, let me say, that your cousin Clarissa, were she likely to live many years, and that (if she married not this man) in penury or want, despised and forsaken by all her friends, puts not so high a value upon the conveniencies of life, nor upon life itself, as to seek to re-obtain the one,

or to preserve the other, by giving such a sanction: a sanction, which (were she to perform her duty,) would reward the violator.

Nor is it so much from pride as from principle that I say this. What, Sir! when virtue, when chastity, is the crown of a woman, and particularly of a wife, shall form an attempt upon her's but upon a presumption that she was capable of receiving his offered hand when he had found himself mistaken in the vile opinion he had conceived of her? Hitherto he has not had reason to think me weak. Nor will I give an instance so flagrant, that weak I am in a point in which it would be criminal to be found weak.

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One day, Sir, you will perhaps know all my story. But, whenever it is known, I beg that the author of my calamities may not be vindictively sought after. He could not have been the author of them, but for a strange concurrence of unhappy causes. As the law will not be able to reach him when I am gone, the apprehension of any other sort of vengeance terrifies me; since, in such a case, should my friends be safe, what honour would his death bring to my memory?—If any of them should come to misfortune, how would my fault be aggravated!

God long preserve you, my dearest Cousin, and bless you but in proportion to the consolation you have given me, in letting me know that you still love me; and that I have one near and dear relation who can pity and forgive me; (and then you will be greatly blessed;) is the prayer of

Your ever grateful and affectionate
CL. *Harlowe*.

LETTER XLVI

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*. [*In answer to his letters* XXIII. XXXVII. *Of this volume*.] *Thursday*, *Aug*. 31.

I cannot but own that I am cut to the heart by this Miss Harlowe's interpretation of her letter. She ought never to be forgiven. She, a meek person, and a penitent, and innocent, and pious, and I know not what, who can deceive with a foot in the grave!—

'Tis evident, that she sat down to write this letter with a design to mislead and deceive. And if she be capable of that, at such a crisis, she has as much need of Heaven's forgiveness, as I have of her's: and, with all her cant of charity and charity, if she be not more sure of it than I am of her real pardon, and if she take the thing in the light she ought to take it in, she will have a few darker moments yet to come than she seems to expect.

Lord M. himself, who is not one of those (to speak in his own phrase) who can penetrate a millstone, sees the deceit, and thinks it unworthy of her; though my cousins Montague vindicate her. And no wonder this cursed partial sex [I hate 'em all—by my soul, I hate 'em all!] will never allow any thing against an individual of it, where our's is concerned. And why? Because, if they censure deceit in another, they must condemn their own hearts.

She is to send me a letter after she is in Heaven, is she? The devil take such allegories, and the devil take thee for calling this absurdity an innocent artifice!

I insist upon it, that if a woman of her character, at such a critical time, is to be justified in such a deception, a man in full health and vigour of body and mind, as I am, may be

excused for all his stratagems and attempts against her. And, thank my stars, I can now sit me down with a quiet conscience on that score. By my soul, I can, Jack. Nor has any body, who can acquit her, a right to blame me. But with some, indeed, every thing she does must be good, every thing I do must be bad— And why? Because she has always taken care to coax the stupid misjudging world, like a woman: while I have constantly defied and despised its censures, like a man.

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But, notwithstanding all, you may let her know from me that I will not molest her, since my visits would be so shocking to her: and I hope she will take this into her consideration as a piece of generosity which she could hardly expect after the deception she has put upon me. And let her farther know, that if there be any thing in my power, that will contribute either to her ease or honour, I will obey her, at the very first intimation, however disgraceful or detrimental to myself. All this, to make her unapprehensive, and that she may have nothing to pull her back.

If her cursed relations could be brought as cheerfully to perform their parts, I'd answer life for life for her recovery.

But who, that has so many ludicrous images raised in his mind by the awkward penitence, can forbear laughing at thee? Spare, I beseech thee, dear Belford, for the future, all thine own aspirations, if thou wouldst not dishonour those of an angel indeed.

When I came to that passage, where thou sayest that thou considerest her* as one sent from Heaven to draw thee after her—for the heart of me I could not for an hour put thee out of my head, in the attitude of dame Elizabeth Carteret, on her monument in Westminster Abbey. If thou never observedst it, go thither on purpose: and there wilt thou see this dame in effigy, with uplifted head and hand, the latter taken hold of by a cupid every inch of stone, one clumsy foot lifted up also, aiming, as the sculptor designed it, to ascend; but so executed, as would rather make one imagine that the figure (without shoe or stocking, as it is, though the rest of the body is robed) was looking up to its corn-cutter: the other riveted to its native earth, bemired, like thee (immersed thou callest it) beyond the possibility of unsticking itself. Both figures, thou wilt find, seem to be in a contention, the bigger, whether it should pull down the lesser about its ears—the lesser (a chubby fat little varlet, of a fourth part of the other's bigness, with wings not much larger than those of a butterfly) whether it should raise the larger to a Heaven it points to, hardly big enough to contain the great toes of either.

* See Letter XXXVII. of this volume.

Thou wilt say, perhaps, that the dame's figure in stone may do credit, in the comparison, to thine, both in grain and shape, wooden as thou art all over: but that the lady, who, in every thing but in the trick she has played me so lately, is truly an angel, is but sorrily represented by the fat-flanked cupid. This I allow thee. But yet there is enough in thy aspirations to strike my mind with a resemblance of thee and the lady to the figures on the wretched monument; for thou oughtest to remember, that, prepared as she may be to mount to her native skies, it is impossible for her to draw after her a heavy fellow who has so much to repent of as thou hast.

But now, to be serious once more, let me tell you, Belford, that, if the lady be really so ill as you write she is, it will become you [no Roman style here!] in a case so very

affecting, to be a little less pointed and sarcastic in your reflections. For, upon my soul, the matter begins to grate me most confoundedly.

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I am now so impatient to hear oftener of her, that I take the hint accidentally given me by our two fellows meeting at Slough, and resolve to go to our friend Doleman's at Uxbridge; whose wife and sister, as well as he, have so frequently pressed me to give them my company for a week or two. There shall I be within two hours' ride, if any thing should happen to induce her to see me: for it will well become her piety, and avowed charity, should the worst happen, [the Lord of Heaven and Earth, however, avert that worst!] to give me that pardon from her lips, which she has not denied to me by pen and ink. And as she wishes my reformation, she knows not what good effects such an interview may have upon me.

I shall accordingly be at Doleman's to-morrow morning, by eleven at farthest. My fellow will find me there at his return from you (with a letter, I hope). I shall have Joel with me likewise, that I may send the oftener, as matters fall out. Were I to be still nearer, or in town, it would be impossible to withhold myself from seeing her.

But, if the worst happen!—as, by your continual knelling, I know not what to think of it!—[Yet, once more, Heaven avert that worst!—How natural it is to pray, when once cannot help one's self!]—*Then* say not, in so many dreadful words, what the event is—-Only, that you advise me to take a trip to Paris—And that will stab me to the heart.

***

I so well approve of your generosity to poor Belton's sister, that I have made Mowbray give up his legacy, as I do mine, towards her India bonds. When I come to town, Tourville shall do the like; and we will buy each a ring to wear in memory of the honest fellow, with our own money, that we may perform his will, as well as our own.

My fellow rides the rest of the night. I charge you, Jack, if you would save his life, that you send him not back empty-handed.

LETTER XLVII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Tuesday night, *Aug*. 30.

When I concluded my last, I hoped that my next attendance upon this surprising lady would furnish me with some particulars as agreeable as now could be hoped for from the declining way she is in, by reason of the welcome letter she had received from her cousin Morden. But it proved quite otherwise to me, though not to herself; for I think I was never more shocked in my life than on the occasion I shall mention presently.

When I attended her about seven in the evening, she told me that she found herself in a very petulant way after I had left her. Strange, said she, that the pleasure I received from my cousin's letter should have such an effect upon me! But I could not help giving

way to a comparative humour, as I may call it, and to think it very hard that my nearer relations did not take the methods which my cousin Morden kindly took, by inquiring into my merit or demerit, and giving my cause a fair audit before they proceeded to condemnation.

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She had hardly said this, when she started, and a blush overspread her sweet face, on hearing, as I also did, a sort of lumbering noise upon the stairs, as if a large trunk were bringing up between two people: and, looking upon me with an eye of concern, Blunderers! said she, they have brought in something two hours before the time.—Don't be surprised, Sir —it is all to save you trouble.

Before I could speak, in came Mrs. Smith: O Madam, said she, what have you done? —Mrs. Lovick, entering, made the same exclamation. Lord have mercy upon me, Madam! cried I, what have you done?—For she, stepping at the same instant to the door, the women told me it was a coffin.—O Lovelace! that thou hadst been there at that moment!—Thou, the causer of all these shocking scenes! Surely thou couldst not have been less affected than I, who have no guilt, as to her, to answer for.

With an intrepidity of a piece with the preparation, having directed them to carry it to her bed-chamber, she returned to us: they were not to have brought it in till after dark, said she—Pray, excuse me, Mr. Belford: and don't you, Mrs. Lovick, be concerned: nor you, Mrs. Smith.—Why should you? There is nothing more in it than the unusualness of the thing. Why may we not be as reasonably shocked at going to church where are the monuments of our ancestors, with whose dust we even hope our dust shall be one day mingled, as to be moved at such a sight as this?

We all remaining silent, the women having their aprons at their eyes, Why this concern for nothing at all? said she. If I am to be blamed for any thing, it is for showing too much solicitude, as it may be thought, for this earthly part. I love to do every thing for myself that I can do. I ever did. Every other material point is so far done, and taken care of, that I have had leisure for things of lesser moment. Minutenesses may be observed, where greater articles are not neglected for them. I might have had this to order, perhaps, when less fit to order it. I have no mother, no sister, no Mrs. Norton, no Miss Howe, near me. Some of you must have seen this in a few days, if not now; perhaps have had the friendly trouble of directing it. And what is the difference of a few days to you, when I am gratified rather than discomposed by it? I shall not die the sooner for such a preparation. Should not every body that has any thing to bequeath make their will? And who, that makes a will, should be afraid of a coffin?—My dear friends, [to the women] I have considered these things; do not, with such an object before you as you have had in me for weeks, give me reason to think you have not.

How reasonable was all this!—It showed, indeed, that she herself had well considered it. But yet we could not help being shocked at the thoughts of the coffin thus brought in; the lovely person before our eyes who is, in all likelihood, so soon to fill it.

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We were all silent still, the women in grief; I in a manner stunned. She would not ask me, she said; but would be glad, since it had thus earlier than she had intended been brought in, that her two good friends would walk in and look upon it. They would be less shocked when it was made more familiar to their eye: don't you lead back, said she, a starting steed to the object he is apt to start at, in order to familiarize him to it, and cure his starting? The same reason will hold in this case. Come, my good friends, I will lead you in.

I took my leave; telling her she had done wrong, very wrong; and ought not, by any means, to have such an object before her.

The women followed her in.—'Tis a strange sex! Nothing is too shocking for them to look upon, or see acted, that has but novelty and curiosity in it.

Down I posted; got a chair; and was carried home, extremely shocked and discomposed: yet, weighing the lady's arguments, I know not why I was so affected—-except, as she said, at the unusualness of the thing.

While I waited for a chair, Mrs. Smith came down, and told me that there were devices and inscriptions upon the lid. Lord bless me! is a coffin a proper subject to display fancy upon?—But these great minds cannot avoid doing extraordinary things!

LETTER XLVIII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Friday Morn. *Sept*. 1.

It is surprising, that I, a man, should be so much affected as I was, at such an object as is the subject of my former letter; who also, in my late uncle's case, and poor Belton's had the like before me, and the directing of it: when she, a woman, of so weak and tender a frame, who was to fill it (so soon perhaps to fill it!) could give orders about it, and draw out the devices upon it, and explain them with so little concern as the women tell me she did to them last night after I was gone.

I really was ill, and restless all night. Thou wert the subject of my execration, as she was of my admiration, all the time I was quite awake: and, when I dozed, I dreamt of nothing but of flying hour-glasses, deaths-heads, spades, mattocks, and eternity; the hint of her devices (as given me by Mrs. Smith) running in my head.

However, not being able to keep away from Smith's, I went thither about seven. The lady was just gone out: she had slept better, I found, than I, though her solemn repository was under her window, not far from her bed-side.

I was prevailed upon by Mrs. Smith and her nurse Shelburne (Mrs. Lovick being abroad with her) to go up and look at the devices. Mrs. Lovick has since shown me a copy of the draught by which all was ordered; and I will give thee a sketch of the symbols.

The principal device, neatly etched on a plate of white metal, is a crowned serpent, with its tail in its mouth, forming a ring, the emblem of eternity: and in the circle made by it is this inscription:

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ClarissaHarlowe.

April x.

[Then the year.]

AETAT. XIX.

For ornaments: at top, an hour-glass, winged. At bottom, an urn.

Under the hour-glass, on another plate, this inscription:

Here the wicked cease from troubling: and *here* the
weary be at rest. Job. iii. 17.

Over the urn, near the bottom:

> Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath
> rewarded thee: And why? Thou hast delivered my
> soul from death; mine eyes from tears; and my feet
> from falling. Ps. cxvi. 7, 8.

Over this is the head of a white lily snapt short off, and just falling from the stalk; and this inscription over that, between the principal plate and the lily:

> The days of man are but as grass. For he flourisheth as a
> flower of the field: for, as soon as the wind goeth over
> it, it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no
> more. Ps. ciii. 15, 16.

She excused herself to the women, on the score of her youth, and being used to draw for her needleworks, for having shown more fancy than would perhaps be thought suitable on so solemn an occasion.

The date, April 10, she accounted for, as not being able to tell what her closing-day would be; and as that was the fatal day of her leaving her father’s house.

She discharged the undertaker’s bill after I went away, with as much cheerfulness as she could ever have paid for the clothes she sold to purchase this her palace: for such she called it; reflecting upon herself for the expensiveness of it, saying, that they might observe in her, that pride left not poor mortals to the last: but indeed she did not know but her father would permit it, when furnished, to be carried down to be deposited with her ancestors; and, in that case, she ought not to discredit those ancestors in her appearance amongst them.

It is covered with fine black cloth, and lined with white satin; soon, she said, to be tarnished with viler earth than any it could be covered by.

The burial-dress was brought home with it. The women had curiosity enough, I suppose, to see her open that, if she did open it.—And, perhaps, thou wouldst have been glad to have been present to have admired it too!—

Mrs. Lovick said, she took the liberty to blame her; and wished the removal of such an object—from her bed-chamber, at least: and was so affected with the noble answer she made upon it, that she entered it down the moment she left her.

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’To persons in health, said she, this sight may be shocking; and the preparation, and my unconcernedness in it, may appear affected: but to me, who have had so gradual a weaning-time from the world, and so much reason not to love it, I must say, I dwell on, I indulge, (and, strictly speaking, I enjoy,) the thoughts of death. For, believe me,’ [looking stedfastly at the awful receptacle,] ’believe what at this instant I feel to be most true, That there is such a vast superiority of weight and importance in the thought of death, and its hoped-for happy consequences, that it in a manner annihilates all other considerations and concerns. Believe me, my good friends, it does what nothing else can do: it teaches me, by strengthening in me the force of the divinest example, to forgive the injuries I have received; and shuts out the remembrance of past evils from my soul.’

And now let me ask thee, Lovelace, Dost thou think that, when the time shall come that thou shalt be obliged to launch into the boundless ocean of eternity, thou wilt be able (any more than poor Belton) to act thy part with such true heroism, as this sweet and tender blossom of a woman has manifested, and continues to manifest!

Oh! no! it cannot be!—And why can’t it be?—The reason is evident: she has no wilful errors to look back upon with self-reproach—and her mind is strengthened by the consolations which flow from that religious rectitude which has been the guide of all her actions; and which has taught her rather to choose to be a sufferer than an aggressor!

This was the support of the divine Socrates, as thou hast read. When led to execution, his wife lamenting that he should suffer being innocent, Thou fool, said he, wouldst thou wish me to be guilty!

LETTER XLIX

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Friday, *Sept*. 1.

How astonishing, in the midst of such affecting scenes, is thy mirth on what thou callest my own aspirations! Never, surely, was there such another man in this world, thy talents and thy levity taken together!— Surely, what I shall send thee with this will affect thee. If not, nothing can, till thy own hour come: and heavy will then thy reflections be!

I am glad, however, that thou enablest me to assure the lady that thou wilt no more molest her; that is to say, in other words, that, after having ruined her fortunes, and all her worldly prospects, thou wilt be so gracious, as to let her lie down and die in peace.

Thy giving up to poor Belton’s sister the little legacy, and thy undertaking to make Mowbray and Tourville follow thy example, are, I must say to thy honour, of a piece with thy generosity to thy Rose-bud and her Johnny; and to a number of other good actions

in pecuniary matters: although thy Rose-bud's is, I believe, the only instance, where a pretty woman was concerned, of such a disinterested bounty.

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Upon my faith, Lovelace, I love to praise thee; and often and often, as thou knowest, have I studied for occasions to do it: insomuch that when, for the life of me, I could not think of any thing done by thee that deserved praise, I have taken pains to applaud the not ungraceful manner in which thou hast performed actions that merited the gallows.

Now thou art so near, I will dispatch my servant to thee, if occasion requires. But, I fear, I shall soon give thee the news thou art apprehensive of. For I am just now sent for by Mrs. Smith; who has ordered the messenger to tell me, that she knew not if the lady will be alive when I come.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 1, TWO O'CLOCK, AT SMITH'S.

I could not close my letter in such an uncertainty as must have added to your impatience. For you have, on several occasions, convinced me, that the suspense you love to give would be the greatest torment to you that you could receive. A common case with all aggressive and violent spirits, I believe. I will just mention then (your servant waiting here till I have written) that the lady has had two very severe fits: in the last of which whilst she lay, they sent to the doctor and Mr. Goddard, who both advised that a messenger should be dispatched for me, as her executor; being doubtful whether, if she had a third, it would not carry her off.

She was tolerably recovered by the time I cane; and the doctor made her promise before me, that, while she was so weak, she would not attempt any more to go abroad; for, by Mrs. Lovick's description, who attended her, the shortness of her breath, her extreme weakness, and the fervour of her devotions when at church, were contraries, which, pulling different ways (the soul aspiring, the body sinking) tore her tender frame in pieces.

So much for the present. I shall detain Will. no longer than just to beg that you will send me back this packet and the last. Your memory is so good, that once reading is all you ever give, or need to give, to any thing. And who but ourselves can make out our characters, were you inclined to let any body see what passes between us? If I cannot be obliged, I shall be tempted to withhold what I write, till I have time to take a copy of it.*

* It may not be amiss to observe, that Mr. Belford's solicitude to get back his letters was owing to his desire of fulfilling the lady's wishes that he would furnish Miss Howe with materials to vindicate her memory.

A letter from Miss Howe is just now brought by a particular messenger, who says he must carry back a few lines in return. But, as the lady is just retired to lie down, the man is to call again by-and-by.

LETTER L

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Uxbridge, *Sept*. 1, *Twelve o’clock at night*.

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I send you the papers with this. You must account to me honestly and fairly, when I see you, for the earnestness with which you write for them. And then also will we talk about the contents of your last dispatch, and about some of your severe and unfriendly reflections.

Mean time, whatever thou dost, don't let the wonderful creature leave us! Set before her the sin of her preparation, as if she thought she could depart when she pleased. She'll persuade herself, at this rate, that she has nothing to do, when all is ready, but to lie down, and go to sleep: and such a lively fancy as her's will make a reality of a jest at any time.

A jest I call all that has passed between her and me; a mere jest to die for—For has not her triumph over me, from first to last, been infinitely greater than her sufferings from me?

Would the sacred regard I have for her purity, even for her personal as well as intellectual purity, permit, I could prove this as clear as the sun. Tell, therefore, the dear creature that she must not be wicked in her piety. There is a too much, as well as too little, even in righteousness. Perhaps she does not think of that.—Oh! that she would have permitted my attendance, as obligingly as she does of thine!—The dear soul used to love humour. I remember the time that she knew how to smile at a piece of apropos humour. And, let me tell thee, a smile upon the lips, or a sparkling in the eye, must have had its correspondent cheerfulness in a heart so sincere as her's.

Tell the doctor I will make over all my possessions, and all my reversions, to him, if he will but prolong her life for one twelvemonth to come. But for one twelvemonth, Jack!—-He will lose all his reputation with me, and I shall treat him as Belton did his doctor, if he cannot do this for me, on so young a subject. But nineteen, Belford!—nineteen cannot so soon die of grief, if the doctor deserve that title; and so blooming and so fine a constitution as she had but three or four months ago!

But what need the doctor to ask her leave to write to her friends? Could he not have done it without letting her know any thing of the matter? That was one of the likeliest means that could be thought of to bring some of them about her, since she is so desirous to see them. At least it would have induced them to send up her favourite Norton. But these plaguy solemn fellows are great traders in parade. They'll cram down your throat their poisonous drugs by wholesale, without asking you a question; and have the assurance to own it to be prescribing: but when they are to do good, they are to require your consent.

How the dear creature's character rises in every line of thy letters! But it is owing to the uncommon occasions she has met with that she blazes out upon us with such a meridian lustre. How, but for those occasions, could her noble sentiments, her prudent consideration, her forgiving spirit, her exalted benevolence, and her equanimity in view

of the most shocking prospects (which set her in a light so superior to all her sex, and even to the philosophers of antiquity) have been manifested?

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I know thou wilt think I am going to claim some merit to myself, for having given her such opportunities of signalizing her virtues. But I am not; for, if I did, I must share that merit with her implacable relations, who would justly be entitled to two-thirds of it, at least: and my soul disdains a partnership in any thing with such a family.

But this I mention as an answer to thy reproaches, that I could be so little edified by perfections, to which, thou supposest, I was for so long together daily and hourly a personal witness—when, admirable as she was in all she said, and in all she did, occasion had not at that time ripened, and called forth, those amazing perfections which now astonish and confound me.

Hence it is that I admire her more than ever; and that my love for her is less personal, as I may say, more intellectual, than ever I thought it could be to a woman.

Hence also it is that I am confident (would it please the Fates to spare her, and make her mine) I could love her with a purity that would draw on my own *future*, as well as ensure her *temporal*, happiness.—And hence, by necessary consequence, shall I be the most miserable of all men, if I am deprived of her.

Thou severely reflectest upon me for my levity: the Abbey instance in thine eye, I suppose. And I will be ingenuous enough to own, that as thou seest not my heart, there may be passages, in every one of my letters, which (the melancholy occasion considered) deserve thy most pointed rebukes. But faith, Jack, thou art such a tragi-comical mortal, with thy leaden aspirations at one time, and thy flying hour-glasses and dreaming terrors at another, that, as Prior says, What serious is, thou turn'st to farce; and it is impossible to keep within the bounds of decorum or gravity when one reads what thou writest.

But to restrain myself (for my constitutional gayety was ready to run away with me again) I will repeat, I must ever repeat, that I am most egregiously affected with the circumstances of the case: and, were this paragon actually to quit the world, should never enjoy myself one hour together, though I were to live to the age of Methusalem.

Indeed it is to this deep concern, that my levity is owing: for I struggle and struggle, and try to buffet down my cruel reflections as they rise; and when I cannot, I am forced, as I have often said, to try to make myself laugh, that I may not cry; for one or other I must do: and is it not philosophy carried to the highest pitch, for a man to conquer such tumults of soul as I am sometimes agitated by, and, in the very height of the storm, to be able to quaver out an horse-laugh?

Your Seneca's, your Epictetus's, and the rest of your stoical tribe, with all their apathy nonsense, could not come up to this. They could forbear wry faces: bodily pains they could well enough seem to support; and that was all: but the pangs of their own smitten-down souls they could not laugh over, though they could at the follies of others.

They read grave lectures; but they were grave. This high point of philosophy, to laugh and be merry in the midst of the most soul-harrowing woes, when the heart-strings are just bursting asunder, was reserved for thy Lovelace.

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There is something owing to constitution, I own; and that this is the laughing-time of my life. For what a woe must that be, which for an hour together can mortify a man six or seven and twenty, in high blood and spirits, of a naturally gay disposition, who can sing, dance, and scribble, and take and give delight in them all?—But then my grief, as my joy, is sharper-pointed than most other men's; and, like what Dolly Welby once told me, describing the parturient throes, if there were not lucid intervals, if they did not come and go, there would be no bearing them.

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After all, as I am so little distant from the dear creature, and as she is so very ill, I think I cannot excuse myself from making her one visit. Nevertheless, if I thought her so near —[what word shall I use, that my soul is not shocked at!] and that she would be too much discomposed by a visit, I would not think of it.—Yet how can I bear the recollection, that, when she last went from me (her innocence so triumphant over my premeditated guilt, as was enough to reconcile her to life, and to set her above the sense of injuries so nobly sustained, that) she should then depart with an incurable fracture in her heart; and that that should be the last time I should ever see her!—How, how, can I bear this reflection!

O Jack! how my conscience, that gives edge even to thy blunt reflections, tears me!—-Even this moment would I give the world to push the cruel reproacher from me by one ray of my usual gayety!—Sick of myself!—sick of the remembrance of my vile plots; and of my light, my momentary ecstacy [villanous burglar, felon, thief, that I was!] which has brought on me such durable and such heavy remorse! what would I give that I had not been guilty of such barbarous and ungrateful perfidy to the most excellent of God's creatures!

I would end, methinks, with one sprightlier line!—but it will not be.— Let me tell thee then, and rejoice at it if thou wilt, that I am

Inexpressibly miserable!

LETTER LI

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Sat. *Morning*, *Sept*. 2.

I have some little pleasure given me by thine, just now brought me. I see now that thou hast a little humanity left. Would to Heaven, for the dear lady's sake, as well as for thy own, that thou hadst rummaged it up from all the dark forgotten corners of thy soul a little sooner!

The lady is alive, and serene, and calm, and has all her noble intellects clear and strong: but nineteen will not however save her. She says she will now content herself with her closet duties, and the visits of the parish-minister; and will not attempt to go out. Nor, indeed, will she, I am afraid, ever walk up or down a pair of stairs again.

I am sorry at my soul to have this to say: but it would be a folly to flatter thee.

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As to thy seeing her, I believe the least hint of that sort, now, would cut off some hours of her life.

What has contributed to her serenity, it seems, is, that taking the alarm her fits gave her, she has entirely finished, and signed and sealed, her last will: which she had deferred till this time, in hopes, as she said, of some good news from Harlowe-place; which would have induced her to alter some passages in it.

Miss Howe's letter was not given her till four in the afternoon, yesterday; at which time the messenger returned for an answer. She admitted him into her presence in the dining-room, ill as she then was, and she would have written a few lines, as desired by Miss Howe; but, not being able to hold a pen, she bid the messenger tell her that she hoped to be well enough to write a long letter by the next day's post; and would not now detain him.

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SATURDAY, SIX IN THE AFTERNOON.

I called just now, and found the lady writing to Miss Howe. She made me a melancholy compliment, that she showed me not Miss Howe's letter, because I should soon have that and all her papers before me. But she told me that Miss Howe had very considerably obviated to Colonel Morden several things which might have occasioned misapprehensions between him and me; and had likewise put a lighter construction, for the sake of peace, on some of your actions than they deserved.

She added, that her cousin Morden was warmly engaged in her favour with her friends: and one good piece of news Miss Howe's letter contained, that her father would give up some matters, which (appertaining to her of right) would make my executorship the easier in some particulars that had given her a little pain.

She owned she had been obliged to leave off (in the letter she was writing) through weakness.

Will. says he shall reach you to-night. I shall send in the morning; and, if I find her not worse, will ride to Edgware, and return in the afternoon.

LETTER LII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TUESDAY, AUG. 29.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

We are at length returned to our own home. I had intended to wait on you in London: but my mother is very ill—Alas! my dear, she is very ill indeed—and you are likewise very ill—I see that by your's of the 25th— What shall I do, if I lose two such near, and dear, and tender friends? She was taken ill yesterday at our last stage in our return home—and has a violent surfeit and fever, and the doctors are doubtful about her.

If she should die, how will all my pertnesses to her fly in my face!— Why, why, did I ever vex her? She says I have been all duty and obedience!—She kindly forgets all my faults, and remembers every thing I have been so happy as to oblige her in. And this cuts me to the heart.

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I see, I see, my dear, that you are very bad—and I cannot bear it. Do, my beloved Miss Harlowe, if you can be better, do, for my sake, be better; and send me word of it. Let the bearer bring me a line. Be sure you send me a line. If I lose you, my more than sister, and lose my mother, I shall distrust my own conduct, and will not marry. And why should I?—Creeping, cringing in courtship!—O my dear, these men are a vile race of reptiles in our day, and mere bears in their own. See in Lovelace all that is desirable in figure, in birth, and in fortune: but in his heart a devil!—See in Hickman—Indeed, my dear, I cannot tell what any body can see in Hickman, to be always preaching in his favour. And is it to be expected that I, who could hardly bear control from a mother, should take it from a husband?—from one too, who has neither more wit, nor more understanding, than myself? yet he to be my instructor!—So he will, I suppose; but more by the insolence of his will than by the merit of his counsel. It is in vain to think of it. I cannot be a wife to any man breathing whom I at present know. This I the rather mention now, because, on my mother's danger, I know you will be for pressing me the sooner to throw myself into another sort of protection, should I be deprived of her. But no more of this subject, or indeed of any other; for I am obliged to attend my mamma, who cannot bear me out of her sight.

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WEDNESDAY, AUG. 30.

My mother, Heaven be praised! has had a fine night, and is much better. Her fever has yielded to medicine! and now I can write once more with freedom and ease to you, in hopes that you also are better. If this be granted to my prayers, I shall again be happy, I writhe with still the more alacrity as I have an opportunity given me to touch upon a subject in which you are nearly concerned.

You must know then, my dear, that your cousin Morden has been here with me. He told me of an interview he had on Monday at Lord M.'s with Lovelace; and asked me abundance of questions about you, and about that villanous man.

I could have raised a fine flame between them if I would: but, observing that he is a man of very lively passions, and believing you would be miserable if any thing should happen to him from a quarrel with a man who is known to have so many advantages at his sword, I made not the worst of the subjects we talked of. But, as I could not tell untruths in his favour, you must think I said enough to make him curse the wretch.

I don't find, well as they all used to respect Colonel Morden, that he has influence enough upon them to bring them to any terms of reconciliation.

What can they mean by it!—But your brother is come home, it seems: so, the honour of the house, the reputation of the family, is all the cry!

The Colonel is exceedingly out of humour with them all. Yet has he not hitherto, it seems, seen your brutal brother.—I told him how ill you were, and communicated to him some of the contents of your letter. He admired you, cursed Lovelace, and raved against all your family.—He declared that they were all unworthy of you.

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At his earnest request, I permitted him to take some brief notes of such of the contents of your letter to me as I thought I could read to him; and, particularly, of your melancholy conclusion.*

* See Letter XXXII. of this volume.

He says that none of your friends think you are so ill as you are; nor will believe it. He is sure they all love you; and that dearly too.

If they do, their present hardness of heart will be the subject of everlasting remorse to them should you be taken from us—but now it seems [barbarous wretches!] you are to suffer within an inch of your life.

He asked me questions about Mr. Belford: and, when he had heard what I had to say of that gentleman, and his disinterested services to you, he raved at some villanous surmises thrown out against you by that officious pedant, Brand: who, but for his gown, I find, would come off poorly enough between your cousin and Lovelace.

He was so uneasy about you himself, that on Thursday, the 24th, he sent up an honest serious man,* one Alston, a gentleman farmer, to inquire of your condition, your visiters, and the like; who brought him word that you was very ill, and was put to great straits to support yourself: but as this was told him by the gentlewoman of the house where you lodge, who, it seems, mingled it with some tart, though deserved, reflections upon your relations' cruelty, it was not credited by them: and I myself hope it cannot be true; for surely you could not be so unjust, I will say, to my friendship, as to suffer any inconveniencies for want of money. I think I could not forgive you, if it were so.

* See Letter XXIII. ibid.

The Colonel (as one of your trustees) is resolved to see you put into possession of your estate: and, in the mean time, he has actually engaged them to remit to him for you the produce of it accrued since your grandfather's death, (a very considerable sum;) and proposes himself to attend you with it. But, by a hint he dropt, I find you had disappointed some people's littleness, by not writing to them for money and supplies; since they were determined to distress you, and to put you at defiance.

Like all the rest!—I hope I may say that without offence.

Your cousin imagines that, before a reconciliation takes place, they will insist that you make such a will, as to that estate, as they shall approve of: but he declares that he will not go out of England till he has seen justice done you by every body; and that you shall not be imposed on either by friend or foe—

By relation or foe, should he not have said?—for a friend will not impose upon a friend.

So, my dear, you are to buy your peace, if some people are to have their wills!

Your cousin [not I, my dear, though it was always my opinion*] says, that the whole family is too rich to be either humble, considerate, or contented. And as for himself, he has an ample fortune, he says, and thinks of leaving it wholly to you.

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* See Vol. I. Letter X.

Had this villain Lovelace consulted his worldly interest only, what a fortune would he have had in you, even although your marrying him had deprived you of a paternal share!

I am obliged to leave off here. But having a good deal still more to write, and my mother better, I will pursue the subject in another letter, although I send both together. I need not say how much I am, and will ever be,

Your affectionate, &c.
Anna Howe.

LETTER LIII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE THURSDAY, AUGUST 31.

The Colonel thought fit once, in praise of Lovelace's generosity, to say, that (as a man of honour ought) he took to himself all the blame, and acquitted you of the consequences of the precipitate step you had taken; since he said, as you loved him, and was in his power, he must have had advantages which he would not have had, if you had continued at your father's, or at any friend's.

Mighty generous, I said, (were it as he supposed,) in such insolent reflectors, the best of them; who pretend to clear reputations which never had been sullied but by falling into their dirty acquaintance! but in this case, I averred, that there was no need of any thing but the strictest truth, to demonstrate Lovelace to be the blackest of villains, you the brightest of innocents.

This he catched at; and swore, that if any thing uncommon or barbarous in the seduction were to come out, as indeed one of the letters you had written to your friends, and which had been shown him, very strongly implied; that is to say, my dear, if any thing worse than perjury, breach of faith, and abuse of a generous confidence, were to appear! [sorry fellows!] he would avenge his cousin to the utmost.

I urged your apprehensions on this head from your last letter to me: but he seemed capable of taking what I know to be real greatness of soul, in an unworthy sense: for he mentioned directly upon it the expectations your friends had, that you should (previous to any reconciliation with them) appear in a court of justice against the villain—*if* you could do it with the advantage to yourself that I hinted might be done.

And truly, if I would have heard him, he had indelicacy enough to have gone into the nature of the proof of the crime upon which they wanted to have Lovelace arraigned. Yet this is a man improved by travel and learning!—Upon my word, my dear, I, who

have been accustomed to the most delicate conversation ever since I had the honour to know you, despise this sex from the gentleman down to the peasant.

Upon the whole, I find that Mr. Morden has a very slender notion of women's virtue in particular cases: for which reason I put him down, though your favourite, as one who is not entitled to cast the first stone.

I never knew a man who deserved to be well thought of himself for his morals, who had a slight opinion of the virtue of our sex in general. For if, from the difference of temperament and education, modesty, chastity, and piety too, are not to be found in our sex preferably to the other, I should think it a sign of much worse nature in ours.

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He even hinted (as from your relations indeed) that it is impossible but there most be some will where there is much love.

These sort of reflections are enough to make a woman, who has at heart her own honour and the honour of her sex, to look about her, and consider what she is doing when she enters into an intimacy with these wretches; since it is plain, that whenever she throws herself into the power of a man, and leaves for him her parents or guardians, every body will believe it to be owing more to her good luck than to her discretion if there be not an end of her virtue: and let the man be ever such a villain to her, she must take into her own bosom a share of his guilty baseness.

I am writing to general cases. You, my dear, are out of the question. Your story, as I have heretofore said, will afford a warning as well as an example:* For who is it that will not infer, that if a person of your fortune, character, and merit, could not escape ruin, after she had put herself into the power of her hyaena, what can a thoughtless, fond, giddy creature expect?

* See Vol. IV. Letter XXIII.

Every man, they will say, is not a *Lovelace*—True: but then, neither is every woman a *Clarissa*. And allow for the one and for the other the example must be of general use.

I prepared Mr. Morden to expect your appointment of Mr. Belford for an office that we both hope he will have no occasion to act in (nor any body else) for many, very many years to come. He was at first startled at it: but, upon hearing such of your reasons as had satisfied me, he only said that such an appointment, were it to take place, would exceedingly affect his other cousins.

He told me, he had a copy of Lovelace's letter to you, imploring your pardon, and offering to undergo any penance to procure it;* and also of your answer to it.**

* See Vol. VII. Letter LXXIX. ** Ibid. Letter LXXXIII.

I find he is willing to hope that a marriage between you may still take place; which, he says, will heal up all breaches.

I would have written much more—on the following particulars especially; to wit, of the wretched man's hunting you out of your lodgings: of your relations' strange implacableness, [I am in haste, and cannot think of a word you would like better just now:] of your last letter to Lovelace, to divert him from pursuing you: of your aunt Hervey's penitential conversation with Mrs. Norton: of Mr. Wyerley's renewed address: of your lessons to me in Hickman's behalf, so approvable, were the man more so than he is; but indeed I am offended with him at this instant, and have been for these two days: of your sister's transportation-project: and of twenty and twenty other things: but

am obliged to leave off, to attend my two cousins Spilsworth, and my cousin Herbert, who are come to visit us on account of my mother's illness—I will therefore dispatch these by Rogers; and if my mother gets well soon (as I hope she will) I am resolved to see you in town, and tell you every thing that now is upon my mind; and particularly, mingling my soul with your's, how much I am, and will ever be, my dearest, dear friend,

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Your affectionate
Anna Howe.

Let Rogers bring one line, I pray you. I thought to have sent him this afternoon; but he cannot set out till to-morrow morning early.

I cannot express how much your staggering lines and your conclusion affect me!

LETTER LIV

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Sunday evening, *Sept*. 3.

I wonder not at the impatience your servant tells me you express to hear from me. I was designing to write you a long letter, and was just returned from Smith's for that purpose; but, since you are urgent, you must be contented with a short one.

I attended the lady this morning, just before I set out for Edgware. She was so ill over-night, that she was obliged to leave unfinished her letter to Miss Howe. But early this morning she made an end of it, and just sealed it up as I came. She was so fatigued with writing, that she told me she would lie down after I was gone, and endeavour to recruit her spirits.

They had sent for Mr. Goddard, when she was so ill last night; and not being able to see him out of her own chamber, he, for the first time, saw her house, as she calls it. He was extremely shocked and concerned at it; and chid Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick for not persuading her to have such an object removed form her bed-chamber: and when they excused themselves on the little authority it was reasonable to suppose they must have with a lady so much their superior, he reflected warmly on those who had more authority, and who left her to proceed with such a shocking and solemn whimsy, as he called it.

It is placed near the window, like a harpsichord, though covered over to the ground: and when she is so ill that she cannot well go to her closet, she writes and reads upon it, as others would upon a desk or table. But (only as she was so ill last night) she chooses not to see any body in that apartment.

I went to Edgware; and, returning in the evening, attended her again. She had a letter brought her from Mrs. Norton (a long one, as it seems by its bulk,) just before I came. But she had not opened it; and said, that as she was pretty calm and composed, she was afraid to look into the contents, lest she should be ruffled; expecting now to hear of nothing that could do her good or give her pleasure from that good woman's dear hard-hearted neighbours, as she called her own relations.

Seeing her so weak and ill, I withdrew; nor did she desire me to tarry, as sometimes she does, when I make a motion to depart.

I had some hints, as I went away, from Mrs. Smith, that she had appropriated that evening to some offices, that were to save trouble, as she called it, after her departure; and had been giving orders to her nurse, and to Mrs. Lovick, and Mrs. Smith, about what she would have done when she was gone; and I believe they were of a very delicate and affecting nature; but Mrs. Smith descended not to particulars.

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The doctor had been with her, as well as Mr. Goddard; and they both joined with great earnestness to persuade her to have her house removed out of her sight; but she assured them that it gave her pleasure and spirits; and, being a necessary preparation, she wondered they should be surprised at it, when she had not any of her family about her, or any old acquaintance, on whose care and exactness in these punctilios, as she called them, she could rely.

The doctor told Mrs. Smith, that he believed she would hold out long enough for any of her friends to have notice of her state, and to see her; and hardly longer; and since he could not find that she had any certainty of seeing her cousin Morden, (which made it plain that her relations continued inflexible,) he would go home, and write a letter to her father, take it as she would.

She had spent great part of the day in intense devotions; and to-morrow morning she is to have with her the same clergyman who has often attended her; from whose hands she will again receive the sacrament.

Thou seest, Lovelace, that all is preparing, that all will be ready; and I am to attend her to-morrow afternoon, to take some instructions from her in relation to my part in the office to be performed for her. And thus, omitting the particulars of a fine conversation between her and Mrs. Lovick, which the latter acquainted me with, as well as another between her and the doctor and apothecary, which I had a design this evening to give you, they being of a very affecting nature, I have yielded to your impatience.

> I shall dispatch Harry to-morrow morning early with her letter to Miss Howe: an offer she took very kindly; as she is extremely solicitous to lessen that young lady's apprehensions for her on not hearing from her by Saturday's post: and yet, if she write truth, as no doubt but she will, how can her apprehensions be lessened?

LETTER LV

Miss Clarissa Harlowe, *to miss Howe*
Saturday, *Sept*. 2.

I write, my beloved Miss Howe, though very ill still: but I could not by the return of your messenger; for I was then unable to hold a pen.

Your mother's illness (as mentioned in the first part of your letter,) gave me great distress for you, till I read farther. You bewailed it as became a daughter so sensible. May you be blessed in each other for many, very many years to come! I doubt not, that even this sudden and grievous indisposition, by the frame it has put you in, and the

apprehension it has given you of losing so dear a mother, will contribute to the happiness I wish you: for, alas! my dear, we seldom know how to value the blessings we enjoy, till we are in danger of losing them, or have actually lost them: and then, what would we give to have them restored to us!

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What, I wonder, has again happened between you and Mr. Hickman? Although I know not, I dare say it is owing to some petty petulance, to some half-ungenerous advantage taken of his obligingness and assiduity. Will you never, my dear, give the weight you and all our sex ought to give to the qualities of sobriety and regularity of life and manners in that sex? Must bold creatures, and forward spirits, for ever, and by the best and wisest of us, as well as by the indiscreetest, be the most kindly treated?

My dear friends know not that I have actually suffered within less than an inch of my life.

Poor Mr. Brand! he meant well, I believe. I am afraid all will turn heavily upon him, when he probably imagined that he was taking the best method to oblige. But were he not to have been so light of belief, and so weakly officious; and had given a more favourable, and, it would be strange if I could not say, a juster report; things would have been, nevertheless, exactly as they are.

I must lay down my pen. I am very ill. I believe I shall be better by-and-by. The bad writing would betray me, although I had a mind to keep from you what the event must soon—

***

Now I resume my trembling pen. Excuse the unsteady writing. It will be so—

I have wanted no money: so don't be angry about such a trifle as money. Yet I am glad of what you inclined me to hope, that my friends will give up the produce of my grandfather's estate since it has been in their hands: because, knowing it to be my right, and that they could not want it, I had already disposed of a good part of it; and could only hope they would be willing to give it up at my last request. And now how rich shall I think myself in this my last stage!—And yet I did not want before—indeed I did not—for who, that has many superfluities, can be said to want!

Do not, my dear friend, be concerned that I call it my last stage; For what is even the long life which in high health we wish for? What, but, as we go along, a life of apprehension, sometimes for our friends, oftener for ourselves? And at last, when arrived at the old age we covet, one heavy loss or deprivation having succeeded another, we see ourselves stript, as I may say, of every one we loved; and find ourselves exposed, as uncompanionable poor creatures, to the slights, to the contempts, of jostling youth, who want to push us off the stage, in hopes to possess what we have:—and, superadded to all, our own infirmities every day increasing: of themselves enough to make the life we wished for the greatest disease of all! Don't you remember the lines of Howard, which once you read to me in my ivy-bower?*

* These are the lines the lady refers to:

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From death we rose to life: ’tis but the same,
Through life to pass again from whence we came.
With shame we see our *passions* can prevail,
Where reason, certainty, and virtue fail.
Honour, that empty name, can death despise; |
SCORN’D *love* to death, as to a refuge, flies; |
And *sorrow* waits for death with longing eyes. |
Hope triumphs o’er the thoughts of death; and *fate*
Cheats fools, and flatters the unfortunate.
We fear to lose, what a small time must waste,
Till life itself grows the disease at last.
Begging for life, we beg for more decay,
And to be long a dying only pray.

In the disposition of what belongs to me, I have endeavoured to do every thing in the justest and best manner I could think of; putting myself in my relations’ places, and, in the greater points, ordering my matters as if no misunderstanding had happened.

I hope they will not think much of some bequests where wanted, and where due from my gratitude: but if they should, what is done, is done; and I cannot now help it. Yet I must repeat, that I hope, I hope, I have pleased every one of them. For I would not, on any account, have it thought that, in my last disposition, any thing undaughterly, unsisterly, or unlike a kinswoman, should have had place in a mind that is a truly free (as I will presume to say) from all resentment, that it now overflows with gratitude and blessings for the good I have received, although it be not all that my heart wished to receive. Were it even an hardship that I was not favoured with more, what is it but an hardship of half a year, against the most indulgent goodness of eighteen years and an half, that ever was shown to a daughter?

My cousin, you tell me, thinks I was off my guard, and that I was taken at some advantage. Indeed, my dear, I was not. Indeed I gave no room for advantage to be taken of me. I hope, one day, that will be seen, if I have the justice done me which Mr. Belford assures me of.

I should hope that my cousin has not taken the liberties which you (by an observation not, in general, unjust) seem to charge him with. For it is sad to think, that the generality of that sex should make so light of crimes, which they justly hold so unpardonable in their own most intimate relations of our’s—yet cannot commit them without doing such injuries to other families as they think themselves obliged to resent unto death, when offered to their own.

But we women are to often to blame on this head; since the most virtuous among us seldom make virtue the test of their approbation of the other sex; insomuch that a man may glory in his wickedness of this sort without being rejected on that account, even to

the faces of women of unquestionable virtue. Hence it is, that a libertine seldom thinks himself concerned so much as to save appearances: And what is it not that our sex suffers in their opinion on this very score? And what have I, more than many others, to answer for on this account in the world's eye?

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May my story be a warning to all, how they prefer a libertine to a man of true honour; and how they permit themselves to be misled (where they mean the best) by the specious, yet foolish hope of subduing riveted habits, and, as I may say, of altering natures!—The more foolish, as constant experience might convince us, that there is hardly one in ten, of even tolerably happy marriages, in which the wife keeps the hold in the husband's affections, which she had in the lover's. What influence then can she hope to have over the morals of an avowed libertine, who marries perhaps for conveniency, who despises the tie, and whom, it is too probable, nothing but old age, or sickness, or disease, (the consequence of ruinous riot,) can reclaim?

I am very glad you gave my cous—

SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 3, SIX O'CLOCK.

Hither I had written, and was forced to quit my pen. And so much weaker and worse I grew, that had I resumed it, to have closed here, it must have been with such trembling unsteadiness, that it would have given you more concern for me, than the delay of sending it away by last night's post can do. I deferred it, therefore, to see how it would please God to deal with me. And I find myself, after a better night than I expected, lively and clear; and hope to give a proof that I do, in the continuation of my letter, which I will pursue as currently as if I had not left off.

I am glad that you so considerately gave my cousin Morden favourable impressions of Mr. Belford; since, otherwise, some misunderstanding might have happened between them: for although I hope this Mr. Belford is an altered man, and in time will be a reformed one, yet is he one of those high spirits that has been accustomed to resent imaginary indignities to himself, when, I believe, he has not been studious to avoid giving real offences to others; men of this cast acting as if they thought all the world was made to bar with them, and they with nobody in it.

Mr. Lovelace, you tell me, thought fit to intrust my cousin with the copy of his letter of penitence to me, and with my answer to it, rejecting him and his suit: and Mr. Belford, moreover, acquaints me, how much concerned Mr. Lovelace is for his baseness, and how freely he accused himself to my cousin. This shows, that the true bravery of spirit is to be above doing a vile action; and that nothing subjects the human mind to so much meanness, as the consciousness of having done wilful wrong to our fellow creatures. How low, how sordid, are the submissions which elaborate baseness compels! that that wretch could treat me as he did, and then could so poorly creep to me for forgiveness of crimes so wilful, so black, and so premeditated! how my soul despised him for his meanness on a certain occasion, of which you will one day be informed!* and him whose actions one's heart despises, it is far from being difficult to reject, had one ever so partially favoured him once.

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* Meaning his meditated second violence (See Vol. VI. Letter XXXVI.) and his succeeding letters to her, supplicating for her pardon.

Yet am I glad this violent spirit can thus creep; that, like a poisonous serpent, he can thus coil himself, and hide his head in his own narrow circlets; because this stooping, this abasement, gives me hope that no farther mischief will ensue.

All my apprehension is, what may happen when I am gone; lest then my cousin, or any other of my family, should endeavour to avenge me, and risk their own more precious lives on that account.

If that part of Cain's curse were Mr. Lovelace's, to be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth; that is to say, if it meant no more harm to him than that he should be obliged to travel, as it seems he intends, (though I wish him no ill in his travels;) and I could know it; then should I be easy in the hoped-for safety of my friends from his skilful violence—-Oh! that I could hear he was a thousand miles off!

When I began this letter, I did not think I could have run to such a length. But 'tis to *you*, my dearest friend, and you have a title to the spirits you raise and support; for they are no longer mine, and will subside the moment I cease writing to you.

But what do you bid me hope for, when you tell me that, if your mother's health will permit, you will see me in town? I hope your mother's health will be perfected as you wish; but I dare not promise myself so great a favour; so great a blessing, I will call it—-and indeed I know not if I should be able to bear it now!

Yet one comfort it is in your power to give me; and that is, let me know, and very speedily it must be, if you wish to oblige me, that all matters are made up between you and Mr. Hickman; to whom, I see, you are resolved, with all your bravery of spirit, to owe a multitude of obligations for his patience with your flightiness. Think of this, my dear proud friend! and think, likewise, of what I have often told you, that *pride*, in man or woman, is an extreme that hardly ever fails, sooner or later, to bring forth its mortifying *contrary*.

May you, my dear Miss Howe, have no discomforts but what you make to yourself! as it will be in your own power to lessen such as these, they ought to be your punishment if you do not. There is no such thing as perfect happiness here, since the busy mind will make to itself evils, were it to find none. You will, therefore, pardon this limited wish, strange as it may appear, till you consider it: for to wish you no infelicity, either within or without you, were to wish you what can never happen in this world; and what perhaps ought not to be wished for, if by a wish one could give one's friend such an exemption; since we are not to live here always.

We must not, in short, expect that our roses will grow without thorns: but then they are useful and instructive thorns: which, by pricking the fingers of the too-hasty plucker, teach future caution. And who knows not that difficulty gives poignancy to our enjoyments; which are apt to lose their relish with us when they are over easily obtained?

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I must conclude—

God for ever bless you, and all you love and honour, and reward you here and hereafter for your kindness to

Your ever obliged and affectionate
Clarissa Harlowe.

LETTER LVI

Mrs. *Norton*, *to miss Clarissa Harlowe*
[*in answer to her's of Thursday*, *August* 24. *See letter* XXX. *Of this volume*.]
Thursday, *Aug*. 31.

I had written sooner, my dearest young lady, but that I have been endeavouring, ever since the receipt of your last letter, to obtain a private audience of your mother, in hopes of leave to communicate it to her. But last night I was surprised by an invitation to breakfast at Harlowe-place this morning; and the chariot came early to fetch me—an honour I did not expect.

When I came, I found there was to be a meeting of all your family with Col. Morden, at Harlowe-place; and it was proposed by your mother, and consented to, that I should be present. Your cousin, I understand, had with difficulty brought this meeting to bear; for your brother had before industriously avoided all conversation with him on the affecting subject; urging that it was not necessary to talk to Mr. Morden upon it, who, being a remoter relation than themselves, had no business to make himself a judge of their conduct to their daughter, their niece, and their sister; especially as he had declared himself in her favour; adding, that he should hardly have patience to be questioned by Mr. Morden on that head.

I was in hopes that your mother would have given me an opportunity of talking with her alone before the company met; but she seemed studiously to avoid it; I dare say, however, not with her inclination.

I was ordered in just before Mr. Morden came; and was bid to sit down— which I did in the window.

The Colonel, when he came, began the discourse, by renewing, as he called it, his solicitations in your favour. He set before them your penitence; your ill health; your virtue, though once betrayed, and basely used; he then read to them Mr. Lovelace's letter, a most contrite one indeed,* and your high-souled answer;** for that was what he justly called it; and he treated as it deserved Mr. Brand's officious information, (of which I had before heard he had made them ashamed,) by representations founded upon

inquiries made by Mr. Alston,*** whom he had procured to go up on purpose to acquaint himself with your manner of life, and what was meant by the visits of that Mr. Belford.

* See Vol. VII. LXXIX. ** Ibid. Letter LXXXIII. *** See Vol. VIII. Letter XXIII.

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He then told them, that he had the day before waited upon Miss Howe, and had been shown a letter from you to her,* and permitted to take some memorandums from it, in which you appeared, both by handwriting, and the contents, to be so very ill, that it seemed doubtful to him, if it were possible for you to get over it. And when he read to them that passage, where you ask Miss Howe, 'What can be done for you now, were your friends to be ever so favourable? and wish for their sakes, more than for your own, that they would still relent;' and then say, 'You are very ill—you must drop your pen—-and ask excuse for your crooked writing; and take, as it were, a last farewell of Miss Howe;—adieu, my dear, adieu,' are your words—

* Ibid. Letter XXXIII.

O my child! my child! said you mamma, weeping, and clasping her hands.

Dear Madam, said your brother, be so good as to think you have more children than this ungrateful one.

Yet your sister seemed affected.

Your uncle Harlowe, wiping his eyes, O cousin, said he, if one thought the poor girl was really so ill—

She must, said your uncle Antony. This is written to her private friend.
God forbid she should be quite lost!

Your uncle Harlowe wished they did not carry their resentments too far.

I begged for God's sake, wringing my hands, and with a bended knee, that they would permit me to go up to you; engaging to give them a faithful account of the way you were in. But I was chidden by your brother; and this occasioned some angry words between him and Mr. Morden.

I believe, Sir, I believe, Madam, said your sister to her father and mother, we need not trouble my cousin to read any more. It does but grieve and disturb you. My sister Clary seems to be ill: I think, if Mrs. Norton were permitted to go up to her, it would be right; wickedly as she has acted, if she be truly penitent—

Here she stopt; and every one being silent, I stood up once more, and besought them to let me go; and then I offered to read a passage or two in your letter to me of the 24th. But I was taken up again by your brother, and this occasioned still higher words between the Colonel and him.

Your mother, hoping to gain upon your inflexible brother, and to divert the anger of the two gentlemen from each other, proposed that the Colonel should proceed in reading the minutes he had taken from your letter.

He accordingly read, ’of your resuming your pen; that you thought you had taken your last farewell; and the rest of that very affecting passage, in which you are obliged to break off more than once, and afterwards to take an airing in a chair.’ Your brother and sister were affected at this; and he had recourse to his snuff-box. And where you comfort Miss Howe, and say, ‘You shall be happy;’ It is more, said he, than she will let any body else be.

Your sister called you sweet soul! but with a low voice: then grew hard-hearted again; set said [sic], Nobody could help being affected by your pathetic grief—but that it was your talent.

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The Colonel then went on to the good effect your airing had upon you; to your good wishes to Miss Howe and Mr. Hickman; and to your concluding sentence, that when the happy life you wished to her comes to be wound up, she may be as calm and as easy at quitting it, as you hope in God you shall be. Your mother could not stand this; but retired to a corner of the room, and sobbed, and wept. Your father for a few minutes could not speak, though he seemed inclined to say something.

Your uncles were also both affected; but your brother went round to each, and again reminded your mother that she had other children.—What was there, he said, in what was read, but the result of the talent you had of moving the passions? And he blamed them for choosing to hear read what they knew their abused indulgence could not be a proof against.

This set Mr. Morden up again—Fie upon you, Cousin Harlowe, said he, I see plainly to whom it is owing that all relationship and ties of blood, with regard to this sweet sufferer, are laid aside. Such rigours as these make it difficult for a sliding virtue ever to recover itself.

Your brother pretended the honour of the family; and declared, that no child ought to be forgiven who abandoned the most indulgent of parents against warning, against the light of knowledge, as you had done.

But, Sir, and Ladies, said I, rising from the seat in the window, and humbly turning round to each, if I may be permitted to speak, my dear Miss asks only for a blessing. She does not beg to be received to favour; she is very ill, and asks only for a last blessing.

Come, come, good Norton, [I need not tell you who said this,] you are up again with your lamentables!—A good woman, as you are, to forgive so readily a crime, that has been as disgraceful to your part in her education as to her family, is a weakness that would induce one to suspect your virtue, if you were to be encountered by a temptation properly adapted.

By some such charitable logic, said Mr. Morden, as this, is my cousin Arabella captivated, I doubt not. If virtue, you, Mr. James Harlowe, are the most virtuous young man in the world.

I knew how it would be, replied your brother, in a passion, if I met Mr. Morden upon this business. I would have declined it; but you, Sir, to his father, would not permit me to do so.

But, Sir, turning to the Colonel, in no other presence——

Then, Cousin James, interrupted the other gentleman, that which is your protection, it seems, is mine. I am not used to bear defiances thus— you are my Cousin, Sir, and the son and nephew of persons as dear as near to me—There he paused—

Are we, said your father, to be made still more unhappy among ourselves, when the villain lives that ought to be the object of every one's resentment who has either a value for the family, or for this ungrateful girl?

That's the man, said your cousin, whom last Monday, as you know, I went purposely to make the object of mine. But what could I say, when I found him so willing to repair his crime?—And I give it as my opinion, and have written accordingly to my poor cousin, that it is best for all round that his offer should be accepted; and let me tell you—

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Tell me nothing, said your father, quite enraged, or that very vile fellow! I have a rivetted hatred to him. I would rather see the rebel die an hundred deaths, were it possible, than that she should give such a villain as him a relation to my family.

Well, but there is no room to think, said you mother, that she will give us such a relation, my dear. The poor girl will lessen, I fear, the number of our relations not increase it. If she be so ill as we are told she is, let us send Mrs. Norton up to her.—That's the least we can do— let us take her, however, out of the hands of that Belford.

Both your uncles supported this motion; the latter part of it especially.

Your brother observed, in his ill-natured way, what a fine piece of consistency it was in you to refuse the vile injurer, and the amends he offered; yet to throw yourself upon the protection of his fast friend.

Miss Harlowe was apprehensive, she said, that you would leave all you could leave to that pert creature, Miss Howe, [so she called her,] if you should die.

O do not, do not suppose that, my Bella, said your poor mother. I cannot think of parting with my Clary—with all her faults, she is my child—her reasons for her conduct are not heard—it would break my heart to lose her.—I think, my dear, to your father, none so fit as I to go up, if you will give me leave, and Mrs. Norton shall accompany me.

This was a sweet motion, and your father paused upon it. Mr. Morden offered his service to escort her; your uncles seemed to approve of it; but your brother dashed all. I hope, Sir, said he, to his father—I hope, Madam, to his mother—that you will not endeavour to recover a faulty daughter by losing an unculpable son. I do declare, that if ever my sister Clary darkens these doors again, I never will. I will set out, Madam, the same hour you go to London, (on such an errand,) to Edinburgh; and there I will reside, and try to forget that I have relations in England, so near and so dear as you are now all to me.

Good God, said the Colonel, what a declaration is this! And suppose, Sir, and suppose, Madam, [turning to your father and mother,] this should be the case, whether it is better, think you, that you should lose for ever such a daughter as my cousin Clary, or that your son should go to Edinburgh, and reside there upon an estate which will be the better for his residence upon it?—

Your brother's passionate behaviour hereupon is hardly to be described. He resented it as promising an alienation of the affection of the family to him. And to such an height were resentments carried, every one siding with him, that the Colonel, with hands and eyes lifted up, cried out, What hearts of flint am I related to!—O, Cousin Harlowe, to your father, are you resolved to have but one daughter?—Are you, Madam, to be taught, by a son, who has no bowels, to forget you are a mother?

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The Colonel turned from them to draw out his handkerchief, and could not for a minute speak. The eyes of every one, but the hard-hearted brother, caught tears from his.

But then turning to them, (with the more indignation, as it seemed, as he had been obliged to show a humanity, which, however, no brave heart should be ashamed of,) I leave ye all, said he, fit company for one another. I will never open my lips to any of you more upon this subject. I will instantly make my will, and in me shall the dear creature have the father, uncle, brother, she has lost. I will prevail upon her to take the tour of France and Italy with me; nor shall she return till ye know the value of such a daughter.

And saying this, he hurried out of the room, went into the court-yard, and ordered his horse.

Mr. Antony Harlowe went to him there, just as he was mounting, and said he hoped he should find him cooler in the evening, (for he, till then, had lodged at his house,) and that then they would converse calmly, and every one, mean time, would weigh all matters well.—But the angry gentleman said, Cousin Harlowe, I shall endeavour to discharge the obligations I owe to your civility since I have been in England; but I have been so treated by that hot-headed young man, (who, as far as I know, has done more to ruin his sister than Lovelace himself, and this with the approbation of you all,) that I will not again enter into your doors, or theirs. My servants shall have orders whither to bring what belongs to me from your house. I will see my dear cousin Clary as soon as I can. And so God bless you altogether!—only this one word to your nephew, if you please—That he wants to be taught the difference between courage and bluster; and it is happy for him, perhaps, that I am his kinsman; though I am sorry he is mine.

I wondered to hear your uncle, on his return to them all, repeat this; because of the consequences it may be attended with, though I hope it will not have bad ones; yet it was considered as a sort of challenge, and so it confirmed every body in your brother's favour; and Miss Harlowe forgot not to inveigh against that error which had brought on all these evils.

I took the liberty again, but with fear and trembling, to desire leave to attend you.

Before any other person could answer, your brother said, I suppose you look upon yourself, Mrs. Norton, to be your own mistress. Pray do you want our consents and courtship to go up?—If I may speak my mind, you and my sister Clary are the fittest to be together.—Yet I wish you would not trouble your head about our family matters, till you are desired to do so.

But don't you know, brother, said Miss Harlowe, that the error of any branch of a family splits that family into two parties, and makes not only every common friend and acquaintance, but even servants judges over both?—This is one of the blessed effects of my sister Clary's fault!

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There never was a creature so criminal, said your father, looking with displeasure at me, who had not some weak heads to pity and side with her.

I wept. Your mother was so good as to take me by the hand; come, good woman, said she, come along with me. You have too much reason to be afflicted with what afflicts us, to want additions to your grief.

But, my dearest young lady, I was more touched for your sake than for my own; for I have been low in the world for a great number of years; and, of consequence, have been accustomed to snubs and rebuffs from the affluent. But I hope that patience is written as legibly on my forehead, as haughtiness on that of any of my obligers.

Your mother led me to her chamber; and there we sat and wept together for several minutes, without being able to speak either of us one word to the other. At last she broke silence, asking me, if you were really and indeed so ill as it was said you were?

I answered in the affirmative; and would have shown her your last letter; but she declined seeing it.

I would fain have procured from her the favour of a line to you, with her blessing. I asked, what was intended by your brother and sister? Would nothing satisfy them but your final reprobation?—I insinuated, how easy it would be, did not your duty and humility govern you, to make yourself independent as to circumstances; but that nothing but a blessing, a last blessing, was requested by you. And many other thins I urged in your behalf. The following brief repetition of what she was pleased to say in answer to my pleas, will give you a notion of it all; and of the present situation of things.

She said, 'She was very unhappy!—She had lost the little authority she once had over her other children, through one child's failing! and all influence over Mr. Harlowe and his brothers. Your father, she said, had besought her to leave it to him to take his own methods with you; and, (as she valued him,) to take no step in your favour unknown to him and your uncles; yet she owned, that they were too much governed by your brother. They would, however, give way in time, she knew, to a reconciliation—they designed no other, for they all still loved you.

'Your brother and sister, she owned, were very jealous of your coming into favour again;—yet could but Mr. Morden have kept his temper, and stood her son's first sallies, who (having always had the family grandeur in view) had carried his resentment so high, that he knew not how to descend, the conferences, so abruptly broken off just now, would have ended more happily; for that she had reason to think that a few concessions on your part, with regard to your grandfather's estate, and your cousin's engaging for your submission as from proper motives, would have softened them all.

’Mr. Brand’s account of your intimacy with the friend of the obnoxious man, she said, had, for the time very unhappy effects; for before that she had gained some ground: but afterwards dared not, nor indeed had inclination, to open her lips in your behalf. Your continued intimacy with that Mr. Belford was wholly unaccountable, and as wholly inexcusable.

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’What made the wished-for reconciliation, she said, more difficult, was, first, that you yourself acknowledged yourself dishonoured; (and it was too well known, that it was your own fault that you ever were in the power of so great a profligate;) of consequence, that their and your disgrace could not be greater than it was; yet, that you refuse to prosecute the wretch. Next, that the pardon and blessing hoped for must probably be attended with your marriage to the man they hate, and who hates them as much: very disagreeable circumstances, she said, I must allow, to found a reconciliation upon.

’As to her own part, she must needs say, that if there were any hope that Mr. Lovelace would become a reformed man, the letter her cousin Morden had read to them from him to you, and the justice (as she hoped it was) he did your character, though to his own condemnation, (his family and fortunes being unexceptionable,) and all his relations earnest to be related to you, were arguments that would weigh with her, could they have any with your father and uncles.’

To my plea of your illness, ’she could not but flatter herself, she answered, that it was from lowness of spirits, and temporary dejection. A young creature, she said, so very considerate as you naturally were, and fallen so low, must have enough of that. Should they lose you, which God forbid! the scene would then indeed be sadly changed; for then those who now most resented, would be most grieved; all your fine qualities would rise to their remembrance, and your unhappy error would be quite forgotten.

’She wished you would put yourself into your cousin’s protection entirely, and have nothing to more to say to Mr. Belford.

And I would recommend it to your most serious consideration, my dear Miss Clary, whether now, as your cousin (who is your trustee for your grandfather’s estate,) is come, you should not give over all thoughts of Mr. Lovelace’s intimate friend for your executor; more especially, as that gentleman’s interfering in the concerns of your family, should the sad event take place (which my heart aches but to think of) might be attended with those consequences which you are so desirous, in other cases, to obviate and prevent. And suppose, my dear young lady, you were to write one letter more to each of your uncles, to let them know how ill you are?—And to ask their advice, and offer to be governed by it, in relation to the disposition of your estate and effects?—-Methinks I wish you would.

I find they will send you up a large part of what has been received from that estate since it was your’s; together with your current cash which you left behind you: and this by your cousin Morden, for fear you should have contracted debts which may make you uneasy.

They seem to expect, that you will wish to live at your grandfather’s house, in a private manner, if your cousin prevail not upon you to go abroad for a year or two.

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FRIDAY MORNING.

Betty was with me just now. She tells me, that your cousin Morden is so much displeased with them all, that he has refused to lodge any more at your uncle Antony's; and has even taken up with inconvenient lodgings, till he is provided with others to his mind. This very much concerns them; and they repent their violent treatment of him: and the more, as he is resolved, he says, to make you his sole executrix, and heir to all his fortune.

What noble fortunes still, my dearest young lady, await you! I am thoroughly convinced, if it please God to preserve your life and your health, that every body will soon be reconciled to you, and that you will see many happy days.

Your mother wished me not to attend you as yet, because she hopes that I may give myself that pleasure soon with every body's good liking, and even at their desire. Your cousin Morden's reconciliation with them, which they are very desirous of, I am ready to hope will include theirs with you.

But if that should happen which I so much dread, and I not with you, I should never forgive myself. Let me, therefore, my dearest young lady, desire you to command my attendance, if you find any danger, and if you wish me peace of mind; and no consideration shall withhold me.

I hear that Miss Howe has obtained leave from her mother to see you; and intends next week to go to town for that purpose; and (as it is believed) to buy clothes for her approaching nuptials.

Mr. Hickman's mother-in-law is lately dead. Her jointure of 600L. a-year is fallen to him; and she has, moreover, as an acknowledgement of his good behaviour to her, left him all she was worth, which was very considerable, a few legacies excepted to her own relations.

These good men are uniformly good: indeed could not else be good; and never fare the worse for being so. All the world agrees he will make that fine young lady an excellent husband: and I am sorry they are not as much agreed in her making him an excellent wife. But I hope a woman of her principles would not encourage his address, if, whether she at present love him or not, she thought she could not love him; or if she preferred any other man to him.

Mr. Pocock undertakes to deliver this; but fears it will be Saturday night first, if not Sunday morning.

May the Almighty protect and bless you!—I long to see you—my dearest young lady, I long to see you; and to fold you once more to my fond heart. I dare to say happy days are coming. Be but cheerful. Give way to hope.

Whether for this world, or the other, you must be happy. Wish to live, however, were it only because you are so well fitted in mind to make every one happy who has the honour to know you. What signifies this transitory eclipse? You are as near perfection, by all I have heard, as any creature in this world can be: for here is your glory—you are brightened and purified, as I may say, by your sufferings!—How I long to hear your whole sad, yet instructive story, from your own lips!

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For Miss Howe's sake, who, in her new engagements will so much want you; for your cousin Morden's sake, for your mother's sake, if I must go on farther in your family; and yet I can say, for all their sakes; and for my sake, my dearest Miss Clary; let your resumed and accustomed magnanimity bear you up. You have many things to do which I know not the person who will do if you leave us.

Join your prayers then to mine, that God will spare you to a world that wants you and your example; and, although your days may seem to have been numbered, who knows but that, with the good King Hezekiah, you may have them prolonged? Which God grant, if it be his blessed will, to the prayers of

Your
Judith Norton

LETTER LVII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Monday, *Sept*. 4.

The lady would not read the letter she had from Mrs. Norton till she had received the Communion, for fear it should contain any thing that might disturb that happy calm, which she had been endeavouring to obtain for it. And when that solemn office was over, she was so composed, she said, that she thought she could receive any news, however affecting, with tranquillity.

Nevertheless, in reading it, she was forced to leave off several times through weakness and a dimness in her sight, of which she complained; if I may say complained; for so easy and soft were her complaints, that they could hardly be called such.

She was very much affected at divers parts of this letter. She wept several times, and sighed often. Mrs. Lovick told me, that these were the gentle exclamations she broke out into, as she read:—Her unkind, her cruel brother!—How unsisterly!—Poor dear woman! seeming to speak of Mrs. Norton. Her kind cousin!—O these flaming spirits! And then reflecting upon herself more than once—What a deep error is mine!—What evils have I been the occasion of!—

When I was admitted to her presence, I have received, said she, a long and not very pleasing letter from my dear Mrs. Norton. It will soon be in your hands. I am advised against appointing you to the office you have so kindly accepted of: but you must resent nothing of these things. My choice will have an odd appearance to them: but it is now too late to alter it, if I would.

I would fain write an answer to it, continued she: but I have no distinct sight, Mr. Belford, no steadiness of fingers.—This mistiness, however, will perhaps be gone by-

and-by.—Then turning to Mrs. Lovick, I don’t think I am dying yet—not actually dying, Mrs. Lovick—for I have no bodily pain—no numbnesses; no signs of immediate death, I think.—And my breath, which used of late to be so short, is now tolerable—my head clear, my intellects free—I think I cannot be dying yet—I shall have agonies, I doubt—-life will not give up so blessedly easy, I fear—yet how merciful is the Almighty, to give his poor creature such a sweet serenity!—’Tis what I have prayed for!—What encouragement, Mrs. Lovick, so near one’s dissolution, to have it to hope that one’s prayers are answered.

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Mrs. Smith, as well as Mrs. Lovick, was with her. They were both in tears; nor had I, any more than they, power to say a word in answer: yet she spoke all this, as well as what follows, with a surprising composure of mind and countenance.

But, Mr. Belford, said she, assuming a still sprightlier air and accent, let me talk a little to you, while I am thus able to say what I have to say.

Mrs. Lovick, don't leave us, [for the women were rising to go,] pray sit down; and do you, Mrs. Smith, sit down too.—Dame Shelbourne, take this key, and open the upper drawer. I will move to it.

She did, with trembling knees. Here, Mr. Belford, is my will. It is witnessed by three persons of Mr. Smith's acquaintance.

I dare to hope, that my cousin Morden will give you assistance, if you request it of him. My cousin Morden continued his affection for me: but as I have not seen him, I leave all the trouble upon you, Mr. Belford. This deed may want forms; and it does, no doubt: but the less, as I have my grandfather's will almost by heart, and have often enough heard that canvassed. I will lay it by itself in this corner; putting it at the further end of the drawer.

She then took up a parcel of letters, enclosed in one cover, sealed with three seals of black wax: This, said she, I sealed up last night. The cover, Sir, will let you know what is to be done with what it encloses. This is the superscription [holding it close to her eyes, and rubbing them]; As soon as I am certainly dead, this to be broke open by Mr. Belford.—Here, Sir, I put it [placing it by the will].—These folded papers are letters, and copies of letters, disposed according to their dates. Miss Howe will do with those as you and she shall think fit. If I receive any more, or more come when I cannot receive them, they may be put into this drawer, [pulling out and pushing in the looking-glass drawer,] to be given to Mr. Belford, be they from whom they will. You'll be so kind as to observe that, Mrs. Lovick, and dame Shelbourne.

Here, Sir, proceeded she, I put the keys of my apparel [putting them into the drawer with her papers]. All is in order, and the inventory upon them, and an account of what I have disposed of: so that nobody need to ask Mrs. Smith any questions.

There will be no immediate need to open or inspect the trunks which contain my wearing apparel. Mrs. Norton will open them, or order somebody to do it for her, in your presence, Mrs. Lovick; for so I have directed in my will. They may be sealed up now: I shall never more have occasion to open them.

She then, though I expostulated with her to the contrary, caused me to seal them up with my seal.

After this, she locked up the drawer where were her papers; first taking out her book of meditations, as she called it; saying, she should, perhaps, have use for that; and then desired me to take the key of that drawer; for she should have no further occasion for that neither.

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All this in so composed and cheerful a manner, that we were equally surprised and affected with it.

You can witness for me, Mrs. Smith, and so can you, Mrs. Lovick, proceeded she, if any one ask after my life and conversation, since you have known me, that I have been very orderly; have kept good hours; and never have lain out of your house but when I was in prison; and then you know I could not help it.

O, Lovelace! that thou hadst heard her or seen her, unknown to herself, on this occasion!—Not one of us could speak a word.

I shall leave the world in perfect charity, proceeded she. And turning towards the women, don't be so much concerned for me, my good friends. This is all but needful preparation; and I shall be very happy.

Then again rubbing her eyes, which she said were misty, and looked more intently round upon each, particularly on me—God bless you all! said she; how kindly are you concerned for me!—Who says I am friendless? Who says I am abandoned, and among strangers?—Good Mr. Belford, don't be so generously humane!—Indeed [putting her handkerchief to her charming eyes,] you will make me less happy, than I am sure you wish me to be.

While we were thus solemnly engaged, a servant came with a letter from her cousin Morden:—Then, said she, he is not come himself!

She broke it open; but every line, she said, appeared two to her: so that, being unable to read it herself, she desired I would read it to her. I did so; and wished it were more consolatory to her: but she was all patient attention: tears, however, often trickling down her cheeks. By the date, it was written yesterday; and this is the substance of it.

He tells her, 'That the Thursday before he had procured a general meeting of her principal relations, at her father's; though not without difficulty, her haughty brother opposing it, and, when met, rendering all his endeavours to reconcile them to her ineffectual. He censures him, as the most ungovernable young man he ever knew: some great sickness, he says, some heavy misfortune, is wanted to bring him to a knowledge of himself, and of what is due from him to others; and he wishes that he were not her brother, and his cousin. Nor doe he spare her father and uncles for being so implicitly led by him.'

He tells her, 'That he parted with them all in high displeasure, and thought never more to darken any of their doors: that he declared as much to her two uncles, who came to him on Saturday, to try to accommodate with him; and who found him preparing to go to London to attend her; and that, notwithstanding their pressing entreaties, he determined

so to do, and not to go with them to Harlowe-place, or to either of their own houses; and accordingly dismissed them with such an answer.

‘But that her noble letter,’ as he calls it, of Aug. 31,* ’being brought him about an hour after their departure, he thought it might affect them as much as it did him; and give them the exalted opinion of her virtue which was so well deserved; he therefore turned his horse’s head back to her uncle Antony’s, instead of forwards toward London.

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* See Letter XLV. of this volume.

’That accordingly arriving there, and finding her two uncles together, he read to them the affecting letter; which left none of the three a dry eye: that the absent, as is usual in such cases, bearing all the load, they accused her brother and sister; and besought him to put off his journey to town, till he could carry with him the blessings which she had formerly in vain solicited for; and (as they hoped) the happy tidings of a general reconciliation.

’That not doubting but his visit would be the more welcome to her, if these good ends could be obtained, he the more readily complied with their desires. But not being willing to subject himself to the possibility of receiving fresh insult from her brother, he had given her uncles a copy of her letter, for the family to assemble upon; and desired to know, as soon as possible, the result of their deliberations.

’He tells her, that he shall bring her up the accounts relating to the produce of her grandfather’s estate, and adjust them with her; having actually in his hands the arrears due to her from it.

’He highly applauds the noble manner in which she resents your usage of her. It is impossible, he owns, that you can either deserve her, or to be forgiven. But as you do justice to her virtue, and offer to make her all the reparation now in your power; and as she is so very earnest with him not to resent that usage; and declares, that you could not have been the author of her calamities but through a strange concurrence of unhappy causes; and as he is not at a loss to know how to place to a proper account that strange concurrence; he desires her not to be apprehensive of any vindictive measures from him.’

Nevertheless (as may be expected) ’he inveighs against you; as he finds that she gave you no advantage over her. But he forbears to enter further into this subject, he says, till he has the honour to see her; and the rather, as she seems so much determined against you. However, he cannot but say, that he thinks you a gallant man, and a man of sense; and that you have the reputation of being thought a generous man in every instance but where the sex is concerned. In such, he owns, that you have taken inexcusable liberties. And he is sorry to say, that there are very few young men of fortune but who allow themselves in the same. Both sexes, he observes, too much love to have each other in their power: yet he hardly ever knew man or woman who was very fond of power make a right use of it.

’If she be so absolutely determined against marrying you, as she declares she is, he hopes, he says, to prevail upon her to take (as soon as her health will permit) a little tour abroad with him, as what will probably establish it; since traveling is certainly the best physic for all those disorders which owe their rise to grief or disappointment. An

absence of two or three years will endear her to every one, on her return, and every one to her.

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’He expresses his impatience to see her. He will set out, he says, the moment he knows the result of her family’s determination; which, he doubts not, will be favourable. Nor will he wait long for that.’

When I had read the letter through to the languishing lady, And so, my friends, said she, have I heard of a patient who actually died, while five or six principal physicians were in a consultation, and not agreed upon what name to give his distemper. The patient was an emperor, the emperor Joseph, I think.

I asked, if I should write to her cousin, as he knew not how ill she was, to hasten up?

By no means, she said; since, if he were not already set out, she was persuaded that she should be so low by the time he could receive my letter, and come, that his presence would but discompose and hurry her, and afflict him.

I hope, however, she is not so very near her end. And without saying any more to her, when I retired, I wrote to Colonel Morden, that if he expects to see his beloved cousin alive, he must lose no time in setting out. I sent this letter by his own servant.

Dr. H. sent away his letter to her father by a particular hand this morning.

Mrs. Walton the milliner has also just now acquainted Mrs. Smith, that her husband had a letter brought by a special messenger from Parson Brand, within this half hour, enclosing the copy of one he had written to Mr. John Harlowe, recanting his officious one.

And as all these, and the copy of the lady’s letter to Col. Morden, will be with them pretty much at a time, the devil’s in the family if they are not struck with a remorse that shall burst open the double-barred doors of their hearts.

Will. engages to reach you with this (late as it will be) before you go to rest. He begs that I will testify for him the hour and the minute I shall give it him. It is just half an hour after ten.

I pretend to be (now by use) the swiftest short-hand writer in England, next to yourself. But were matter to arise every hour to write upon, and I had nothing else to do, I cannot write so fast as you expect. And let it be remembered, that your servants cannot bring letters or messages before they are written or sent.

LETTER LVIII

Dr. H. *To James Harlowe*, *Senior*, *Esq*.
London, *Sept*. 4.

SIR,

If I may judge of the hearts of other parents by my own, I cannot doubt but you will take it well to be informed that you have yet an opportunity to save yourself and family great future regret, by dispatching hither some one of it with your last blessing, and your lady’s, to the most excellent of her sex.

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I have some reason to believe, Sir, that she has been represented to you in a very different light from the true one. And this it is that induces me to acquaint you, that I think her, on the best grounds, absolutely irreproachable in all her conduct which has passed under my eye, or come to my ear; and that her very misfortunes are made glorious to her, and honourable to all that are related to her, by the use she has made of them; and by the patience and resignation with which she supports herself in a painful, lingering, and dispiriting decay! and by the greatness of mind with which she views her approaching dissolution. And all this from proper motives; from motives in which a dying saint might glory.

She knows not that I write. I must indeed acknowledge, that I offered to do so some days ago, and that very pressingly: nor did she refuse me from obstinacy—she seemed not to know what that is—but desired me to forbear for two days only, in hopes that her newly-arrived cousin, who, as she heard, was soliciting for her, would be able to succeed in her favour.

I hope I shall not be thought an officious man on this occasion; but, if I am, I cannot help it, being driven to write, by a kind of parental and irresistible impulse.

But, Sir, whatever you think fit to do, or permit to be done, must be speedily done; for she cannot, I verily think, live a week: and how long of that short space she may enjoy her admirable intellects to take comfort in the favours you may think proper to confer upon her cannot be said. I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

R.H.

LETTER LIX

Mr. *Belford*, *to William Morden*, *Esq*.
London, *Sept*. 4.

SIR,

The urgency of the case, and the opportunity by your servant, will sufficiently apologize for this trouble from a stranger to your person, who, however, is not a stranger to your merit.

I understand you are employing your good offices with the parents of Miss Clarissa Harlowe, and other relations, to reconcile them to the most meritorious daughter and kinswoman that ever family had to boast of.

Generously as this is intended by you, we here have too much reason to think all your solicitudes on this head will be unnecessary: for it is the opinion of every one who has the honour of being admitted to her presence, that she cannot lie over three days: so that, if you wish to see her alive, you must lose no time to come up.

She knows not that I write. I had done it sooner, if I had had the least doubt that before now she would not have received from you some news of the happy effects of your kind mediation in her behalf. I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,
J. *Belford*.

LETTER LX

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Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*. [*In answer to letter* LVII.] *Uxbridge*, *Tuesday Morn*, *between* 4 *and* 5.

And can it be, that this admirable creature will so soon leave this cursed world! For cursed I shall think it, and more cursed myself, when she is gone. O, Jack! thou who canst sit so cool, and, like Addison's Angel, direct, and even enjoy, the storm, that tears up my happiness by the roots; blame me not for my impatience, however unreasonable! If thou knowest, that already I feel the torments of the damned, in the remorse that wrings my heart, on looking back upon my past actions by her, thou wouldst not be the devil thou art, to halloo on a worrying conscience, which, without my merciless aggravations, is altogether intolerable.

I know not what to write, nor what I would write. When the company that used to delight me is as uneasy to me as my reflections are painful, and I can neither help nor divert myself, must not every servant about me partake in a perturbation so sincere!

Shall I give thee a faint picture of the horrible uneasiness with which my mind struggles? And faint indeed it must be; for nothing but outrageous madness can exceed it; and that only in the apprehension of others; since, as to the sufferer, it is certain, that actual distraction (take it out of its lucid intervals) must be an infinitely more happy state than the state of suspense and anxiety, which often brings it on.

Forbidden to attend the dear creature, yet longing to see her, I would give the world to be admitted once more to her beloved presence. I ride towards London three or four times a day, resolving pro and con, twenty times in two or three miles; and at last ride back; and, in view of Uxbridge, loathing even the kind friend, and hospitable house, turn my horse's head again towards the town, and resolve to gratify my humour, let her take it as she will; but, at the very entrance of it, after infinite canvassings, once more alter my mind, dreading to offend and shock her, lest, by that means, I should curtail a life so precious.

Yesterday, in particular, to give you an idea of the strength of that impatience, which I cannot avoid suffering to break out upon my servants, I had no sooner dispatched Will., than I took horse to meet him on his return.

In order to give him time, I loitered about on the road, riding up this lane to the one highway, down that to the other, just as my horse pointed; all the way cursing my very being; and though so lately looking down upon all the world, wishing to change conditions with the poorest beggar that cried to me for charity as I rode by him—and throwing him money, in hopes to obtain by his prayers the blessing my heart pants after.

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After I had sauntered about an hour or two, (which seemed three or four tedious ones,) fearing I had slipt the fellow, I inquired at every turnpike, whether a servant in such a livery had not passed through in his return from London, on a full gallop; for woe had been to the dog, had I met him on a sluggish trot! And lest I should miss him at one end of Kensingtohn, as he might take either the Acton or Hammersmith road; or at the other, as he might come through the Park, or not; how many score times did I ride backwards and forwards from the Palace to the Gore, making myself the subject of observation to all passengers whether on horseback or on foot; who, no doubt, wondered to see a well-dressed and well-mounted man, sometimes ambling, sometimes prancing, (as the beast had more fire than his master) backwards and forwards in so short a compass!

Yet all this time, though longing to espy the fellow, did I dread to meet him, lest he should be charged with fatal tidings.

When at distance I saw any man galloping towards me, my resemblance-forming fancy immediately made it to be him; and then my heart choked me. But when the person's nearer approach undeceived me, how did I curse the varlet's delay, and thee, by turns! And how ready was I to draw my pistol at the stranger, for having the impudence to gallop; which none but my messenger, I thought, had either right or reason to do! For all the business of the world, I am ready to imagine, should stand still on an occasion so melancholy and so interesting to me. Nay, for this week past, I could cut the throat of any man or woman I see laugh, while I am in such dejection of mind.

I am now convinced that the wretches who fly from a heavy scene, labour under ten times more distress in the intermediate suspense and apprehension, than they could have, were they present at it, and to see and know the worst: so capable is fancy or imagination, the more immediate offspring of the soul, to outgo fact, let the subject be either joyous or grievous.

And hence, as I conceive, it is, that all pleasures are greater in the expectation, or in the reflection, than in fruition; as all pains, which press heavy upon both parts of that unequal union by which frail mortality holds its precarious tenure, are ever most acute in the time of suffering: for how easy sit upon the reflection the heaviest misfortunes, when surmounted!—But most easy, I confess, those in which body has more concern than soul. This, however, is a point of philosophy I have neither time nor head just now to weigh: so take it as it falls from a madman's pen.

Woe be to either of the wretches who shall bring me the fatal news that she is no more! For it is but too likely that a shriek-owl so hated will never hoot or scream again; unless the shock, that will probably disorder my whole frame on so sad an occasion, (by unsteadying my hand,) shall divert my aim from his head, heart, or bowels, if it turn not against my own.

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But, surely, she will not, she cannot yet die! Such a matchless excellence,

——whose mind
Contains a world, and seems for all things fram'd,

could not be lent to be so soon demanded back again!

But may it not be, that thou, Belford, art in a plot with the dear creature, (who will not let me attend her to convince myself,) in order to work up my soul to the deepest remorse; and that, when she is convinced of the sincerity of my penitence, and when my mind is made such wax, as to be fit to take what impression she pleases to give it, she will then raise me up with the joyful tidings of her returning health and acceptance of me!

What would I give to have it so! And when the happiness of hundreds, as well as the peace and reconciliation of several eminent families, depend upon her restoration and happiness, why should it not be so?

But let me presume it will. Let me indulge my former hope, however improbable—I will; and enjoy it too. And let me tell thee how ecstatic my delight would be on the unravelling of such a plot as this!

Do, dear Belford, let it be so!—And, O, my dearest, and ever-dear Clarissa, keep me no loner in this cruel suspense; in which I suffer a thousand times more than ever I made thee suffer. Nor fear thou that I will resent, or recede, on an ecclaircissement so desirable; for I will adore thee for ever, and without reproaching thee for the pangs thou hast tortured me with, confess thee as much my superior in virtue and honour!

But once more, should the worst happen—say not what that worst is—and I am gone from this hated island—gone for ever—and may eternal—but I am crazed already—and will therefore conclude myself,

Thine more than my own, (and no great compliment neither) R.L.

LETTER LXI

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
TUES. *Sept*. 9 *In the Morn*. *At Mr*. *Smith's*.

When I read yours of this morning, I could not help pitying you for the account you give of the dreadful anxiety and suspense you labour under. I wish from my heart all were to end as you are so willing to hope: but it will not be; and your suspense, if the worst part of your torment, as you say it is, will soon be over; but, alas! in a way you wish not.

I attended the lady just now. She is extremely ill: yet is she aiming at an answer to her Norton's letter, which she began yesterday in her own chamber, and has written a good deal: but in a hand not like her own fine one, as Mrs. Lovick tells me, but larger, and the lines crooked.

I have accepted of the offer of a room adjoining to the widow Lovick's, till I see how matters go; but unknown to the lady; and I shall go home every night, for a few hours. I would not lose a sentence that I could gain from lips so instructive, nor the opportunity of receiving any command from her, for an estate.

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In this my new apartment I now write, and shall continue to write, as occasions offer, that I may be the more circumstantial: but I depend upon the return of my letters, or copies of them, on demand, that I may have together all that relates to this affecting story; which I shall re-peruse with melancholy pleasure to the end of my life.

I think I will send thee Brand's letter to Mr. John Harlowe, recanting his base surmises. It is a matchless piece of pedantry; and may perhaps a little divert thy deep chagrin: some time hence at least it may, if not now.

What wretched creatures are there in the world! What strangely mixed creatures!—So sensible and so silly at the same time! What a various, what a foolish creature is man! —

THREE O'CLOCK.

The lady has just finished her letter, and has entertained Mrs. Lovick, Mrs. Smith, and me, with a noble discourse on the vanity and brevity of life, to which I cannot do justice in the repetition: and indeed I am so grieved for her, that, ill as she is, my intellects are not half so clear as her's.

A few things which made the strongest impression upon me, as well from the sentiments themselves as from her manner of uttering them, I remember. She introduced them thus:

I am thinking, said she, what a gradual and happy death God Almighty (blessed be his name) affords me! Who would have thought, that, suffering what I have suffered, and abandoned as I have been, with such a tender education as I have had, I should be so long a dying!—But see now by little and little it had come to this. I was first take off from the power of walking; then I took a coach—a coach grew too violent an exercise: then I took up a chair—the prison was a large *death-stride* upon me—I should have suffered longer else!—Next, I was unable to go to church; then to go up or down stairs; now hardly can move from one room to another: and a less room will soon hold me.—My eyes begin to fail me, so that at times I cannot see to read distinctly; and now I can hardly write, or hold a pen.—Next, I presume, I shall know nobody, nor be able to thank any of you; I therefore now once more thank you, Mrs. Lovick, and you, Mrs. Smith, and you, Mr. Belford, while I can thank you, for all your kindness to me. And thus by little and little, in such a gradual sensible death as I am blessed with, God dies away in us, as I may say, all human satisfaction, in order to subdue his poor creatures to himself.

Thou mayest guess how affected we all were at this moving account of her progressive weakness. We heard it with wet eyes; for what with the women's example, and what with her moving eloquence, I could no more help it than they. But we were silent nevertheless; and she went on applying herself to me.

O Mr. Belford! This is a poor transitory life in the best enjoyments. We flutter about here and there, with all our vanities about us, like painted butterflies, for a gay, but a very short season, till at last we lay ourselves down in a quiescent state, and turn into vile worms: And who knows in what form, or to what condition we shall rise again?

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I wish you would permit me, a young creature, just turned of nineteen years of age, blooming and healthy as I was a few months ago, now nipt by the cold hand of death, to influence you, in these my last hours, to a life of regularity and repentance for any past evils you may have been guilty of. For, believe me, Sir, that now, in this last stage, very few things will bear the test, or be passed as laudable, if pardonable, at our own bar, much less at a more tremendous one, in all we have done, or delighted in, even in a life not very offensive neither, as we may think! —Ought we not then to study in our full day, before the dark hours approach, so to live, as may afford reflections that will soften the agony of the last moments when they come, and let in upon the departing soul a ray of Divine mercy to illuminate its passage into an awful eternity?

She was ready to faint, and choosing to lie down, I withdrew; I need not say with a melancholy heart: and when I got to my new-taken apartment, my heart was still more affected by the sight of the solemn letter the admirable lady had so lately finished. It was communicated to me by Mrs. Lovick; who had it to copy for me; but it was not to be delivered to me till after her departure. However, I trespassed so far, as to prevail upon the widow to let me take a copy of it; which I did directly in character.

I send it enclosed. If thou canst read it, and thy heart not bleed at thy eyes, thy remorse can hardly be so deep as thou hast inclined me to think it is.

LETTER LXII

Miss Clarissa Harlowe, *to Mrs*. *Norton*
[*in answer to letter* LVI.*]

* Begun on Monday Sept. 4, and by piecemeal finished on Tuesday; but not sent till the Thursday following.

MY DEAREST MRS. NORTON,

I am afraid I shall not be able to write all that is upon my mind to say to you upon the subject of your last. Yet I will try.

As to my friends, and as to the sad breakfasting, I cannot help being afflicted for them. What, alas! has not my mother, in particular, suffered by my rashness!—Yet to allow so much for a son!—so little for a daughter!—But all now will soon be over, as to me. I hope they will bury all their resentments in my grave.

As to your advice, in relation to Mr. Belford, let me only say, that the unhappy reprobation I have met with, and my short time, must be my apology now.—I wish I could have written to my mother and my uncles as you advise. And yet, favours come so slowly from them.

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The granting of one request only now remains as a desirable one from them. Which nevertheless, when granted, I shall not be sensible of. It is that they will be pleased to permit my remains to be laid with those of my ancestors—placed at the feet of my dear grandfather, as I have mentioned in my will. This, however, as they please. For, after all, this vile body ought not so much to engage my cares. It is a weakness— but let it be called a natural weakness, and I shall be excused; especially when a reverential gratitude shall be known to be the foundation of it. You know, my dear woman, how my grandfather loved me. And you know how much I honoured him, and that from my very infancy to the hour of his death. How often since have I wished, that he had not loved me so well!

I wish not now, at the writing of this, to see even my cousin Morden. O, my blessed woman! My dear maternal friend! I am entering upon a better tour than to France or Italy either!—or even than to settle at my once-beloved Dairy-house!—All these prospects and pleasures, which used to be so agreeable to me in health, how poor seem they to me now!—

Indeed, indeed, my dear Mamma Norton, I shall be happy! I know I shall! —I have charming forebodings of happiness already!—Tell all my dear friends, for their comfort, that I shall!—Who would not bear the punishments I have borne, to have the prospects and assurances I rejoice in!—Assurances I might not have had, were my own wishes to have been granted to me!

Neither do I want to see even you, my dear Mrs. Norton. Nevertheless I must, in justice to my own gratitude, declare, that there was a time, could you have been permitted to come, without incurring displeasure from those whose esteem it is necessary for you to cultivate and preserve, that your presence and comfortings would have been balm to my wounded mind. But were you now, even by consent, and with reconciliatory tidings, to come, it would but add to your grief; and the sight of one I so dearly love, so happily fraught with good news, might but draw me back to wishes I have had great struggles to get above. And let me tell you for your comfort, that I have not left undone any thing that ought to be done, either respecting mind or person; no, not to the minutest preparation: so that nothing is left for you to do for me. Every one has her direction as to the last offices.—And my desk, that I now write upon —O my dearest Mrs. Norton, all is provided!—All is ready! And all will be as decent as it should be!

And pray let my Miss Howe know, that by the time you will receive this, and she your signification of the contents of it, will, in all probability, be too late for her to do me the inestimable favour, as I should once have thought it, to see me. God will have no rivals in the hearts of those he sanctifies. By various methods he deadens all other sensations, or rather absorbs them all in the love of him.

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I shall nevertheless love you, my Mamma Norton, and my Miss Howe, whose love to me has passed the love of woman, to my latest hour!—But yet, I am now above the quick sense of those pleasures which once delighted me, and once more I say, that I do not wish to see objects so dear to me, which might bring me back again into sense, and rival my supreme love.

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Twice have I been forced to leave off. I wished, that my last writing might be to you, or to Miss Howe, if it might not be to my dearest Ma——

Mamma, I would have wrote—is the word distinct?—My eyes are so misty!— If, when I apply to you, I break off in half-words, do you supply them— the kindest are your due. —Be sure take the kindest, to fill up chasms with, if any chasms there be—

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Another breaking off!—But the new day seems to rise upon me with healing in its wings. I have gotten, I think, a recruit of strength: spirits, I bless God, I have not of late wanted.

Let my dearest Miss Howe purchase her wedding-garments—and may all temporal blessings attend the charming preparation!—Blessings will, I make no question, notwithstanding the little cloudiness that Mr. Hickman encounters with now and then, which are but prognostications of a future golden day to him: for her heart is good, and her head not wrong.—But great merit is coy, and that coyness had not always its foundation in pride: but if it should seem to be pride, take off the skin-deep covering, and, in her, it is noble diffidence, and a love that wants but to be assured!

Tell Mr. Hickman I write this, and write it, as I believe, with my last pen; and bid him bear a little at first, and forbear; and all the future will be crowning gratitude, and rewarding love: for Miss Howe had great sense, fine judgment, and exalted generosity; and can such a one be ungrateful or easy under those obligations which his assiduity and obligingness (when he shall be so happy as to call her his) will lay her under to him?

As for me, never bride was so ready as I am. My wedding garments are bought——and though not fine or gawdy to the sight, though not adorned with jewels, and set off with gold and silver, (for I have no beholders' eyes to wish to glitter in,) yet will they be the easiest, the happiest suit, that ever bridal maiden wore—for they are such as carry with them a security against all those anxieties, pains, and perturbations, which sometimes succeed to the most promising outsettings.

And now, my dear Mrs. Norton, do I wish for no other.

O hasten, good God, if it be thy blessed will, the happy moment that I am to be decked out in his all-quieting garb! And sustain, comfort, bless, and protect with the all-shadowing wing of thy mercy, my dear parents, my uncles, my brother, my sister, my cousin Morden, my ever-dear and ever-kind Miss Howe, my good Mrs. Norton, and every deserving person to whom they wish well! is the ardent prayer, first and last, of every beginning hour, as the clock tells it me, (hours now are days, nay, years,) of

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Your now not sorrowing or afflicted, but happy,
Clarissa Harlowe.

LETTER LXIII

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Wed. *Morn*. *Sept*. 6, *Half an hour after three*.

I am not the savage which you and my worst enemies think me. My soul is too much penetrated by the contents of the letter which you enclosed in your last, to say one word more to it, than that my heart has bled over it from every vein!—I will fly from the subject—but what other can I choose, that will not be as grievous, and lead into the same?

I could quarrel with all the world; with thee, as well as the rest; obliging as thou supposest thyself for writing to me hourly. How darest thou, (though unknown to her,) to presume to take an apartment under the sane roof with her?—I cannot bear to think that thou shouldest be seen, at all hours passing to and repassing from her apartments, while I, who have so much reason to call her mine, and one was preferred by her to all the world, am forced to keep aloof, and hardly dare to enter the city where she is!

If there be any thing in Brand's letter that will divert me, hasten it to me. But nothing now will ever divert me, will ever again give me joy or pleasure! I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep. I am sick of all the world.

Surely it will be better when all is over—when I know the worst the Fates can do against me—yet how shall I bear that worst?—O Belford, Belford! write it not to me!—But if it must happen, get somebody else to write; for I shall curse the pen, the hand, the head, and the heart, employed in communicating to me the fatal tidings. But what is this saying, when already I curse the whole world except her—myself most?

In fine, I am a most miserable being. Life is a burden to me. I would not bear it upon these terms for one week more, let what would be my lot; for already is there a hell begun in my own mind. Never more mention it to me, let her, or who will say it, the prison—I cannot bear it—May d——n——n seize quick the cursed woman, who could set death upon taking that large stride, as the dear creature calls it!—I had no hand in it!— But her relations, her implacable relations, have done the business. All else would have been got over. Never persuade me but it would. The fire of youth, and the violence of passion, would have pleaded for me to good purpose, with an individual of a sex, which loves to be addressed with passionate ardour, even to tumult, had it not been for that cruelty and unforgivingness, which, (the object and the penitence considered,) have no example, and have aggravated the heinousness of my faults.

Unable to rest, though I went not to bed till two, I dispatch this ere the day dawn—who knows what this night, this dismal night, may have produced!

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I must after my messenger. I have told the varlet I will meet him, perhaps at Knightsbridge, perhaps in Piccadilly; and I trust not myself with pistols, not only on his account, but my own—for pistols are too ready a mischief.

I hope thou hast a letter ready for him. He goes to thy lodgings first— for surely thou wilt not presume to take thy rest in an apartment near her's. If he miss thee there, he flies to Smith's, and brings me word whether in being, or not.

I shall look for him through the air as I ride, as well as on horseback; for if the prince of it serve me, as well as I have served him, he will bring the dog by his ears, like another Habakkuk, to my saddle-bow, with the tidings that my heart pants after.

Nothing but the excruciating pangs the condemned soul fells, at its entrance into the eternity of the torments we are taught to fear, can exceed what I now feel, and have felt for almost this week past; and mayest thou have a spice of those, if thou hast not a letter ready written for thy

Lovelace.

LETTER LXIV

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
TUEDAY, *Sept*. 5, *Six o'clock*.

The lady remains exceedingly weak and ill. Her intellects, nevertheless, continue clear and strong, and her piety and patience are without example. Every one thinks this night will be her last. What a shocking thing is that to say of such an excellence! She will not, however, send away her letter to her Norton, as yet. She endeavoured in vain to superscribe it: so desired me to do it. Her fingers will not hold the pen with the requisite steadiness.—She has, I fear, written and read her last!

EIGHT O'CLOCK.

She is somewhat better than she was. The doctor had been here, and thinks she will hold out yet a day or two. He has ordered her, as for some time past, only some little cordials to take when ready to faint. She seemed disappointed, when he told her she might yet live two or three days; and said, she longed for dismission!—Life was not so easily extinguished, she saw, as some imagined.—Death from grief, was, she believed, the slowest of deaths. But God's will must be done!—Her only prayer was now for submission to it: for she doubted not but by the Divine goodness she should be an happy creature, as soon as she could be divested of these rags of mortality.

Of her own accord she mentioned you; which, till then, she had avoided to do. She asked, with great serenity, where you were?

I told her where, and your motives for being so near; and read to her a few lines of your's of this morning, in which you mention your wishes to see her, your sincere affliction, and your resolution not to approach her without her consent.

I would have read more; but she said, Enough, Mr. Belford, enough!—Poor man, does his conscience begin to find him!—Then need not any body to wish him a greater punishment!—May it work upon him to an happy purpose!

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I took the liberty to say, that as she was in such a frame that nothing now seemed capable of discomposing her, I could wish that you might have the benefit of her exhortations, which, I dared to say, while you were so seriously affected, would have a greater force upon you than a thousand sermons; and how happy you would think yourself, if you could but receive her forgiveness on your knees.

How can you think of such a thing, Mr. Belford? said she, with some emotion; my composure is owing, next to the Divine goodness blessing my earnest supplications for it, to the not seeing him. Yet let him know that I now again repeat, that I forgive him.—-And may God Almighty, clasping her fingers, and lifting up her eyes, forgive him too; and perfect repentance, and sanctify it to him!—Tell him I say so! And tell him, that if I could not say so with my whole heart, I should be very uneasy, and think that my hopes of mercy were but weakly founded; and that I had still, in my harboured resentment, some hankerings after a life which he has been the cause of shortening.

The divine creature then turning aside her head—Poor man, said she! I once could have loved him. This is saying more than ever I could say of any other man out of my own family! Would he have permitted me to have been an humble instrument to have made him good, I think I could have made him happy! But tell him not this if he be really penitent—it may too much affect him!—There she paused.—

Admirable creature!—Heavenly forgiver!—Then resuming—but pray tell him, that if I could know that my death might be a mean to reclaim and save him, it would be an inexpressible satisfaction to me!

But let me not, however, be made uneasy with the apprehension of seeing him. I cannot bear to see him!

Just as she had done speaking, the minister, who had so often attended her, sent up his name; and was admitted.

Being apprehensive that it would be with difficulty that you could prevail upon that impetuous spirit of your's not to invade her in her dying hours, and of the agonies into which a surprise of this nature would throw her, I thought this gentleman's visit afforded a proper opportunity to renew the subject; and, (having asked her leave,) acquainted him with the topic we had been upon.

The good man urged that some condescensions were usually expected, on these solemn occasions, from pious souls like her's, however satisfied with themselves, for the sake of showing the world, and for example-sake, that all resentments against those who had most injured them were subdued; and if she would vouchsafe to a heart so truly penitent, as I had represented Mr. Lovelace's to be, that personal pardon, which I had been pleading for there would be no room to suppose the least lurking resentment remained; and it might have very happy effects upon the gentleman.

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I have no lurking resentment, Sir, said she—this is not a time for resentment: and you will be the readier to believe me, when I can assure you, (looking at me,) that even what I have most rejoiced in, the truly friendly love that has so long subsisted between my Miss Howe and her Clarissa, although to my last gasp it will be the dearest to me of all that is dear in this life, has already abated of its fervour; has already given place to supremer fervours; and shall the remembrance of Mr. Lovelace's personal insults, which I bless God never corrupted that mind which her friendship so much delighted, be stronger in these hours with me, then the remembrance of a love as pure as the human heart ever boasted? Tell, therefore, the world, if you please, and (if, Mr. Belford, you think what I said to you before not strong enough,) tell the poor man, that I not only forgive him, but have such earnest wishes for the good of his soul, and that from consideration of its immortality, that could my penitence avail for more sins than my own, my last tear should fall for him by whom I die!

Our eyes and hands expressed to us both what our lips could not utter.

Say not, then, proceeded she, nor let it be said, that my resentments are unsubdued!—-And yet these eyes, lifted up to Heaven as witness to the truth of what I have said, shall never, if I can help it, behold him more!—For do you not consider, Sirs, how short my time is; what much more important subjects I have to employ it upon; and how unable I should be, (so weak as I am,) to contend even with the avowed penitence of a person in strong health, governed by passions unabated, and always violent?—And now I hope you will never urge me more on this subject?

The minister said, it were pity ever to urge this plea again.

You see, Lovelace, that I did not forget the office of a friend, in endeavouring to prevail upon her to give you her last forgiveness personally. And I hope, as she is so near her end, you will not invade her in her last hours; since she must be extremely discomposed at such an interview; and it might make her leave the world the sooner for it.

This reminds me of an expression which she used on your barbarous hunting of her at Smith's, on her return to her lodgings; and that with a serenity unexampled, (as Mrs. Lovick told me, considering the occasion, and the trouble given her by it, and her indisposition at the time;) he will not let me die decently, said the angelic sufferer!—He will not let me enter into my Maker's presence with the composure that is required in entering into the drawing-room of an earthly prince!

I cannot, however, forbear to wish, that the heavenly creature could have prevailed upon herself, in these her last hours, to see you; and that for my sake, as well as yours; for although I am determined never to be guilty of the crimes, which, till within these few past weeks have blackened my former life; and for which, at present, I most heartily hate myself; yet should I be less apprehensive of such a relapse, if wrought upon by the

solemnity which such an interview must have been attended with, you had become a reformed man: for no devil do I fear, but one in your shape.

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It is now eleven o'clock at night. The lady who retired to rest an hour ago, is, as Mrs. Lovick tells me, in a sweet slumber.

I will close here. I hope I shall find her the better for it in the morning. Yet, alas! how frail is hope—How frail is life; when we are apt to build so much on every shadowy relief; although in such a desperate case as this, sitting down to reflect, we must know, that it is but shadowy!

I will enclose Brand's horrid pedantry. And for once am aforehand with thy ravenous impatience.

LETTER LXV

Mr. *Brand*, *to Mr*. *John Walton*
sat. *Night*, *Sept*. 2.

DEAR MR. WALTON,

I am obliged to you for the very 'handsomely penned', (and 'elegantly written,') letter which you have sent me on purpose to do 'justice' to the 'character' of the 'younger' Miss Harlowe; and yet I must tell you that I had reason, 'before that came,' to 'think,' (and to 'know' indeed,) that we were 'all wrong.' And so I had employed the 'greatest part' of this 'week,' in drawing up an 'apologetical letter' to my worthy 'patron,' Mr. John Harlowe, in order to set all 'matters right' between 'me and them,' and, ('as far as I could,') between 'them' and 'Miss.' So it required little more than 'connection' and 'transcribing,' when I received 'your's'; and it will be with Mr. Harlowe aforesaid, 'to-morrow morning'; and this, and the copy of that, will be with you on 'Monday morning.'

You cannot imagine how sorry I am that 'you' and Mrs. Walton, and Mrs. Barker, and 'I myself,' should have taken matters up so lightly, (judging, alas-a-day! by appearance and conjecture,) where 'character' and 'reputation' are concerned. Horace says truly,

> 'Et semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum.'

That is, 'Words one spoken cannot be recalled.' But, Mr. Walton, they may be 'contradicted' by 'other' words; and we may confess ourselves guilty of a 'mistake,' and express our 'concern' for being 'mistaken'; and resolve to make our 'mistake' a 'warning' to us for the 'future': and this is all that 'can be done,' and what every 'worthy mind will do'; and what nobody can be 'readier to do' than 'we four undesigning offenders,' (as I see by 'your letter,' on 'your part,' and as you will see by the 'enclosed copy,' on 'mine';) which, if it be received as I 'think it ought,' (and as I 'believe it will,') must give me a

‘speedy’ opportunity to see you when I ‘visit the lady’; to whom, (as you will see in it,) I expect to be sent up with the ‘olive-branch.’

The matter in which we all ‘erred,’ must be owned to be ‘very nice’; and (Mr. Belford’s ‘character considered’) ‘appearances’ ran very strong ‘against the lady.’ But all that this serveth to show is, ’that in doubtful matters, the wisest people may be mistaken’; for so saith the ‘Poet,’

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‘Fallitur in dubiis hominum solertia rebus.’

If you have an ‘opportunity,’ you may (as if ‘from yourself,’ and ‘unknown to me’) show the enclosed to Mr. Belford, who (you tell me) ‘resenteth’ the matter very heinously; but not to let him ‘see’ or ’hear read,’ those words ‘that relate to him,’ in the paragraph at the ’bottom of the second page,’ beginning, [’But yet I do insist upon it,] to the ‘end’ of that paragraph; for one would not make one’s self ‘enemies,’ you know; and I have ‘reason to think,’ that this Mr. ‘Belford’ is as ‘passionate’ and ‘fierce’ a man as Mr. Lovelace. What pity it is the lady could find no ‘worthier a protector!’ You may paste those lines over with ‘blue’ or ‘black paper,’ before he seeth it: and if he insisteth upon taking a copy of my letter, (for he, or any body that ‘seeth it,’ or ‘heareth it read,’ will, no doubt, be glad to have by them the copy of a letter so full of the ‘sentiments’ of the ‘noblest writers’ of ‘antiquity,’ and ‘so well adapted,’ as I will be bold to say they are, to the ‘point in hand’; I say, if he insisteth upon taking a copy,) let him give you the ‘strongest assurances’ not to suffer it to be ‘printed’ on ‘any account’; and I make the same request to you, that ‘you’ will not; for if any thing be to be made of a ‘man’s works,’ who, but the ‘author,’ should have the ‘advantage’? And if the ‘Spectators,’ the ‘Tatlers,’ the ‘Examiners,’ the ‘Guardians,’ and other of our polite papers, make such a ‘strutting’ with a ‘single verse,’ or so by way of ‘motto,’ in the ‘front’ of ‘each day’s’ paper; and if other ‘authors’ pride themselves in ‘finding out’ and ‘embellishing’ the ‘title-pages’ of their ‘books’ with a ‘verse’ or ‘adage’ from the ‘classical writers’; what a figure would ‘such a letter as the enclosed make,’ so full fraught with ‘admirable precepts,’ and ‘a-propos quotations,’ from the ’best authority’?

I have been told that a ‘certain noble Lord,’ who once sat himself down to write a ‘pamphlet’ in behalf of a ‘great minister,’ after taking ‘infinite pains’ to ‘no purpose’ to find a ‘Latin motto,’ gave commission to a friend of ‘his’ to offer to ‘any one,’ who could help him to a ‘suitable one,’ but of one or two lines, a ‘hamper of claret.’ Accordingly, his lordship had a ‘motto found him’ from ‘Juvenal,’ which he ‘unhappily mistaking,’ (not knowing ‘Juvenal’ was a ‘poet,’) printed as a prose ‘sentence’ in his ‘title-page.’

If, then, ‘one’ or ‘two’ lines were of so much worth, (A ’hamper of claret’! No ’less’!) of what ‘inestimable value’ would ’such a letter as mine’ be deemed?—And who knoweth but that this noble P—r, (who is now* living,) if he should happen to see ‘this letter’ shining with such a ‘glorious string of jewels,’ might give the ‘writer a scarf,’ in order to have him ‘always at hand,’ or be a ‘mean’ (some way or other) to bring him into ‘notice’? And I would be bold to say (’bad’ as the ‘world’ is) a man of ‘sound learning’ wanteth nothing but an ‘initiation’ to make his ‘fortune.’

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* *i.e*. At the time this Letter was written.

I hope, my good friend, that the lady will not ‘die’: I shall be much ‘grieved,’ if she doth; and the more because of mine ’unhappy misrepresentation’: so will ‘you’ for the ‘same cause’; so will her ‘parents’ and ‘friends.’ They are very ‘rich’ and ‘very worthy’ gentlefolks.

But let me tell you, ‘by-the-by,’ that they had carried the matter against her ‘so far,’ that I believe in my heart they were glad to ‘justify themselves’ by ‘my report’; and would have been ‘less pleased,’ had I made a ‘more favourable one.’ And yet in ‘their hearts’ they ‘dote’ upon her. But now they are all (as I hear) inclined to be ‘friends with her,’ and ‘forgive her’; her ‘brother,’ as well as ’the rest.’

But their ‘cousin,’ Col. Morden, ‘a very fine gentleman,’ had had such ‘high words’ with them, and they with him, that they know not how to ‘stoop,’ lest it should look like being frighted into an ‘accommodation.’ Hence it is, that ‘I’ have taken the greater liberty to ’press the reconciliation’; and I hope in ‘such good season,’ that they will all be ‘pleased’ with it: for can they have a ‘better handle’ to save their ‘pride’ all round, than by my ‘mediation’? And let me tell you, (inter nos, ‘betwixt ourselves,’) ‘very proud they all are.’

By this ‘honest means,’ (for by ‘dishonest ones’ I would not be ‘Archbishop of Canterbury,’) I hope to please every body; to be ‘forgiven,’ in the ‘first place,’ by ‘the lady,’ (whom, being a ’lover of learning’ and ‘learned men,’ I shall have great ‘opportunities’ of ‘obliging’; for, when she departed from her father’s house, I had but just the honour of her ‘notice,’ and she seemed ‘highly pleased’ with my ’conversation’;) and, ‘next’ to be ‘thanked’ and ‘respected’ by her ‘parents,’ and ‘all her family’; as I am (I bless God for it) by my ’dear friend’ Mr. John Harlowe: who indeed is a man that professeth a ’great esteem’ for ‘men of erudition’; and who (with ‘singular delight,’ I know) will run over with me the ‘authorities’ I have ‘quoted,’ and ‘wonder’ at my ‘memory,’ and the ‘happy knack’ I have of recommending ’mine own sense of things’ in the words of the ‘greatest sages of antiquity.’

Excuse me, my good friend, for this ‘seeming vanity.’ The great Cicero (you must have heard, I suppose) had a ‘much greater’ spice of it, and wrote a ‘long letter begging’ and ‘praying’ to be ‘flattered.’ But if I say ‘less of myself’ than other people (who know me) ‘say of me,’ I think I keep a ‘medium’ between ‘vanity’ and ‘false modesty’; the latter of which oftentimes gives itself the ‘lie,’ when it is ‘declaring of’ the ‘compliments,’ that ‘every body’ gives it as its due: an hypocrisy, as well as folly, that, (I hope,) I shall for ever scorn to be guilty of.

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I have ‘another reason’ (as I may tell to you, my ‘old school-fellow’) to make me wish for this ‘fine lady’s recovery’ and ‘health’; and that is, (by some distant intimations,) I have heard from Mr. John Harlowe, that it is ‘very likely’ (because of the ‘slur’ she hath received) that she will choose to ‘live privately’ and ’penitently’—and will probably (when she cometh into her ‘estate’) keep a ‘chaplain’ to direct her in her ‘devotions’ and ’penitence’—If she doth, who can stand a ‘better chance’ than ’myself’?—And as I find (by ‘your’ account, as well as by ’every body’s’) that she is innocent as to ‘intention,’ and is resolved never to think of Mr. ‘Lovelace more,’ who knoweth ‘what’ (in time) ‘may happen’? —And yet it must be after Mr. ‘Lovelace’s death,’ (which may possibly sooner happen than he ‘thinketh’ of, by means of his ’detestable courses’:) for, after all, a man who is of ‘public utility,’ ought not (for the ‘finest woman’ in the world) to lay his ‘throat’ at the ‘mercy’ of a man who boggleth at nothing.

I beseech you, let not this hint ‘go farther’ than to ‘yourself,’ your ‘spouse,’ and Mrs. ‘Barker.’ I know I may trust my ‘life’ in ’your hands’ and ‘theirs.’ There have been (let me tell ye) ‘unlikelier’ things come to pass, and that with ‘rich widows,’ (some of ‘quality’ truly!) whose choice, in their ‘first marriages’ hath (perhaps) been guided by ‘motives of convenience,’ or ‘mere corporalities,’ as I may say; but who by their ‘second’ have had for their view the ‘corporal’ and ‘spiritual’ mingled; which is the most eligible (no doubt) to ‘substance’ composed ‘of both,’ as ‘men’ and ‘women’ are.

Nor think (Sir) that, should such a thing come to pass, ‘either’ would be ‘disgraced,’ since ‘the lady’ in ‘me’ would marry a ‘gentleman’ and a ‘scholar’: and as to ‘mine own honour,’ as the ‘slur’ would bring her ‘high fortunes’ down to an ‘equivalence’ with my ‘mean ones,’ (if ‘fortune’ only, and not ‘merit,’ be considered,) so hath not the ‘life’ of ‘this lady’ been ‘so tainted,’ (either by ‘length of time,’ or ‘naughtiness of practice,’) as to put her on a ‘foot’ with the ’cast Abigails,’ that too, too often, (God knoweth,) are thought good enough for a ‘young clergyman,’ who, perhaps, is drawn in by a ‘poor benefice’; and (if the ‘wicked one’ be not ‘quite worn out’) groweth poorer and poorer upon it, by an ‘increase of family’ he knoweth not whether ’is most his,’ or his ‘noble,’ (’ignoble,’ I should say,) ‘patrons.’

But, all this ‘apart,’ and ‘in confidence.’

I know you made at school but a small progress in ‘languages.’ So I have restrained myself from ‘many illustrations’ from the ‘classics,’ that I could have filled this letter with, (as I have done the enclosed one:) and, being at a ‘distance,’ I cannot ‘explain’ them to you, as I ’do to my friend,’ Mr. John Harlowe; and who, (after all,) is obliged to ‘me’ for pointing out to ‘him’ many ‘beauties’ of the ‘authors I quote,’ which otherwise would lie concealed from ‘him,’ as they must from every ’common observer.’—But this (too) ’inter nos’—for he would not take it well to ‘have it known’—’Jays’ (you know, old school-fellow, ‘jays,’ you know) ‘will strut in peacocks’ feathers.’

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But whither am I running? I never know where to end, when I get upon ‘learned topics.’ And albeit I cannot compliment ‘you’ with the ’name of a learned man,’ yet are you ‘a sensible man’; and (’as such’) must have ‘pleasure’ in ‘learned men,’ and in ‘their writings.’

In this confidence, (Mr. Walton,) with my ‘kind respects’ to the good ladies, (your ‘spouse’ and ‘sister,’) and in hopes, for the ’young lady’s sake,’ soon to follow this long, long epistle, in ‘person,’ I conclude myself,

Your loving and faithful friend,
Elias Brand.

You will perhaps, Mr. Walton, wonder at the meaning of the ’lines drawn under many of the words and sentences,’ (UNDERSCORING we call it;) and were my letters to be printed, those would be put in a ‘different character.’ Now, you must know, Sir, that ’we learned men’ do this to point out to the readers, who are not ‘so learned,’ where the ‘jet of our arguments lieth,’ and the ‘emphasis’ they are to lay upon ‘those words’; whereby they will take in readily our ‘sense’ and ‘cogency.’ Some ‘pragmatical’ people have said, that an author who doth a ‘great deal of this,’ either calleth his readers ‘fools,’ or tacitly condemneth ‘his own style,’ as supposing his meaning would be ‘dark’ without it, or that all of his ‘force’ lay in ‘words.’ But all of those with whom I have conversed in a learned way, ‘think as I think.’ And to give a very ‘pretty,’ though ‘familiar illustration,’ I have considered a page distinguished by ‘different characters,’ as a ‘verdant field’ overspread with ‘butter-flowers’ and ‘daisies,’ and other summer-flowers. These the poets liken to ’enamelling’—have you not read in the poets of ‘enamelled meads,’ and so forth?

LETTER LXVI

Mr. *Brand*, *to John Harlowe*, *Esq*.
Sat. *Night*, *Sept*. 2.

WORTHY SIR,

I am under no ‘small concern,’ that I should (unhappily) be the ‘occasion’ (I am sure I ‘intended’ nothing like it) of ’widening differences’ by ‘light misreport,’ when it is the ‘duty’ of one of ’my function’ (and no less consisting with my ‘inclination’) to ‘heal’ and ‘reconcile.’

I have received two letter to set me ‘right’: one from a ’particular acquaintance,’ (whom I set to inquire of Mr. Belford’s character); and that came on Tuesday last, informing me, that your ‘unhappy niece’ was greatly injured in the account I had had of her; (for I had told ‘him’ of it, and that with very ‘great concern,’ I am sure, apprehending it to be ‘true.’) So I ‘then’ set about writing to you, to ‘acknowledge’ the ‘error.’ And had gone a good way in it, when the second letter

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came (a very ‘handsome one’ it is, both in ‘style’ and ‘penmanship’) from my friend Mr. Walton, (though I am sure it cannot be ‘his inditing,’) expressing his sorrow, and his wife’s, and his sister-in-law’s likewise, for having been the cause of ‘misleading me,’ in the account I gave of the said ‘young lady’; whom they ‘now’ say (upon ‘further inquiry’) they find to be the ‘most unblameable,’ and ‘most prudent,’ and (it seems) the most ‘pious’ young lady, that ever (once) committed a ‘great error’; as (to be sure) ‘her’s was,’ in leaving such ‘worthy parents’ and ‘relations’ for so ‘vile a man’ as Mr. Lovelace; but what shall we say?— Why, the divine Virgil tells us,

‘Improbe amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis?’

For ‘my part,’ I was but too much afraid (for we have ’great opportunities,’ you are sensible, Sir, at the ‘University,’ of knowing ‘human nature’ from ‘books,’ the ‘calm result’ of the ’wise man’s wisdom,’ as I may say,

‘(Haurit aquam cribro, qui discere vult sine libro)’

‘uninterrupted’ by the ‘noise’ and ‘vanities’ that will mingle with ‘personal conversation,’ which (in the ‘turbulent world’) is not to be enjoyed but over a ‘bottle,’ where you have an ‘hundred foolish things’ pass to ‘one that deserveth to be remembered’; I was but too much afraid ‘I say’) that so ‘great a slip’ might be attended with ‘still greater’ and ‘worse’: for ‘your’ Horace, and ‘my’ Horace, the most charming writer that ever lived among the ‘Pagans’ (for the ‘lyric kind of poetry,’ I mean; for, the be sure, ‘Homer’ and ‘Virgil’ would ‘otherwise’ be ‘first’ named ‘in their way’) well observeth (and who understood ‘human nature’ better than he?)

’Nec vera virtus, cum semel excidit,
Curat reponi deterioribus.’

And ‘Ovid’ no less wisely observeth:

’Et mala sunt vicina bonis. Errore sub illo
Pro vitio virtus crimina saepe tulit.’

Who, that can draw ‘knowledge’ from its ‘fountain-head,’ the works of the ‘sages of antiquity,’ (improved by the ‘comments’ of the ‘moderns,’) but would ‘prefer’ to all others the ‘silent quiet life,’ which ‘contemplative men’ lead in the ‘seats of learning,’ were they not called out (according to their ‘dedication’) to the ‘service’ and ‘instruction’ of the world?

Now, Sir, ‘another’ favourite poet of mine (and not the ’less a favourite’ for being a ‘Christian’) telleth us, that ill is the custom of ‘some,’ when in a ‘fault,’ to throw the blame upon the backs of ‘others,’

’——Hominum quoque mos est,
Quae nos cunque premunt, alieno imponere tergo.’
Mant.

But I, though (in this case) ‘misled,’ (’well intendedly,’ nevertheless, both in the ‘misleaders’ and ‘misled,’ and therefore entitled to lay hold of that plea, if ‘any body’ is so entitled,) will not however, be classed among such ‘extenuators’; but (contrarily) will always keep in mind that verse, which ‘comforteth in mistake,’ as well as ‘instructeth’; and which I quoted in my last letter;

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‘Errare est hominis, sed non persistere——’

And will own, that I was very ‘rash’ to take up with ‘conjectures’ and ‘consequences’ drawn from ‘probabilites,’ where (especially) the ‘character’ of so ‘fine a lady’ was concerned.

‘Credere fallacy gravis est dementia famae.’ *Mant*.

Notwithstanding, Miss Clarissa Harlowe (I must be bold to say) is the ‘only young lady,’ that ever I heard of (or indeed read of) that, ’having made such a false step,’ so ‘soon’ (of ‘her own accord,’ as I may say) ‘recovered’ herself, and conquered her ‘love of the deceiver’; (a great conquest indeed!) and who flieth him, and resolveth to ‘die,’ rather than to be his; which now, to her never-dying ‘honour’ (I am well assured) is the case—-and, in ‘justice’ to her, I am now ready to take to myself (with no small vexation) that of Ovid,

‘Heu! patior telis vulnera facta meis.’

But yet I do insist upon it, that all ‘that part’ of my ‘information,’ which I took upon mine own ‘personal inquiry,’ which is what relates to Mr. ‘Belford’ and ‘his character,’ is ‘literally true’; for there is not any where to be met with a man of a more ‘libertine character’ as to ‘women,’ Mr. ‘Lovelace’ excepted, than he beareth.

And so, Sir, I must desire of you, that you will not let ‘any blame’ lie upon my ‘intention’; since you see how ready I am to ‘accuse myself’ of too lightly giving ear to a ‘rash information’ (not knowing it to be so, however): for I depended the more upon it, as the ‘people I had it from’ are very ‘sober,’ and live in the ‘fear of God’: and indeed when I wait upon you, you will see by their letter, that they must be ‘conscientious’ good people: wherefore, Sir, let me be entitled, from ’all your good family,’ to that of my last-named poet,

‘Aspera confesso verba remitte reo.’

And now, Sir, (what is much more becoming of my ‘function,’) let me, instead of appearing with the ‘face of an accuser,’ and a ’rash censurer,’ (which in my ‘heart’ I have not ‘deserved’ to be thought,) assume the character of a ‘reconciler’; and propose (by way of ‘penance’ to myself for my ‘fault’) to be sent up as a ‘messenger of peace’ to the ‘pious young lady’; for they write me word ‘absolutely’ (and, I believe in my heart, ‘truly’) that the ‘doctors’ have ‘given her over,’ and that she ‘cannot live.’ Alas! alas! what a sad thing would that be, if the ‘poor bough,’ that was only designed (as I ‘very well know,’ and am ‘fully assured’) ‘to be bent, should be broken!’

Let it not, dear Sir, seem to the ‘world’ that there was any thing in your ‘resentments’ (which, while meant for ‘reclaiming,’ were just and fit) that hath the ‘appearance’ of

‘violence,’ and ‘fierce wrath,’ and ‘inexorability’; (as it would look to some, if carried to extremity, after ‘repentance’ and ‘contrition,’ and ‘humiliation,’ on the ’fair offender’s’ side:) for all this while (it seemeth) she hat been a ’second Magdalen’ in her ‘penitence,’ and yet not so bad as a ‘Magdalen’ in her ‘faults’; (faulty, nevertheless, as she hath been once, the Lord knoweth!

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’Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur: optimus ille est,
Qui minimis urgentur’——saith Horace).

Now, Sir, if I may be named for this ‘blessed’ employment, (for, ’Blessed is the peace-maker!’) I will hasten to London; and (as I know Miss had always a ‘great regard’ to the ‘function’ I have the honour to be of) I have no doubt of making myself acceptable to her, and to bring her, by ‘sound arguments,’ and ‘good advice,’ into a ‘liking of life,’ which must be the ‘first step’ to her ‘recovery’: for, when the ‘mind’ is ’made easy,’ the ‘body’ will not ‘long suffer’; and the ‘love of life’ is a ‘natural passion,’ that is soon ‘revived,’ when fortune turneth about, and smileth:

’Vivere quisque diu, quamvis & egenus & ager,
Optat.—— —— ——’ *Ovid*.

And the sweet Lucan truly observeth,

’———— Fatis debentibus annos
Mors invita subit.—— ——’

And now, Sir, let me tell you what shall be the ‘tenor’ of my ‘pleadings’ with her, and ‘comfortings’ of her, as she is, as I may say, a ’learned lady’; and as I can ‘explain’ to her ‘those sentences,’ which she cannot so readily ‘construe herself’: and this in order to convince ‘you’ (did you not already ‘know’ my ‘qualifications’) how well qualified I ‘am’ for the ‘christian office’ to which I commend myself.

I will, *in the first place*, put her in mind of the ’common course of things’ in this ‘sublunary world,’ in which ‘joy’ and ‘sorrow, sorrow’ and joy,’ succeed one another by turns’; in order to convince her, that her griefs have been but according to ‘that’ common course of things:

‘Gaudia post luctus veniunt, post gaudia luctus.’

Secondly, I will remind her of her own notable description of ‘sorrow,’ whence she was once called upon to distinguish wherein ‘sorrow, grief,’ and ‘melancholy,’ differed from each other; which she did ‘impromptu,’ by their ‘effects,’ in a truly admirable manner, to the high satisfaction of every one: I myself could not, by ‘study,’ have distinguished ‘better,’ nor more ’concisely’—*sorrow*, said she, ‘wears’; *grief* ‘tears’; but *melancholy* ‘sooths.’

My inference to her shall be, that since a happy reconciliation will take place, ‘grief’ will be banished; ‘sorrow’ dismissed; and only sweet ‘melancholy’ remain to ‘sooth’ and ‘indulge’ her contrite ‘heart,’ and show to all the world the penitent sense she hath of her great error.

Thirdly, That her ’joys,’* when restored to health and favour, will be the greater, the deeper her griefs were.

* ‘Joy,’ let me here observe, my dear Sir, by way of note, is not absolutely inconsistent with ‘melancholy’; a ‘soft gentle joy,’ not a ‘rapid,’ not a ‘rampant joy,’ however; but such a ‘joy,’ as shall lift her ‘temporarily’ out of her ‘soothing melancholy,’ and then ’let her down gently’ into it again; for ‘melancholy,’ to be sure, her ‘reflection’ will generally make to be her state.

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‘Gaudia, quae multo parta labore, placent.’

Fourthly, That having ‘really’ been guilty of a ‘great error,’ she should not take ‘impatiently’ the ‘correction’ and ‘anger’ with which she hath been treated.

‘Leniter, ex merito quicquid patiare ferundum est.’

Fifthly, That ‘virtue’ must be established by ‘patience’; as saith Prudentius:

‘Haec virtus vidua est, quam non patientia firmat.’

Sixthly, That in the words of Horace, she may ‘expect better times,’ than (of late) she had ‘reason’ to look for.

‘Grata superveniet, quae non sperabitur, hora.’

SEVENTHLY, That she is really now in ‘a way’ to be ‘happy,’ since, according to ‘Ovid,’ she ‘can count up all her woe’:

‘Felix, qui patitur quae numerare potest.’

And those comforting lines,

’Estque serena dies post longos gratior imbres,
Et post triste malum gratior ipsa salus.’

EIGHTHLY, That, in the words of Mantuan, her ‘parents’ and ‘uncles’ could not ‘help loving her’ all the time they were ‘angry at her’:

’AEqua tamen mens est, & amica voluntas,
Sit licet in natos austere parentum.’

NINTHLY, That the ‘ills she hath met with’ may be turned (by the ’good use’ to be made of them) to her ‘everlasting benefit’; for that,

‘Cum furit atque ferit, Deus olim parcere quaerit.’

TENTHLY, That she will be able to give a ‘fine lesson’ (a ‘very’ fine lesson) to all the ‘young ladies’ of her ‘acquaintance,’ of the ‘vanity’ of being ‘lifted up’ in ‘prosperity,’ and the ‘weakness’ of being ’cast down’ in ‘adversity’; since no one is so ‘high,’ as to be above being ‘humbled’; so ‘low,’ as to ‘need to despair’: for which purpose the advice of ‘Ausonius,’

’Dum fortuna juvat, caveto tolli:
Dum fortuna tonat, caveto mergi.’

I shall tell her, that Lucan saith well, when he calleth ’adversity the element of patience’;

‘——Gaudet patientia duris:’

That

‘Fortunam superat virtus, prudential famam.’

That while weak souls are ‘crushed by fortune,’ the ‘brave mind’ maketh the fickle deity afraid of it:

‘Fortuna fortes metuit, ignavos permit.’

ELEVENTHLY, That if she take the advice of ‘Horace,’

‘Fortiaque adversis opponite pectora rebus,’

it will delight her ‘hereafter’ (as ‘Virgil’ saith) to ’revoke her past troubles’:

‘——Forsan & haec olim meminisse juvabit.’

And, to the same purpose, ‘Juvenal’ speaking of the ‘prating joy’ of mariners, after all their ‘dangers are over’:

‘Gaudent securi narrare pericula nautae.’

Which suiting the case so well, you’ll forgive me, Sir, for ’popping down’ in ‘English metre,’ as the ‘translative impulse’ (pardon a new word, and yet we ‘scholars’ are not fond of ‘authenticating new’ words) came upon me ‘uncalled for’:

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The seaman, safe on shore, with joy doth tell
What cruel dangers him at sea befell.

With ‘these,’ Sir, and an ‘hundred more’ wise ‘adages,’ which I have always at my ‘fingers’ end,’ will I (when reduced to ‘form’ and ‘method’) entertain Miss; and as she is a ‘well-read,’ and (I might say, but for this ‘one’ great error) a ‘wise’ young lady, I make no doubt but I shall ‘prevail’ upon her, if not by ‘mine own arguments,’ by those of ‘wits’ and ‘capacities’ that have a ‘congeniality’ (as I may say) to ‘her own,’ to take to heart,

——Nor of the laws of fate complain,
Since, though it has been cloudy, now’t clears up again.——

Oh! what ‘wisdom’ is there in these ‘noble classical authors!’ A ’wise man’ will (upon searching into them,) always find that they speak ‘his’ sense of ‘men’ and ‘things.’ Hence it is, that they so readily occur to my ‘memory’ on every occasion—though this may look like ‘vanity,’ it is too true to be omitted; and I see not why a man may not ’know these things of himself,’ which ‘every body’ seeth and ‘saith of him’; who, nevertheless, perhaps know not ‘half so much as he,’ in other matters.

I know but of ‘one objection,’ Sir, that can lie against my going; and that will arise from your kind ‘care’ and ‘concern’ for the ’safety of my person,’ in case that ‘fierce’ and ‘terrible man,’ the wicked Mr. Lovelace, (of whom every one standeth in fear,) should come cross me, as he may be resolved to try once more to ’gain a footing in Miss’s affections’: but I will trust in ‘Providence’ for ‘my safety,’ while I shall be engaged in a ‘cause so worthy of my function’; and the ‘more’ trust in it, as he is a ‘learned man’ as I am told.

Strange too, that so ‘vile a rake’ (I hope he will never see this!) should be a ‘learned man’; that is to say, that a ‘learned man’ may be a ‘sly sinner,’ and take opportunities, ’as they come in his way’—which, however, I do assure you, ‘I never did,’

I repeat, that as he is a ‘learned man,’ I shall ‘vest myself,’ as I may say, in ‘classical armour’; beginning ‘meekly’ with him (for, Sir, ‘bravery’ and ‘meekness’ are qualities ‘very consistent with each other,’ and in no persons so shiningly ‘exert’ themselves, as in the ’Christian priesthood’; beginning ‘meekly’ with him, I say) from Ovid,

‘Corpora magnanimo satis est protrasse leoni:’

So that, if I should not be safe behind the ’shield of mine own prudence,’ I certainly should be behind the ‘shields’ of the ‘ever-admirable classics’: of ‘Horace’ particularly; who, being a ‘rake’ (and a ‘jovial rake’ too,) himself, must have great weight with all ‘learned rakes.’

And who knoweth but I may be able to bring even this 'Goliath in wickedness,' although in 'person' but a 'little David' myself, (armed with the 'slings' and 'stones' of the 'ancient sages,') to a due sense of his errors? And what a victory would that be!

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I could here, Sir, pursuing the allegory of David and Goliath, give you some of the ‘stones’ (’hard arguments’ may be called ‘stones,’ since they ‘knock down a pertinacious opponent’) which I could ‘pelt him with,’ were he to be wroth with me; and this in order to take from you, Sir, all apprehensions for my ‘life,’ or my ‘bones’; but I forbear them till you demand them of me, when I have the honour to attend you in person.

And now, (my dear Sir,) what remaineth, but that having shown you (what yet, I believe, you did not doubt) how ‘well qualified’ I am to attend the lady with the ‘olive-branch,’ I beg of you to dispatch me with it ‘out of hand’? For if she be so ‘very ill,’ and if she should not live to receive the grace, which (to my knowledge) all the ‘worthy family’ design her, how much will that grieve you all! And then, Sir, of what avail will be the ‘eulogies’ you shall all, peradventure, join to give to her memory? For, as Martial wisely observeth,

‘——Post cineres gloria sera venit.’

Then, as ‘Ausonius’ layeth it down with ‘equal propriety,’ that ’those favours which are speedily conferred are the most grateful and obliging’ ——

And to the same purpose Ovid:

‘Gratia ab officio, quod mora tar dat, abest.’

And, Sir, whatever you do, let the ‘lady’s pardon’ be as ‘ample,’ and as ‘cheerfully given,’ as she can ‘wish for it’: that I may be able to tell her, that it hath your ‘hands,’ your ‘countenances,’ and your ’whole hearts,’ with it—for, as the Latin verse hath it, (and I presume to think I have not weakened its sense by my humble advice),

‘Dat bene, dat multum, qui dat cum munere vultum.’

And now, Sir, when I survey this long letter,* (albeit I see it enamelled, as a ‘beautiful meadow’ is enamelled by the ‘spring’ or ‘summer’ flowers, very glorious to behold!) I begin to be afraid that I may have tired you; and the more likely, as I have written without that ‘method’ or ‘order,’ which I think constituteth the ‘beauty’ of ’good writing’: which ‘method’ or ‘order,’ nevertheless, may be the ’better excused’ in a ‘familiar epistle,’ (as this may be called,) you pardoning, Sir, the ‘familiarity’ of the ‘word’; but yet not altogether ‘here,’ I must needs own; because this is ‘a letter’ and ‘not a letter,’ as I may say; but a kind of ‘short’ and ‘pithy discourse,’ touching upon ‘various’ and ‘sundry topics,’ every one of which might be a ‘fit theme’ to enlarge upon of volumes; if this ‘epistolary discourse’ (then let me call it) should be pleasing to you, (as I am inclined to think it will, because of the ‘sentiments’ and ‘aphorisms’ of the ‘wisest of the antients,’ which ‘glitter through it’ like so many dazzling ‘sunbeams,’) I will (at my leisure) work it up into a ‘methodical discourse’; and perhaps may one day print it, with a ‘dedication’ to

my ‘honoured patron,’ (if, Sir, I have ‘your’ leave,) ‘singly’ at first, (but not till I have thrown out ‘anonymously,’

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two or three ‘smaller things,’ by the success of which I shall have made myself of ‘some account’ in the ’commonwealth of letters,’) and afterwards in my ’works’—not for the ‘vanity’ of the thing (however) I will say, but for the ‘use’ it may be of to the ‘public’; for, (as one well observeth,) ’though glory always followeth virtue, yet it should be considered only as its shadow.’

* And here, by way of note, permit me to say, that no ‘sermon’ I ever composed cost me half the ‘pains’ that this letter hath done—but I knew your great ‘appetite’ after, as well as ‘admiration’ of, the ’antient wisdom,’ which you so justly prefer to the ’modern’—and indeed I join with you to think, that the ‘modern’ is only ‘borrowed,’ (as the ‘moon’ doth its light from the ‘sun,’) at least, that we ‘excel’ them in nothing; and that our ‘best cogitations’ may be found, generally speaking, more ‘elegantly’ dressed and expressed by them.

’Contemnit laudem virtus, licet usque sequatur
Gloria virtutem, corpus ut umbra suum.’

A very pretty saying, and worthy of all men’s admiration.

And now, (’most worthy Sir,’ my very good friend and patron,) referring the whole to ‘your’s,’ and to your ‘two brothers,’ and to ’young Mr. Harlowe’s’ consideration, and to the wise consideration of good ’Madam Harlowe,’ and her excellent daughter, ‘Miss Arabella Harlowe’; I take the liberty to subscribe myself, what I ‘truly am,’ and ’every shall delight to be,’ in ‘all cases,’ and at ‘all times,’

Your and their most ready and obedient as well as faithful servant, *Elias Brand*.

LETTER LXVII

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*. [*In answer to letter* LXIV. *Of this volume*.] WEDN. *Morn*. *Sept*. 6.

And is she somewhat better?—Blessings upon thee without number or measure! Let her still be better and better! Tell me so at least, if she be not so: for thou knowest not what a joy that poor temporary reprieve, that she will hold out yet a day or two, gave me.

But who told this hard-hearted and death-pronouncing doctor that she will hold it no longer? By what warrant says he this? What presumption in these parading solemn fellows of a college, which will be my contempt to the latest hour of my life, if this brother of it (eminent as he is deemed to be) cannot work an ordinary miracle in her favour, or rather in mine!

Let me tell thee, Belford, that already he deserves the utmost contempt, for suffering this charming clock to run down so low. What must be his art, if it could not wind it up in a quarter of the time he has attended her, when, at his first visits, the springs and wheels of life and motion were so god, that they seemed only to want common care and oiling!

I am obliged to you for endeavouring to engage her to see me. 'Twas acting like a friend. If she had vouchsafed me that favour, she should have seen at her feet the most abject adorer that ever kneeled to justly-offended beauty.

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What she bid you, and what she forbid you, to tell me, (the latter for tender considerations:) that she forgives me; and that, could she have made me a good man, she would have made me a happy one! That she even loved me! At such a moment to own that she once loved me! Never before loved any man! That she prays for me! That her last tear should be shed for me, could she by it save a soul, doomed, without her, to perdition!— O Belford! Belford! I cannot bear it!—What a dog, what a devil have I been to a goodness so superlative!—Why does she not inveigh against me? —Why does she not execrate me?—O the triumphant subduer! Ever above me!—And now to leave me so infinitely below her!

Marry and repair, at any time; this, wretch that I was, was my plea to myself. To give her a lowering sensibility; to bring her down from among the stars which her beamy head was surrounded by, that my wife, so greatly above me, might not despise me; this was one of my reptile motives, owing to my more reptile envy, and to my consciousness of inferiority to her!—Yet she, from step to step, from distress to distress, to maintain her superiority; and, like the sun, to break out upon me with the greater refulgence for the clouds that I had contrived to cast about her!—And now to escape me thus!—No power left me to repair her wrongs!—No alleviation to my self-reproach!—No dividing of blame with her!—

Tell her, O tell her, Belford, that her prayers and wishes, her superlatively-generous prayers and wishes, shall not be vain: that I can, and do repent—and long have repented.—Tell her of my frequent deep remorses—it was impossible that such remorses should not at last produce effectual remorse—yet she must not leave me—-she must live, if she would wish to have my contrition perfect—For what can despair produce?

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I will do every thing you would have me do, in the return of your letters. You have infinitely obliged me by this last, and by pressing for an admission for me, though it succeeded not.

Once more, how could I be such a villain to so divine a creature! Yet love her all the time, as never man loved woman!—Curse upon my contriving genius!—Curse upon my intriguing head, and upon my seconding heart!—To sport with the fame, with the honour, with the life, of such an angel of a woman!—O my d——d incredulity! That, believing her to be a woman, I must hope to find her a woman! On my incredulity, that there could be such virtue (virtue for virtue’s sake) in the sex, founded I my hope of succeeding with her.

But say not, Jack, that she must leave us yet. If she recover, and if I can but re-obtain her favour, then, indeed, will life be life to me. The world never saw such an husband

as I will make. I will have no will but her's. She shall conduct me in all my steps. She shall open and direct my prospects, and turn every motion of my heart as she pleases.

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You tell me, in your letter, that at eleven o'clock she had sweet rest; and my servant acquaints me, from Mrs. Smith, that she has had a good night. What hopes does this fill me with! I have given the fellow five guineas for his good news, to be divided between him and his fellow-servant.

Dear, dear Jack! confirm this to me in thy next—for Heaven's sake, do!— Tell the doctor I'll make a present of a thousand guineas if he recover her. Ask if a consultation then be necessary.

Adieu, dear Belford! Confirm, I beseech thee, the hopes that now, with sovereign gladness, have taken possession of a heart, that, next to her's, is

Thine.

LETTER LXVIII

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
WEDN. *Morn*. *Eight o'clock*, (6 *Sept*.)

Your servant arrived here before I was stirring. I sent him to Smith's to inquire how the lady was; and ordered him to call upon me when he came back. I was pleased to hear she had tolerable rest. As soon as I had dispatched him with the letter I had written over night, I went to attend her.

I found hr up, and dressed; in a white sattin night-gown. Ever elegant; but now more so than I had seen her for a week past: her aspect serenely cheerful.

She mentioned the increased dimness of her eyes, and the tremor which had invaded her limbs. If this be dying, said she, there is nothing at all shocking in it. My body hardly sensible of pain, my mind at ease, my intellects clear and perfect as ever. What a good and gracious God have I!—For this is what I always prayed for.

I told her it was not so serene with you.

There is not the same reason for it, replied she. 'Tis a choice comfort, Mr. Belford, at the winding up of our short story, to be able to say, I have rather suffered injuries myself, than offered them to others. I bless God, though I have bee unhappy, as the world deems it, and once I thought more so than at present I think I ought to have done, since my calamities were to work out for me my everlasting happiness; yet have I not wilfully made any one creature so. I have no reason to grieve for any thing but for the sorrow I have given my friends.

But pray, Mr. Belford, remember me in the best manner to my cousin Morden; and desire him to comfort them, and to tell them, that all would have been the same, had they accepted of my true penitence, as I wish and as I trust the Almighty has done.

I was called down: it was to Harry, who was just returned from Miss Howe's, to whom he carried the lady's letter. The stupid fellow being bid to make haste with it, and return as soon as possible, staid not until Miss Howe had it, she being at the distance of five minutes, although Mrs. Howe would have had him stay, and sent a man and horse purposely with it to her daughter.

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WEDNESDAY MORNING, TEN O'CLOCK.

The poor lady is just recovered from a fainting fit, which has left her at death's door. Her late tranquillity and freedom from pain seemed but a lightening, as Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith call it.

By my faith, Lovelace, I had rather part with all the friends I have in the world, than with this lady. I never knew what a virtuous, a holy friendship, as I may call mine to her, was before. But to be so new to it, and to be obliged to forego it so soon, what an affliction! Yet, thank Heaven, I lose her not by my own fault!—But 'twould be barbarous not to spare thee now.

She has sent for the divine who visited her before, to pray with her.

LETTER LXIX

Mr. *Lovelace*, *to John Belford*, *Esq*.
Kensington, *Wednesday noon*.

Like AEsop's traveller, thou blowest hot and cold, life and death, in the same breath, with a view, no doubt, to distract me. How familiarly dost thou use the words, dying, dimness, tremor? Never did any mortal ring so many changes on so few bells. Thy true father, I dare swear, was a butcher, or an undertaker, by the delight thou seemest to take in scenes of death and horror. Thy barbarous reflection, that thou losest her not by thy own fault, is never to be forgiven. Thou hast but one way to atone for the torments thou hast given me, and that is, by sending me word that she is better, and will recover. Whether it be true or not, let me be told so, and I will go abroad rejoicing and believing it, and my wishes and imaginations shall make out all the rest.

If she live but one year, that I may acquit myself to myself (no matter for the world!) that her death is not owing to me, I will compound for the rest.

Will neither vows nor prayers save her? I never prayed in my life, put all the years of it together, as I have done for this fortnight past: and I have most sincerely repented of all my baseness to her—And will nothing do?

But after all, if she recovers not, this reflection must be my comfort; and it is truth; that her departure will be owing rather to wilfulness, to downright female wilfulness, than to any other cause.

It is difficult for people, who pursue the dictates of a violent resentment, to stop where first they designed to stop.

I have the charity to believe, that even James and Arabella Harlowe, at first, intended no more by the confederacy they formed against this their angel sister, than to disgrace and keep her down, lest (sordid wretches!) their uncles should follow the example their grandfather had set, to their detriment.

So this lady, as I suppose, intended only at first to vex and plague me; and, finding she could do it to purpose, her desire of revenge insensibly became stronger in her than the desire of life; and now she is willing to die, as an event which she thinks will cut my heart-strings asunder. And still, the more to be revenged, puts on the Christian, and forgives me.

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But I'll have none of her forgiveness! My own heart tells me I do not deserve it; and I cannot bear it!—And what is it but a mere verbal forgiveness, as ostentatiously as cruelly given with a view to magnify herself, and wound me deeper! A little, dear, specious—but let me stop —lest I blaspheme!

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Reading over the above, I am ashamed of my ramblings; but what wouldest have me do?—Seest thou not that I am but seeking to run out of myself, in hope to lose myself; yet, that I am unable to do either?

If ever thou lovedst but half so fervently as I love—but of that thy heavy soul is not capable.

Send me word by the next, I conjure thee, in the names of all her kindred saints and angels, that she is living, and likely to live!—If thou sendest ill news, thou wilt be answerable for the consequences, whether it be fatal to the messenger, or to

Thy
Lovelace.

LETTER LXX

Mr. *Belford*, *to Robert Lovelace*, *Esq*.
Wednesday, *eleven o'clock*.

Dr. H. has just been here. He tarried with me till the minister had done praying by the lady; and then we were both admitted. Mr. Goddard, who came while the doctor and the clergyman were with her, went away with them when they went. They took a solemn and everlasting leave of her, as I have no scruple to say; blessing her, and being blessed by her; and wishing (when it came to be their lot) for an exit as happy as her's is likely to be.

She had again earnestly requested of the doctor his opinion how long it was now probable that she could continue; and he told her, that he apprehended she would hardly see to-morrow night. She said, she should number the hours with greater pleasure than ever she numbered any in her life on the most joyful occasion.

How unlike poor Belton's last hours her's! See the infinite differences in the effects, on the same awful and affecting occasion, between a good and a bad conscience!

This moment a man is come from Miss Howe with a letter. Perhaps I shall be able to send you the contents.

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She endeavoured several times with earnestness, but in vain, to read the letter of her dear friend. The writing, she said, was too fine for her grosser sight, and the lines staggered under her eye. And indeed she trembled so, she could not hold the paper; and at last desired Mrs. Lovick to read it to her, the messenger waiting for an answer.

Thou wilt see in Miss Howe's letter, how different the expression of the same impatience, and passionate love, is, when dictated by the gentler mind of a woman, from that which results from a mind so boisterous and knotty as thine. For Mrs. Lovick will transcribe it, and I shall send it—to be read in this place, if thou wilt.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TUESDAY, SEPT. 5.

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O MY DEAREST FRIEND!

What will become of your poor Anna Howe! I see by your writing, as well as read by your own account, (which, were you not very, very ill, you would have touched more tenderly,) how it is with you! Why have I thus long delayed to attend you! Could I think, that the comfortings of a faithful friend were as nothing to a gentle mind in distress, that I could be prevailed upon to forbear visiting you so much as once in all this time! I, as well as every body else, to desert and abandon my dear creature to strangers! What will become of you, if you be as bad as my apprehensions make you!

I will set out this moment, little as the encouragement is that you give me to do so! My mother is willing I should! Why, O why was she not before willing?

Yet she persuades me too, (lest I should be fatally affected were I to find my fears too well justified,) to wait the return of this messenger, who rides our swiftest horse.—God speed him with good news to me—One line from your hand by him!—Send me but one line to bid me attend you! I will set out the moment, the very moment I receive it. I am now actually ready to do so! And if you love me, as I love you, the sight of me will revive you to my hopes.—But why, why, when I can think this, did I not go up sooner!

Blessed Heaven! deny not to my prayers, my friend, my admonisher, my adviser, at a time so critical to myself.

But methinks, your style and sentiments are too well connected, too full of life and vigour, to give cause for so much despair as thy staggering pen seems to forbode.

I am sorry I was not at home, [I must add thus much, though the servant is ready mounted at the door,] when Mr. Belford's servant came with your affecting letter. I was at Miss Lloyd's. My mamma sent it to me—and I came home that instant. But he was gone: he would not stay, it seems. Yet I wanted to ask him an hundred thousand questions. But why delay I thus my messenger? I have a multitude of things to say to you—to advise with you about!—You shall direct me in every thing. I will obey the holding up of your finger. But, if you leave me—what is the world, or any thing in it, to your

Anna Howe?

The effect this letter had on the lady, who is so near the end which the fair writer so much apprehends and deplores, obliged Mrs. Lovick to make many breaks in reading it, and many changes of voice.

This is a friend, said the divine lady, (taking the letter in her hand, and kissing it,) worth wishing to live for.—O my dear Anna Howe! how uninterruptedly sweet and noble has been our friendship!—But we shall one day meet, (and this hope must comfort us both,)

never to part again! Then, divested of the shades of body, shall be all light and all mind! — Then how unalloyed, how perfect, will be our friendship! Our love then will have one and the same adorable object, and we shall enjoy it and each other to all eternity!

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She said, her dear friend was so earnest for a line or two, that she fain would write, if she could: and she tried—but to no purpose. She could dictate, however, she believed; and desired Mrs. Lovick would take pen and paper. Which she did, and then she dictated to her. I would have withdrawn; but at her desire staid.

She wandered a good deal at first. She took notice that she did. And when she got into a little train, not pleasing herself, she apologized to Mrs. Lovick for making her begin again and again; and said, that the third time should go, let it be as it would.

She dictated the farewell part without hesitation; and when she came to blessing and subscription, she took the pen, and dropping on her knees, supported by Mrs. Lovick, wrote the conclusion; but Mrs. Lovick was forced to guide her hand.

You will find the sense surprisingly entire, her weakness considered.

I made the messenger wait while I transcribed it. I have endeavoured to imitate the subscriptive part; and in the letter made pauses where, to the best of my remembrance, she paused. In nothing that relates to this admirable lady can I be too minute.

WEDN. NEAR THREE O'CLOCK.

MY DEAREST MISS HOWE,

You must not be surprised—nor grieved—that Mrs. Lovick writes for me. Although I cannot obey you, and write with my pen, yet my heart writes by her's—accept it so—it is the nearest to obedience I can!

And now, what ought I to say? What can I say?—But why should not you know the truth? since soon you must—very soon.

Know then, and let your tears be those, if of pity, of joyful pity! for I permit you to shed a few, to embalm, as I may say, a fallen blossom— know then, that the good doctor, and the pious clergyman, and the worthy apothecary, have just now—with joint benedictions —taken their last leave of me; and the former bids me hope—do, my dearest, let me say hope —hope for my enlargement before to-morrow sun-set.

Adieu, therefore, my dearest friend!—Be this your consolation, as it is mine, that in God's good time we shall meet in a blessed eternity, never more to part!—Once more, then, adieu!—and be happy!—Which a generous nature cannot be, unless—to its power —it makes others so too.

God for ever bless you!—prays, dropt on my bended knees, although supported upon them,

Your obliged, grateful, affectionate,
CL. *Harlowe*.

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When I had transcribed and sealed this letter, by her direction, I gave it to the messenger myself, who told me that Miss Howe waited for nothing but his return to set out for London.

Thy servant is just come; so I will close here. Thou art a merciless master. These two fellows are battered to death by thee, to use a female word; and all female words, though we are not sure of their derivation, have very significant meanings. I believe, in their hearts, they wish the angel in the Heaven that is ready to receive her, and thee at the proper place, that there might be an end of their flurries—another word of the same gender.

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What a letter hast thou sent me!—Poor Lovelace!—is all the answer I will return.

Five o'clock.] Col. Morden is this moment arrived.

LETTER LXXI

Mr. *Belford* [*in continuation*.] *Eight in the evening*.

I had but just time, in my former, to tell you that Col. Morden was arrived. He was on horseback, attended by two servants, and alighted at the door just as the clock struck five. Mrs. Smith was then below in her back-shop, weeping, her husband with her, who was as much affected as she; Mrs. Lovick having left them a little before, in tears likewise; for they had been bemoaning one another; joining in opinion that the admirable lady would not live the night over. She had told them, it was her opinion too, from some numbnesses, which she called the forerunners of death, and from an increased inclination to doze.

The Colonel, as Mrs. Smith told me afterwards, asked with great impatience, the moment he alighted, how Miss Harlowe was? She answered— Alive!—but, she feared, drawing on apace.—Good God! said he, with his hands and eyes lifted up, can I see her? My name is Morden. I have the honour to be nearly related to her.—Step up, pray, and let her know, (she is sensible, I hope,) that I am here—Who is with her?

Nobody but her nurse, and Mrs. Lovick, a widow gentlewoman, who is as careful of her as if she were her mother.

And more careful too, interrupted he, or she is not careful at all——

Except a gentleman be with her, one Mr. Belford, continued Mrs. Smith, who has been the best friend she has had.

If Mr. Belford be with her, surely I may—but pray step up, and let Mr. Belford know that I shall take it for a favour to speak with him first.

Mrs. Smith came up to me in my new apartment. I had but just dispatched your servant, and was asking her nurse if I might be again admitted? Who answered, that she was dozing in the elbow chair, having refused to lie down, saying, she should soon, she hoped, lie down for good.

The Colonel, who is really a fine gentleman, received me with great politeness. After the first compliments—My kinswoman, Sir, said he, is more obliged to you than to any of her own family. For my part, I have been endeavouring to move so many rocks in her favour; and, little thinking the dear creature so very bad, have neglected to attend her, as I ought to have done the moment I arrived; and would, had I known how ill she was,

and what a task I should have had with the family. But, Sir, your friend has been excessively to blame; and you being so intimately his friend, has made her fare the worse for your civilities to her. But are there no hopes of her recovery?

The doctors have left her, with the melancholy declaration that there are none.

Has she had good attendance, Sir? A skilful physician? I hear these good folks have been very civil and obliging to her.

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Who could be otherwise? said Mrs. Smith, weeping.—She is the sweetest lady in the world!

The character, said the Colonel, lifting up his eyes and one hand, that she has from every living creature!—Good God! How could your accursed friend—

And how could her cruel parents? interrupted I.—We may as easily account for him, as for them.

Too true! returned me, the vileness of the profligates of our sex considered, whenever they can get any of the other into their power.

I satisfied him about the care that had been taken of her, and told him of the friendly and even paternal attendance she had had from Dr. H. and Mr. Goddard.

He was impatient to attend her, having not seen her, as he said, since she was twelve years old; and that then she gave promises of being one of the finest women in England.

She was so, replied I, a very few months ago: and, though emaciated, she will appear to you to have confirmed those promises; for her features are so regular and exact, her proportions so fine, and her manner so inimitably graceful, that, were she only skin and bone, she must be a beauty.

Mrs. Smith, at his request, stept up, and brought us down word that Mrs. Lovick and her nurse were with her; and that she was in so sound a sleep, leaning upon the former in her elbow-chair, that she had neither heard her enter the room, nor go out. The Colonel begged, if not improper, that he might see her, though sleeping. He said, that his impatience would not let him stay till he awaked. Yet he would not have her disturbed; and should be glad to contemplate her sweet features, when she saw not him; and asked, if she thought he could not go in, and come out, without disturbing her?

She believed he might, she answered; for her chair’s back was towards the door.

He said he would take care to withdraw, if she awoke, that his sudden appearance might not surprise her.

Mrs. Smith, stepping up before us, bid Mrs. Lovick and nurse not stir, when we entered; and then we went up softly together.

We beheld the lady in a charming attitude. Dressed, as I told you before, in her virgin white. She was sitting in her elbow-chair, Mrs. Lovick close by her, in another chair, with her left arm round her neck, supporting it, as it were; for, it seems, the lady had bid her do so, saying, she had been a mother to her, and she would delight herself in thinking

she was in her mamma’s arms; for she found herself drowsy; perhaps, she said, for the last time she should be so.

One faded cheek rested upon the good woman’s bosom, the kindly warmth of which had overspread it with a faint, but charming flush; the other paler and hollow, as if already iced over by death. Her hands white as the lily, with her meandering veins more transparently blue than ever I had seen even her’s, (veins so soon, alas! to be choked up by the congealment of that purple stream, which

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already so languidly creeps, rather than flows, through them!) her hands hanging lifelessly, one before her, the other grasped by the right-hand of the kind widow, whose tears bedewed the sweet face which her motherly boson supported, though unfelt by the fair sleeper; and either insensibly to the good woman, or what she would not disturb her to wipe off, or to change her posture: her aspect was sweetly calm and serene: and though she started now and then, yet her sleep seemed easy; her breath, indeed short and quick; but tolerably free, and not like that of a dying person.

In this heart-moving attitude she appeared to us when we approached her, and came to have her lovely face before us.

The Colonel, sighing often, gazed upon her with his arms folded, and with the most profound and affectionate attention; till at last, on her starting, and fetching her breath with greater difficulty than before, he retired to a screen, that was drawn before her house, as she calls it, which, as I have heretofore observed, stands under one of the windows. This screen was placed there at the time she found herself obliged to take to her chamber; and in the depth of our concern, and the fulness of other discourse at our first interview, I had forgotten to apprize the Colonel of what he would probably see.

Retiring thither, he drew out his handkerchief, and, overwhelmed with grief, seemed unable to speak; but, on casting his eye behind the screen, he soon broke silence; for, struck with the shape of the coffin, he lifted up a purplish-coloured cloth that was spread over it, and, starting back, Good God! said he, what's here?

Mrs. Smith standing next him, Why, said he, with great emotion, is my cousin suffered to indulge her sad reflections with such an object before her?

Alas! Sir, replied the good woman, who should controul her? We are all strangers about her, in a manner: and yet we have expostulated with her upon this sad occasion.

I ought, said I, (stepping softly up to him, the lady again falling into a doze,) to have apprized you of this. I was here when it was brought in, and never was so shocked in my life. But she had none of her friends about her, and no reason to hope for any of them to come near her; and, assured she should not recover, she was resolved to leave as little as possible, especially as to what related to her person, to her executor. But it is not a shocking object to her, though it be to every body else.

Curse upon the hard-heartedness of those, said he, who occasioned her to make so sad a provision for herself!—What must her reflections have been all the time she was thinking of it, and giving orders about it? And what must they be every time she turns her head towards it? These uncommon genius's—but indeed she should have been controuled in it, had I been here.

The lady fetched a profound sigh, and, starting, it broke off our talk; and the Colonel then withdrew farther behind the screen, that his sudden appearance might not surprise her.

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Where am I?—said she. How drowsy I am! How long have I dozed? Don't go, Sir, (for I was retiring,) I am very stupid, and shall be more and more so, I suppose.

She then offered to raise herself; but being ready to faint through weakness, was forced to sit down again, reclining her head on her chair back; and, after a few moments, I believe now, my good friends, said she, all your kind trouble will soon be over. I have slept, but am not refreshed, and my fingers' ends seem numbed—have no feeling! (holding them up,)—'tis time to send the letter to my good Norton.

Shall I, Madam, send my servant post with it?

O no, Sir, I thank you. It will reach the dear woman too soon, (as she will think,) by the post.

I told her this was not post-day.

Is it Wednesday still, said she; bless me! I know not how the time goes —but very tediously, 'tis plain. And now I think I must soon take to my bed. All will be most conveniently, and with least trouble, over there— will it not, Mrs. Lovick?—I think, Sir, turning to me, I have left nothing to these last incapacitating hours. Nothing either to say, or to do—I bless God, I have not. If I had, how unhappy should I be! Can you, Sir, remind me of any thing necessary to be done or said to make your office easy?

If, Madam, your cousin Morden should come, you would be glad to see him, I presume?

I am too weak to wish to see my cousin now. It would but discompose me, and him too. Yet, if he come while I can see him, I will see him, were it but to thank him for former favours, and for his present kind intentions to me. Has any body been here from him?

He has called, and will be here, Madam, in half an hour; but he feared to surprise you.

Nothing can surprise me now, except my mamma were to favour me with her last blessing in person. That would be a welcome surprise to me, even yet. But did my cousin come purposely to town to see me?

Yes, Madam, I took the liberty to let him know, by a line last Monday, how ill you were.

You are very kind, Sir. I am, and have been greatly obliged to you. But I think I shall be pained to see him now, because he will be concerned to see me. And yet, as I am not so ill as I shall presently be—the sooner he comes the better. But if he come, what shall I do about the screen? He will chide me, very probably, and I cannot bear chiding now. Perhaps, [leaning upon Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith,] I can walk into the next apartment to receive him.

She motioned to rise, but was ready to faint again, and forced to sit still.

The Colonel was in a perfect agitation behind the screen to hear this discourse; and twice, unseen by his cousin, was coming from it towards her; but retreated for fear of surprising her too much.

I stept to him, and favoured his retreat; she only saying, Are you going, Mr. Belford? Are you sent for down? Is my cousin come? For she heard somebody step softly across the room, and thought it to be me; her hearing being more perfect than her sight.

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I told her, I believed he was; and she said, We must make the best of it, Mrs. Lovick, and Mrs. Smith. I shall otherwise most grievously shock my poor cousin: for he loved me dearly once.—Pray give me a few of the doctor's last drops in water, to keep up my spirits for this one interview; and that is all, I believe, that can concern me now.

The Colonel, (who heard all this,) sent in his name; and I, pretending to go down to him, introduced the afflicted gentleman; she having first ordered the screen to be put as close to the window as possible, that he might not see what was behind it; while he, having heard what she had said about it, was determined to take no notice of it.

He folded the angel in his arms as she sat, dropping down on one knee; for, supporting herself upon the two elbows of the chair, she attempted to rise, but could not. Excuse, my dear Cousin, said she, excuse me, that I cannot stand up—I did not expect this favour now. But I am glad of this opportunity to thank you for all your generous goodness to me.

I never, my best-beloved and dearest Cousin, said he, (with eyes running over,) shall forgive myself, that I did not attend you sooner. Little did I think you were so ill; nor do any of your friends believe it. If they did—

If they did, repeated she, interrupting him, I should have had more compassion from them. I am sure I should—But pray, Sir, how did you leave them? Are you reconciled to them? If you are not, I beg, if you love your poor Clarissa, that you will; for every widened difference augments but my fault; since that is the foundation of all.

I had been expecting to hear from them in your favour, my dear Cousin, said he, for some hours, when this gentleman's letter arrived, which hastened me up; but I have the account of your grandfather's estate to make up with you, and have bills and drafts upon their banker for the sums due to you; which they desire you may receive, lest you should have occasion for money. And this is such an earnest of an approaching reconciliation, that I dare to answer for all the rest being according to your wishes, if ——

Ah! Sir, interrupted she, with frequent breaks and pauses—I wish—I wish this does not rather show that, were I to live, they would have nothing more to say to me. I never had any pride in being independent of them; all my actions, when I might have made myself more independent, show this —But what avail these reflections now?—I only beg, Sir, that you, and this gentleman—to whom I am exceedingly obliged—will adjust those matters—according to the will I have written. Mr. Belford will excuse me; but it was in truth more necessity than choice that made me think of giving him the trouble he so kindly accepts. Had I the happiness to see you, my Cousin, sooner—or to know that you still honoured me with your regard—I should not have had the assurance to ask this favour of him.—

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But, though the friend of Mr. Lovelace, he is a man of honour, and he will make peace rather than break it. And, my dear Cousin, let me beg of you while I have nearer relations than my Cousin Morden, dear as you are, and always were to me, you have no title to avenge my wrongs upon him who has been the occasion of them. But I wrote to you my mind on this subject, and my reasons—and I hope I need not further urge them.

I must do Mr. Lovelace so much justice, answered he, wiping his eyes, as to witness how sincerely he repents him of his ungrateful baseness to you, and how ready he is to make you all the amends in his power. He owns his wickedness, and your merit. If he did not, I could not pass it over, though you have nearer relations; for, my dear Cousin, did not your grandfather leave me in trust for you? And should I think myself concerned for your fortune, and not for your honour? But since he is so desirous to do you justice, I have the less to say; and you may make yourself entirely easy on that account.

I thank you, thank you, Sir, said she;—all is now as I wished.—But I am very faint, very weak. I am sorry I cannot hold up; that I cannot better deserve the honour of this visit —but it will not be—and saying this, she sunk down in her chair, and was silent.

Hereupon we both withdrew, leaving word that we would be at the Bedford Head, if any thing extraordinary happened.

We bespoke a little repast, having neither of us dined; and, while it was getting ready, you may guess at the subject of our discourse. Both joined in lamentation for the lady's desperate state; admired her manifold excellencies; severely condemned you and her friends. Yet, to bring him into better opinion of you, I read to him some passages from your last letters, which showed your concern for the wrongs you had done her, and your deep remorse: and he said it was a dreadful thing to labour under the sense of a guilt so irredeemable.

We procured Mr. Goddard, (Dr. H. not being at home,) once more to visit her, and to call upon us in his return. He was so good as to do so; but he tarried with her not five minutes; and told us, that she was drawing on apace; that he feared she would not live till morning; and that she wished to see Colonel Morden directly.

The Colonel made excuses where none were needed; and though our little refection was just brought in, he went away immediately.

I could not touch a morsel; and took pen and ink to amuse myself, and oblige you; knowing how impatient you would be for a few lines: for, from what I have recited, you see it was impossible I could withdraw to write when your servant came at half an hour after five, or have an opportunity for it till now; and this is accidental; and yet your poor fellow was afraid to go away with the verbal message I sent; importing, as no doubt he

told you, that the Colonel was with us, the lady excessively ill, and that I could not stir to write a line.

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TEN O’CLOCK.

The Colonel sent to me afterwards, to tell me that the lady having been in convulsions, he was so much disordered that he could not possibly attend me.

I have sent every half hour to know how she does—and just now I have the pleasure to hear that her convulsions have left her; and that she is gone to rest in a much quieter way than could be expected.

Her poor cousin is very much indisposed; yet will not stir out of the house while she is in such a way; but intends to lie down on a couch, having refused any other accommodation.

End of Vol. 8.