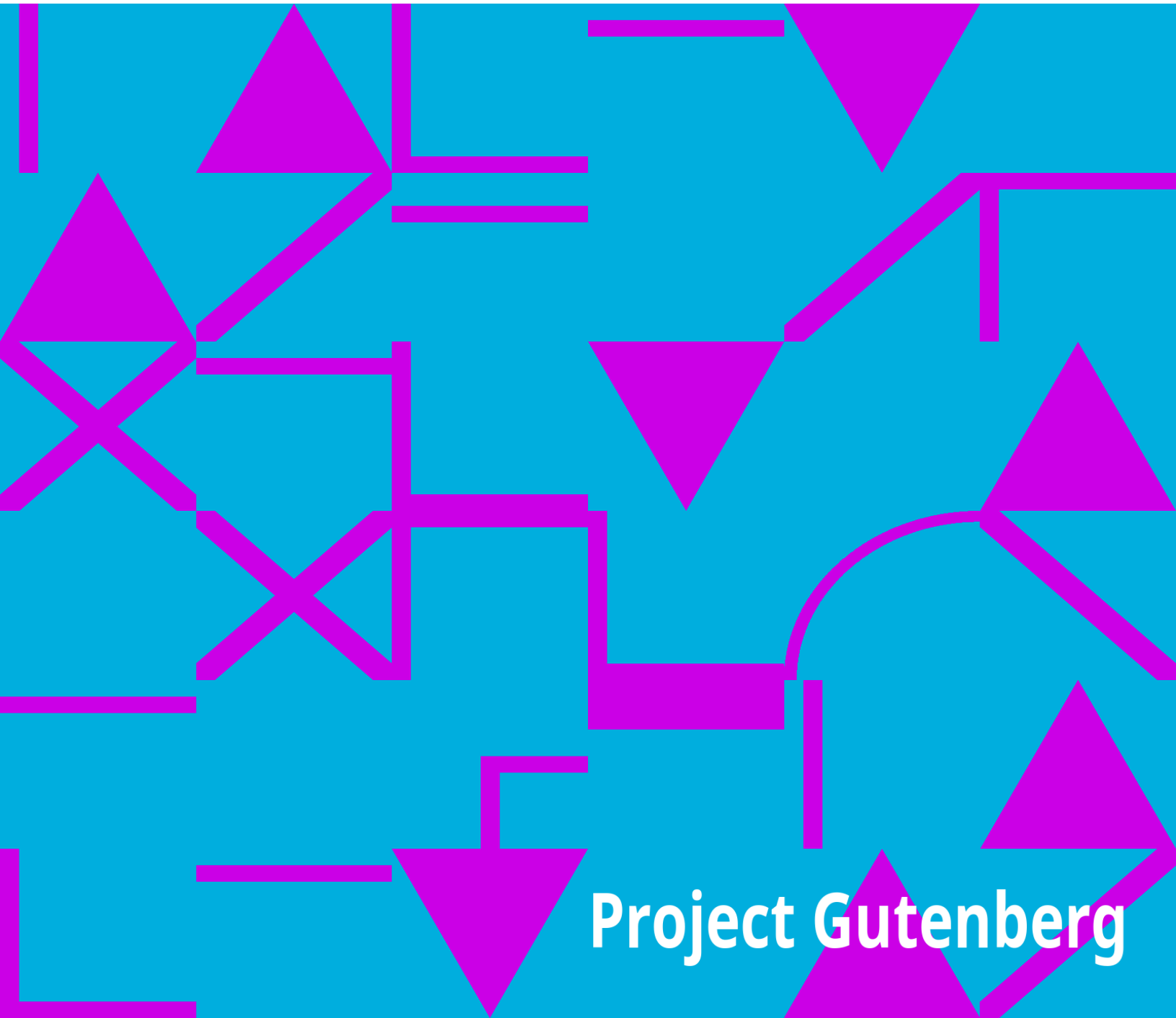
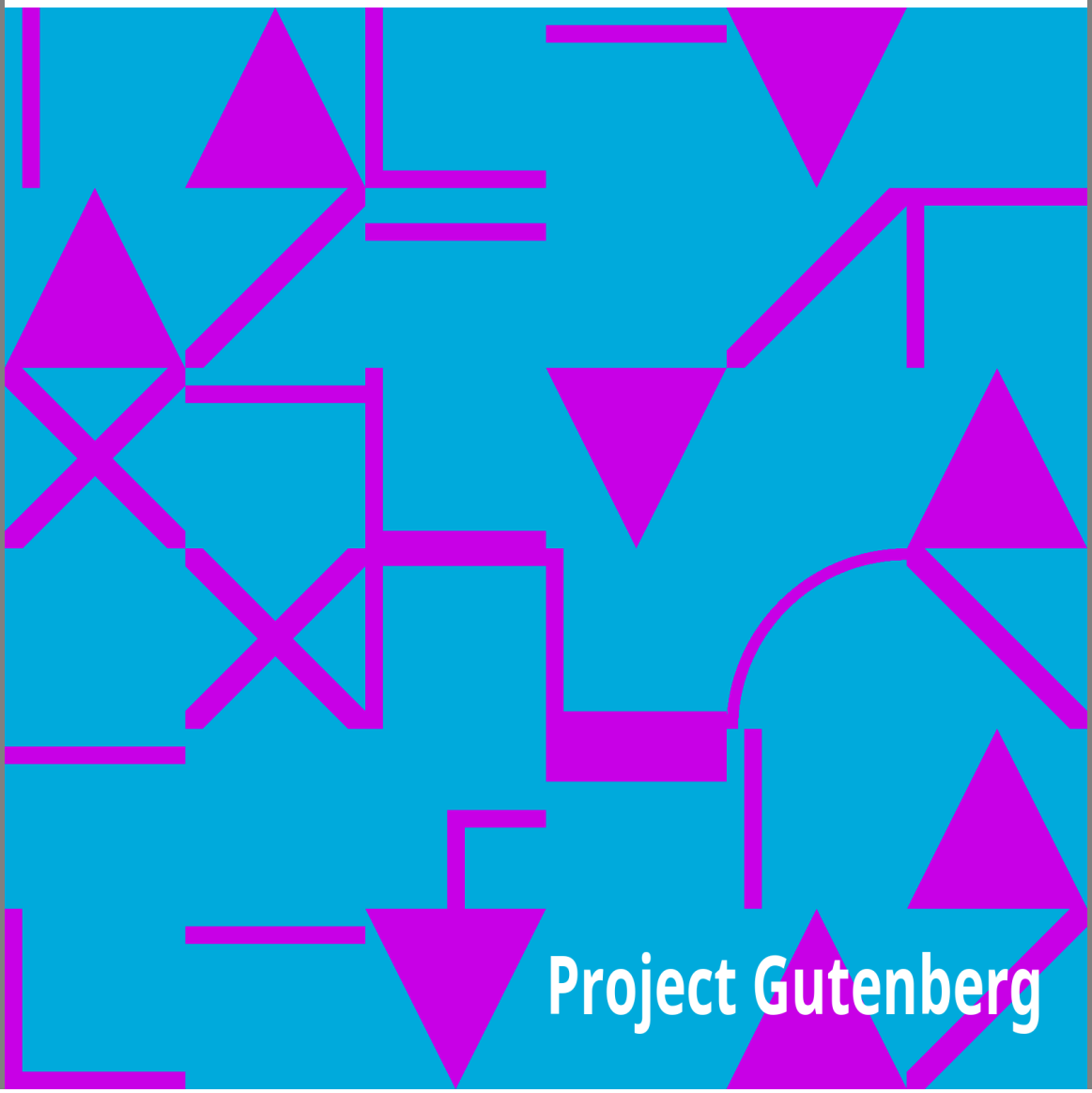
Tales and Novels — Volume 08

Maria Edgeworth



Tales and Novels — Volume 08

Maria Edgeworth



Project Gutenberg

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Tales and Novels — Volume 08

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Tales and Novels — Volume 08

Author: Maria Edgeworth

Release date: November 1, 2005 [eBook #9321]
Most recently updated: February 25, 2021

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/9321

Credits: Text file produced by Jonathan Ingram, William Flis, and
Distributed
Proofreaders

HTML file produced by David Widger

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TALES AND NOVELS — VOLUME 08 ***

TALES AND NOVELS,

VOLUME VIII (of X)

PATRONAGE, concluded;
COMIC DRAMAS; LEONORA; AND LETTERS

By Maria Edgeworth

In Ten Volumes. With Engravings on Steel
(Engravings are not included in this edition)

CONTENTS

PATRONAGE, Concluded

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHAPTER XL.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CHAPTER XLIV.

COMIC DRAMAS.

LOVE AND LAW

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LOVE AND LAW

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

THE ROSE, THISTLE,

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE ROSE,

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

LEONORA (Letters)

LETTER From A GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND

ANSWER

LETTERS

PATRONAGE

CHAPTER XXXVI.

No less an event than Alfred's marriage, no event calling less imperatively upon her feelings, could have recovered Lady Jane's sympathy for Caroline. But Alfred Percy, who had been the restorer of her fortune, her friend in adversity, what pain it would give him to find her, at the moment when he might expect her congratulations, quarrelling with his sister—that sister, too, who had left her home, where she was so happy, and Hungerford Castle, where she was adored, on purpose to tend Lady Jane in sickness and obscurity!

Without being put exactly into these words, or, perhaps, into any words, thoughts such as these, with feelings of gratitude and affection, revived for Caroline in Lady Jane's mind the moment she heard of Alfred's intended marriage.

"Good young man!—Excellent friend!—Well, tell me all about it, *my dear*."

It was the first time that her ladyship had said *my dear* to Caroline since the day of the fatal refusal.

Caroline was touched by this word of reconciliation—and the tears it brought into her eyes completely overcame Lady Jane, who hastily wiped her own.

"So, my dear Caroline—where were we? Tell me about your brother's marriage—when is it to be?—How has it been brought about?—The last I heard of the Leicesters was the good dean's death—I remember pitying them very much—Were they not left in straitened circumstances, too? Will Alfred have any fortune with Miss Leicester?—Tell me every thing—read me his letters."

To go back to Dr. Leicester's death. For some months his preferments were kept in abeyance. Many were named, or thought of, as likely to succeed him. The deanery was in the gift of the crown, and as it was imagined that the vicarage was also at the disposal of government, applications had poured in, on all sides, for friends, and friends' friends, to

the remotest link of the supporters of ministry—But—to use their own elegant, phrase—the hands of government were tied.

It seems that in consequence of some parliamentary interest, formerly given opportunely, and in consideration of certain arrangements in his diocese, to serve persons whom ministers were obliged to oblige, a promise had long ago been given to Bishop Clay that his recommendation to the deanery should be accepted on the next vacancy. The bishop, who had promised the living to his sister's husband, now presented it to Mr. Buckhurst Falconer, with the important addition of Dr. Leicester's deanery.

To become a dean was once the height of Buckhurst's ambition, that for which in a moment of elation he prayed, scarcely hoping that his wishes would ever be fulfilled: yet now that his wish was accomplished, and that he had attained this height of his ambition, was he happy? No!—far from it; farther than ever. How could he be happy—dissatisfied with his conduct, and detesting his wife? In the very act of selling himself to this beldam, he abhorred his own meanness; but he did not know how much reason he should have to repent, till the deed was done. It was done in a hurry, with all the precipitation of a man who hates himself for what he feels forced to do. Unused to bargain and sale in any way, in marriage never having thought of it before, Buckhurst did not take all precautions necessary to make his sacrifice answer his own purpose. He could not conceive the avaricious temper and habits of his lady, till he was hers past redemption. Whatever accession of income he obtained from his marriage, he lived up to; immediately, his establishment, his expenses, surpassed his revenue. His wife would not pay or advance a shilling beyond her stipulated quota to their domestic expenses. He could not hear the parsimonious manner in which she would have had him live, or the shabby style in which she received his friends. He was more profuse in proportion as she was more niggardly; and whilst she scolded and grudged every penny she paid, he ran in debt magnanimously for hundreds. When the living and deanery came into his possession, the second year's fruits had been eaten beforehand. Money he must have, and money his wife would not give—but a litigious agent suggested to him a plan for raising it, by demanding a considerable sum from the executors of the late Dr. Leicester, for what is called *dilapidation*. The parsonage-house seemed to be in good repair; but to make out charges of dilapidation was not difficult to those who understood the business—and fifteen hundred pounds was the charge presently made out

against the executors of the late incumbent. It was invidious, it was odious for the new vicar, in the face of his parishioners, of all those who loved and respected his predecessor, to begin by making such a demand—especially as it was well known that the late dean had not saved any of the income of his preferment, but had disposed of it amongst his parishioners as a steward for the poor. He had left his family in narrow circumstances. They were proud of his virtues, and not ashamed of the consequences. With dignity and ease they retrenched their expenses; and after having lived as became the family of a dignitary of the church, on quitting the parsonage, the widow and her niece retired to a small habitation, suited to their altered circumstances, and lived with respectable and respected economy. The charge brought against them by the new dean was an unexpected blow. It was an extortion, to which Mrs. Leicester would not submit—could not without injury to her niece, from whose fortune the sum claimed, if yielded, must be deducted.

Alfred Percy, from the first moment of their distress, from the time of good Dr. Leicester's death, had been assiduous in his attentions to Mrs. Leicester; and by the most affectionate letters, and, whenever he could get away from London, by his visits to her and to his Sophia, had proved the warmth and constancy of his attachment. Some months had now passed—he urged his suit, and besought Sophia no longer to delay his happiness. Mrs. Leicester wished that her niece should now give herself a protector and friend, who might console her for the uncle she had lost. It was at this period the *dilapidation charge* was made. Mrs. Leicester laid the whole statement before Alfred, declaring that for his sake, as well as for her niece's, she was resolute to defend herself against injustice. Alfred could scarcely bring himself to believe that Buckhurst Falconer had acted in the manner represented, with a rapacity, harshness, and cruelty, so opposite to his natural disposition. Faults, Alfred well knew that Buckhurst had; but they were all, he thought, of quite a different sort from those of which he now stood accused. What was to be done? Alfred was extremely averse from going to law with a man who was his relation, for whom he had early felt, and still retained, a considerable regard: yet he could not stand by, and see the woman he loved, defrauded of nearly half the small fortune she possessed. On the other hand, he was employed as a professional man, and called upon to act. He determined, however, before he should, as a last resource, expose the truth and maintain the right in a court of justice,

previously to try every means of conciliation in his power. To all his letters the new dean answered evasively and unsatisfactorily, by referring him to his attorney, into whose hands he said he had put the business, and he knew and wished to hear nothing more about it. The attorney, Solicitor Sharpe, was impracticable—Alfred resolved to see the dean himself; and this, after much difficulty, he at length effected. He found the dean and his lady tête-à-tête. Their raised voices suddenly stopped short as he entered. The dean gave an angry look at his servant as Alfred came into the room.

"Your servants," said Alfred, "told me that you were not at home, but I told them that I knew the dean would be at home to an old friend."

"You are very good,—(said Buckhurst)—you do me a great deal of honour," said the dean.

Two different manners appeared in the same person: one natural—belonging to his former, the other assumed, proper, as he thought, for his present self, or rather for his present situation.

"Won't you be seated? I hope all our friends—" Mrs. Buckhurst, or, as she was called, Mrs. Dean Falconer, made divers motions, with a very ugly chin, and stood as if she thought there ought to be an introduction. The dean knew it, but being ashamed to introduce her, determined against it. Alfred stood in suspension, waiting their mutual pleasure.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" repeated the dean.

Down plumped Mrs. Falconer directly, and taking out her spectacles, as if to shame her husband, by heightening the contrast of youth and age, deliberately put them on; then drawing her table nearer, settled herself to her work.

Alfred, who saw it to be necessary, determined to use his best address to conciliate the lady.

"Mr. Dean, you have never yet done me the honour to introduce me to Mrs. Falconer."

"I thought—I thought we had met before—since—Mrs. Falconer, Mr. Alfred Percy."

The lady took off her spectacles, smiled, and adjusted herself, evidently with an intention to be more agreeable. Alfred sat down by her work-table, directed his conversation to her, and soon talked, or rather induced her to talk herself into fine humour. Presently she retired to dress for dinner, and

“hoped Mr. Alfred Percy had no intention of running away—*she* had a well-aired bed to offer him.”

The dean, though he cordially hated his lady, was glad, for his own sake, to be relieved from her fits of crossness; and was pleased by Alfred’s paying attention to her, as this was a sort of respect to himself, and what he seldom met with from those young men who had been his companions before his marriage—they usually treated his lady with a neglect or ridicule which reflected certainly upon her husband.

Alfred never yet had touched upon his business, and Buckhurst began to think this was merely a friendly visit. Upon Alfred’s observing some alteration which had been lately made in the room in which they were sitting, the dean took him to see other improvements in the house; in pointing out these, and all the conveniences and elegancies about the parsonage, Buckhurst totally forgot the *dilapidation suit*; and every thing he showed and said tended unawares to prove that the house was in the most perfect repair and best condition possible. Gradually, whatever solemnity and beneficed pomp there had at first appeared in the dean’s manner, wore off, or was laid aside; and, except his being somewhat more corpulent and rubicund than in early years, he appeared like the original Buckhurst. His gaiety of heart, indeed, was gone, but some sparkles of his former spirits remained.

“Here,” said he, showing Alfred into his study, “here, as our good friend Mr. *Blank* said, when he showed us his study, ‘*Here* is *where* I read all day long—quite snug—and nobody’s a bit the wiser for it.’”

The dean seated himself in his comfortable arm-chair. “Try that chair, Alfred, excellent for sleeping in at one’s ease.”

“To rest the cushion and soft dean invite.”

“Ah!” said Alfred, “often have I sat in this room with my excellent friend, Dr. Leicester!”

The new dean’s countenance suddenly changed: but endeavouring to pass it off with a jest, he said, “Ay, poor good old Leicester, he sleeps for ever,—that’s one comfort—to me—if not to you.” But perceiving that Alfred

continued to look serious, the dean added some more proper reflections in a tone of ecclesiastical sentiment, and with a sigh of decorum—then rose, for he smelt that the *dilapidation suit* was coming.

"Would not you like, Mr. Percy, to wash your hands before dinner?"

"I thank you, Mr. Dean, I must detain you a moment to speak to you on business."

Black as Erebus grew the face of the dean—he had no resource but to listen, for he knew it would come after dinner, if it did not come now; and it was as well to have it alone in the study, where nobody might be a bit the wiser.

When Alfred had stated the whole of what he had to say, which he did in as few and strong words as possible, appealing to the justice and feelings of Buckhurst—to the fears which the dean must have of being exposed, and ultimately defeated, in a court of justice—"Mrs. Leicester," concluded he, "is determined to maintain the suit, and has employed me to carry it on for her."

"I should very little have expected," said the dean, "that Mr. Alfred Percy would have been employed in such a way against me."

"Still less should I have expected that I could be called upon in such a way against you," replied Alfred. "No one can feel it more than I do. The object of my present visit is to try whether some accommodation may not be made, which will relieve us both from the necessity of going to law, and may prevent me from being driven to the performance of this most painful professional duty."

"Duty! professional duty!" repeated Buckhurst: "as if I did not understand all those *cloak-words*, and know how easy it is to put them on and off at pleasure!"

"To some it may be, but not to me," said Alfred, calmly.

Anger started into Buckhurst's countenance: but conscious how inefficacious it would be, and how completely he had laid himself open, the dean answered, "You are the best judge, sir. But I trust—though I don't pretend to understand the honour of lawyers—I trust, as a gentleman, you will not take advantage against me in this suit, of any thing my openness has shown you about the parsonage."

“You trust rightly, Mr. Dean,” replied Alfred, in his turn, with a look not of anger, but of proud indignation; “you trust rightly, Mr. Dean, and as I should have expected that one who has had opportunities of knowing me so well ought to trust.”

“That’s a clear answer,” said Buckhurst. “But how could I tell?—so much *jockeying* goes on in every profession—how could I tell that a lawyer would be more conscientious than another man? But now you assure me of it—I take it upon your word, and believe it in your case. About the accommodation—*accommodation* means money, does not it?—frankly, I have not a shilling. But Mrs. Falconer is all *accommodation*. Try what you can do with her—and by the way you began, I should hope you would do a great deal,” added he, laughing.

Alfred would not undertake to speak to his lady, unless the dean would, in the first instance, make some sacrifice. He represented that he was not asking for money, but for a relinquishment of a claim, which he apprehended not to be justly due: “And the only use I shall ever make of what you have shown me here, is to press upon your feelings, as I do at this moment, the conviction of the injustice of that claim, which I am persuaded your lawyers only instigated, and that you will abandon.”

Buckhurst begged him not to be persuaded of any such thing. The instigation of an attorney, he laughing said, was not in law counted the instigation of the devil—at law no man talked of feelings. In matters of property judges did not understand them, whatever figure they might make with a jury in criminal cases—with an eloquent advocate’s hand on his breast.

Alfred let Buckhurst go on with his vain wit and gay rhetoric till he had nothing more to say, knowing that he was hiding consciousness of unhandsome conduct. Sticking firmly to his point, Alfred showed that his client, though gentle, was resolved, and that, unless Buckhurst yielded, law must take its course—that though he should never give any hint, the premises must be inspected, and disgrace and defeat must follow.

Forced to be serious, fretted and hurried, for the half-hour bell before dinner had now rung, and the dean’s stomach began to know canonical hours, he exclaimed, “The upshot of the whole business is, that Mr. Alfred Percy is in love, I understand, with Miss Sophia Leicester, and this fifteen hundred pounds, which he pushes me to the bare wall to relinquish, is

eventually, as part of her fortune, to become his. Would it not have been as fair to have stated this at once?"

"No—because it would not have been the truth."

"No!—You won't deny that you are in love with Miss Leicester?"

"I am as much in love as man can be with Miss Leicester; but her fortune is nothing to me, for I shall never touch it."

"Never touch it! Does the aunt—the widow—the cunning widow, refuse consent?"

"Far from it: the aunt is all the aunt of Miss Leicester should be—all the widow of Dr. Leicester ought to be. But her circumstances are not what they ought to be; and by the liberality of a friend, who lends me a house, rent free, and by the resources of my profession, I am better able than Mrs. Leicester is to spare fifteen hundred pounds: therefore, in the recovery of this money I have no personal interest at present. I shall never receive it from her."

"Noble! Noble!—just what I could have done myself—once! What a contrast!"

Buckhurst laid his head down upon his arms flat on the table, and remained for some moments silent—then, starting upright, "I'll never claim a penny from her—I'll give it all up to you! I will, if I sell my band for it, by Jove!"

"Oh! what has your father to answer for, who forced you into the church!" thought Alfred.

"My dear Buckhurst," said he, "my dear dean—"

"Call me Buckhurst, if you love me."

"I do love you, it is impossible to help it, in spite of—"

"All my faults—say it out—say it out—in spite of your conscience," added Buckhurst, trying to laugh.

"Not in spite of my conscience, but in favour of yours," said Alfred, "against whose better dictates you have been compelled all your life to act."

"I have so, but that's over. What remains to be done at present? I am in real distress for five hundred pounds. Apropos to your being engaged in this dilapidation suit, you can speak to Mrs. Falconer about it. Tell her I have given up the thing; and see what she will do."

Alfred promised he would speak to Mrs. Falconer. “And, Alfred, when you see your sister Caroline, tell her that I am not in one sense such a wretch—quite, as she thinks me. But tell her that I am yet a greater wretch—infinitely more miserable than she, I hope, can conceive—beyond redemption—beyond endurance miserable.” He turned away hastily in an agony of mind. Alfred shut the door and escaped, scarcely able to bear his own emotion.

When they met at dinner, Mrs. Dean Falconer was an altered person—her unseemly morning costume and well-worn shawl being cast aside, she appeared in bloom-coloured gossamer gauze, and primrose ribbons, a would-be young lady. Nothing of that curmudgeon look, or old fairy cast of face and figure, to which he had that morning been introduced, but in their place smiles, and all the false brilliancy which rouge can give to the eyes, proclaimed a determination to be charming.

The dean was silent, and scarcely ate any thing, though the dinner was excellent, for his lady was skilled in the culinary department, and in favour of Alfred had made a more hospitable display than she usually condescended to make for her husband’s friends. There were no other guests, except a young lady, companion to Mrs. Falconer. Alfred was as agreeable and entertaining as circumstances permitted; and Mrs. Buckhurst Falconer, as soon as she got out of the dining-room, even before she reached the drawing-room, pronounced him to be a most polite and accomplished young man, very different indeed from the *common run*, or the usual style, of Mr. Dean Falconer’s dashing bachelor beaux, who in her opinion were little better than brute bears.

At coffee, when the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, as Alfred was standing beside Mrs. Falconer, meditating how and when to speak of the object of his visit, she cleared the ground by choosing the topic of conversation, which, at last fairly drove her husband out of the room. She judiciously, maliciously, or accidentally, began to talk of the proposal which she had heard a near relation of hers had not long since made to a near relation of Mr. Alfred Percy’s—Mr. Clay, of Clay-hall, her nephew, had proposed for Mr. Alfred’s sister, Miss Caroline Percy. She was really sorry the match was not to take place, for she had heard a very high character of the young lady in every way, and her nephew was rich enough to do without fortune—not but what that would be very acceptable to all men—especially

young men, who are now mostly all for money instead of all for love—except in the case of very first rate extraordinary beauty, which therefore making a woman a prey, just as much one as the other, might be deemed a misfortune as great, though hardly *quite*, Mrs. Buckhurst said, as she had found a great fortune in her own particular case. The involution of meaning in these sentences rendering it not easy to be comprehended, the dean stood it pretty well, only stirring his coffee, and observing that it was cold; but when his lady went on to a string of interrogatories about Miss Caroline Percy—on the colour of her eyes and hair—size of her mouth and nose—requiring in short a complete full-length portrait of the young lady, poor Buckhurst set down his cup, and pleading business in his study, left the field open to Alfred.

"Near-sighted glasses! Do you never use them, Mr. Percy?" said Mrs. Dean Falconer, as she thought Alfred's eyes fixed upon her spectacles, which lay on the table.

No—he never used them, he thanked her: he was rather far-sighted than short-sighted. She internally commended his politeness in not taking them up to verify her assertion, and put them into her pocket to avoid all future danger.

He saw it was a favourable moment, and entered at once into his business—beginning by observing that the dean was much out of spirits. The moment money was touched upon, the curmudgeon look returned upon the lady; and for some time Alfred had great difficulty in making himself heard: she poured forth such complaints against the extravagance of the dean, with lists of the debts she had paid, the sums she had given, and the vow she had made, never to go beyond the weekly allowance she had, at the last settlement, agreed to give her husband.

Alfred pleaded strongly the expense of law, and the certainty, in his opinion, of ultimate defeat, with the being obliged to pay all the costs, which would fall upon the dean. The dean was willing to withdraw his claim—he had promised to do so, in the most handsome manner; and therefore, Alfred said, he felt particularly anxious that he should not be distressed for five hundred pounds, a sum for which he knew Mr. Falconer was immediately pressed. He appealed to Mrs. Falconer's generosity. He had been desired by the dean to speak to her on the subject, otherwise he should not have presumed—and it was as a professional man, and a near

relation, that he now took the liberty: this was the first transaction he had ever had with her, and he hoped he should leave the vicarage impressed with a sense of her generosity, and enabled to do her justice in the opinion of those who did not know her.

That was very little to her, she bluntly said—she acted only up to her own notions—she lived only for herself.

"And for her husband." Love, Alfred Percy said, he was assured, was superior to money in her opinion. "And after all, my dear madam, you set me the example of frankness, and permit me to speak to you without reserve. What can you, who have no reason, you say, to be pleased with either of your nephews, do better with your money, than spend it while you live and for yourself, in securing happiness in the gratitude and affection of a husband, who, generous himself, will be peculiarly touched and attached by generosity?"

The words, *love, generosity, generous*, sounded upon the lady's ear, and she was unwilling to lose that high opinion which she imagined Alfred entertained of her sentiments and character. Besides, she was conscious that he was in fact nearer the truth than all the world would have believed. Avaricious in trifles, and parsimonious in those every-day habits which brand the reputation immediately with the fault of avarice, this woman was one of those misers who can be generous by fits and starts, and who have been known to *give* hundreds of pounds, but never without reluctance would part with a shilling.

She presented the dean, her husband, with an order on her banker for the money he wanted, and Alfred had the pleasure of leaving his unhappy friend better, at least, than he found him. He rejoiced in having compromised this business so successfully, and in thus having prevented the litigation, ill-will, and disgraceful circumstances, which, without his interference, must have ensued.

The gratitude of Mrs. Leicester and her niece was delightful. The aunt urged him to accept what he had been the means of saving, as part of her niece's fortune; but this he absolutely refused, and satisfied Mrs. Leicester's delicacy, by explaining, that he could not, if he would, now yield to her entreaties, as he had actually obtained the money from poor Buckhurst's generous repentance, upon the express faith that he had no private interest in the accommodation.

“You would not,” said Alfred, “bring me under the act against raising money upon false pretences?”

What Alfred lost in money he gained in love. His Sophia’s eyes beamed upon him with delight. The day was fixed for their marriage, and at Alfred’s suggestion, Mrs. Leicester consented, painful as it was, in some respects, to her feelings, that they should be married by the dean in the parish church.

Alfred brought his bride to town, and as soon as they were established in their own house, or rather in that house which Mr. Gresham insisted upon their calling their own, Lady Jane Granville was the first person to offer her congratulations.—Alfred begged his sister Caroline from Lady Jane, as he had already obtained his father’s and mother’s consent. Lady Jane was really fond of Caroline’s company, and had forgiven her, as well as she could; yet her ladyship had no longer a hope of being *of use* to her, and felt that even if any other offer were to occur—and none such as had been made could ever more be expected—it would lead only to fresh disappointment and altercation; therefore she, with the less reluctance, relinquished Caroline altogether.

Caroline’s new sister had been, from the time they were first acquainted, her friend, and she rejoiced in seeing all her hopes for her brother’s happiness accomplished by this marriage. His Sophia had those habits of independent occupation which are essential to the wife of a professional man, and which enable her to spend cheerfully many hours alone, or at least without the company of her husband. On his return home every evening, he was sure to find a smiling wife, a sympathizing friend, a cheerful fireside.—She had musical talents—her husband was fond of music; and she did not lay aside the accomplishments which had charmed the lover, but made use of them to please him whom she had chosen as her companion for life. Her voice, her harp, her utmost skill, were ready at any moment, and she found far more delight in devoting her talents to him than she had ever felt in exhibiting them to admiring auditors. This was the domestic use of accomplishments to which Caroline had always been accustomed; so that joining in her new sister’s occupations and endeavours to make Alfred’s evenings pass pleasantly, she felt at once as much *at home* as if she had been in the country; for the mind is its own place, and domestic happiness may be naturalized in a capital city.

At her brother's house, Caroline had an opportunity of seeing a society that was new to her, that of the professional men of the first eminence both in law and medicine, the men of science and of literature, with whom Alfred and Erasmus had been for years assiduously cultivating acquaintance. They were now happy to meet at Alfred's house, for they liked and esteemed him, and they found his wife and sister sensible, well-informed women, to whom their conversation was of real amusement and instruction; and who, in return, knew how to enliven their leisure hours by female sprightliness and elegance. Caroline now saw the literary and scientific world to the best advantage: not the amateurs, or the mere *show* people, but those who, really excelling and feeling their own superiority, had too much pride and too little time to waste upon idle flattery, or what to them were stupid, uninteresting *parties*. Those who refused to go to Lady Spilsbury's, or to Lady Angelica Headingham's, or who were seen there, perhaps, once or twice in a season as a great favour and honour, would call three or four evenings every week at Alfred's.

The first news, the first hints of discoveries, inventions, and literary projects, she heard from time to time discussed. Those men of talent, whom she had heard were to be seen at *conversaziones*, or of whom she had had a glimpse in fine society, now appeared in a new point of view, and to the best advantage; without those pretensions and rivalships with which they sometimes are afflicted in public, or those affectations and singularities, which they often are supposed to assume, to obtain notoriety among persons inferior to them in intellect and superior in fashion. Instead of playing, as they sometimes did, a false game to amuse the multitude, they were obliged now to exert their real skill, and play fair with one another.

Sir James Harrington tells us, that in his days the courtiers who played at divers games in public, had a way of exciting the admiration and amazement of the commoner sort of spectators, by producing heaps of golden counters, and seeming to stake immense sums, when all the time they had previously agreed among one another, that each guinea should stand for a shilling, or each hundred guineas for one: so that in fact two modes of calculation were used for the initiated and uninitiated; and this exoteric practice goes on continually to this hour, among literary performers in the intellectual, as well as among courtiers in the fashionable world.

Besides the pleasure of studying celebrated characters, and persons of eminent merit, at their ease and at her own, Caroline had now opportunities of seeing most of those objects of rational curiosity, which with Lady Jane Granville had been prohibited as *mauvais ton*. With men of sense she found it was not *mauvais ton* to use her eyes for the purposes of instruction or entertainment.

With Mrs. Alfred Percy she saw every thing in the best manner; in the company of well-informed guides, who were able to point out what was essential to be observed; ready to explain and to illustrate; to procure for them all those privileges and advantages as spectators, which common gazers are denied, but which liberal and enlightened men are ever not only ready to allow, but eager to procure for intelligent, unassuming females.

Among the gentlemen of learning, talents, and eminence in Alfred's own profession, whom Caroline had the honour of seeing at her brother's, were Mr. Friend, the *friend* of his early years at the bar; and that great luminary, who in a higher orbit had cheered and guided him in his ascent. The chief justice was in a station, and of an age, where praise can be conferred without impropriety, and without hurting the feelings of delicacy or pride. He knew how to praise—a difficult art, but he excelled in it. As Caroline once, in speaking of him, said, "Common compliments compared to praise from him, are as common coin compared to a medal struck and appropriated for the occasion."

About this time Mr. Temple came to tell Alfred, that a ship had been actually ordered to be in readiness to carry him on his intended embassy; that Mr. Shaw had recovered; that Cunningham Falconer had no more excuses or pretences for delay; despatches, the last Lord Oldborough said he should ever receive from him as envoy, had now arrived, and Temple was to have set out immediately; but that the whole embassy had been delayed, because Lord Oldborough had received a letter from Count Altenberg, giving an account of alarming revolutionary symptoms, which had appeared in the capital, and in the provinces, in the dominions of his sovereign, Lord Oldborough had shown Mr. Temple what related to public affairs, but had not put the whole letter into his hands. All that he could judge from what he read was, that the Count's mind was most seriously occupied with the dangerous state of public affairs in his country. "I should have thought," added Mr. Temple, "that the whole of this communication

was entirely of a political nature, but that in the last page which Lord Oldborough put into my hand, the catch-words at the bottom were *Countess Christina*."

Alfred observed, "that, without the aid of Rosamond's imagination to supply something more, nothing could be made of this. However, it was a satisfaction to have had direct news of Count Altenberg."

The next day Mr. Temple came for Alfred. Lord Oldborough desired to see him.

"Whatever his business may be, I am sure it is important and interesting," said Mr. Temple; "by this time I ought to be well acquainted with Lord Oldborough—I know the signs of his suppressed emotion, and I have seldom seen him put such force upon himself to appear calm, and to do the business of the day, before he should yield his mind to what pressed on his secret thoughts."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

When Alfred arrived, Lord Oldborough was engaged with some gentlemen from the city about a loan. By the length of time which the negotiators stayed, they tried Alfred's patience; but the minister sat with immoveable composure, till they knew their own minds, and till they departed. Then, the loan at once dismissed from his thoughts, he was ready for Alfred.

"You have married, I think, Mr. Alfred Percy, since I saw you last—I congratulate you."

His lordship was not in the habit of noticing such common events; Alfred was surprised and obliged by the interest in his private affairs which this congratulation denoted.

"I congratulate you, sir, because I understand you have married a woman of sense. To marry a fool—to form or to have any connexion with a fool," continued his lordship, his countenance changing remarkably as he spoke, "I conceive to be the greatest evil, the greatest curse, that can be inflicted on a man of sense."

He walked across the room with long, firm, indignant strides—then stopping short, he exclaimed, "*Lettres de cachet*!—Dangerous instruments in bad hands!—As what are not?—But one good purpose they answered—they put it in the power of the head of every noble house to disown, and to deprive of the liberty to disgrace his family, any member who should manifest the will to commit desperate crime or desperate folly."

Alfred was by no means disposed to join in praise even of this use of a *lettre de cachet*, but he did not think it a proper time to argue the point, as he saw Lord Oldborough was under the influence of some strong passion. He waited in silence till his lordship should explain himself farther.

His lordship unlocked a desk, and produced a letter.

"Pray, Mr. Percy—Mr. Alfred Percy—have you heard any thing lately of the Marchioness of Twickenham?"

"No, my lord."

Alfred, at this instant, recollected the whisper which he had once heard at chapel, and he added, “Not of late, my lord.”

“There,” said Lord Oldborough, putting a letter into Alfred’s hands —“there is the sum of what I have heard.”

The letter was from the Duke of Greenwich, informing Lord Oldborough that an unfortunate discovery had been made of *an affair* between the Marchioness of Twickenham and a certain Captain Bellamy, which rendered an immediate separation necessary.

“So!” thought Alfred, “my brother Godfrey had a fine escape of this fair lady!”

“I have seen her once since I received that letter, and I never will see her again,” said Lord Oldborough: “that’s past—all that concerns her is past and irremediable. Now as to the future, and to what concerns myself. I have been informed—how truly, I cannot say—that some time ago a rumour, a suspicion of this intrigue was whispered in what they call the fashionable world.”

“I believe that your lordship has been truly informed,” said Alfred; and he then mentioned the whisper he had heard at the chapel.

“Ha!—Farther, it has been asserted to me, that a hint was given to the Marquis of Twickenham of the danger of suffering that—what is the man’s name?—Bellamy, to be so near his wife; and that the hint was disregarded.”

“The marquis did very weakly or very wickedly,” said Alfred.

“All wickedness is weakness, sir, you know: but to our point. I have been assured that the actual discovery of the intrigue was made to the marquis some months previously to the birth of his child—and that he forbore to take any notice of this, lest it might affect the legitimacy of that child. After the birth of the infant—a boy—subsequent indiscretions on the part of the marchioness, the marquis would make it appear, gave rise to his first suspicions. Now, sir, these are the points, of which, as my friend, and as a professional man, I desire you to ascertain the truth. If the facts are as I have thus heard, I presume no divorce can be legally obtained.”

“Certainly not, my lord.”

“Then I will direct you instantly to the proper channels for information.”

Whilst Lord Oldborough wrote directions, Alfred assured him he would fulfil his commission with all the discretion and celerity in his power.

“The next step,” continued Lord Oldborough—“for, on such a subject, I wish to say all that is necessary at once, that it may be banished from my mind—your next step, supposing the facts to be ascertained, is to go with this letter—my answer to the Duke of Greenwich. See him—and see the marquis. In matters of consequence have nothing to do with secondary people—deal with the principals. Show in the first place, as a lawyer, that their divorce is unattainable—next, show the marquis that he destroys his son and heir by attempting it. The duke, I believe, would be glad of a pretext for dissolving the political connexion between me and the Greenwich family. He fears me, and he fears the world: he dares not abandon me without a pretence for the dissolution of friendship. He is a weak man, and never dares to act without a pretext; but show him that a divorce is not necessary for his purpose—a separation will do as well—Or without it, I am ready to break with him at council, in the House of Lords, on a hundred political points; and let him shield himself as he may from the reproach of desertion, by leaving the blame of quarrel on my impracticability, or on what he will, I care not—so that my family be saved from the ignominy of divorce.”

As he sealed his letter, Lord Oldborough went on in abrupt sentences.

“I never counted on a weak man’s friendship—I can do without his grace —Woman! Woman! The same—ever since the beginning of the world!”

Then turning to Alfred to deliver the letter into his hand, “Your brother, Major Percy, sir—I think I recollect—He was better in the West Indies.”

“I was just thinking so, my lord,” said Alfred.

“Yes—better encounter the plague than a fool.”

Lord Oldborough had never before distinctly adverted to his knowledge of his niece’s partiality for Godfrey, but his lordship now added, “Major Percy’s honourable conduct is not unknown: I trust honourable conduct never was, and never will be, lost upon me.—This to the Duke of Greenwich—and this to the marquis.—Since it was to be, I rejoice that this Captain Bellamy is the gallant.—Had it been your brother, sir—could there have been any love in the case—not, observe, that I believe in love, much less am I subject to the weakness of remorse—but a twinge might have seized my mind—I might possibly have been told that the marchioness was married against her inclination.—But I am at ease on that point—my judgment of her was right.—You will let me know, in one word, the result

of your negotiation without entering into particulars—divorce, or no divorce, is all I wish to hear."

Alfred did not know all the circumstances of the Marchioness of Twickenham's marriage, nor the peremptory manner in which it had been insisted upon by her uncle, otherwise he would have felt still greater surprise than that which he now felt, at the stern, unbending character of the man. Possessed as Lord Oldborough was by the opinion, that he had at the time judged and acted in the best manner possible, no after-events could make him doubt the justice of his own decision, or could at all shake him in his own estimation.

Alfred soon brought his report. "In one word—no divorce, my lord."

"That's well—I thank you, sir."

His lordship made no farther inquiries—not even whether there was to be a *separation*.

Alfred was commissioned by the Duke of Greenwich to deliver a message, which, like the messages of the gods in Homer, he delivered verbatim, and without comment: "His grace of Greenwich trusts Lord Oldborough will believe, that, notwithstanding the unfortunate circumstances, which dissolved in some degree the family connexion, it was the farthest possible from his grace's wish or thoughts to break with Lord Oldborough, as long as private feelings, and public principles, could be rendered by any means compatible."

Lord Oldborough smiled in scorn—and Alfred could scarcely command his countenance.

Lord Oldborough prepared to give his grace the opportunity, which he knew he desired, of differing with him on principle: his lordship thought his favour and power were now sufficiently established to be able to do without the Duke of Greenwich, and his pride prompted him to show this to his grace and to the world. He carried it with a high hand for a short time; but even whilst he felt most secure, and when all seemed to bend and bow before his genius and his sway, many circumstances and many persons were combining to work the downfall of his power.

One of the first slight circumstances which shook his favour, was a speech he had made to some gentleman, about the presentation of the deanery to Buckhurst Falconer. It had been supposed by many, who knew

the court which Commissioner Falconer paid to Lord Oldborough, that it was through his lordship's interest, that this preferment was given to the son; but when some person, taking this for granted, spoke of it to his lordship, he indignantly disclaimed all part in the transaction, and it is said that he added, "Sir, I know what is due to private regard as a man—and as a minister what must be yielded to parliamentary influence; but I never could have advised the bestowing ecclesiastical benefice and dignity upon any one whose conduct was not his first recommendation."

This speech, made in a moment of proud and perhaps unguarded indignation, was repeated with additions, suppressions, variations, and comments. Any thing will at court serve the purpose of those who wish to injure, and it is inconceivable what mischief was done to the minister by this slight circumstance. In the first place, the nobleman high in office, and the family connexions of the nobleman who had made the exchange of livings, and given the promise of the deanery to Bishop Clay, were offended beyond redemption—because they were in the wrong. Then, all who had done, or wished to do wrong, in similar instances, were displeased by reflection or by anticipation. But Lord Oldborough chiefly was injured by misrepresentation in the quarter where it was of most consequence to him to preserve his influence. It was construed by the highest authority into disrespect, and an imperious desire to encroach on favour, to control prerogative, and to subdue the mind of his sovereign. Insidious arts had long been secretly employed to infuse these ideas; and when once the jealousy of power was excited, every trifle confirmed the suspicion which Lord Oldborough's uncourtier-like character was little calculated to dispel. His popularity now gave umbrage, and it was hinted that he wished to make himself the *independent* minister of the people.

The affairs of the country prospered, however, under his administration; there was trouble, there was hazard in change. It was argued, that it was best to wait at least for some reverse of fortune in war, or some symptom of domestic discontent, before an attempt should be made to displace this minister, formidable by his talents, and by the awe his commanding character inspired.

The habit of confidence and deference for his genius and integrity remained, and to him no difference for some time appeared, in consequence of the secret decay of favour.

Commissioner Falconer, timid, anxious, restless, was disposed by circumstances and by nature, or by second nature, to the vigilance of a dependent's life; accustomed to watch and consult daily the barometer of court favour, he soon felt the coming storm; and the moment he saw prognostics of the change, he trembled, and considered how he should best provide for his own safety before the hour of danger arrived. Numerous libels against the minister appeared, which Lord Oldborough never read, but the commissioner, with his best spectacles, read them all; for he well knew and believed what the sage Selden saith, that "though some make slight of libels, yet you may see by them how the wind sets."

After determining by the throwing up of these straws which way the wind set, the commissioner began with all possible skill and dexterity to trim his boat. But dexterous trimmer though he was, and "prescient of change," he did yet not foresee from what quarter the storm would come.

Count Altenberg's letters had unveiled completely the envoy Cunningham Falconer's treachery, as far as it related to his intrigues abroad, and other friends detected some of his manoeuvres with politicians at home, to whom he had endeavoured to pay court, by betraying confidence reposed in him respecting the Tourville papers. Much of the mischief Cunningham had done this great minister still operated, unknown to his unsuspicious mind: but sufficient was revealed to determine Lord Oldborough to dismiss him from all future hopes of his favour.

"Mr. Commissioner Falconer," he began one morning, the moment the commissioner entered his cabinet, "Mr. Commissioner Falconer," in a tone which instantly dispelled the smile at entrance from the commissioner's countenance, and in the same moment changed his whole configurature. "My confidence is withdrawn from your son, Mr. Cunningham Falconer—for ever—and not without good reason—as you may—if you are not aware of it already—see, by those papers."

Lord Oldborough turned away, and asked his secretaries for his red box, as he was going to council.

Just as he left his cabinet, he looked back, and said, "Mr. Falconer, you should know, if you be not already apprised of it, that your son Cunningham is on his road to Denmark. You should be aware that the journey is not made by my desire, or by his majesty's order, or by any official authority; consequently he is travelling to the court of Denmark at his own expense or

yours—unless he can prevail upon his Grace of Greenwich to defray his ambassadorial travelling charges, or can afford to wait for them till a total change of administration—of which, sir, if I see any symptoms to-day in council," added his lordship, in the tone of bitter irony; "I will give you fair notice—for fair dealing is what I practise."

This said, the minister left the commissioner to digest his speech as he might, and repaired to council, where he found every thing apparently as smooth as usual, and where he was received by all, especially by the highest, with perfect consideration.

Meantime Commissioner Falconer was wretched beyond expression—wretched in the certainty that his son, that he himself, had probably lost, irrecoverably, one excellent patron, before they had secured, even in case of change, another. This premature discovery of Cunningham's intrigues totally disconcerted and overwhelmed him; and, in the bitterness of his heart, he cursed the duplicity which he had taught and encouraged, still more by example, than by precept. But Cunningham's duplicity had more and closer folds than his own. Cunningham, conceited of his diplomatic genius, and fearful of the cautious timidity of his father, did not trust that father with the knowledge of all he did, or half of what he intended; so that the commissioner, who had thought himself at the bottom of every thing, now found that he, too, had been cheated by his son with false confidences; and was involved by him in the consequences of a scheme, of which he had never been the adviser. Commissioner Falconer knew too well, by the experience of Cumberland and others, the fate of those who suffer themselves to be lured on by second-hand promises; and who venture, without being publicly acknowledged by their employers, to undertake any diplomatic mission. Nor would Cunningham, whose natural disposition to distrust was greater than his father's, have sold himself to any political tempter, without first signing and sealing the compact, had he been in possession of his cool judgment, and had he been in any other than the desperate circumstances in which he was placed. His secret conscience whispered that his recall was in consequence of the detection of some of his intrigues, and he dreaded to appear before the haughty, irritated minister. Deceived also by news from England that Lord Oldborough's dismission or resignation could not be distant, Cunningham had ventured upon this bold stroke for an embassy.

On Lord Oldborough's return from council, the commissioner, finding, from his secret informants, that every thing had gone on smoothly, and being over-awed by the confident security of the minister, began to doubt his former belief; and, in spite of all the symptoms of change, was now inclined to think that none would take place. The sorrow and contrition with which he next appeared before Lord Oldborough were, therefore, truly sincere; and when he found himself alone once more with his lordship, earnest was the vehemence with which he disclaimed his unworthy son, and disavowed all knowledge of the transaction.

"If I had seen cause to believe that you had any part in this transaction, sir, you would not be here at this moment: therefore your protestations are superfluous—none would be accepted if any were necessary."

The very circumstance of the son's not having trusted the father completely, saved the commissioner, for this time, from utter ruin: he took breath; and presently—oh, weak man! doomed never to know how to deal with a strong character—fancying that his intercession might avail for his son, and that the pride of Lord Oldborough might be appeased, and might be suddenly wrought to forgiveness, by that tone and posture of submission and supplication used only by the subject to offended majesty, he actually threw himself at the feet of the minister.

"My gracious lord—a pardon for my son!"

"I beseech you, sir!" cried Lord Oldborough, endeavouring to stop him from kneeling—the commissioner sunk instantly on his knee.

"Never will the unhappy father rise till his son be restored to your favour, my lord."

"Sir," said Lord Oldborough, "I have no favour for those who have no sense of honour: rise, Mr. Falconer, and let not the father degrade himself for the son—*unavailingly*."

The accent and look were decisive—the commissioner rose. Instead of being gratified, his patron seemed shocked, if not disgusted: far from being propitiated by this sacrifice of dignity, it rendered him still more averse; and no consolatory omen appearing, the commissioner withdrew in silence, repenting that he had abased himself. After this, some days and nights passed with him in all the horrors of indecision—Could the minister weather the storm or not?—should Mr. Falconer endeavour to reinstate himself with Lord Oldborough, or secure in time favour with the Duke of

Greenwich?—Mrs. Falconer, to whom her husband's groans in the middle of the night at last betrayed the sufferings of his mind, drew from him the secret of his fears and meditations. She advised strongly the going over, decidedly, and in time, but secretly, to the Greenwich faction.

The commissioner knew that this could not be done secretly. The attention of the minister was now awake to all his motions, and the smallest movement towards his grace of Greenwich must be observed and understood. On the other hand, to abide by a falling minister was folly, especially when he had positively withdrawn his favour from Cunningham, who had the most to expect from his patronage. Between these opposite difficulties, notwithstanding the urgent excitations of Mrs. Falconer, the poor commissioner could not bring himself to decide, till the time for action was past.

Another blow came upon him for which he was wholly unprepared—there arrived from abroad accounts of the failure of a secret expedition; and the general in his despatches named Colonel John Falconer as the officer to whose neglect of orders he principally attributed the disappointment. It appeared that orders had been sent to have his regiment at a certain place at a given hour. At the moment these orders came, Colonel John Falconer was out on a shooting party without leave. The troops, of course, on which the general had relied, did not arrive in time, and all his other combinations failed from this neglect of discipline and disobedience of orders. Colonel Falconer was sent home to be tried by a court-martial.

"I pity you, sir," said Lord Oldborough, as Commissioner Falconer, white as ashes, read in his presence these despatches—"I pity you, sir, from my soul: here is no fault of yours—the fault is mine."

It was one of the few faults of this nature which Lord Oldborough had ever committed. Except in the instance of the Falconer family, none could name any whom his lordship had placed in situations, for which they were inadequate or unfit. Of this single error he had not foreseen the consequences; they were more important, more injurious to him and to the public, than he could have calculated or conceived. It appeared now as if the Falconer family were doomed to be his ruin. That the public knew, in general, that John Falconer had been promoted by ministerial favour, Lord Oldborough was aware; but he imagined that the peculiar circumstances of that affair were known only to himself and to Commissioner Falconer's

family. To his astonishment he found, at this critical moment, that the whole transaction had reached the ear of majesty, and that it was soon publicly known. The commissioner, with protestations and oaths, declared that the secret had never, by his means, transpired—it had been divulged by the baseness of his son Cunningham, who betrayed it to the Greenwich faction. They, skilled in all the arts of undermining a rival, employed the means that were thus put into their power with great diligence and effect.

It was observed at the levee, that the sovereign looked coldly upon the minister. Every courtier whispered that Lord Oldborough had been certainly much to blame. Disdainful of their opinions, Lord Oldborough was sensibly affected by the altered eye of his sovereign.

"What! After all my services!—At the first change of fortune!"

This sentiment swelled in his breast; but his countenance was rigidly calm, his demeanour towards the courtiers and towards his colleagues more than usually firm, if not haughty.

After the levee, he demanded a private audience.

Alone with the king, the habitual influence of this great minister's superior genius operated. The cold manner was changed, or rather, it was changed involuntarily. From one "not used to the language of apology," the frank avowal of a fault has a striking effect. Lord Oldborough took upon himself the whole blame of the disaster that had ensued, in consequence of his error, an error frequent in other ministers, in him, almost unprecedented.

He was answered with a smile of royal raillery, that the peculiar family circumstances which had determined his lordship so rapidly to promote that officer, must, to all fathers of families and heads of houses, if not to statesmen and generals, be a sufficient and home apology.

Considering the peculiar talent which his sovereign possessed, and in which he gloried, that of knowing the connexions and domestic affairs, not only of the nobility near his person, but of private individuals remote from his court, Lord Oldborough had little cause to be surprised that this secret transaction should be known to his majesty. Something of this his lordship, with all due respect, hinted in reply. At the termination of this audience, he was soothed by the condescending assurance, that whilst the circumstances of the late unfortunate reverse naturally created regret and mortification, no dissatisfaction with his ministerial conduct mixed with these feelings; on the contrary, he was assured that fear of the effect a disappointment might

have on the mind of the public, in diminishing confidence in his lordship's efforts for the good of the country, was the sentiment which had lowered the spirits and clouded the brow of majesty.

His lordship returned thanks for the gracious demonstration of these sentiments—and, bowing respectfully, withdrew. In the faces and behaviour of the courtiers, as in a glass, he saw reflected the truth. They all pretended to be in the utmost consternation; and he heard of nothing but "apprehensions for the effect on the public mind," and "fears for his lordship's popularity." His secretary, Mr. Temple, heard, indeed, more of this than could reach his lordship's ear directly; for, even now, when they thought they foresaw his fall, few had sufficient courage to hazard the tone of condolence with Lord Oldborough, or to expose the face of hypocrisy to the severity of his penetrating eye. In secret, every means had been taken to propagate in the city, the knowledge of all the circumstances that were unfavourable to the minister, and to increase the dissatisfaction which any check in the success of our armies naturally produces. The tide of popularity, which had hitherto supported the minister, suddenly ebbed; and he fell, in public opinion, with astonishing rapidity. For the moment all was forgotten, but that he was the person who had promoted John Falconer to be a colonel, against whom the cry of the populace was raised with all the clamour of national indignation. The Greenwich faction knew how to take advantage of this disposition. It happened to be some festival, some holiday, when the common people, having nothing to do, are more disposed than at any other time to intoxication and disorder. The emissaries of designing partisans mixed with the populace, and a mob gathered round the minister's carriage, as he was returning home late one day—the same carriage, and the same man, whom, but a few short weeks before, this populace had drawn with loud huzzas, and almost with tears of affection. Unmoved of mind, as he had been when he heard their huzzas, Lord Oldborough now listened to their execrations, till from abuse they began to proceed to outrage. Stones were thrown at his carriage. One of his servants narrowly escaped being struck. Lord Oldborough was alone—he threw open his carriage-door, and sprang out on the step.

"Whose life is it you seek?" cried he, in a voice which obtained instant silence. "Lord Oldborough's? Lord Oldborough stands before you. Take his life who dares—a life spent in your service. Strike! but strike openly. You are Englishmen, not assassins."

Then, turning to his servants, he added, in a calm voice, “Home—slowly. Not a man here will touch you. Keep your master in sight. If I fall, mark by what hand.”

Then stepping down into the midst of the people, he crossed the street to the flagged pathway, the crowd opening to make way for him. He walked on with a deliberate firm step; the mob moving along with him, sometimes huzzaing, sometimes uttering horrid execrations in horrid tones. Lord Oldborough, preserving absolute silence, still walked on, never turned his head, or quickened his pace, till he reached his own house. Then, facing the mob, as he stood waiting till the door should be opened, the people, struck with his intrepidity, with one accord joined in a shout of applause.

The next instant, and before the door was opened, they cried, “Hat off!—Hat off!”

Lord Oldborough’s hat never stirred. A man took up a stone.

“Mark that man!” cried Lord Oldborough.

The door opened. “Return to your homes, my countrymen, and bless God that you have not any of you to answer this night for murder!”

Then entering his house, he took off his hat, and gave it to one of his attendants. His secretary, Temple, had run down stairs to meet him, inquiring what was the cause of the disturbance.

“Only,” said Lord Oldborough, “that I have served the people, but never bent to them.”

“Curse them! they are not worth serving. Oh! I thought they’d have taken my lord’s life that minute,” cried his faithful servant Rodney. “The sight left my eyes. I thought he was gone for ever. Thank God! he’s safe. Take off my lord’s coat—I can’t—for the soul of me. Curse those ungrateful people!”

“Do not curse them, my good Rodney,” said Lord Oldborough, smiling. “Poor people, they are not ungrateful, only mistaken. Those who mislead them are to blame. The English are a fine people. Even an English mob, you see, is generous, and just, as far as it knows.”

Lord Oldborough was sound asleep this night, before any other individual in the house had finished talking of the dangers he had escaped.

The civil and military courage shown by the minister in the sudden attack upon his character and person were such as to raise him again at once to his former height in public esteem. His enemies were obliged to affect

admiration. The Greenwich party, foiled in this attempt, now disavowed it. News of a victory effaced the memory of the late disappointment. Stocks rose—addresses for a change of ministry were quashed—addresses of thanks and congratulation poured in—Lord Oldborough gave them to Mr. Temple to answer, and kept the strength of his attention fixed upon the great objects which were essential to the nation and the sovereign he served.

Mr. Falconer saw that the storm had blown over, the darkness was past—Lord Oldborough, firm and superior, stood bright in power, and before him the commissioner bent more obsequious, more anxious than ever. Anxious he might well be—unhappy father! the life, perhaps, of one of his sons, his honour, certainly, at stake—the fortune of another—his existence ruined! And what hopes of propitiating him, who had so suffered by the favour he had already shown, who had been betrayed by one of the family and disgraced by another. The commissioner's only hope was in the recollection of the words, "I pity you from my soul, sir," which burst from Lord Oldborough even at the moment when he had most reason to be enraged against Colonel Falconer. Following up this idea, and working on the generous compassion, of which, but for this indication, he should not have supposed the stern Lord Oldborough to be susceptible, the commissioner appeared before him every day the image of a broken-hearted father. In silence Lord Oldborough from time to time looked at him; and by these looks, more than by all the promises of all the great men who had ever spoken to him, Mr. Falconer was reassured; and, as he told Mrs. Falconer, who at this time was in dreadful anxiety, he felt certain that Lord Oldborough would not punish him for the faults of his sons—he was satisfied that his place and his pension would not be taken from him—and that, at least in fortune, they should not be utterly ruined. In this security the commissioner showed rather more than his customary degree of strength of mind, and more knowledge of Lord Oldborough's character than he had upon most other occasions evinced.

Things were in this state, when, one morning, after the minister had given orders that no one should be admitted, as he was dictating some public papers of consequence to Mr. Temple, the Duke of Greenwich was announced. His grace sent in a note to signify that he waited upon Lord Oldborough by order of his majesty; and that, if this hour were not convenient, he begged to have the hour named at which his grace could be admitted. His grace was admitted instantly. Mr. Temple retired—for it was

evident this was to be a secret conference. His grace of Greenwich entered with the most important solemnity—infinitely more ceremonious than usual; he was at last seated, and, after heavy and audible sighs, still hesitated to open his business. Through the affected gloom and dejection of his countenance Lord Oldborough saw a malicious pleasure lurking, whilst, in a studied exordium, he spoke of the infinite reluctance with which he had been compelled, by his majesty's express orders, to wait upon his lordship on a business the most painful to his feelings. As being a public colleague—as a near and dear connexion—as a friend in long habits of intimacy with his lordship, he had prayed his majesty to be excused; but it was his majesty's pleasure: he had only now to beg his lordship to believe that it was with infinite concern, &c. Lord Oldborough, though suffering under this circumlocution, never condescended to show any symptom of impatience; but allowing his grace to run the changes on the words and forms of apology, when these were exhausted, his lordship simply said, that "his majesty's pleasure of course precluded all necessity for apology."

His grace was vexed to find Lord Oldborough still unmoved—he was sure this tranquillity could not long endure: he continued, "A sad business, my lord—a terrible discovery—I really can hardly bring myself to speak—"

Lord Oldborough gave his grace no assistance.

"My private regard," he repeated.

A smile of contempt on Lord Oldborough's countenance.

"Your lordship's hitherto invulnerable public integrity—"

A glance of indignation from Lord Oldborough.

"*Hitherto* invulnerable!—your grace will explain."

"Let these—these fatal notes—letters—unfortunately got into the hands of a leading, impracticable member of opposition, and by him laid—Would that I had been apprised, or could have conceived it possible, time enough to prevent that step; but it was done before I had the slightest intimation—laid before his majesty—"

Lord Oldborough calmly received the letters from his grace.

"My own handwriting, and private seal, I perceive."

The duke sighed—and whilst Lord Oldborough drew out, opened, and read the first letter in the parcel, his grace went on—"This affair has thrown us all into the greatest consternation. It is to be brought before parliament

immediately—unless a resignation should take place—which we should all deplore. The impudence, the inveteracy of that fellow, is astonishing—no silencing him. We might hush up the affair if his majesty had not been apprised; but where the interest of the service is concerned, his majesty is warm."

"His majesty!" cried Lord Oldborough: "His majesty could not, I trust, for a moment imagine these letters to be I mine?"

"But for the hand and seal which I understood your lordship to acknowledge, I am persuaded his majesty could not have believed it."

"Believed! My king! did he believe it?" cried Lord Oldborough. His agitation was for a moment excessive, uncontrollable. "No! that I will never credit, till I have it from his own lips." Then commanding himself, "Your grace will have the goodness to leave these letters with me till to-morrow."

His grace, with infinite politeness and regret, was under the necessity of refusing this request. His orders were only to show the letters to his lordship, and then to restore them to the hands of the member of opposition who had laid them before his majesty.

Lord Oldborough took off the cover of one of the letters, on which was merely the address and seal. The address was written also at the bottom of the letter enclosed, therefore the cover could not be of the least importance. The duke could not, Lord Oldborough said, refuse to leave this with him.

To this his grace agreed—protesting that he was far from wishing to make difficulties. If there were any thing else he could do—any thing his lordship would wish to have privately insinuated or publicly said—

His lordship, with proud thanks, assured the duke he did not wish to have any thing privately insinuated; and whatever it was necessary to say or do publicly, he should do himself, or give orders to have done. His lordship entered into no farther explanation. The duke at last was obliged to take his leave, earnestly hoping and trusting that this business would terminate to his lordship's entire satisfaction.

No sooner was the duke gone than Lord Oldborough rang for his carriage.

"Immediately—and Mr. Temple, instantly."

Whilst his carriage was coming to the door, in the shortest manner possible Lord Oldborough stated the facts to his secretary, that letters had

been forged in his lordship's name, promising to certain persons promotion in the army—and navy—gratification—and pensions. Some were addressed to persons who had actually obtained promotion, shortly after the time of these letters; others contained reproaches for having been ill-used. Even from the rapid glance Lord Oldborough had taken of these papers, he had retained the names of several of the persons to whom they were addressed —and the nature of the promotion obtained. They were persons who could have had no claim upon an honest minister. His lordship left a list of them with Mr. Temple—also the cover of the letter, on which was a specimen of the forged writing and the private seal.

"I am going to the king. In my absence, Mr. Temple, think for me—I know you feel for me. The object is to discover the authors of this forgery."

"My lord, may I consult with Mr. Alfred Percy?"

"Yes—with no other person."

It was not Lord Oldborough's day for doing business with the king. He was late—the king was going out to ride. His majesty received the minister as usual; but notwithstanding the condescension of his majesty's words and manner, it was evident to Lord Oldborough's penetration, that there was a coldness and formality in the king's countenance.

"I beg I may not detain your majesty—I see I am late," said Lord Oldborough.

"Is the business urgent, my lord?"

"No, sir; for it concerns principally myself: it can, therefore, wait your majesty's leisure at any hour your majesty may appoint."

The king dismounted instantly.

"This moment, my lord, I am at leisure for any business that concerns your lordship."

The king returned to the palace—Lord Oldborough followed, and all the spectators on foot and horseback were left full of curiosity.

Notwithstanding the condescension of his majesty's words and manner, and the polite promptitude to attend to any business that concerned his lordship, it was evident to Lord Oldborough's penetration that there was an unusual coldness and formality in the king's countenance and deportment, unlike the graciousness of his reception when satisfied and pleased. As soon as the business of the day had been gone through, Lord Oldborough said he

must now beg his majesty's attention on a subject which principally concerned himself. The king looked as one prepared to hear, but determined to say as little as possible.

Lord Oldborough placed himself so as to give the king the advantage of the light, which he did not fear to have full on his own countenance.

"Sir, certain letters, signed with my name, and sealed with my seal, have, I am informed, been laid before your majesty."

"Your lordship has been rightly informed."

"I trust—I hope that your majesty—"

At the firm assertion, in the tone with which Lord Oldborough pronounced, I *trust*—his majesty's eye changed—and moved away from Lord Oldborough's, when he, with respectful interrogation of tone, added, "I *hope* your majesty could not believe those letters to be mine."

"Frankly, my lord," said the king, "the assertions, the insinuations of no man, or set of men, of any rank or weight in my dominions, could by any imaginable means have induced me to conceive it possible that such letters had been written by your lordship. Not for one moment could my belief have been compelled by any evidence less strong than your lordship's handwriting and seal. I own, I thought I knew your lordship's seal and writing; but I now see that I have been deceived, and I rejoice to see it."

"I thank your majesty. I cannot feel surprise that a forgery and a counterfeit which, at first view, compelled my own belief of their being genuine, should, for a moment, have deceived you, sir; but, I own, I had flattered myself that my sovereign knew my heart and character, yet better than my seal and signature."

"Undoubtedly, my lord."

"And I should have hoped that, if your majesty had perused those letters, no assertions could have been necessary, on my part, to convince you, sir, that they could not be mine. I have now only to rejoice that your majesty is undeceived; and that I have not intruded unnecessarily with this explanation. I am fully sensible, sir, of your goodness, in having thus permitted me to make, as early as possible, this assertion of my innocence. For the proofs of it, and for the detection of the guilty, I am preparing; and I hope to make these as clear to you, sir, as your majesty's assurance of the

pleasure you feel in being undeceived is satisfactory—consolatory to me," concluded Lord Oldborough, with a bow of profound yet proud respect.

"My lord," said the king, "I have no doubt that this affair will redound to your honour, and *terminate to your lordship's entire satisfaction*."

The very phrase used by the Duke of Greenwich.

"As to myself, your lordship can have no farther anxiety; but I wish your lordship's endeavours to detect and bring proofs home to the guilty may be promptly successful—for the gratification of your own feelings, and the satisfaction of the public mind, before the matter should be brought forward in parliament."

His majesty bowed, and as Lord Oldborough retired, he added some gracious phrases, expressive of the high esteem he felt for the minister, and the interest he had always, and should always take, in whatever could contribute to his public and private—*satisfaction*—(again).

To an eye and ear less practised in courts than this minister's, all that had been said would have been really satisfactory: but Lord Oldborough discerned a secret embarrassment in the smile, a constraint in the manner, a care, an effort to be gracious in the language, a caution, a rounding of the periods, a recurrence to technical phrases of compliment and amity, a want of the free fluent language of the heart; language which, as it flows, whether from sovereign or subject, leaves a trace that the art of courtier or of monarch cannot imitate. In all attempts at such imitation, there is a want, of which vanity and even interest is not always sensible, but which feeling perceives instantly. Lord Oldborough felt it—and twice, during this audience, he was on the point of offering his resignation, and twice, exerting strong power over himself, he refrained.

He saw plainly that he was not where he had been in the king's confidence; that his enemies had been at work, and, in some measure, had succeeded; that suspicions had been infused into the king's mind. That his king had doubted him, his majesty had confessed—and Lord Oldborough discerned that there was no genuine joy at the moment his majesty was undeceived, no real anxiety for his honour, only the ostensible manifestation suitable to the occasion—repeatable—or recordable.

Still there was nothing of which he could complain; every expression, if written down or repeated, must have appeared proper and gracious from the sovereign to his minister; and for that minister to resign at such a moment,

from pride or pique, would have been fatal to the dignity, perhaps to the integrity, of his character.

Lord Oldborough reasoned thus as he stood in the presence of the king, and compelled himself, during the whole audience, and to the last parting moment, to preserve an air and tone of calm, respectful self-possession.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

During Lord Oldborough's absence, his faithful secretary had been active in his service. Mr. Temple went immediately to his friend Alfred Percy. Alfred had just returned fatigued from the courts, and was resting himself, in conversation with his wife and Caroline.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Alfred," said Mr. Temple, "but I must take you away from these ladies to consult you on particular business."

"Oh! let the particular business wait till he has rested himself," said Mrs. Percy, "unless it be a matter of life and death."

"Life and death!" cried Lady Frances Arlington, running in at the open door—"Yes, it is a matter of life and death!—Stay, Mr. Temple! Mr. Percy! going the moment I come into the room—Impossible!"

"Impossible it would be," said Mr. Temple, "in any other case; but—"

"'When a lady's in the case,
You know all other things give place,'"

cried Lady Frances. "So, positively, gentlemen, I stop the way. But, Mr. Temple, to comfort you—for I never saw a man, gallant or ungallant, look so impatient—I shall not be able to stay above a moment—Thank you, Mrs. Percy, I can't sit down—Mrs. Crabstock, the crossest of Crabstocks and stiffest of pattern-women, is in the carriage waiting for me. Give me joy—I have accomplished my purpose, and without Lady Jane Granville's assistance—obtained a permit to go with Lady Trant, and made her take me to Lady Angelica's last night. Grand conversazione!—Saw the German baron! Caught both the profiles—have 'em here—defy you not to smile. Look," cried her ladyship, drawing out of her *reticule* a caricature, which she put into Caroline's hand; and, whilst she was looking at it, Lady Frances went on speaking rapidly. "Only a sketch, a scrawl in pencil, while they thought I was copying a Sonnet to Wisdom—on the worst bit of paper, too, in the world—old cover of a letter I stole from Lady Trant's *reticule* while

she was at cards. Mr. Temple, you shall see my *chef-d'oeuvre* by and by; don't look at the reverse of the medal, pray. Did not I tell you, you were the most impatient man in the world?"

It was true that Mr. Temple was at this instant most impatient to get possession of the paper, for on the back of that cover of the letter, on which the caricature was drawn, the hand-writing of the direction appeared to him —He dared scarcely believe his eyes—his hopes.

"Mrs. Crabstock, my lady," said the footman, "is waiting."

"I know, sir," said Lady Frances: "so, Caroline, you won't see the likeness. Very well; if I can't get a compliment, I must be off. When you draw a caricature, I won't praise it. Here! Mr. Temple, one look, since you are dying for it."

"One look will not satisfy me," cried Mr. Temple, seizing the paper: "your ladyship must leave the drawing with us till to-morrow."

"*Us—must*. Given at our court of St. James's. Lord Oldborough's own imperative style."

"Imperative! no; humbly I beseech your ladyship, thus humbly," cried Mr. Temple, kneeling in jest, but keeping in earnest fast hold of the paper.

"But why—why? Are you acquainted with Lady Angelica? I did not know you knew her."

"It is excellent!—It is admirable!—I cannot let it go. This hand that seized it long shall hold the prize."

"The man's mad! But don't think I'll give it to you—I would not give it to my mother: but I'll lend it to you, if you'll tell me honestly why you want it."

"Honestly—I want to show it to a particular friend, who will be delighted with it."

"Tell me who, this minute, or you shall not have it."

"Mrs. Crabstock, my lady, bids me say, the duchess—"

"The duchess—the deuce!—if she's come to the duchess, I must go. I hope your man, Mrs. Percy, won't tell Mrs. Crabstock he saw this gentleman kneeling."

"Mrs. Crabstock's getting out, my lady," said the footman, returning.

"Mr. Temple, for mercy's sake, get up."

“Never, till your ladyship gives the drawing.”

“There! there! let me go—audacious!”

“Good morning to you, Mrs. Percy—Good bye, Caroline—Be at Lady Jane’s to-night, for I’m to be there.”

Her ladyship ran off, and met Mrs. Crabstock on the stairs, with whom we leave her to make her peace as she pleases.

“My dear Temple, I believe you are out of your senses,” said Alfred: “I never saw any man so importunate about a drawing that is not worth a straw —trembling with eagerness, and kneeling!—Caroline, what do you think Rosamond would have thought of all this?”

“If she knew the whole, she would have thought I acted admirably,” said Mr. Temple. “But come, I have business.”

Alfred took him into his study, and there the whole affair was explained. Mr. Temple had brought with him the specimen of the forgery to show to Alfred, and, upon comparing it with the handwriting on the cover of the letter on which the caricature was drawn, the similarity appeared to be strikingly exact. The cover, which had been stolen, as Lady Frances Arlington said, from Lady Trant’s *reticule*, was directed to Captain Nuttall. He was one of the persons to whom forged letters had been written, as appeared by the list which Lord Oldborough had left with Mr. Temple. The secretary was almost certain that his lordship had never written with his own hand to any Captain Nuttall; but this he could ask the moment he should see Lord Oldborough again. It seemed as if this paper had never been actually used as the cover of a letter, for it had no post-mark, seal, or wafer. Upon farther inspection, it was perceived that a *t* had been left out in the name of *Nuttall*; and it appeared probable that the cover had been thrown aside, and a new one written, in consequence of this omission. But Alfred did not think it possible that Lady Trant could be the forger of these letters, because he had seen some of her ladyship’s notes of invitation to Caroline, and they were written in a wretched cramped hand.

“But that cramped hand might be feigned to conceal the powers of penmanship,” said Mr. Temple.

“Well! granting her ladyship’s talents were equal to the mere execution,” Alfred persisted in thinking she had not abilities sufficient to invent or

combine all the parts of such a scheme. “She might be an accomplice, but she must have had a principal—and who could that principal be?”

The same suspicion, the same person, came at the same moment into the heads of both gentlemen, as they sat looking at each other.

“There is an intimacy between them,” said Alfred. “Recollect all the pains Lady Trant took for Mrs. Falconer about English Clay—they—”

“Mrs. Falconer! But how could she possibly get at Lord Oldborough’s private seal—a seal that is always locked up—a seal never used to any common letter, never to any but those written by his own hand to some private friend, and on some very particular occasion? Since I have been with him I have not seen him use that seal three times.”

“When and to whom, can you recollect?” said Alfred.

“I recollect!—I have it all!” exclaimed Mr. Temple, striking the table—“I have it! But, Lady Frances Arlington—I am sorry she is gone.”

“Why! what of her?—Lady Frances can have nothing more to do with the business.”

“She has a great deal more, I can assure you—but without knowing it.”

“Of that I am certain, or all the world would have known it long ago: but tell me how.”

“I recollect, at the time when I was dangling after Lady Frances—there’s good in every thing—just before we went down to Falconer-court, her ladyship, who, you know, has always some reigning fancy, was distracted about what she called *bread-seals*. She took off the impression of seals with bread—no matter how, but she did—and used to torment me—no, I thought it a great pleasure at the time—to procure for her all the pretty seals I could.”

“But, surely, you did not give her Lord Oldborough’s?”

“I!—not I!—how could you imagine such a thing?”

“You were in love, and might have forgotten consequences.”

“A man in love may forget every thing, I grant—except his fidelity. No, I never gave the seal; but I perfectly recollect Lady Frances showing it to me in her collection, and my asking her how she came by it.”

“And how did she?”

“From the cover of a note which the duke, her uncle, had received from Lord Oldborough; and I, at the time, remembered his lordship’s having written it to the Duke of Greenwich on the birth of his grandson. Lord Oldborough had, upon a former occasion, affronted his grace by sending him a note sealed with a wafer—this time his lordship took special care, and sealed it with his private *seal of honour*.”

“Well! But how does this bring the matter home to Mrs. Falconer?” said Alfred.

“Stay—I am bringing it as near home to her as possible. We all went down to Falconer-court together; and there I remember Lady Frances had her collection of bread-seals, and was daubing and colouring them with vermilion—and Mrs. Falconer was so anxious about them—and Lady Frances gave her several—I must see Lady Frances again directly, to inquire whether she gave her, among the rest, Lord Oldborough’s—I’ll go to Lady Jane Granville’s this evening on purpose. But had I not better go this moment to Lady Trant?”

Alfred advised, that having traced the matter thus far, they should not hazard giving any alarm to Lady Trant or to Mrs. Falconer, but should report to Lord Oldborough what progress had been made.

Mr. Temple accordingly went home, to be in readiness for his lordship’s return. In the mean time the first exaltation of indignant pride having subsided, and his cool judgment reflecting upon what had passed, Lord Oldborough considered that, however satisfactory to his own mind might be the feeling of his innocence, the proofs of it were necessary to satisfy the public; he saw that his character would be left doubtful, and at the mercy of his enemies, if he were in pique and resentment hastily to resign, before he had vindicated his integrity. “*If* your proofs be produced, my lord!”—these words recurred to him, and his anxiety to obtain these proofs rose high; and high was his satisfaction the moment he saw his secretary, for by the first glance at Mr. Temple’s countenance he perceived that some discovery had been made.

Alfred, that night, received through Mr. Temple his lordship’s request, that he would obtain what farther information he could relative to the private seal, in whatever way he thought most prudent. His lordship trusted entirely to his discretion—Mr. Temple was engaged with other business.

Alfred went with Caroline to Lady Jane Granville's, to meet Lady Frances Arlington; he entered into conversation, and by degrees brought her to his point, playing all the time with her curiosity, and humouring her childishness, while he carried on his cross-examination.

At first she could not recollect any thing about making the seals he talked of. "It was a fancy that had passed—and a past fancy," she said, "was like a past love, or a past beauty, good for nothing but to be forgotten." However, by proper leading of the witness, and suggesting time, place, and circumstance, he did bring to the fair lady's mind all that he wanted her to remember. She could not conceive what interest Mr. Percy could take in the matter—it was some jest about Mr. Temple, she was sure. Yes, she did recollect a seal with a Cupid riding a lion, that Mr. Temple gave her just before they went to Falconer-court—was that what he meant?

"No—but a curious seal—" (Alfred described the device.)

"Lord Oldborough's! Yes, there was some such odd seal." But it was not given to her by Mr. Temple—she took that from a note to her uncle, the Duke of Greenwich.

Yes—that, Alfred said, he knew; but what did her ladyship do with it?

"You know how I got it! Bless me! you seem to know every thing I do and say. You know my affairs vastly well—you act the conjuror admirably—pray, can you tell me whom I am to marry?"

"That I will—when your ladyship has told me to whom you gave that seal."

"That I would, and welcome, if I could recollect—but I really can't. If you think I gave it to Mr. Temple, I assure you, you are mistaken—you may ask him."

"I know your ladyship did not give it to Mr. Temple—but to whom did you give it?"

"I remember now—not to any gentleman, after all—you are positively out. I gave it to Mrs. Falconer."

"You are certain of that, Lady Frances Arlington?"

"I am certain, Mr. Alfred Percy."

"And how can you prove it to me, Lady Frances?"

“The easiest way in the world—by asking Mrs. Falconer. Only I don’t go there now much, since Georgiana and I have quarrelled—but what can make you so curious about it?”

“That’s a secret.”—At the word *secret*, her attention was fixed.—“May I ask if your ladyship would know the seal again if you saw it?—Is this any thing like the impression?” (showing her the seal on the forged cover.)

“The very same that I gave Mrs. Falconer, I’ll swear to it—I’ll tell you how I know it particularly. There’s a little outer rim here, with points to it, which there is not to the other. I fastened my bread-seal into an old setting of my own, from which I had lost the stone. Mrs. Falconer took a fancy to it, among a number of others, so I let her have it. Now I have answered all your questions—answer mine—Whom am I to marry?”

“Your ladyship will marry whomsoever—your ladyship *pleases*.”

“That was an ambiguous answer,” she observed; “for that she *pleased* every body.” Her ladyship was going to run on with some further questions, but Alfred pretending that the oracle was not permitted to answer more explicitly, left her completely in the dark as to what his meaning had been in this whole conversation.

He reported progress to Lord Oldborough—and his lordship slept as soundly this night as he did the night after he had been attacked by the mob.

The next morning the first person he desired to see was Mr. Falconer—his lordship sent for him into his cabinet.

“Mr. Commissioner Falconer, I promised to give you notice, whenever I should see any probability of my going out of power.”

“Good Heaven! my lord,” exclaimed the commissioner, starting back. The surprise, the consternation were real—Lord Oldborough had his eye upon him to determine that point.

“Impossible, surely!—I hope—”

His hope flitted at the moment to the Duke of Greenwich—but returned instantly: he had made no terms—had missed his time. If Lord Oldborough should go out of office—his place, his pension, gone—utter ruin.

Lord Oldborough marked the vacillation and confusion of his countenance, and saw that he was quite unprepared.

“I hope—Merciful Powers! I trust—I thought your lordship had triumphed over all your enemies, and was firmer in favour and power than ever. What can have occurred?”

Without making any answer, Lord Oldborough beckoned to the commissioner to approach nearer the window where his lordship was standing, and then suddenly put into his hand the cover with the forged handwriting and seal.

“What am I to understand by this, my lord?” said the bewildered commissioner, turning it backwards and forwards. “Captain Nuttall!—I never saw the man in my life. May I ask, my lord, what I am to comprehend from this?”

“I see, sir, that you know nothing of the business.”

The whole was explained by Lord Oldborough succinctly. The astonishment and horror in the poor commissioner’s countenance and gestures, and still more, the eagerness with which he begged to be permitted to try to discover the authors of this forgery, were sufficient proofs that he had not the slightest suspicion that the guilt could be traced to any of his own family.

Lord Oldborough’s look, fixed on the commissioner, expressed what it had once before expressed—“Sir, from my soul, I pity you!”

The commissioner saw this look, and wondered why Lord Oldborough should pity *him* at a time when all his lordship’s feelings should naturally be for himself.

“My lord, I would engage we shall discover—we shall trace it.”

“I believe that I have discovered—that I have traced it,” said Lord Oldborough; and he sighed.

Now that sigh was more incomprehensible to the commissioner than all the rest, and he stood with his lips open for a moment before he could utter, “Why then resign, my lord?”

“That is my affair,” said Lord Oldborough. “Let us, if you please, sir, think of yours; for, probably, this is the only time I shall ever more have it in my power to be of the least service to you.”

“Oh! my lord—my lord, don’t say so!” said the commissioner quite forgetting all his artificial manner, and speaking naturally: “the last time you shall have it in your power!—Oh! my dear lord, don’t say so!”

“My dear sir, I must—it gives me pain—you see it does.”

“At such a time as this to think of me instead of yourself! My lord, I never knew you till this moment—so well.”

“Nor I you, sir,” said Lord Oldborough. “It is the more unfortunate for us both, that our connexion and intercourse must now for ever cease.”

“Never, never, my lord, if you were to go out of power to-morrow—which Heaven, in its mercy and justice, forbid! I could never forget the goodness—I would never desert—in spite of all interest—I should continue—I hope your lordship would permit me to pay my duty—all intercourse could never cease.”

Lord Oldborough saw, and almost smiled at the struggle between the courtier and the man—the confusion in the commissioner’s mind between his feelings and his interest. Partly his lordship relieved, and partly he pained Mr. Falconer, by saying, in his firm tone, “I thank you, Mr. Falconer; but all intercourse must cease. After this hour, we meet no more. I beg you, sir, to collect your spirits, and to listen to me calmly. Before this day is at an end, you will understand why all farther intercourse between us would be useless to your interest, and incompatible with my honour. Before many hours are past, a blow will be struck which will go to your heart—for I see you have one—and deprive you of the power of thought. It is my wish to make that blow fall as lightly upon you as possible.”

“Oh! my lord, your resignation would indeed be a blow I could never recover. The bare apprehension deprives me at this moment of all power of thought; but still I hope—”

“Hear me, sir, I beg, without interruption: it is my business to think for you. Go immediately to the Duke of Greenwich, make what terms with him you can—make what advantage you can of the secret of my approaching resignation—a secret I now put in your power to communicate to his grace, and which no one yet suspects—I having told it to no one living but to yourself. Go quickly to the duke—time presses—I wish you success—and a better patron than I have been, than my principles would permit me to be. Farewell, Mr. Falconer.”

The commissioner moved towards the door when Lord Oldborough said “*Time presses*;” but the commissioner stopped—turned back—could not go: the tears—real tears—rolled down his cheeks—Lord Oldborough went forward, and held out his hand to him—the commissioner kissed it, with the

reverence with which he would have kissed his sovereign's hand; and bowing, he involuntarily backed to the door, as if quitting the presence of majesty.

"It is a pity that man was bred a mere courtier, and that he is cursed with a family on none of whom there is any dependence," thought Lord Oldborough, as the door closed upon the commissioner for ever.

Lord Oldborough delayed an hour purposely, to give Mr. Falconer advantage of the day with the Duke of Greenwich: then ordered his carriage, and drove to—Mrs. Falconer's.

Great was her surprise at the minister's entrance.—"Concerned the commissioner was not at home."

"My business is with Mrs. Falconer."

"My lord—your lordship—the honour and the pleasure of a visit—Georgiana, my dear."

Mrs. Falconer nodded to her daughter, who most unwillingly, and as if dying with curiosity, retired.

The smile died away upon Mrs. Falconer's lips as she observed the stern gravity of Lord Oldborough's countenance. She moved a chair towards his lordship—he stood, and leaning on the back of the chair, paused, as he looked at her.

"What is to come?—Cunningham, perhaps," thought Mrs. Falconer; "or perhaps something about John. When will he speak?—I can't—I must—I am happy to see your lordship looking so well."

"Is Mrs. Falconer acquainted with Lady Trant?"

"Lady Trant—yes, my lord."

"Mercy! Is it possible?—No, for her own sake she would not betray me," thought Mrs. Falconer.

"Intimately?" said Lord Oldborough.

"Intimately—that is, as one's intimate with every body of a certain sort—one visits—but no farther—I can't say I have the honour—"

Mrs. Falconer was so distracted by seeing Lord Oldborough searching in his pocket-book for a letter, that in spite of all her presence of mind, she knew not what she said; and all her presence of countenance failed, when

Lord Oldborough placed before her eyes the cover directed to Captain Nuttall.

Can you guess how this came into Lady Trant's possession, madam?"

"I protest, my lord," her voice trembling, in spite of her utmost efforts to command it, "I don't know—nor can I conceive—"

"Nor can you conceive by whom it was written, madam?"

"It appears—it bears a resemblance—some likeness—as far as I recollect—but it is so long since I have seen your lordship's own hand—and hands are so like—sometimes—and I am so bad a judge—every hand, all fashionable hands, are so like."

"And every seal like every seal?" said Lord Oldborough, placing the counterfeit seal before Mrs. Falconer. "I recommend it to you, madam, to waste no farther time in evasion; but to deliver to me the counterpart of this seal, the impression of my private seal, which you had from Lady Frances Arlington."

"A mere bread-seal! Her ladyship surely has not said—I really have lost it—if I ever had it—I declare your lordship terrifies me so, by this strange mode—"

"I recommend it to you once more, madam, and for the last time I earnestly recommend it to you, to deliver up to me that seal, for I have sworn to my belief that it is in your possession; a warrant will in consequence be issued, to seize and search your papers. The purport of my present visit, of which I should gladly have been spared the pain, is to save you, madam, from the public disgrace of having a warrant executed. Do not faint, madam, if you can avoid it, nor go into hysterics; for if you do, I must retire, and the warrant must be executed. Your best course is to open that desk, to give me up the seal, to make to me at this instant a full confession of all you know of this transaction. If you do thus, for your husband's sake, madam, I will, as far as I can consistently with what is due to myself, spare you the shame of an arrest."

Mrs. Falconer, with trembling hands, unlocked the desk, and delivered the seal.

"And a letter which I see in the same hand-writing, madam, if you please."

She gave it; and then, unable to support herself longer, sunk upon a sofa: but she neither fainted nor screamed—she was aware of the consequences. Lord Oldborough opened the window to give her air. She was relieved by a burst of tears, and was silent—and nothing was heard but her sobs, which she endeavoured to suppress in vain. She was more relieved on looking up by one glance at Lord Oldborough's countenance, where she saw compassion working strongly.

But before she could take any advantage of it, the expression was changed, the feeling was controlled: he was conscious of its weakness—he recollected what public justice, and justice to his own character, required—he recollected all the treachery, the criminality, of which she had been guilty.

"Madam, you are not now in a condition, I see, to explain yourself farther—I will relieve you from my presence: my reproaches you will never hear; but I shall expect from you, before one hour, such an avowal in writing of this whole transaction, as may, with the written confession of Lady Trant, afford the proofs which are due to my sovereign, and to the public, of my integrity."

Mrs. Falconer bowed her head, covered her face, clasped her hands in agony: as Lord Oldborough retired, she sprang up, followed to throw herself at his feet, yet without knowing what she could say.

"The commissioner is innocent!—If you forsake him, he is undone—all, all of us, utterly ruined! Oh! Georgiana! Georgiana! where are you? speak for me!"

Georgiana was in an inner apartment, trying on a new robe *à la Georgienne*.

"Whatever you may wish farther to say to me, madam," said Lord Oldborough, disengaging himself from her, and passing decidedly on, before Georgiana appeared, "you will put in writing, and let me have within this hour—or never."

Within that hour, Commissioner Falconer brought, for Lord Oldborough, the paper his wife had drawn up, but which he was obliged to deliver to Mr. Temple; for Lord Oldborough had so ordered, and his lordship persevered in refusing to see him more. Mrs. Falconer's paper was worded with all the art and address of which she was mistress, and all the pathos she could command—Lord Oldborough looked only for facts—these he marked with

his pencil, and observed where they corroborated and where they differed from Lady Trant's confession, which Mr. Temple had been charged to obtain during his lordship's visit to Mrs. Falconer. The greater part of the night Lord Oldborough and Mr. Alfred Percy were employed arranging these documents, so as to put the proofs in the clearest and shortest form, to be laid before his majesty the succeeding day.

It appeared that Mrs. Falconer had been first tempted to these practices by the distress for money into which extravagant entertainments, or, as she stated, the expenses incident to her situation—expenses which far exceeded her income—had led her. It was supposed, from her having kept open house at times for the minister, that she and the commissioner had great influence; she had been applied to—presents had been offered, and she had long withstood. But at length, Lady Trant acting in concert with her, they had been supplied with information by a clerk in one of the offices, a relation of Lady Trant, who was a vain, incautious youth, and, it seems, did not know the use made of his indiscretion: he told what promotions he heard spoken of—what commissions were making out. The ladies prophesied, and their prophecies being accomplished, they gained credit. For some time they kept themselves behind the scenes—and many, applying to A.B., and dealing with they did not know whom, paid for promotions which would have come unpaid for; others paid, and were never promoted, and wrote letters of reproach—Captain Nuttall was among these, and he it was, who, finding himself duped, first stirred in the business; and by means of an active member of opposition, to whom he made known his secret grievance, brought the whole to light.

The proofs arranged (and Lord Oldborough never slept till they were perfected), he reposed tranquilly. The next day, asking an audience of his majesty, he simply laid the papers on his majesty's table, observing that he had been so fortunate as to succeed in tracing the forgery, and that he trusted these papers contained all the necessary proofs.

His lordship bowed and retired instantly, leaving his majesty to examine the papers alone.

The resolution to resign his ministerial station had long been forming in Lord Oldborough's mind. It was not a resolution taken suddenly in pride or pique, but after reflection, and upon strong reasons. It was a measure which he had long been revolving in his secret thoughts. During the enthusiasm of

political life, the proverbial warnings against the vanity of ambition, and the danger of dependence on the favour of princes, had passed on his ear but as a schoolboy's lesson: a phrase "to point a moral, or adorn a tale." He was not a reading man, and the maxims of books he disregarded or disbelieved; but in the observations he made for himself he trusted: the lessons he drew from life were never lost upon him, and he acted in consequence of that which he believed, with a decision, vigour, and invariability, seldom found even among philosophers. Of late years he had, in real life, seen striking instances of the treachery of courtiers, and had felt some symptoms of insecurity in the smile of princes. Fortune had been favourable to him—she was fickle—he determined to quit her before she should change. Ambition, it is true, had tempted him—he had risen to her highest pinnacle: he would not be hurled from high—he would descend voluntarily, and with dignity. Lord Oldborough's habits of thought were as different as possible from those of a metaphysician: he had reflected less upon the course of his own mind than upon almost any other subject; but he knew human nature practically; disquisitions on habit, passion, or the sovereign good, were unread by him, nor, in the course of his life, had he ever formed a system, moral or prudential; but the same penetration, the same *longanimity*, which enabled him to govern the affairs of a great nation, gave him, when his attention turned towards himself, a foresight for his own happiness. In the meridian of life, he had cherished ambition, as the only passion that could supply him with motive strong enough to call great powers into great action. But of late years he had felt something, not only of the waywardness of fortune, but of the approaches of age—not in his mind, but in his health, which had suffered by his exertions. The attacks of hereditary gout had become more violent and more frequent. If he lived, these would, probably, at seasons, often incapacitate him from his arduous ministerial duties: much, that he did well, must be ill done by deputy. He had ever reprobated the practice of leaving the business of the nation to be done by clerks and underlings in office. Yet to this the minister, however able, however honest, must come at last, if he persist in engrossing business and power beyond what an individual can wield. Love for his country, a sense of his own honour, integrity, and consistency, here combined to determine this great minister to retire while it was yet time—to secure, at once, the dignity and happiness of the evening of life. The day had been devoted to good and high purposes—that was enough—he could now, self-satisfied and full of

honour, bid adieu to ambition. This resolution, once formed, was fixed. In vain even his sovereign endeavoured to dissuade him from carrying it into execution.

When the king had examined the papers which Lord Oldborough had laid before him, his majesty sent for his lordship again, and the moment the minister entered the cabinet, his majesty expressed his perfect satisfaction in seeing that his lordship had, with so little trouble, and with his usual ability, got to the bottom of this affair.

What was to be done next? The Duke of Greenwich was to be summoned. His grace was in astonishment when he saw the papers which contained Lord Oldborough's complete vindication, and the crimination of Mrs. Falconer. Through the whole, as he read on, his grace had but one idea, viz. "Commissioner Falconer has deceived me with false intelligence of the intended resignation." Not one word was said by Lord Oldborough to give his grace hope of that event—till the member of opposition by whom the forged letters had been produced—till all those who knew or had heard any thing of the transaction were clearly and fully apprised of the truth. After this was established, and that all saw Lord Oldborough clear and bright in honour, and, at least apparently, as firm in power as he had ever been, to the astonishment of his sovereign his lordship begged permission to resign.

Whatever might have been the effect of misrepresentation, to lower Lord Oldborough's favour, at the moment when he spoke of retiring, his king recollected all his past services—all that must, in future, be hazarded and lost in parting with such a minister—so eminent in abilities, of such tried integrity, of such fidelity, such attachment to his person, such a zealous supporter of royalty, such a favourite with his people, so successful as well as so able a minister! Never was he so much valued as at this moment. All his sovereign's early attachment returned in full strength and warmth.

"No, my lord, you must not—you will not leave me."

These simple words, spoken with the warmth of the heart, touched Lord Oldborough more than can be told. It was difficult to resist them, especially when he saw tears in the eyes of the monarch whom he loved.

But his resolution was taken. He thanked his majesty, not with the common-place thanks of courtiers, but with his whole heart and soul he thanked his majesty for this gracious condescension—this testimony of

approbation—these proofs of sensibility to his attachment, which paid—overpaid him, in a moment, for the labours of a life. The recollection of them would be the glory, the solace of his age—could never leave his memory while life lasted—would, he thought, be present to him, if he should retain his senses, in his dying moment. But he was, in the midst of this strong feeling, firm to the resolution his reason had taken. He humbly represented, that he had waited for a favourable time when the affairs of the country were in a prosperous train, when there were few difficulties to embarrass those whom his majesty might name to succeed to his place at the head of administration: there were many who were ambitious of that station—zeal, talents, and the activity of youth were at his majesty's command. For himself, he found it necessary for his health and happiness to retire from public business; and to resign the arduous trust with which he had been honoured.

"My lord, if I must accept of your resignation, I must—but I do it with regret. Is there any thing your lordship wishes—any thing you will name for yourself or your friends, that I can do, to show my sense of your services and merit?"

"For myself, your majesty's bounty has left me nothing to wish."

"For your friends, then, my lord?—Let me have the satisfaction of obliging you through them."

Nothing could be more gracious or more gratifying than the whole of this parting audience. It was Lord Oldborough's last audience.

The news of his resignation, quickly whispered at court, was not that day publicly known or announced. The next morning his lordship's door was crowded beyond example in the memory of ministers. Mr. Temple, by his lordship's order, announced as soon as possible the minister's having resigned. All were in astonishment—many in sorrow: some few—a very few of the most insignificant of the crowd, persons incapable of generous sympathy, who thought they could follow their own paltry interests unnoticed—left the room, without paying their farewell respects to this great minister—minister now no more.

The moment he appeared, there was sudden silence. All eyes were fixed upon him, every one pressing to get into the circle.

"Gentlemen, thank you for these marks of attention—of regard. Mr. Temple has told you—you know, my friends, that I am a man without

power."

"We know," answered a distinguished gentleman, "that you are Lord Oldborough. With or without power, the same in the eyes of your friends, and of the British nation."

Lord Oldborough bowed low, and looked gratified. His lordship then went round the circle with an air more cheerful, more free from reserve, than usual; with something in his manner more of sensibility, but nothing less of dignity. All who merited distinction he distinguished by some few appropriate words, which each remembered afterwards, and repeated to their families and friends. He spoke or listened to each individual with the attention of one who is courting, not quitting, popularity. Free from that restraint and responsibility which his public and ministerial duties had imposed upon him, he now entered into the private concerns of all, and gave his parting assistance or counsel. He noted all grievances—registered all promises that ought to be recommended to the care of his successor in office. The wishes of many, to whom he had forborne to give any encouragement, he now unexpectedly fulfilled and surpassed. When all were satisfied, and had nothing more to ask or to hope from him, they yet delayed, and parted from Lord Oldborough with difficulty and regret.

A proof that justice commands more than any other quality the respect and gratitude of mankind. Take time and numbers into the calculation, and all discover, in their turn, the advantage of this virtue. This minister, a few regretted instances excepted, had shown no favour, but strict justice, in his patronage.

All Lord Oldborough's requests for his friends were granted—all his recommendations attended to: it was grateful to him to feel that his influence lasted after his power had ceased. Though the sun had apparently set, its parting rays continued to brighten and cheer the prospect.

Under a new minister, Mr. Temple declined accepting of the embassy which had been offered to him. Remuneration suitable to his services, and to the high terms in which Lord Oldborough had spoken of his merit, was promised; and without waiting to see in what form, or manner, this promise would be accomplished, the secretary asked and obtained permission to accompany his revered master to his retirement. Alfred Percy, zealous and ardent in Lord Oldborough's service, the more this great man's character had risen upon his admiration, had already hastened to the country to

prepare every thing at Clermont-park for his reception. By his orders, that establishment had been retrenched; by Alfred Percy's activity it was restored. Services, which the richest nobleman in the land could not have purchased, or the highest have commanded, Alfred was proud to pay as a voluntary tribute to a noble character.

Lord Oldborough set out for the country at a very early hour in the morning, and no one previously knew his intentions, except Mr. Temple. He was desirous to avoid what it had been whispered was the design of the people, to attend him in crowds through the streets of the metropolis.

As they drove out of town, Lord Oldborough recollected that in some account, either of the Duke of Marlborough, or the Duke of Ormond's leaving London, after his dismission from court, it is said, that of all those whom the duke had served, all those who had courted and flattered him in the time of his prosperity and power, none showed any gratitude or attachment, excepting one page, who appeared at the coach-door as his master was departing, and gave some signs of genuine sorrow and respect.

"I am fortunate," said Lord Oldborough, "in having few complaints to make of ingratitude. I make none. The few I might make," continued his lordship, who now rewarded Mr. Temple's approved fidelity, by speaking to him with the openness and confidence of friendship, "the few I might make have been chiefly caused by errors of my own in the choice of the persons I have obliged. I thank Heaven, however, that upon the whole I leave public life not only with a good conscience, but with a good opinion of human nature. I speak not of courtiers—there is nothing of nature about them—they are what circumstances make them. Were I to live my life over again, the hours spent with courtiers are those which I should most wish to be spared; but by a statesman, or a minister, these cannot be avoided. For myself, in resigning my ministerial office, I might say, as Charles the Fifth, when he abdicated, said to his successor, 'I leave you a heavy burthen; for since my shoulders have borne it, I have not passed one day exempt from anxiety.'

"But from the first moment I started in the course of ambition, I was aware that tranquillity must be sacrificed; and to the last moment I abided by the sacrifice. The good I had in view, I have reached—the prize at which I aimed, I have won. The glory of England was my object—her approbation my reward. Generous people!—If ever I bore toil or peril in your cause, I

am rewarded, and never shall you hear me say that ‘the unfruitful glories please no more.’ The esteem of my sovereign!—I possess it. It is indefeasibly mine. His favour, his smiles, are his to give, or take away. Never shall he hear from me the *wailings* of disappointed ambition.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Caroline took advantage of the opportunity of returning home with her brother Alfred, when he went to the country, to prepare Clermont-park for the reception of Lord Oldborough. And now she saw her home again with more than wonted delight. Every thing animate and inanimate seemed to smile upon her, every heart rejoiced at her return; and she enjoyed equally the pleasure of loving, and of being beloved by, such friends. She had been amused and admired during her residence in London; but a life of dissipation she had always thought, and now she was convinced from experience, could never suit her taste or character. She would immediately have resumed her former occupations, if Rosamond would have permitted; but Rosamond took entire possession of her at every moment when her father or mother had not claimed their prior right to hear and to be heard.

"Caroline, my dear, don't natter yourself that you shall be left in peace—See!—she is sitting down to write a letter, as if she had not been away from us these six months—You must write to Lady Jane Granville!—Well, finish your gratitude quickly—and no more writing, reading, or drawing, this day; you must think of nothing but talking, or listening to me."

Much as she loved talking in general, Rosamond now so far preferred the pleasure of hearing, that, with her eyes fixed on Caroline, her countenance varying with every variety of Caroline's expression, she sat perfectly silent all the time her sister spoke. And scarcely was her voice heard, even in exclamation. But, during the pauses of narrative, when the pause lasted more than a minute, she would say, "Go on, my dear Caroline, go on. Tell us something more."

The conversation was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Mr. Temple—and Rosamond did not immediately find her fluency of speech increase. Mr. Temple had seized the first moment that duty and gratitude to his master and friend permitted to hasten to the Hills, nor had Lord Oldborough been unmindful of his feelings. Little as his lordship was disposed to think of love affairs, it seems he recollected those of his secretary; for, the morning after their arrival at Clermont-park, when he proffered his services,

Lord Oldborough said, that he had only to trouble Mr. Temple to pay a visit for him, if it would not be disagreeable, to his old friend Mr. Percy.

"Tell him that I know his first wish will be to come to show me that it is the man, not the minister, for whom he had a regard: tell him this proof of his esteem is unnecessary. He will wish to see me for another reason: he is a philosopher—and will have a philosophical curiosity to discover how I exist without ambition. But of that he cannot yet form a judgment—nor can I: therefore, if he pleases, let his visit be delayed till next week. I have some papers to arrange, which I should wish to show him, and I cannot have them sooner in readiness. If you, Mr. Temple, can contrive to pass this week at Mr. Percy's, let me not detain you. There is no fear," added he, smiling, that "in solitude I should be troubled by the spectre which haunted the minister in Gil Blas in his retirement."

Never was man happier than Mr. Temple, when he found himself in the midst of the family circle at the Hills, and seated beside Rosamond, free from all cares, all business, all intrigues of courtiers, and restraints of office; no longer in the horrors of, attendance and dependence, but with the promise of a competent provision for life—with the consciousness of its having been, honourably obtained; and to brighten all, the hope, the delightful hope, of soon prevailing on the woman he loved, to become his for ever.

Alfred Percy had been obliged to return directly to London, and for once in his life Mr. Temple benefited by the absence of his friend. In the small house at the Hills, Alfred's was the only room that could have been spared for him; and in this room, scarcely fourteen feet square, the ex-secretary found himself lodged more entirely to his satisfaction than he had ever been in the sumptuous apartments of the great. The happy are not fastidious as to their accommodations; they never miss the painted ceiling, or the long arcade, and their slumbers require no bed of down. The lover's only fear was, that this happy week would pass too swiftly; and, indeed, time flew unperceived by him, and by Rosamond. One fine day, after dinner, Mrs. Percy proposed, that instead of sitting longer in the house, they should have their dessert of strawberries in some pleasant place in the lawn or wood. Rosamond eagerly seconded this proposal, and whispered, "Caroline's bower."

Thither they went. This bower of Caroline, this favourite spot, Rosamond, during her sister's absence, had taken delight in ornamenting, and it did credit as much to her taste as to her kindness. She had opened a view on one side to a waterfall among the rocks; on the other, to a winding path descending through the glen. Honey-suckle, rose, and eglantine, near the bower, were in rich and wild profusion; all these, the song of birds, and even the smell of the new-mown grass, seemed peculiarly delightful to Mr. Temple. Of late years he had been doomed to close confinement in a capital city; but all his tastes were rural, and, as he said, he feared he should expose himself to the ridicule Dr. Johnson throws on those "who talk of sheep and goats, and who babble of green fields."

Mr. Percy thought Dr. Johnson was rather too intolerant of rural description, and of the praises of a country life, but acknowledged that he quite agreed with him in disliking, pastorals—excepting always that beautiful drama, "The Gentle Shepherd." Mr. Percy said, that, in his opinion, a life purely pastoral must, if it could be realized, prove as insufferably tiresome in reality, as it usually is found to be in fiction. He hated Delias and shepherdesses, and declared that he should soon grow tired of any companion with whom he had no other occupation in common but "*tending a few sheep*." There was a vast difference, he thought, between pastoral and domestic life. His idea of domestic life comprised all the varieties of literature, exercise, and amusement for the faculties, with the delights of cultivated society.

The conversation turned from pastoral life and pastorals to Scotch and English ballads and songs. Their various merits of simplicity, pathos, or elegance, were compared and discussed. After the Reliques of Ancient Poetry had been sufficiently admired, Rosamond and Caroline mentioned two modern compositions, both by the same author, each exquisite in its different style of poetry—one beautiful, the other sublime. Rosamond's favourite was the Exile of Erin; Caroline's, the Mariners of England. To justify their tastes, they repeated the poems. Caroline fixed the attention of the company on the flag, which has

"Braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze,"

when suddenly her own attention seemed to be distracted by some object in the glen below. She endeavoured to go on, but her voice faltered—her colour changed. Rosamond, whose quick eye followed her sister's, instantly caught a glimpse of a gentleman coming up the path from the glen. Rosamond started from her seat, and clasping her hands, exclaimed, "It is! It *is* he!—It is Count Altenberg!"

They had not recovered from their astonishment when Count Altenberg stood before them. To Mr. Percy, to Mrs. Percy, to Rosamond, to each he spoke, before he said one word to Caroline. But one look had said all, had spoken, and had been understood.

That he was not married she was certain—for that look said he loved her—and her confidence in his honour was secure: Whatever had delayed his return, or had been mysterious in his conduct, she felt convinced that he had never been to blame.

And on his part did he read as distinctly the truth in her countenance?—Was the high colour, the radiant pleasure in that countenance unmarked? The joy was so veiled by feminine modesty, that he doubted, trembled, and if at last the rapid feelings ended in hope, it was respectful hope. With deference the most marked, mingled with dignity, tenderness, and passion, he approached Caroline. He was too delicate, too well-bred, to distress her by distinguishing her more particularly; but as he took the seat, which she left for him beside her mother, the open and serene expression of her eye, with the soft sound of her voice, in the few words she answered to what he said, were enough to set his heart at ease. The sight of Mr. Temple had at first alarmed the Count, but the alarm was only momentary. One glance at Rosamond re-assured him.

Ideas, which it requires many words to tell, passed instantaneously with the rapidity of light. After they were seated, some minutes were spent in common-place questions and answers, such as those which Benjamin Franklin would wisely put all together, into one formula, to satisfy curiosity. Count Altenberg landed the preceding day—had not stopped to see any one in England—had not even heard of Lord Oldborough's resignation—had proceeded directly to the Hills—had left his equipage at a town a few miles distant—thought he had been fully master of the well-known road, but the approach having been lately changed, he had missed his way.

This settled, to make room for a more interesting explanation, Mr. Temple had the politeness to withdraw. Rosamond had the humanity, and Caroline the discretion, to accompany him in his walk.

Count Altenberg then said, addressing himself to Mr. Percy, on whose regard he seemed to have reliance, and to Mrs. Percy, whom he appeared most anxious to interest in his favour, "You certainly, sir, as a man of penetration, and a father; you, madam, as a mother, and as a lady who must have been accustomed to the admiration of our sex, could not avoid seeing, when I was in this country before, that I felt the highest admiration, that I had formed the strongest attachment for your daughter—Miss Caroline Percy."

Mr. and Mrs. Percy both acknowledged that they thought Count Altenberg had shown some preference for Caroline; but as he had never declared his attachment, they had not felt themselves justified in inferring more from his attentions than his general good opinion. A change in his manner, which they observed shortly before they quitted Hungerford Castle, had impressed them with the idea that he had no such views as they had once been led to imagine, and their never having heard any thing from him since, had confirmed them in this belief.

"Painful—exquisitely painful, as it was to me," said Count Altenberg, "I felt myself bound in honour to leave you in that error; and, at all hazards to myself, to suffer you to continue under that persuasion, as I was then, and have been till within these few days, in dread of being obliged to fulfil an engagement, made without my concurrence or knowledge, and which must for ever have precluded me from indulging the first wish of my heart. The moment, literally the moment I was at liberty, I hastened hither, to declare my real sentiments, and to solicit your permission to address your daughter. But before I can expect that permission, before I can hope for your approbation of my suit—an approbation which, I am well aware, must depend entirely upon your opinion of my character—I must, to explain whatever may have appeared unintelligible in my conduct, be permitted to make you fully acquainted with the circumstances in which I have been placed."

Beginning with the history of his father's letters and his own, respecting the projected marriage with the Countess Christina, he related, nearly as follows, all that passed, after his having, in obedience to his father's

summons, returned home. He found contracts drawn up and ready for his signature—the friends of both families apprized of the proposed alliance, and every thing actually prepared for his marriage. Remonstrances with his father were vain. The old Count said that it was impossible to break off the match, that his honour and the honour of his house was pledged. But independently of all promises, he considered the accomplishment of this marriage as most desirable and advantageous: with all the vehemence of affection, and all the force of parental authority, he charged his son to fulfil his engagements. The old Count was a fond but an imperious father; a good but an ambitious man. It was his belief that love is such a transient passion, that it is folly to sacrifice to its indulgence any of the solid and permanent interests of life. His experience at courts, and his observation on the gallantries of young princes and nobles, had taught him to believe that love is not only a transient, but a variable and capricious feeling, easily changing its object, and subsisting only by novelty. All that his son said of his attachment to Caroline, of the certainty of its permanence, and of its being essential to the happiness of his life, the father heard but as the common language of every enamoured youth. He let his son speak without interruption, but smiled incredulous, and listened only as to the voice of one in the paroxysm of a passion, which, however violent, would necessarily subside. Between the fits, he endeavoured to control the fever of his mind, and as a spell repeated these words, “Albert! see the young Countess Christina—but once—I ask no more.”

Albert, with the respect due to a father, but with the firmness due to himself, and with all the courage which love only could have given to oppose the authority and affection of a parent, refused to ratify the contract that had been prepared, and declined the proposed interview. He doubted not, he said, that the lady was all his father described—beautiful, amiable, and of transcendant talents; he doubted not her power to win any but a heart already won. He would enter into no invidious comparisons, nor bid defiance to her charms—his own choice was made, he was sure of his constancy, and he thought it not only the most honourable course, but the most respectful to the Lady Christina, ingenuously at once, and without having any interview with her, or her friends, to state the truth—that the treaty had been commenced by his father without his knowledge, and carried on under total ignorance of an attachment he had formed in England. The father, after some expressions of anger and disappointment,

was silent, and appeared to acquiesce. He no longer openly urged the proposed interview, but he secretly contrived that it should take place. At a masked ball at court, Count Albert entered into conversation with a Minerva, whose majestic air and figure distinguished her above her companions, whose language, thoughts, and sentiments, perfectly sustained the character which she assumed. He was struck with admiration by her talents, and by a certain elevation of thought and sentiment, which, in all she said, seemed the habitual expression of a real character, not the strained language of a feigned personage. She took off her mask—he was dazzled by her beauty. They were at this moment surrounded by numbers of her friends and of his, who were watching the effect produced by this interview. His father, satisfied by the admiration he saw in Count Albert's countenance, when they both took off their masks, approached and whispered, "the Countess Christina." Count Altenberg grew pale, and for a moment stood in silent consternation. The lady smiled with an air of haughty superiority, which in some degree relieved him, by calling his own pride to his aid, and by convincing him that tenderness, or feminine timidity, which he would have most dreaded to wound, were not the characteristics of her mind. He instantly asked permission to pay his respects to her at her father's palace the ensuing day. She changed colour—darted a penetrating glance at the Count; and after an incomprehensible and quick alternation of pleasure and pain in her countenance, she replied, that "she consented to grant Count Albert Altenberg that interview which he and their mutual friends desired." She then retired with friends from the assembly.

In spite of the haughtiness of her demeanour, it had been obvious that she had desired to make an impression upon Count Albert; and all who knew her agreed that she had never on any occasion been seen to exert herself so much to shine and please. She shone, but had not pleased. The father, however, was content; an interview was promised—he trusted to the charms and talents of the Countess—he trusted to her flattering desire to captivate, and with impatience and confidence, he waited for the event of the succeeding day. Some intervening hours, a night of feverish and agonizing suspense, would have been spared to Count Albert, had he at this time known any thing of an intrigue—an intrigue which an artful enemy had been carrying on, with design to mortify, disgrace, and ruin his house. The plan was worthy of him by whom it was formed—M. de Tourville—a

person, between whom and Count Albert there seemed an incompatibility of character, and even of manner; an aversion openly, indiscreetly shown by the Count, even from his boyish years, but cautiously concealed on the part of M. de Tourville, masked in courtly smiles and a diplomatic air of perfect consideration. Fear mixed with M. de Tourville's dislike. He was aware that if Count Albert continued in confidence with the hereditary prince, he would, when the prince should assume the reins of government, become, in all probability, his prime minister, and then adieu to all M. de Tourville's hopes of rising to favour and fortune. Fertile in the resources of intrigue, gallant and political, he combined them, upon this occasion, with exquisite address. When the Countess Christina was first presented at court, he had observed that the Prince was struck by her beauty. M. de Tourville took every means that a courtier well knows how to employ, to flatter the taste by which he hoped to benefit. In secret he insinuated into the lady's ear that she was admired by the prince. M. de Tourville knew her to be of an aspiring character, and rightly judged that ambition was her strongest passion. When once the hope of captivating the prince had been suggested to her, she began to disdain the proposed alliance with the house of Altenberg; but she concealed this disdain, till she could show it with security: she played her part with all the ability, foresight, and consummate prudence, of which ambition, undisturbed by love, is capable. Many obstacles opposed her views: the projected marriage with Count Albert Altenberg—the certainty that the reigning prince would never consent to his son's forming an alliance with the daughter of a subject. But the old Prince was dying, and the Lady Christina calculated, that till his decease, she could protract the time appointed for her marriage with Count Albert. The young Prince might then break off the projected match, prevail upon the Emperor to create her a Princess of the empire, and then, without derogating from his rank, or giving offence to German ideas of propriety, he might gratify his passion, and accomplish the fulness of her ambition. Determined to take no counsel but her own, she never opened her scheme to any of her friends, but pursued her plan secretly, in concert with M. de Tourville, whom she considered but as a humble instrument devoted to her service. He all the while considering her merely as a puppet, played by his art, to secure at once the purposes of his interest and of his hatred. He thought he foresaw that Count Albert would never yield his intended bride peaceably to his prince—he knew nothing of the Count's attachment in England—the Lady

Christina was charming—the alliance highly advantageous to the house of Altenberg—the breaking off such a marriage, and the disappointment of a passion which he thought the young Countess could not fail to inspire, would, as M. de Tourville hoped, produce an irreparable breach between the Prince and his favourite. On Count Albert's return from England, symptoms of alarm and jealousy had appeared in the Prince, unmarked by all but by the Countess Christina, and by the confidant, who was in the secret of his passion.

So far M. de Tourville's scheme had prospered, and from the character of the hereditary Prince, it was likely to succeed in its ultimate view. He was a Prince of good dispositions, but wanting in resolution and civil courage: capable of resisting the allurements of pleasure for a certain time, but soon weary of painful endurance in any cause; with a taste for virtue, but destitute of that power to bear and forbear, without which there is no virtue: a hero, when supported by a stronger mind, such as that of his friend, Count Albert; but relaxing and sinking at once, when exposed to the influence of a flatterer such as M. de Tourville: subject to exquisite shame and self-reproach, when he had acted contrary to his own idea of right; yet, from the very same weakness that made him err, disposed to be obstinate in error. M. de Tourville argued well from his knowledge of his character, that the Prince, enamoured as he was of the charms of the fair Christina, would not long be able to resist his passion; and that if once he broke through his sense of honour, and declared that passion to the destined bride of his friend, he would ever afterwards shun and detest the man whom he had injured. All this M. de Tourville had admirably well combined: no man understood and managed better the weaknesses of human nature, but its strength he could not so well estimate; and as for generosity, as he could not believe in its sincerity, he was never prepared for its effects. The struggles which the Prince made against his passion were greater, and of longer duration, than M. de Tourville had expected. If Count Albert had continued absent, the Prince might have been brought more easily to betray him; but his return recalled, in the midst of love and jealousy, the sense of respect he had for the superior character of this friend of his early days: he knew the value of a friend—even at the moment he yielded his faith to a flatterer. He could not at once forfeit the esteem of the being who esteemed him most—he could not sacrifice the interest, and as he thought, the happiness, of the man who loved him best. The attachment his favourite had shown him, his

truth, his confiding openness of temper, the pleasure in his countenance when he saw him first upon his return from England, all these operated on the heart of the Prince, and no declaration of his passion had been made at the time when the appointed interview took place between Count Albert and the Countess Christina at her father's palace. Her friends not doubting that her marriage was on the eve of its accomplishment, had no scruple, even in that court of etiquette, in permitting the affianced lovers to have as private a conference as each seemed to desire. The lady's manner was this morning most alarmingly gracious. Count Albert was, however, struck by a difference in her air the moment she was alone with him, from what it had been whilst in the presence of her friends. All that he might without vanity have interpreted as marking a desire to please, to show him favour, and to evince her approbation, at least, of the choice her friends had made for her, vanished the moment they withdrew. What her motives might be, Count Altenberg could not guess; but the hope he now felt, that she was not really inclined to consider him with partiality, rendered it more easy to enter into that explanation, upon which he was, at all events, resolved. With all the delicacy due to her sex, with all the deference due to her character, and all the softenings by which politeness can soothe and conciliate pride, he revealed to the Countess Christina the real state of his affections: he told her the whole truth, concluding, by repeating the assurance of his belief, that her charms and merit would be irresistible to any heart that was disengaged.

The lady heard him in astonishment: for this turn of fate she had been wholly unprepared—the idea of his being attached to another had never once presented itself to her imagination; she had never calculated on the possibility that her alliance should be declined by any individual of a family less than sovereign. She possessed, however, pride of character superior to her pride of rank, and strength of mind suited to the loftiness of her ambition. With dignity in her air and countenance, after a pause of reflection, she replied, "Count Albert Altenberg is, I find, equal to the high character I have heard of him: deserving of my esteem and confidence, by that which can alone command esteem and merit confidence—sincerity. His example has recalled me to my nobler self, and he has, in this moment, rescued me from the labyrinth of a diplomatist. Count Albert's sincerity I—little accustomed to imitation, but proud to *follow* in what is good and great—shall imitate. Know then, sir, that my heart, like your own, is engaged: and that you may be convinced I do not mock your ear with the semblance

of confidence, I shall, at whatever hazard to myself, trust to you my secret. My affections have a high object—are fixed upon him, whose friend and favourite Count Albert Altenberg deservedly is. I should scorn myself—no throne upon earth could raise me in my own opinion, if I could deceive or betray the man who has treated me with such sincerity."

Relieved at once by this explanation, and admiring the manner in which it was made, mingled joy and admiration were manifest in his countenance; and the lady forgave him the joy, in consideration of the tribute he paid to her superiority. Admiration was a tribute he was most willing to yield at this moment, when released from that engagement to love, which it had been impossible for him to fulfil.

The Countess recalled his attention to her affairs and to his own. Without his making any inquiry, she told him all that had been done, and all that yet remained to be done, for the accomplishment of her hopes: she had been assured, she said, by one now in the favour and private confidence of the hereditary prince, that his inclination for her was—painfully and with struggles, which, in her eyes, made his royal heart worthy her conquest—suppressed by a sense of honour to his friend.

"This conflict would now cease," Count Albert said. "It should be his immediate care to relieve his Prince from all difficulty on his account."

"By what means?" the Countess asked.

"Simply by informing him of the truth—as far as I am concerned. Your secret, madam, is safe—your confidence sacred. Of all that concerns myself—my own attachment, and the resignation of any pretensions that might interfere with his, he shall immediately be acquainted with the whole truth."

The Countess coloured, and repeating the words, "*the whole truth*," looked disconcerted, and in great perplexity replied, that Count Albert's speaking to the Prince directly—his immediate resignation of his pretensions—would, perhaps, defeat her plans. This was not the course she had intended to pursue—far from that which M. de Tourville had pointed out. After some moments' reflection, she said, "I abide by the truth—speak to the prince—be it so: I trust to your honour and discretion to speak to him in such terms as not to implicate me, to commit my delicacy, or to derogate from my dignity. We shall see then whether he loves me as I desire to be loved. If he does, he will free me, at once, from all difficulty with my friends, for he will speak *en prince*—and not speak in vain; if he loves me

not, I need not tell you, sir, that you are equally free. My friends shall be convinced that I will never be the bride of any other man."

After the explanation with the Lady Christina, Count Albert lost no time; he went instantly to the palace. In his way thither, he was met by one of the pages, who told him the Prince desired to see him immediately. He found the Prince alone. Advancing to meet him, with great effort in his manner to command his emotion, the Prince said, "I have sent for you, Count Albert, to give you a proof that the friendship of Princes is not, in every instance, so vain a thing as it is commonly believed to be. Mine for you has withstood strong temptation:—you come from the Countess Christina, I believe, and can measure, better than any one, the force of that temptation. Know, that in your absence it has been my misfortune to become passionately enamoured of your destined bride; but I have never, either by word or look, directly or indirectly, infringed on what I felt to be due to your friendship and to my own honour. Never did I give her the slightest intimation of my passion, never attempted to take any of the advantages which my situation might be supposed to give."

Count Albert had just received the most convincing testimony corroborating these assertions—he was going to express his sense of the conduct of his Prince, and to explain his own situation, but the Prince went on speaking with the eagerness of one who fears his own resolution, who has to say something which he dreads that he should not be able to resume or finish, if his feelings should meet with any interruption.

"And now let me, as your friend and prince, congratulate you, Count Albert, on your happiness; and, with the same sincerity, I request that your marriage may not be delayed, and that you will take your bride immediately away from my father's court. Time will, I hope, render her presence less dangerous; time will, I hope, enable me to enjoy your society in safety; and when it shall become my duty to govern this state, I shall hope for the assistance of your talents and integrity, and shall have deserved, in some degree, your attachment."

The Count, in the strongest manner, expressed his gratitude to his Prince for these proofs of his regard, given under circumstances the most trying to the human heart. He felt, at this instant, exquisite pleasure in revealing to his highness the truth, in showing him that the sacrifice he had so honourably, so generously determined to make, was not requisite, that their

affections were fixed on different objects, that before Count Albert had any idea of the prince's attachment to the Lady Christina, it had been his ardent wish, his determination, at all hazards, to break off engagements which he could not fulfil.

The Prince was in rapturous joy—all his ease of manner towards his friend returned instantly, his affection and confidence flowed in full tide. Proud of himself, and happy in the sense of the imminent danger from which he had escaped, he now described the late conflicts his heart had endured with the eloquence of self-complacency, and with that sense of relief which is felt in speaking on the most interesting of all subjects to a faithful friend from whom a secret has been painfully concealed. The Prince now threw open every thought, every feeling of his mind. Count Altenberg rose higher than ever in his favour: not the temporary favourite of the moment—the companion of pleasures—the flatterer of present passion or caprice; but the friend in whom there is certainty of sympathy, and security of counsel. The Prince, confiding in Count Albert's zeal and superior powers, now took advice from him, and made a confidant no longer of M. de Tourville. The very means which that intriguing courtier had taken to undermine the Count thus eventually proved the cause of establishing more firmly his credit. The plain sincerity of the Count, and the generous magnanimity of the lady, at once disconcerted and destroyed the artful plan of the diplomatist. M. de Tourville's disappointment when he heard from the Countess Christina the result of her interview with Count Albert, and the reproaches which in that moment of vexation he could not refrain from uttering against the lady for having departed from their plan, and having trusted to the Count, unveiled to her the meanness of his character and the baseness of his designs. She plainly saw that his object had been not to assist her love, but to gratify his own hate: not merely to advance his own fortune—that, she knew, must be the first object of every courtier—but "to rise upon the ruins of another's fame;" and this, she determined, should never be accomplished by her assistance, or with her connivance. She put Count Albert on his guard against this insidious enemy.

The Count, grateful to the lady, yet biassed neither by hope of her future favour nor by present desire to please, firm in honour and loyalty to the Prince who asked his counsel, carefully studied the character of the Countess Christina, to determine whether she possessed the qualities fit for the high station to which love was impatient that she should be elevated.

When he was convinced that her character was such as was requisite to ensure the private happiness of the prince, to excite him to the attainment of true glory—then, and not till then, he decidedly advised the marriage, and zealously offered any assistance in his power to promote the union. The hereditary Prince about this time became, by the death of his father, sole master of his actions; but it was not prudent to begin his government with an act in open defiance of the prejudices or customs of his country. By these customs, he could not marry any woman under the rank of a Princess; and the Emperor had been known to refuse conferring this rank, even on favourites of powerful potentates, by whom he had been in the most urgent manner solicited. Count Albert Altenberg stood high in the esteem of the Emperor, at whose court he had spent some time; and his prince now commissioned him to go to Vienna, and endeavour to move the Emperor to concede this point in his favour. This embassy was a new and terrible delay to the Count's anxious desire of returning to England. But he had offered his services, and he gave them generously. He repaired to Vienna, and persevering through many difficulties, at length succeeded in obtaining for the Countess the rank of Princess. The attachment of the Prince was then publicly declared—the marriage was solemnized—all approved of the Prince's choice—all—except the envious, who never approve of the happy. Count Albert received, both from the Prince and Princess, the highest marks of esteem and favour. M. de Tourville, detected and despised, retired from court in disgrace and in despair.

Immediately after his marriage, the Prince declared his intention of appointing Count Albert Altenberg his prime minister; but before he entered on the duties of his office and the very moment that he could be spared by his Prince, he asked and obtained permission to return to England, to the lady on whom his affections were fixed. The old Count, his father, satisfied with the turn which affairs had taken, and gratified in his utmost ambition by seeing his son minister of state, now willingly permitted him to follow his own inclination in the choice of a wife. "And," concluded Count Albert, "my father rejoices that my heart is devoted to an Englishwoman: having himself married an English lady, he knows, from experience, how to appreciate the domestic merits of the ladies of England; he is prepossessed in their favour. He agrees, indeed, with foreigners of every nation, who have had opportunities of judging, and who all allow that—next to their

own countrywomen—the English are the most charming and the most amiable women in the world."

When the Count had finished, and had pronounced this panegyric of a nation, while he thought only of an individual, he paused, anxious to know what effect his narrative had produced on Mr. and Mrs. Percy.

He was gratified both by their words and looks, which gave him full assurance of their entire satisfaction.

"And since he had done them the honour of appealing to their opinion, they might be permitted to add their complete approbation of every part of his conduct, in the difficult circumstances in which he had been placed. They were fully sensible of the high honour that such a man as Count Altenberg conferred on their daughter by his preference. As to the rest, they must refer him to Caroline herself." Mr. Percy said with a grave voice, but with a smile from which the Count augured well, "that even for the most advantageous and, in his opinion, desirable connexion, he would not influence his daughter's inclination.—Caroline must decide."

The Count, with all the persuasive tenderness and energy of truth and love, pleaded his own cause, and was heard by Caroline with a modest, dignified, ingenuous sensibility, which increased his passion. Her partiality was now heightened by her conviction of the strength and steadiness of his attachment; but whilst she acknowledged how high he stood in her esteem, and did not attempt to conceal the impression he had made on her heart, yet he saw that she dreaded to yield to the passion which must at last require from her the sacrifice of her home, country, friends, and parents. As long as the idea of being united to him was faint and distant, so was the fear of the sacrifices that union might demand; but now, the hope, the fear, the certainty, at once pressed on her heart with the most agitating urgency. The Count as far as possible relieved her mind by the assurance, that though his duty to his Prince and his father, that though all his private and public connexions and interests obliged him to reside some time in Germany, yet that he could occasionally visit England, that he should seize every opportunity of visiting a country he preferred to all others; and, for his own sake, he should cultivate the friendship of her family, as each individual was in different ways suited to his taste and stood high in his esteem.

Caroline listened with fond anxiety to these hopes: she was willing to believe in promises which she was convinced were made with entire

sincerity; and when her affections had been wrought to this point, when her resolution was once determined, she never afterwards tormented the man to whom she was attached, with wavering doubts and scruples.

Count Altenberg's promise to his prince obliged him to return at an appointed time. Caroline wished that time had been more distant; she would have delighted in spending the spring-time of love in the midst of those who had formed till now all the happiness of her life—with her parents, to whom she owed every thing, to whom her gratitude was as warm, as strong, as her affection—with her beloved sister, who had sympathized so tenderly in all her sorrow, and who ardently wished to have some time allowed to enjoy her happiness. Caroline felt all this, but she felt too deeply to display feeling: sensible of what the duty and honour of Count Altenberg demanded, she asked for no delay.

The first letters that were written to announce her intended marriage were to Mrs. Hungerford and to Lady Jane Granville. And it may be recorded as a fact rather unusual, that Caroline was so fortunate as to satisfy all her friends: not to offend one of her relations, by telling any too soon, or too late, of her intentions. In fact, she made no secret, no mystery, where none was required by good sense or propriety. Nor did she communicate it under a strict injunction of secrecy to twenty friends, who were afterwards each to be angry with the other for having, or not having, told that of which they were forbidden to speak. The order of precedency in Caroline's confidential communications was approved of even by all the parties concerned.

Mrs. Hungerford was at Pembroke with her nieces when she received Caroline's letter: her answer was as follows:

"MY DEAR CHILD,

"I am ten years younger since I read your letter, therefore do not be surprised at the quickness of my motions—I shall be with you at the Hills, in town, or wherever you are, as soon as it is possible, after you let me know when and where I can embrace you and our dear Count. At the marriage of my niece, Lady Mary Barclay, your mother will remember that I prayed to Heaven I might live to see my beloved Caroline united to the man of her choice—I am grateful that this blessing, this completion of all my earthly hopes and happiness, has been granted to me.

“M. ELIZABETH HUNGERFORD.”

The answer of Lady Jane Granville came next.

“*Confidential*.

“This is the last *confidential* letter I shall ever be able to write to you—for a married woman’s letters, you know, or you will soon know, become, like all the rest of her property, subject to her husband—excepting always the secrets of which she was possessed before marriage, which do not go into the common stock, if she be a woman of honour—so I am safe with you, Caroline; and any erroneous opinion I might have formed, or any hasty expressions I may have let drop, about a certain Count, you will bury in oblivion, and never let me see you look even as if you recollected to have heard them.

“You were right, my dear, in that whole business—I was wrong; and all I can say for myself is, that I was wrong with the best possible intentions. I now congratulate you with as sincere joy, as if this charming match had been made by my advice, under my *chaperonage*, and by favour of that *patronage of fashion*, of which I know your father thinks that both my *head* and *heart* are full; there he is only half right, after all: so do not let him be too proud. I will not allow that my heart is ever wrong, certainly not where you are concerned.

“I am impatient, my dear Caroline, to see your Count Altenberg. I heard him most highly spoken of yesterday by a Polish nobleman, whom I met at dinner at the Duke of Greenwich’s. Is it true, that the Count is to be prime minister of the Prince of ——? the Duke of Greenwich asked me this question, and I promised I would let his grace know from *the best possible* authority—but I did not *commit* you.

“And now, my dear, for my own interest. If you have really and cordially forgiven me, for having so rashly said, upon a late occasion, that I would never forgive you, prove to me your placability and your sincerity—use your all-powerful influence to obtain for me a favour on which I have set my heart. Will you prevail on all your house to come up to town directly, and take possession of mine?—Count Altenberg, you say, has business to transact with ministers: whilst this is going on, and whilst the lawyers are settling preliminaries, where can you all be better than with me? I hope I shall be able to make Mr. and Mrs. Percy feel as much at home, in one

hour's time, as I found myself the first evening after my arrival at the Hills some years ago.

"I know the Hungerfords will press you to go to them, and Alfred and Mrs. A. Percy will plead *nearest of kin*—I can only throw myself upon your generosity. The more inducements you have to go to other friends, the more I shall feel gratified and obliged, if you favour me with this proof of your preference and affection. Indulge me, my dear Caroline, perhaps for the last time, with your company, of which, believe me, I have, though a woman of the world, sense and feeling sufficient fully to appreciate the value. Yours (at all events), ever and affectionately,

"J. GRANVILLE.

"*Spring Gardens—Tuesday*.

"P. S.—I hope your father is of my opinion, that weddings, especially among persona of a certain rank of life, ought always to be *public*,—attended by the friends and connexions of the families, and conducted with something of the good old aristocratic formality, pomp, and state, of former times."

Lady Jane Granville's polite and urgent request was granted. Caroline and all her family had pleasure in showing Lady Jane that they felt grateful for her kindness.

Mr. Temple obtained permission from Lord Oldborough to accompany the Percys to town; and it was settled that Rosamond and Caroline should be married on the same day.

But the morning after their arrival in London, Mr. Temple appeared with a countenance very unlike that which had been seen the night before—Hope and joy had fled.—All pale and in consternation!—Rosamond was ready to die with terror. She was relieved when he declared that the evil related only to his fortune. The place that had been promised to him was given; indeed—the word of promise was kept to the ear—but by some management, either of Lord Skreene's or Lord Skrimpshire's, the place had been *saddled* with a pension to the widow of the gentleman by whom it had been previously held, and the amount of this pension was such as to reduce the profits of the place to an annual income by no means sufficient to secure independence, or even competence, to a married man. Mr. Temple knew

that when the facts were stated to Lord Oldborough, his lordship would, by his representations to the highest authority, obtain redress; but the secretary was unwilling to implicate him in this disagreeable affair, unwilling to trouble his tranquillity again with court intrigues, especially, as Mr. Temple said, where his own personal interest alone was concerned—at any rate this business must delay his marriage. Count Altenberg could not possibly defer the day named for his wedding—despatches from the continent pressed the absolute necessity of his return. Revolutionary symptoms had again appeared in the city—his prince could not dispense with his services. His honour was at stake.

Mr. Temple did not attempt or pretend to bear his disappointment like a philosopher: he bore it like a lover, that is to say, very ill. Rosamond, poor Rosamond, rallied him with as much gaiety as she could command with a very heavy heart.

After a little time for reflection, her good sense, which, when called upon to act, never failed to guide her conduct, induced her to exert decisive influence to prevent Mr. Temple from breaking out into violent complaints against those in power, by whom he had been ill-treated.

The idea of being married on the same day with her sister, she said, after all, was a mere childish fancy, for which no solid advantage should be hazarded; therefore she conjured her lover, not in heat of passion to precipitate things, but patiently to wait—to return and apply to Lord Oldborough, if he should find that the representations he had already made to Lord Skrimpshire failed of effect. With much reluctance, Mr. Temple submitted to postpone the day promised for his marriage; but both Mr. and Mrs. Percy so strongly supported Rosamond's arguments, that he was compelled to be prudent. Rosamond now thought only of her sister's approaching nuptials. Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer arrived in town, and all Mr. and Mrs. Percy's troops of friends gathered round them for this joyful occasion.

Lady Jane Granville was peculiarly happy in finding that Mr. Percy agreed with her in opinion that marriages ought to be publicly solemnized; and rejoiced that, when Caroline should be led to the altar by the man of her choice, she would feel that choice sanctioned by the approbation of her assembled family and friends. Lady Jane justly observed, that it was advantageous to mark as strongly as possible the difference between

marriages with consent of friends, and clandestine unions, which from their very nature must always be as private as possible.

If some little love of show, and some aristocratic pride of family, mixed with Lady Jane's good sense upon this as upon most other occasions, the truly philosophic will be inclined to pardon her; for they best know how much of all the principles which form the strength and happiness of society, depends upon mixed motives.

Mr. and Mrs. Percy, grateful to Lady Jane, and willing to indulge her affection in its own way, gratified her with permission to arrange the whole ceremonial of the wedding.

Now that Rosamond's marriage was postponed, she claimed first right to be her sister's bridemaid; Lady Florence Pembroke, Mrs. Hungerford's niece, had made her request, and obtained Caroline's promise, to be the second; and these were all that Caroline desired to have: but Lady Jane Granville evidently wished for the honour and glory of Lady Frances Arlington for a third, because she was niece to the Duke of Greenwich; and besides, as Lady Jane pleaded, "though a little selfish, she really would have been generous, if she had not been spoiled: to be sure, she cared in general for no one but herself; yet she absolutely showed particular interest about Caroline. *Besides*, her ladyship had set her heart upon the matter, and never would forgive a disappointment of a fancy." Her ladyship's request was granted. Further than this affair of the three bridemaids we know not—there is no record concerning who were the bride-men. But before we come to the wedding-day, we think it necessary to mention, for the satisfaction of the prudent part of the world, that the settlements were duly signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of proper witnesses.

At the moment of recording this fact, we are well aware that as much as we shall gain in the esteem of the old, we shall lose in the opinion of the young. We must therefore be satisfied with the nod of approbation from parents, and must endure the smile of scorn from lovers. We know that

"Jointure, portion, gold, estate,
Houses, household-stuff, or land,
The low conveniences of fate,

Are Greek, no lovers understand."

We regret that we cannot gratify some of our courteous readers with a detailed account of the marriage of Caroline and Count Altenberg, with a description of the wedding-dresses, or a list of the company, who, after the ceremony, partook of an elegant collation at Lady Jane Granville's house in Spring-Gardens. We lament that we cannot even furnish a paragraph in honour of Count Altenberg's equipage.

After all their other friends had made their congratulations, had taken leave of Caroline, and had departed, Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer still lingered.

"I know, my love," said Mrs. Hungerford, "I ought to resign you, in these last moments, to your parents, your brothers, your own Rosamond; yet I have some excuse for my selfishness—they will see you again, it is to be hoped, often—But I!—that is not in the course of nature: the blessing I scarcely could have expected to live to enjoy has been granted to me. And now that I have seen you united to one worthy of you, one who knows your value, I am content—I am grateful. Farewell, again and again, my beloved Caroline, may every—"

Tears spoke the rest. Turning from Caroline, she leaned on Count Altenberg's arm; as he conducted her to her carriage, "You are a happy man, Count Altenberg," said she: "forgive me, if I am not able to congratulate you as I ought—Daughter Mortimer, you know my heart—speak for me, if you can."

Count Altenberg was more touched by this strong affection for Caroline than he could have been by any congratulatory compliments to himself. After the departure of Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer, came the separation so much dreaded by all the family, for which all stood prepared. Despising and detesting the display of sensibility, they had fortified themselves for this moment with all their resolution, and each struggled to repress their own feelings.

Count Altenberg had delayed till the last moment. It was now necessary that they should set out. Caroline, flushed crimson to the very temples one instant, and pale the next, commanded with the utmost effort her emotion; Rosamond, unable to repress hers, clung to her sister weeping. Caroline's

lips quivered with a vain attempt to speak—she could only embrace Rosamond repeatedly, and then her mother. Her father pressed her to his bosom—blessed her—and then drawing her arm within his, led her to her husband.

As they passed through the hall, the faithful housekeeper, and the old steward, who had come from the country to the marriage, pressed forward, in hopes of a last look. Caroline stopped, and took leave of each. She was able, though with difficulty, to speak, and she thanked them for all the services and kindness she had received from them from childhood to this hour: then her father led her to the carriage.

“It is the order of nature, my dear child,” said he; “we are fond but not selfish parents; your happiness is gained by the sacrifice, and we can part with you.”

CHAPTER XL.

Some sage moralist has observed, that even in the accomplishment of our most ardent wishes in this world, there is always some circumstance that disappoints our expectations, or mixes somewhat of pain with the joy. “This is perfectly true,” thought Rosamond. “How often have I wished for Caroline’s marriage with Count Altenberg—and now she is married—really married—and gone!”

It had passed with the rapidity of a dream: the hurry of joy, the congratulations—all, all was over; and in sad silence, Rosamond felt the reality of her loss—by Rosamond doubly felt at this moment, when all her own affairs were in great uncertainty. Mr. Temple was still unable to obtain the performance of the promise which had been made him of *remuneration* and *competent provision*. He had gone through, in compliance with the advice of his friends, the mortification of reiterating vain memorials and applications to the Duke of Greenwich, Lord Skrimpshire, Lord Skreene, and Mr. Secretary Cope. The only thing which Mr. Temple refused to do, was to implicate Lord Oldborough, or to disturb him on the subject. He had spent some weeks with his old master in his retirement without once adverting to his own difficulties, still hoping that on his return to town a promise would be fulfilled, which Lord Skreene had given him, that “the affair should in his absence be settled to his satisfaction.” But on his return to town, his lordship found means of evasion and delay, and threw the blame on others; the course of memorials and representations was to be recommenced. Mr. Temple’s pride revolted, his love was in despair—and frequently, in the bitterness of disappointment, he reiterated to his friend Alfred his exclamations of regret and self-reproach, for having quitted, from pique and impatience of spirit, a profession where his own perseverance and exertions would infallibly have rendered him by this time independent. Rosamond saw with sympathy and anguish the effect which these feelings of self-reproach, and hope delayed, produced on Mr. Temple’s spirits and health. His sensibility, naturally quick, and rendered more acute by disappointment, seemed now continually to draw from all characters and events, and even from every book he opened, a moral against

himself, some new illustration or example, which convinced him more and more of the folly of being a dependant on the great. He was just in this repentant mood, when one morning, at Mrs. Alfred Percy's, Rosamond heard him sigh deeply several times, as he was reading with great attention. She could not forbear asking what it was that touched him so much. He put the book into her hands, pointing to the following passage. "The whole of this letter{1}," said he, "is applicable to me and excellent; but this really seems as if it had been written for me or by me."

{Footnote 1: Letter from Mr. Williams (secretary to Lord Chancellor West) to Mrs. Williams.}

She read,

"I was a young man, and did not think that men were to die, or to be turned out . . . What was to be done now?—No money, my former patron in disgrace! friends that were in favour not able to serve me, or not willing; that is, cold, timid, careful of themselves, and indifferent to a man whose disappointments made him less agreeable . . . I languished on for three long melancholy years, sometimes a little elated; a smile, a kind hint, a downright promise, dealt out to me from those in whom I had placed some silly hopes, now and then brought a little refreshment, but that never lasted long; and to say nothing of the agony of being reduced to talk of one's own misfortunes and one's wants, and that basest and lowest of all conditions, the slavery of borrowing, to support an idle useless being—my time, for those three years, was unhappy beyond description. What would I have given then for a profession! . . . any useful profession is infinitely better than a thousand patrons."

To this Rosamond entirely acceded, and admired the strong good sense of the whole letter; but she observed to Mr. Temple, that it was very unjust, not only to himself, but what was of much more consequence, to *her*, to say that all this applied exactly to his case. "Did Mr. Temple," she asked, "mean to assert that she could esteem a man who was *an idle useless being*, a mere dependant on great men, a follower of courts? Could such a man have recommended himself to her father? Could such a man ever have been the chosen friend of her brother Alfred?

"It was true," she acknowledged, "that this friend of her brother had made one mistake in early life; but who is there that can say that he has not in youth or age committed a single error? Mr. Temple had done one silly

thing, to be sure, in quarrelling with his profession; but he had suffered, and had made amends for this afterwards, by persevering application to literature. There he had obtained the success he deserved. Gentlemen might sigh and shake their heads, but could any gentleman deny this? Could it be denied that Mr. Temple had distinguished himself in literature? Could any person deny that a political pamphlet of his recommended him to the notice of Lord Oldborough, one of the ablest statesmen in England, who made him his secretary, and whose esteem and confidence he afterwards acquired by his merit, and continued, in place and out, to enjoy?—Will any gentleman deny this?" Rosamond added, that, "in defence of *her brother's friend*, she could not help observing, that a man who had obtained the esteem of some of the first persons of their day, who had filled an employment of trust, that of secretary to a minister, with fidelity and credit, who had published three celebrated political pamphlets, and two volumes of moral and philosophical disquisitions, which, as she had heard the bookseller say, were become *stock books*, could not deserve to be called an *idle useless being*. To be born and die would not make all his history—no, such a man would at least be secure of honourable mention in the Biographia Britannica as a writer—moral—political—metaphysical."

But while Rosamond thus did her utmost to support the spirits of her lover, her own began to fail; her vivacity was no longer natural: she felt every day more and more the want of her sister's sympathy and strength of mind.

Letters from abroad gave no hope of Caroline's return—delay after delay occurred. No sooner had quiet been restored to the country, than Count Altenberg's father was taken ill, and his illness, after long uncertainty, terminated fatally.

After the death of his father, the Count was involved in a variety of domestic business, which respect for the memory of his parent, and affection for surviving relations, could not allow him to leave. When all this had been arranged, and when all seemed preparing for their return to England, just when Rosamond hoped that the very next letter would announce the day when they would set out, the French declared war, the French troops were actually in motion—invasion was hourly expected—it was necessary to prepare for the defence of the country. At such a moment the Count could not quit his country or his Prince. And there was Caroline,

in the midst of a country torn by civil war, and in the midst of all the horrors of revolution.

About this time, to increase the anxiety of the Percy family, they learned that Godfrey was taken prisoner on his way home from the West Indies. The transport, in which his division of the regiment had embarked had been separated from her convoy by a gale of wind in the night, and it was apprehended that she had been taken by the enemy. Godfrey's family hoped for a moment that this might be a false alarm; but after enduring the misery of reading contradictory paragraphs and contests of the newspaper writers with each other for several successive days, it was at last too clearly established and confirmed, by official intelligence, that the transport was taken by a Dutch ship.

In the midst of these accumulating causes of anxiety, trials of another kind were preparing for this family, as if Fortune was determined to do her utmost to ruin and humble those who had despised her worshippers, struggled against her influence, and risen in the world in defiance of her power. To explain the danger which now awaited them, we must return to their old family enemy, Sir Robert Percy. Master of Percy-hall, and of all that wealth could give, he could not enjoy his prosperity, but was continually brooding on plans of avarice and malice.

Since his marriage with Miss Falconer, Sir Robert Percy's establishment had become so expensive as to fret his temper continually. His tenants had had more and more reason to complain of their landlord, who, when any of his farms were out of lease, raised his rents exorbitantly, to make himself amends, as he said, for the extravagance of his wife. The tenants, who had ever disliked him as the successor and enemy of their *own* good and beloved landlord, now could not and attempted not to conceal their aversion. This renewed and increased the virulence of his dislike to *our* branch of the Percys, who, as he knew, were always compared *with him and his*, and seemed to be for ever present to the provoking memories of these tenants.

Sir Robert was disappointed hitherto in the hope for which he married, the hope of an heir, who should prevent the estate from returning to those from whom it had been wrested by his arts. Envy at seeing the rising and prosperous state of *those Percys*, who, in spite of their loss of fortune, had made their way up again through all obstacles, combined to increase his

antipathy to his relations. His envy had been exasperated by the marriage of Caroline to Count Altenberg, and by the high reputation of her brother. He heard their praises till his soul sickened; and he was determined to be their destruction. He found a willing and able assistant in Sharpe the attorney, and they soon devised a plan worthy of their conjoined malice. At the time when Sir Robert had come into possession of Percy-hall, after the suit had been decided in his favour, he had given up all claim to the rents which Mr. Percy had received during the years which he had held the estate, and had accepted in lieu of them the improvements which Mr. Percy had made on the estate, and a considerable quantity of family plate and a collection of pictures. But now Sir Robert wrote to Mr. Percy without adverting to this agreement, and demanding from him the amount of all the rents which he had received, deducting only a certain sum on his own valuation for improvements. The plate and pictures, which he had left at Percy-hall, Sir Robert said he was willing to take in lieu of the debt; but an immense balance against Mr. Percy remained. In technical phrase, we believe, he warned Mr. Percy that Sharpe his attorney had directions to commence a suit against him for the *mesne rents*. The amount of the claim was such as it was absolutely impossible that Mr. Percy could pay, even by the sale of every thing he possessed in the world. If this claim were established, his family would be reduced to beggary, he must end his days in a prison, or fly his country, and take refuge in some foreign land. To this last extremity Sir Robert hoped to reduce him. In reply, however, to his insolent letter, he was surprised, by receiving from Mr. Percy a calm and short reply, simply saying that his son Alfred would take the proper steps to bring the affair to trial, and that he must submit to the decision of the law, whatever that might be. Sir Robert was mortified to the quick by finding that he could not extort from his victim one concession or complaint, nor one intemperate expression.

But however calm and dignified was Mr. Percy's conduct, it could not be without the greatest anxiety that he awaited the event of the trial which was to decide his future fate and that of his whole family.

The length of time which must elapse before the trial could come on was dreadful. Suspense was the evil they found most difficult to endure. Suspense may be easily borne by persons of an indolent character, who never expect to rule their destiny by their own genius; but to those who feel themselves possessed of energy and abilities to surmount obstacles and to

brave dangers, it is torture to remain passive—to feel that prudence, virtue, genius avail them not—that while rapid ideas pass in their imagination, time moves with an unaltered pace, and compels them to wait, along with the herd of vulgar mortals, for knowledge of futurity.

CHAPTER XLI.

What has become all this time of the Falconer family?

Since the marriage of Miss Falconer with Sir Robert Percy, all intercourse between the Falconers and our branch of the Percy family had ceased; but one morning, when Alfred was alone, intently considering his father's case, and the legal difficulties which threatened him, he was surprised by a visit from Commissioner Falconer. The commissioner looked thin, pale, and wretched. He began by condoling with Alfred on their mutual family misfortunes. Alfred received this condolence with politeness, but with a proud consciousness that, notwithstanding his father's present difficulties, and the total loss of fortune with which he was threatened, neither his father, nor any individual in his family, would change places with any one of the Falconers; since nothing dishonourable could be imputed to Mr. Percy, and since none of his misfortunes had been occasioned by any imprudence of his own.

A deep sigh from the commissioner, at the moment these thoughts were passing in Alfred's mind, excited his compassion, for he perceived that the same reflections had occurred to him.

After taking an immoderate quantity of snuff, the commissioner went on, and disclaimed, in strong terms, all knowledge of his son-in-law Sir Robert's cruel conduct to his cousin. The commissioner said that Sir Robert Percy had, since his marriage with Bell Falconer, behaved very ill, and had made his wife show great ingratitude to her own family—that in Mrs. Falconer's distress, when she and Georgiana were most anxious to retire from town for a short time, and when Mrs. Falconer had naturally looked to the house of her married daughter as a sure asylum, the doors of Percy-hall had been actually shut against her; Sir Robert declaring, that he would not be involved in the difficulties and disgrace of a family who had taken him in to marry a girl without any fortune.

Alfred was perfectly convinced, both from the cordial hatred with which the commissioner now spoke of his son-in-law, and from Mr. Falconer's disposition, that he had nothing to do with the cruel measures which Sir

Robert had taken against his father. Commissioner Falconer was not a malevolent, but a weak man—incapable of being a disinterested friend—equally incapable of becoming a malicious enemy. The commissioner now proceeded to his own affairs, and to the business of his visit. He said that he had been disappointed in all his hopes from the Greenwich party—that when *that sad business of Mrs. Falconer's came out*, they had seized this as a pretence for *dropping* him altogether—that when they had, by Lord Oldborough's retreat from office, obtained every thing they wanted, and had no more occasion for assistance or information, they had shamefully forgotten, or disowned, all their former promises to Cunningham. They had refused to accredit him at the court of Denmark, refused even to defray the expenses of his journey thither, which, in the style he had thought it necessary for an ambassador to travel in, had been considerable. Upon the hopes held out, he had taken a splendid house in Copenhagen, and had every day, for some weeks, been in expectation of the arrival of his credentials. When it was publicly known that another ambassador was appointed, Cunningham's creditors became clamorous; he contrived to escape from Copenhagen in the night, and was proceeding *incog.* in his journey homewards, when he was stopped at one of the small frontier towns, and was there actually detained in prison for his debts.

The poor commissioner produced his son's letter, giving an account of his detention, and stating that, unless the money he had raised in Copenhagen was paid, there was no hope of his being liberated—he must perish in a foreign jail.

We spare the reader the just reproaches which the unhappy father, at this moment, uttered against the son's duplicity. It was his fate, he said, to be ruined by those for whom he had been labouring and planning, night and day, for so many years. "And now," concluded Mr. Falconer, "here am I, reduced to sell almost the last acre of my paternal estate—I shall literally have nothing left but Falconer-court, and my annuity!—Nothing!—But it must be done, ill as he has used me, and impossible as it is, ever, even at this crisis, to get the truth from him—I must pay the money: he is in jail, and cannot be liberated without this sum. I have here, you see, under the hand of the chief magistrate, sufficient proof—I will not, however, trouble you, my dear sir, with showing more of these letters—only it is a comfort to me to speak to one who will listen with some sympathy—Ah! sir, when out of place!—out of favour!—selling one's estate!—how people change!—But

I am taking up your time. Since these lands are to be sold, the sooner the better. Your father, you know, is trustee to my marriage-settlements, and, I believe, his consent, his signature, will be necessary—will it not?—I am no lawyer—I really am not clear what *is* necessary—and my solicitor, Mr. Sharpe, I have dismissed: perhaps you will allow me to put the business into your hands?"

Alfred undertook it, and kindly told the commissioner that if he would send him his papers, he would, without putting him to any expense, look them over carefully—have all the necessary releases drawn—and make his title clear to any purchaser who should apply.

The commissioner was full of gratitude for this friendly offer, and immediately begged that he might leave his title-deeds. Accordingly the servant was desired to bring in the box which he had left in the carriage. The commissioner then rose to take leave, but Alfred begged he would stay till he had written a list of the deeds, as he made it a rule never to take charge of any papers, without giving a receipt for them. The commissioner thought this "a superfluous delicacy between friends and relatives;" but Alfred observed that relations would, perhaps, oftener continue friends, if in matters of business, they took care always to be as exact as if they were strangers.

The commissioner looked at his watch—said he was in haste—he was going to wait upon Lord Somebody, from whom, in spite of all his experience, he expected something.

"You will find a list of the deeds, I have a notion," said he, "in the box, Mr. Alfred Percy, and you need only sign it—that will be quite sufficient."

"When I have compared the papers with the list, I will sign it," said Alfred: "my clerk and I will do it as quickly as possible. Believe me, you cannot be in greater haste than I am."

The commissioner, secretly cursing Alfred's accuracy, and muttering something of the necessity for his own punctuality, was obliged to submit. He sat down—the clerk was sent for—the box was opened. The list of the papers was, as Alfred found, drawn out by Buckhurst Falconer; and the commissioner now recollected the time. "Just when poor Buckhurst," said the father, with a sigh, "was arguing with me against going into the church —at that time. I remember, he was desperately in love with your sister Caroline."

“Why, in truth,” said Alfred, smiling, as he read over the scrawled list, “this looks a little as if it were written by a man in love—here’s another reason for our comparing the papers and the list.”

“Well, well, I took it all upon trust—I am no lawyer—I never looked at them—never opened the box, and am very sorry to be obliged to do it now.”

The essential care, either of papers or estate, the commissioner had evermore neglected, while he had all his life been castle-building, or pursuing some phantom of fortune at court. Whilst Alfred was comparing the papers and the list, the commissioner went on talking of the marriage of Caroline with Count Altenberg, asking when they expected them to return. It was possible that Count Altenberg might be moved to make some remonstrance in favour of Cunningham; and a word or two from him to the Duke of Greenwich would do the business. The commissioner longed to hint this to Alfred, but he was so intent upon these bundles of parchment, that till every one of them was counted, it would be in vain to make that attempt: so the commissioner impatiently stood by, while the clerk went on calling over the papers, and Alfred, in equal strains, replying. “Thank Heaven!” said he to himself, “they have got to the last bundle.”

“Bundle eighteen,” cried the clerk.

“Bundle eighteen,” replied Alfred. “How many numbers does it contain?”

“Six,” said the clerk.

“Six!—no, seven, if you please,” said Alfred.

“But six in the list, sir.”

“I will read them over,” said Alfred. “No. 1. Deed of assignment to Filmer Griffin, Esq. No. 2. Deed of mortgage to Margaret Simpson, widow. No. 3. Deed of lease and release. No. 4. Lease for a year—”

“No. 4. no such thing—stop, sir—Deed!”

Alfred gave one look at the paper, and starting up, snatched it from the hands of his clerk, with an exclamation of joy, signed the receipt for the commissioner, put it into his hands, locked the box, and sat down to write a letter, all with such rapidity that the commissioner was struck with astonishment and curiosity. Notwithstanding all his impatience to be punctual to his own engagement, he now stood fixed to the spot, and at last began with “My dear Mr. Alfred Percy, may I ask what has happened?”

“My dear commissioner, I have found it—I have found it—the long-lost deed, and I am writing to my father, to tell him. Excuse me—excuse me if I am not able to explain farther at this moment.”

The commissioner understood it all too quickly. He saw how it had happened through Buckhurst’s carelessness. At the time Buckhurst had been packing up these papers, some of Mr. Percy’s had been lying on the table—Buckhurst had been charged not to mix them with his father’s; but he was in love, and did not know what he was doing.

The commissioner began three sentences, and left them all unfinished, while Alfred did not hear one word of them: the first was an apology for Buckhurst, the second a congratulation for his good cousin Percy, the third was an exclamation that came from his heart. “Good Heavens! but what will become of my daughter Bell and Sir Robert? I do not comprehend quite, my dear sir.”

Perceiving that he was not heard by Alfred, the commissioner took up his hat and departed, determining that he would inquire farther from Sir Robert’s solicitor concerning the probable consequences of the recovery of this deed.

Alfred had no sooner finished his joyful letter to his father than he wrote to Sir Robert Percy, informing him of the recovery of the deed, and letting him know that he was ready to show it to whomsoever Sir Robert would send to his house to examine it. He made this offer to put an end at once to all doubts. He trusted, he said, that when Sir Robert should be satisfied of the existence and identity of the deed, he would stop his present proceedings for the recovery of the *mesne rents*, and that he would, without obliging his father to have farther recourse to law, restore to him the Percy estate.

To this letter no answer was received for some time. At length Mr. Sharpe called on Alfred, and begged to see the deed. He was permitted to examine it in Alfred’s presence. He noted down the date, names of the witnesses, and some other particulars, of which, he observed, it was necessary he should inform Sir Robert, before he could be satisfied as to the identity of the conveyance. Sharpe was particularly close and guarded in his looks and words during this interview; would neither admit nor deny that he was satisfied, and went away leaving nothing certain, but that he would write to Sir Robert. Alfred thought he saw that they meant to avoid giving an

answer, in order to keep possession some months longer, till another term. He took all the necessary steps to bring the matter to trial immediately, without waiting for any answer from Sir Robert. No letter came from him, but Alfred received from his solicitor the following note:

"Sir,

"I am directed by Sir Robert Percy to acquaint you, in reply to yours of the 20th instant, that conceiving his title to the Percy estate to be no way affected by the instrument to which you allude therein, he cannot withdraw his present suit for the *mesne rents* that had been already received, if you proceed in an ejectment for the recovery of the aforesaid estate.

"I am, sir,

"Your humble servant,

"A. Sharpe.

"*Wednesday.*"

Alfred was surprised and alarmed by this letter. It had never occurred to him as possible, that Sir Robert and his counsel would attempt to stand a new trial in the face of this recovered deed; this was beyond all he could have conceived even from their effrontery and villany. He consulted Mr. Friend, who, after considering Sharpe's letter, could not devise what defence they intended to make, as the deed, upon most accurate examination, appeared duly executed, according to the provision of the statute of frauds. Upon the whole, Mr. Friend was of opinion that the letter was meant merely to alarm the plaintiffs, and to bring them to offer or consent to a compromise. In this opinion Alfred was confirmed the next day, by an interview with Sharpe, accidental on Alfred's part, but designed and prepared by the solicitor, who watched Alfred as he was coming out of the courts, and dogged him till he parted from some gentlemen with whom he was walking—then joining him, he said, in a voice which Mr. Allscrip might have envied for its power of setting sense at defiance, "I am happy, Mr. Alfred Percy, to chance to see you to-day; for, with a view to put an end to litigation and difficulties, I had a few words to suggest—premising that I do not act or speak now, in any wise, as or for Sir Robert Percy, or with reference to his being my client, or as a solicitor in this cause, be it understood, but merely and solely as one gentleman to another, upon honour—and not bringing forward any idea to be taken advantage of hereafter, as tending to any thing in the shape of an offer to compromise,

which, in a legal point of view, you know, sir, I could not be warranted to hazard for my client, and of consequence, which I hereby declare, I do not in any degree mean."

"Would you be so good, Mr. Sharpe, to state at once what you do mean? for I confess I do not, in any degree, understand you."

"Why, then, sir, what I mean is, simply, and candidly, and frankly, this: that if I could, without compromising the interest of my client, which, as an honest man, I am bound not to do or appear to do, I should wish to put an end to this litigation between relations; and though your father thinks me his enemy, would convince him to the contrary, if he would allow me, and could point out the means of shortening this difference between relations, which has occasioned so much scandal; and moreover, could devise an accommodation, which might be agreeable to both parties, and save you a vast deal of trouble and vexation; possession," added he, laughing, "being nine points of the law."

Mr. Sharpe paused, as if hoping that something would now be said by Alfred, that might direct him whether to advance or recede; but Alfred only observed, that probably the end Mr. Sharpe proposed to himself by speaking was to make himself understood, and that this desirable end he had not yet attained.

"Why, sir, in some cases, one cannot venture to make one's self understood any way, but by inuendoes."

"Then, good morning to you, sir—you and I can never understand one another."

"Pardon me, sir, unless you are in a hurry," cried Mr. Sharpe, catching Alfred by the button, "which (when so large an estate, to which you might eventually succeed, is in question) you are too much a man of business to be—in one word, then, for I won't detain you another moment, and I throw myself open, and trust to your honour—"

"You do me honour."

"Put a parallel case. You, plaintiff A——, I, defendant B——. I should, if I were A——, but no way advising it, being B——, offer to divide the whole property, the claim for the *mesne rents* being wholly given up; and that the offer would be accepted, I'd engage upon my honour, supposing myself witnessing the transaction, only just as a gentleman."

“Impossible, sir,” cried Alfred, with indignation. “Do you take me for a fool? Do you think I would give up half my father’s estate, knowing that he has a right to the whole?”

“Pardon me, sir—I only suggested an A. B. case. But one word more, sir,” cried Mr. Sharpe, holding Alfred, who was breaking from him, “for your own—your father’s interest: you see this thing quite in a wrong point of view; when you talk of a few months’ more or less delay of getting possession, being all there is between us—depend upon it, if it goes to trial you will never get possession.”

“Then, sir, if you think so, you are betraying the interest of your client, in advising me not to let it go to trial.”

“Good God! sir: but that is between you and me only.”

“Pardon me, sir, it is between you and your conscience.”

“Oh! if that’s all—my conscience is at ease, when I’m trying to prevent the scandal of litigation between relations: therefore, just let me mention to you for your private information, what I know Sir Robert would not wish to come out before the trial.”

“Don’t tell it to me, sir—I will not hear it,” cried Alfred, breaking from him, and walking on very fast.

Faster still Sharpe pursued. “You’ll remember, sir, at all events, that what has been said is not to go further—you’ll not forget.”

“I shall never forget that I am a man of honour, sir,” said Alfred.

Sharpe parted from him, muttering, “that if he lived to the day of trial, he would repent this.”

“And if I live till the day of judgment, I shall never repent it,” thought Alfred.

Now fully convinced that Sir Robert desired a compromise, and wanted only to secure, while in possession, some portion of that property, which he knew the law would ultimately force him to relinquish, Alfred persevered in his course, relieved from the alarm into which he had at first been thrown, when he learned that his opponents intended to make a defence. Alfred felt assured that they would never let the matter come to trial; but time passed on, and they still persisted. Many of his brother lawyers were not only doubtful, but more inclined to despond than to encourage him as to the event of the trial; several regretted that he had not accepted of Mr. Sharpe’s

offered compromise. “Half the estate certain, and his father’s release from all difficulties, they thought too good offers to have been rejected. He might, as Sharpe had prophesied, have to repent his rejection of that proposal.”

Others observed, that though Mr. Alfred Percy was certainly a young man of great talents, and had been successful at the bar, still he was a young lawyer; and it was a bold and hazardous, not to say rash thing, to take upon himself the conduct of a suit against such opponents as Mr. Sharpe and Sir Robert Percy, practised in law, hardened in iniquity, and now driven to desperation.

Mr. Friend was the only man who stood steadily by Alfred, and never wavered in his opinion. “Trust to truth and justice,” said he; “you did right not to compromise—be firm. If you fail, you will have this consolation—you will have done all that man could do to deserve success.”

The day of trial approached. Mr. Friend had hoped, till very late in the business, that the object of their adversaries was only to intimidate, and that they would never let it go to trial: now it was plain they would. But on what grounds? Again and again Mr. Friend and Alfred perused and reperused Sir John Percy’s deed, and examined the opinions of counsel of the first eminence. Both law and right appeared to be clearly on their side; but it was not likely that their experienced opponents should persist without having some strong resource.

A dread silence was preserved by Sir Robert Percy and by Mr. Solicitor Sharpe. They must have some deep design: what it could be, remained to be discovered even till the day of trial.

CHAPTER XLII.

The day of trial arrived—Mr. Percy came up to town, and brought Mrs. Percy and Rosamond with him to his son Alfred's, that they might all be together, and hear as soon as possible their fate.

The trial came on about three o'clock in the afternoon. The court was uncommonly crowded. Mr. Percy, his son Erasmus, and all his friends, and Sir Robert and his adherents, appeared on opposite sides of the galleries.

The excellent countenance and gentlemanlike demeanour of Mr. Percy were contrasted with the dark, inauspicious physiognomy of Sir Robert, who sat opposite to him, and who was never tranquil one second, but was continually throwing notes to his counsel, beckoning or whispering to his attorney—while convulsive twitches of face and head, snuff-taking, and handkerchief spread frequently to conceal the expression of his countenance, betrayed the malignant flurry of his spirits.

Alfred conducted his father's cause in the most judicious and temperate manner. An attempt had been made by Sir Robert to prejudice the public against Mr. Percy, by representing him as the descendant of a younger brother, who was endeavouring to dispossess the heir of the elder branch of the family of that estate, which belonged to him by right of inheritance. Alfred's fast care was to put the court and the jury in full possession of the facts. He stated that "His father, Lewis Percy, plaintiff in this cause, and Robert Percy, Bart. defendant, both descended from Sir John Percy, who was their grandfather. Sir John outlived both his sons, who left him two grandsons, Robert was the son of his eldest, and Lewis of his youngest son. Sir John had two estates, one of them paternal, which went in the ordinary course of descent to the representative of the eldest son, being the present Sir Robert Percy. Sir John's other estate, in Hampshire, which came to him by his wife, he conveyed, a short time before his death, to his youngest grandson, the present Lewis Percy, who had held undisturbed possession of it for many years. But, in process of time, Sir Robert Percy ruined himself by play, and having frequent intercourse with Sharpe, the solicitor, upon some great emergency inquired whether it was not possible to shake the title of his cousin Mr. Percy's estate. He suggested that the conveyance might

not be forthcoming; but Sir Robert assured him that both his grandfather and the present Mr. Percy were men of business, and that there was little likelihood either that the deeds should be lost, or that there should be any flaw in the title. Afterwards a fire broke out at Percy-hall, which consumed that wing of the house in which were Mr. Percy's papers—the papers were all saved except this deed of conveyance. Mr. Sharpe being accidentally apprized of the loss, conveyed the intelligence to Sir Robert. He immediately commenced a suit against his cousin, and had finally succeeded in obtaining a verdict in his own favour, and possession of the Hampshire estate. At the time when Mr. Percy delivered up possession and quitted Percy-hall, in consideration of the extensive improvements which he had made, and in consideration of his giving up to Sir Robert plate, furniture, wine, horses, and equipages, Sir Robert had promised to forego whatever claim he might have upon Mr. Percy for the rents which he had received during the time he had held the estate; but, afterwards, Sir Robert repented of having made this agreement, broke his promise, and took out a writ against his cousin for the *mesne rents*. They amounted to an immense sum, which Mr. Percy was utterly unable to pay, and he could have had no hope of avoiding ruin, had the claim been by law decided against him. By fortunate circumstances, however, he had, while this cause was pending, recovered that lost conveyance, which proved his right to the Hampshire estate. Of this he had apprized Sir Robert, who had persisted, nevertheless, in holding possession, and in his claim for the *mesne rents*. The present action was brought by Mr. Percy in resistance of this unjust claim, and for the recovery of his property."

Not one word of invective, of eloquence, of ornament, or of any attempt at pathos, did our barrister mix with this statement. It was his object to put the jury and the court clearly in possession of facts, which, unadorned, he knew would appear stronger than if encumbered by any flowers of oratory.

Having produced the deed, conveying the Hampshire estate to his father, Alfred called evidence to prove the signature of Sir John Percy, and the handwriting of the witnesses. He farther proved that this conveyance had been formerly seen among his father's papers at Percy-hall, showed it had been recently recovered from Mr. Falconer's box of papers, and explained how it had been put there by mistake, and he supported this fact by the evidence of Commissioner Falconer, father-in-law to the defendant.—

Alfred rested his cause on these proofs, and waited, anxious to know what defence the defendant was prepared to make.

To his astonishment and consternation, Sir Robert's counsel produced another deed of Sir John Percy's, revoking the deed by which Sir John had made over his Hampshire estate to his younger grandson, Mr. Percy; it appearing by a clause in the original deed that a power for this purpose had been therein reserved. This deed of revocation was handed to the judge and to the jury, that it might be examined. The two deeds were carefully compared. The nicest inspection could not discover any difference in the signature or seal. When Mr. Friend examined them, he was in dismay. The instrument appeared perfect. Whilst the jury were occupied in this examination, Mr. Friend and Alfred had a moment to consult together.

"We are undone," whispered Mr. Friend, "if they establish this deed of revocation—it sets us aside for ever."

Neither Mr. Friend nor Alfred had any doubt of its being a forgery, but those, who had plunged thus desperately in guilt, would probably be provided with perjury sufficient to support their iniquity.

"If we had been prepared!" said Mr. Friend: "but how could we be prepared for such a stroke? Even now, if we had time, we could summon witnesses who would discredit theirs, but—"

"Do not despair," said Alfred: "still we have a chance that their own witnesses may cross each other, or contradict themselves. Falsehood, with all its caution, is seldom consistent."

The trial proceeded. Alfred, in the midst of the fears and sighs of his friends, and of the triumphant smiles and anticipating congratulations of his enemies, continued to keep both his temper and his understanding cool. His attention was fixed upon the evidence produced, regardless of the various suggestions whispered or written to him by ignorant or learned advisers.

William Clerke, the only surviving witness to the deed of revocation produced by Sir Robert, was the person on whose evidence this cause principally rested. He was now summoned to appear, and room was made for him. He was upwards of eighty years of age: he came slowly into court, and stood supporting himself upon his staff, his head covered with thin gray hairs, his countenance placid and smiling, and his whole appearance so respectable, so venerable, as to prepossess, immediately, the jury and the court in his favour.

Alfred Percy could scarcely believe it possible, that such a man as this could be the person suborned to support a forgery. After being sworn, he was desired to sit down, which he did, bowing respectfully to the court. Sir Robert Percy's counsel proceeded to examine him as to the points they desired to establish.

"Your name, sir, is William Clerke, is it not?"

"My name is William Clerke," answered the old man, in a feeble voice.

"Did you ever see this paper before?" showing him the deed.

"I did—I was present when Sir John Percy signed it—he bid me witness it, that is, write my name at the bottom, which I did, and then he said, 'Take notice, William Clerke, this is a deed, revoking the deed by which I made over my Hampshire estate to my youngest grandson, Lewis Percy.'"

The witness was going on, but the counsel interrupted.

"You saw Sir John Percy sign this deed—you are sure of that?"

"I am sure of that."

"Is this Sir John Percy's signature?"

"It is—the very same I saw him write; and here is my own name, that he bid me put just there."

"You can swear that this is your handwriting?"

"I can—I do."

"Do you recollect what time Sir John Percy signed this deed?"

"Yes; about three or four days before his death."

"Very well, that is all we want of you, Mr. Clerke."

Alfred Percy desired that Clerke should be detained in court, that he might cross-examine him. The defendants went on, produced their evidence, examined all their witnesses, and established all they desired.

Then it came to Alfred's turn to cross-examine the witnesses that had been produced by his adversary. When William Clerke re-appeared, Alfred regarding him stedfastly, the old man's countenance changed a little; but still he looked prepared to stand a cross-examination. In spite of all his efforts, however, he trembled.

"Oh! you are trembling on the brink of the grave!" said Alfred, addressing him in a low, solemn tone: "pause, and reflect, whilst you are

allowed a moment's time. A few years must be all you have to spend in this world. A few moments may take you to another, to appear before a higher tribunal—before that Judge, who knows our hearts, who sees into yours at this instant."

The staff in the old man's hand shook violently.

Sir Robert Percy's counsel interrupted—said that the witness should not be intimidated, and appealed to the court. The judge was silent, and Alfred proceeded, "You know that you are upon your oath—these are possibly the last words you may ever utter—look that they be true. You know that men have been struck dead whilst uttering falsehoods. You are upon your oath—did you see Sir John Percy sign this deed?"

The old man attempted in vain to articulate.

"Give him time to recollect," cried the counsel on the opposite side: "give him leave to see the writing now he has his spectacles."

He looked at the writing twice—his head and hands shaking so that he could not fix his spectacles. The question was repeated by the judge. The old man grew pale as death. Sir Robert Percy, just opposite to him, cleared his throat to catch the witness's attention, then darted at him such a look as only he could give.

"Did I see Sir John Percy sign this deed?" repeated William Clerke: "yes, I did."

"You hear, my lord, you hear," cried Sir Robert's counsel, "the witness says he did—there is no occasion farther to intimidate this poor old man. He is not used to speak before such an audience. There is no need of eloquence—all we want is truth. The evidence is positive. My lord, with your lordship's leave, I fancy we may dismiss him."

They were going to hurry him away, but Alfred Percy said that, with the permission of the court, he must cross-examine that witness farther, as the whole event of the trial depended upon the degree of credit that might be given to his evidence.

By this time the old man had somewhat recovered himself; he saw that his age and reverend appearance still prepossessed the jury in his favour, and from their looks, and from the whispers near him, he learned that his tremor and hesitation had not created any suspicion of guilt, but had been attributed rather to the sensibility of virtue, and the weakness of age. And,

now that the momentary emotion which eloquence had produced on his mind had subsided, he recollected the bribe that had been promised to him. He was aware that he had already sworn what, if he contradicted, might subject him to be prosecuted for perjury. He now stood obstinately resolved to persevere in his iniquity. The first falsehoods pronounced and believed, the next would be easy.

"Your name is William Clerke, and this," said Alfred (pointing to the witness's signature), "is your handwriting?"

"Yes, I say it is."

"You *can* write then?" (putting a pen into his hand) "be so good as to write a few words in the presence of the court." He took the pen, but after making some fruitless attempts, replied, "I am too old to write—I have not been able to write my name these many years—Indeed! sir, indeed! you are too hard upon one like me. God knows," said he, looking up to Heaven, some thought with feeling, some suspected with hypocrisy—"God knows, sir, I speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. Have you any more questions to put to me? I am ready to tell all I know. What interest have I to conceal any thing?" continued he, his voice gaining strength and confidence as he went on repeating the lesson which he had been taught.

"It was long, a long while ago," he said, "since it had all happened; but thank Heaven, his memory had been spared him, and he remembered all that had passed, the same as if it was but yesterday. He recollected how Sir John looked, where he sat, what he said when he signed this deed; and, moreover, he had often before heard of a dislike Sir John had taken to his younger grandson—ay, to that young gentleman's father," looking at Alfred; "and I was very sorry to hear it—very sorry there should be any dispute in the family, for I loved them all," said he, wiping his eyes—"ay, I loved 'em all, and all alike, from the time they were in their cradles. I remember too, once, Sir John said to me, 'William Clerke,' says he, 'you are a faithful lad'—for I was a lad once—"

Alfred had judiciously allowed the witness to go on as far as he pleased with his story, in the expectation that some exaggeration and contradiction would appear; but the judge now interrupted the old man, observing that this was nothing to the purpose—that he must not take up the time of the court with idle tales, but that if he had any thing more to give in evidence respecting the deed, he should relate it.

The judge was thought to be severe; and the old man, after glancing his eye on the jury, bowed with an air of resignation, and an appearance of difficulty, which excited their compassion.

“We may let him go now, my lord, may not we?” said Sir Robert Percy’s counsel.

“With the permission of his lordship, I will ask one other question,” said Alfred.

Now it should be observed, that after the first examination of this witness, Alfred had heard him say to Mr. Sharpe, “They forgot to bring out what I had to say about the seal.” To which Sharpe had replied, “Enough without it.” Alfred had examined the seal, and had observed that there was something underneath it—through a small hole in the parchment he saw something between the parchment and the sealing-wax.

“You were present, I think you say, Mr. Clerke, not only when this deed was signed, but when it was sealed?”

“I was, sir,” cried Clerke, eager to bring out this part of the evidence, as it had been prepared for him by Sir Robert; “I surely was; and I remember it particularly, because of a little remarkable circumstance: Sir John, God bless him!—I think I see him now—My lord, under this seal,” continued the old man, addressing himself to the judge, and putting his shrivelled finger upon the seal, “under this very seal Sir John put a sixpence—and he called upon me to observe him doing it—for, my lord, it is my opinion, he thought then of what might come to pass—he had a sort of a foreboding of this day. And now, my lord, order them, if you please, to break the seal—break it before them all,—and if there is not the sixpence under it, why this deed is not Sir John’s, and this is none of my writing, and,” cried he, lifting up his hands and eyes, “I am a liar, and perjured.”

There was a profound silence. The seal was broken. The sixpence appeared. It was handed in triumph, by Sir Robert Percy’s counsel, to the jury and to the judge. There seemed to be no longer a doubt remaining in the minds of the jury—and a murmur of congratulation among the partisans of Sir Robert seemed to anticipate the verdict.

“‘Tis all over, I fear,” whispered Friend to Alfred. “Alfred, you have done all that could be done, but they have sworn through every thing—it is over with us.”

“Not yet,” said Alfred. Every eye turned upon him, some from pity, some from curiosity, to see how he bore his defeat. At length, when there was silence, he begged to be permitted to look at the sixpence. The judge ordered that it should be shown to him. He held it to the light to examine the date of the coin; he discovered a faint impression of a head on the sixpence, and, upon closer inspection, he made out the date, and showed clearly that the date of the coin was later than the date of the deed: so that there was an absolute impossibility that this sixpence could have been put under the seal of the deed by Sir John.

The moment Alfred stated this fact, the counsel on the opposite side took the sixpence, examined it, threw down his brief, and left the court. People looked at each other in astonishment. The judge ordered that William Clerke should be detained, that he might be prosecuted by the crown for perjury.

The old man fell back senseless. Mr. Sharpe and Sir Robert Percy pushed their way together out of court, disclaimed by all who had till now appeared as their friends. No farther evidence was offered, so that here the trial closed. The judge gave a short, impressive charge to the jury, who, without withdrawing, instantly gave their verdict in favour of the plaintiff, Lewis Percy—a verdict that was received with loud acclamations, which not even respect to the court could restrain.

Mr. Percy and Alfred hastily shook hands with their friends, and in the midst of universal applause hurried away to carry the good news to Mrs. Percy and Rosamond, who were at Alfred’s house, waiting to hear the event of the trial.

Neither Alfred nor Mr. Percy had occasion to speak—the moment Mrs. Percy and Rosamond saw them they knew the event.

“Yes,” said Mr. Percy, “our fortune is restored; and doubly happy we are, in having regained it, in a great measure, by the presence of mind and ability of my son.”

His mother and sister embraced Alfred with tears of delight. For some moments a spectator might have imagined that he beheld a family in deep affliction. But soon through these tears appeared on the countenance of each individual the radiance of joy, smiles of affection, tenderness, gratitude, and every delightful benignant feeling of the human heart.

“Has any body sent to Mrs. Hungerford and to Lady Jane Granville?” said Mr. Percy.

“Yes, yes, messengers were sent off the moment the verdict was given,” said Erasmus: “I took care of that.”

“It is a pity,” said Rosamond, “that Caroline is not here at this moment, and Godfrey.”

“It is best as it is,” said Mrs. Percy: “we have that pleasure still in store.”

“And now, my beloved children,” said Mr. Percy, “after having returned thanks to Providence, let me here, in the midst of all of you to whom I owe so large a share of my happiness, sit down quietly for a few minutes to enjoy ‘the sober certainty of waking bliss.’”

CHAPTER XLIII.

The day after the trial brought several happy letters to the Percys. Rosamond called it the day of happy letters, and by that name it was ever after recorded in the family. The first of these letters was from Godfrey, as follows:

“Dear father, mother, brothers, and sisters all! I hope you are not under any anxiety about me, for here I am, safe and sound, and in excellent quarters, at the house of Mynheers Grinderweld, Groensveld, and Slidderschild, Amsterdam, the Dutch merchants who were shipwrecked on our coast years ago! If it had happened yesterday, the thing could not be fresher in their memories. My dear Rosamond, when we laughed at their strange names, square figures, and formal advice to us, if ever we should, by the changes and chances of human events, be reduced to distress, we little thought that I, a prisoner, should literally come to seek shelter at their door. And most hospitably have I been received. National prejudices, which I early acquired, I don’t know how, against the Dutch, made me fancy that a Dutchman could think only of himself, and would give nothing for nothing: I can only say from experience, I have been as hospitably treated in Amsterdam as ever I was in London. These honest merchants have overwhelmed me with civilities and substantial services, and still they seem to think they can never do enough for me. I wish I may ever see them on English ground again. But we have no Percy-hall to receive them in now; and as well as I remember the Hills, we could not conveniently stow more than one at a time. Side by side, as they stood after breakfast, I recollect, at Percy-hall, they would completely fill up the parlour at the Hills.

“I may well be in high spirits to-day; for these good people have just been telling me, that the measures they have been taking to get my exchange effected, have so far succeeded, they have reason to believe that in a week, or a fortnight at farthest, I shall be under weigh for England.

“In the mean time, you will wonder perhaps how I got here; for I perceive that I have subjected myself to Rosamond’s old reproach of never beginning my story at the beginning. My father used to say, half the mistakes in human affairs arise from our *taking for granted*; but I think I

may take it for granted, that either from the newspapers or from Gascoigne, who must be in England by this time, you have learned that the transport I was on board, with my division of the regiment, parted convoy in the storm of the 18th, in the night, and at daybreak fell in with two Dutchmen. Our brave boys fought as Englishmen always do; but all that is over now, so it does not signify prosing about it. Two to one was too much—we were captured. I had not been five minutes on the Dutchman's deck, when I observed one of the sailors eyeing me very attentively. Presently he came up and asked if my name was not Percy, and if I did not recollect to have seen him before? He put me in mind of the shipwreck, and told me he was one of the sailors who were harboured in one of my father's outhouses whilst they were repairing the wreck. I asked him what had become of the drunken carpenter, and told him the disaster that ensued in consequence of that rascal's carelessness. My sailor was excessively shocked at the account of the fire at Percy-hall: he thumped his breast till I thought he would have broken his breast-bone; and after relieving his mind by cursing and swearing in high Dutch, low Dutch, and English, against the drunken carpenter, he told me there was no use in saying any more, for that he had punished himself.—He was found dead one morning behind a barrel, from which in the night he had been drinking spirits surreptitiously through a straw. Pray tell this to old John, who used always to prophesy that this fellow would come to no good: assure him, however, at the same time, that all the Dutch sailors do not deserve his maledictions. Tell him, I can answer for the poor fellow who recognized me, and who, during the whole passage, never failed to show me and my fellow-prisoners every little attention in his power. When we got to Amsterdam, it was he reminded me of the Dutch merchants, told me their names, which, without his assistance, I might have perished before I could ever have recollected, and showed me the way to their house, and never rested till he saw me well settled.

"You will expect from me some account of this place. You need not expect any, for just as I had got to this line in my letter appeared one who has put all the lions of Amsterdam fairly out of my head—Mr. Gresham! He has been for some weeks in the country, and has just returned. The Dutch merchants, not knowing of his being acquainted with my family, never mentioned him to me, nor me to him: so our surprise at meeting was great. What pleasure it is in a foreign country, and to a poor prisoner, to see any one from dear England, and one who knows our own friends! I had never

seen Mr. Gresham myself, but you have all by your letters made me well acquainted with him. I like him prodigiously, to use a lady's word (not yours, Rosamond). Letters from Mr. Henry were waiting for him here; he has just opened them, and the first news he tells me is, that Caroline is going to be married! Is it possible? Count Altenberg! The last time I heard from you, you mentioned nothing of all this. Some of your letters must have been lost. Pray write again immediately, and do not take it for granted that I shall be at home before a letter reaches me; but give me a full history of every thing up to the present moment. Groensveld is sealing his letters for London, and must have mine now or never. Adieu! Pray write fully: you cannot be too minute for a poor prisoner.

"Yours affectionately,

"burning with curiosity,

"GODFREY PERCY."

A letter from Mr. Gresham to Mr. Henry farther informed them, that Godfrey's exchange was actually effected, and that he had secured his passage on board a vessel just ready to sail for England.

Next came letters from Count Altenberg. Briefly, in the laconic style of a man pressed at once by sudden events and strong feelings, he related that at the siege of the city of —— by the French, early in the morning of the day on which it was expected that the enemy would attempt to storm the place, his prince, while inspecting the fortifications, was killed by a cannon-ball, on the very spot where the Count had been standing but a moment before. All public affairs were changed in his country by the death of the prince. His successor, of a weak character, was willing to purchase present ease, and to secure his low pleasures, at any price—ready to give up the honour of his country, and submit to the conqueror—that he had been secretly intriguing with the enemy, had been suspected, and this suspicion was confirmed by his dastardly capitulation when the means of defence were in his power and the spirit of his people eager for resistance.

With indignation, heightened by grief, contrast, and despairing patriotism, Count Altenberg had remonstrated in vain—had refused, as minister, to put his signature to the capitulation—had been solicited urgently to concede—offers of wealth and dignities pressed upon him: these

he rejected with scorn. Released from all his public engagements by the death of the prince, and by the retiring of the princess from court, Count Altenberg refused to act as minister under his successor; and seeing that, under such a successor to the government, no means of serving or saving the country remained, he at once determined to quit it for ever: resolved to live in a free country, already his own, half by birth and wholly by inclination, where he had property sufficient to secure him independence, sufficient for his own wishes, and for those of his beloved Caroline—a country where he could enjoy better than on any other spot in the whole compass of the civilized world, the blessings of real liberty and of domestic tranquillity and happiness.

His decision made, it was promptly executed. He left to a friend the transacting the sale of his German property, and Caroline concluded his letter with

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,

“Passports are obtained, every thing ready. Early next week we set out for England; by the first of next month we shall be at HOME.”

Then came a letter from Lord Oldborough. Some time previously to the trial, surprised at neither seeing Mr. Temple nor hearing of his marriage, his lordship had written to inquire what delayed his promised return. Taking it for granted that he was married, his lordship in the most polite manner begged that he would prevail upon his bride to enliven the retirement of an old statesman by her sprightly company. As the friend of her father he made this request, with a confidence in her hereditary disposition to show him kindness.

In reply to this letter, Mr. Temple told his friend and master what had delayed his marriage, and why he had hitherto forborne to trouble him on the subject. Lord Oldborough, astonished and indignant, uttered once and but once contemptuous exclamations against the “inconceivable meanness of Lord Skrimpshire,” and the “infinitely small mind of his grace of Greenwich;” then, without condescending to any communication with inferior powers, his lordship applied directly to the highest authority. The consequence was that a place double the value of that which had been promised was given to Mr. Temple, and it was to announce his appointment

to it that occasioned the present letter from Lord Oldborough, enclosing one from Mr. Secretary Cope, who "had it in command to assure his lordship that the delay had arisen solely from the anxious desire of his majesty's ministers to mark their respect for his lordship's recommendation, and their sense of Mr. Temple's merit, by doing more than had been originally proposed. An opportunity, for which they had impatiently waited, had now put it into their power to evince the sincerity of their intentions in a mode which they trusted would prove to the entire satisfaction of his lordship."

The greatest care was taken both in substance and manner to gratify Lord Oldborough, whose loss had been felt, and whose value had, upon comparison, increased in estimation.

Rosamond was rewarded by seeing the happiness of the man she loved, and hearing him declare that he owed it to her prudence.

"Rosamond's prudence!—Whoever expected to hear this?" Mr. Percy exclaimed. "And yet the praise is just. So, henceforward, none need ever despair of grafting prudence upon generosity of disposition and vivacity of temper."

Mr. Temple obtained from Rosamond a promise to be his, as soon as her sister Caroline and her brother should arrive.

Lady Jane Granville, who felt the warmest interest in their prosperity, was the first to whom they communicated all this joyful intelligence. Her ladyship's horses had indeed reason to rue this day; for they did more work this day than London horses ever accomplished before in the same number of hours, not excepting even those of the merciless Mrs. John Prevost; for Lady Jane found it necessary to drive about to her thousand acquaintance to spread the news of the triumph and felicity of the Percy family.

In the midst of this tumult of joy, Mr. Percy wrote two letters: one was to his faithful old steward, John Nelson, who deserved from his master this mark of regard; the other was to Commissioner Falconer, to make him some friendly offers of assistance in his own affairs, and to beg that, through him, his daughter, the unhappy and deserted lady of Sir Robert Percy, might be assured that neither Mr. Percy nor any of his family wished to put her to inconvenience; and that far from being in haste to return to Percy-hall, they particularly wished to wait in town for the arrival of Caroline and Count Altenberg; and they therefore requested that she would not hasten her removal, from any false idea of their impatience. We said the deserted lady

of Sir Robert Percy, for Sir Robert had fled from the country. On quitting the court after the trial, he took all the ready money he had previously collected from his tenants, and set out for the continent, leaving a note for his wife, apprizing her "that she would never see him more, and that she had better return to her father and mother, as he had no means left to support her extravagance."

Commissioner Falconer was at this time at Falconer-court, where he had been obliged to go to settle some business with his tenantry, previously to the sale of his land for the redemption of Cunningham. The Commissioner's answer to Mr. Percy's letter was as follows:

"I cannot tell you, my dear sir, how much I was touched by the kindness of your letter and conduct—so different from what I have met with from others. I will not cloud your happiness—in which, believe me, I heartily rejoice—by the melancholy detail of all my own sorrows and disappointments; but only answer briefly to your friendly inquiries respecting my affairs.

"And first, for my unfortunate married daughter, who has been in this terrible manner returned upon our hands. She thanks you for your indulgence, on which she will not encroach. Before you receive this, she will have left Percy-hall. She is going to live with a Miss Clapham, a great heiress, who wants a fashionable companion and chaperon. Mrs. Falconer became acquainted with her at Tunbridge, and has devised this plan for Arabella. I fear Bell's disposition will not suit such a situation, but she has no other resource.

"Mrs. Falconer and Georgiana have so *over-managed* matters with respect to Petcalf, that it has ended, as I long since feared it would, in his breaking off. If Mrs. Falconer had taken my advice, Georgiana might now be completely settled; instead of which she is fitting out for India. She is going, to be sure, in good company; but in my opinion the expense (which, Heaven knows, I can ill afford) will be thrown away like all the rest—for Georgiana has been much worn by late hours, and though still young, has, I fear, lost her bloom, and looks rather old for India.

"I am truly obliged to you, my dear sir, for your friendly offer with respect to Falconer-court, and have in consequence stopped the sale of the furniture. I shall rejoice to have such a good tenant as Mr. Temple. It is indeed much more agreeable to me to let than to sell. The accommodation,

as you propose, will put it in my power to release Cunningham, which is my most pressing difficulty.

"As you are the only person in the world now who takes an interest in my affairs, or to whom I can safely unburden my mind, I must, though I know complaint to be useless, relieve my heart by it for a moment. I can safely say, that for the last ten years of my life I have never spent a day *for myself*. I have been continually planning and toiling to advance my family,—not an opportunity has been neglected; and yet from this very family springs all my unhappiness. Even Mrs. Falconer blames me as the cause of that *sad business*, which has disgraced us for ever, and deprived us of all our friends —and has afforded an excuse for breaking all promises. There are many, whom I will not name, but they are persons now high in office, who have— I may venture to say it to you—used me shamefully ill.

"Many an honest tradesman and manufacturer, to say nothing of men of talents in the liberal professions, I have seen in the course of the last forty years make their own fortunes, and large fortunes, while I have ended worse than I began—have literally been working all my life for others, not only without reward, but without thanks. If I were to begin life again, I certainly should follow your principles, my dear sir, and depend more upon myself and less upon others, than I have done—But now all is over. Let me assure you, that in the midst of my own misfortunes, I rejoice in your prosperity, and in the esteem and respect with which I hear you and yours spoken of by all.

"Present my affectionate regards and congratulations to Mrs. Percy, and to all your amiable and happy circle. Propriety and feeling for my poor daughter, Lady Percy, must prevent my paying at present my personal congratulations to you at Percy-hall; but I trust you will not the less believe in the sincerity of my attachment.

"I am, my dear sir,

"Your obliged and faithful

"Friend and servant,

"T. FALCONER.

"P.S.—I have just learnt that the little place I mentioned to Mr. Alfred Percy, when we last met, is not disposed of. Lord Oldborough's influence,

as Mr. Temple well knows, is still all-powerful; and your interest with his lordship, you must be sensible, is greater than that of any other person living, without exception. A word from you would do the business for me. It is but a trifle, which I should once have been ashamed to ask: but it is now a matter of necessity."

The event of the trial, and the restoration of the Percy family to their property, were heard with transports of joy by the old tenantry. They had not needed the effect of contrast, to make them love and feel the value of their good landlord; but certainly Sir Robert Percy's tyranny, and all that he had made them suffer for their obstinate fidelity to the *old branch*, had heightened and fortified their attachment. It was now their turn to glory in that honest obstinacy, and with the strong English sense of justice, they triumphed in having the rightful owners restored to their estate, and to the seat of their ancestors.

As the Percy family crossed the well-known bridge at the end of the village, those bells, which had sounded so mournfully, which had been muffled when they quitted their home, now rang out a merry triumphant peal—and it was rung by the hands of the very same persons who had formerly given that proof of attachment to him in his adversity.—Emotion as strong now seized Mr. Percy's heart. At the same spot he jumped out of the carriage, and by the same path along which he had hastened to stop the bell-ringers, lest they should ruin themselves with Sir Robert, he now hastened to see and thank these honest, courageous people. In passing through the village, which had been freshly swept and garnished the people, whom, he remembered to have seen in tears following the carriage at their departure, were now crowding to their doors with faces bright with smiles. Hats that had never stirred, and backs that had never bent for the *usurper*, were now eager with low bows to mark their proud respect to the true man. There were no noisy acclamations, for all were touched. The voices of the young children, however, were heard, who, as their mothers held them up in their arms, to see the landlord, of whom they had heard so much, offered their little nosegays as the open carriage passed, and repeated blessings on those, on whom from their cradles, they had heard blessings bestowed by their parents.

The old steward stood ready at the park-gate to open it for his master. His master and the ladies put their hands out of the carriage to shake hands with

him, but he could not stand it. He just touched his master's hand. Tears streamed down his face, and turning away without being able to say one word, he hid himself in the porter's lodge.

As they drove up to the house, they saw standing on the steps waiting—and long had he been waiting there, for the first sound of the carriage—Johnson, the butler, who had followed the family to the Hills, and had served them in their fallen fortunes—Johnson was now himself. Before the hall-door, wide open to receive them, he stood, with the livery-servants in due order.

Mrs. Harte, the good old housekeeper, had been sent down to prepare for the reception of the family, and a world of trouble she had had; but all was now right and proper, and she was as active and alert as the youngest of her maidens could have been, in conducting the ladies to their apartments, in showing all the old places, and doing what she called the honours of the *re-installation*. She could have wished to have vented a little of her indignation, and to have told how some things had been left; but her better taste and judgment, and her sense of what would be pleasing to her master and mistress, repressed all recrimination. By the help of frequent recurrence to her snuff-box, in difficulties great, together with much rubbing of her hands, and some bridling of her head, she got through it, without naming those, who should not be thought of, as she observed, on this joyful day.

The happiness of the Percy family was completed by the return of Godfrey, of Caroline, and Count Altenberg. Godfrey arrived just as his family were settled at Percy-hall. After his long absence from his home and country, he doubly enjoyed this scene of domestic prosperity. Beloved as Rosamond was by rich and poor in the neighbourhood, and the general favourite of her family, her approaching marriage spread new and universal joy. It is impossible to give an idea of the congratulations, and of the bustle of the various preparations, which were going on at this time at Percy-hall, especially in the lower regions. Even Mrs. Harte's all-regulating genius was insufficient for the exigencies of the times. Indeed, her head and her heart were now at perpetual variance, continually counteracting and contradicting each other. One moment delighted with the joy and affection of the world below, she would come up to boast of it to her mistress and her young ladies; the next moment she would scold all the people for being out of their wits, and for not minding or knowing a single thing they were doing, or

ordered to do, “no more than the babes in the wood;” then proving the next minute and acknowledging that she was “*really quite as bad as themselves*. And no wonder, for the thoughts of Miss Rosamond’s marriage had turned her head entirely upside down—for she had been at Miss Rosamond’s christening, held her by proxy, and considered her always as her particular own child, and well she might, for a better, except, perhaps, Miss Caroline —I should say *the countess*—never breathed.”

The making a *desert* island for Miss Rosamond’s wedding-dinner was the object which had taken such forcible possession of Mrs. Harte’s imagination, that till it was accomplished it was in vain to hope that any other could, in her eyes, appear in any kind of proportion. In the midst of all the sentimental joy above stairs, and in the midst of all the important business of settlements and lawyers, Mrs. Harte was pursuing the settled purpose of her soul, constructing with infinite care, as directed by her complete English Housekeeper, a *desert island for a wedding*, in a deep china dish, with a mount in the middle, two figures upon the mount, with crowns on their heads, a knot of rock-candy at their feet, and gravel-walks of *shot comfits*, judiciously intersecting in every direction their dominions.

CHAPTER XLIV.

As soon as it was possible, after his return to Percy-hall, Mr. Percy went to pay his respects to Lord Oldborough. He found this great statesman happy in retirement, without any affectation of happiness. There were proofs in every thing about him that his mind had unbent itself agreeably; his powers had expanded upon different objects, building, planting, improving the soil and the people.

He had many tastes, which had long lain dormant, or rather which had been held in subjugation by one tyrant passion. That passion vanquished, the former tastes resumed their activity. The superior strength of his character was shown in his never recurring to ambition. Its vigour was displayed in the means by which he supplied himself, not only with variety of occupation, but with variety of motive. Those, who best know the human mind must be aware of the difficulty of supplying motive for one accustomed to stimulus of so high a kind, as that to which Lord Oldborough had been habituated. For one who had been at the head of the government of a great nation, to make for himself objects in the stillness and privacy of a country life, required no common talent and energy of soul. The difficulty was increased to Lord Oldborough, for to him the vast resource of a taste for literature was wanting.

The biographer of Sir Robert Walpole tells us, that though he had not forgotten his classical attainments, he had little taste for literary occupations. Sir Robert once expressed his regret on this subject to Mr. Fox, in the library at Houghton. “I wish,” he said, “I took as much delight in reading as you do; it would be the means of alleviating many tedious hours in my present retirement. But, to my misfortune, I derive no pleasure from such pursuits.”

Lord Oldborough felt, but never condescended to complain of that deficiency of general literature, which was caused in him, partly by his not having had time for the attainment, and partly by his having formed too low an estimate of the influence and power of literature in the political world. But he now took peculiar delight in recalling the classical studies in which he had in his youth excelled; as Mr. Percy sympathized with him in this

taste, there was another point in which they coalesced. Mr. Percy stayed with his old friend some days, for he was anxious to give him this proof of attachment, and felt interested in seeing his character develope itself in a new direction, displaying fresh life and strength, and unexpected resource in circumstances, in which statesmen of the most vigorous minds, and of the highest spirit, have been seen to "droop and drowse," to sink into indolence, sensuality, or the horrors of hypochondriacism and superstition.

Lord Oldborough, on his first retiring to Clermont-park, had informed Mr. Percy that he should wish to see him as soon as he had arranged certain papers. He now reminded his lordship of it, and Lord Oldborough put into his hands a sketch, which he had been drawing out, of the principal transactions in which he had been engaged during his political career, with copies of his letters to the first public characters of the day in our own and in foreign countries. Even by those who had felt no regard for the man, the letters of such a minister would have been read with avidity; but Mr. Percy perused them with a stronger interest than any which could be created by mere political or philosophical curiosity. He read them with a pleasure which a generous mind takes in admiring that which is good and great, with the delight which a true friend feels in seeing proofs that justify all the esteem he had previously felt. He saw in these original documents, in this history of Lord Oldborough's political life, the most perfect consistency and integrity, the most disinterested and enlightened patriotism. When Mr. Percy returned the manuscript to his lordship, he spoke of the satisfaction he must experience in looking back upon this record of a life spent in the service of his country, and observed that he was not surprised that, with such a solid source of self-approbation, such indefeasible claims to the gratitude of his countrymen, and such well-earned fame, he should be, as he appeared, happy in retirement.

"I am happy, and, I believe, principally from the cause you have mentioned," said Lord Oldborough, who had a mind too great for the affectation of humility. "So far I am happy."

"Yet," added he, after a considerable pause, "I have, I feel, a greater capability of happiness, for which I have been prevented from making any provision, partly by the course of life of which I made choice, and partly by circumstances over which I had no control."

He paused again; and, turning the conversation, spoke of his sister, an elderly lady, who had come to pass some time with him. They had lived separate almost all their lives; she in Scotland with her husband, a Scottish nobleman, who having died about the time when Lord Oldborough had resigned his ministerial situation, she had accepted his lordship's invitation to visit him in his retirement. The early attachment he had had for this sister seemed to revive in his mind when they met; and, as if glad to have some object for his affections, they were poured out upon her. Mr. Percy observed a tenderness in his manner and voice when he spoke to her, a thousand little attentions, which no one would have expected from the apparently stern Lord Oldborough, a man who had been engrossed all his life by politics.

On the morning of the last day which Mr. Percy meant to spend at Clermont-park, his lordship, as they were sitting together in his study, expressed more than common regret at the necessity for his friend's departure, but said, "I have no right to detain you from your family." Then, after a pause, he added, "Mr. Percy, you first gave me the idea that a private life is the happiest."

"My lord, in most cases I believe it is; but I never meant to assert that a public life spent in noble exertion, and with the consciousness of superior talent and utility, is not more desirable than the life of any obscure individual can possibly be, even though he possess the pleasure of domestic ease and tranquillity. There are men of eminent abilities, capable of extraordinary exertions, inspired by exalted patriotism. I believe, notwithstanding the corruption of so many has weakened all faith in public virtue, I believe in the existence of such men, men who devote themselves to the service of their country: when the time for their relinquishing the toils of public life arrives, honour and self-approbation follow them in retirement."

"It is true, I am happy," repeated Lord Oldborough; "but to go on with what I began to say to you yesterday—I feel that some addition might be made to my happiness. The sense of having, to the best of my ability, done my duty, is satisfactory. I do not require applause—I disdain adulation—I have sustained my public life without sympathy—I could seldom meet with it—where I could, I have enjoyed it—and could now enjoy it—exquisitely—as you do, Mr. Percy—surrounded by a happy family. Domestic life requires domestic pleasures—objects for the affections."

Mr. Percy felt the truth of this, and could answer only by suggesting the idea of Mr. Temple, who was firmly and warmly attached to Lord Oldborough, and for whom his lordship had a strong regard.

“Mr. Temple, and my daughter Rosamond, whom your lordship honoured with so kind an invitation, propose, I know, paying their respects to you next week. Though I am her father, I may venture to say that Rosamond’s sprightliness is so mixed with solid information and good sense, that her society will become agreeable to your lordship.”

“I shall rejoice to see Mrs. Temple here. As the daughter of one friend, and the wife of another, she has a double claim to my regard. And (to say nothing of hereditary genius or dispositions—in which you do not believe, and I do), there can be no doubt that the society of a lady, educated as your daughter has been, must suit my taste. The danger is, that her society should become necessary to me. For Mr. Temple I already feel a degree of affection, which I must repress, rather than indulge.”

“Repress!—Why so, my lord? You esteem him—you believe in the sincerity of his attachment?”

“I do.”

“Then why with stoicism—pardon me, my dear lord—why repress affection?”

“Lest I should become dependent for my daily happiness on one, whose happiness is independent of mine—in some degree incompatible with mine. Even if his society were given to me, his heart must be at his home, and with his family. You see I am no proud stoic, but a man who dares to look at life—the decline of life, such as it is—as it must be. Different, Mr. Percy, in your situation—and in mine.”

The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of a carriage.

Lord Oldborough looked out of the window as it passed—then smiled, and observed how altered the times were, since Clermont-park used to be crowded with visitors and carriages—now the arrival of one is an event.

The servant announced a foreign name, a Neapolitan abbé, who had come over in the train of a new ambassador: he had just arrived in England, and had letters from the Cardinal . . ., his uncle, which he was desired to deliver into Lord Oldborough’s own hand. The abbé was, it appeared, personally a stranger to him, but there had been some ministerial

intercourse between his lordship and the cardinal. Lord Oldborough received these political letters with an air of composure and indifference which proved that he ceased to have an interest in the game.

“He supposed,” he said, “that the abbé had been apprized that he was no longer one of his majesty’s ministers—that he had resigned his official situation—had retired—and that he took no part whatever in public affairs.”

The abbé replied that he had been apprized that Lord Oldborough had retired from the public office; but his uncle, he added, with a significant smile, was aware that Lord Oldborough’s influence was as great still as it had ever been, and greater than that of any ostensible minister.

This Lord Oldborough disclaimed—coolly observing that his influence, whatever it might be, could not be known even to himself, as it was never exerted; and that, as he had determined nevermore to interfere in public business, he could not be of the least political service to the cardinal. The Duke of Greenwich was now the person to whom on such subjects all applications should be addressed.

The abbé, however, repeated, that his instructions from the cardinal were positive and peremptory, to deliver these letters into no hands but those of Lord Oldborough—that in consequence of this strict injunction he had come purposely to present them. He was instructed to request his lordship would not put the letters into the hands of any secretary, but would have the goodness to examine them himself, and give his counsel how to proceed, and to whom they should, in case of his lordship’s declining to interfere, be addressed.

“Mr. Percy!” said Lord Oldborough, recalling Mr. Percy, who had risen to quit the room, “you will not leave me—Whatever you may wish to say, M. l’abbé, may be said before this gentleman—my friend.”

His lordship then opened the packet, examined the letters—read and re-directed some to the Duke of Greenwich, others to the king: the abbé, all the time, descanting vehemently on Neapolitan politics—regretting Lord Oldborough’s resignation—adverting still to his lordship’s powerful influence—and pressing some point in negotiation, for which his uncle, the cardinal, was most anxious.

Among the letters, there was one which Lord Oldborough did not open: he laid it on the table with the direction downwards, leaned his elbow upon

it, and sat as if calmly listening to the abbé; but Mr. Percy, knowing his countenance, saw signs of extraordinary emotion, with difficulty repressed.

At length the gesticulating abbé finished, and waited his lordship's instructions.

They were given in few words. The letters re-directed to the king and the Duke of Greenwich were returned to him. He thanked his lordship with many Italian superlatives—declined his lordship's invitation to stay till the next day at Clermont-park—said he was pressed in point of time—that it was indispensably necessary for him to be in London, to deliver these papers, as soon as possible. His eye glanced on the unopened letter.

"Private, sir," said Lord Oldborough, in a stern voice, without moving his elbow from the paper: "whatever answer it may require, I shall have the honour to transmit to you—for the cardinal."

The abbé bowed low, left his address, and took leave. Lord Oldborough, after attending him to the door, and seeing him depart, returned, took out his watch, and said to Mr. Percy "Come to me, in my cabinet, in five minutes."

Seeing his sister on the walk approaching his house, he added, "Let none follow me."

When the five minutes were over, Mr. Percy went to Lord Oldborough's cabinet—knocked—no answer—knocked again—louder—all was silent—he entered—and saw Lord Oldborough seated, but in the attitude of one just going to rise; he looked more like a statue than a living person: there was a stiffness in his muscles, and over his face and hands a deathlike colour. His eyes were fixed, and directed towards the door—but they never moved when Mr. Percy entered, nor did Lord Oldborough stir at his approach. From one hand, which hung over the arm of his chair, his spectacles had dropped; his other hand grasped an open letter.

"My dear lord!" cried Mr. Percy.

He neither heard nor answered. Mr. Percy opened the window and let down the blind. Then attempting to raise the hand which hung down, he perceived it was fixed in all the rigidity of catalepsy. In hopes of recalling his senses or his power of motion, Mr. Percy determined to try to draw the letter from his grasp; the moment the letter was touched, Lord Oldborough started—his eyes darting fiercely upon him.

"Who dares? Who are you, sir?" cried he.

“Your friend, Percy—my lord.”

Lord Oldborough pointed to a chair—Mr. Percy sat down. His lordship recovered gradually from the species of trance into which he had fallen. The cataleptic rigidity of his figure relaxed—the colour of life returned—the body regained its functions—the soul resumed at once her powers. Without seeming sensible of any interruption or intermission of feeling or thought, Lord Oldborough went on speaking to Mr. Percy.

“The letter which I now hold in my hand is from that Italian lady of transcendent beauty, in whose company you once saw me when we first met at Naples. She was of high rank—high endowments. I loved her; how well—I need not—cannot say. We married secretly. I was induced—no matter how—to suspect her fidelity—pass over these circumstances—I cannot speak or think of them. We parted—I never saw her more. She retired to a convent, and died shortly after: nor did I, till I received this letter, written on her death-bed, know that she had given me a son. The proofs that I wronged her are irresistible. Would that they had been given to me when I could have repaired my injustice!—But her pride prevented their being sent till the hour of her death.”

On the first reading of her letter, Lord Oldborough had been so struck by the idea of the injustice he had done the mother, that he seemed scarcely to advert to the idea of his having a son. Absorbed in the past, he was at first insensible both to the present and the future. Early associations, long dormant, were suddenly wakened; he was carried back with irresistible force to the days of his youth, and something of likeness in air and voice to the Lord Oldborough he had formerly known appeared to Mr. Percy. As the tumult of passionate recollections subsided, as this enthusiastic reminiscence faded, and the memory of the past gave way to the sense of the present, Lord Oldborough resumed his habitual look and manner. His thoughts turned upon his son, that unknown being who belonged to him, who had claims upon him, who might form a great addition to the happiness or misery of his life. He took up the letter again, looked for the passage that related to his son, and read it anxiously to himself, then to Mr. Percy—observing, “that the directions were so vague, that it would be difficult to act upon them.”

“The boy was sent when three years old to England or Ireland, under the care of an Irish priest, who delivered him to a merchant, recommended by

the Hamburg banker, &c."

"I shall have difficulty in tracing this—great danger of being mistaken or deceived," said Lord Oldborough, pausing with a look of anxiety. "Would to God that I had means of knowing with certainty *where*, and above all, *what*, he is, or that I had never heard of his existence!"

"My lord, are there any more particulars?" inquired Mr. Percy, eagerly.

Lord Oldborough continued to read, "Four hundred pounds of your English money have been remitted to him annually, by means of these Hamburg bankers. To them we must apply in the first instance," said Lord Oldborough, "and I will write this moment."

"I think, my lord, I can save you the trouble," said Mr. Percy: "I know the man."

Lord Oldborough put down his pen, and looked at Mr. Percy with astonishment.

"Yes, my lord, however extraordinary it may appear, I repeat it—I believe I know your son; and if he be the man I imagine him to be, I congratulate you—you have reason to rejoice."

"The facts, my dear sir," cried Lord Oldborough: "do not raise my hopes."

Mr. Percy repeated all that he had heard from Godfrey of Mr. Henry—related every circumstance from the first commencement of them—the impertinence and insult to which the mystery that hung over his birth had subjected him in the regiment—the quarrels in the regiment—the goodness of Major Gascoigne—the gratitude of Mr. Henry—the attachment between him and Godfrey—his selling out of the regiment after Godfrey's ineffectual journey to London—his wishing to go into a mercantile house—the letter which Godfrey then wrote, begging his father to recommend Mr. Henry to Mr. Gresham, disclosing to Mr. Percy, with Mr. Henry's permission, all that he knew of his birth.

"I have that letter at home," said Mr. Percy: "your lordship shall see it. I perfectly recollect the circumstances of Mr. Henry's having been brought up in Ireland by a Dublin merchant, and having received constantly a remittance in quarterly payments of four hundred pounds a year, from a banker in Cork."

“Did he inquire why, or from whom?” said Lord Oldborough; “and does he know his mother?”

“Certainly not: the answer to his first inquiries prevented all further questions. He was told by the bankers that they had directions to stop payment of the remittance if any questions were asked.”

Lord Oldborough listened with profound attention as Mr. Percy went on with the history of Mr. Henry, relating all the circumstances of his honourable conduct with respect to Miss Panton—his disinterestedness, decision, and energy of affection.

Lord Oldborough’s emotion increased—he seemed to recognize some traits of his own character.

“I *hope* this youth is my son,” said his lordship, in a low suppressed voice.

“He deserves to be yours, my lord,” said Mr. Percy.

“To have a son might be the greatest of evils—to have *such* a son must be the greatest of blessings,” said his lordship. He was lost in thought for a moment, then exclaimed, “I must see the letter—I must see the man.”

“My lord, he is at my house.”

Lord Oldborough started from his seat—“Let me see him instantly.”

“To-morrow, my lord,” said Mr. Percy, in a calm tone, for it was necessary to calm his impetuosity—“to-morrow. Mr. Henry could not be brought here to-night without alarming him, or without betraying to him the cause of our anxiety.”

“To-morrow, let it be—you are right, my dear friend. Let me see him without his suspecting that I am any thing to him, or he to me—you will let me have the letter to-night.”

“Certainly, my lord.”

Mr. Percy sympathized with his impatience, and gratified it with all the celerity of a friend: the letter was sent that night to Lord Oldborough. In questioning his sons more particularly concerning Mr. Henry, Mr. Percy learnt from Erasmus a fresh and strong corroborating circumstance. Dr. Percy had been lately attending Mr. Gresham’s porter, O’Brien, the Irishman; who had been so ill, that, imagining himself dying, he had sent for a priest. Mr. Henry was standing by the poor fellow’s bedside when the

priest arrived, who was so much struck by the sight of him, that for some time his attention could scarcely be fixed on the sick man. The priest, after he had performed his official duties, returned to Mr. Henry, begged pardon for having looked at him with so much earnestness, but said that Mr. Henry strongly reminded him of the features of an Italian lady who had committed a child to his care many years ago. This led to farther explanation, and upon comparing dates and circumstances, Mr. Henry was convinced that this was the very priest who had carried him over to Ireland—the priest recognized him to be the child of whom he had taken charge; but farther, all was darkness. The priest knew nothing more—not even the name of the lady from whom he had received the child. He knew only that he had been handsomely rewarded by the Dublin merchant, to whom he had delivered the boy—and he had heard that this merchant had since become bankrupt, and had fled to America. This promise of a discovery, and sudden stop to his hopes, had only mortified poor Mr. Henry, and had irritated that curiosity which he had endeavoured to lull to repose.

Mr. Percy was careful, both for Mr. Henry's sake and for Lord Oldborough's, not to excite hopes which might not ultimately be accomplished. He took precautions to prevent him from suspecting any thing extraordinary in the intended introduction to Lord Oldborough.

There had been some dispute between the present minister and some London merchant, about the terms of a loan which had been made by Lord Oldborough—Mr. Gresham's house had some concern in this transaction; and it was now settled between Mr. Percy and Lord Oldborough, that his lordship should write to desire to see Mr. Henry, who, as Mr. Gresham's partner, could give every necessary information. Mr. Henry accordingly was summoned to Clermont-park, and accompanied Mr. Percy, with his mind intent upon this business.

Mr. Henry, in common with all who were capable of estimating a great public character, had conceived high admiration for Lord Oldborough; he had seen him only in public, and at a distance—and it was not without awe that he now thought of being introduced to him, and of hearing and speaking to him in private.

Lord Oldborough, meanwhile, who had been satisfied by the perusal of the letter, and by Mr. Percy's information, waited for his arrival with extreme impatience. He was walking up and down his room, and looking

frequently at his watch, which he believed more than once to have stopped. At length the door opened.

"Mr. Percy, and Mr. Henry, my lord."

Lord Oldborough's eye darted upon Henry. Struck instantly with the resemblance to the mother, Lord Oldborough rushed forward, and clasping him in his arms, exclaimed, "My son!"

Tenderness, excessive tenderness, was in his look, voice, soul, as if he wished to repair in a moment the injustice of years.

"Yes," said Lord Oldborough, "*now* I am happy—*now*, I also, Mr. Percy, may be proud of a son—I too shall know the pleasures of domestic life. Now I am happy!" repeated he,

"And, pleased, resigned
To tender passions all his mighty mind."

March 26th, 1813.

END OF PATRONAGE.

COMIC DRAMAS.

LOVE AND LAW

A DRAMA.

IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

MR. CARVER, of Bob's Fort . . *A Justice of the Peace in Ireland.*
OLD MATTHEW McBRIDE . . . . *A rich Farmer.*
PHILIP McBRIDE . . . . . *His Son.*
RANDAL ROONEY . . . . . *Son of the Widow Catherine Rooney —a Lover of Honor McBride.*
MR. GERALD O'BLANEY . . . . *A Distiller.*
PATRICK COXE . . . . . *Clerk to Gerald O'Blaney.*

WOMEN.

MRS. CARVER . . . . . *Wife of Mr. Carver.*
MISS BLOOMSBURY . . . . . *A fine London Waiting-maid of Mrs. Carver's.*
MRS. CATHERINE ROONEY,
commonly called
CATTY ROONEY . . . . *A Widow—Mother of Randal Rooney.*
HONOR McBRIDE . . . . . *Daughter of Matthew McBride, and Sister of Philip McBride.*

A Justice's Clerk—a Constable—Witnesses—and two Footmen.

LOVE AND LAW

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Cottage.—A Table—Breakfast.

HONOR McBRIDE, alone.

Honor. Phil!—(*calls*)—Phil, dear! come out.

Phil.—(*answers from within*) Wait till I draw on my boots!

Honor. Oh, I may give it up: he's full of his new boots—and singing, see!

Enter PHIL McBRIDE, dressed in the height of the Irish buck-farmer fashion, singing,

"Oh the boy of Ball'navogue!
Oh the dasher! oh the rogue!
He's the thing! and he's the pride
Of town and country, Phil McBride—
All the talk of shoe and brogue!
Oh the boy of Ball'navogue!"

There's a song to the praise and glory of your—of your brother, Honor! And who made it, do you think, girl?

Honor. Miss Caroline Flaherty, no doubt. But, dear Phil, I've a favour to ask of you.

Phil. And welcome! What? But first, see! isn't there an elegant pair of boots, that fits a leg like wax?—There's what'll plase Car'line Flaherty, I'll engage. But what ails you, Honor?—you look as if your own heart was like to break. Are not you for the fair to-day?—and why not?

Honor. Oh! rasons. (*Aside*) Now I can't speak.

Phil. Speak on, for I'm dumb and all ear—speak up, dear—no fear of the father's coming out, for he's leaving his *bird* (i.e. beard) in the bason, and that's a work of time with him.—Tell all to your own Phil.

Honor. Why then I won't go to the fair—because—better keep myself to myself, out of the way of meeting them that mightn't be too plasing to my father.

Phil. And might be too plasing to somebody else—Honor McBride.

Honor. Oh, Phil, dear! But only promise me, brother, dearest, if you would this day meet any of the Rooneys—

Phil. That means Randal Rooney.

Honor. No, it was his mother Catty was in my head.

Phil. A bitterer scould never was!—nor a bigger lawyer in petticoats, which is an abomination.

Honor. 'Tis not pritty, I grant; but her heart's good, if her temper would give it fair play. But will you promise me, Phil, whatever she says—you won't let her provoke you this day.

Phil. How in the name of wonder will I hinder her to give me provocation? and when the spirit of the McBrides is up—

Honor. But don't lift a hand.

Phil. Against a woman?—no fear—not a finger against a woman.

Honor. But I say not against any Rooney, man or woman. Oh, Phil! dear, don't let there be any fighting betwixt the McBride and Rooney factions.

Phil. And how could I hinder if I would? The boys will be having a row, especially when they get the spirits—and all the better.

Honor. To be drinking! Oh! Phil, the mischief that drinking does!

Phil. Mischief! Quite and clane the contrary—when the shillelah's up, the pike's down. 'Tis when there'd be no fights at fairs, and all sober, then there's rason to dread mischief. No man, Honor, dare be letting the whiskey into his head, was there any mischief in his heart.

Honor. Well, Phil, you've made it out now cliverly. So there's most danger of mischief when men's sober—is that it?

Phil. Irishmen?—ay; for sobriety is not the nat'ral state of the *craturs*; and what's not nat'ral is hypocritical, and a hypocrite is, and was, and ever will be my contempt.

Honor. And mine too. But—

Phil. But here's my hand for you, Honor. They call me a beau and a buck, a slasher and dasher, and flourishing Phil. All that I am, may be; but there's one thing I am not, and will never be—and that's a bad brother to you. So you have my honour, and here's my oath to the back of it. By all the pride of man and all the consate of woman—where will you find a bigger oath?—happen what will, this day, I'll not lift my hand against Randal Rooney!

Honor. Oh, thanks! warm from the heart. But here's my father—and where's breakfast?

Phil. Oh! I must be at him for a horse: you, Honor, mind and back me.

Enter Old McBRIDE.

Old McB. Late I am this fair day all along with my beard, that was thicker than a hedgehog's. Breakfast, where?

Honor. Here, father dear—all ready.

Old McB. There's a jewel! always supple o' foot. Phil, call to them to bring out the horse bastes, while I swallow my breakfast—and a good one, too.

Phil. Your horse is all ready standing, sir. But that's what I wanted to ax you, father—will you be kind enough, sir, to shell out for me the price of a *daacent* horse, fit to mount a man like me?

Old McB. What ails the baste you have under you always?

Phil. Fit only for the hounds:—not to follow, but to feed 'em.

Old McB. Hounds! I don't want you, Phil, to be following the hounds at-all-at-all.

Honor. But let alone the hounds. If you sell your bullocks well in the fair to-day, father dear, I think you'll be so kind to spare Phil the price of a horse.

Old McB. Stand out o' my way, Honor, with that wheedling voice o' your own—I won't. Mind your own affairs—you're leaguing again me, and I'll engage Randal Rooney's at the bottom of all—and the cement that sticks you and Phil so close together. But mind, Madam Honor, if you give him the meeting at the fair the day—

Honor. Dear father, I'm not going—I give up the fair o' purpose, for fear I'd see him.

Old McB. (*kissing her*) Why then you're a piece of an angel!

Honor. And you'll give my brother the horse?

Old McB. I won't! when I've said I won't—I wont.

{*Buttons his coat, and exit.*

Phil. Now there's a sample of a father for ye!

Old McB. (*returning*) And, Mistress Honor, may be you'd be staying at home to—Where's Randal Rooney to be, pray, while I'd be from home?

Honor. Oh! father, would you suspect—

Old McB. (*catching her in his arms, and kissing her again and again*) Then you're a true angel, every inch of you. But not a word more in favour of the horse—sure the money for the bullocks shall go to your portion, every farthing.

Honor. There's the thing! (*Holding her father*) I don't wish that.

Phil. (*stopping her mouth*) Say no more, Honor—I'm best pleased so.

Old McB. (*aside*) I'll give him the horse, but he sha'n't know it. (*Aloud*) I won't. When I say I won't, did I ever?

{*Exit Old McBRIDE.*

Phil. Never since the world *stud*—to do you justice, you are as obstinate as a mule. Not all the bullocks he's carrying to the fair the day, nor all the bullocks in Ballynavogue joined to 'em, in one team, would draw that father o' mine one inch out of his way.

Honor. (*aside, with a deep sigh*) Oh, then what will I do about Randal ever!

Phil. As close a fisted father as ever had the grip of a guinea! If the guineas was all for you—wilcome, Honor! But that's not it. Pity of a lad o' spirit like me to be cramped by such a hunx of a father.

Honor. Oh! don't be calling him names, Phil: stiff he is, more than close—and any way, Phil dear, he's the father still—and ould, consider.

Phil. He is,—and I'm fond enough of him, too, would he only give me the price of a horse. But no matter—spite of him I'll have my swing the day, and it's I that will tear away with a good horse under me and a good whip over him in a capital style, up and down the street of Ballynavogue, for you, Miss Car'line Flaherty! I know who I'll go to, this minute—a man I'll engage will lend me the loan of his bay gelding; and that's Counshillor Gerald O'Blaney. {*Going, HONOR stops him.*

Honor. Gerald O'Blaney! Oh, brother!—Mercy!—Don't! any thing rather than that—

Phil. (*impatiently*) Why, then, Honor?

Honor. (*aside*) If I'd tell him, there'd be mischief. (*Aloud.*) Only—I wouldn't wish you under a compliment to one I've no opinion of.

Phil. Phoo! you've taken a prejudice. What is there again Counshillor O'Blaney?

Honor. Counshillor! First place, why do you call him *counshillor*? he never was a raal counshillor sure—nor jantleman at all.

Phil. Oh! counshillor by courtesy—he was an attorney once—just as we *doctor* the apotecary.

Honor. But, Phil, was not there something of this man's being dismissed the courts for too sharp practice?

Phil. But that was long ago, if it ever was. There's sacrets in all families to be forgotten—bad to be raking the past. I never knew you so sharp on a neighbour, Honor, before:—what ails ye?

Honor. (*sighing*) I can't tell ye. {*Still holding him.*

Phil. Let me go, then!—Nonsense!—the boys of Ballynavogue will be wondering, and Miss Car'line most.

{*Exit, singing,*

"Oh the boys of Ball'navogue."

HONOR, alone.

Honor. Oh, Phil! I *could* not tell it you; but did you but know how *that* Gerald O'Blaney insulted your shister with his vile proposhals, you'd no more ask the loan of his horse!—and I in dread, whenever I'd be left in the house alone, that that bad man would boult in upon me—and Randal to find him! and Randal's like gunpowder when his heart's touched!—and if Randal should come *by himself*, worse again! Honor, where would be your resolution to forbid him your presence? Then there's but one way to be right—I'll lave home entirely. Down, proud stomach! You must go to service, Honor McBride. There's Mrs. Carver, kind-hearted lady, is wanting a girl—

she’s English, and nice; may be I’d not be good enough; but I can but try, and do my best; any thing to plase the father.

{*Exit HONOR.*

SCENE II.

O'BLANEY'S Counting-house.

GERALD O'BLANEY alone at a desk covered with Papers.

O'Bla. Of all the employments in life, this eternal balancing of accounts, see-saw, is the most sickening of all things, except it would be the taking the inventory of your stock, when you're reduced to *invent* the stock itself; —then that's the most lowering to a man of all things! But there's one comfort in this distillery business—come what will, a man has always *proof spirits*.

Enter PAT COXE.

Pat. The whole tribe of Connaught men come, craving to be *ped* for the oats, counsellor, due since last Serapht{1} fair.

{Footnote 1: Shrovetide.}

O'Bla. Can't be ped to-day, let 'em crave never so.—Tell 'em *Monday*; and give 'em a glass of whiskey round, and that will send 'em off contint, in a jerry.

Pat. I shall—I will—I see, sir. {*Exit PAT COXE.*

O'Bla. Asy settled that!—but I hope many more duns for oats won't be calling on me this day, for cash is not to be had:—here's bills plenty—long bills, and short bills—but even the kites, which I can fly as well as any man, won't raise the wind for me now.

Re-enter PAT.

Pat. Tim McGudikren, sir, for his debt—and talks of the sub-sheriff, and can't wait.

O'Bla. I don't ax him to wait; but he must take in payment, since he's in such a hurry, this bill at thirty-one days, tell him.

Pat. I shall tell him so, plase your honour. {*Exit PAT.*

O'Bla. They have all rendezvous'd to drive me mad this day; but the only thing is to keep the head cool. What I'm dreading beyant all is, if that ould Matthew McBride, who is as restless as a ferret when he has lodged money

with any one, should come this day to take out of my hands the two hundred pounds I've got of his—Oh, then I might shut up! But stay, I'll match him—and I'll match myself too: that daughter Honor of his is a mighty pretty girl to look at, and since I can't get her any other way, why not ax her in marriage? Her portion is to be—

Re-enter PAT.

Pat. The protested note, sir—with the charge of the protest to the back of it, from Mrs. Lorigan; and her compliments, and to know what will she do?

O'Bla. What will *I* do, fitter to ax. My kind compliments to Mrs. Lorigan, and I'll call upon her in the course of the day, to settle it all.

Pat. I understand, sir. {*Exit PAT.*

O'Bla. Honor McBride's portion will be five hundred pounds on the nail —that would be no bad hit, and she a good, clever, likely girl. I'll pop the question this day.

Re-enter PAT.

Pat. Corkeran the cooper's bill, as long as my arm.

O'Bla. Oh! don't be bothering me any more. Have you no sinse? Can't you get shut of Corkeran the cooper without me? Can't ye quarrel with the items? Tear the bill down the middle, if necessary, and sind him away with a flay (flea) in his ear, to make out a proper bill—which I can't see till to-morrow, mind. I never pay any man on fair-day.

Pat. (*aside*) Nor on any other day. (*Aloud*) Corkeran's my cousin, counsellor, and if convanient, I'd be glad you'd advance him a pound or two on account.

O'Bla. 'Tis not convanient was he twenty times your cousin, Pat. I can't be paying in bits, nor on account—all or none.

Pat. None, then, I may tell him, sir?

O'Bla. You may—you must; and don't come up for any of 'em any more. It's hard if I can't have a minute to talk to myself.

Pat. And it's hard if I can't have a minute to eat my breakfast, too, which I have not. {*Exit PAT.*

O'Bla. Where was I?—I was popping the question to Honor McBride. The only thing is, whether the girl herself wouldn't have an objection:—there's that Randal Rooney is a great *bachelor* of hers, and I doubt she'd be

apt to prefar him before me, even when I'd purpose marriage. But the families of the Rooneys and McBrides is at vareance—then I must keep 'em so. I'll keep Catty Rooney's spirit up, niver to consent to that match. Oh! if them Rooneys and McBrides were by any chance to make it up, I'd be undone: but against that catastrophe I've a preventative. Pat Coxe! Pat Coxe! where are you, my young man?

Enter PAT, wiping his mouth.

Pat. Just swallowing my breakfast.

O'Bla. Mighty long swallowing you are. Here—don't be two minutes, till you're at Catty Rooney's, and let me see how cliverly you'll execute that confidential embassy I trusted you with. Touch Catty up about her ould ancient family, and all the Kings of Ireland she comes from. *Blarney* her cliverly, and work her to a foam against the McBrides.

Pat. Never fear, your honour. I'll tell her the story we agreed on, of Honor McBride meeting of Randal Rooney behind the chapel.

O'Bla. That will do—don't forget the ring; for I mane to put another on the girl's finger, if she's agreeable, and knows her own interest. But that last's a private article. Not a word of that to Catty, you understand.

Pat. Oh! I understand—and I'll engage I'll compass Catty, tho' she's a cunning shaver.

O'Bla. Cunning?—No; she's only hot tempered, and asy managed.

Pat. Whatever she is, I'll do my best to plase you. And I expict your honour, counsellor, won't forget the promise you made me, to ask Mr. Carver for that little place—that situation that would just shute me.

O'Bla. Never fear, never fear. Time enough to think of shuting you, when you've done my business. {*Exit PAT.* That will work like harm, and ould Matthew, the father, I'll speak to, myself, genteelly. He will be proud, I warrant, to match his daughter with a gentleman like me. But what if he should smell a rat, and want to be looking into my affairs? Oh! I must get it sartified properly to him before all things, that I'm as safe as the bank; and I know who shall do that for me—my worthy friend, that most consequential magistrate, Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort, who loves to be advising and managing of all men, women, and children, for their good. 'Tis he shall advise ould Matthew for *my* good. Now Carver thinks he lades the whole county, and ten mile round—but who is it lades him, I want to know? Why,

Gerald O'Blaney.—And how? Why, by a spoonful of the universal panacea, *flattery*—in the vulgar tongue, *flummery*. (*A knock at the door heard.*) Who's rapping at the street?—Carver of Bob's Fort himself, in all his glory this fair-day. See then how he struts and swells. Did ever man, but a pacock, look so fond of himself with less rason? But I must be caught deep in accounts, and a balance of thousands to credit. (*Sits down to his desk, to account books.*) Seven thousand, three hundred, and two pence. (*Starting and rising.*) Do I see Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort?—Oh! the honour—

Mr. Carv. Don't stir, pray—I beg—I request—I insist. I am by no means ceremonious, sir.

O'Bla. (*bustling and setting two chairs*) No, but I'd wish to show respect proper to him I consider the first man in the county.

Mr. Carv. (*aside*) Man! gentleman, he might have said.

{*Mr. CARVER sits down and rests himself consequentially.*

O'Bla. Now, Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort, you've been over fartiguing yourself—

Mr. Carv. For the public good. I can't help it, really.

O'Bla. Oh! but, upon my word and honour, it's too much: there's rason in all things. A man of Mr. Carver's fortin to be slaving! If you were a man in business, like me, it would be another thing. I must slave at the desk to keep all round. See, Mr. Carver, see!—ever since the day you advised me to be as particular as yourself in keeping accounts to a farthing, I do, to a fraction, even like state accounts, see!

Mr. Carv. And I trust you find your advantage in it, sir. Pray, how does the distillery business go on?

O'Bla. Swimmingly! ever since that time, Mr. Carver, your interest at the castle helped me at the dead lift, and got that fine took off. 'Tis to your purtiction, encouragement, and advice entirely, I owe my present unexampled prosperity, which you prophesied; and Mr. Carver's prophecies seldom, I may say never, fail to be accomplished.

Mr. Carv. I own there is some truth in your observation. I confess I have seldom been mistaken or deceived in my judgment of man, woman, or child.

O'Bla. Who can say so much?

Mr. Carv. For what reason, I don't pretend to say; but the fact ostensibly is, that the few persons I direct with my advice are unquestionably apt to prosper in this world.

O'Bla. Mighty apt! for which rason I would wish to trouble you for your unprecedently good advice on another pint, if it, would not be too great a liberty.

Mr. Carv. No liberty at all, my good Gerald—I am always ready to advise —only to-day—certainly, the fair day of Ballynavogue, there are so many calls upon me, both in a public and private capacity, so much business of vital importance!

O'Bla. (*aside*) Vital importance!—that is his word on all occasions. (*Aloud*) May be then, (oh! where was my head?) may be you would not have breakfasted all this time? and we've the kittle down always in this house, (*rising*) Pat!—Jack!—Mick!—Jenny! put the kittle down.

Mr. Carv. Sit down, sit still, my worthy fellow. Breakfasted at Bob's Fort, as I always do.

O'Bla. But a bit of cake—a glass of wine, to refrish and replinish nature.

Mr. Carv. Too early—spoil my dinner. But what was I going to say?

O'Bla. (*aside*) Burn me, if I know; and I pray all the saints you may never recollect.

Mr. Carv. I recollect. How many times do you think I was stopped on horseback coming up the street of Ballynavogue?—Five times by weights and measures imperiously calling for reformation, sir. Thirteen times, upon my veracity, by booths, apple-stalls, nuisances, vagabonds, and drunken women. Pigs without end, sir—wanting ringing, and all squealing in my ears, while I was settling sixteen disputes about tolls and customs. Add to this, my regular battle every fair-day with the crane, which ought to be any where but where it is; and my perputual discoveries of fraudulent kegs, and stones in the butter! Now, sir, I only ask, can you wonder that I wipe my forehead? (*wiping his forehead*).

O'Bla. In troth, Mr. Carver, I cannot! But these are the pains and penalties of being such a man of consequence as you evidently are;—and I that am now going to add to your troubles too by consulting you about my little pint!

Mr. Carv. A point of law, I dare to say; for people somehow or other have got such a prodigious opinion of my law. (*Takes snuff.*)

O'Bla. (*aside*) No coming to the pint till he has finished his own panygeric.

Mr. Carv. And I own I cannot absolutely turn my back on people. Yet as to *poor* people, I always settle them by telling them, it is my principle that law is too expensive for the poor: I tell them, the poor have nothing to do with the laws.

O'Bla. Except the penal.

Mr. Carv. True, the civil is for us, men of property; and no man should think of going to law, without he's qualified. There should be licenses.

O'Bla. No doubt. Pinalties there are in plinty; still those who can afford should indulge. In Ireland it would as ill become a gentleman to be any way shy of a law-shute, as of a duel.

Mr. Carv. Yet law is expensive, sir, even to me.

O'Bla. But 'tis the best economy in the end; for when once you have cast or non-shuted your man in the courts, 'tis as good as winged him in the field. And suppose you don't get sixpence costs, and lose your cool hundred by it, still it's a great advantage; for you are let alone to enjoy your own in pace and quiet ever after, which you could not do in this county without it. But the love of the law has carried me away from my business: the pint I wanted to consult you about is not a pint of law; 'tis another matter.

Mr. Carv. (*looking at his watch*) I must be at Bob's Fort, to seal my despatches for the castle. And there's another thing I say of myself.

O'Bla. (*aside*) Remorseless agotist!

Mr. Carv. I don't know how the people all have got such an idea of my connexions at the castle, and my influence with his Excellency, that I am worried with eternal applications: they expect I can make them all gaugers or attorney-generals, I believe. How do they know I write to the castle?

O'Bla. Oh! the post-office tells asy by the big sales (seals) to your despatches—(*aside*)—which, I'll engage, is all the castle ever, rades of them, though Carver has his Excellency always in his mouth, God help him!

Mr. Carv. Well, you wanted to consult me, Gerald?

O'Bla. And you'll give me your advice, which will be conclusive, law, and every thing to me. You know the McBrides—would they be safe?

Mr. Carv. Very safe, substantial people.

O'Bla. Then here's the thing, Mr. Carver: as you recommend them, and as they are friends of yours—I will confess to you that, though it might not in pint of interest be a very prudent match, I am thinking that Honor McBride is such a prudent girl, and Mrs. Carver has taken her by the hand, so I'd wish to follow Mrs. Carver's example for life, in taking Honor by the hand for better for worse.

Mr. Carv. In my humble opinion you cannot do better; and I can tell you a secret—Honor will have no contemptible fortune in that rank of life.

O'Bla. Oh, fortune's always contemptible in marriage.

Mr. Carv. Fortune! sir?

O'Bla. (*aside*) Overshot. (*Aloud*) In comparison with the patronage and protection or countenance she'd have from you and your family, sir.

Mr. Carv. That you may depend upon, my good Gerald, as far as we can go; but you know we are nothing.

O'Bla. Oh, I know you're every thing—every thing on earth—particularly with ould McBride; and you know how to speak so well and iloquent, and I'm so tongue-tied and bashful on such an occasion.

Mr. Carv. Well, well, I'll speak for you.

O'Bla. A thousand thanks down to the ground.

Mr. Carv. (*patting him on the back as he rises*) My *poor* Gerald.

O'Bla. Then I am *poor* Gerald in point of wit, I know; but you are too good a friend to be calling me *poor* to ould McBride—you can say what I can't say.

Mr. Carv. Certainly, certainly; and you may depend on me. I shall speak my decided opinion; and I fancy McBride has sense enough to be ruled by me.

O'Bla. I am sure he has—only there's a Randal Rooney, a wild young man, in the case. I'd be sorry the girl was thrown I away upon Randal.

Mr. Carv. She has too much sense: the father will settle that, and I'll settle the father. {*Mr. CARVER going.*

O'Bla. (*following, aside*) And who has settled you?

Mr. Carv. Don’t stir—don’t stir—men of business must be nailed to a spot—and I’m not ceremonious. {*Exit Mr. CARVER.*

O’Bla. Pinned him by all that’s cliver! {*Exit O’BLANEY.*

SCENE III.

Mrs. CARVER'S Dressing-room.

Mrs. CARVER sitting at work.—BLOOMSBURY standing.

Bloom. Certainly, ma'am, what I always said was, that for the commonalty, there's no getting out of an Irish cabin a girl fit to be about a lady such as you, Mrs. Carver, in the shape of a waiting-maid or waiting-maid's assistant, on account they smell so of smoke, which is very distressing; but this Honor McBride seems a bettermost sort of girl, ma'am; if you can make up your mind to her *vice*.

Mrs. Carv. Vice?

Bloom. That is, vicious pronounciations in regard to their Irish brogues.

Mrs. Carv. Is that all?—I am quite accustomed to *the accent*.

Bloom. Then, ma'am, I declare now, I've been forced to stuff my *hears* with cotton wool hever since I comed to Ireland. But this here Honor McBride has a mighty pretty *vice*, if you don't take exceptions to a little nationality; nor she if not so smoke-dried: she's really a nice, tidy-looking like girl considering. I've taken tea with the family often, and they live quite snug for Hirish. I'll assure you, ma'am, quite bettermost people for Hibernians, as you always said, ma'am.

Mrs. Carv. I have a regard for old Matthew, though he is something of a miser, I fear.

Bloom. So, ma'am, shall I call the girl up, that we may see and talk to her? I think, ma'am, you'll find she will do; and I reckon to keep her under my own eye and advice from morning till night: for when I seed the girl so willing to larn, I quite took a fancy to her, I own—as it were.

Mrs. Carv. Well, Bloomsbury, let me see this Honor McBride.

Bloom. (*calling*) One of you there! please call up Honor McBride.

Mrs. Carv. She has been waiting a great while, I fear; I don't like to keep people waiting.

Bloom. (*watching for HONOR as she speaks*) Dear heart, ma'am, in this here country, people does love waiting for waiting's sake, that's sure—they

got nothing else to do. Here, Honor—walk in, Honor,—rub your shoes always.

Enter HONOR, timidly.

Mrs. Carv. (*in an encouraging voice*) Come in, my good girl.

Bloom. Oh! child, the door: the peoples never shut a door in, Ireland! Did not I warn you?—says I, "Come when you're called—do as you're bid—shut the door after you, and you'll never be chid." Now what did I tell you, child?

Honor. To shut the door after me when I'd come into a room.

Bloom. When I'd come—now that's not dic'snary English.

Mrs. Carv. Good Bloomsbury, let that pass for the present—come a little nearer to me, my good girl.

Honor. Yes, ma'am.

Bloom. Take care of that china pyramint with your cloak—walk on to Mrs. Carver—no need to be afraid—I'll stand your friend.

Mrs. Carv. I should have thought, Honor McBride, you were in too comfortable a way at home, to think of going into service.

Honor. (*sighs*) No better father, nor brother, *nor* (than) I have, ma'am, I thank your ladyship; but some things come across.

Mrs. Carv. (*aside*) Oh! it is a blushing case, I see: I must talk to her alone, by-and-by. (*Aloud*) I don't mean, my good girl, to pry into your family affairs.

Honor. Oh! ma'am, you're too good. (*Aside*) The kind-hearted Lady, how I love her already! (*She wipes the tears from her eyes.*)

Bloom. Take care of the bow-pot at your elbow, child; for if you break the necks of them moss roses—

Honor. I ax their pardon.

Mrs. Carv. Better take the flower-pot out of her way, Bloomsbury.

Bloom. (*moving the flower-pot*) There, now: but, Honor, keep your eyes on my lady, never turn your head, and keep your hands always afore you, as I show you. Ma'am, she'll larn manners in time—Lon'on was not built in a day. It i'n't to be expected of she!

Mrs. Carv. It is not to be expected indeed that she should learn every thing at once; so one thing at a time, good Bloomsbury, and one person at a time. Leave Honor to me for the present.

Bloom. Certainly, ma'am; I beg pardon—I was only saying—

Mrs. Carv. Since it is, it seems, necessary, my good girl, that you should leave home, I am glad that you are not too proud to go into service.

Honor. Oh! into *your* service, ma'am,—I'd be too proud if you'd be kind enough to accept me.

Mrs. Carv. Then as to wages, what do you expect?

Honor. Any thing at all you please, ma'am.

Bloom. (*pressing down her shoulder*) And where's your curtsy? We shall bring these Irish knees into training by and by, I hopes.

Honor. I'm awk'ard and strange, ma'am—I never was from home afore.

Mrs. Carv. Poor girl—we shall agree very well, I hope.

Honor. Oh yes, any thing at all, ma'am; I'm not greedy—nor needy, thanks above! but it's what I'd wish to be under your protection if it was plasing, and I'll do my very best, madam. (*Curtsies.*)

Mrs. Carv. Nobody can expect more, and I hope and trust you'll find mine an easy place—Bloomsbury, you will tell her, what will be required of her. (*Mrs. Carver looks at her watch.*) At twelve o'clock I shall be returned from my walk, and then, Honor, you will come into my cabinet here; I want to say a few words to you. {*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE IV.

The High Road—A Cottage in view—Turf-stack, Hay-rick, &c.

Catty Rooney alone, walking backwards and forwards.

Catty. 'Tis but a stone's throw to Ballynavogue. But I don't like to be going into the fair on foot, when I been always used to go in upon my pillion behind my husband when living, and my son Randal, after his death. Wait, who comes here?—'Tis Gerald O'Blaney's, the distiller's, young man, Pat Coxe: now we'll larn all—and whether O'Blaney can lend me the loan of a horse or no. A good morrow to you, kindly, Mr. Pat Coxe.

Enter PAT COXE.

Pat. And you the same, Mrs. Rooney, tinfold. Mr. O'Blaney has his *sarvices* to you, ma'am: no, not his *sarvices*, but his compliments, that was the word—his kind compliments, that was the very word.

Catty. The counshillor's always very kind to me, and genteel.

Pat. And was up till past two in the morning, last night, madam, he bid me say, looking over them papers you left with him for your shuit, ma'am, with the McBrides, about the bit of Ballynascraw bog; and if you call upon the counshillor in the course of the morning, he'll find, or make, a minute, for a consultation, he says. But mane time, to take no step to compromise, or make it up, *for your life*, ma'am.

Catty. No fear, I'll not give up at law, or any way, to a McBride, while I've a drop of blood in my veins—and it's good thick Irish blood runs in these veins.

Pat. No doubt, ma'am—from the kings of Ireland, as all the world knows, Mrs. Rooney.

Catty. And the McBrides have no blood at-all-at-all.

Pat. Not a drop, ma'am—so they can't stand before you.

Catty. They *ought* not, any way!—What are they? Cromwellians at the best. Mac Brides! Scotch!—not Irish native, at-all-at-all. People of yesterday, graziers—which tho' they've made the money, can't buy the blood. My anshestors sat on a throne, when the McBrides had only their

hunkers{1} to sit upon; and if I walk now when they ride, they can't look down upon me—for every body knows who I am—and what they are.

{Footnote 1: Their *hunkers*, i.e. their hams.}

Pat. To be sure, ma'am, they do—the whole country talks of nothing else, but the shame when you'd be walking and they riding.

Catty. Then could the counshillor lend me the horse?

Pat. With all the pleasure in life, ma'am, only every horse he has in the world is out o' messages, and drawing turf and one thing or another to-day—and he is very sorry, ma'am.

Catty. So am I, then—I'm unlucky the day. But I won't be saying so, for fear of spreading ill luck on my faction. Pray now what kind of a fair is it?—Would there be any good signs of a fight, Mr. Pat Coxe?

Pat. None in life as yet, ma'am—only just buying and selling. The horse-bastes, and horned-cattle, and pigs squeaking, has it all to themselves. But it's early times yet—it won't be long so.

Catty. No McBrides, no Ballynavogue boys gathering yet?

Pat. None to signify of the McBrides, ma'am, at all.

Catty. Then it's plain them McBrides dare not be showing their faces, or even their backs, in Ballynavogue. But sure all our Ballynascraw boys, the Roonies, are in it as usual, I hope?

Pat. Oh, ma'am, there is plinty of Roonies. I marked Big Briny of Cloon, and Ulick of Eliogarty, and little Charley of Killaspugbrone.

Catty. All *good* men{1}—no better. Praise be where due.

{Footnote 1: men who fight well.}

Pat. And scarce a McBride I noticed. But the father and son—ould Matthew, and flourishing Phil, was in it, with a new pair of boots and the silver-hilted whip.

Catty. The spalpeen! turned into a buckeen, that would be a squireen,—but can't.

Pat. No, for the father pinches him.

Catty. That's well—and that ould Matthew is as obstinate a neger as ever famished his stomach. What's he doing in Ballynavogue the day?

Pat. Standing he is there, in the fair-green with his score of fat bullocks, that he has got to sell.

Catty. Fat bullocks! Them, I reckon, will go towards Honor McBride's portion, and a great fortin she'll be for a poor man—but I covet none of it for me or mine.

Pat. I'm sure of that, ma'am,—you would not demane yourself to the likes.

Catty. Mark me, Pat Coxe, now—with all them fat bullocks at her back, and with all them fresh roses in her cheeks—and I don't say but she's a likely girl, if she wa'n't a McBride; but with all that, and if she was the best spinner in the three counties—and I don't say but she's good, if she wa'n't a McBride;—but was she the best of the best, and the fairest of the fairest, and had she to boot the two stockings full of gould, Honor McBride shall never be brought home, a daughter-in-law to me! My pride's up.

Pat. (*aside*) And I'm instructed to keep it up.—(*Aloud*) True for ye, ma'am, and I wish that all had as much proper pride, as ought to be having it.

Catty. There's maning in your eye, Pat—give it tongue.

Pat. If you did not hear it, I suppose there's no truth in it.

Catty. What?—which?

Pat. That your son Randal, Mrs. Rooney, is not of your way of thinking about Honor McBride, may be's.

Catty. Tut! No matter what way of thinking he is—a young slip of a boy like him does not know what he'll think to-morrow. He's a good son to me; and in regard to a wife, one girl will do him as well as another, if he has any sinse—and I'll find him a girl that will plase him, I'll engage.

Pat. May be so, ma'am—no fear: only boys do like to be plasing themselves, by times—and I noticed something.

Catty. What did you notice?—till me, Pat, dear, quick.

Pat. No—'tis bad to be meddling and remarking to get myself ill-will; so I'll keep myself to myself: for Randal's ready enough with his hand as you with the tongue—no offence, Mrs. Rooney, ma'am.

Catty. Niver fear—only till me the truth, Pat, dear.

Pat. Why, then, to the best of my opinion, I seen Honor McBride just now giving Randal Rooney the meeting behind the chapel; and I seen him putting a ring on her finger.

Catty. (*clasping her hands*) Oh, murder!—Oh! the unnat'ral monsters that love makes of these young men; and the traitor, to use me so, when he promised he'd never make a stolen match unknown'st to me.

Pat. Oh, ma'am, I don't say—I wouldn't swear—it's a match yet.

Catty. Then I'll run down and stop it—and catch 'em.

Pat. You haven't your jock on, ma'am—(*she turns towards the house*)—and it's no use—for you won't catch 'em: I seen them after, turning the back way into Nick Flaherty's.

Catty. Nick Flaherty's, the publican's? oh, the sinners! And this is the saint that Honor McBride would be passing herself upon us for? And all the edication she got at Mrs. Carver's Sunday school! Oh, this comes of being better than one's neighbours! A fine thing to tell Mrs. Carver, the English lady, that's so nice, and so partial to Miss Honor McBride! Oh, I'll expose her!

Pat. Oh! sure, Mrs. Rooney, you promised you'd not tell, (*Standing so as to stop CATTY.*)

Catty. Is it who told me? No—I won't mintion a sintence of your name. But let me by—I won't be put off now I've got the scent. I'll hunt 'em out, and drag her to shame, if they're above ground, or my name's not Catty Rooney! Mick! Mick! little Mick! (*calling at the cottage door*) bring my blue *jock* up the road after me to Ballynavogue. Don't let me count three till you're after me, or I'll bleed ye! (*Exit CATTY, shaking her closed hand, and repeating*) I'll expose Honor McBride—I'll expose Honor! I will, by the blessing!

Pat. (*alone*) Now, if Randal Rooney would hear, he'd make a jelly of me, and how I'd trimble; or the brother, if he comed across me, and knewed. But they'll niver know. Oh, Catty won't say a sintence of my name, was she carded! No, Catty's a scould, but has a conscience. Then I like conscience in them I have to dale with sartainly. {*Exit.*

SCENE V.

Mrs. CARVER'S Dressing-room, HONOR McBRIDE and MISS BLOOMSBURY discovered.

Honor. How *will* I know, Miss Bloomsbury, when it will be twelve o'clock?

Bloom. You'll hear the clock strike: but I suspect you'se don't understand the clock yet—well, you'll hear the workmen's bell.

Honor. I know, ma'am, oh, I know, true—only I was flurried, so I forgot.

Bloom. Flurried! but never be flurried. Now mind and keep your head upon your shoulders, while I tell you all your duty—you'll just ready this here room, your lady's dressing-room; not a partical of dust let me never find, petticlarly behind the vindor shuts.

Honor. Vindor shuts!—where, ma'am?

Bloom. The *shuts* of the *vindors*—did you never hear of a vindor, child?

Honor. Never, ma'am.

Bloom. (*pointing to a window*) Don't tell me! why, your head is a wool-gathering! Now, mind me, pray—see here, always you put that there,—and this here, and that upon that,—and this upon this, and this under that,—and that under this—you can remember that much, child, I supposes?

Honor. I'll do my endeavour, ma'am, to remember all.

Bloom. But mind, now, my good girl, you takes *petticlar* care of this here pyramint of japanned china—and *very* petticlar care of that there great joss—and the *very most petticularest* care of this here right reverend Mandolin. (*Pointing to, and touching a Mandarin, so as to make it shake. HONOR starts back.*)

Bloom. It i'n't alive. Silly child, to start at a Mandolin shaking his head and beard at you. But, oh! mercy, if there i'n't enough to make him shake his head. Stand there!—stand here!—now don't you see?

Honor. Which, ma'am?

Bloom. "*Which, ma'am!*" you're no *witch*, indeed, if you don't see a cobweb as long as my arm. Run, run, child, for the pope's head.

Honor. Pope's head, ma'am?

Bloom. Ay, the pope's head, which you'll find under the stairs. Well, a'n't you gone? what do you stand there like a stuck pig, for?—Never see a pope's head?—never 'ear of a pope's head?

Honor. I've heard of one, ma'am—with the priest; but we are protestants.

Bloom. Protestants! what's that to do? I do protest, I believe that little head of yours is someway got wrong on your shoulders to-day. {*The clock strikes*—HONOR, *who is close to it, starts.*

Bloom. Start again!—why, you're all starts and fits. Never start, child! so ignoramus like! 'tis only the clock in your ear,—twelve o'clock, hark!—The bell will ring now in a hurry. Then you goes in there to my lady—stay, you'll never be able, I dare for to say, for to open the door without me; for I opine you are not much usen'd to brass locks in Hirish cabins—can't be expected. See here, then! You turns the lock in your hand this'n ways—the lock, mind now; not the key nor the bolt for your life, child, else you'd bolt your lady in, and there'd be my lady in Lob's pound, and there'd be a pretty kettle, of fish!—So you keep, if you can, all I said to you in your head, if possible—and you goes in there—and I goes out here.

{*Exit BLOOMSBURY.*

Honor. (curtsying) Thank ye, ma'am. Then all this time I'm sensible I've been behaving and looking little better than like a fool, or an *innocent.*—But I hope I won't be so bad when the lady shall speak to me. (*The bell rings.*) Oh, the bell summons me in here.—(*Speaks with her hand on the lock of the door*) The lock's asy enough—I hope I'll take courage—(*sighs*)—Asier to spake before one nor two, any way—and asier tin times to the mistress than the maid. {*Exit HONOR.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

GERALD O'BLANEY'S Counting-house.

O'BLANEY alone.

O'Bla. Then I wonder that ould Matthew McBride is not here yet. But is not this Pat Coxe coming up yonder? Ay. Well, Pat, what success with Catty?

Enter PAT COXE, panting.

Take breath, man alive—What of Catty?

Pat. Catty! Oh, murder! No time to be talking of Catty now! Sure the shupervizor's come to town.

O'Bla. Blood!—and the malt that has not paid duty in the cellar! Run, for your life, to the back-yard, give a whistle to call all the boys that's ricking o' the turf, away with 'em to the cellar, out with every sack of malt that's in it, through the back-yard, throw all into the middle of the turf-stack, and in the wink of an eye build up the rick over all, snoog (snug).

Pat. I'll engage we'll have it done in a crack. {*Exit PAT.*

O'Bla. (*calling after him*) Pat! Pat Coxe! man!

Re-enter PAT.

O'Bla. Would there be any fear of any o' the boys *informin*?

Pat. Sooner cut their ears off! {*Exit PAT.*

Enter Old McBRIDE, at the opposite side.

Old McB. (*speaking in a slow, drawling brogue*) Would Mr. Gerald O'Blaney, the counsellor, be within?

O'Bla. (*quick brogue*) Oh, my best friend, Matthew McBride, is it you, dear? Then here's Gerald O'Blaney, always at your sarvice. But shake hands; for of all men in Ireland, you are the man I was aching to lay my eyes on. And in the fair did ye happen to meet Carver of Bob's Fort?

Old McB. (*speaking very slowly*) Ay. did I—and he was a-talking to me, and I was a-talking to him—and he's a very good gentleman, Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort—so he is—and a gentleman that knows how things should be;

and he has been giving of me, Mr. O'Blaney, a great account of you, and how you're thriving in the world—and so as that.

O'Bla. Nobody should know that better than Mr. Carver of Bob's Fort—he knows all my affairs. He is an undeniable honest gentleman, for whom I profess the highest regard.

Old McB. Why then he has a great opinion of you too, counsellor—for he has been advising of, and telling of me, O'Blaney, of your proposhal, sir—and very sinsible I am of the honour done by you to our family, sir—and condescension to the likes of us—though, to be sure, Honor McBride, though she is my daughter, is a match for any man.

O'Bla. Is a match for a prince—a Prince Ragent even. So no more about condescension, my good Matthew, for love livels all distinctions.

Old McB. That's very pretty of you to say so, sir; and I'll repeat it to Honor.

O'Bla. Cupid is the great liveller, after all, and the only democrat Daity on earth I'd bow to—for I know you are no democrat, Mr. McBride, but quite and clane the contrary way.

Old McB. Quite and clane and stiff, I thank my God; and I'm glad, in spite of the vowel before your name, Mr. O'Blaney, to hear you are of the same kidney.

O'Bla. I'm happy to find myself agreeable to you, sir.

Old McB. But, however agreeable to me, as I won't deny, it might be, sir, to see my girl made into a gentlewoman by marriage, I must observe to you —

O'Bla. And I'll keep her a jaunting car to ride about the country; and in another year, as my fortune's rising, my wife should rise with it into a coach of her own.

Old McB. Oh! if I'd live to see my child, my Honor, in a coach of her own! I'd be too happy—oh, I'd die contint!

O'Bla. (*aside*) No fear!—(*Aloud*) And why should not she ride in her own coach, Mistress Counsellor O'Blaney, and look out of the windows down upon the *Roonies*, that have the insolence to look up to her?

Old McB. Ah! you know *that*, then. That's all that's against us, sir, in this match.

O'Bla. But if *you* are against Randal, no fear.

Old McB. I am against him—that is, against his family, and all his seed, breed, and generation. But I would not break my daughter's heart if I could help it.

O'Bla. Wheugh!—hearts don't break in these days, like china.

Old McB. This is my answer, Mr. O'Blaney, sir: you have my lave, but you must have hers too.

O'Bla. I would not fear to gain that in due time, if you would stand my friend in forbidding her the sight of Randal.

Old McB. I will with pleasure, that—for tho' I won't force her to marry to plase me, I'll forbid her to marry to displase me; and when I've said it, whatever it is, I'll be obeyed. (*Strikes his stick on the ground.*)

O'Bla. That is all I ax.

Old McB. But now what settlement, counshillor, will you make on my girl?

O'Bla. A. hundred a year—I wish to be liberal—Mr. Carver will see to that—he knows all my affairs, as I suppose he was telling you.

Old McB. He was—I'm satisfied, and I'm at a word myself always. You heard me name my girl's portion, sir?

O'Bla. I can't say—I didn't mind—'twas no object to me in life.

Old McB. (*in a very low, mysterious tone, and slow brogue*) Then five hundred guineas is some object to most men.

O'Bla. Certainly, sir; but not such an object as your daughter to me: since we are got upon business, however, best settle all that out of the way, as you say at once. Of the five hundred, I have two in my hands already, which you can make over to me with a stroke of a pen. (*Rising quickly, and getting pen, ink, and books.*)

Old McB. (*speaking very slowly*) Stay a hit—no hurry—in life. In business—'tis always most haste, worse speed.

O'Bla. Take your own time, my good Matthew—I'll be as slow as you plase—only love's quick.

Old McB. Slow and sure—love and all—fast bind, fast find—three and two, what does that make?

O'Bla. It used to make five before I was in love.

Old McB. And will the same after you're married and dead. What am I thinking of? A score of bullocks I had in the fair—half a score sold in my pocket, and owing half—that's John Dolan, twelve pound tin—and Charley Duffy nine guineas and thirteen tin pinnies and a five-penny bit: stay, then, put that to the hundred guineas in the stocking at home.

O'Bla. (*aside*) How he makes my mouth water: (*Aloud*) May be, Matthew, I could, that am used to it, save you the trouble of counting?

Old McB. No trouble in life to me ever to count my money—only I'll trouble you, sir, if you please, to lock that door; bad to be chinking and spreading money with doors open, for walls has ears and eyes.

O'Bla. True for you. (*Rising, and going to lock the doors.*)

{*Old McBRIDE with great difficulty, and very slowly, draws out of his pocket his bag of money—looking first at one door, and then at the other, and going to try whether they are locked, before he unties his bag.*}

Old McB. (*spreads and counts his money and notes*) See me now, I wrote on some scrap somewhere 59*l.* in notes—then hard cash, twinty pounds—rolled up silver and gould, which is scarce—but of a hundred pounds there's wanting fourteen pounds odd, I think, or something that way; for Phil and I had our breakfast out of a one pound note of Finlay's, and I put the change somewhere—besides a riband for Honor, which make a deficiency of fourteen pounds seven shillings and two pence—that's what's deficient—count it which way you will.

O'Bla. (*going to sweep the money off the table*) Oh! never mind the deficiency—I'll take it for a hundred plump.

Old McB. (*stopping him*) Plump me no plumps—I'll have it exact, or not at all—I'll not part it, so let me see it again.

O'Bla. (*aside with a deep sigh, almost a groan*) Oh! when I had had it in my fist—almost: but 'tis as hard to get money out of this man as blood out of a turnip; and I'll be lost to-night without it.

Old McB. 'Tis not exact—and I'm exact: I'll put it all up again—(*he puts it deliberately into the bag again, thrusting the bag into his pocket*)—I'll make it up at home my own way, and send it in to you by Phil in an hour's time; for I could not sleep sound with so much in my house—bad people about—safer with you in town. Mr. Carver says, you are as good as the Bank of Ireland—there's no going beyond that. (*Buttoning up his pockets.*)

So you may unlock the doors and let me out now—I'll send Phil with all to you, and you'll give him a bit of a receipt or a token, that would do.

O'Bla. I shall give a receipt by all means—all regular: short accounts make long friends. (*Unlocks the door.*)

Old McB. True, sir, and I'll come in and see about the settlements in the morning, if Honor is agreeable.

O'Bla. I shall make it my business to wait upon the young lady myself on the wings of love; and I trust I'll not find any remains of Randal Rooney in her head.

Old McB. Not if I can help it, depend on that. (*They shake hands.*)

O'Bla. Then, fare ye well, father-in-law—that's meat and drink to me: would not ye take a glass of wine then?

Old McB. Not a drop—not a drop at all—with money about me: I must be in a hurry home.

O'Bla. That's true—so best: recommind me kindly to Miss Honor, and say a great dale about my impatience—and I'll be expicting Phil, and won't shut up till he comes the night.

Old McB. No, don't; for he'll be with you before night-fall. {*Exit McBRIDE.*

O'Bla. (*calling*) Dan! open the door, there: Dan! Joe! open the door smart for Mr. McBride! (O'BLANEY *rubbing his hands.*) Now I think I may pronounce myself made for life—success to my parts!—and here's Pat too! Well, Pat Coxe, what news of the thing in hand?

Enter PAT COXE.

Pat. Out of hand clane! that job's nately done. The turf-rick, sir, 's built up cliver, with the malt snug in the middle of its stomach—so were the shupervishor a conjuror even, barring he'd dale with the ould one, he'd never suspict a sentence of it.

O'Bla. Not he—he's no conjuror: many's the dozen tricks I played him afore now.

Pat. But, counshillor, there's the big veshel in the little passage—I got a hint from a friend, that the shuper got information of the spirits in that from some villain.

O'Bla. And do you think I don't know a trick for that, too?

Pat. No doubt: still, counshillor, I'm in dread of my life that that great big veshel won't be implied in a hurry.

O'Bla. Won't it? but you'll see it will, though; and what's more, them spirits will turn into water for the shupervisor.

Pat. Water! how?

O'Bla. Asy—the ould tan-pit that's at the back of the distillery.

Pat. I know—what of it?

O'Bla. A sacret pipe I've got fixed to the big veshel, and the pipe goes under the wall for me into the tan-pit, and a sucker I have in the big veshel, which I pull open by a string in a crack, and lets all off all clane into the tan-pit.

Pat. That's capital!—but the water?

O'Bla. From the pump, another pipe—and the girl's pumping asy, for she's to wash to-morrow, and knows nothing about it; and so the big veshel she fills with water, wondering what ails the water that it don't come—and I set one boy and another to help her—and the pump's bewitched, and that's all:—so that's settled.

Pat. And cliverly. Oh! counshillor, we are a match for the shuper any day or night.

O'Bla. For him and all his tribe, *coursing* officers and all. I'd desire no better sport than to hear the whole pack in full cry after me, and I doubling, and doubling, and safe at my form at last. With you, Pat, my precious, to drag the herring over the ground previous to the hunt, to distract the scent, and defy the nose of the dogs.

Pat. Then I am proud to sarve you, counshillor.

O'Bla. I know you are, and a very honest boy. And what did you do for me, with Catty Rooney?

Pat. The best.—Oh! it's I *blarny'd* Catty to the skies, and then egged her on, and aggravated her against the McBrides, till I left her as mad as e'er a one in Bedlam—up to any thing! And full tilt she's off to Flaherty's, the publican, in her blue jock—where she'll not be long afore she kicks up a quarrel, I'll engage; for she's sarching the house for Honor McBride, who is *not* in it—and giving bad language, I warrant, to all the McBride faction, who *is* in it, drinking. Oh! trust Catty's tongue for breeding a riot! In half an

hour, I'll warrant, you'll have as fine a fight in town as ever ye seen or *hard*.

O'Bla. That's iligantly done, Pat. But I hope Randal Rooney is in it?

Pat. In the thick of it he is, or will be. So I hope your honour did not forgit to spake to Mr. Carver about that little place for me?

O'Bla. Forgit!—Do I forgit my own name, do you think? Sooner forgit that *then* my promises.

Pat. Oh! I beg your honour's pardon—I would not doubt your word; and to make matters sure, and to make Catty cockahoop, I tould her, and swore to her, there was not a McBride in the town but two, and there's twinty, more or less.

O'Bla. And when she sees them twinty, more or less, what will she think? —Why would you say that?—she might find you out in a lie next minute, Mr. Overdo. 'Tis dangerous for a young man to be telling more lies than is absolutely requisite. The *lie superfluous* brings many an honest man, and, what's more, many a cliver fellow, into a scrape—and that's your great fau't, Pat.

Pat. Which, sir?

O'Bla. That, sir. I don't see you often now take a glass too much. But, Pat, I hear you often still are too apt to indulge in a lie too much.

Pat. Lie! Is it I?—Whin upon my conscience, I niver to my knowledge tould a lie in my life, since I was born, excipt it would be just to skreen a man, which is charity, sure,—or to skreen myself, which is self-defence, sure—and that's lawful; or to oblige your honour, by particular desire, and *that* can't be helped, I suppose.

O'Bla. I am not saying again all that—only (*laying his hand on* PAT'S *shoulder as he is going out*) against another time, all I'm warning you, young man, is, you're too apt to think there never can be lying enough. Now too much of a good thing is good for nothing. {*Exit O'BLANEY.*

PAT, alone.

Pat. There's what you may call the divil rebuking sin—and now we talk of the like, as I've heard my *mudther* say, that he had need of a long spoon that ates wid the divil—so I'll look to that in time. But whose voice is that I hear coming up stairs? I don't believe but it's Mr. Carver—only what

should bring him back agin, I wonder now? Here he is, all out of breath, coming.

Enter Mr. CARVER.

Mr. Carv. Pray, young man, did you happen to see—(*panting for breath*) Bless me, I've ridden so fast back from Bob's Fort!

Pat. My master, sir, Mr. O'Blaney, is it? Will I run?

Mr. Carv. No, no—stand still till I have breath.—What I want is a copy of a letter I dropped some where or other—here I think it must have been, when I took out my handkerchief—a copy of a letter to his Excellency—of great consequence. (*Mr. CARVER sits down and takes breath.*)

Pat. (*searching about with officious haste*) If it's above ground, I'll find it. What's this?—an old bill: that is not it. Would it be this, crumpled up? —"To His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."

Mr. Carv. (*snatching*) No farther, for your life!

Pat. Well then I was lucky I found it, and proud.

Mr. Carv. And well you may be, young man; for I can assure you, on this letter the fate of Ireland may depend. (*Smoothing the letter on his knee.*)

Pat. I wouldn't doubt it—when it's a letter of your honour's—I know your honour's a great man at the castle. And plase your honour, I take this opportunity of tanking your honour for the encouragement I got about that little clerk's place—and here's a copy of my hand-writing I'd wish to show your honour, to see I'm capable—and a scholard.

Mr. Carv. Hand-writing! Bless me, young man, I have no time to look at your hand-writing, sir. With the affairs of the nation on my shoulders—can you possibly think?—is the boy mad?—that I've time to revise every poor scholar's copy-book?

Pat. I humbly beg your honour's pardon, but it was only becaase I'd wish to show I was not quite so unworthy to be under (whin you've time) your honour's protection, as promised.

Mr. Carv. My protection?—you are not under my protection, sir:—promised clerk's place?—I do not conceive what you are aiming at, sir.

Pat. The little clerk's place, plase your honour—that my master, Counshillor O'Blaney, tould me he spoke about to your honour, and was recommending me for to your honour.

Mr. Carv. Never—never heard one syllable about it, till this moment.

Pat. Oh! murder:—but I expict your honour's goodness will—

Mr. Carv. To make your mind easy, I promised to appoint a young man to that place, a week ago, by Counsellor O'Blaney's special recommendation. So there must be some mistake.

{*Exit Mr. CARVER.*}

PAT, alone.

Pat. Mistake? ay, mistake on purpose. So he never spoke! so he lied!—my master that was praching me! And oh, the dirty lie he tould me! Now I can't put up with that, when I was almost perjuring myself for him at the time. Oh, if I don't fit him for this! And he got the place given to another!—then I'll git him as well sarved, and out of this place too—seen-if-I-don't! He is cunning enough, but I'm cuter nor he—I have him in my power, so I have! and I'll give the shupervizor a scent of the malt in the turf-stack—and a hint of the spirits in the tan-pit—and it's I that will like to stand by innocent, and see how shrunk O'Blaney's double face will look forenent the shupervizor, when all's found out, and not a word left to say, but to pay—ruined hand and foot! Then that shall be, and before nightfall. Oh! one good turn desarves another—in revenge, prompt payment while you live!

{*Exit.*}

SCENE II.

McBRIDE'S Cottage.

MATTHEW McBRIDE and HONOR. (MATTHEW with a little table before him, at dinner.)

Old McB. (*pushing his plate from him*) I'll take no more—I'm done. {*He sighs.*}

Honor. Then you made but a poor dinner, father, after being at the fair, and up early, and all!—Take this bit from my hands, father dear.

Old McB. (*turning away sullenly*) I'll take nothing from you, Honor, but what I got already enough—and too much of—and that's ungratitude.

Honor. Ungratitude, father! then you don't see my heart.

Old McB. I lave that to whoever has it, Honor: 'tis enough for me, I see what you do—and that's what I go by.

Honor. Oh, me! and what did I do to displase you, father? (*He is obstinately silent; after waiting in vain for an answer, she continues*) I that was thinking to make all happy, (*aside*) but myself, (*aloud*) by settling to keep out of the way of—all that could vex you—and to go to sarvice, to Mrs. Carver's. I thought that would plase you, father.

Old McB. Is it to lave me, Honor? Is it *that* you thought would plase me, Honor?—To lave your father alone in his ould age, after all the slaving he got and was willing to undergo, whilst ever he had strength, early and late, to make a little portion for you, Honor,—you, that I reckoned upon for the prop and pride of my ould age—and you expect you'd plase me by laving me.

Honor. Hear me just if, pray then, father.

Old McB. (*shaking her off as she tries to caress him*) Go, then; go where you will, and demane yourself going into sarvice, rather than stay with me —go.

Honor. No, I'll not go. I'll stay then with you, father dear,—say that will plase you.

Old McB. (*going on without listening to her*) And all for the love of this Randal Rooney! Ay, you may well put your two hands before your face; if you'd any touch of natural affection at all, *that* young man would have been the last of all others you'd ever have thought of loving or liking any way.

Honor. Oh! if I could help it!

Old McB. There it is. This is the way the poor fathers is always to be trated. They to give all, daughter and all, and get nothing at all, not their choice even of the man, the villain that's to rob 'em of all—without thanks even; and of all the plinty of bachelors there are in the parish for the girl that has money, that daughter will go and pick and choose out the very man the father mislikes beyond all others, and then it's "*Oh! if I could help it*!"—Asy talking!

Honor. But, dear father, wasn't it more than talk, what I did?—Oh, won't you listen to me?

Old McB I'll not hear ye; for if you'd a grain o spirit in your mane composition, Honor, you would take your father's part, and not be putting yourself under Catty's feet—the bad-tongued woman, that hates you, Honor, like poison.

Honor. If she does hate me, it's all through love of her own—

Old McB. Son—ay—that she thinks too good for you—for *you*, Honor; you, the Lily of Lismore—that might command the pride of the country. Oh! Honor dear, don't be lessening yourself; but be a proud girl, as you ought, and my own Honor.

Honor. Oh, when you speak so kind!

Old McB. And I beg your pardon, if I said a cross word; for I know you'll never think of him more, and no need to lave home at all for his sake. It would be a shame in the country, and what would Mrs. Carver herself think?

Honor. She thinks well of it, then.

Old McB. Then whatever she thinks, she sha'n't have my child from me! tho' she's a very good lady, and a very kind lady, too. But see now, Honor—have done with love, for it's all foolishness; and when you come to be as ould as I am, you'll think so too. The shadows goes all one way, till the middle of the day, and when that is past, then all the t'other way; and so it is with love, in life—stay till the sun is going down with you.

Honor. Then it would be too late to be thinking of love.

Old McB. And too airly now, and there's no good time, for it's all folly. I'll ax you, will love set the potatoes?—will love make the rent?—or will love give you a jaunting car?—as to my knowledge, another of your bachelors would.

Honor. Oh, don't name him, father.

Old McB. Why not—when it's his name that would make a lady of you, and there'd be a rise in life, and an honour to your family?

Honor. Recollect it was he that would have dishonoured my family, in me, if he could.

Old McB. But he repints now; and what can a man do but repint, and offer to make honourable restitution, and thinking of marrying, as now, Honor dear;—is not that a condescension of he, who's a sort of a jantleman?

Honor. A sort, indeed—a bad sort.

Old McB. Why, not jantleman *born*, to be sure.

Honor. Nor *bred.*

Old McB. Well, there's many that way, neither born nor bred, but that does very well in the world; and think what it would be to live in the big shingled house, in Ballynavogue, with him!

Honor. I'd rather live here with you, father.

Old McB. Then I thank you kindly, daughter, for that, but so would not *I for* you,—and then the jaunting-car, or a coach, in time, if he could! He has made the proposhal for you in form this day.

Honor. And what answer from you, father?

Old McB. Don't be looking so pale,—I tould him he had my consint, if he could get yours. And, oh! before you speak, Honor dear, think what it would be up and down in Ballynavogue, and every other place in the county, assizes days and all, to be Mistress Gerald O'Blaney!

Honor. I couldn't but think very ill of it, father; thinking ill, as I do, of him. Father dear, say no more, don't be breaking my heart—I'll never have that man; but I'll stay happy with you.

Old McB. Why, then, I'll be contint with that same; and who wouldn't?—If it's what you'd rather stay, and *can* stay contint, Honor dear, I'm only too

happy. (*Embracing her—then pausing.*) But for Randal—

Honor. In what can you fau't him, only his being a Rooney?

Old McB. That's all—but that's enough. I'd sooner see you in your coffin —sooner be at your wake to-night, than your wedding with a Rooney! 'Twould kill me. Come, promise me—I'd trust your word—and 'twould make me asy for life, and I'd die asy, if you'd promise never to have him.

Honor. Never till you would consent—that's all I can promise.

Old McB. Well, that same is a great ase to my heart.

Honor. And to give a little ase to mine, father, perhaps you could promise —

Old McB. What?—I'll promise nothing at all—I'll promise nothing at all —I'll promise nothing I couldn't perform.

Honor. But this you could perform asy, dear father: just hear your own Honor.

Old McB. (*aside*) That voice would wheedle the bird off the bush—and when she'd prefar me to the jaunting-car, can I but listen to her? (*Aloud*) Well, what?—if it's any thing at all in rason.

Honor. It is in rason entirely. It's only, that if Catty Rooney's—

Old McB. (*stopping his ears*) Don't name her.

Honor. But she might be brought to rason, father; and if she should be brought to give up that claim to the bit o' bog of yours, and when all differs betwix' the families be made up, then you would consent.

Old McB. When Catty Rooney's brought to rason! Oh! go shoe the goslings, dear,—ay, you'll get my consint then. There's my hand: I promise you, I'll never be called on to perform that, Honor, jewel.

Honor. (*kissing his hand*) Then that's all I'd ask—nor will I say one word more, but thank you, father.

Old McB. (*putting on his coat*) She's a good cratur—sorrow better! sister or daughter. Oh! I won't forget that she prefarred me to the jaunting-car. Phil shall carry him a civil refusal. I'll send off the money, the three hundred, by your brother, this minute—that will be some comfort to poor O'Blaney.

{*Exit McBRIDE.*

Honor. Is not he a kind father, then, after all?—That promise he gave me about Catty, even such as it is, has ased my heart wonderfully. Oh! it will all come right, and they'll all be rasonable in time, even Catty Rooney, I've great hope; and little hope's enough, even for love to live upon. But, hark! there's my brother Phil coming. (*A noise heard in the back-house.*) 'Tis only the cow in the bier. (*A knock heard at the door.*) No, 'tis a Christian; no cow ever knocked so soft. Stay till I open—Who's in it?

Randal. (*from within*) Your own Randal—open quick.

Honor. Oh! Randal, is it you? I can't open the door.

{*She holds the door—he pushes it half open.*

Randal. Honor, that I love more than life, let me in, till I speak one word to you, before you're set against me for ever.

Honor. No danger of that—but I can't let you in, Randal.

Randal. Great danger! Honor, and you must. See you I will, if I die for it!

{*He advances, and she retires behind the door, holding it against him.*

Honor. Then I won't see you this month again, if you do. My hand's weak, but my heart's strong, Randal.

Randal. Then my heart's as weak as a child's this minute. Never fear—don't hold against me, Honor; I'll stand where I am, since you don't trust me, nor love me—and best so, may be: I only wanted to say three words to you.

Honor. I can't hear you now, Randal.

Randal. Then you'll never hear me more. Good bye to you, Honor.

{*He pulls the door to, angrily.*

Honor. And it's a wonder as it was you didn't meet my father as you came, or my brother.

Randal. (*pushing the door a little open again*) Your brother!—Oh, Honor! that's what's breaking my heart—(*he sighs*)—that's what I wanted to say to you; and listen to me. No fear of your father, he's gone down the road: I saw him as I come the short cut, but he didn't see me.

Honor. What of my brother?—say, and go.

Randal. Ay, go—for ever, you'll bid me, when I've said.

Honor. What! oh, speak, or I'll drop.—(*She no longer holds the door, but leans against a table.—RANDAL advances, and looks in.*)

Randal. Don't be frightened, then, dearest—it's nothing in life but a fight at a fair. He's but little hurted.

Honor. Hurted!—and by who? by you, is it?—Then all's over.—(*RANDAL comes quite in—HONOR, putting her hand before her eyes.*)—You may come or go, for I'll never love you more.

Randal. I expicted as much!—But she'll faint!

Honor. I won't faint: leave me, Mr. Randal.

Randal. Take this water from me, (*holding a cup*) it's all I ask.

Honor. No need. (*She sits down*) But what's this?—(*Seeing his hand bound up.*)

Randal. A cut only.

Honor. Bleeding—stop it. (*Turning from him coldly.*)

Randal. Then by this blood—no, not by this worthless blood of mine—but by that dearest blood that fled from your cheeks, and this minute is coming back, Honor, I swear—(*kneeling to her.*)

Honor. Say what you will, or swear, I don't hear or heed you. And my father will come and find you there—and I don't care.

Randal. I know you don't—and I don't care myself what happens me. But as to Phil, it's only a cut in the head he got, that signifies nothing—if he was not your brother.

Honor. Once lifted your hand against him—all's over.

Randal. Honor, I did not lift my hand against *him*; but I was in the quarrel with his faction.

Honor. And this your promise to me not to be in any quarrel! No, if my father consented to-morrow, I'd nivir have you now. (*Rises, and is going—he holds her.*)

Randal. Then you're wrong, Honor: you've heard all against me—now hear what's for me.

Honor. I'll hear no more—let me go.

Randal. Go, then; (*he lets her go, and turns away himself*) and I'm going before Mr. Carver, who *will* hear me, and the truth will appear—and tho'

not from you, Honor, I'll have justice.

{*Exit RANDAL.*

Honor. Justice! Oh, worse and worse! to make all public; and if once we go to law, there's an end of love—*for ever.*

{*Exit HONOR.*

SCENE III.

O'BLANEY'S House.

O'BLANEY and CATTY ROONEY.

Catty. And didn't ye hear it, counshillor? the uproar in the town and the riot?—oh! you'd think the world was throwing out at windows. See my jock, all tattered! Didn't ye hear!

O'Bla. How could I hear, backwards, as you see, from the street, and given up to my business?

Catty. Business! oh! here is a fine business—the McBrides have driven all before them, and chased the Roonies out of Ballynavogue. (*In a tone of deep despair.*) Oh! Catty Rooney! that ever you'd live to see this day!

O'Bla. Then take this glass (*offering a glass of whiskey*) to comfort your heart, my good Mrs. Rooney.

Catty. No, thank you, counshillor, it's past that even! ogh! ogh!—oh! wirrastrew!—oh! wirrastrew, ogh!—(*After wringing her hands, and yielding to a burst of sorrow and wailing, she stands up firmly.*) Now I've ased my heart, I'll do. I've spirit enough left in me yet, you'll see; and I'll tell you what I came to you for, counshillor.

O'Bla. Tell me first, is Randal Rooney in it, and is he hurt?

Catty. He was in it: he's not hurt, more shame for him! But, howsomever, he bet one boy handsomely; that's my only comfort. Our faction's all going full drive to swear examinations, and get justice.

O'Bla. Very proper—very proper: swear examinations—that's the course, and only satisfaction in these cases to get justice.

Catty. Justice!—revenge sure! Oh! revenge is sweet, and I'll have it. Counshillor dear, I never went before Mr. Carver—you know him, sir—what sort is he?

O'Bla. A mighty good sort of gentleman—only mighty tiresome.

Catty. Ay, that's what I hard—that he is mighty fond of talking to people for their good. Now that's what I dread, for I can't stand being talked to for my good.

O'Bla. 'Tis little use, I confess. We Irish is wonderful soon tired of goodness, if there's no spice of fun along with it; and poor Carver's soft, and between you and I, he's a little bothered, but, Mrs. Rooney, you won't repate?

Catty. Repate!—I! I'm neither watch nor repater—I scorn both; and between you and I, since you say so, counshillor, that's my chiefest objection to Carver, whom I wouldn't know from Adam, except by reputation. But it's the report of the country, that he has common informers in his pay and favour; now that's mane, and I don't like it.

O'Bla. Nor I, Mrs. Rooney. I had experience of informers in the distillery line once. The worst varmin that is ever encouraged in any house or country. The very mintion of them makes me creep all over still.

Catty. Then 'tis Carver, they say, that has the oil of Rhodium for them; for they follow and fawn on him, like rats on the rat catcher—of all sorts and sizes, he has 'em. They say, he sets them over and after one another; and has *lations* of them that he lets out on the craturs' cabins, to larn how many grains of salt every man takes with his little *prates*, and bring information if a straw would be stirring.

O'Bla. Ay, and if it would, then, it's Carver that would quake like the aspin leaf—I know that. It's no malice at all in him; only just he's a mighty great poltroon.

Catty. Is that all? Then I'd pity and laugh at him, and I go to him preferably to any other magistrate.

O'Bla. You may, Mrs. Rooney—for it's in terror of his life he lives, continually draming day and night, and croaking of carders and thrashers, and oak boys, and white boys, and peep-o'-day boys, and united boys, and riband-men, and men and boys of all sorts that have, and that have not, been up and down the country since the rebellion.

Catty. The poor cratur! But in case he'd prove refractory, and would not take my examinations, can't I persecute my shute again the McBrides for the bit of the bog of Ballynascraw, counshillor?—Can't I *harash* 'em at law?

O'Bla. You can, ma'am, harash them properly. I've looked over your papers, and I'm happy to tell you, you may go on at law as soon and as long as you plase.

Catty. (*speaking very rapidly*) Bless you for that word, counshillor; and by the first light to-morrow, I'll drive all the grazing cattle, every four-footed *baast* off the land, and pound 'em in Ballynavogue; and if they replevy, why I'll distrain again, if it be forty times, I will go. I'll go on distraining, and I'll advertise, and I'll cant, and I'll sell the distress at the end of the eight days. And if they dare for to go for to put a plough in that bit of reclaimed bog, I'll come down upon 'em with an injunction, and I would not value the expinse of bringing down a record a pin's pint; and if that went again me, I'd remove it to the courts above and wilcome; and after that, I'd go into equity, and if the chancillor would not be my friend, I'd take it over to the House of Lords in London, so I would as soon as look at 'em; for I'd wear my feet to the knees for justice—so I would.

O'Bla. That you would! You're an iligant lawyer, Mrs. Rooney; but have you the sinews of war?

Catty. Is it money, dear?—I have, and while ever I've one shilling to throw down to ould Matthew McBride's guinea, I'll go on; and every guinea he parts will twinge his vitals: so I'll keep on while ever I've a fiv'-penny bit to rub on another—for my spirit is up.

O'Bla. Ay, ay, so you say. Catty, my dear, your back's asy up, but it's asy down again.

Catty. Not when I've been trod on as now, counshillor: it's then I'd turn and fly at a body, gentle or simple, like mad.

O'Bla. Well done, Catty (*patting her on the back*). There's my own pet mad cat—and there's a legal venom in her claws, that every scratch they'll give shall fester so no plaister in law can heal it.

Catty. Oh, counshillor, now, if you wouldn't be flattering a wake woman.

O'Bla. Wake woman!—not a bit of woman's wakeness in ye. Oh, my cat-o'-cats! let any man throw her from him, which way he will, she's on her legs and at him again, tooth and claw.

Catty. With nine lives, renewable for ever.

{*Exit CATTY.*

O'Bla. (*alone*) There's a demon in woman's form set to work for me! Oh, this works well—and no fear that the Roonies and McBrides should ever come to an understanding to cut me out. Young Mr. Randal Rooney, my humble compliments to you, and I hope you'll become the willow which

you'll soon have to wear for Miss Honor McBride's pretty sake. But I wonder the brother a'n't come up yet with the rist of her fortune. (Calls behind the scenes.) Mick! Jack! Jenny! Where's Pat?—Then why don't you know? run down a piece of the road towards Ballynascraw, see would you see any body coming, and bring me word would you see Phil McBride—you know, flourishing Phil.—Now I'm prepared every way for the shupervishor, only I wish to have something genteel in my fist for him, and a show of cash flying about—nothing like it, to dazzle the eyes.

{*Exit O'BLANEY.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in Mr. CARVER'S House. Mr. CARVER seated: a table, pens, ink, paper, and law-books. A cleric, pen in hand.—On the right-hand side of Mr. CARVER stands Mrs. CATTY ROONEY.—RANDAL ROONEY beside her, leaning against a pillar, his arms folded.—Behind Mrs. ROONEY, three men—one remarkably tall, one remarkably little.—On the left-hand of Mr. CARVER stand Old MATTHEW McBRIDE, leaning on his stick; beside him, PHILIP McBRIDE, with his silver-hilted whip in his hand.—A Constable at some distance behind Mr. CARVER'S chair.—Mr. CARVER looking over and placing his books, and seeming to speak to his clerk.

Catty. (*aside to her son*) See I'll take it asy, and be very shivel and sweet wid him, till I'll see which side he'll lane, and how it will go with us Roonies—(*Mr. CARVER rising, leans forward with both his hands on the table, as if going to speak, looks round, and clears his throat loudly.*)—Will I spake now, plase your honour?

Old McB. Dacency, when you see his honour preparing his throat.

{*Mr. CARVER clears his throat again.*

Catty. (*curtsying between each sentence*) Then I ixpect his honour will do me justice. I got a great character of his honour. I'd sooner come before your honour than any jantleman in all Ireland. I'm sure your honour will stand my *frind*.

Clerk. Silence!

Mr. Carv. Misguided people of Ballynavogue and Ballynascraw—

{*At the instant Mr. CARVER pronounces the word "Ballynavogue," CATTY curtsies, and all the ROONIES, behind her, bow, and answer—*

Here, plase your honour.

{*And when Mr. CARVER says* "Ballynascraw," *all the McBRIDES bow, and reply—*

Here, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. (*speaking with pomposity, but embarrassment, and clearing his throat frequently*) When I consider and look round me, gentlemen, and when I look round me and consider, how long a period of time I have had the honour to bear his majesty's commission of the peace for this county—

Catty. (*curtsying*) Your honour's a good warrant, no doubt.

Mr. Carv. Hem!—hem!—also being a residentiary gentleman at Bob's Fort—hem!—hem!—hem!—(*Coughs, and blows his nose.*)

Catty. (*aside to her son*) Choking the cratur is with the words he can't get out. (*Aloud*) Will I spake now, plase your honour?

Clerk. Silence! silence!

Mr. Carv. And when I consider all the ineffectual attempts I have made by eloquence and otherwise, to moralize and civilize you gentlemen, and to eradicate all your heterogeneous or rebellious passions—

Catty. Not a rebel, good or bad, among us, plase your honour.

Clerk. Silence!

Mr. Carv. I say, my good people of Ballynavogue and Ballynascraw, I stand here really in unspeakable concern and astonishment, to notice at this fair-time in my barony, these symptoms of a riot, gentlemen, and features of a tumult.

Catty. True, your honour, see—scarce a symptom of a fature lift in the face here of little Charley of Killaspugbrone, with the b'ating he got from them McBrides, who bred the riot, entirely under Flourishing Phil, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. (*turning to PHIL McBRIDE.*) Mr. Philip McBride, son of old Matthew, quite a substantial man,—I am really concerned, Philip, to see you, whom I looked upon as a sort of, I had almost said, *gentleman*—

Catty. Gentleman! what sort? Is it because of the new topped boots, or by virtue of the silver-topped whip, and the bit of a red rag tied about the throat?—Then a gentleman's asy made, now-a-days.

Young McB. It seems 'tis not so asy any way, now-a-days, to make a *gentlewoman*, Mrs. Rooney.

Catty. (*springing forward angrily*) And is it me you mane, young man?

Randal. Oh! mother, dear, don't be aggravating.

Mr. Carv. Clerk, why don't you maintain silence?

Catty. (*pressing before her son*) Stand back, then, Randal Rooney—don't you hear *silence*?—don't be brawling before his honour. Go back wid yourself to your pillar, or post, and fould your arms, and stand like a fool that's in love, as you are.—I beg your honour's pardon, but he's my son, and I can't help it.—But about our examinations, plase your honour, we're all come to swear—here's myself, and little Charley of Killaspugbrone, and big Briny of Cloon, and Ulick of Eliogarty—all ready to swear.

Mr. Carv. But have these gentlemen no tongues of their own, madam?

Catty. No, plase your honour, little Charley has no English tongue; he has none but the native Irish.

Mr. Carv. Clerk, make out their examinations, with a translation; and interpret for Killaspugbrone.

Catty. Plase your honour, I being the lady, expicted I'd get lave to swear first.

Mr. Carv. And what would you swear, madam, if you got leave, pray?—be careful, now.

Catty. I'll tell you how it was out o' the face, plase your honour. The whole Rooney faction—

Mr. Carv. Faction!—No such word in my presence, madam.

Catty. Oh, but I'm ready to swear to it, plase your honour, in or out of the presence:—the whole Rooney faction—every Rooney, big or little, that was in it, was bet, and banished the town and fair of Ballynavogue, for no rason in life, by them McBrides there, them scum o' the earth.

Mr. Carv. Gently, gently, my good lady; no such thing in my presence, as scum o' the earth.

Catty. Well, Scotchmen, if your honour prefars. But before a Scotchman, myself would prefar the poorest spalpeen—barring it be Phil, the buckeen—I ax pardon (*curtsying*), if a buckeen's the more honourable.

Mr. Carv. Irrelevant in toto, madam; for buckeens and spalpeens are manners or species of men unknown to or not cognizable by the eye of the law; against them, therefore, you cannot swear: but if you have any thing against Philip McBride—

Catty. Oh, I have plinty, and will swear, plase your honour, that he put me in bodily fear, and tore my jock, my blue jock, to tatters. Oh, by the vartue

of this book (*snatching up a book*), and all the books that ever were shut or opened, I'll swear to the damage of five pounds, be the same more or less.

Mr. Carv. My good lady, *more or less* will never do.

Catty. Forty shillings, any way, I'll swear to; and that's a felony, your honour, I hope?

Mr. Carv. Take time, and consult your conscience conscientiously, my good lady, while I swear these other men—

{*She examines the coat, holding it up to view—Mr. CARVER beckons to the Rooney party.*

Mr. Carv. Beaten men! come forward.

Big Briny. Not *beaten*, plase your honour, only *bet*.

Ulick of Eliogarty. Only black eyes, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. You, Mr. Charley or Charles Rooney, of Killaspugbrone; you have read these examinations, and are you scrupulously ready to swear?

Catty. He is, and *will*, plase your honour; only he's the boy that has got no English tongue.

Mr. Carv. I wish *you* had none, madam, ha! ha! ha! (*The two McBRIDES laugh—the ROONIES look grave.*) You, Ulick Rooney, of Eliogarty, *are these* your examinations?

Catty. He can't write, nor rade writing from his cradle, plase your honour; but can make his mark equal to another, sir. It has been read to him any way, sir, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. And you, sir, who style yourself big Briny of Cloon—you think yourself a great man, I suppose?

Catty. It's what many does that has got less rason, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. Understand, my honest friend, that there is a vast difference between looking big and being great.

Big Briny. I see—I know, your honour.

Mr. Carv. Now, gentlemen, all of you, before I hand you the book to swear these examinations, there is one thing of which I must warn and apprize you—that I am most remarkably clear-sighted; consequently there can be no *thumb kissing* with me, gentlemen.

Big Briny. We'll not ax it, plase your honour.

Catty. No Rooney, living or dead, was ever guilty or taxed with the like! (*Aside to her son*) Oh, they'll swear iligant! We'll flog the world, and have it all our own way! Oh, I knew we'd get justice—or I'd know why.

Clerk. Here's the book, sir, to swear complainants.

{*Mr. CARVER comes forward.*

Mr. Carv. Wait—wait; I must hear both sides.

Catty. Both sides! Oh, plase your honour—only bother you.

Mr. Carv. Madam, it is my duty to have ears for all men.—Mr. Philip, now for your defence.

Catty. He has none in nature, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. Madam, you have had my ear long enough—be silent, at your peril.

Catty. Ogh—ogh!—silent!

{*She groans piteously.*

Mr. Carv. Sir, your defence, without any preamble or pre-ambulation.

Phil. I've no defence to make, plase your honour, but that I'm innocent.

Mr. Carv. (*shaking his head*) The worst defence in law, my good friend, unless you've witnesses.

Phil. All present that time in the fair was too busy fighting for themselves to witness for me that I was not; except I'd call upon one that would clear me entirely, which is that there young man on the opposite side.

Catty. Oh, the impudent fellow! Is it my son?

Old McB. Is it Randal Rooney? Why, Phil, are you turned *innocent*?

Phil. I am not, father, at all. But with your lave, I call on Randal Rooney, for he is an undeniable honourable man—I refer all to his evidence.

Randal. Thank you, Phil. I'll witness the truth, on whatever side.

Catty rushes in between them, exclaiming, in a tremendous tone,

If you do, Catty Rooney's curse be upon—

Randal stops her mouth, and struggles to hold his mother back.

Oh, mother, you couldn't curse!—

{*All the ROONIES get about her and exclaim*,

Oh, Catty, your son you couldn't curse!

Mr. Carv. Silence, and let *me* be heard. Leave this lady to me; I know how to manage these feminine vixens. Mrs. Catherine Rooney, listen to me —you are a reasonable woman.

Catty. I am not, nor don't pretend to it, plase your honour.

Mr. Carv. But you can hear reason, madam, I presume, from the voice of authority.

Catty. No, plase your honour—I'm deaf, stone deaf.

Mr. Carv. No trifling with me, madam; give me leave to advise you a little for your good.

Catty. Plase your honour, it's of no use—from a child up I never could stand to be advised for my good. See, I'd get hot and hotter, plase your honour, till I'd bounce! I'd fly! I'd burst! and myself does not know what mischief I mightn't do.

Mr. Carv. Constable! take charge of this cursing and cursed woman, who has not respect for man or magistrate. Away with her out of my presence!—I commit her for a contempt.

Randal (*eagerly*) Oh! plase your honour, I beg your honour's pardon for her—my mother—entirely. When she is in her rason, she has the greatest respect for the whole bench, and your honour above all. Oh! your honour, be plasing this once! Excuse her, and I'll go bail for her she won't say another word till she'd get the nod from your honour.

Mr. Carv. On that condition, and on that condition only, I am willing to pass over the past. Fall back, constable.

Catty. (*aside*) Why then, Gerald O'Blaney mislet me. This Carver is a *fauterer* of the Scotch. Bad luck to every bone in his body! (*As CATTY says this her son draws her back, and tries to pacify her.*)

Mr. Carv. Is she muttering, constable?

Randal. Not a word, plase your honour, only just telling herself to be quiet. Oh, mother, dearest, I'll kneel to plase you.

Catty. Kneel! oh, to an ould woman like me—no standing that! So here, on my hunkers I am, for your sake, Randal, and not a word, good or bad! Can woman do more? (*She sits with her fingers on her lips.*)

Mr. Carv. Now for your defence, Philip: be short, for mercy's sake! (*pulling out his watch.*)

Phil. Not to be detaining your honour too long—I was in Ballynavogue this forenoon, and was just—that is, Miss Car'line Flaherty was just—

Mr. Carv. Miss Caroline Flaherty! What in nature can she have to do with the business?

Phil. Only axing me, sir, she was, to play the flageolets, which was the rason I was sitting at Flaherty's.

Mr. Carv. Address yourself to the court, young man.

Phil. Sitting at Flaherty's—in the parlour, with the door open, and all the McBrides which was *in it* was in the outer room taking a toombler o' punch I trated 'em to—but not drinking—not a man *out o' the way*—when in comes that gentlewoman. (*Pointing to Mrs. ROONEY.—RANDAL groans.*) Never fear, Randal, I'll tell it as soft as I can.

Old McB. Soft, why? Mighty soft cratur ever since he was born, plase your honour, though he's my son.

Mr. Carv. (*putting his fingers on his lips*) Friend Matthew, no reflections in a court of justice ever. Go on, Philip.

Phil. So some one having tould Mrs. Rooney lies, as I'm confident, sir—for she come in quite *mad*, and abused my sister Honor; accusing her, before all, of being sitting and giving her company to Randal Rooney at Flaherty's, drinking, and something about a ring, and a meeting behind the chapel, which I couldn't understand;—but it fired me, and I stepped—but I recollected I'd promised Honor not to let her provoke me to lift a hand good or bad—so I stepped across very civil, and I said to her, says I, Ma'am, it's all lies—some one has been belying Honor McBride to you, Mrs. Rooney.

{*CATTY sighs and groans, striking the back of one hand reiteratedly into the palm of the other—rises—beats the devil's tattoo as she stands—then claps her hands again.*

Mr. Carv. That woman has certainly more ways of making a noise, without speaking, than any woman upon earth. Proceed, Philip.

Phil. Depind on it, it's all lies, Mrs. Rooney, says I, ma'am. No, but *you* lie, flourishing Phil, says she. With that every McBride to a man, rises from the table, catching up chairs and stools and toomblers and jugs to revenge Honor and me. Not for your life, boys, don't *let-drive* ne'er a one of yees, says I—she's a woman, and a widow woman, and only a *scould* from her birth: so they held their hands; but she giving tongue bitter, 'twas hard for

flesh and blood to stand it. Now, for the love of heaven and me, sit down all, and be *quite* as lambs, and finish your poonch like gentlemen, sir, says I: so saying, I *tuk* Mrs. Rooney up in my arms tenderly, as I would a bould child—she screeching and screeching like mad:—whereupon her jock caught on the chair, pocket-hole or something, and give one rent from head to *fut*—and that was the tattering of the jock. So we got her to the door, and there she spying her son by ill-luck in the street, directly stretches out her' arms, and kicking my shins, plase your honour, till I could not hold her, "Murder! Randal Rooney," cries she, "and will you see your own mother murdered?"

Randal. Them were the very words, I acknowledge, she used, which put me past my rason, no doubt.

Phil. Then Randal Rooney, being past his rason, turns to all them Roonies that were *in no condition.*

Mr. Carv. That were, what we in English would call *drunk*, I presume?

Randal. Something very near it, plase your honour.

Phil. Sitting on the bench outside the door they were, when Randal came up. "Up, Roonies, and at 'em!" cried he; and up, to be sure, they flew, shillelahs and all, like lightning, daling blows on all of us McBrides: but I never lifted a hand; and Randal, I'll do him justice, avoided to lift a hand against me.

Randal. And while I live I'll never forget *that* hour, nor *this* hour, Phil, and all your generous construction.

Catty. (*aside*) Why then it almost softens me; but I won't be made a fool on.

Mr. Carv. (*who has been re-considering the examinations*) It appears to me that you, Mr. Philip McBride, did, as the law allows, only *lay hands softly* upon complainant, Catherine Rooney; and the Rooneys, as it appears, struck, and did strike, the first blow.

Randal. I can't deny, plase your honour, we did.

Mr. Carv. (*tearing the examinations*) Then, gentlemen—you Roonies—*beaten men*, I cannot possibly take your examinations.

{*When the examinations are torn, the McBRIDES all bow and thank his honour.*

Mr. Carv. Beaten men! depart in peace.

The ROONIES sigh and groan, and after turning their hats several times, bow, walk a few steps away, return, and seem loath to depart. CATTY springs forward, holding up her hands joined in a supplicating attitude to Mr. CARVER.

Randal. If your honour would be plasing to let her spake now, or she'd burst, may be.

Mr. Carv. Speak now, woman, and ever after hold your tongue.

Catty. Then I am rasonable now, plase your honour; for I'll put it to the test—see, I'll withdraw my examinations entirely, and I'll recant—and I'll go farther, I'll own I'm wrong—(though I know I'm right)—and I'll beg your pardon, McBrides, if—(but I know I'll not have to beg your pardon either)—but I say I *will* beg your pardon, McBrides, *if*, mind *if*, you will accept my test, and it fails me.

Mr. Carv. Very fair, Mrs. Rooney.

Old McB. What is it she's saying?

Phil. What test, Mrs. Rooney?

Randal. Dear mother, name your test.

Catty. Let Honor McBride be summoned, and if she can prove she took no ring, and was not behind the chapel with Randal, nor drinking at Flaherty's with him, the time she was, I give up all.

Randal. Agreed, with all the pleasure in life, mother. Oh, may I run for her?

Old McB. Not a fut, you sir—go, Phil dear.

Phil. That I will, like a lapwing, father.

Mr. Carv. Where to, sir—where so precipitate?

Phil. Only to fetch my sister.

Mr. Carv. Your sister, sir?—then you need not go far: your sister, Honor McBride, is, I have reason to believe, in this house.

Catty. So. Under whose protection, I wonder?

Mr. Carv. Under the protection of Mrs. Carver, madam, into whose service she was desirous to engage herself; and whose advice—

Clerk. Shall I, if you please, sir, call Honor in?

Mr. Carv. If you please.

{*A silence.—CATTY stands biting her thumb.—Old McBRIDE leans his chin upon Us hands on his stick, and never stirs, even his eyes.—Young McBRIDE looks out eagerly to the side at which HONOR is expected to enter—RANDAL looking over his shoulder, exclaims—*

There she comes!—Innocence in all her looks.

Catty. Oh! that we shall see soon. No making a fool of me.

Old McB. My daughter's step—I should know it. (*Aside*) How my old heart bates!

{*Mr. CARVER takes a chair out of the way.*

Catty. Walk in—walk on, Miss Honor. Oh, to be sure, Miss Honor will have justice.

Enter HONOR McBRIDE, walking very timidly.

And no need to be ashamed, Miss Honor, until you're found out.

Mr. Carv. Silence!

Old McB. Thank your honour.

{*Mr. CARVER whispers to his clerk, and directs him while the following speeches go on.*

Catty. That's a very pretty curtsy, Miss Honor—walk on, pray—all the gentlemen's admiring you—my son Randal beyant all.

Randal. Mother, I won't bear—

Catty. Can't you find a sate for her, any of yees? Here's a stool—give it her, Randal. (*HONOR sits down.*) And I hope it won't prove the stool of repentance, Miss or Madam. Oh, bounce your forehead, Randal—truth must out; you've put it to the test, sir.

Randal. I desire no other for her or myself.

{*The father and brother take each a hand of HONOR—support and soothe her.*

Catty. I'd pity you, Honor, myself, only I know you a McBride—and know you're desaving me, and all present.

Mr. Carv. Call that other witness I allude to, clerk, into our presence without delay.

Clerk. I shall, sir. {*Exit clerk.*

Catty. We'll see—we'll see all soon—and the truth will come out, and shame the *dibbil* and the McBrides!

Randal. (*looking out*) The man I bet, as I'm a sinner!

Catty. What?—Which?—Where?—True for ye!—I was wondering I did not see the man you bet appear again ye: and this is he, with the head bound up in the garter, coming—miserable cratur he looks—who would he be?

Randal. You'll see all soon, mother.

Enter PAT COXE, his head bound up.

Mr. Carv. Come on—walk on boldly, friend.

Catty. Pat Coxe! saints above!

Mr. Carv. Take courage, you are under my protection here—no one will dare to touch you.

Randal (*with infinite contempt*) Touch ye! Not I, ye dirty dog!

Mr. Carv. No, sir, you have done enough that way already, it appears.

Honor. Randal! what, has Randal done this?

Mr. Carv. Now observe—this Mr. Patrick Coxe, aforesaid, has taken refuge with me; for he is, it seems, afraid to appear before his master, Mr. O'Blaney, this night, after having been beaten: though, as he assures me, he has been beaten without any provocation whatsoever, by you, Mr. Randal Rooney—answer, sir, to this matter.

Randal. I don't deny it, sir—I bet him, 'tis true.

Pat. To a jelly—without marcy—he did, plase your honour, sir.

Randal. Sir, plase your honour, I got rason to suspect this man to be the author of all them lies that was tould backwards and forwards to my mother, about me and Miss Honor McBride, which made my mother mad, and driv' her to raise the riot, plase your honour. I charged Pat with the lies, and he shirked, and could give me no satisfaction, but kept swearing he was no liar, and bid me keep my distance, for he'd a pocket pistol about him. "I don't care what you have about you—you have not the truth about ye, nor in ye," says I; "ye are a liar, Pat Coxe," says I: so he cocked the pistol at me, saying, *that* would prove me a coward—with that I wrenched the pistol from him, and *bet* him in a big passion. I own to that, plase your honour—there I own I was wrong (*turning to HONOR*), to demane myself lifting my hand any way.

Mr. Carv. But it is not yet proved that this man has told any lies.

Randal. If he has tould no lies, I wronged him. Speak, mother—(*COXE gets behind CATTY, and twitches her gown*), was it he who was the informer, or not?

Catty. Nay, Pat Coxe, if you lied, I'll not screen you; but if you tould the truth, stand out like a man, and stand to it, and I'll stand by you, against my own son even, Randal, if he was the author of the report. In plain words, then, he, Pat Coxe, tould me, that she, Honor McBride, gave you, Randal Rooney, the meeting behind the chapel, and you gave her the ring—and then she went with you to drink at Flaherty's.

Honor. (*starting up*) Oh! who *could* say the like of me?

Catty. There he stands—now, Pat, you must stand or fall—will you swear to what you said? (*Old McBRIDE and PHIL approach PAT.*)

Mr. Carv. This is not the point before me; but, however, I waive that objection.

Randal. Oh! mother, don't put him to his oath, lest he'd perjure himself.

Pat. I'll swear: do you think I'd be making a liar of myself?

Honor. Father—Phil dear—hear me one word!

Randal. Hear her—oh! hear her—go to her.

Honor. (*in a low voice*) Would you ask at what time it was he pretends I was taking the ring and all that?

Old McB. Plase your honour, would you ask the rascal what time?

Mr. Carv. Don't call him rascal, sir—no *rascals* in my presence. What time did you see Honor McBride behind the chapel, Pat Coxe?

Pat. As the clock struck twelve—I mind—by the same token the workmen's bell rang as usual! that same time, just as I seen Mr. Randal there putting the ring on her finger, and I said, "*There's the bell ringing for a wedding*," says I.

Mr. Carv. To whom did you say that, sir?

Pat. To myself, plase your honour—I'll tell you the truth.

Honor. Truth! That time the clock struck twelve and the bell rang, I was happily here in this house, sir.

Honor. If I might take the liberty to call one could do me justice.

Mr. Carv. No liberty in justice—speak out.

Honor. If I might trouble Mrs. Carver herself?

Mr. Carv. Mrs. Carver will think it no trouble (*rising with dignity*) to do justice, for she has been the wife to one of his majesty's justices of the peace for many years.

{*Sends a servant for Mrs. CARVER.*

Mr. Carv. Mrs. Carver, my dear, I must summon you to appear in open court, at the suit or prayer of Honor McBride.

Enter Mrs. CARVER, who is followed by Miss BLOOMSBURY, on tiptoe.

Mrs. Carv. Willingly.

Mr. Carv. The case lies in a nutshell, my dear: there is a man who swears that Honor McBride was behind the chapel, with Randal Rooney putting a ring on her finger, when the clock struck twelve, and our workmen's bell rang this morning. Honor avers she was at Bob's Fort with you: now as she could not be, like a bird, in two places at once—was she with you?

Mrs. Carv. Honor McBride was with me when the workmen's bell rang, and when the clock struck twelve, this day—she stayed with me till two o'clock.

{*All the ROONIES, except CATTY, exclaim—*

Oh, no going beyond the lady's word!

Mrs. Carv. And I think it but justice to add, that Honor McBride has this day given me such proofs of her being a good girl, a good daughter, and a good sister, that she has secured my good opinion and good wishes for life.

Mr. Carv. And mine in consequence.

Bloom. And mine of course. {*HONOR curtsies.*

{*Old McBRIDE bows very low to Mr. CARVER, and again to Mrs. CARVER. PHIL bows to Mr. and Mrs. CARVER, and to Miss BLOOMSBURY.*

Old McB. Where are you now, Catty?—and you, Pat, ye unfortinate liar?

Pat. (*falling on his knees*) On me knees I am. Oh, I am an unfortinate liar, and I beg your honour's pardon this once.

Mr. Carv. A most abandoned liar, I pronounce you.

Pat. Oh! I hope your honour won't abandon me, for I didn't know Miss Honor was under her ladyship, Mrs. Carver's favour and purtection, or I'd sooner ha' cut my tongue out clane—and I expict your honour won't turn your hack on me quite, for this is the first lies I ever was found out in since my creation; and how could I help, when it was by my master's particular desire?

Mr. Carv. Your master! honest Gerald O'Blaney!

Catty. O'Blaney!—save us! (*Lifting up her hands and eyes.*)

Mr. Carv. Take care, Pat Coxe.

Pat. Mr. O'Blaney, ma'am—plase your honour—all truth now—the counshillor, that same and no other, as I've breath in my body—for why should I tell a lie now, when I've no place in my eye, and not a ha'porth to get by it? I'll confess all. It was by my master's orders that I should set you, Mrs. Rooney, and your pride up, ma'am, again' making up with them McBrides. I'll tell the truth now, plase your honour—that was the cause of the lies I mentioned about the ring and chapel—I'll tell more, if you'll bind Mr. Randal to keep the pace.

Randal. I?—ye dirty dog!—Didn't I tell ye already, I'd not dirty my fingers with the likes of you?

Pat. All Mr. Gerald O'Blaney's aim was to ruin Mr. Randal Rooney, and set him by the ears with that gentleman, Mr. Philip McBride, the brother, and they to come to blows and outrage, and then be in disgrace committed by his honour.

Randal. (*turning to* HONOR McBRIDE) Honor, you saved all—your brother and I never lifted our hands against one another, thanks be to Heaven and you, dearest!

Catty. And was there no truth in the story of the chapel and the ring?

Pat. Not a word of truth, but lies, Mrs. Rooney, dear ma'am, of the master's putting into my mouth out of his own head.

{*CATTY ROONEY walks firmly and deliberately across the room to HONOR McBRIDE.*

Catty. Honor McBride, I was wrong; and here, publicly, as I traduced you, I ax your pardon before his honour, and your father, and your brother, and before Randal, and before my faction and his.

{*Both ROONIES and McBRIDES all, excepting Old McBRIDE, clap their hands, and huzza.*

Mr. Carv. I ought to reprove this acclamation—but this once I let it pass.

Phil. Father, you said nothing—what do you say, sir?

Old McB. (*never moving*) I say nothing at all. I never doubted Honor, and knew the truth must appear—that's all I say.

Honor. Oh! father dear—more you will say (*shaking his stick gently*). Look up at me, and remember the promise you gave me, when Catty should be rasonable—and is not she rasonable now?

Old McB. I did not hear a word from her about the bog of Ballynascraw.

Catty. Is it the pitiful bit?—No more about it! Make crame cheeses of it—what care I? 'Twas only for pride I stood out—not *that* I'm thinking of now!

Old McB. Well, then, miracles will never cease! here's one in your favour, Honor; so take her, Randal, fortune and all—a wife of five hundred.

Randal. (*kneeling*) Oh! happiest of men I am this minute.

Catty. I the same, if she had not a pinny in the world.

Mr. Carv. Happiest of men!—Don't kneel or go in to ecstasies now, I beg, till I know the *rationale* of this. Was not I consulted?—did not I give my opinion and advice in favour of another?

Old McB. You was—you did, plase your honour, and I beg your honour's pardon, and Mr. Counsellor O'Blaney's.

Mr. Carv. And did not you give your consent?—I must think him a very ill-used person.

Old McB. I gave my consint only in case he could win hers, plase your honour, and he could *not*—and I could not break my own daughter's heart, and I beg your honour's pardon.

Mr. Carv. I don't know how that may be, sir, but I gave my approbation to the match; and I really am not accustomed to have my advice or opinion neglected or controverted. Yet, on the other hand—

Enter a Footman with a note, which he gives to Mr. CARVER.

Old McB. (*aside to PHIL*) Say something for me, Phil, can't ye?—I hav'n't a word.

Mr. Carv. (*rising with a quicker motion than usual*) Bless me! bless me! —here is a revolution! and a counter revolution!—Here's news will make you all in as great astonishment as I own I am.

Old McB. What is it?

Randal. I'm made for life—I don't care what comes.

Honor. Nor I: so it is not to touch you, I'm happy.

Catty. Oh! your honour, spake quick, *this time*—I beg pardon!

Mr. Carv. Then I have to confess that *for once* I have been deceived and mistaken in my judgment of a man; and what is more, of a man's *circumstances* completely—O'Blaney.

Old McB. What of his *circumstances*, oh! sir, in the name of mercy?

Mr. Carv. Bankrupt, at this instant all under seizure to the supervisor. Mr. Gerald O'Blaney has fled the country.

Old McB. Then, Honor, you are without a penny; for all her fortune, 500*l.*, was in his hands.

Randal. Then I'm as happy to have her without a penny—happier I am to prove my love pure.

Catty. God bless you for my own son! That's our way of thinking, Mr. McBride—you see it was not for the fortune.

Honor. Oh! Phil, didn't I tell you her heart was right?

Catty. We will work hard—cheer up, McBrides. Now the Roonies and McBrides has joined, you'll see we'll defy the world and O'Blaney, the *chate* of *chates*.

Honor. Randal's own mother!

Catty. Ay, now, we are all one family—now pull together. Don't be cast down, Phil dear. I'll never call you *flourishing Phil* again, so don't be standing on pride. Suppose your shister has not a pinny, she's better than the best, and I'll love her and fold her to my ould warm heart, and the daughter of my heart she is now.

Honor. Oh, mother!—for you are my mother now—and happy I am to have a mother in you.

Mr. Carv. I protest it makes me almost—almost—blow my nose.

Catty. Why, then, you're a good cratur. But who tould you I was a vixen, dear—plase your honour?

Mr. Carv. Your friend that is gone.

Catty. O'Blaney?

Randal. Frind! He never was frind to none—least of all to hisself.

Catty. Oh! the double-distilled villain!—he tould your honour I was a vixen, and fond of law. Now would you believe what I'm going to till you? he tould me of his honour—

Mr. Carv. Of me, his patron?

Catty. Of you, his patron, sir. He tould me your honour—which is a slander, as we all here can witness, can't we? by his honour's contempt of Pat Coxe—yet O'Blaney said you was as fond and proud of having informers about you as a rat-catcher is of rats.

Mr. Carv. Mistress Catherine Rooney, and all you good people,—there is a great deal of difference between obtaining information and encouraging common informers.

Catty. There is, I'm sinsible. (*Aside to her son*) Then he's a good magistrate—except a little pompous, mighty good. (*Aloud to Mr. CARVER*) Then I beg your honour's pardon for my bad behaviour, and bad language and all. 'Twas O'Blaney's fau't—but he's down, and don't trample on the fallen.

Old McB. Don't defind O'Blaney! Oh! the villain, to rob me of all my hard arnings. Mrs. Catty, I thank you as much as a heavy heart can, for you're ginerous; and you, Randal, for your—

Randal. Is it for loving her, when I can't help it?—who could?

Old McB. (*sighing deeply*) But still it goes against the father's heart to see his child, his pride, go pinnyless out of his house.

Phil. Then, sir, father dear, I have to tell you she is not pennyless.—But I would not tell you before, that Randal, and Catty too, might show themselves what they are. Honor is not pennyless: the three hundred you gave me to lodge with O'Blaney is safe here. (*Opening his pocket-book.*)—When I was going to him with it as you ordered, by great luck, I was stopped by this very quarrel and riot in Ballynavogue:—he was the original

cause of kicking up the riot, and was summoned before your honour,—and here's the money.

Old McB. Oh, she's not pinnyless! Well, I never saw money with so much pleasure, in all my long days, nor could I think I'd ever live to give it away with half so much satisfaction as this minute. I here give it, Honor, to Randal Rooney and you:—and bless ye, child, with the man of *your* choice, who is *mine* now.

Mrs. Carv. (*aside to Mr. CARVER*) My dear, I wish to invite all these good people to a wedding dinner; but really I am afraid I shall blunder in saying their names—will you prompt me?

Mr. Carv. (*aside to Mrs. CARVER*) Why really I am not used to be a prompter; however, I will condescend to prompt *you*, Mrs. Carver. (*He prompts, while she speaks.*)

Mrs. Carv. Mr. Big Briny of Cloon, Mr. Ulick of Eliogarty, Mr. Charley of Killaspugbrone, and you, Mrs. Catty Rooney, and you, Mr. McBride, senior, and you, Mr. Philip McBride, no longer *flourishing Phil*; since you are now all reconciled, let me have the pleasure of giving you a reconciliation dinner, at the wedding of Honor McBride, who is an honour to her family, and Randal Rooney, who so well deserves her love.

The McBRIDES and ROONIES join in the cry of Long life and great luck to your ladyship, that was always good!

Mr. Carv. And you comprehend that I beg that the wedding may be celebrated at Bob's Fort.

All join in crying, Long may your honour's honour reign over us in glory at Bob's Fort!

Catty. (*cracking her fingers*) A fig for the bog of Ballynascraw!—Now 'tis all Love and no Law!

THE ROSE, THISTLE,

AND

SHAMROCK.

A DRAMA.

IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR WILLIAM HAMDEN . . . *An Elderly English Gentleman.*

CHRISTY GALLAGHER . . . . *Landlord of an Irish village inn.*

MR. ANDREW HOPE . . . . . *A Drum-major in a Scotch regiment.*

OWEN LARKEN . . . . . *The Son of the Widow Larken*
—a Boy of about fifteen.

GILBERT . . . . . *An English Servant of Sir William Hamden.*

WOMEN.

MISS O'HARA . . . . . *A young Heiress—Niece of Sir William Hamden.*

MISS FLORINDA GALLAGHER . *Daughter of Christy Gallagher.*

THE WIDOW LARKEN . . . . *Mother of Owen and of Mabel.*

MABEL LARKEN . . . . . *Daughter of the Widow Larken.*

BIDDY DOYLE . . . . . *Maid of the Inn.*

Band of a Regiment.

SCENE.—*The Village of Bannow, in Ireland.*

THE ROSE,

&c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Dressing-Room in Bannow-Castle, in Ireland.

Enter Sir WILLIAM HAMDEN, in his morning-gown.

Sir W. Every thing precisely in order, even in Ireland!—laid, I do believe, at the very same angle at which they used to be placed on my own dressing-table, at Hamden-place, in Kent. Exact Gilbert! most punctual of valet de chambres!—and a young fellow, as he is, too! It is admirable!—Ay, though he looks as if he were made of wood, and moves like an automaton, he has a warm heart, and a true English spirit—true-born English every inch of him. I remember him, when first I saw him ten years ago at his father's, Farmer Ashfield's, at the harvest-home; there was Gilbert in all his glory, seated on the top of a hay-rick, singing,

"Then sing in praise of men of Kent,
So loyal, brave, and free;
Of Britain's race, if one surpass,
A man of Kent is he!"

How he brought himself to quit the men of Kent to come to Ireland with me is wonderful. However, now he is here, I hope he is tolerably happy: I must ask the question in direct terms; for Gilbert would never speak till spoken to, let him feel what he might.

Sir W. (*calls*) Gilbert!—Gilbert!

Enter GILBERT.

Gilb. Here, sir.

Sir W. Gilbert, now you have been in Ireland some weeks, I hope you are not unhappy.

Gilb. No, sir, thank you, sir.

Sir W. But are you happy, man?

Gilb. Yes, sir, thank you, sir.

{*GILBERT retires, and seems busy arranging his master's clothes: Sir WILLIAM continues dressing.*

Sir W. (*aside*) *Yes, sir, thank you, sir.* As dry as a chip—sparing of his words, as if they were his last. And the fellow can talk if he would—has humour, too, if one could get it out; and eloquence, could I but touch the right string, the heartstring. I'll try again. (*Aloud*) Gilbert!

Gilb. Yes, sir. (*Comes forward respectfully.*)

Sir W. Pray what regiment was it that was passing yesterday through the village of Bannow?

Gilb. I do not know, indeed, sir.

Sir W. That is to say, you saw they were Highlanders, and that was enough for you—you are not fond of the Scotch, Gilbert?

Gilb. No, sir, I can't say as I be.

Sir W. But, Gilbert, for my sake you must conquer this prejudice. I have many Scotch friends whom I shall go to visit one of these days—excellent friends they are!

Gilb. Are they, sir? If so be you found them so, I will do my best, I'm sure.

Sir W. Then pray go down to the inn here, and inquire if any of the Scotch officers are there.

Gilb. I will, sir. I heard say the officers went off this morning.

Sir W. Then you need not go to inquire for them.

Gilb. No, sir. Only as I heard say, the drum-major and band is to stay a few days in Bannow, on account of their wanting to enlist a new bugle-boy. I was a thinking, if so be, sir, you thought well of it, on account you like these Scotch, I'd better to step down, and see how the men be as to being comfortable.

Sir W. That's right, do. Pray, have they tolerable accommodations at the inn in this village?

Gilb. (*smiling*) I can't say much for that, sir.

Sir W. (*aside*) Now I shall set him going. (*Aloud*) What, the inn here is not like one of our English inns on the Bath road?

Gilb. (*suppressing a laugh*) Bath road! Bless you, sir, it's no more like an inn on the Bath road, nor on any road, cross or by-road whatsomdever, as

ever I seed in England. No more like—no more like than nothing at all, sir!

Sir W. What sort of a place is it, then?

Gilb. Why, sir, I'd be ashamed almost to tell you. Why, sir, I never seed such a place to call an inn, in all my born days afore. First and foremost, sir, there's the pig is in and out of the kitchen all day long, and next the calf has what they call the run of the kitchen; so what with them brute beasts, and the poultry that has no coop, and is always under one's feet, or over one's head, the kitchen is no place for a Christian, even to eat his bread and cheese in.

Sir W. Well, so much for the kitchen. But the parlour—they have a parlour, I suppose?

Gilb. Yes, sir, they have a parlour as they may call it, if they think proper, sir. But then again, an honest English farmer would be *afeard on* his life to stay in it, on account of the ceiling just a coming down a' top of his head. And if he should go up stairs, sir, why that's as bad again, and worse; for the half of them there stairs is rotten, and ever so many pulled down and burnt.

Sir W. Burnt!—the stairs?

Gilb. Burnt, sir, as sure as I'm standing here!—burnt, sir, for fuel one *scarce year*, as they says, sir. Moreover, when a man does get up the stairs, sir, why he is as bad off again, and worse; for the floor of the place they calls the bedchamber, shakes at every step, as if it was a coming down with one; and the walls has all cracks, from top to toe—and there's rat-holes, or holes o' some sort or t'other, all in the floor: so that if a man don't pick his steps curiously, his leg must go down through the ceiling below. And moreover, there's holes over head through the roof, sir; so that if it rains, it can't but pour on the bed. They tell me, they used for to shift the bed from one place to another, to find, as they say, the dry corner; but now the floor is grown so crazy, they dare not stir the bed for their lives.

Sir W. Worse and worse!

Gilb. And moreover, they have it now in the worst place in the whole room, sir. Close at the head of the bed, there is a window with every pane broke, and some out entirely, and the women's petticoats and the men's hats just stuck in to *stop all for the night*, as they say, sir.

{*GILBERT tries to stifle his laughter.*

Sir W. Laugh out, honest Gilbert. In spite of your gravity and your civility, laugh. There is no harm, but sometimes a great deal of good done by laughing, especially in Ireland. Laughing has mended, or caused to be mended, many things that never would have been mended otherwise.

Gilb. (*recovering his gravity*) That's true, I dare to say, sir.

Sir W. Now, Gilbert, if you were to keep an inn, it would be a very different sort of inn from what you have been describing—would not it?

Gilb. I hope so, sir.

Sir W. I remember when we were talking of establishing you in England, that your father told me you would like to set up an inn.

Gilb. (*his face brightening*) For sartin, sir, 'tis the thing in the whole world I should like the best, and be the proudest on, if so be it was in my power, and if so be, sir, you could spare me. (*Holding his master's coat for him to put on.*)

Sir W. Could. spare you, Gilbert!—I *will* spare you, whether I can conveniently or not. If I had an opportunity of establishing advantageously a man who has served me faithfully for ten years, do you think I would not put myself to a little inconvenience to do it?—Gilbert, you do not know Sir William Hamden.

Gilb. Thank you, sir, but I do—and I should be main sorry to leave you, that's sartin, if it was even to be landlord of the best inn in all England—I know I should.

Sir W. I believe it.—But, stay—let us understand one another—I am not talking of England, and perhaps you are not thinking of Ireland.

Gilb. Yes, sir, but I am.

Sir W. You are! I am heartily glad to hear it, for then I can serve you directly. This young heiress, my niece, to whom this town belongs, has a new inn ready built.

Gilb. I know, sir.

Sir W. Then, Gilbert, write a proposal for this inn, if you wish for it, and I will speak to my niece.

Gilb. (*bowing*) I thank you, sir—only I hope I shall not stand in any honest man's light. As to a dishonest man, I can't say I value standing in his light, being that he has no right to have any, as I can see.

Sir W. So, Gilbert, you will settle in Ireland at last? I am heartily glad to see you have overcome your prejudices against this country. How has this been brought about?

Gilb. Why, sir, the thing was, I didn't know nothing about it, and there was a many lies told backwards and forwards of Ireland, by a many that ought to have known better.

Sir W. And now that you have seen with your own eyes, you are happily convinced that in Ireland the men are not all savages.

Gilb. No, sir, no ways savage, except in the article of some of them going bare-footed; but the men is good men, most of them.

Sir W. And the women? You find that they have not wings on their shoulders.

Gilb. No, sir. (*Smiling*) And I'm glad they have not got wings, else they might fly away from us, which I'd be sorry for—some of them.

{*After making this speech, GILBERT steps back, and brushes his master's hat diligently.*

Sir W. (*aside*) Ha! is that the case? Now I understand it all. 'Tis fair, that Cupid, who blinds so many, should open the eyes of some of his votaries. (*Aloud.*) When you set up as landlord in your new inn, Gilbert, (*Gilbert comes forward*) you will want a landlady, shall not you?

Gilb. (*falls back, and answers*) I shall, sir, I suppose.

Sir W. Miss—what's her name? the daughter of the landlord of the present inn. Miss—what's her name?

Gilb. (*answers without coming forward*) Miss Gallagher, sir.

Sir W. Miss Gallagher?—A very ugly name!—I think it would be charity to change it, Gilbert.

Gilb. (*bashfully*) It would, no doubt, sir.

Sir W. She is a very pretty girl.

Gilb. She is, sir, no doubt.

{*Cleaning the brush with his hand, bows, and is retiring.*

Sir W. Gilbert, stay, (*GILBERT returns.*) I say, Gilbert, I took particular notice of this Miss Gallagher, as she was speaking to you last Sunday. I thought she seemed to smile upon you, Gilbert.

Gilb. (*very bashfully*) I can't say, indeed, sir.

Sir W. I don't mean, my good Gilbert, to press you to say any thing that you don't choose to say. It was not from idle curiosity that I asked any questions, but from a sincere desire to serve you in whatever way you like best, Gilbert.

Gilb. Oh, dear master! I can't speak, you are so good to me, and always was—too good!—so I say nothing. Only I'm not ungrateful—I know I'm not ungrateful, that I am not! And as to the rest, there's not a thought I have, you'd condescend for to know, but you should know it as soon as my mother—that's to say, as soon as ever I knowed it myself. But, sir, the thing is this, since you're so good to let me speak to you, sir—

Sir W. Speak on, pray, my good fellow.

Gilb. Then, sir, the thing is this. There's one girl, they say, has set her thoughts upon me: now I don't like she, because why? I loves another; but I should not choose to say so, on account of its not being over and above civil, and on account of my not knowing yet for sartin whether or not the girl I loves loves me, being I never yet could bring myself to ask her the question. I'd rather not mention her name neither, till I be more at a sartinty. But since you be so kind, sir, if you be so good to give me till this evening, sir, as I have now, with the hopes of the new inn, an independency to offer her, I will take courage, and I shall have her answer soon, sir—and I will let you know with many thanks, sir, whether—whether my heart's broke or not.

{*Exit GILBERT hastily.*

Sir W. (*alone*) Good, affectionate creature! But who would have thought that out of that piece of wood a lover could be made? This is Cupid's delight!

{*Exit Sir WILLIAM.*

SCENE II.

Parlour of the Inn at Bannow.

Miss FLORINDA GALLAGHER, sola.

Various articles of dress on the floor—a looking-glass propped up on a chest—Miss GALLAGHER is kneeling before the glass, dressing her long hair, which hangs over her shoulders.

Miss G. I don't know what's come to this glass, that it is not flattering at all *the* day. The spots and cracks in it is making me look so full of freckles and crow's feet—and my hair, too, that's such a figure, as straight and as stiff and as stubborn as a presbyterian. See! it won't curl for me: so it is in the papillotes it must be; and that's most genteel.

{*Sound of a drum at a distance—Miss GALLAGHER starts up and listens.*

Miss G. Hark till I hear! Is not that a drum I hear? Ay, I had always a quick ear for the drum from my cradle. And there's the whole band—but it's only at the turn of the avenue. It's on parade they are. So I'll be dressed and dacent before they are here, I'll engage. And it's my plaid scarf I'll throw over all, iligant for the Highlanders, and I don't doubt but the drum-major will be conquist to it at my feet afore night—and what will Mr. Gilbert say to that? And what matter what he says?—I'm not bound to him, especially as he never popped me the question, being so preposterously bashful, as them Englishmen have the misfortune to be. But that's not my fault any way. And if I happen to find a more shutable match, while he's turning the words in his mouth, who's to blame me?—My father, suppose! —And what matter?—Have not I two hundred pounds of my own, down on the nail, if the worst come to the worst, and why need I be a slave to any man, father or other?—But he'll kill himself soon with the whiskey, poor man, at the rate he's going. Two glasses now for his *mornings*, and his *mornings* are going on all day. There he is, roaring. (*Mr. GALLAGHER heard singing.*) You can't come in here, sir.

{*She bolts the door.*

Enter CHRISTY GALLAGHER, kicking the door open.

Christy. Can't I, dear? what will hinder me?—Give me the *kay* of the spirits, if you plase.

Miss G. Oh, sir! see how you are walking through all my things.

Christy. And they on the floor!—where else should I walk, but on the floor, pray, Miss Gallagher?—Is it, like a fly, on the ceiling you'd have me be, walking with my head upside down, to plase you?

Miss G. Indeed, sir, whatever way you're walking, it's with your head upside down, as any body may notice, and that don't plase me at all—isn't it a shame, in a morning?

Christy. Phoo! don't be talking of shame, you that knows nothing about it. But lend me the kay of the spirits, Florry.

Miss G. Sir, my name's Florinda—and I've not the kay of the spirits at all, nor any such vulgar thing.

Christy. Vulgar! is it the kay?

Miss G. Yes, sir, it's very vulgar to be keeping of kays.

Christy. That's lucky, for I've lost all mine now. Every single kay I have in the wide world now I lost, barring this kay of the spirits, and that must be gone after the rest too I b'lieve, since you know nothing of it, unless it be in this here chist.

{*CHRISTY goes to the chest.*

Miss G. Oh, mercy, sir!—Take care of the looking-glass, which is broke already. Oh, then, father, 'tis not in the chist, 'pon my word and honour now, if you'll b'lieve: so don't be rummaging of all my things.

{*CHRISTY persists in opening the chest.*

Christy. It don't signify, Florry; I've granted myself a gineral sarch-warrant; dear, for the kay; and, by the blessing, I'll go clane to the bottom o' this chist. (*Miss GALLAGHER writhes in agony.*) Why, what makes you stand twisting there like an eel or an ape, child?—What, in the name of the ould one, is it you're afeard on?—Was the chist full now of love-letter scrawls from the grand signior or the pope himself, you could not be more tinder of them.

Miss G. Tinder, sir!—to be sure, when it's my best bonnet I'm thinking on, which you are mashing entirely.

Christy. Never fear, dear! I won't mash an atom of the bonnet, provided always, you'll mash these apples for me, jewel. (*He takes apples out of the chest.*) And wasn't I lucky to find them in it? Oh, I knew I'd not sarch this chist for nothing. See how they'll make an iligant apple-pie for Mr. Gilbert now, who loves an iligant apple-pie above all things—your iligant self always excipted, dear.

{*Miss GALLAGHER makes a slight curtsy, but motions the apples from her.*

Miss G. Give the apples then to the girl, sir, and she'll make you the pie, for I suppose she knows how.

Christy. And don't you, then, Florry?

Miss G. And how should I, sir?—You didn't send me to the dancing-school of Ferrinafad to larn me to make apple-pies, I conclude.

Christy. Troth, Florry, 'twas not I sint you there, sorrow foot but your mother; only she's in her grave, and it's bad to be talking ill of the dead any way. But be that how it will, Mr. Gilbert must get the apple-pie, for rasons of my own that need not be mintioned. So, Biddy! Biddy, girl! Biddy Doyle!

Enter BIDDY, running, with a ladle in her hand.

Christy. Drop whatever you have in your hand, and come here, and be hanged to you! And had you no ears to your head, Biddy?

Biddy. Sure I have, sir—ears enough. Only they are bothering me so without, that pig and the dog fighting, that I could not hear ye calling at-all-at-all. What is it?—For I'm skimming the pot, and can't lave it.

{*Miss GALLAGHER goes on dressing*

Christy. It's only these apples, see!—You'll make me an apple-pie, Biddy, smart.

Biddy. Save us, sir!—And how will I ever get time, when I've the hash to make for them Scotch yet? Nor can I tell, for the life of me, what it was I did with the onions and scallions neither, barring by great luck they'd be in and under the press here—(*running to look under the press*)—which they are, praised be God! in the far corner.

{*BIDDY stretches her arm under the press.*

Christy. There's a nice girl, and a 'cute cliver girl, worth a dozen of your Ferrinafads.

{*BIDDY throws the onions out from under the press, while he speaks.*

Miss G. Then she's as idle a girl as treads the earth, in or out of shoe-leather, for there's my bed that she has not made yet, and the stairs with a month's dust always; and never ready by any chance to do a pin's worth for one, when one's dressing.

{*A drum heard; the sound seems to be approaching near.*

Christy. Blood! the last rowl of the drum, and I not got the kay of the spirits.

Miss G. Oh, saints above! what's gone with my plaid scarf?—and my hair *behind*, see!

{*Miss GALLAGHER twists up her hair behind.—BIDDY gathers up the onions into her apron, and exit hastily.—CHRISTY runs about the room in a distracted manner, looking under and over every thing, repeating*—The kay! the kay! the kay!

Christy. For the whiskey must be had for them Scotch, and the bottled beer too for them English; and how will I get all or any without the kay? Bones, and distraction!

Miss G. And my plain hanke'cher that must be had, and where will I find it, in the name of all the damons, in this chaos you've made me out of the chist, father? And how will I git all in again, before the drum-major's in it?

Christy. (*sweeping up a heap of things in his arms, and throwing them into the chest*) Very asy, sure! this ways.

Miss G. (*darting forward*) There's the plaid hanke'cher.—(*She draws it out from the heap under her father's arm, and smooths it on her knee.*) But, oh! father, how you are making hay of my things!

Christy. Then I wish I could make hay of them, for hay is much wanting for the horses that's in it.

Miss G. (*putting on her plaid scarf*) Weary on these pins! that I can't stick any way at all, my hands all trimble so.—Biddy! Biddy! Biddy! Biddy, can't ye?—(*Re-enter BIDDY, looking bewildered.*) Just pin me behind, girl—smart.

Christy. Biddy is it?—Biddy, girl, come over and help me tramp down this hay.

{*CHRISTY jumps into the chest.*

Miss G. Oh, Biddy, run and stop him, for the love of God! with his brogues and big feet.

Biddy. Oh, marcy! that's too bad, sir; get out o' that if you plase, or Miss Florry will go mad, sure! and the major that's coming up the street—Oh, sir, if you plase, in the name of mercy!

Christy. (*jumping out*) Why, then, sittle it all yourself, Biddy, and success to you; but you'll no more get all in again afore Christmas, to the best of my opinion, no more, see! than you'd get bottled porter, froth and all, into the bottle again, once it was out.

Miss G. Such comparisons!—(*tossing back her head.*)

Christy. And caparisons!—(*pointing to the finery on the floor.*) But in the middle of it all, lend me the poker, which will answer for the master-kay, sure!—that poker that is houlding up the window—can't ye, Biddy?

{*BIDDY runs and pulls the poker hastily from under the sash, which suddenly falls, and every pane of glass falls out and breaks.*

Christy. Murder! and no glazier!

Miss G. Then Biddy, of all girls, alive or dead, you're the awk'ardest, vulgarest, unluckiest to touch any thing at all!

Biddy. (*picking up the glass*) I can't think what's come to the glass, that makes it break so asy the day! Sure I done it a hundred times the same, and it never broke wid me afore.

Christy. Well! stick up a petticoat, or something of the kind, and any way lend me hould of the poker; for, in lieu of a kay, that's the only frind in need.

{*Exit CHRISTY with the poker.*

Miss G. There, Biddy, that will do—any how.—Just shut down the lid, can't ye? and find me my other shoe. Biddy—then, lave that,—come out o' that, do girl, and see the bed!—run there, turn it up just any way;—and Biddy, run here,—stick me this tortise comb in the back of my head—oh! (*screams and starts away from BIDDY.*) You ran it fairly into my brain, you did! you're the grossest! heavy handiest!—fit only to wait on Sheelah na

Ghirah, or the like.—(*Turns away from BIDDY with an air of utter contempt.*) But I'll go and resave the major properly.—(*Turns back as she is going, and says to BIDDY*) Biddy, settle all here, can't ye?—Turn up the bed, and sweep the glass and dust in the dust corner, for it's here I'm bringing him to dinner,—so settle up all in a minute, do you mind me, Biddy! for your life!

{*Exit Miss GALLAGHER.*

BIDDY, alone—(*speaking while she puts the things in the room in order.*)

Settle up all in a minute!—asy said!—and *for my life* too!—Why, then, there's not a greater slave than myself in all Connaught, or the three kingdoms—from the time I get up in the morning, and that's afore the flight of night, till I get to my bed again at night, and that's never afore one in the morning! But I wouldn't value all one pin's pint, if it was kind and civil she was to me. But after I strive, and strive to the utmost, and beyand—(*sighs deeply*) and when I found the innions, and took the apple-pie off her hands, and settled her behind, and all to the best of my poor ability for her, after, to go and call me Sheelah na Ghirah! though I don't rightly know who that Sheelah na Ghirah was from Adam—but still it's the bad language I get, goes to my heart. Oh, if it had but plased Heaven to have cast me my lot in the sarvice of a raal jantleman or lady instead of the likes of these! Now, I'd rather be a dog in his honour's or her honour's house than lie under the tongue, of Miss Gallagher, as I do—to say nothing of ould Christy.

Miss GALLAGHER'S voice heard, calling,

Biddy! Biddy Doyle! Biddy, can't ye?

Biddy. Here, miss, in the room, readying it, I am.

CHRISTY GALLAGHER'S voice heard calling,

Biddy!—Biddy Doyle!—Biddy, girl! What's come o' that girl, that always out o' the way idling, when wanted?—Plague take her!

Biddy. Saints above! hear him now!—But I scorn to answer.

Screaming louder in mingled voices, CHRISTY'S and Miss GALLAGHER'S,

Biddy! Biddy Doyle!—Biddy, girl!

Christy. (*putting in his head*) Biddy! sorrow take ye! are ye in it?—And you are, and we cracking our vitals calling you. What is it you're dallying

here for? Stir! stir! dinner!

{*He draws back his head, and exit.*

BIDDY, alone.

Coming then!—Sure it's making up the room I am with all speed, and the bed not made after all!—(*Throws up the press-bed.*)—But to live in this here house, girl or boy, one had need have the lives of nine cats and the legs of forty.

{*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Kitchen of the Inn.

Miss FLORINDA GALLAGHER and CHRISTY GALLAGHER.

Boys and Men belonging to the Band, in the back Scene.

Christy. (*to the band*) The girl's coming as fast as possible to get yees your dinners, jantlemen, and sorrow better dinner than she'll give you: you'll get all instantly—(*To Miss GALLAGHER*) And am not I telling you, Florry, that the drum-major did not come in yet at all, but went out through the town, to see and get a billet and bed for the sick man they've got.

Enter BIDDY, stops and listens.

Miss G. I wonder the major didn't have the manners to step in, and spake to the lady first—was he an Irishman, he would.

Biddy. Then it's my wonder he wouldn't step in to take his dinner first—was he an Englishman, he would. But it's lucky for me and for him he didn't, becaase he couldn't, for it won't be ready this three-quarters of an hour—only the Scotch broth, which boiled over.

{*BIDDY retires, and goes on cooking.—CHRISTY fills out a glass of spirits to each of the band.*

Miss G. Since the major's not in it, I'll not be staying here—for here's only riff-raff triangle and gridiron boys, and a black-a-moor, and that I never could stand; so I'll back into the room. Show the major up, do you mind, father, as soon as ever he'd come.

Christy. Jantlemen all! here's the king's health, and confusion worse confounded to his enemies, for yees; or if ye like it better, here's the plaid tartan and fillibeg for yees, and that's a comprehensive toast—will give ye an appetite for your dinners.

{*They drink in silence.*

Miss G. Did ye hear me, father?

Christy. Ay, ay.—Off with ye!

{*Exit Miss GALLAGHER, tossing back her head.—CHRISTY pours out a glass of whiskey for himself, and with appropriate graces of the elbow and little finger, swallows it, making faces of delight.*

Christy. Biddy! Biddy, girl, ye!—See the pig putting in his nose—keep him out—can't ye?

Biddy. Hurrush! hurrush! (*Shaking her apron.*) Then that pig's as sinsible as any Christian, for he'd run away the minute he'd see me.

Christy. That's manners o' the pig.—Put down a power more turf, Biddy:—see the jantlemen's gathering round the fire, and has a right to be *could* in their knees this St. Patrick's day in the morning—for it's March, that comes in like a lion.

{*The band during this speech appear to be speaking to BIDDY.—She comes forward to CHRISTY.*

Christy. What is it they are whispering and conjuring, Biddy?

Biddy. 'Twas only axing me, they were, could they all get beds the night in it.

Christy. Beds! ay can yees, and for a dozen more—only the room above is tinder in the joists, and I would not choose to put more on the floor than two beds, and one shake-down, which will answer for five; for it's a folly to talk,—I'll tell you the truth, and not a word of lie. Wouldn't it be idle to put more of yees in the room than it could hold, and to have the floor be coming through the parlour ceiling, and so spoil two good rooms for one night's bad rest, jantlemen?—Well, Biddy, what is it they're saying?

Biddy. They say they don't understand—can they have beds or not?

Christy. Why, body and bones! No, then, since nothing else will they comprehend,—*no*,—only five, say,—five can sleep in it.

{*The band divide into two parties,—Five remain, and the others walk off in silence.*

Biddy. And it's into the room you'd best walk up, had not yees, five jantlemen, that sleep?

{*The five walk into the parlour—CHRISTY preparing to follow, carrying whiskey bottle and, jug—turns back, and says to BIDDY,*

Is it dumb they are all? or *innocents*?

Biddy. Not at all innocents, no more than myself nor yourself. Nor dumb neither, only that the Scotch tongue can't spake English as we do.

Christy. Oh! if that's all, after dinner the whiskey punch will make 'em spake, I'll engage.

{*Exit CHRISTY.*

Biddy. 'Tis I that am glad they've taken themselves away, for there's no cooking with all the men in the fire.

Enter Mr. ANDREW HOPE, Drum-major.

Mr. H. A gude day to you, my gude lassy.

Biddy. The same to you, sir, and kindly. I beg your pardon for not knowing—would it be the drum-major, sir?

Mr. H. No offence, my gude lass; I am Andrew Hope, and drum-major. I met some of my men in the street coming down, and they told me they could not have beds here.

Biddy. No, sir, plase your honour, only five that's in the room yonder: if you'd be plased to walk up, and you'll get your dinner immediately, your honour, as fast as can be dished, your honour.

Mr. H. No hurry, my gude lass. But I would willingly see the beds for my poor fellows, that has had a sair march.

Biddy. Why then, if your honour would take a fool's advice, you'd not be looking at them beds, to be spoiling your dinner—since, good or bad, all the looking at 'em in the wide world won't mend 'em one feather, sure.

Mr. H. My gude girl, that's true. Still I'd like ever to face the worst.

Biddy. Then it's up that ladder you'll go.

Mr. H. No stairs?

Biddy. Oh, there are stairs—but they are burnt and coming down, and you'll find the ladder safest and best; only mind the little holes in the floor, if you plase, your honour.

{*Mr. HOPE ascends the ladder while she speaks, and goes into the bedchamber above.*

BIDDY, sola.

Well, I'm ashamed of my life, when a stranger and foreigner's reviewing our house, though I'm only the girl in it, and no ways answerable. It frets

me for my country forenent them Scotch and English. (*Mr. HOPE descends the ladder.*) Then I'm sorry it's not better for your honour's self, and men. But there's a new inn to be opened the 25th, in this town; and if you return this way, I hope things will be more agreeable and proper. But you'll have no bad dinner, your honour, any way;—there's Scotch broth, and Scotch hash, and fried eggs and bacon, and a turkey, and a boiled leg of mutton and turnips, and *pratees* the best, and well boiled; and I hope, your honour, that's enough for a soldier's dinner, that's not nice.

Mr. H. Enough for a soldier's dinner! ay, gude truth, my lass; and more than enough for Andrew Hope, who is no ways nice. But, tell me, have you no one to help you here, to dress all this?

Biddy. Sorrow one, to do a hand's turn for me but myself, plase your honour; for the daughter of the house is too fine to put her hand to any thing in life: but she's in the room there within, beyond, if you would like to see her—a fine lady she is!

Mr. H. A fine lady, is she? Weel, fine or coarse, I shall like to see her,—and weel I may and must, for I had a brother once I luved as my life; and four years back that brother fell sick here, on his road to the north, and was kindly tended here at the inn at Bannow; and he charged me, puir lad, on his death-bed, if ever fate should quarter me in Bannow, to inquire for his gude friends at the inn, and to return them his thanks; and so I'm fain to do, and will not sleep till I've done so.—But tell me first, my kind lassy,—for I see you are a kind lassy,—tell me, has not this house had a change of fortune, and fallen to decay of late? for the inn at Bannow was pictured to me as a bra' neat place.

Biddy. Ah! that was, may-be, the time the Larkens had it?

Mr. H. The Larkens!—that was the very name: it warms my heart to hear the sound of it.

Biddy. Ay, and quite another sort of an inn this was, I hear talk, in their time,—and quite another guess sort, the Larkens from these Gallaghers.

Mr. H. And what has become of the Larkens, I pray?

Biddy. They are still living up yonder, by the bush of Bannow, in a snug little place of a cabin—that is, the Widow Kelly.

Mr. H. Kelly!—but I am looking for Larken.

Biddy. Oh, Larken! that's Kelly: 'tis all one—she was a Kelly before she was married, and in this country we stick to the maiden's name throughout.

Mr. H. The same in our country—often.

Biddy. Indeed! and her daughter's name is Mabel, after the Kellys; for you might have noticed, if it ever happened your honour to hear it, an ould song of Mabel Kelly—*Planxty* Kelly. Then the present Mabel is as sweet a cratur as ever the ould Mabel Kelly was—but I must mind the pratees. (*She goes to lift a pot off the fire.*)

Mr. H. Hold! my gude girl, let me do that for you; mine is a strong haund.

Biddy. I thank your honour,—it's too much trouble entirely for a jantleman like you; but it's always the best jantleman has the *laste* pride.—Then them Kellys is a good race, ould and young, and I love 'em, root and branch. Besides Mabel the daughter, there's Owen the son, and as good a son he is—no better! He got an edication in the beginning, till the troubles came across his family, and the boy, the child, for it's bare fifteen he is this minute, give up all his hopes and prospects, the cratur! to come home and slave for his mother.

Mr. H. Ah, that's weel—that's weel! I luve the lad that makes a gude son. —And is the father *deed*?

Biddy. Ay, dead and deceased he is, long since, and was buried just upon that time that ould Sir Cormac, father of the young heiress that is now at the castle above, the former landlord that was over us, died, see!—Then there was new times and new *takes*, and the widow was turned out of the inn, and these Gallaghers got it, and all wint wrong and to rack; for Mrs. Gallagher, that was, drank herself into her grave unknownst, for it was by herself in private she took it; and Christy Gallagher, the present man, is doing the same, only publicly, and running through all, and the house is tumbling over our ears: but he hopes to get the new inn; and if he does, why, he'll be lucky —and that's all I know, for the dinner is done now, and I'm going in with it —and won't your honour walk up to the room now?

Mr. H. (*going to the ladder*) Up here?

Biddy. Oh, it's not *up* at all, your honour, sure! but down here—through this ways.

Mr. H. One word more, my gude lassy. As soon as we shall have all dined, and you shall have ta'en your ane dinner, I shall beg of you, if you be

not then too much tired, to show me the way to that bush of Bannow, whereat this Widow Larken's cottage is.

Biddy. With all the pleasure in life, if I had not a fut to stand upon.

{*Exit Mr. HOPE.—BIDDY follows with a dish smoking hot.*

Biddy. And I hope you'll find it an iligant Scotch hash, and there's innions plinty—sure the best I had I'd give you; for I'm confident now he's the true thing—and tho' he is Scotch, he desarves to be Irish, every inch of him.

{*Exit BIDDY DOYLE.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Irish Cabin.—The Kitchen.

Widow LARKEN. On one side of her, MABEL at needle-work; on the other side, OWEN her son enters, bringing in a spinning-wheel, which he places before his mother.

Owen. There, mother, is your wheel mended for you.

Mabel. Oh, as good as new, Owen has made it for you.

Widow. Well, whatever troubles come upon me in this world, have not I a right to be thankful, that has such good childer left me?—Still it grieves me, and goes to the quick of my heart, Mabel, dear, that your brother here should be slaving for me, a boy that is qualified for better.

Owen. And what better can I be than working for my mother—man or boy?

Mabel. And if he thinks it no slavery, what slavery is it, mother?

Owen. Mother, to-day is the day to propose for the new inn—I saw several with the schoolmaster, who was as busy as a bee, penning proposals for them, according as they dictated, and framing letters and petitions for Sir William Hamden and Miss O'Hara. Will you go up to the castle and speak, mother?

Widow. No, no—I can't speak, Owen.

Owen. Here's the pen and ink-horn, and I'll sit me down, if you'd sooner write than speak.

Widow. See, Owen, to settle your mind, I would not wish to get that inn.

Owen. Not wish to get it! The new inn, mother—but if you had gone over it, as I have. 'Tis the very thing for you. Neat and compact as a nutshell; not one of them grand inns, too great for the place, that never answers no more than the hat that's too big for the head, and that always blows off.

Widow. No, dear, not the thing for me, now a widow, and your sister Mabel—tho' 'tis not for me to say—such a likely, fine girl. I'd not be happy to have her in a public-house—so many of all sorts that would be in it, and

drinking, may be, at fairs and funerals, and no man of the house, nor master, nor father for her.

Owen. Sure, mother, I'm next to a father for her. Amn't I a brother? and no brother ever loved a sister better, or was more jealous of respect for her; and if you'd be pleasing, I could be man and master enough.

Widow. (*laughing*) You, ye dear slip of a boy!

Owen. (*proudly, and raising his head high*) Slip of a boy as I am, then, and little as you think of me—

Widow. Oh! I think a great deal of you! only I can't think you big nor old, Owen, can I?

Owen. No—nor any need to be big or old, to keep people of all sorts in respect, mother.

Widow. Then he looked like his father—did not he, Mabel?

Mabel. He did—God bless him!

Owen. Now hear me, mother, for I'm going to speak sense. You need not listen, Mabel.

Mabel. But it's what I like to listen to sense, especially yours, Owen.

Owen. Then I can't help it.—You must hear, even if you blush for it.

Mabel. Why would I blush?

Owen. Because you won't be able to help it, when I say Mr. Gilbert.—See!

Mabel. Oh, dear Owen! that's not fair. (*She falls back a little.*)

Owen. Well, mother, it's with you I'm reasoning. If he was your son-in-law—

Widow. Hush! that he'll never be. Now, Owen, I'll grow angry if you put nonsense in the girl's head.

Owen. But if it's in the man's head, it's not a bit nonsense.

Mabel. Owen, you might well say I shouldn't listen to you.

{*Exit MABEL.*

Widow. There now, you've drove your sister off.

Owen. Well, Gilbert will bring her on again, may be.

Widow. May be—but that *may be* of yours might lead us all wrong.

{*She lays her hand on OWEN'S arm, and speaks in a serious tone.*

Widow. Now, dear, don't be saying one word more to her, lest it should end in a disappointment.

Owen. Still it is my notion, 'tis Mabel he loves.

Widow. Oh! what should you know, dear, o' the matter?

Owen. Only having eyes and ears like another.

Widow. Then what hinders him to speak?

Owen. It's bashfulness only, mother. Don't you know what that is?

Widow. I do, dear. It's a woman should know that best. And it is not Mabel, nor a daughter of mine, nor a sister of yours, Owen, should be more forward to understand than the man is to speak—was the man a prince.

Owen. Mother, you are right; but I'm not wrong neither. And since I'm to say no more, I'm gone, mother.

{*Exit OWEN.*

Widow. (*alone*) Now who could blame that boy, whatever he does or says? It's all heart he is, and wouldn't hurt a fly, except from want of thought. But, stay now, I'm thinking of them soldiers that is in town. (*Sighs*) Then I didn't sleep since ever they come; but whenever I'd be sinking to rest, starting, and fancying I heard the drum for Owen to go. (*A deep groaning sigh.*) Och! and then the apparition of Owen in regimentals was afore me!

Enter OWEN, dancing and singing,

"Success to my brains, and success to my tongue!
Success to myself, that never was wrong!"

Widow. What is it? What ails the boy? Are ye mad, Owen?

Owen. (*capering, and snapping his fingers*) Ay, mad! mad with joy I am. And it's joy I give you, and joy you'll give me, mother darling. The new inn's yours, and no other's, and Gilbert is your own too, and no other's—but Mabel's for life. And is not there joy enough for you, mother?

Widow. Joy!—Oh, too much! (*She sinks on a seat.*)

Owen. I've been too sudden for her!

Widow. No, dear—not a bit, only just give me time—to feel it. And is it true? And am I in no dream now? And where's Mabel, dear?

Owen. Gone to the well, and Gilbert with her. We met her, and he turned off with her, and I come on to tell you, mother dear.

Widow. Make me clear and certain; for I'm slow and weak, dear. Who told you all this good? and is it true?—And my child Mabel *mavourneen*!—Oh, tell me again it's true.

Owen. True as life. But your lips is pale still, and you all in a tremble. So lean on me, mother dear, and come out into God's open air, till I see your spirit come back—and here's your bonnet, and we'll meet Mabel and Gilbert, and we'll all go up to the castle to give thanks to the lady.

Widow. (*looking up to heaven*) Thanks! Oh, hav'n't I great reason to be thankful, if ever widow had!

{*Exeunt, WIDOW leaning on OWEN.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Bannote Castle.

Footmen bringing in Baskets of Flowers.

Miss O'HARA and Sir WILLIAM HAMDEN.

Clara. Now, my dear uncle, I want to consult you.

Sir W. And welcome, my child. But if it is about flowers, you could not consult a worse person, for I scarcely know a rose from a ——. What is this you have here—a thistle?

Clara. Yes, sir; and that is the very thing I want your opinion about.

Sir W. Well, my dear, all I know about thistles, I think, is, that asses love thistles—will that do?

Clara. Oh, no, sir—pray be serious, for I am in the greatest hurry to settle how it is all to be. You know it is St. Patrick's day.

Sir W. Yes, and here is plenty of shamrock, I see.

Clara. Yes, here is the shamrock—the rose, the ever blowing rose—and the thistle. And as we are to have Scotch, English, and Irish at our little fête champêtre this evening, don't you think it would be pretty to have the tents hung with the rose, thistle, and shamrock joined?

Sir W. Very pretty, my dear: and I am glad there are to be tents, otherwise a fête champêtre in the month of March would give me the rheumatism even to think of.

Clara. Oh, my dear sir, not at all. You will be snug and warm in the green-house.

Sir W. Well, Clara, dispose of me as you please—I am entirely at your service for the rest of my days.

Clara. Thank you, sir—you are the best of uncles, guardians, and friends.

{*Miss O'HARA goes back and appears to be giving directions to the servants.*

Sir W. Uncle, nature made me—guardian, your father made me—friend, you made me yourself, Clara. (*Sir WILLIAM comes forward, and speaks as*

if in a reverie.) And ever more my friendship for her shall continue, though my guardianship is over. I am glad I conquered my indolence, and came to Ireland with her; for a cool English head will be wanting to guide that warm Irish heart.—And here I stand counsel for prudence against generosity!

Clara. (*advancing to him playfully*) A silver penny for your thoughts, uncle.

Sir W. Shall I never teach you economy?—such extravagance! to give a penny, and a silver penny, for what you may have for nothing.

Clara. Nothing can come of nothing—speak again.

Sir W. I was thinking of you, my—*ward* no longer.

Clara. Ward always, pray, sir. Whatever I may be in the eye of the law, I am not arrived at years of discretion yet, in my own opinion, nor in yours, I suspect. So I pray you, uncle, let me still have the advantage of your counsel and guidance.

Sir W. You ask for my advice, Clara. Now let me see whether you will take it.

Clara. I am all attention.

Sir W. You know you must allow me a little prosing. You are an heiress, Clara—a rich heiress—an Irish heiress. You desire to do good, don't you?

Clara. (*with eagerness*) With all my heart!—With all my soul!

Sir W. That is not enough, Clara. You must not only desire to do good, you must know how to do it.

Clara. Since you, uncle, know that so well, you will teach it to me.

Sir W. Dear, flattering girl—but you shall not flatter me out of the piece of advice I have ready for you. Promise me two things.

Clara. And first, for your first.

Sir W. Finish whatever you begin.—Good beginnings, it is said, make good endings, but great beginnings often make little endings, or, in this country, no endings at all. *Finis coronat opta*—and that crown is wanting wherever I turn my eyes. Of the hundred magnificent things your munificent father began—

Clara. (*interrupting*) Oh, sir, spare my father!—I promise you that *I* will finish whatever I begin. What's your next command?

Sir W. Promise me that you will never make a promise to a tenant, nor any agreement about business, but in writing—and empower me to say that you will never keep any verbal promise about business—then, none such will ever be claimed.

Clara. I promise you—Stay!—this is a promise about business: I must give it to you in writing.

{*Miss O'HARA sits down to a writing-table, and writes.*

Sir W. (*looking out of the window*) I hope I have been early enough in giving this my second piece of advice, worth a hundred sequins—for I see the yard is crowded with gray-coated suitors, and the table here is already covered with letters and petitions.

Clara. Yes, uncle, but I have not read half of them yet.

{*Presents the written promise to Sir WILLIAM.*

Sir W. Thank you, my dear; and you will be thankful to me for this when I am dead and gone.

Clara. And whilst you are alive and here, if you please, uncle. Now, sir, since you are so kind to say that your time is at my disposal, will you have the goodness to come with me to these gray-coated suitors, and let us give answers to these poor petitioners, who, "as in duty bound, will ever pray."

{*Takes up a bundle of papers.*

Sir W. (*taking a letter from his pocket*) First, my dear niece, I must add to the number. I have a little business. A petition to present from a *protégé* of mine.

Clara. A protégé of yours!—Then it is granted, whatever it be.

Sir W. (*smiling*) Recollect your promise, Clara.

Clara. Oh, true—it must be in writing.

{*She goes hastily to the writing-table, and takes up a pen.*

Sir W. Read before you write, my dear—I insist upon it.

Clara. Oh, sir, when it is a request of yours, how can I grant it soon enough? But it shall be done in the way you like best—slowly—deliberately—(*opening the letter*)—in minuet time. And I will look before I leap—and I'll read before I write. (*She reads the signature.*) Gilbert! Honest Gilbert, how glad I shall be to do any thing for you, independently of your master! (*Reads on, suddenly lets the letter drop, and clasps her hands.*) Sir

—Uncle, my dear uncle, how unfortunate I am! Why did, not you ask me an hour ago?—Within this hour I have promised the new inn to another person.

Sir W. Indeed!—that is unfortunate. My poor Gilbert will be sadly disappointed.

Clara. How vexed I am! But I never should have thought of Gilbert for the inn: I fancied he disliked Ireland so much that he would never have settled here.

Sir W. So thought I till this morning. But love, my dear—love is lord of all. Poor Gilbert!

Clara. Poor Gilbert!—I am so sorry I did not know this sooner. Of all people, I should for my own part have preferred Gilbert for the inn, he would have kept it so well.

Sir W. He would so. (*Sighs.*)

Clara. I do so blame myself—I have been so precipitate, so foolish, so wrong—without consulting you even.

Sir W. Nay, my dear, I have been as wrong, as foolish, as precipitate as you; for before I consulted you, I told Gilbert that I could almost *promise* that he should have the inn in consequence of my recommendation. And upon the strength of that *almost* he is gone a courting. My dear, we are both a couple of fools; but I am an old—you are a young one. There is a wide difference—let that comfort you.

Clara. Oh, sir, nothing comforts me, I am so provoked with myself; and you will be so provoked with me, when I tell you how silly I have been.

Sir W. Pray tell me.

Clara. Would you believe that I have literally given it for a song? A man sent me this morning a copy of verses to the heiress of Bannow. The verses struck my fancy—I suppose because they flattered me; and with the verses came a petition setting forth claims, and a tenant's right, and fair promises, and a proposal for the new inn; and at the bottom of the paper I rashly wrote these words—"*The poet's petition is granted.*"

Sir W. A promise in writing, too!—My dear Clara, I cannot flatter you—this certainly is not a wise transaction. So, to reward a poet, you made him an innkeeper. Well, I have known wiser heads, to reward a poet, make him an exciseman.

Clara. But, sir, I am not quite so silly as they were, for I did not *make* the poet an innkeeper—he is one already.

Sir W. An innkeeper already!—Whom do you mean?

Clara. A man with a strange name—or a name that will sound strange to your English ears—Christy Gallagher.

Sir W. A rogue and a drunken dog, I understand: but he is a poet, and knows how to flatter the heiress of Bannow.

Clara. (*striking her forehead*) Silly, silly Clara!

Sir W. (*changing his tone from irony to kindness*) Come, my dear Clara, I will not torment you any more. You deserve to have done a great deal of mischief by your precipitation; but I believe this time you have done little or none, at least none that is irremediable; and you have made Gilbert happy, I hope and believe, though without intending it.

Clara. My dear uncle—you set my heart at ease—but explain.

Sir W. Then, my dear, I shrewdly suspect that the daughter of this Christy *What-do-you-call-him* is the lady of Gilbert's thoughts.

Clara. I see it all in an instant. That's delightful! We can pension off the drunken old father, and Gilbert and the daughter will keep the inn. Gilbert is in the green-house, preparing the coloured lamps—let us go and speak to him this minute, and settle it all.

Sir W. Speak to him of his loves? Oh, my dear, you'd kill him on the spot! He is so bashful, he'd blush to death.

Clara. Well, sir, do you go alone, and I will keep far, far aloof.

{*Exeunt at opposite sides.*

SCENE III.

Parlour of the Inn.

CHRISTY and Miss GALLAGHER.

Christy. (*to Miss GALLAGHER, slapping her on her back*) Hould up your head, child; there's money bid for you.

Miss G. Lord, father, what a thump on the back to salute one with. Well, sir, and if money is bid for me, no wonder: I suppose, it's because I have money.

Christy. That's all the rason—you've hit it, Florry. It's money that love always looks for now. So you may be proud to larn the news I have for you, which will fix Mr. Gilbert, your bachelor, for life, I'll engage—and make him speak out, you'll see, afore night-fall. We have the new inn, dear!—I've got the promise here under her own hand-writing.

Miss G. Indeed!—Well, I'm sure I shall be glad to get out of this hole, which is not fit for a rat or a Christian to live in—and I'll have my music and my piano in the back parlour, genteel.

Christy. Oh! Ferrinafad, are you there? It's your husband must go to that expinse, my precious, if he chooses, *twingling* and *tweedling*, instead of the puddings and apple pies—that you'll settle betwix yees; and in the honeymoon, no doubt, you've cunning enough to compass that, and more.

Miss G. To be sure, sir, and before I come to the honeymoon, I promise you; for I won't become part or parcel of any man that ever wore a head, except he's music in his soul enough to allow me my piano in the back parlour.

Christy. Asy! asy! Ferrinafad—don't be talking about the piano-forte, till you are married. Don't be showing the halter too soon to the shy horse—it's with the sieve of oats you'll catch him; and his head once in the sieve, you have the halter on him clane. Pray, after all, tell me, Florry, the truth—did Mr. Gilbert ever ax you?

Miss G. La, sir, what a coarse question. His eyes have said as much a million of times.

Christy. That's good—but not in law, dear. For, see, you could not *shue* a man in the four courts for a breach of promise made only with the eyes, jewel. It must be with the tongue afore witness, mind, or under the hand, sale, or mark—look to that.

Miss G. But, dear sir, Mr. Gilbert is so tongue-tied with that English bashfulness.

Christy. Then Irish impudence must cut the string of that tongue, Florry. Lave that to me, unless you'd rather yourself.

Miss G. Lord, sir—what a rout about one man, when, if I please, I might have a dozen lovers.

Christy. Be the same more or less. But one rich bachelor's worth a dozen poor, that is, for the article of a husband.

Miss G. And I dare say the drum-major is rich enough, sir—for all Scotchmen, they say, is fond of money and *a*conomie; and I'd rather after all be the lady of a military man. (*Sings.*)

"I'll live no more at home,
But I'll follow with the drum,
And I'll be the captain's lady, oh!"

Christy. Florry! Florry! mind you would not fall between two stools, and nobody to pity you.

Enter BIDDY.

Miss G. Well, what is it?

Biddy. The bed. I was seeing was the room empty, that I might make it; for it's only turned up it is, when I was called off to send in dinner. So I believe I'd best make it now, for the room will be wanting for the tea-drinking, and what not.

Miss G. Ay, make the bed do, sure it's asy, and no more about it;—you've talked enough about it to make twinty beds, one harder nor the other,—if talk would do. (*BIDDY goes to make the bed.*) And I'm sure there's not a girl in the parish does less in the day, for all the talk you keep. Now I'll just tell all you didn't do, that you ought this day, Biddy.

{*While Miss GALLAGHER is speaking to BIDDY, Mr. GALLAGHER opens a press, pours out, and swallows a dram.*

Christy. Oh, that would be too long telling, Florry, and that'll keep cool. Lave her now, and you may take your scould out another time. I want to spake to you. What's this I wanted to say? My memory's confusing itself. Oh, this was it—I didn't till you how I got this promise of the inn: I did it nately—I got it for a song.

Miss G. You're joking,—and I believe, sir, you're not over and above sober. There's a terrible strong smell of the whiskey.

Christy. No, the whiskey's not strong, dear, at-all-at-all!—You may keep smelling what way you plase, but I'm as sober as a judge, still,—and, drunk or sober, always knows and knewed on which side my bread was buttered: —got it for a song, I tell you—a bit of a complimentary, adulatory scroll, that the young lady fancied—and she, slap-dash, Lord love her, and keep her always so! writes at the bottom, *granted the poet's petition*.

Miss G. And where on earth, then, did you get that song?

Christy. Where but in my brains should I get it? I could do that much any way, I suppose, though it was not my luck to be edicated at Ferrinafad.

{*Miss GALLAGHER looks back, and sees BIDDY behind her.—Miss GALLAGHER gives her a box on the ear.*

Miss G. Manners! that's to teach ye.

Biddy. Manners!—Where would I larn them—when I was only waiting the right time to ax you what I'd do for a clane pillow-case?

Miss G. Why, turn that you have inside out, and no more about it.

Christy. And turn yourself out of this, if you plase. (*He turns BIDDY out by the shoulders.*) Let me hear you singing *Baltiorum* in the kitchen, for security that you're not hearing my sacrets. There, she's singing it now, and we're snug;—tell me when she stops, and I'll stop myself.

Miss G. Then there's the girl has ceased singing. There's somebody's come in, into the kitchen; may be it's the drum-major. I'll go and see.

{*Exit Miss GALLAGHER.*

CHRISTY, solus.

There she's off now! And I must after her, else she'll spoil her market, and my own. But look ye, now—if I shouldn't find her agreeable to marry

this Mr. Gilbert, the man I've laid out for her, why here's a good stick that will bring her to rason in the last resort; for there's no other way of rasoning with Ferrinafad.

{*Exit CHRISTY.*

SCENE IV.

The Garden of the Widow LARKEN'S Cottage.

OWEN and MABEL.

Owen. How does my mother bear the disappointment, Mabel about the inn?

Mabel. Then to outward appearance she did not take it so much to heart as I expected she would. But I'm sure she frets inwardly—because she had been in such hopes, and in such spirits, and so proud to think how well her children would all be settled.

Owen. Oh, how sorry I am I told her in that hurry the good news I heard, and all to disappoint her afterwards, and break her heart with it!

Mabel. No, she has too good a heart to break for the likes. She'll hold up again after the first disappointment—she'll struggle on for our sakes, Owen.

Owen. She will: but Mabel dearest, what do you think of Gilbert?

Mabel. (*turning away*) I strive not to think of him at all.

Owen. But sure I was not wrong there—he told me as much as that he loved you.

Mabel. Then he never told me that much.

Owen. No! What, not when he walked with you to the well?

Mabel. No. What made you think he did?

Owen. Why, the words he said about you when he met me, was—where's your sister Mabel? Gone to the well, Gilbert, says I. And do you think a man that has a question to ask her might make bold to step after her? says he. Such a man as you—why not? says I. Then he stood still, and twirled a rose he held in his hand, and he said nothing, and I no more, till he stooped down, and from the grass where we stood pulled a sprig of clover. Is not this what *you* call shamrock? says he. It is, says I. Then he puts the shamrock along with the rose—How would *that* do? says he.

Mabel. Did he say that, Owen?

Owen. Yes, or how would they look together? or, would they do together? or some words that way; I can't be particular to the word—you know, he speaks different from us; but that surely was the sense; and I minded too, he blushed up to the roots, and I pitied him, and answered—

Mabel. Oh, what did you answer?

Owen. I answered and said, I thought they'd do very well together; and that it was good when the Irish shamrock and the English rose was united.

Mabel. (*hiding her face with her hands*) Oh, Owen, that was too plain.

Owen. Plain! Not at all—it was not. It's only your tenderness makes you feel it too plain—for, listen to me, Mabel. (*Taking her hand from her face.*) Sure, if it had any meaning particular, it's as strong for Miss Gallagher as for any body else.

Mabel. That's true:—and may be it was that way he took it,—and may be it was her he was thinking of—

Owen. When he asked me for you? But I'll not mislead you—I'll say nothing; for it was a shame he did not speak out, after all the encouragement he got from me.

Mabel. Then did he get encouragement from you?

Owen. That is—(*smiling*)—taking it the other way, he might understand it so, if he had any conscience. Come now, Mabel, when he went to the well, what did he say to you? for I am sure he said something.

Mabel. Then he said nothing—but just put the rose and shamrock into my hand.

Owen. Oh! did he?—And what did you say?

Mabel. I said nothing.—What could I say?

Omen. I wish I'd been with you, Mabel.

Mabel. I'm glad you were not, Owen.

Owen. Well, what did he say next?

Mabel. I tell you he said nothing, but cleared his throat and hemmed, as he does often.

Owen. What, all the way to the well and back, nothing but hem, and clear his throat?

Mabel. Nothing in life.

Owen. Why, then, the man's a fool or a rogue.

Mabel. Oh, don't say that, any way. But there's my mother coming in from the field. How weak she walks! I must go in to bear her company spinning.

Owen. And I'll be in by the time I've settled all here.

{*Exit MABEL.*

OWEN, solus.

Oh! I know how keenly Mabel feels all, tho' she speaks so mild. Then I'm cut to the heart by this behaviour of Gilbert's:—sure he could not be so cruel to be jesting with her!—he's an Englishman, and may be he thinks no harm to jilt an Irishwoman. But I'll show him—but then if he never asked her the question, how can we say any thing?—Oh! the thing is, he's a snug man, and money's at the bottom of all,—and since Christy's to have the new inn, and Miss Gallagher has the money!—Well, it's all over, and I don't know what will become of me.

Enter Mr. ANDREW HOPE.

Mr. H. My gude lad, may your name be Larken?

Owen. It is, sir—Owen Larken, at your service—the son of the widow Larken.

Mrs. H. Then I have to thank your family for their goodness to my puir brother, years ago. And for yourself, your friend, Mr. Christy Gallagher, has been telling me you can play the bugle?

Owen. I can, sir.

Mr. H. And we want a bugle, and the *pay's* fifteen guineas; and I'd sooner give it to you than three others that has applied, if you'll list.

Owen. Fifteen guineas! Oh! if I could send that money home to my mother! but I must ask her consint. Sir, she lives convanient, just in this cabin here—would you be pleased to step in with me, and I'll ask her consint.

Mr. H. That's right,—lead on, my douce lad—you ken the way.

{*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Kitchen of the Widow LAKKEN'S Cottage.

A Door is seen open, into an inner Room.

MABEL, alone, (Sitting near the door of the inner room, spinning and singing{1}.)

{Footnote 1: This song is set to music by Mr. Webbe.}

Sleep, mother, sleep! in slumber blest,
It joys my heart to see thee rest.
Unfelt in sleep thy load of sorrow;
Breathe free and thoughtless of to-morrow;
And long, and light, thy slumbers last,
In happy dreams forget the past.
Sleep, mother, sleep! thy slumber's blest;
It joys my heart to see thee rest.

Many's the night she wak'd for me,
To nurse my helpless infancy:
While cradled on her patient arm,
She hush'd me with a mother's charm.
Sleep, mother, sleep! thy slumber's blest;
It joys my heart to see thee rest.

And be it mine to soothe thy age,
With tender care thy grief assuage,
This hope is left to poorest poor,
And richest child can do no more.
Sleep, mother, sleep! thy slumber's blest;
It joys my heart to see thee rest.

While MABEL is singing the second stanza, OWEN and ANDREW HOPE enter. Mr. HOPE stops short, and listens: he makes a sign to OWEN to

stand still, and not to interrupt MABEL—while OWEN approaches her on tiptoe.

Mr. H. (*aside*) She taks my fancy back to dear Scotland, to my ain hame, and my ain mither, and my ain Kate.

Owen. So Mabel! I thought you never sung for strangers?

{*MABEL turns and sees Mr. HOPE—She rises and curtsies.*

Mr. H. (*advancing softly*) I fear to disturb the mother, whose slumbers are so blest, and I'd fain hear that lullaby again. If the voice stop, the mother may miss it, and wake.

Mabel. (*looking into the room in which her mother sleeps, then closing the door gently*) No, sir,—she'll not miss my voice now, I thank you—she is quite sound asleep.

Owen. This is Mr. Andrew Hope, Mabel—you might remember one of his name, a Serjeant Hope.

Mabel. Ah! I mind—he that was sick with us, some time back.

Mr. H. Ay, my brother that's dead, and that your gude mither was so tender of, when sick, charged me to thank you all, and so from my soul I do.

Mabel. 'Twas little my poor mother could do, nor any of us for him, even then, though we could do more then than we could now, and I'm glad he chanced to be with us in our better days.

Mr. H. And I'm sorry you ever fell upon worse days, for you deserve the best; and will have such again, I trust. All I can say is this—that gif your brother here gangs with me, he shall find a brother's care through life fra' me.

Owen. I wouldn't doubt you; and that you know, Mabel, would be a great point, to have a friend secure in the regiment, if I thought of going.

Mabel. If!—Oh! what are you thinking of, Owen? What is it you're talking of going? (*Turning towards the door of her mother's room suddenly.*) Take care, but she'd wake and hear you, and she'd never sleep easy again.

Owen. And do you think so?

Mabel. Do I think so? Am not I sure of it? and you too, Owen, if you'd take time to think and feel.

Owen. Why there's no doubt but it's hard, when the mother has reared the son, for him to quit her as soon as he can go alone; but it is what I was thinking: it is only the militia, you know, and I'd not be going out of the three kingdoms ever at all; and I could be sending money home to my mother, like Johnny Reel did to his.

Mabel. Money is it? Then there's no money you could send her—not the full of Lough Erne itself, in golden guineas, could make her amends for the loss of yourself, Owen, and you know that.

Mr. H. And I am not the man that would entice you to list, or gang with me, in contradiction to your duty at home, or your interest abroad: so (*turning to* MABEL) do not look on me as the tempter to evil, nor with distrust, as you do, kind sister as you are, and like my own Kate; but hear me coolly, and without prejudice, for it is his gude I wish.

Mabel. I am listening then, and I ask your pardon if I looked a doubt.

Mr. H. The gude mother must wish, above all things here below, the weal and *advancement* and the honour of her bairns; and she would not let the son be tied to her apron-strings, for any use or profit to herself, but ever wish him to do the best in life for his sel'. Is not this truth, gude friends—plain truth?

Mabel. It is then—I own that: truth and sense too.

Owen. Now see there, Mabel.

Mr. H. And better for him to do something abroad than digging at home; and in the army he might get on,—and here's the bugle-boy's pay.

Mabel. Is it a bugle-boy you are thinking of making him?

Mr. H. That's the only thing I could make him. I wish I could offer better.

Mabel. Then, I thank you, sir, and I wouldn't doubt ye—and it would be very well for a common boy that could only dig; but my brother's no common boy, sir.

Owen. Oh, Mabel!

Mabel. Hush, Owen! for it's the truth I'm telling, and if to your face I can't help it. You may hide the face, but I won't hide the truth.

Mr. H. Then speak on, my warm-hearted lassy, speak on.

Mabel. Then, sir, he got an edication while ever my poor father lived, and no better scholar, they said, for the teaching he got:—but all was given over

when the father died, and the troubles came, and Owen, as he ought, give himself up intirely for my mother, to help her, a widow. But it's not digging and slaving he is to be always:—it's with the head, as my father used to say, he'll make more than the hands; and we hope to get a clerk's place for him sometime, or there will be a schoolmaster wanting in this town, and that will be what he would be fit for; and not—but it's not civil, before you, a soldier, sir, to say the rest.

Mr. H. Fear not, you will not give offence.

Mabel. And not to be spending his breath blowing through a horn all his days, for the sake of wearing a fine red coat. I beg your pardon again, sir, if I say too much—but it's to save my brother and my mother.

Mr. H. I like you the better for all you've said for both.

Owen. And I'm off entirely:—I'll not list, I thank you, sir.

{*MABEL clasps her hands joyfully, then embraces her brother.*

Mr. H. And I'll not ask you to list—and I would not have asked it at all, but that a friend of yours told me it would be the greatest service I could do you, and that it was the thing of all others you wished.

Owen. That friend was Christy Gallagher: but he was mistaken—that's all.

Mabel. I hope that's all. But I've no dependance on him for a friend, nor has my mother.

Owen. Why, he was saying to me, and I could not say against it, that he had a right to propose for the inn if he could, though Gilbert and we wanted to get it.

Mabel. Then I wonder why Christy should be preferred rather than my mother.

Owen. Then that's a wonder—and I can't understand how that was.

Mr. H. I have one more thing to say, or to do, which I should like better, if you'll give me leave. If there's a difficulty aboot the rent of this new inn that you are talking of, I have a little spare money, and you're welcome to it:—I consider it as a debt of my brother's, which I am bound to pay; so no obligation in life—tell me how much will do.

{*Takes out his purse.*

Owen and *Mabel.* You are very kind—you are very good.

Mr. H. No, I am not—I am only just. Say only how much will do.

Owen. Alas! money won't do now, sir. It's all settled, and Christy says he has a promise of it in writing from the lady.

Mr. H. May be this Christy might sell his interest, and we will see—I will not say till I find I can do. Fare ye weel till we meet, as I hope we shall, at the dance that's to be at the castle. The band is to be there, and I with them, and I shall hope for this lassy's hand in the dance.

Mabel. (*aside*) And Gilbert that never asked me! (*Aloud*) I thank you kindly, sir, I sha'n't go to the dance at-all-at-all, I believe—my mother had better take her rest, and I must stay with her—a good night to you kindly.

{*Exit MABEL into her mother's room.*

Mr. H. This sister of yours would leave me no heart to carry back to Scotland, I fear, but that I'm a married man already, and have my own luve —a Kate of my own, that's as fair as she, and as gude, and that's saying much.

Owen. (*aside*) Much more than Florinda Gallagher will like to hear.

Mr. H. I shall thank you if you will teach me, for my Kate, the words of that song your sister was singing when we came in.

Owen. I believe it's to flatter me you say this, for that song is my writing.

Mr. H. Yours?

Owen. Mine, such as it is.

Mr. H. Sic a ane as you are then, I'm glad you are not to be a bugle-boy: your sister is right.

Owen. I'll teach you the words as we go along.

Mr. H. Do so;—but mind now this song-writing do not lead you to idleness. We must see to turn your edication to good account. (*Aside*) Oh, I will never rest till I pay my brother's debt, some way or other, to this gude family.

{*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CHRISTY alone.

So this Scotchman could not list Owen. *Couldn't* nor *wouldn't*, that's what he says; and the Scotchman looked very hard at me as he spoke: moreover, I seen Mr. Gilbert and him with their two heads close together, and that's a wonder, for I know Gilbert's not nat'rally fond of any sort of Scotchman. There's something brewing:—I must have my wits about me, and see and keep sober this night, if I can, any way. From the first I suspicted Mr. Gilbert had his heart on Mabel. (BIDDY DOYLE *puts her head in*) Biddy Doyle! what the mischief does that head of yours do there?

Biddy. Nothing in life, sir: only just to see who was in it, along with yourself, because I thought I hard talking enough for two.

Christy. You, girl, have curiosity enough for two, and two dozen, and too much! So plase take your head and yourself out of that, and don't be overharing my private thoughts; for that was all the talking ye hard, and *my* thoughts can't abide listeners.

Biddy. I'm no listener—I ax your pardon, sir: I scorn to listen to your thoughts, or your words even.

{*Exit BIDDY.*

Christy. That girl has set me topsy-turvy. Where was I?—Oh! this was it. Suppose even, I say, suppose this Gilbert's fancy should stick to Mabel, I might manage him, nevertheless. I've a great advantage and prerogative over this Englishman, in his having never been dipped in the Shannon. He is so *under cow* with bashfulness now, that I don't doubt but what in one of his confusions I could asy bring him to say Yes in the wrong place; and sooner than come to a perplexing refusal of a young lady, he might, I'll engage, be brought about to marry the girl he didn't like, in lieu of the girl he did. We shall see—but hark! I hear Ferrinafad's voice, singing, and I must join, and see how the thing's going on, or going off.

{*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Miss GALLAGHER and GILBERT at a Tea-Table.

Gilb. (*aside*) Now would I give five golden guineas this minute that her father, or any mortal man, woman, or child in the varsal world, would come in and say something; for ‘tis so awk’ard for I to be sitting here, and I nothing to say to she.

Miss G. (*aside*) When will the man pay me the compliment to speak, I wonder? Wouldn’t any body think he’d no tongue in that mouth of his, screwed up, and blushing from ear to ear?

Enter CHRISTY.

Christy. Hoo! hoo! hoo!—How’s this—both of yees mute as fishes the moment I come in? Why I hard you just now, when my back was turned, singing like turtle-doves—didn’t I, Florry?

Miss G. Indeed, sir, as to turtle-doves, I’m not sinsible; but Mr. Gilbert requisted of me to be favouring him with a song, which I was complying with, though I’m not used to be singing without my piano.

Christy. (*aside*) Sorrow take your piano! you’re not come there yet.

Miss G. I wonder the drum-major isn’t come yet. Does he expect tea can be keeping hot for him to the end of time? He’ll have nothing but slop-dash, though he’s a very genteel man. I’m partial to the military school, I own, and a High lander too is always my white-headed boy.

Gilb. (*astonished*) Her white-headed boy!—Now, if I was to be hanged for it, I don’t know what that means.

Miss G. Now where can you have lived, Mr. Gilbert, not to know *that*?

Christy. (*aside*) By the mass, he’s such a matter-o’-fact-man, I can’t get round him with all my wit.

Miss G. Here’s the drum-major! Scarlet’s asy seen at a distance, that’s one comfort!

Enter Mr. HOPE.

Mr. H. I'm late, Miss Florinda, I fear, for the tea-table; but I had a wee-wee bit of business to do for a young friend, that kept me.

Miss G. No matter, major, my tapot defies you. Take a cup a tea. Are you fond of music, major?

Mr. H. Very fond of music, ma'am—do you sing or play?

Miss G. I do play—I plead guilty to that I own. But in this hole that we are in, there's no room fitting for my piano. However, in the new inn which we have got now, I'll fix my piano iligant in the back-parlour.

Mr. H. In the mean time, Miss Florinda, will you favour us with a song?

Christy. And I'll be making the punch, for I'm no songstress. Biddy! Biddy Doyle! hot water in a jerry.

Miss G. Indeed I'm not used to sing without my piano; but, to oblige the major, I'll sing by note.

Miss GALLAGHER sings.

Softly breathing through the heart,
When lovers meet no more to part;
That purity of soul be mine,
Which speaks in music's sound divine.

'Midst trees and streams of constant love,
That's whispered by the turtle-dove;
Sweet cooing cushat all my pray'r,
Is love in elegance to share.

Mr. H. That's what I call fine, now! Very fine that.

{*GILBERT nods.*

Miss G. (*aside*) Look at that Englishman, now, that hasn't a word of compliment to throw to a dog, but only a nod. (*Aloud*) 'Tis the military that has always the souls for music, and for the ladies—and I think, gentlemen, I may step for'ard, and say I'm entitled to call upon you now:—Mr. Gilbert, if you've ever a love-song in your composition.

Gilb. Love-song I can't say, ma'am; but such as I have—I'm no great hand at composition—but I have one song—they call it, *My choice of a*

wife.

Miss G. Pray let's have it, sir.

Christy. Now for it, by Jabus.

Mr. H. Give it us, Mr. Gilbert.

Enter BIDDY with hot water, and exit.

GILBERT sings.

There's none but a fool will wed on a sudden,
Or take a fine miss that can't make a pudding;
If he get such a wife, what would a man gain, O!
But a few ballad-tunes on a wretched piano?

Some ladies than peacocks are twenty times prouder,
Some ladies than thunder are twenty times louder;
But I'll have a wife that's obliging and civil—
For me, your fine ladies may go to the devil!

Miss G. (*rising*) Sir, I comprehend your song, coarse as it is, and its moral to boot, and I humbly thank ye, sir. (*She curtsies low.*) And if I live a hundred year, and ninety-nine to the back of that, sir, I will remember it to you, sir.

Christy. (*leaving the punch which he had been making, comes forward with a lemon in his hand*) Wheugh! wheugh! wheugh! Ferrinafad!

Gilb. (*aside*) Ferrinafad!—the man's mad!

Miss G. Father, go your ways back to your punch. Here stands the only *raal* gentleman in company (*pointing to the drum-major*), if I'm to make the election.

Christy. Major, you can't but drink her health for that compliment. {*He presents a glass of punch to Mr. HOPE.*

Mr. H. Miss Gallagher's health, and a gude husband to her, and *soon*.

Miss G. And soon!—No hurry for them that has choice.

Christy. That has money, you mane, jewel. Mr. Gilbert, you did not give us your toast.

Gilb. Your good health, ma'am—your good health, sir,—Mr. Hope, your good health, and your fireside in Scotland, and in pa'tic'lar your good wife.

Miss G. (*starting*) Your wife, sir! Why, sir, is't possible you're a married man, after all?

Mr. H. Very possible, ma'am—thank Heaven and my gude Kate.

Miss G. His gude Kate!—Well, I hate the Scotch accent of all languages under the sun.

Christy. In a married man, I suppose you *mane*, Florry?

Miss G. This is the way with officers continually—passing themselves for bachelors.

Christy. Then, Florry, we'd best recommend it to the drum-major the next town he'd go into, to put up an advertisement in capitals on his cap, warning all women whom it may consarn, that he is a married man.

Miss G. 'Tis no consarn of mine, I'll assure you, sir, at any rate; for I should scorn to think of a Scotchman any way. And what's a drum-major, after all? {*Exit, in a passion.*

Christy. Bo boo! bo boo! bo boo! there's a tantarara now; but never mind her, she takes them tantarums by turns. Now depend upon it, Mr. Gilbert, it's love that's at the bottom of it all, clane and clear.

Gilb. It's very like, sir—I can't say.

Christy. Oh, but I *can* say—I know her, egg and bird. The thing is, she's mad with you, and that has set her all through other.—But we'll finish our tumbler of punch. {*Draws forwards the table, and sets chairs.*

Gilb. (*aside*) Egg and bird!—mad! All through other!—Confound me if I understand one word the man is saying; but I will make him understand me, if he can understand plain English.

Mr. H. (*aside*) I'll stand by and see fair play. I have my own thought.

Gilb. Now, Mr. ——, to be plain with you at once—here's fifty guineas in gold, and if you will take them, and give me up the promise you have got of the new inn, you shall be welcome. That's all I have to say, if I was to talk till Christmas—and fewest words is best in matters of business.

Christy. Fifty guineas in gold!—Don't part with a guinea of them, man, put 'em up again. You shall have the new inn without a word more, and into

the bargain my good-will and my daughter—and you're a jantleman, and can't say *no* to that, any way.

Gilb. Yes, but I can though: since you drive me to the wall, I must say no, and I do say no. And, dang it, I would have been hanged almost as soon as say so much to a father. I beg your pardon, sir, but my heart is given to another. Good evening to you.

Christy. (*holding him as he attempts to go*) Take it coolly, and listen to me, and tell me—was you ever married before, Mr. Gilbert?

Gilb. Never.

Christy. Then I was—and I can tell you that I found to my cost, love was all in all with me before I was married, and after I had been married a twel'-month, money was all in all with me; for I had the wife, and I had not the money, and without the money, the wife must have starved.

Gilb. But I can work, sir, and will, head, hands, and heart, for the woman I love.

Christy. Asy said—hard done. Mabel Larken is a very pretty girl. But wait till I tell you what Kit Monaghan said to me yesterday. I'm going to be married, sir, says he to me. Ay, so you mintioned to me a fortnight ago, Kit, says I—to Rose Dermod, isn't it? says I. Not at all, sir, says he—it is to Peggy McGrath, this time. And what quarrel had you to Rose Dermod? says I. None in life, sir, says he; but Peggy McGrath had two cows, and Rose Dermod had but the one, and in my mind there is not the differ of a cow betwix' one woman and another. Do you understand me now, Mr. Gilbert?

Gilb. Sir, we shall never understand one another—pray let me go, before I get into a passion.

{*Breaks from CHRISTY, and exit.*

Christy. Hollo! Hollo! Mr. Gilbert! (*GILBERT returns.*) One word more about the new inn. I've done about Florry; and, upon my conscience, I believe you're right enough—only that I'm her father, and in duty bound to push her as well as I can.

Gilb. Well, sir, about the inn: be at a word with me; for I'm not in a humour to be trifled with.

Mr. H. (*aside*) Fire beneath snow! who'd ha' thought it?

Christy. Then, if it was sixty guineas instead of fifty, I'd take it, and you should have my bargain of the inn.

Mr. H. (*aside*) I'll not say my word until I see what the bottom of the men are.

Gilb. (*aside*) Why, to make up sixty, I must sell my watch even; but I'll do it—any thing to please Mabel. (*Aloud*) Well, sixty guineas, if you won't give it for less.

Christy. Done! (*Eagerly.*)

Mr. H. Stay, stay, Mr. Gilbert! Have a care, Mr. Gallagher!—the lady might not be well pleased at your handing over her written promise, Mr. Gallagher—wait a wee bit. Don't conclude this bargain till you are before the lady at the castle.

Gilb. So best—no doubt.

Christy. All one to me—so I pocket the sixty.

Mr. H. (*aside to GILBERT*) Come off.

Gilb. We shall meet then at the castle to-night: till then, a good day to you, Mr. Gallagher.

{*Exeunt GILBERT and Mr. HOPE.*

Christy. Good night to ye kindly, gentlemen. There's a fool to love for you now! If I'd ax'd a hundred, I'd ha' got it. But still there's only one thing. Ferrinafad will go mad when she learns I have sold the new inn, and she to live on in this hole, and no place for the piano. I hope Biddy did not hear a sentence of it. (*Calls*) Biddy! Biddy Doyle! Biddy, can't ye?

Enter Biddy.

Biddy. What is it?

Christy. Did you hear any thing? Oh, I see ye did by your eyes. Now, hark'ee, my good girl: don't mention a sentence to Ferrinafad of my settling the new inn, till the bargain's complate, and money in both pockets—you hear.

Biddy. I do, sir. But I did not hear afore.

Christy. Becaase, she, though she's my daughter, she's crass—I'll empty my mind to you, Biddy.

Biddy. (*aside*) He has taken enough to like to be talking to poor Biddy.

Christy. Afore Florry was set up on her high horse by that little independency her doting grandmother left her, and until she got her head turned with that Ferrinafad edication, this Florry was a good girl enough. But now what is she?—Given over to vanities of all sorts, and no comfort in life to me, or use at all—not like a daughter at all, nor mistress of the house neither, nor likely to be well married neither, or a credit to me that way! And saucy to me on account of that money of hers I liquidated unknown'st.

Biddy. True for ye, sir.

Christy. Then it all comes from the little finger getting to be the master of me; for I'm confident that when sober, I was not born to be a rogue nat'rally. Was not I honest Christy once? (*ready to cry.*) Oh, I'm a great penitent! But there's no help for it now.

Biddy. True for you, sir.

Christy. I'm an unfortunate cratur, and all the neighbours know it.—So, Biddy dear, I've nothing for it but to take another glass.

Biddy. Oh! no, sir, not when you'll be going up to the castle to the lady—you'll be in no condition.

Christy. Tut, girl—'twill give me heart. Let's be merry any way. {*Exit, singing,*

"They say it was care killed the cat,
That starved her, and caused her to die;
But I'll be much wiser than that,
For the devil a care will care I."

SCENE III.

Widow LARKEN'S Cottage.

Widow LARKEN, MABEL, and GILBERT.

Gilb. And could you doubt me, Mabel, after I told you I loved you?

Mabel. Never would nor could have doubted, had you once told me as much, Mr. Gilbert.

Widow. There was the thing, Mr. Gilbert—you know it was you that was to speak, if you thought of her.

Gilb. Do not you remember the rose and the shamrock?

Widow. Oh! she does well enough; and that's what her heart was living upon, till I killed the hope.

Gilb. You!—killed the hope!—I thought you were my friend.

Widow. And so I am, and was—but when you did not speak.

Gilb. If I had not loved her so well, I might have been able, perhaps, to have said more.

Widow. Then that's enough. Mabel mavourneen, wear the rose he give you now—I'll let you—and see it's fresh enough. She put it in water—oh! she had hope still!

Mabel. And was not I right to trust him, mother?

Gilb. Mabel, if I don't do my best to make you happy all my days, I deserve to be—that's all! But I'm going to tell you about the new inn: that's what I have been about ever since, and I'm to have it for sixty guineas.

Enter OWEN, rubbing his hands.

Owen. You see, mother, I was right about Gilbert and Mabel. But Mr. Hope and the band is gone up to the castle. Come, come!—time to be off!—no delay!—Gilbert! Mabel, off with you! (*He pushes them off.*) And glad enough ye are to go together. Mother dear, here's your bonnet and the cloak,—here round ye throw—that's it—take my arm. (*Widow stumbles as he pulls her on.*) Oh, I'm putting you past your speed, mother.

Widow. No, no.—No fear in life for the mother that has the support of such a son.

SCENE IV.

A large Apartment in Bannow Castle, ornamented with the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock.—The hall opens into a lawn, where the country-people are seen dancing.

Enter CLARA, Sir WILLIAM HAMDEN, and a train of dancers.

Clara. Now, sir, as we have here English, Scotch, and Irish dancers, we can have the English country-dance, the Scotch reel, and the Irish jig.

Sir W. Then to begin with the Irish jig, which I have never seen.

Clara. You shall see it in perfection.

{*An Irish jig is danced, a Scotch reel follows, and an English country-dance. When CLARA has danced down the country-dance, she goes with her partner to Sir WILLIAM HAMDEN.*

Clara. We are going out to look at the dancers on the lawn.

Sir W. Take me with you, for I wish to see those merry dancers—I hear them laughing. I love to hear the country-people laugh: theirs is always *the heart's laugh.*

{*Exeunt Sir WILLIAM and CLARA.*

{*The dancers recommence, and after dancing for a few minutes, they go off just as Sir WILLIAM and CLARA return, entering from the hall door.*

Clara. My dear uncle, thank you for going out among these poor people, and for speaking so kindly to them. One would think that you had lived in Ireland all your life, you know so well how to go *straight* to Irish heads and Irish hearts by kindness, and by what they love almost as well, *humour,* and good-humour. Thank you again and again.

Sir W. My dear niece, you need not thank me; for if you had nothing to do with these people—if you had never been born—I should have loved the Irish for their own sakes. How easy it is to please them! How easy to make them happy; and how grateful they are, even for a few words of kindness.

Clara. Yes. This I may say without partiality—whatever other faults my countrymen have, they certainly are a grateful people. My father, who knew them well, taught me from my childhood, to trust to Irish gratitude.

Sir W. (*changing his tone*) But, on the other hand, it is my duty to watch over your Irish generosity, Clara. Have you made any more promises, my dear, since morning?

Clara. Oh! no, sir; and I have heartily repented of that which I made this morning: for I find that this man to whom I have promised the new inn is a sad drunken, good-for-nothing person; and as for his daughter, whom I have never yet seen—

Sir W. (*looking towards the entrance from the lawn*)

"But who is this? What thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems—
That so bedeck'd, ornate and gay,
Comes this way sailing."

Enter Miss GALLAGHER.

Miss G. Sir, I beg pardon. But I was told Miss O'Hara would wish to speak with Christy Gallagher, and I'm his daughter—he not being very well to-night. He will be up with miss in the morning—but is confined to his bed with a pain about his heart, he took, just when I was coming away.

{*CHRISTY'S voice heard, singing, to the tune of "St. Patrick's day in the morning."*

"Full bumpers of whiskey,
Will make us all frisky,
On Patrick's day in the morning."

Miss G. (*aside*) Oh! King of glory, if he is not come up after all!

Clara. "What noise is that, unlike the former sound?"

Sir W. Only some man, singing in honour of St. Patrick, I suppose.

Enter CHRISTY GALLAGHER, BIDDY *trying to hold him back.*

Christy. Tut! let me in: I know the lady is here, and I must thank her as becoming—

{*CLARA puts her hand before her face and retires as he advances.*

Miss G. Oh! father, keep out—you're not in a condition.

Sir W. John! Thomas! carry this man off.

Christy. Ah, now, just let me remark to his honour—did he ever hear this song in England? (*He struggles and sings, while they are carrying him off,*)

"O'Rourke's noble feast shall ne'er be forgot,
By those who were there, or by those who were not."

But it was not O'Rourke's noble feast at all, it was O'Hara's noble feast, to the best of my knowledge—I'll take my affidavit; and am not I here, on the spot, ready and proud to fight any one that denies the contrary? Let me alone, Florry, for I'm no babby to be taken out of the room. Ready and proud, I say I am, to fight any tin men in the county, or the kingdom itself, or the three kingdoms entirely, that would go for to dare for to offer to articulate the contrary. So it's Miss O'Hara for ever, huzza! a! a! a! a!

Sir W. Carry him off this instant. Begone!

{*The servants carry off CHRISTY GALLAGHER, while he sings, to the tune of "One bottle more,"*

"Oh, give me but whiskey, contInted I'll sing,
Hibernia for ever, and God save the king!"

{*Miss GALLAGHER directs and expedites her father's retreat.*

Clara. Shame! shame! Is this the tenant I have chosen?

Miss G. Indeed, and indeed, then, Miss O'Hara, I often preach to him, but there's no use in life preaching to him—as good preaching to the winds! for, drunk or sober, he has an answer ready at all points. It is not wit he wants, sir.

Sir W. And he is happy in having a daughter, who knows how to make the best of his faults, I see. What an excellent landlord he will be for this new inn!

Miss G. Oh, certainly, sir—only it's being St. Patrick's night, he would be more inexcusable; and as to the new inn, plase Heaven! he shall get no pace on earth till he takes an oath afore the priest against spirits, good or bad, for a twil'month to come, before ever I trust a foot of his in the new inn.

Clara. But, ma'am, from your own appearance, I should apprehend that you would not be suited to the business yourself—I should suppose you would think it beneath you to keep an inn.

Miss G. Why, ma'am—why, sir—you know when it is called an hotel, it's another thing; and I'm sure I've a great regard for the family, and there's nothing I wouldn't do to oblige Miss O'Hara.

Clara. Miss Gallagher, let me beg that if you wish to oblige me—

Enter GILBERT.

Sir W. Well, Gilbert?

Gilb. Only, sir, if you and Miss O'Hara were at leisure, sir, one Mr. Andrew Hope, the master of the band, would wish to be allowed to come in to sing a sort of a welcome home they have set to music, sir, for Miss O'Hara.

Clara. I do believe this is the very song which that drunken man gave me this morning, and for which I gave him the promise of the inn. I shall be ashamed to hear the song.

Sir W. Let me hear it, at all events. Desire Mr. Andrew Hope, and his merry-men-all, to walk in. {*Exit GILBERT.*

Enter Mr. HOPE and band.—Some of the country-people peep in, as if wishing to enter.

Sir W. Come in, my good friends.

{*Enter, among others, the Widow LARKEN, and MABEL, and OWEN.—BIDDY follows timidly.—Miss GALLAGHER takes a conspicuous place.—Sir WILLIAM and CLARA continue speaking.*

Sir W. Did Gilbert introduce his bride elect to you, Clara?

Clara. Yes, Mabel Larken, that girl with the sweet modest countenance—and her mother, that respectable-looking woman; and her brother, I see, is here, that boy with the quick, intelligent eyes. I know all the family—know them all to be good; and these were the people I might have served! Oh, fool! fool!

Sir W. Well, well, well, ‘tis over now, my dear Clara—you will be wiser another time. Come, Mr. Hope, give us a little flattery, to put us in good-humour with ourselves.

{*The band prelude; but just as they begin, Sir WILLIAM sees CHRISTY, who is coming in softly, holding back the skirts of his coat.—Sir WILLIAM in a loud voice exclaims,*

Turn out that man! How dare you return to interrupt us, sir? Turn out that man!

Christy. (*falling on his knees*) Oh! plase your honour, I beg your pardon for one minute: only just give me lave to *insense* your honour’s honour. I’m not the same man at all.

Sir W. Stand up, stand up—an Englishman cannot bear to see a man kneel to him. Stand up, pray, if you can.

Christy. Then I can, plase your honour (*rises*), since I got a shock.

Clara. What shock? What do you mean?

Christy. Oh, nothing in life, miss, that need consarn you—only a fall I got from my horse, which the child they set to lead me would put me up upon, and it come down and kilt me; for it wasn’t a proper horse for an unfortunate man like me, that was overtaken, as I was then; and it’s well but I got a kick of the baast.

Sir W. Do you say you were kicked by a horse?

Christy. Not at all, plase your honour—I say *it was well but* I got a kick of the baast. But it’s all for the best now; for see, I’m now as sober as a jidge, and *quite* as any lamb; and if I’d get lave only just to keep in this here corner, I would be no let or hinderance to any. Oh! dear miss! spake for me! I’m an ould man, miss, that your father’s honour was partial to always, and called me *honest* Christy, which I was once, and till his death too.

Sir W. What a strange mixture is this man!

Clara. Pray let him stay, uncle—he’s sober now.

Sir W. Say not one word more, then; stand still there in your corner.

Christy. And not a word for my life—not breathe, even—to plase you! becaase I’ve a little business to mintion to the lady. Sixty guineas to resave from Mr. Gilbert, yonder. Long life to you, miss! But I’ll say no more till this Scotchman has done with his fiddle and his musics.

Sir W. I thought, sir, you were not to have spoken another syllable.

{*CHRISTY puts his finger on his lips, and bows to Sir WILLIAM and to CLARA.*

Sir W. Now, Mr. Hope.

Mr. HOPE sings, and the Band join in chorus,

Though Bannow's heiress, fair and young,
Hears polish'd praise from ev'ry tongue;
Yet good and kind, she'll not disdain
The tribute of the lowly swain.
The heart's warm welcome, Clara, meets thee;
Thy native land, dear lady, greets thee.

That open brow, that courteous grace,
Bespeaks thee of thy generous race;
Thy father's soul is in thy smile—
Thrice blest his name in Erin's isle.
The heart's warm welcome, Clara, meets thee;
Thy native land, dear lady, greets thee.

The bright star shining on the night,
Betokening good, spreads quick delight;
But quicker far, more glad surprise,
Wakes the kind radiance of her eyes.
The heart's warm welcome, Clara, meets thee;
Thy native land, dear lady, greets thee{1}.

{Footnote 1: Set to music by Mr. Webbe.}

Christy. Then I'm not ashamed, any way, of that song of mine.

Sir W. Of yours?—Is it possible that it is yours?

Clara. It is indeed. These are the very lines he gave me this morning.

Christy. And I humbly thank you, madam or miss, for having got them set to the musics.

Clara. I had nothing to do with that. We must thank Mr. Hope for this agreeable surprise.

Christy. Why, then, I thank you, Mr. Drum.

Mr. H. You owe me no thanks, sir. I will take none from you.

Christy. No—for I didn't remember giving you the copy. I suppose Florry did.

Miss G. Not I, sir.

Christy. Or the schoolmaster's foul copy may be, for it was he was putting the song down for me on paper. My own hand-writing shaking so bad, I could not make a fair copy fit for the lady.

Mr. H. Mr. Gallagher, don't plunge farther in falsehood—you know the truth is, that song's not yours.

Christy. Why, then, by all—

Mr. H. Stop, stop, Mr. Gallagher—stop, I advise you.

Christy. Why, then, I won't stop at any thing—for the song's my own.

Mr. H. In one sense of the word, may be, it may be called your own, sir; for you bought it, I know.

Christy. I bought it? Oh, who put that in your Scotch brains? Whoever it was, was a big liar.

Biddy. No liar at all, sir—I ax your pardon—'twas I.

Christy. And you overheard my thoughts, then, talking to myself—ye traitor!

Biddy. No, sir—again I ax your pardon; no listener Biddy Doyle. But I was at the schoolmaster's, to get him pen a letter for me to my poor father, and there with him, I heard how Christy bought the song, and seen the first copy—and the child of the house told me all about it, and how it was lift there by Mr. Owen Larken.

Sir W. and *Clara* (*joyfully*). Owen Larken!—you?

Christy. All lies! Asy talk!—asy talk—asy to belie a poor man.

Mr. H. If you tell the truth, you can tell us the next verse, for there's another which we did not yet sing.

Christy. Not in my copy, which is the original.

Sir W. If you have another verse, let us hear it—and that will decide the business.

Christy. Oh, the devil another line, but what's lame, I'll engage, and forged, as you'll see.

Mr. HOPE sings,

Quick spring the feelings of the heart,
When touch'd by Clara's gen'rous art;
Quick as the grateful shamrock springs,
In the good fairies' favour'd rings.

Clara. What does Christy say now?

Christy. Why, miss, I say that's well said for the shamrock any way. And all that's in it for me is this—the schoolmaster was a rogue that did not give me that verse in for my money.

Sir W. Then you acknowledge you bought it?

Christy. What harm, plase your honour? And would not I have a right to buy what pleases me—and when bought and ped for isn't it mine in law and right? But I am mighty unlucky this night. So, come along, Florry—we are worsted see! No use to be standing here longer, the laughing-stock of all that's in it—Ferrinafad.

Miss G. Murder! Father, then here's all you done for me, by your lies and your whiskey! I'll go straight from ye, and lodge with Mrs. Mulrooney. Biddy, what's that you're grinning at? Plase to walk home out of that.

Biddy. Miss Florinda, I am partly engaged to dance; but I won't be laving you in your downfall: so here's your cloak—and lane on me.

Widow. Why, then, Biddy, we'll never forget you in our prosperity.

Mabel and *Owen.* Never, never. You're a good girl, Biddy.

{*Exeunt Miss GALLAGHER, BIDDY, and CHRISTY.*

Clara. I am glad they are gone.

Sir W. I congratulate you, my dear niece, upon having got rid of tenants who would have disgraced your choice.

Clara. These (*turning to OWEN, MABEL, and her mother,*) these will do honour to it. My written promise was to *grant the poet's petition*. Owen, you are *the poet*—what is your petition?

Owen. May I speak?—May I say all I wish?

Clara and *Sir W.* Yes, speak—say all you wish.

Owen. I am but a young boy, and not able to keep the new inn; but Mr. Gilbert and Mabel, with my mother's help, would keep it well, I think; and it's they I should wish to have it, ma'am, if it were pleasing to you.

Sir W. And what would become of yourself, my good lad?

Owen. Time enough, sir, to think of myself, when I've seen my mother and sister settled.

Sir W. Then as you won't think of yourself, I must think for you. Your education, I find, has been well begun, and I will take care it shall not be left half done.

Widow. Oh, I'm too happy this minute! But great joy can say little.

Mabel. (*aside*) And great love the same.

Mr. H. This day is the happiest I have seen since I left the land of cakes.

Gilb. Thank you, Mr. Hope. And when I say thank you, why, I feel it. 'Twas you helped us at the dead lift.

Sir W. You see I was right, Gilbert; the Scotch make good friends. (*GILBERT bows.*) And now, Clara, my love, what shall we call the new inn—for it must have a name? Since English, Scotch, and Irish, have united to obtain it, let the sign be the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock.

END OF COMIC DRAMAS.

LEONORA

LETTER I.

Lady Olivia to Lady Leonora L——.

What a misfortune it is to be born a woman! In vain, dear Leonora, would you reconcile me to my doom. Condemned to incessant hypocrisy, or everlasting misery, woman is the slave or the outcast of society. Confidence in our fellow-creatures, or in ourselves, alike forbidden us, to what purpose have we understandings, which we may not use? hearts, which we may not trust? To our unhappy sex, genius and sensibility are the most treacherous gifts of heaven. Why should we cultivate talents merely to gratify the caprice of tyrants? Why seek for knowledge, which can prove only that our wretchedness is irremediable? If a ray of light break in upon us, it is but to make darkness more visible; to show us the narrow limits, the Gothic structure, the impenetrable barriers of our prison. Forgive me if on this subject I cannot speak—if I cannot think—with patience. Is it not fabled, that the gods, to punish some refractory mortal of the male kind, doomed his soul to inhabit upon earth a female form? A punishment more degrading, or more difficult to endure, could scarcely be devised by cruelty omnipotent. What dangers, what sorrows, what persecutions, what nameless evils await the woman who dares to rise above the prejudices of her sex!

"Ah! happy they, the happiest of their kind!"

who, without a struggle, submit their reason to be swathed by all the absurd bandages of custom. What, though they cripple or distort their minds; are not these deformities beauties in the eyes of fashion? and are not these people the favoured nurselings of the *World*, secure of her smiles, her caresses, her fostering praise, her partial protection, through all the dangers of youth and all the dotage of age?

“Ah! happy they, the happiest of their kind!”

who learn to speak, and think, and act by rote; who have a phrase, or a maxim, or a formula ready for every occasion; who follow—

“All the nurse and all the priest have taught.”

And is it possible that Olivia can envy these *tideless-blooded* souls their happiness—their apathy? Is her high spirit so broken by adversity? Not such the promise of her early years, not such the language of her unsophisticated heart! Alas! I scarcely know, I scarcely recollect, that proud self, which was wont to defy the voice of opinion, and to set at nought the decrees of prejudice. The events of my life shall be related, or rather the history of my sensations; for in a life like mine, sensations become events—a metamorphosis which you will see in every page of my history. I feel an irresistible impulse to open my whole heart to you, my dear Leonora. I ought to be awed by the superiority of your understanding and of your character; yet there is an indulgence in your nature, a softness in your temper, that dissipates fear, and irresistibly attracts confidence.

You have generously refused to be prejudiced against me by busy, malignant rumour; you have resolved to judge of me for yourself. Nothing, then, shall be concealed. In such circumstances I cannot seek to extenuate any of my faults or follies. I am ready to acknowledge them all with self-humiliation more poignant than the sarcasms of my bitterest enemies. But I must pause till I have summoned courage for my confession. Dear Leonora, adieu!

OLIVIA.

LETTER II.

OLIVIA TO LEONORA.

Full of life and spirits, with a heart formed for all the enthusiasm, for all the delicacy of love, I married early, in the fond expectation of meeting a heart suited to my own. Cruelly disappointed, I found—merely a husband. My heart recoiled upon itself; true to my own principles of virtue, I scorned dissimulation. I candidly confessed to my husband, that my love was extinguished. I proved to him, alas! too clearly, that we were not born for each other. The attractive moment of illusion was past—never more to return; the repulsive reality remained. The living was chained to the dead, and, by the inexorable tyranny of English laws, that chain, eternally galling to innocence, can be severed only by the desperation of vice. Divorce, according to our barbarous institutions, cannot be obtained without guilt. Appalled at the thought, I saw no hope but in submission. Yet to submit to live with the man I could not love was, to a mind like mine, impossible. My principles and my feelings equally revolted from this legal prostitution. We separated. I sought for balm to my wounded heart in foreign climes.

To the beauties of nature I was ever feelingly alive. Amidst the sublime scenes of Switzerland, and on the consecrated borders of her classic lakes, I sometimes forgot myself to happiness. Felicity, how transient!—transient as the day-dreams that played upon my fancy in the bright morning of love. Alas! not all creation's charms could soothe me to repose. I wandered in search of that which change of place cannot afford. There was an aching void in my heart—an indescribable sadness over my spirits. Sometimes I had recourse to books; but how few were in unison with my feelings, or touched the trembling chords of my disordered mind! Commonplace morality I could not endure. History presented nothing but a mass of crimes. Metaphysics promised some relief, and I bewildered myself in their not inelegant labyrinth. But to the bold genius and exquisite pathos of some German novelists I hold myself indebted for my largest portion of ideal bliss; for those rapt moments, when sympathy with kindred souls

transported me into better worlds, and consigned vulgar realities to oblivion.

I am well aware, my Leonora, that you approve not of these my favourite writers: but yours is the morality of one who has never known sorrow. I also would interdict such cordials to the happy. But would you forbid those to taste felicity in dreams who feel only misery when awake? Would you dash the cup of Lethe from lips to which no other beverage is salubrious or sweet?

By the use of these opiates my soul gradually settled into a sort of pleasing pensive melancholy. Has it not been said, that melancholy is a characteristic of genius? I make no pretensions to genius: but I am persuaded that melancholy is the habitual, perhaps the natural state of those who have the misfortune to feel with delicacy.

You, my dear Leonora, will class this notion amongst what you once called my refined errors. Indeed I must confess, that I see in you an exception so striking as almost to compel me to relinquish my theory. But again let me remind you, that your lot in life has been different from mine. Alas! how different! Why had not I such a friend, such a mother as yours, early to direct my uncertain steps, and to educate me to happiness? I might have been—But no matter what I might have been—. I must tell you what I have been.

Separated from my husband, without a guide, without a friend at the most perilous period of my life, I was left to that most insidious of counsellors—my own heart—my own weak heart. When I was least prepared to resist the impression, it was my misfortune to meet with a man of a soul congenial with my own. Before I felt my danger, I was entangled beyond the possibility of escape. The net was thrown over my heart; its struggles were to no purpose but to exhaust my strength. Virtue commanded me to be miserable—and I was miserable. But do I dare to expect your pity, Leonora, for such an attachment? It excites your indignation, perhaps your horror. Blame, despise, detest me; all this would I rather bear, than deceive you into fancying me better than I really am.

Do not, however, think me worse. If my views had been less pure, if I had felt less reliance on the firmness of my own principles, and less repugnance to artifice, I might easily have avoided some appearances, which have injured me in the eyes of the world. With real contrition I

confess, that a fatal mixture of masculine independence of spirit, and of female tenderness of heart, has betrayed me into many imprudences; but of vice, and of that meanest species of vice, hypocrisy, I thank Heaven, my conscience can acquit me. All I have now to hope is, that you, my indulgent, my generous Leonora, will not utterly condemn me. Truth and gratitude are my only claims to your friendship—to a friendship, which would be to me the first of earthly blessings, which might make me amends for all I have lost. Consider this before, unworthy as I am, you reject me from your esteem. Counsel, guide, save me! Without vanity, but with confidence I say it, I have a heart that will repay you for affection. You will find me easily moved, easily governed by kindness. Yours has already sunk deep into my soul, and your power is unlimited over the affections and over the understanding of

Your obliged

OLIVIA.

LETTER III.

FROM LADY LEONORA L—— TO HER MOTHER, THE DUCHESS OF ——, ENCLOSING THE PRECEDING LETTERS.

I am permitted to send you, my dear mother, the enclosed letters. Mixed with what you may not approve, you will, I think, find in them proofs of an affectionate heart and superior abilities. Lady Olivia is just returned to England. Scandal, imported from the continent, has had such an effect in prejudicing many of her former friends and acquaintance against her, that she is in danger of being excluded from that society of which she was once the ornament and the favourite; but I am determined to support her cause, and to do every thing in my power to counteract the effects of malignity. I cannot sufficiently express the indignation that I feel against the

mischievous spirit of scandal, which destroys happiness at every breath, and which delights in the meanest of all malignant feelings—the triumph over the errors of superior characters. Olivia has been much blamed, because she has been much envied.

Indeed, my dear mother, you have been prejudiced against her by false reports. Do not imagine that her fascinating manners have blinded my judgment: I assure you that I have discerned, or rather that she has revealed to me, all her faults: and ought not this candour to make a strong impression upon my mind in her favour? Consider how young, how beautiful she was at her first entrance into fashionable life; how much exposed to temptation, surrounded by flatterers, and without a single friend. I am persuaded that she would have escaped all censure, and would have avoided all the errors with which she now reproaches herself, if she had been blessed with a mother such as mine.

LEONORA L——.

LETTER IV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

MY DEAREST CHILD,

I must answer your last before I sleep—before I can sleep in peace. I have just finished reading the rhapsody which it enclosed; and whilst my mind is full and warm upon the subject, let me write, for I can write to my own satisfaction at no other time. I admire and love you, my child, for the generous indignation you express against those who trample upon the fallen, or who meanly triumph over the errors of superior genius; and if I seem more cold, or more severe, than you wish me to be, attribute this to

my anxiety for your happiness, and to that caution which is perhaps the infirmity of age.

In the course of my long life I have, alas! seen vice and folly dressed in so many different fashions, that I can find no difficulty in detecting them under any disguise; but your unpractised eyes are almost as easily deceived as when you were five years old, and when you could not believe that your pasteboard nun was the same person in her various changes of attire.

Nothing would tempt you to associate with those who have avowed themselves regardless of right and wrong; but I must warn you against another, and a far more dangerous class, who professing the most refined delicacy of sentiment, and boasting of invulnerable virtue, exhibit themselves in the most improper and hazardous situations; and who, because they are without fear, expect to be deemed free from reproach. Either from miraculous good fortune, or from a singularity of temper, these adventurous heroines may possibly escape with what they call perfect innocence. So much the worse for society. Their example tempts others, who fall a sacrifice to their weakness and folly. I would punish the tempters in this case more than the victims, and for them the most effectual species of punishment is contempt. Neglect is death to these female lovers of notoriety. The moment they are out of fashion their power to work mischief ceases. Those who from their character and rank have influence over public opinion are bound to consider these things in the choice of their associates. This is peculiarly necessary in days when attempts are made to level all distinctions. You have sometimes hinted to me, my dear daughter, with all proper delicacy, that I am too strict in my notions, and that, unknown to myself, my pride mixes with morality. Be it so: the pride of family, and the pride of virtue, should reciprocally support each other. Were I asked what I think the best guard to a nobility in this or in any other country, I should answer, VIRTUE. I admire that simple epitaph in Westminster Abbey on the Duchess of Newcastle:—"Her name was Margaret Lucas, youngest sister to the Lord Lucas of Colchester;—a noble family, for all the brothers were valiant and all the sisters virtuous."

I look to the temper of the times in forming rules for conduct. Of late years we have seen wonderful changes in female manners. I may be like the old marquis in Gil Blas, who contended that even the peaches of modern days had deteriorated; but I fear that my complaints of the degeneracy of

human kind are better founded, than his fears for the vegetable creation. A taste for the elegant profligacy of French gallantry was, I remember, introduced into this country before the destruction of the French monarchy. Since that time, some sentimental writers and pretended philosophers of our own and foreign countries, have endeavoured to confound all our ideas of morality. To every rule of right they have found exceptions, and on these they have fixed the public attention by adorning them with all the splendid decorations of eloquence; so that the rule is despised or forgotten, and the exception triumphantly established in its stead. These orators seem as if they had been employed by Satan to plead the cause of vice; and, as if possessed by the evil spirit, they speak with a vehemence which carries away their auditors, or with a subtlety which deludes their better judgment. They put extreme cases, in which virtue may become vice, or vice virtue: they exhibit criminal passions in constant connexion with the most exalted, the most amiable virtues; thus making use of the best feelings of human nature for the worst purposes, they engage pity or admiration perpetually on the side of guilt. Eternally talking of philosophy or philanthropy, they borrow the terms only to perplex the ignorant and seduce the imagination. They have their systems and their theories, and in theory they pretend that the general good of society is their sole immutable rule of morality, and in practice they make the variable feelings of each individual the judges of this general good. Their systems disdain all the vulgar virtues, intent upon some *beau ideal* of perfection or perfectibility. They set common sense and common honesty at defiance. No matter: their doctrine, so convenient to the passions and soporific to the conscience, can never want partisans; especially by weak and enthusiastic women it is adopted and propagated with eagerness; then they become personages of importance, and zealots in support of their sublime opinions; and they can read,—and they can write, —and they can talk,—and they can *effect a revolution in public opinion*! I am afraid, indeed, that they can; for of late years we have heard more of sentiment than of principles; more of the rights of woman than of her duties. We have seen talents disgraced by the conduct of their possessors, and perverted in the vain attempt to defend what is unjustifiable.

Where must all this end? Where the abuse of reason inevitably ends—in the ultimate law of force. If, in this age of reason, women make a bad use of that power which they have obtained by the cultivation of their understanding, they will degrade and enslave themselves beyond

redemption; they will reduce their sex to a situation worse than it ever experienced even in the ages of ignorance and superstition. If men find that the virtue of women diminishes in proportion as intellectual cultivation increases, they will connect, fatally for the freedom and happiness of our sex, the ideas of female ignorance and female innocence; they will decide that one is the effect of the other. They will not pause to distinguish between the use and the abuse of reason; they will not stand by to see further experiments tried at their expense, but they will prohibit knowledge altogether as a pernicious commodity, and will exert the superior power which nature and society place in their hands, to enforce their decrees. Opinion obtained freedom for women; by opinion they may be again enslaved. It is therefore the interest of the female world, and of society, that women should be deterred by the dread of shame from passing the bounds of discretion. No false lenity, no partiality in favour of amusing talents or agreeable manners, should admit of exceptions which become dangerous examples of impunity. The rank and superior understanding of a *delinquent* ought not to be considered in mitigation, but as aggravating circumstances. Rank makes ill conduct more conspicuous: talents make it more dangerous. Women of abilities, if they err, usually employ all their powers to justify rather than to amend their faults.

I am afraid, my dear daughter, that my general arguments are closing round your Olivia; but I must bid you a good night, for my poor eyes will serve me no longer. God bless you, my dear child.

LETTER V.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

I agree with you, my dear mother, that in these times especially it is incumbent upon all persons, whose rank or reputation may influence public opinion, to be particularly careful to support the cause of female honour, of

virtue, and religion. With the same object in view, we may however differ in the choice of means for its attainment. Pleasure as well as pain acts upon human creatures; and therefore, in governing them, may not reward be full as efficacious as punishment? Our sex are sufficiently apprised of the fatal consequences of ill conduct; the advantages of well-earned reputation should be at least as great, as certain, and as permanent.

In former times, a single finger pointed at the scutcheon of a knight challenged him to defend his fame; but the defiance was open, the defence was public; and if the charge proved groundless, it injured none but the malicious accuser. In our days, female reputation, which is of a nature more delicate than the honour of any knight, may be destroyed by the finger of private malice. The whisper of secret scandal, which admits of no fair or public answer, is too often sufficient to dishonour a life of spotless fame. This is the height, not only of injustice, but of impolicy. Women will become indifferent to reputation, which it is so difficult, even by the prudence of years, to acquire, and which it is so easy to lose in a moment, by the malice or thoughtlessness of those, who invent, or who repeat scandal. Those who call themselves the world, often judge without listening to evidence, and proceed upon suspicion with as much promptitude and severity, as if they had the most convincing proofs. But because Cæsar, nearly two thousand years ago, said that his wife ought not even to be suspected, and divorced her upon the strength of this sentiment, shall we make it a general maxim that suspicion justifies punishment? We might as well applaud those, who when their friends are barely suspected to be tainted with the plague, drive them from all human comfort and assistance.

Even where women, from the thoughtless gaiety of youth, or the impulse of inexperienced enthusiasm, may have given some slight cause for censure, I would not have virtue put on all her gorgon terrors, nor appear circled by the vengeful band of prudes; her chastening hand will be more beneficially felt if she wear her more benign form. To place the imprudent in the same class with the vicious, is injustice and impolicy; were the same punishment and the same disgrace to be affixed to small and to great offences, the number of *capital* offenders would certainly increase. Those who were disposed to yield to their passions would, when they had once failed in exact decorum, see no motive, no fear to restrain them; and there would be no pause, no interval between error and profligacy. Amongst females who have been imprudent, there are many things to be considered

which ought to recommend them to mercy. The judge, when he is obliged to pronounce the immutable sentence of the law, often, with tears, wishes that it were in his power to mitigate the punishment: the decisions of opinion may and must vary with circumstances, else the degree of reprobation which they inflict cannot be proportioned to the offence, or calculated for the good of society. Among the mitigating circumstances, I should be inclined to name even, those which you bring in aggravation. Talents, and what is called genius, in our sex are often connected with a warmth of heart, an enthusiasm of temper, which expose to dangers, from which the coldness of mediocrity is safe. In the illuminated palace of ice, the lights which render the spectacle splendid, and which raise the admiration of the beholders, endanger the fabric and tend to its destruction.

But you will tell me, dear mother, that allusion is not argument—and I am almost afraid to proceed, lest you should think me an advocate for vice. I would not shut the gates of mercy, inexorably and indiscriminately, upon all those of my own sex, who have even been *more than imprudent*.

"He taught them shame, the sudden sense of ill—
Shame, Nature's hasty conscience, which forbids
Weak inclination ere it grows to will,
Or stays rash will before it grows to deeds."

Whilst a woman is alive to shame she cannot be dead to virtue. But by injudicious or incessant reproach, this principle, even where it is most exquisite, may be most easily destroyed. The mimosa, when too long exposed to each rude touch, loses its retractile sensibility. It ought surely to be the care of the wise and benevolent to cherish that principle, implanted in our nature as the guard of virtue, that principle, upon which legislators rest the force of punishment, and all the grand interests of society.

My dear mother, perhaps you will be surprised at the style in which I have been writing, and you will smile at hearing your Leonora discuss the duties of legislators and the grand interests of society. She has not done so from presumption, or from affectation. She was alarmed by your supposing that her judgment was deluded by fascinating manners, and she determined to produce *general* arguments, to convince you that she is not actuated by

particular prepossession. You see that I have at least some show of reason on *my* side. I have forborne to mention Olivia's name: but now that I have obviated, I hope by reasoning, the imputation of partiality, I may observe that all my arguments are strongly in her favour. She had been attacked by slander; *the world* has condemned her upon suspicion merely. She has been imprudent; but I repeat, in the strongest terms, that I am *convinced of her innocence*; and that I should bitterly regret that a woman with such an affectionate heart, such uncommon candour, and such superior abilities, should be lost to society.

Tell me, my dear mother, that you are no longer in anxiety about the consequences of my attachment to Olivia.

Your affectionate daughter,

LEONORA.

LETTER VI.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

You lament, my dear child, that such an affectionate heart, such great abilities as Olivia's, should be lost to society. Before I sympathize in your pity, my judgment must be convinced that it is reasonable.

What proofs has Lady Olivia given of her affectionate heart? She is at variance with both her parents; she is separated from her husband; and she leaves her child in a foreign country, to be educated by strangers. Am I to understand, that her ladyship's neglecting to perform the duties of a daughter, a wife, and a mother, are proofs of an affectionate heart? As to her superior talents, do they contribute to her own happiness, or to the happiness of others? Evidently not to her own; for by her account of herself, she is one of the most miserable wretches alive! She tells you that "*she went*

to foreign climes in search of balm for a wounded heart, and wandered from place to place, looking for what no place could afford." She talks of "*indescribable sadness—an aching void—an impenetrable prison—darkness visible—dead bodies chained to living ones*;" and she exhibits all the disordered furniture of a "diseased mind." But you say, that though her powers are thus insufficient to make herself happy, they may amuse or instruct the world; and of this I am to judge by the letters which you have sent me. You admire fine writing; so do I. I class eloquence high amongst the fine arts. But by eloquence I mean something more than Dr. Johnson defines it to be, "the art of speaking with fluency and elegance." This is an art which is now possessed to a certain degree by every boarding-school miss. Every scribbling young lady can now string sentences and sentiments together, and can turn a period harmoniously. Upon the strength of these accomplishments they commence heroines, and claim the privileges of the order; privileges which go to an indefinite and most alarming extent. Every heroine may have her own code of morality for her private use, and she is to be tried by no other; she may rail as loudly as she pleases "at the barbarous institutions of society," and may deplore "*the inexorable tyranny of the English laws*." If she find herself involved in delicate entanglements of crossing duties, she may break through any one, or all of them, to extricate herself with a noble contempt of prejudice.

I have promised to reason calmly; but I cannot repress the terror which I feel at the idea of my daughter's becoming the friend of one of these women. Olivia's letters are, I think, in the true heroine style; and they might make a brilliant figure in a certain class of novels. She begins with a bold exclamation on "the misfortune of being born a woman!—*the slave or the outcast of society, condemned to incessant hypocrisy*!" Does she mean modesty? Her manly soul feels it "*the most degrading punishment that omnipotent cruelty could devise, to be imprisoned in a female form*." From such a masculine spirit some fortitude and magnanimity might be expected; but presently she begs to be pitied, for a broken spirit, and more than female tenderness of heart. I have observed that the ladies who wish to be men, are usually those who have not sufficient strength of mind to be women.

Olivia proceeds in an ironical strain to envy, as "*the happiest of their sex, those who submit to be swathed by custom*." These persons she stigmatizes with the epithet of *tideless-blooded*. It is the common trick of unprincipled women to affect to despise those who conduct themselves with propriety.

Prudence they term *coldness*; fortitude, *insensibility;* and regard to the rights of others, *prejudice*. By this perversion of terms they would laugh or sneer virtue out of countenance; and, by robbing her of all praise, they would deprive her of all immediate motive. Conscious of their own degradation, they would lower every thing, and every body, to their own standard: they would make you believe, that those who have not yielded to their passions are destitute of sensibility; that the love which is not blazoned forth in glaring colours is not entitled to our sympathy. The sacrifice of the strongest feelings of the human heart to a sense of duty is to be called mean, or absurd; but the shameless frenzy of passion, exposing itself to public gaze, is to be an object of admiration. These heroines talk of strength of mind; but they forget that strength of mind is to be shown in resisting their passions, not in yielding to them. Without being absolutely of an opinion, which I have heard maintained, that all virtue is sacrifice, I am convinced that the essential characteristic of virtue is to bear and forbear. These sentimentalists can do neither. They talk of sacrifices and generosity; but they are the veriest egotists—the most selfish creatures alive.

Open your eyes, my dear Leonora, and see things as they really are. Lady Olivia thinks it a sufficient excuse for abandoning her husband, to say, that she found "*his soul was not in unison with hers*." She thinks it an adequate apology for a criminal attachment, to tell you that "*the net was thrown over her heart before she felt her danger: that all its struggles were to no purpose, but to exhaust her strength*."

If she did not feel her danger, she prepared it. The course of reading which her ladyship followed was the certain preparation for her subsequent conduct. She tells us that she could not endure "*the common-place of morality, but metaphysics promised her some relief*." In these days a heroine need not be amoralist, but she must be a metaphysician. She must "*wander in the not inelegant labyrinth*;" and if in the midst of it she comes unawares upon the monster vice, she must not start, though she have no clue to secure her retreat.

From metaphysics Lady Olivia went on to German novels. "*For her largest portions of bliss, for those rapt moments, which consigned vulgar realities to oblivion*," she owns herself indebted to those writers, who promise an ideal world of pleasure, which, like the *mirage* in the desert, bewilders the feverish imagination. I always suspected the imagination of

these *women of feeling* to be more susceptible than their hearts. They want excitation for their morbid sensibility, and they care not at what expense it is procured. If they could make all the pleasures of life into one cordial, they would swallow it at a draught in a fit of sentimental spleen. The mental intemperance that they indulge in promiscuous novel-reading destroys all vigour and clearness of judgment; every thing dances in the varying medium of their imagination. Sophistry passes for reasoning; nothing appears profound but what is obscure; nothing sublime but what is beyond the reach of mortal comprehension. To their vitiated taste the simple pathos, which o'ersteps not the modesty of nature, appears cold, tame, and insipid; they must have *scènes* and a *coup de théâtre*; and ranting, and raving, and stabbing, and drowning, and poisoning; for with them there is no love without murder. Love, in their representations, is indeed a distorted, ridiculous, horrid monster, from whom common sense, taste, decency, and nature recoil.

But I will be calm.—You say, my dear Leonora, that your judgment has not been blinded by Lady Olivia's fascinating manners; but that you are strongly influenced in her favour by that candour, with which she has revealed to you all her faults. The value of candour in individuals should be measured by their sensibility to shame. When a woman throws off all restraint, and then desires me to admire her candour, I am astonished only at her assurance. Do not be the dupe of such candour. Lady Olivia avows a criminal passion, yet you say that you have no doubt of her innocence. The persuasion of your unsuspecting heart is no argument: when you give me any proofs in her favour, I shall pay them all due attention. In the mean time I have given you my opinion of those ladies who place themselves in the most perilous situations, and then expect you to believe them safe.

Olivia's professions of regard for you are indeed enthusiastic. She tells you, that "*your power is unlimited over her heart and understanding; that your friendship would be to her one of the greatest of earthly blessings*." May be so—but I cannot wish you to be her friend. With whatever confidence she makes the assertion, do not believe that she has a heart capable of feeling the value of yours. These sentimental, unprincipled women make the worst friends in the world. We are often told that, "poor creatures! they do nobody any harm but themselves;" but in society it is scarcely possible for a woman to do harm to herself, without doing harm to others; all her connexions must be involved in the consequences of her

imprudence. Besides, what confidence can you repose in them? If you should happen to be an obstacle in the way of any of their fancies, do you think that they will respect you or your interest, when they have not scrupled to sacrifice their own to the gratification of their passions? Do you think that the gossamer of sentiment will restrain those whom the strong chains of prudence could not hold?

Oh! my dearest child, forcibly as these arguments carry conviction to my mind, I dread lest your compassionate, generous temper, should prevent their reaching your understanding. Then let me conjure you, by all the respect which you have ever shown for your mother's opinions, by all that you hold dear or sacred, beware of forming an intimacy with an unprincipled woman. Believe me to be

Your truly affectionate mother, ——

LETTER VII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

No daughter ever felt more respect for the opinions of a parent than I do for yours, my dearest mother; but you have never, even from childhood, required from me a blind submission—you have always encouraged me to desire conviction. And now, when the happiness of another is at stake, you will forgive me if I am less disposed to yield than I should be, I hope, if my own interest or taste were alone concerned.

You ask me what proofs I have of Lady Olivia's innocence. Believe me, I have such as are convincing to my unbiassed judgment, and such as would be sufficient to satisfy all your doubts, were I at liberty to lay the whole truth before you. But even to exculpate herself, Olivia will not ruin in your opinion her husband, of whom you imagine that she has no reason to complain. I, who know how anxious she is to obtain your esteem, can appreciate the sacrifice that she makes; and in this instance, as in many

others, I admire her magnanimity; it is equal to her candour, for which she is entitled to praise even by your own principles, dear mother: since, far from having *thrown off all restraint*, she is exquisitely susceptible of shame.

As to her understanding—have no persons of great talents ever been unfortunate? Frequently we see that they have not been able, by all their efforts and all their powers, to remedy the defects in the characters and tempers of those with whom they have unhappily been connected. Olivia married very young, and was unfortunately mistaken in her choice of a husband: on that subject I can only deplore her error and its consequences: but as to her disagreements with her own family, I do not think her to blame. For the mistakes we make in the choice of lovers or friends we may be answerable, but we cannot be responsible for the faults of the relations who are given to us by nature. If we do not please them, it may be our misfortune; it is not necessarily our fault. I cannot be more explicit, without betraying Lady Olivia's confidence, and implicating others in defending her.

With respect to that attachment of which you speak with so much just severity, she has given me the strongest assurances that she will do every thing in her power to conquer it. Absence, you know, is the first and the most difficult step, and this she has taken. Her course of reading displeases you: I cannot defend it: but I am persuaded that it is not a proof of her taste being vitiated. Many people read ordinary novels as others take snuff, merely from habit, from the want of petty excitation; and not, as you suppose, from the want of exorbitant or improper stimulus. Those who are unhappy have recourse to any trifling amusement that can change the course of their thoughts. I do not justify Olivia for having chosen such *comforters* as certain novels, but I pity her, and impute this choice to want of fortitude, not to depravity of taste. Before she married, a strict injunction was laid upon her not to read any book that was called a novel: this raised in her mind a sort of perverse curiosity. By making any books or opinions contraband, the desire to read and circulate them is increased; bad principles are consequently smuggled into families, and being kept secret, can never be subject to fair examination. I think it must be advantageous to the right side of any question, that all which can be said against it should be openly heard, that it may be answered. I do not

“Hate when vice can bolt her arguments;”

for I know that virtue has a tongue to answer her. The more vice repeats her assertions, the better; because when familiarized, their boldness will not astound the understanding, and the charm of novelty will not be mistaken for the power of truth. We may observe, that the admiration for the class of writers to whom you allude, though violent in its commencement, has abated since they have been more known; and numbers, who began with rapture, have ended with disgust. Persons of vivacious imaginations, like Olivia, may be caught at first view by whatever has the appearance of grandeur or sublimity; but if time be allowed for examination, they will infallibly detect the disproportions, and these will ever afterwards shock their taste: if you will not allow leisure for comparison—if you say, do not look at such strange objects, the obedient eyes may turn aside, but the rebel imagination pictures something a thousand times more wonderful and charming than the reality. I will venture to predict, that Olivia will soon be tired of the species of novels which she now admires, and that, once surfeited with these books, and convinced of their pernicious effects, she will never relapse into the practice of novel reading.

As to her taste for metaphysical books—Dear mother, I am very daring to differ with you in so many points; but permit me to say, that I do not agree with you in detesting metaphysics. People may lose themselves in that labyrinth; but why should they meet with vice in the midst of it? The characters of a moralist, a practical moralist, and a metaphysician, are not incompatible, as we may see in many amiable and illustrious examples. To examine human motives, and the nature of the human mind, is not to destroy the power of virtue, or to increase the influence of vice. The chemist, after analyzing certain substances, and after discovering their constituent parts, can lay aside all that is heterogeneous, and recompound the substance in a purer state. From analogy we might infer, that the motives of metaphysicians ought to be purer than those of the vulgar and ignorant. To discover the art of converting base into noble passions, or to obtain a universal remedy for all mental diseases, is perhaps beyond the power of metaphysicians; but in the pursuit, useful discoveries may be made.

As to Olivia's letters—I am sorry I sent them to you; for I see that they have lowered, instead of raising her in your opinion. But if you criticise letters, written in openness and confidence of heart to a private friend, as if they were set before the tribunal of the public, you are—may I say it?—not only severe, but unjust; for you try and condemn the subjects of one country by the laws of another.

Dearest mother, be half as indulgent to Olivia as you are to me: indeed you are prejudiced against her; and because you see some faults, you think her whole character vicious. But would you cut down a fine tree because a leaf is withered, or because the canker-worm has eaten into the bud? Even if a main branch were decayed, are there not remedies which, skilfully applied, can save the tree from destruction, and perhaps restore it to its pristine beauty?

And now, having exhausted all my allusions, all my arguments, and all my little stock of eloquence, I must come to a plain matter of fact—

Before I received your letter I had invited Lady Olivia to spend some time at L—— Castle. I fear that you will blame my precipitation, and I reproach myself for it, because I know it will give you pain. However, though you will think me imprudent, I am certain you would rather that I were imprudent than unjust. I have defended Olivia from what I believe to be unmerited censure; I have invited her to my house; she has accepted my proffered kindness; to withdraw it afterwards would be doing her irreparable injury: it would confirm all that the world can suspect: it would be saying to the censorious—I am convinced that you are right, and I deliver your victim up to you.

Thus I should betray the person whom I undertook to defend: her confidence in me, her having but for a moment accepted my protection, would be her ruin. I could not act in so base a manner.

Fear nothing for me, my best, but too anxious, friend. I may do Lady Olivia some good; she can do me no harm. She may learn the principles which you have taught me; I can never catch from her any tastes or habits which you would disapprove. As to the rest, I hazard little or nothing. The hereditary credit which I enjoy in my maternal right enables me to assist others without injuring myself.

Your affectionate daughter,

LEONORA.

LETTER VIII.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

MY DEAREST CHILD,

I hope that you are in the right, and that I am in the wrong.
Your affectionate mother, ——.

LETTER IX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Prepare yourself, my ever dear and charming Gabrielle, for all the torments of jealousy. Know, that since I came to England I have formed a new friendship with a woman who is interesting in the extreme, who has charmed me by the simplicity of her manners and the generous sensibility of her heart. Her character is certainly too reserved: yet even this defect has perhaps increased her power over my imagination, and consequently over my affections. I know not by what magic she has obtained it, but she has already an ascendancy over me, which would quite astonish *you*, who know my wayward fancies and independent spirit.

Alas! I confess my heart is weak indeed; and I fear that all the power of friendship and philosophy combined will never strengthen it sufficiently. Oh, Gabrielle! how can I hope to obliterate from my soul that attachment which has marked the colour of my destiny for years? Yet such courage, such cruel courage is required of me, and of such I have boasted myself capable. Lady Leonora L——, my new friend, has, by all the English eloquence of virtue, obtained from me a promise, which, I fear, I shall not have the fortitude to keep—but I must make the attempt—Forbid R—— to write to me—Yes! I have written the words—Forbid R—— to write to me —Forbid him to think of me—I will do more—if possible I will forbid myself henceforward to think of him—to think of love—Adieu, my Gabrielle—All the illusions of life are over, and a dreary blank of future existence lies before me, terminated only by the grave. To-morrow I go to L —— Castle, with feelings which I can compare only to those of the unfortunate La Vallière when she renounced her lover, and resolved to bury herself in a cloister.—Alas! why have not I the resource of devotion?

Your unhappy

OLIVIA.

LETTER X.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Publish my travels!—Not I, my dear friend. The world shall never have the pleasure of laughing at General B——‘s trip to Paris. Before a man sets about to inform others, he should have seen, not only the surface but the bottom of things; he should have had, not only a *vue d’oiseau*, but (to use a celebrated naval commander’s expression) a *vue de poisson* of his subject. By this time you must have heard enough of the Louvre and the Tuilleries,

and Versailles, and le petit Trianon, and St. Cloud—and you have had enough of pictures and statues; and you know all that can be known of Bonaparté, by seeing him at a review or a levee; and the fashionable beauties and *celebrated characters* of the hour have all passed and repassed through the magic lantern. A fresh showman might make his figures a little more correct, or a little more in laughable caricature, but he could produce nothing new. Alas! there is nothing new under the sun. Nothing remains for the moderns, but to practise the oldest follies the newest ways. Would you, for the sake of your female friends, know the fashionable dress of a Parisian *elegante*, see Seneca on the transparent vestments of the Roman ladies, who, like these modern belles, were generous in the display of their charms to the public. No doubt these French republicanists act upon the true Spartan principle of modesty: they take the most efficacious method to prevent their influence from being too great over the imaginations of men, by renouncing all that insidious reserve which alone can render even beauty permanently dangerous.

Of the cruelties of the revolution I can tell you nothing new. The public have been steeped up to the lips in blood, and have surely had their fill of horrors.

But, my dear friend, you say that I must be able to give a just view of the present state of French society, and of the best parts of it, because I have not, like some of my countrymen, hurried about Paris from one *spectacle* to another, seen the opera, and the play-houses, and the masked balls, and the gaming-houses, and the women of the Palais Royal, and the lions of all sorts; gone through the usual routine of presentation and public dinners, drunk French wine, damned French cookery, and "come home content." I have certainly endeavoured to employ my time better, and have had the good fortune to be admitted into the best *private societies* in Paris. These were composed of the remains of the French nobility, of men of letters and science, and of families, who, without interfering in politics, devote themselves to domestic duties, to literary and social pleasures. The happy hours I have passed in this society can never be forgotten, and the kindness I have received has made its full impression upon an honest English heart. I will never disgrace the confidence of my friends, by drawing their characters for the public.

Cæsar in all his glory, and all his despotism, could not, with impunity, force a Roman knight {1} to go upon the stage: but modern anecdote-mongers, more cruel and insolent than Cæsar, force their friends of all ages and sexes to appear, and speak, and act, for the amusement or derision of the public.

{Footnote 1: Laberius.}

My dear friend, is not my resolution, never to favour the world with my tour, well grounded? I hope that I have proved to your satisfaction, that I could tell people nothing but what I do not understand, or what is not worth telling them, or what has been told them a hundred times, or what, as a gentleman, I am bound not to publish.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

Friendship, my amiable and interesting Gabrielle, is more an affair of the heart than of the head, more the instinct of taste than the choice of reason. With me the heart is no longer touched, when the imagination ceases to be charmed. Explain to me this metaphysical phenomenon of my nature, and, for your reward, I will quiet your jealousy, by confessing without compunction what now weighs on my conscience terribly. I begin to feel that I can never love this English friend as I ought. She is *too English*—far too English for one who has known the charms of French ease, vivacity, and sentiment; for one who has seen the bewitching Gabrielle's infinite variety.

Leonora has just the figure and face that you would picture to yourself for *une belle Anglaise*; and if our Milton comes into your memory, you might repeat, for the quotation is not too trite for a foreigner,

"Grace is in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love."

But then it is grace which says nothing, a heaven only for a husband, the dignity more of a matron than of a heroine, and love that might have suited Eve before she had seen this world. Leonora is certainly a beauty; but then a beauty who does not know her power, and who, consequently, can make no one else feel its full extent. She is not unlike your beautiful Polish Princess, but she has none of the charming Anastasia's irresistible transitions from soft, silent languor, to brilliant, eloquent enthusiasm. All the gestures and attitudes of Anastasia are those of taste and sentiment; Leonora's are simply those of nature. *La belle nature*, but not *le beau idéal*. With a figure that would grace any court, or shine upon any stage, she usually enters a room without producing, or thinking of producing, any sensation; she moves often without seeming to have any other intention than to change her place; and her fine eyes generally look as if they were made only to see with. At times she certainly has a most expressive and intelligent countenance. I have seen her face enlightened by the fire of genius, and shaded by the exquisite touches of sensibility; but all this is merely called forth by the occasion, and vanishes before it is noticed by half the company. Indeed, the full radiance of her beauty or of her wit seldom shines upon any one but her husband. The audience and spectators are forgotten. Heavens! what a difference between the effect which Leonora and Gabrielle produce! But, to do her justice, much of this arises from the different *organization* of French and English society. In Paris the insipid details of domestic life are judiciously kept behind the scenes, and women appear as heroines upon the stage with all the advantages of decoration, to listen to the language of love, and to receive the homage of public admiration. In England, gallantry is not yet *systematized*, and our sex look more to their families than to what is called *society* for the happiness of existence. And yet the affection of mothers for their children does not appear to be so strong in the hearts of

English as of French women. In England, ladies do not talk of the *sentiment of maternity* with that elegance and sensibility with which you expatiate upon it continually in conversation. They literally are *des bonnes mères de famille*, not from the impulse of sentiment, but merely from an early instilled sense of duty, for which they deserve little credit. However, they devote their lives to their children, and those who have the misfortune to be their intimate friends are doomed to see them half the day, or all day long, go through the part of the good mother in all its diurnal monotony of lessons and caresses. All this may be vastly right—it is a pity it is so tiresome. For my part I cannot conceive how persons of superior taste and talents can submit to it, unless it be to make themselves a reputation, and that you know is done by writing and talking on the general principles, not by submitting to the minute details of education. The great painter sketches the outline, and touches the principal features, but leaves the subordinate drudgery of filling up the parts, finishing the drapery, &c., to inferior hands.

Upon recollection, in my favourite "Sorrows of Werter," the heroine is represented cutting bread and butter for a group of children: I admire this simplicity in Goethe; 'tis one of the secrets by which he touches the heart. Simplicity is delightful by way of variety, but always simplicity is worse than *toujours perdrix*. Children in a novel or a drama are charming little creatures: but in real life they are often insufferable plagues. What becomes of them in Paris I know not; but I am sure that they are never in the way of one's conversations or reveries; and it would be a blessing to society if English children were as inaudible and invisible. These things strike me sensibly upon my return to England, after so long an absence. Surely, by means of the machinery of masters, and governesses, and schools, the manufacture of education might be carried on without incommoding those who desire to see only the finished production. Here I find the daughter of an English duke, a woman in the first bloom of youth, of the highest pretensions in point of rank, beauty, fashion, accomplishments, and talents, devoting herself to the education of two children, orphans, left to her care by an elder sister. To take charge of orphans is a good and fine action; as such it touches me sensibly; but then where is the necessity of sacrificing one's friends, and one's pleasures, day after day, and hour after hour, to mere children? Leonora can persevere only from a notion of duty. Now, in my opinion, when generosity becomes duty it ceases to be virtue. Virtue requires free-will: duty implies constraint. Virtue acts from the impulse of

the moment, and never tires or is tired; duty drudges on in consequence of reflection, and, weary herself, wearies all beholders. Duty, always laborious, never can be graceful; and what is not graceful in woman cannot be amiable—can it, my amiable Gabrielle? But I reproach myself for all I have written. Leonora is my friend—besides, I am really obliged to her, and for the universe would I not hint a thought to her disadvantage. Indeed she is a most excellent, a faultless character, and it is the misfortune of your Olivia not to love perfection as she ought.

My charming and interesting Gabrielle, I am more out of humour with myself than you can conceive; for in spite of all that reason and gratitude urge, I fear I cannot prefer the insipid virtues of Leonora to the lively graces of Gabrielle.

As to the cold husband, Mr. L——, I neither know nor wish to know any thing of him; but I live in hopes of an agreeable and interesting accession to our society to-day, from the arrival of Leonora's intimate friend, a young widow, whose husband I understand was a man of a harsh temper: she has gone through severe trials with surprising fortitude; and though I do not know her history, I am persuaded it must be interesting. Assuredly this husband could never have been the man of her choice, and of course she must have had some secret unhappy attachment, which doubtless preyed upon her spirits. Probably the object of her affection, in despair at her marriage, plighted his faith unfortunately, or possibly may have fallen a sacrifice to his constancy. I am all impatience to see her. Her husband's name was so ruggedly English, that I am sure you would never be able to pronounce it, especially if you only saw it written; therefore I shall always to you call her Helen, a name which is more pleasing to the ear, and more promising to the imagination. I have not been able to prevail upon Leonora to describe her friend to me exactly; she says only, that she loves Helen too well to overpraise her beforehand. My busy fancy has, however, bodied forth her form, and painted her in the most amiable and enchanting colours. Hark! she is just arrived. Adieu.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XII.

FROM MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

. . . Having now had the honour of spending nearly a week in the society of the celebrated enchantress, Lady Olivia, you will naturally expect that I should be much improved in the art of love: but before I come to my improvements I must tell you, what will be rather more interesting, that Leonora is perfectly well and happy, and that I have the dear delight of exclaiming ten times an hour, "Ay, just as I thought it would be!—Just such a wife, just such a mistress of a family I knew she would make."

"*Not to admire*," is an art or a precept which I have not been able to practise much since I came here. Some philosophers tell us that admiration is not only a silly but a fatiguing state of mind; and I suppose that nothing could have preserved my mind from being tired to death, but the quantity of bodily exercise which I have taken. I could, if I pleased, give you a plan and elevation of this castle. Nay, I doubt not but I could stand an examination in the catalogue of the pictures, or the inventory of the furniture.

You, Helen!—you who could not remember the colour of Lady N——'s *new* curtains after you had seen them at least a hundred times!

Lady N—— was indifferent to me, and how could I hang up her curtains in my memory? By what could they hold? Do you not know, Margaret ... all the fine things that I could say, and that quartos have said before me, about the association of ideas and sensations, &c.? Those we love impart to uninteresting objects the power of pleasing, as the magnet can communicate to inert metal its attractive influence.

Till Mr. L—— was Leonora's lover I never liked him much. I do not mean to call him inert. I always knew that he had many excellent qualities; but there was nothing in his temper peculiarly agreeable to me, and there was something in his character that I did not thoroughly understand; yet, since he is become Leonora's husband, I find my understanding much improved, and I dare say it will soon be so far enlarged, that I shall comprehend him perfectly.

Leonora has almost persuaded me to like Lady Olivia. Not to laugh at her would be impossible. I wish you could see the way in which we go on together. Our first setting out would have diverted you. Enter Lady Olivia breathless, with an air of theatric expectation—advances to embrace Helen, who is laughing with Leonora—her back turned towards the side of the stage at which Olivia enters—Olivia pauses suddenly, and measures Helen *with a long look*. What passes in Lady Olivia's mind at this moment I do not know, but I guess that she was disappointed woefully by my appearance. After some time she was recovered, by Leonora's assistance, from her reverie, and presently began to admire my vivacity, and to find out that I was Clarissa's Miss Howe—no, I was Lady G.—no, I was Heloise's Clara: but I, choosing to be myself, and insisting upon being an *original*, sunk again visibly and rapidly in Olivia's opinion, till I was in imminent danger of being *nobody*, Leonora again kindly interposed to save me from annihilation; and after an interval of an hour or two dedicated to letter-writing, Lady Olivia returned and seated herself beside me, resolved to decide what manner of woman I was. Certain novels are the touchstones of feeling and *intellect* with certain ladies. Unluckily I was not well read in these; and in the questions put to me from these sentimental statute-books, I gave strange judgments, often for the husband or parents against the heroine. I did not even admit the plea of destiny, irresistible passion, or *entraînement*, as in all cases sufficient excuse for all errors and crimes. Moreover, I excited astonishment by calling things by obsolete names. I called a married woman's having a lover *a crime*! Then I was no judge of virtues, for I thought a wife's making an intimate friend of her husband's mistress was scandalous and mean; but this I was told is the height of delicacy and generosity. I could not perceive the propriety of a man's liking two women at the same time, or a woman's having a platonic attachment for half a dozen lovers: and I owned that I did not wish divorce could be as easily obtained in England as in France. All which proved that I have never been out of England—a great misfortune! I dare say it will soon be discovered that women as well as madeira cannot be good for any thing till they have crossed the line. But besides the obloquy of having lived only in the best company in England, I was further disgraced by the discovery, that I am deplorably ignorant of metaphysics, and have never been enlightened by any philanthropic transcendental foreign professor of humanity. Profoundly humiliated, and not having yet taken the first step towards

knowledge, the knowing that I was ignorant, I was pondering upon my sad fate, when Lady Olivia, putting her hand upon my shoulder, summoned me into the court of love, there in my own proper person to answer such questions as it should please her ladyship to ask. For instance:—"Were you ever in love?—How often?—When?—Where?—And with whom?"

Never having stood a cross-examination in public upon these points, I was not quite prepared to reply; and I was accused of giving evasive answers, and convicted of blushing. Mr. L——, who was present at this examination, enjoyed, in his grave way, my astonishment and confusion, but said not one word. I rallied my spirits and my wits, and gave some answers which gained the smile of the court on my side.

From these specimens you may guess, my dear Margaret, how well this lady and I are likely to agree. I shall divert myself with her absurdities without scruple. Yet notwithstanding the flagrancy of these, Leonora persuades me to think well of Olivia; indeed I am so happy here, that it would be a difficult matter at present to make me think ill of any body. The good qualities, which Leonora sees in her, are not yet visible to my eyes; but Leonora's visual orb is so cleared with charity and love, that she can discern what is not revealed to vulgar sight. Even in the very germ, she discovers the minute form of the perfect flower. *The Olivia* will, I hope, in time, blow out in full perfection.

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XIII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Monday.

O my Gabrielle! this Helen is not precisely the person that I expected. Instead of being a dejected beauty, she is all life and gaiety.

I own I should like her better if she were a little more pensive; a tinge of melancholy would, in her situation, be so becoming and natural. My imagination was quite disappointed when I beheld the quickness of her eyes and frequency of her smiles. Even her mode of showing affection to Leonora was not such as could please me. This is the first visit, I understand, that she has paid Leonora since her marriage: these friends have been separated for many months.—I was not present at their meeting; but I came into the room a few minutes after *Helen*'s arrival, and I should have thought that they had seen one another but yesterday. This *dear Helen* was quite at ease and at home in a few moments, and seemed as if she had been living with us for years. I make allowance for the ease of well-bred people. Helen has lived much in the world, and has polished manners. But the heart —the heart is superior to politeness; and even ease, in some situations, shows a want of the delicate *tact* of sentiment. In a similar situation I should have been silent, entranced, absorbed in my sensations—overcome by them, perhaps dissolved in tears. But in Helen there appeared no symptoms of real sensibility—nothing characteristic—nothing profound—nothing concentrated: it was all superficial, and evaporated in the common way. I was provoked to see Leonora satisfied. She assures me that Helen has uncommonly strong affections, and that her character rather exceeds than is deficient in enthusiasm. Possibly; but I am certain that Helen is in no danger of becoming romantic. Far from being abstracted, I never saw any one seem more interested and eager about every present occurrence—pleased, even to childishness, with every passing trifle. I confess that she is too much of this world for me. But I will if possible suspend my judgment, and study her a few hours longer, before I give you my definitive opinion.

Thursday.

Well, my Gabrielle, my *definitive opinion* is that I can never love this friend of Leonora. I said that she had lived much in the world—but only in the English world: she has never seen any other; therefore, though quite in a different style from Leonora, she shocks me with the same nationality. All her ideas are exclusively English: she has what is called English good sense, and English humour, and English prejudices of *all sorts*, both masculine and feminine. She takes fire in defence of her country and of her

sex; nay, sometimes blushes even to awkwardness, which one would not expect in the midst of her good breeding and vivacity. What a difference between her vivacity and that of my charming Gabrielle! as great as between the enlargement of your mind and the limited nature of her understanding. I tried her on various subjects, but found her intrenched in her own contracted notions. All new, or liberal, or sublime ideas in morality or metaphysics she either cannot seize, or seizes only to place in a ridiculous point of view: a certain sign of mediocrity. Adieu, my Gabrielle. I must send you the pictures, whether engaging or forbidding, of those with whom your Olivia is destined to pass her time. When I have no events to relate, still I must write to convey to you my sentiments. Alas! how imperfectly!—for I have interdicted myself the expression of those most interesting to my heart. Leonora, calmly prudent, coolly virtuous, knows not what it costs me to be faithful to this cruel promise. Write to me, my sympathizing, my tender friend!

Your ever unhappy

OLIVIA.

LETTER XIV.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

July 10th.

Some very good people, like some very fine pictures, are best at a distance. But Leonora is not one of these: the nearer you approach, the better you like her; as in arabesque-work you may admire the beauty of the design even at a distance, but you cannot appreciate the delicacy of the execution till you examine it closely, and discover that every line is formed of grains of gold, almost imperceptibly fine. I am glad that the “small sweet

courtesies of life" have been hailed by one sentimental writer at least. The minor virtues are not to be despised, even in comparison with the most exalted. The common rose, I have often thought, need not be ashamed of itself even in company with the finest exotics in a hothouse; and I remember, that your brother, in one of his letters, observed, that the common cock makes a very respectable figure, even in the grand Parisian assembly of all the stuffed birds and beasts in the universe. It is a glorious thing to have a friend who will jump into a river, or down a precipice, to save one's life: but as I do not intend to tumble down precipices, or to throw myself into the water above half a dozen times, I would rather have for my friends persons who would not reserve their kindness wholly for these grand occasions, but who could condescend to make me happy every day, and all day long, even by actions not sufficiently sublime to be recorded in history or romance.

Do not infer from this that I think Leonora would hesitate to make *great* sacrifices. I have had sufficient experience of her fortitude and active courage of mind in the most trying circumstances, whilst many who talked more stoutly, shrunk from *committing* themselves by actions.

Some maxim-maker says, that past misfortunes are good for nothing but to be forgotten. I am not of his opinion: I think that they are good to make us know our winter from our summer friends, and to make us feel for those who have sustained us in adversity, that most pleasurable sensation of the human mind—gratitude.

But I am straying unawares into the province of sentiment, where I am such a stranger that I shall inevitably lose my way, especially as I am too proud to take a guide. Lady Olivia —— may perhaps be very fond of Leonora: and as she has every possible cause to be so, it is but reasonable and charitable to suppose that she is: but I should never guess it by her manner. She speaks of her friendship sometimes in the most romantic style, but often makes observations upon *the enviable coolness and imperturbability of Leonora's disposition*, which convinces me that she does not understand it in the least. Those who do not really feel, always pitch their expressions too high or too low, as deaf people bellow, or speak in a whisper. But I may be mistaken in my suspicions of Olivia; for *to do the lady justice*, as Mrs. Candour would say, she is so affected, that it is difficult to know what she really feels. Those who put on rouge occasionally, are

suspected of wearing it constantly, and never have any credit for their natural colour; presently they become so accustomed to common rouge, that, mistaking scarlet for pale pink, they persist in laying on more and more, till they are like nothing human.

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

I have found it! I have found it! dear Gabrielle, rejoice with me! I have solved the metaphysical problem, which perplexed me so cruelly, and now I am once more at peace with myself. I have discovered the reason why I cannot love Leonora as she merits to be loved—she has obliged me; and the nature of obligation is such, that it supposes superiority on one side, and consequently destroys the equality, the freedom, the ease, the charm of friendship. Gratitude weighs upon one's heart in proportion to the delicacy of its feelings. To minds of an ordinary sort it may be pleasurable, for with them it is sufficiently feeble to be calm; but in souls of a superior cast, it is a poignant, painful sensation, because it is too strong ever to be tranquil. In short,

"'Tis bliss but to a certain bound—
Beyond, 'tis agony."

For my own part, the very dread that I shall not be thought to express enough, deprives me of the power to speak or even to feel. Fear, you know,

extinguishes affection; and of all fears, the dread of not being sufficiently grateful, operates the most powerfully. Thus sensibility destroys itself.—Gracious Heaven! teach me to moderate mine.

In the nature of the obligation with which Leonora has oppressed my heart, there is something peculiarly humiliating. Upon my return to this country, I found the malignant genius of scandal bent upon destroying my reputation. You have no idea of the miserable force of prejudice which still prevails here. There are some women who emancipate themselves, but then unluckily they are not in sufficient numbers to keep each other in countenance in public. One would not choose to be confined to the society of people who cannot go to court, though sometimes they take the lead elsewhere. We are full half a century behind you in civilization; and your revolution has, I find, afforded all our stiffened moralists *incontrovertible* arguments against liberty of opinion or conduct in either sex.

I was thunderstruck when I saw the grave and repulsive faces of all my female acquaintance. At first I attributed every thing that was strange and disagreeable to English reserve, of which I had retained a sufficiently formidable idea: but I presently found that there was some other cause which kept all these nice consciences at a distance from my atmosphere.

Would you believe it? I saw myself upon the point of being quite excluded from good society. Leonora saved me from this imminent danger. Voluntarily, and I must say nobly, if not gracefully, Leonora came forward in my defence. Vanquishing her natural English timidity, she braved the eyes, and tongues, and advice of all the prudes and old dowagers my enemies, amongst whom I may count the superannuated Duchess her mother, the proudest dowager now living. When I appeared in public with a personage of Leonora's unblemished reputation, scandal, much against her will, was forced to be silent, and it was to be taken for granted that I was, in the language of prudery, perfectly innocent. Leonora, to be consistent in goodness, or to complete her triumph in the face of the world, invited me to accompany her to the country.—I have now been some weeks at this superb castle. Heaven is my witness that I came with a heart overflowing with affection; but the painful, the agonizing sense of humiliation mixed with my tenderest sentiments, and all became bitterness insufferable. Oh, Gabrielle! you, and perhaps you alone upon earth, can understand my feelings. Adieu! —pity me—I must not ask you a single question about—I must not write

the name for ever dear—What am I saying? where are my promises?—Adieu!—Adieu!

Your unhappy

OLIVIA.

LETTER XVI.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

July 16th.

As I have never thought it my duty in this mortal life to mourn for the absurdities of my fellow-creatures, I should now enjoy the pleasure of laughing at Lady Olivia, if my propensity were not checked by a serious apprehension that she will injure Leonora's happiness. From the most generous motives, dear Leonora is continually anxious to soothe her mind, to persuade and reason her into common sense, to re-establish her in public opinion, and to make her happy. But I am convinced that Lady Olivia never will have common sense, and consequently never can be happy. Twenty times a day I wish her at the antipodes, for I dread lest Leonora should be implicated in her affairs, and involved in her misery.

Last night this foolish woman, who unluckily is graced with all the power of words, poured forth a fine declamation in favour of divorce. In vain Leonora reasoned, expostulated, blushed. Lady Olivia cannot blush for herself; and though both Mr. L—— and I were present, she persisted with that vehemence which betrays personal interest in an argument. I suspect that she is going to try to obtain a divorce from her husband, that she may marry her lover. Consider the consequences of this for Leonora.—Leonora to be the friend of a woman who will risk the infamy of a trial at Doctors' Commons! But Leonora says I am mistaken, and that all this is only

Olivia's way of talking. I wish then, that, if she does not intend to act like a fool, she would not talk like one. I agree with the gentleman who said that a woman who begins by playing the fool, always ends by playing the devil. Even before me, though I certainly never solicit her confidence, Lady Olivia talks with the most imprudent openness of her love affairs; not, I think, from ingenuousness, but from inability to restrain herself. Begin what subject of conversation I will, as far from Cupid as possible, she will bring me back again to him before I know where I am. She has no ideas but on this one subject. Leonora, dear, kind-hearted Leonora, attributes this to the temporary influence of a violent passion, which she assures me Olivia will conquer, and that then all her great and good qualities will, as if freed from enchantment, re-assume their natural vigour. *Natural!*—there is nothing natural about this sophisticated lady. I wish Leonora would think more of herself, and less of other people. As to Lady Olivia's excessive sensibility, I have no faith in it. I do not think either the lover or the passion so much to be feared for her, as the want of a lover and the habit of thinking that it is necessary to be in love. . . .

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XVII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

MY DEAR L——, Paris, Hôtel de Courlande,

When you ask a countryman in England the way to the next town, he replies, "Where do you come from, master?" and till you have answered this question, no information can you obtain from him. You ask me what I know of Lady Olivia ——. What is your reason for asking? Till you have

answered this question, hope for no information from me. Seriously, Lady Olivia had left Paris before I arrived, therefore you cannot have my judgment of her ladyship, which I presume is all you could depend upon. If you will take hearsay evidence, and if you wish me to speak to general character, I can readily satisfy you. Common reputed, loud and unanimous in favour of her talents, beauty, and fashion: there is no resisting, I am told, the fascination of her manners and conversation; *but* her opinions are fashionably liberal, and her practice as liberal as her theories. Since her separation from her husband, her lover is publicly named. Some English friends plead in her favour platonic attachment: this, like benefit of clergy, is claimed of course for a first offence: but Lady Olivia's Parisian acquaintance are not so scrupulous or so old-fashioned as to think it an offence; they call it an *arrangement*, and to this there can be no objection. As a French gentleman said to me the other day, with an unanswerable shrug, "Tout le monde sait que R—— est son amant; d'ailleurs, c'est la femme la plus aimable du monde."

As to Lady Olivia's friend, Mad. de P——, she sees a great deal of company: her house is the resort of people of various descriptions; ministers, foreigners, coquettes, and generals; in short, of all those who wish, without scandal or suspicion, to intrigue either in love or politics. Her assemblies are also frequented by a few of *l'ancien régime*, who wish to be in favour with the present government. Mad. de P——, of a noble family herself, and formerly much at court, has managed matters so as to have regained all her husband's confiscated property, and to have acquired much influence with some of the leading men of the day. In her manners and conversation there is an odd mixture of frivolity and address, of the airs of coquetry and the jargon of sentiment. She has the politeness of a French Countess, with *exquisite* knowledge of the world and of *les convenances*, joined to that freedom of opinion which marks the present times. In the midst of all these inconsistencies, it is difficult to guess what her real character may be. At first sight I should pronounce her to be a silly woman, governed by vanity and the whim of the moment: but those who know her better than I do, believe her to be a woman of considerable talents, inordinately fond of power, and uniformly intent upon her own interest, using coquetry only as a means to govern our sex, and frivolity as a mask for her ambition. In short, Mad. de P—— is a perfect specimen of the combination of an *intrigante* and an *élégante*, a combination often found in

Paris. Here women mingle politics and gallantry—men mix politics and epicurism—which is the better mixture?

I have business of importance to my country to transact to-day, *therefore* I am going to dine with the modern Apicius. Excuse me, my dear friend, if I cannot stay at present to answer your questions about divorce. I must be punctual. What sort of a negotiator can he make who is too late at a minister's dinner? Five minutes might change the face of Europe.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XVIII.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

My incomparable Olivia! your letters are absolutely divine. I am *maussade*, I *vegetate*. I cannot be said to live the days when I do not hear from you. Last Thursday I was disappointed of one of these dear letters, and *Brave-et-tendre* told me frankly, that I was so little amiable he should not have known me.—As to the rest, pardon me for not writing punctually: I have been really in a chaos of business and pleasure, and I do not know which fatigues most. But I am obliged to attend the ministers every day, for the sake of my friends.

A thousand and a thousand thanks for your pictures of your English friends: sketches by a masterly hand must be valuable, whatever the subject. I would rather have the pictures than the realities. Your Helen and your Lady Leonora are too good for me, and I pity you from my soul for being shut up in that old castle. I suppose it is like an old castle in Dauphiny, where I once spent a week, and where I was nearly frightened to death by

the flapping of the old tapestry behind my bed, and by the bats which flew in through the broken windows. They say, however, that our *châteaux* and yours are something different. Of this I have no clear conception.

I send you three comforters in your prison—a billet-doux, a new novel, and a pattern of my sandal: a billet-doux from R—— says every thing for itself; but I must say something for the new novel. Zenobie, which I now send you, is the declared rival of Seraphin. Parties have run high on both sides, and applications were made and inuendoes discovered, and wit and sentiment came to close combat; and, as usual, people talked till they did not understand themselves. For a fortnight, wherever one went, the first words to be heard on entering every *salon* were Seraphine and Zenobie.—Peace or war.—Mlle. Georges and Mlle. Duchesnois were nothing to Seraphine and Zenobie. For Heaven's sake tell me which you prefer! But I fear they will be no more talked of before I have your answer. To say the truth, I am tired of both heroines, for a fortnight is too long to talk or think of any one thing.

I flatter myself you will like my sandals: they are my own invention, and my foot really shows them to advantage. You know I might say, as Du P ——said of himself, "J'ai un pied dont la petitesse échappe à la vitesse de la pensée." I thought my poor friend Mad. Dumarais would have died with envy, the other day, when I appeared in them at her ball, which, by-the-bye, was in all its decorations as absurd and in as bad taste as usual. For the most part these *nouveaux riches* lavish money, but can never purchase taste or a sense of propriety. All is gold: but that is not enough; or rather that is too much. In spite of all that both the Indies, China, Arabia, Egypt, and even Paris can do for them, they will be ever out of place, in the midst of their magnificence: they will never even know how to ruin themselves nobly. They must live and die as they were born, ridiculous. Now I would rather not exist than feel myself ridiculous. But I believe no one living, not even le petit d'Heronville, knows himself to be an object of ridicule. There are no looking-glasses for the mind, and I question whether we should use them if there were. D'Heronville is just as you left him, and as much my amusement as he used to be yours. He goes on with an eternal galimatias of patriotism, with such a self-sufficient air and decided tone! never suspecting that he says only what other people make him say, and that he is listened to, only to find out what *some people* think. Many will say before fools, what they would not hazard before wise men; not considering that fools can

repeat as well as parrots. I once heard a great man remark, that the only spies fit to be trusted are those who do not know themselves to be such; who have no salary but what their vanity pays them, and who are employed without being accredited.

But trève de politique!—My charming Olivia, I know, abhors politics, as much as I detest metaphysics, from all lips or pens but hers. Now I must tell you something of your friends here.

O—— talks nonsense as agreeably as ever, and dances as divinely. ‘Tis a pity he cannot always dance, for then he would not ruin himself at play. He wants me to get him a regiment—as if I had any power!—or as if I would use it for this purpose, when I knew that my interesting friend Mad. Q—— would break her poor little heart if he were to quit her.

Mon Coeur is as pretty as ever; but she is now in affliction. She has lost her dear little dog Corisonde. He died suddenly; almost in her arms! She will erect a monument to him in her charming *jardin Anglois*. This will occupy her, and then “Time, the comforter”—Inimitable Voltaire!

Our dear *Brillante* has just had a superb *hommage* from her lover the commissary—a necklace and bracelets of the finest; pearls: but she cannot wear them yet: her brother having died last week, she is in deep mourning. This brother was not upon good terms with her. He never forgave the divorce. He thought it a disgrace to have a sister *une divorcée*; but he was full of prejudice, poor man, and he is dead, and we need think no more of him or of his faults.

Our ci-devant chanoine, who married that little Meudon, is as miserable as possible, and as ridiculous: for he is jealous of his young wife, and she is a *franche-coquette*. The poor man looks as if he repented sincerely of his errors. What a penitent a coquette can make of a husband! Bourdaloue and Massillon would have tried their powers on this man’s heart in vain.

Did I tell you that Mad. G—— is a second time divorced? But this time it is her husband’s doing, not hers. This handsome husband has spent all the immense fortune she brought him, and now procures a divorce for *incompatibility of temper*, and is going to marry another lady, richer than Mad. G——, and as great a fool. This system of divorce, though convenient, is not always advantageous to women. However, in one point of view, I wonder that the rigid moralists do not defend it, as the only means of making a man in love with his own wife. A man divorces; the law does not

permit him to marry the same woman afterwards; of course this prohibition makes him fall in love with her. Of this we have many edifying examples besides Fanchette, who, though she was so beautiful, and a tolerable actress, would never have drawn all Paris to the Vaudeville if she had not been a *divorcée*, and if it had not been known that her husband, who played the lover of the piece, was dying to marry her again. Apropos, Mad. St. Germain is acting one of her own romances, in the high sublime style, and threatens to poison herself for love of her perjured inconstant—but it will not do.

Madame *la Grande* was near having a sad accident the other night: in crossing the Pont-neuf her horses took fright; for there was a crowd and *embarras*, a man having just drowned himself—not for love, but for hunger. How many men, women, and children, do you think drowned themselves in the Seine last year? Upwards of two hundred. This is really shocking, and a stop should be put to it by authority. It absolutely makes me shudder and reflect; but *après nous le déluge* was La Pompadour's maxim, and should be ours.

Mad. Folard *se coiffe en cheveux*, and Mad. Rocroix crowns herself with roses, whilst all the world knows that either of them is old enough to be my mother. In former days a woman could not wear flowers after thirty, and was *bel esprit* or *dévote* at forty, for it was thought bad taste to do otherwise. But now every body may be as young as they please, or as ridiculous. Women have certainly gained by the new order of things.

Our poor friend *Vermeille* se meurt de la poitrine—a victim to tea and late hours. She is an interesting creature, and my heart bleeds for her: she will never last till winter.

Do you know, it is said, we shall soon have no wood to burn. What can have become of all our forests? People should inquire after them. The Venus de Medici has at last found her way down the Seine. It is not determined yet where to place her: but she is at Paris, and that is a great point gained for her. You complained that the Apollo stands with his back so near the wall, that there is no seeing half the beauties of his shoulders. If I have any influence, Venus shall not be so served. I have been to see her. She is certainly divine—but not French. I do not despair of seeing her surpassed by our artists.

Adieu, my adorable Olivia. I should have finished my letter yesterday; but when I came home in the morning, expecting to have a moment sacred to you and friendship, whom should I find established in an arm-chair in my cabinet but our old Countess *Cidevant*. There was no retreat for me. In the midst of my concentrated rage, I was obliged to advance and embrace her, and there was an end of happiness for the day. The pitiless woman kept me till it was even too late to dress, talking over her family misfortunes; as if they were any thing to me. She wants to get her son employed, but her pride will not let her pay her court properly, and she wants me to do it for her. Not I, truly. I should shut my doors against her but for the sake of her nephew *le roué*, who is really a pretty young man. My angel, I embrace you tenderly.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

How melancholy to a feeling heart is the moment when illusion vanishes, whether that illusion has been created by the magic of love or of friendship! How many such moments, Gabrielle, has your unfortunate friend been doomed to endure! Alas! when will treacherous fancy cease to throw a deceitful brilliancy upon each new object!

Perhaps I am too delicate—but R——‘s note, enclosed in your last, my Gabrielle, was unlike his former letters. It was not passionate, it was only reasonable. A man who can reason is no longer in love. The manner in which he speaks of divorce shocked me beyond expression. Is it for him to talk of scruples when upon this subject I have none? I own to you that my pride and my tenderness are sensibly wounded. Is it for him to convince me that I am in the wrong? I shall not be at ease till I hear from you again, my

amiable friend: for my residence here becomes insupportable. But a few short weeks are past since I fancied Leonora an angel, and now she falls below the ordinary standard of mortals. But a few short weeks are past since, in the full confidence of finding in Leonora a second self, a second Gabrielle, I eagerly developed to her my inmost soul; yet now my heart closes, I fear never more to open. The sad conviction, that we have but few ideas, and no feelings in common, stops my tongue when I attempt to speak, chills my heart when I begin to listen.

Do you know, my Gabrielle, I have discovered that Leonora is inordinately selfish? For all other faults I have charity; but selfishness, which has none to give, must expect none. O divine sensibility, defend me from this isolation of the heart! All thy nameless sorrows, all thy heart-rending tortures, would I a thousand times rather endure. Leonora's selfishness breaks out perpetually; and, alas! it is of the most inveterate, incurable kind: every thing that is immediately or remotely connected with self she loves, and loves with the most provoking pertinacity. Her mother, her husband, she adores, because they are her own; and even her sister's children, because she considers them, she says, as her own. All and every possible portion of self she cherishes with the most sordid partiality. All that touches these relations touches her; and every thing which is theirs, or, in other words, which is hers, she deems excellent and sacred. Last night I just hazarded a word of ridicule upon some of the obsolete prejudices of that august personage, that Duchess of old tapestry, her still living ancestor. I wish, Gabrielle, you had seen Leonora's countenance. Her colour rose up to her temples, her eyes lightened with indignation, and her whole person assumed a dignity, which might have killed a presumptuous lover, or better far, might have enslaved him for life. What folly to waste all this upon such an occasion! But selfishness is ever blind to its real interests. Leonora is so bigoted to this old woman, that she is already in mind an old woman herself. She fancies that she traces a resemblance to her mother, and of course to dear self in her infant, and she looks upon it with such doting eyes, and talks to it with such exquisite tones of fondness, as are to me, who know the source from which they proceed, quite ridiculous and disgusting. An infant, who has no imaginable merit, and, to impartial eyes, no charms, she can love to this excess from no motive but pure *egotism*. Then her husband—but this subject I must reserve for another letter. I am summoned to walk with him this moment.

Adieu, charming Gabrielle,

OLIVIA.

LETTER XX.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

MY DEAR L——, Paris, 180—.

Enclosed I send you, according to your earnest desire, Cambacérès' reflections upon the intended new law of divorce. Give me leave to ask why you are so violently interested upon this occasion? Do you envy France this blessing? Do you wish that English husbands and wives should have the power of divorcing each other at pleasure for *incompatibility of temper*? And have you calculated the admirable effect this would produce upon the temper both of the weaker and the stronger sex? To bear and forbear would then be no longer necessary. Every happy pair might quarrel and part at a moment's notice—at a year's notice at most. And their children? The wisdom of Solomon would be necessary to settle the just division of the children. I have this morning been attending a court of law to hear a famous trial between two husbands: the abdicated lord a ci-devant noble, and the reigning husband a ci-devant grand-vicaire, who has *reformed*. Each party claimed a right to the children by the first marriage, for the children were minors entitled to large fortunes. The *reformed* grand-vicaire pleaded his own cause with astonishing assurance, amidst the discountenancing looks, murmurs, and almost amidst the groans of disapprobation from the majority of the auditors. His powers of impudence, however, failed him at last. I sat on the bench behind him, and saw that his ears had the grace to blush. After another hearing, this cause, which had lasted four years, was decided; and the first husband and real father was permitted to have the guardianship of

his own children. During the four years' litigation, the friends of the parties, from the grandmother downwards, were all at irreconcileable variance. What became of the children all this time? Their mother was represented during the trial as she deserved to be, as a wretch void of shame and gratitude. The father was universally pitied, though his rival painted him as a coward, who during the revolution had left his children to save himself by flight; and as a fool, who had left his wife to the care of a profligate grand-vicaire. Divorce is not countenanced by opinion in Paris, though permitted by law. With a few exceptions in extraordinary cases, I have observed that *les divorcées* are not received into good society.

To satiate your curiosity, I send you all the papers that have been written lately on this subject, of which you will find that of Cambacérès the best. The wits say that he is an impartial judge. I presume you want these pamphlets for some foolish friend; for yourself you can never want them, blessed as you are with such a wife as Lady Leonora L—. I am not surprised that profligate men should wish for freedom of divorce, because it would save them damages in Doctors' Commons: but you rather astonish me—if a wise man should be astonished at any thing in these days—by assuring me that you have lately heard this system eloquently defended by a female philosopher. What can women expect from it but contempt? Next to polygamy, it would prove the most certain method of destroying the domestic happiness of the sex, as well as their influence and respectability in society. But some of the dear creatures love to talk of what they do not understand, and usually show their eloquence to the greatest advantage, by taking the wrong side of a question.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XXI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

From selfishness to jealousy there is but one step, or rather there is none; for jealousy of a certain sort is but selfishness in another form. How different this passion as I have felt it, and as I see it shown! In some characters it is the symptom of amiable and exquisite sensibility; in others of odious coldness and contraction of heart. In some of our sex it is, you know, my Gabrielle, a delicate fear, a tender anxiety, a proof of ardent passion; in others it is a mere love of power, a disgusting struggle for the property of a heart, an absurd assertion of rights and prerogatives. Surely no prejudice of education or institution can be more barbarous than that which teaches a wife that she has an indefeasible and exclusive right both to the affections and the fidelity of her husband. I am astonished to hear it avowed by any woman who has the slightest pretensions to delicacy of sentiment, or liberality of mind. I should expect to find this vulgar prejudice only among the downright dames, who talk of *my good man*, and lay a particular emphasis on the possessive pronoun *my*; who understand literally, and expect that their spouses should adhere punctually to every coarse article of our strange marriage vow.

In certain points of view, my Gabrielle, jealousy is undoubtedly the strongest proof of an indelicate mind. Yet, if I mistake not, the delicate, the divine Leonora, is liable to this terrestrial passion. Yesterday evening, as I was returning from a *stroll* in the park with Mr. L——, we met Leonora; and methought she looked embarrassed at meeting us. Heaven knows there was not the slightest occasion for embarrassment, and I could not avoid being surprised at such weakness, I had almost said folly, in a woman of Leonora's sense, especially as she knows how my heart is attached. In the first moments of our intimacy my confidence was unbounded, as it ever is in those I love. Aware as I was of the light in which the prejudices of her education and her country make her view such connexions, yet I scrupled not, with the utmost candour, to confess the unfortunate attachment which had ruled my destiny. After this confidence, do not suspicion and jealousy on her part appear strange? Were Mr. L—— and I shut up for life in the same prison, were we left together upon a desert island, were we alone in the universe, I could never think of him. And Leonora does not see this!

How the passions obscure and degrade the finest understandings! But perhaps I do her injustice, and she felt nothing of what her countenance expressed. It is certain, however, that she was silent for some moments after she joined us, from what cause she knows best—so was Mr. L——, I suppose from English awkwardness—so was I, from pure astonishment. At length, in pity of Leonora, I broke the silence. I had recourse to the beauties of nature.

"What a heavenly evening!" said I. "We have been listening to the songs of the birds, enjoying this fresh breeze of nature's perfumes." Leonora said something about the superiority of nature's perfumes to those of art; and observed, "how much more agreeable the smell of flowers appears in the open air than in confined rooms!" Whilst she spoke she looked at her husband, as she continually does for assent and approbation. He assented, but apparently without knowing what he was saying; and only by one of his English monosyllables. I alone was at ease.

"Can any thing be more beautiful," continued I, looking back, "than the soft mellow foliage of those woods, and the exquisite tints of their rich colouring? What delicious melancholy such an evening spreads over the heart!—what reflections!—what recollections!—Oh, Leonora, look at the lights upon that mountain, and the deep shadows upon the lake below. Just such scenes have I admired, by such have I been entranced in Switzerland."

Leonora put her arm within mine—she seemed to have no objection to my thoughts going back to Switzerland—I sighed—she pressed my hand affectionately—I wiped the starting tear from my eye. Mr. L—— looked at me with something like surprise whilst I repeated involuntarily,

"I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you,
For morn is approaching your charms to restore,
Perfumed with fresh fragrance, and glitt'ring with dew."

I paused, recollecting myself, struck with *the ridicule* of repeating verses, and of indulging feelings in which no one perhaps sympathized.

"Those are beautiful lines," said Leonora: "that poem has always been a favourite of mine."

“And of mine, also,” said Mr. L——.

“I prefer Beattie’s Hermit to all other hermits,” said Leonora.

I was not in a mood calmly to discuss with her a point of criticism—I walked on in reverie: but in this I was not allowed to indulge. Mr. L—— asked if I could not recollect some more of the Hermit—I pleaded the worst memory in the world—a memory that can never recollect any poem perfectly by rote, only the touches of genius or sensibility that strike me—and those are so few!

“But in this poem there are so many,” said Leonora. I am sure she insisted only to please her husband, and pleaded against her real feelings, purposely to conceal them. He persisted in his request, with more warmth than usual. I was compelled to rouse myself from my reverie, and to call back my distant thoughts. I repeated all that I could recollect of the poem. Mr. L—— paid me a profusion of compliments upon the sweetness of my voice, and my taste in reciting. He was pleased to find that my manner and tones gave an Italian expression to English poetry, which to him was a peculiar charm. It reminded him of some Signora, whom he had known at Florence. This was the first time I had learned that he had been abroad. I was going to explore the foreign field of conversation which he thus opened; but just at that moment Leonora withdrew her arm from mine, and I fancied that she coloured. This might be only my fancy, or the natural effect of her stooping to gather a flower. We were now within sight of the castle. I pointed to one of the turrets over a Gothic window, upon which the gleams of the setting sun produced a picturesque effect; my glove happened to be off, and Leonora unluckily saw that her husband’s eyes were fixed upon my arm, instead of the turret to which I was pointing. ‘Twas a trifle which I never should have noticed, had she not forced it upon my attention. She actually turned pale. I had the presence of mind not to put on my glove.

I must observe more accurately; I must decide whether this angelic Leonora is, or is not susceptible of the mortal passion ycleped jealousy. I confess my curiosity is awakened.

Adieu, my ever amiable Gabrielle. OLIVIA.

LETTER XXII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

When the passions are asleep we are apt to fancy they are dead. I verily thought that curiosity was dead within me, it had lain so long dormant, while stronger and tenderer sentiments waked in full activity; but now that absence and distance from their object lull them to temporary repose, the vulgar subordinate passions are roused, and take their turn to reign. My curiosity was so strongly excited upon the subject of Leonora's jealousy, that I could not rest, without attempting to obtain satisfaction. Blame me not, dearest Gabrielle, for in my situation you would inevitably have done the same, only that you would have done it with more address; with that peculiar, inimitable address, which I envy above all your accomplishments. But address is a delicate native of France, and though it may now and then exist as a stranger, I doubt whether it can ever be naturalized in our rude climate. All the attempts I have made are, however, encouraging enough—you shall judge. My object was, to ascertain the existence or non-existence of Leonora's jealousy. I set about it with a tolerably careless assurance, and followed up the hint which accident had thrown out for my ingenuity to work upon. You remember, or at least I remember, that Leonora withdrew her arm from mine, and stooped to gather a flower at the moment when her husband mentioned Florence, and the resemblance of my voice to that of some Italian charmer. The next day I happened to play some of my sweetest Italian airs, and to accompany them with my voice. The music-room opens into the great hall: Leonora and her husband were in the hall, talking to some visitors. The voices were soon hushed, as I expected, by the magic sounds, but, what I did not expect, Leonora was the first who led the way into the music-room. Was this affectation? These *simple* characters sometimes baffle all the art of the decipherer. I should have been clear that it was affectation, had Leonora been prodigal of compliments on my performance; but she seemed only to listen for her own pleasure, and left it to Mr. L—— to applaud. Whilst I was preparing to play over again the air which pleased him most, the two little nephews came running to beg

Leonora would follow them to look at some trifle, some coloured shadow, upon the garden-wall, I think they said: she let them lead her off, leaving *us* together. This did not seem like jealousy. I was more at a loss than ever, and determined to make fresh and more decisive experiments. Curiosity, you know, is heightened by doubt. To cure myself of curiosity, it is necessary therefore to put my mind out of doubt. Admire the practical application of metaphysics! But metaphysics always make you yawn. Adieu for to-day.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXIII.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

L—— Castle.

Dear Margaret, an uncle of mine, who, ever since I can remember, seemed to me cut out for an old bachelor, writes me word that he is just going to be married, and that I must grace his nuptials. I cannot refuse, for he has always been very kind to me, and we have no right to cut people out for old bachelors. That I am sorry to leave Leonora, it is superfluous to tell you; but this is the melancholy part of the business, on which I make it a principle to dwell as little as possible.

Lady Olivia must be heartily glad that I am going, for I have been terribly troublesome to her by my gaiety and my *simplicity*. I shall lose all the pleasure I had promised myself in seeing the *dénouement* of the comedy of *The Sentimental Coquette*; or, *The Heroine unmasked*.

I made Leonora almost angry with me this morning, by a hint or two I gave upon this subject. She looked so very grave, that I was afraid of my own thoughts, and I dared not explain myself farther. Intimate as I am with her, there are points on which I am sure that she would never make me her

confidante. I think that she has not been in her usual good spirits lately; and though she treats Olivia with uniform kindness, and betrays not, even to my watchful eyes, the slightest symptom of jealousy, yet I suspect that she sees what is going forward, and she suffers in secret. Now, if she would let me explain myself, I could set her heart at ease, by the assurance that Mr. L —— is only acting a part. If her affection for her husband did not almost blind her, she would have as much penetration as I have—which you will allow, my dear Margaret, is saying a great deal.

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XXIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

Congratulate me, my charming Gabrielle, upon being delivered from the unfeeling gaiety of that friend of Leonora, that Helen of whom I formerly sent you a too flattering portrait. Her departure relieves me from many painful sensations. Dissonance to a musical ear is not more horrid, than want of harmony between characters, to the soul of sensibility. Between Helen and me there was a perpetual discord of ideas and sentiments, which fatigued me inexpressibly. Besides, I began to consider her as a spy upon my actions. But there, I believe, I did her injustice, for she was too much occupied with her own trifling thoughts to have any alarming powers of observation.

Since her departure we have been very gay. Yesterday we had a large company at dinner; some of the neighbouring families, whom I expected to find mere country visitors, that were come a dozen miles to show their

antediluvian finery, retire half an hour after dinner, spoil coffee with cream, say nothing, but at their appointed hours rise, ring for their superb carriages, and go home by moonlight. However, to my astonishment, I found myself in a society of well-bred, well-informed persons; the women ready to converse, and the men, even after dinner, not impatient to get rid of them. Two or three of the company had travelled, and I was glad to talk to them of Italy, Switzerland, and France. Mr. L—— I knew would join in this conversation. I discovered that he came to Florence just as I was leaving it. I was to have been at our ambassador's one evening when he was there; but a headache prevented me. These little coincidences, you know, my Gabrielle, draw people closer together. I remember to have heard of a Mr. L —— at Florence, who was a passionate admirer of our sex. He was then unmarried. I little thought that this was the same person. Beneath a cold exterior these Englishmen often conceal a wondrous quantity of enthusiasm —volcanoes under snow. Curiosity, dear indefatigable curiosity, supported me through the labour of clearing away the snow, and I came to indubitable traces of unextinguished and unextinguishable fire. The character of L—— is quite different from what I had imagined it to be. It is an *excellent study*. We had a long and interesting conversation upon national manners, especially upon those of the females of all nations. He concluded by quoting the words of your friend M. le Vicomte de Segur, "If I were permitted to choose, I should prefer a French woman for my friend, an English woman for my wife, and a Polish lady for my mistress."

From this, it seems, that I am mistaken about the Italian signora, or else Mr. L—— has an enlarged charity for the graces of all nations.—More subject for curiosity.

In the evening, before the company separated, we were standing on the steps of the great hall, looking at a fine effect of moonlight, and I pointed out the shadow of the arches of a bridge. From moonlight we went on to lamplight, and many pretty things were said about art and nature. A gentleman, who had just returned from Paris, talked of the reflection of the lamps in the Seine, which one sees in crossing the Pont-Royal, and which, as he said, appear like a colonnade of fire. As soon as he had finished *prosing* about his colonnade, I turned to Mr. L——, and asked if he remembered the account which Coxe the traveller gives of the Polish princess Czartoryski's charming *fête champêtre* and the illuminated rustic bridge of one arch, the reflection of which in the water was so strong as to

deceive the eye, and to give the whole the appearance of a brilliant circle suspended in the air. Mr. L—— seemed enchanted with my description, and eagerly said that he would some night have a bridge in his improvements, illuminated, that *we* (half-gallant Englishman!) might see the effect. I carelessly replied, that probably it would have a good effect: I would then have talked on other subjects to the lady next me: but an Englishman cannot suddenly change the course of his conversation. Mr. L—— still persisted in asking a variety of questions about this Polish fête. I excused myself; for if you satisfy curiosity you are no longer sublime; besides it is so pedantic to remember *accurately* any thing one meets with in books. I assured him that I had forgotten the particulars.

My countrymen are wondrous persevering, when once roused. This morning, when I came down to breakfast, I found Mr. L—— with a volume of Coxe's travels in his hand. He read aloud to Leonora the whole description of the illuminated gardens, and of a Turkish tent of curious workmanship, and of a pavilion, supported by pillars, ornamented with wreaths of flowers. Leonora's birthday is some time in the next month; and her husband, probably to prevent any disagreeable little feelings, proposed that the *fête champêtre*, he designed to give, should be on that day. She seemed rather to discourage the thing. Now to what should this indifference be attributed? To jealousy I should positively decide, but that two reasons oppose this idea, and keep me in doubt. She was not within hearing at the moonlight conference, and knew nothing of my having mentioned the Polish fête, or of her husband's having proposed to illuminate the bridge for me. Besides, I remember, the other day when she was reading the new French novel you sent me, she expressed great dislike to the sentimental fêtes, which the lover prepares for his mistress. I would give more than I dare tell you, my dear Gabrielle, to be able to decide whether she is jealous of me or not. But where was I? Mr. L——, who had set his heart upon the *fête champêtre*, persisted, and combatted her antipathy by reason. Foolish man! he should have tried compliments, or caresses—if I had not been present.

"My dear Leonora," said he, "I think you carry your dislike to these things too far. They are more according to the French than to the English taste, I know; but we should not be influenced by national prejudice. I detest the ostentation and the affectation of sentiment as much as you can; but where the real feeling exists, every mode of showing kindness is

agreeable. You must let us have this little fête on your birthday. Besides the pleasure it will give me, I really think it is useful to mix ideas of affection with amusement."

She smiled most graciously, and replied, that she would with pleasure accept of kindness in any form from him. In short, she was willing to have the fête, when it was clearly explained that she was to be the object of it. Is not this proof positive of jealousy? And yet my curiosity is not thoroughly satisfied. I must go on; for Leonora's sake I must go on. When I have been assured of the truth, I shall know how to conduct myself; and you, who know my heart, will do me the justice to believe, that when I am convinced of my friend's weakness, I shall spare it with the most delicate caution: but till I am convinced, I am in perpetual danger of blundering by my careless, inadvertent innocence. You smile, Gabrielle; dear malicious Gabrielle, even in your malice you are charming! Adieu! Pray for the speedy extinction of my curiosity.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXV.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

You say, my dearest mother, that of late, my letters have been more constrained and less cheerful than usual, and you conjure me not to conceal from you any thing which may concern my happiness. I have ever found you my best and most indulgent friend, and there is not a thought or feeling of my mind, however weak or foolish, that I desire to conceal from you. No one in this world is more—is so much interested in my happiness; and, in every doubtful situation, I have always been accustomed to apply to your unerring judgment for assistance. Your strength of mind, your enlightened

affection, would support and direct me, would at once show me how I ought to act, and inspire me with courage and fortitude sufficient to be worthy of your esteem and of my own. At no period of my life, not even when my heart first felt the confused sensations of a passion that was new to it, did I ever want or wish for a friend so much as at this instant: and yet I hesitate whether I ought to ask even your advice, whether I ought to indulge myself in speaking of my feelings even to my mother. I refrained from giving the slightest intimation of them to my dear Helen, though she often led to this subject, and seemed vexed by my reserve. I thought it not right to accept of her sympathy. From her kindness I had every consolation to expect, but no assistance from her counsels, because she does not understand Mr. L——‘s character, and I could plainly perceive that she had an erroneous idea so fixed in her fancy, as to prevent her seeing things in their true light. I am afraid of imputing blame where I most wish to avoid it: I fear to excite unjust suspicions; I dread that if I say the whole, you will imagine that I mean much more than I say.

I have not been quite well lately, and my mind probably is more apt to be alarmed than it would be, if my health were stronger. All that I apprehend, may exist merely in my own distempered imagination. Do not then suppose others are to blame, when perhaps I only am in fault. I have for some time past been dissatisfied with myself, and have had reason to be so: I do not say this from any false humility; I despise that affectation; but I say it with a sincere desire that you may assist me to cure myself of a weakness, which, if it were to grow upon my mind, must render me miserable, and might destroy the happiness of the person I love best upon earth. You know that I am not naturally or habitually of a suspicious temper, but I am conscious of having lately felt a disposition to jealousy. I have been spoiled by the excessive attention, which my husband paid to me in the first year of our marriage.

You warned me not to fancy that he could continue always a lover. I did not, at least I tried not to expect such an impossibility. I was prepared for the change, at least I thought I was: yet now the time, the inevitable time is come, and I have not the fortitude to bear it as I ought. If I had never known what it was to possess his love, I might perhaps be content with his friendship. If I could feel only friendship for him, I should now, possibly, be happy. I know that I have the first place in his esteem: I do believe—I should be miserable indeed if I did not believe—that I have the first place in

his affection. But this affection is certainly different from what it once was. I wish I could forget the difference. No: I retract that wish; however painful the comparison, the recollection of times that are past is delightful to my heart. Yet, my dear mother, if such times are never to return, it would be better for me to forget that they have ever been. It would be wiser not to let my imagination recur to the past, which could then tend only to render me discontented with the present and with the future. The FUTURE! how melancholy that word sounds to me! What a dreary length of prospect it brings to my view! How young I am, how many years may I have to live, and how little motive have I left in life! Those which used to act most forcibly upon me, have now scarcely power to move my mind. The sense of duty, it is true, raises me to some degree of exertion; I hope that I do not neglect the education of the two children whom my poor sister bequeathed to my care. When my mind was at ease they were my delight; but now I feel that I am rather interrupted than interested by their childish gaiety and amusements.

I am afraid that I am growing selfish, and I am sure that I have become shamefully indolent. I go on with certain occupations every day from habit, not from choice; my mind is not in them. I used to flatter myself that I did many things, from a sense of duty and of general benevolence, which I am convinced were done merely from a particular wish to please, and to make myself more and more beloved by the object of my fondest affection. Disappointed in this hope, I sink into indolence, from which the desire to entertain my friends is not sufficient to rouse me. Helen has been summoned away; but I believe I told you that Mr. and Mrs. F——, whose company is peculiarly agreeable to my taste, and Lady M—— and her amiable daughters, and your witty friend ——, are with us. In such society I am ashamed of being stupid; yet I cannot contribute to the amusement of the company, and I feel surprised at their animation and sprightliness. It seems as if I was looking on at dances, without hearing any music. Sometimes I fear that my silence should be observed, and then I begin to talk, without well knowing what I am saying. I confine myself to the most common-place subjects, and hesitate, from the dread of saying something quite foreign to the purpose. What must Mr. L—— think of my stupidity? But he does not, I believe, perceive it: he is so much occupied with—with other objects. I am glad that he does not see all that passes in my mind, for he might despise me if he knew that I am so miserable. I did not mean to

use so strong an expression; but now it is written, I will not blot it out, lest you should fancy something worse than the reality. I am not, however, yet so weak as to be seriously *miserable* when I have no real cause to be so. The truth is ——. Now you know this phrase is a tacit confession that all that has been said before is false. The real truth is ——. By my prefacing so long you may be sure that I have reason to be ashamed of this real truth's coming out. The real truth is, that I have been so long accustomed to be the first and *only* object of Mr. L——'s thoughts, that I cannot bear to see him think of any thing else. Yes, *things* I can bear; but not *persons*—female persons; and there is one person here, who is so much more agreeable and entertaining than I am, that she engrosses very naturally almost all his attention. I am not *envious*, I am sure; for I could once admire all Lady Olivia's talents and accomplishments, and no one could be more charmed than I was, with her fascinating manners and irresistible powers of pleasing; but when those irresistible powers may rob me of the heart of my beloved husband—of the whole happiness of my life—how can I admire them? All I can promise is to preserve my mind from the meanness of suspicion. I can do my rival justice. I can believe, and entreat you to believe, that she does not wish to be my rival: that she is perfectly innocent of all design to injure me, and that she is not aware of the impression she has made. I, who know every change of Mr. L——'s countenance, every inflexion of his voice, every turn of his mind, can see too plainly what she cannot discern. I should indeed have thought, that no woman, whom he distinguished or preferred in any degree, could avoid perceiving it, his manner is so expressive, so flattering; but perhaps this appears so only to me—a woman, who does not love him, may see things very differently. Lady Olivia can be in no danger, because her heart, fortunately for me, is prepossessed in favour of another; and a woman whose heart is occupied by one object is absolutely blind, as I well know, to all others. With this security I ought to be satisfied; for I believe no one inspires a lasting passion, without sharing it.

I am summoned to give my opinion about certain illuminations and decorations for a *fête champêtre* which Mr. L—— is so kind as to give in honour of my birthday—just at the time I am complaining of his neglect!—No, dear mother, I hope I have not complained of *him*, but of *myself*:—and it is your business to teach your daughter to be more reasonable. Write soon and fully to

Your affectionate

LEONORA.

LETTER XXVI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

This fine *fête champêtre* is over.—Expect no description of it from me, Gabrielle, for I am horribly out of humour. The whole pleasure of the evening was destroyed by the most foolish circumstance imaginable. Leonora's jealousy is now evident to more eyes than mine. No farther doubt upon the subject can remain. My curiosity is satisfied; but I am now left to reproach myself, for having gone so far to ascertain what I ought to have taken for granted. All these good English wives are jealous; so jealous, that no one, who has any pretensions to beauty, wit, or *amiability*, can live with them. They can have no *society* in our sense of the word; of course they must live shut up in their own dismal houses, with their own stupid families, the faithful husband and wife sitting opposite to each other in their own chimney corners, yawning models of constancy. And this they call virtue! How the meanest vices usurp the name of virtue! Leonora's is a jealousy of the most illiberal and degrading species; a jealousy of the temper, not of the heart. She is too cold to feel the passion of love.—She never could be in love; of that I am certain. She is too reasonable, too prudish. Besides, to imagine that she could be in love with her own husband, and after eighteen months' marriage—the thing is absurd! the thing is impossible! No, she deceives herself or him, or both, if she pretends that her jealousy arises from love, from what you and I, Gabrielle, understand by the word. Passion, and passion only, can plead a just excuse of its own excesses. Were Leonora in love, I could pardon her jealousy. But now I despise it. Yes, with all her high reputation, and *imposing* qualities, I must think of her with contempt. And now that I have given vent to my feelings, with that freedom in which I ever indulge myself in writing to you,

my amiable Gabrielle, chosen friend of my heart, I will compose myself, and give you a rational account of things.

You know that I am said to have some taste. Leonora makes no pretensions to any. Wishing, I suppose, that her fête should be as elegant as possible, she consulted me about all the arrangements and decorations. It was I that did every thing. My skill and taste were admired by the whole company, and especially by Mr. L——. He was in remarkably good spirits at the commencement of the evening; quite gay and gallant: he certainly paid me a great deal of attention, and it was natural he should; for besides being his guest, I was undoubtedly the most elegant woman present. My fame had gone abroad; I found that I was the object of general attention. To this I have been tolerably well accustomed all my life; enough at least to prevent me from giving any visible sign of being moved by admiration in whatever form it comes; whether in the polite foreign glance, or the broad English stare. The starers enjoyed their pleasure, and I mine: I moved and talked, I smiled or was pensive, as though I saw them not; nevertheless the homage of their gaze was not lost upon me. You know, my charming Gabrielle, one likes to observe the *sensation* one produces amongst new people. The incense that I perceived in the surrounding atmosphere was just powerful enough to affect my nerves agreeably: that languor which you have so often reproached me for indulging in the company of what we call *indifferents* gradually dissipated; and, as poor R—— used to say of me, I came from behind my cloud like the sun in all its glory. I was such as you have seen me, Gabrielle, in my best days, in my best moments, in my very best style. I wonder what would excite me to such a waste of powers. L —— seemed inspired too: he really was quite agreeable, and showed me off almost as well as R—— himself could have done. I had no idea that he had this species of talent. You will never know of what my countrymen are capable, for you are out of patience with the statues the first half hour: now it takes an amazing time to animate them; but they can be waked into life, and I have a pride in conquering difficulties.—There were more men this night, in proportion to the women, than one usually sees in English company, consequently it was more agreeable. I was surrounded by an admiring audience, and my conversation of course was sufficiently general to please all, and sufficiently particular to distinguish the man whom I wished to animate. In all this you will say there was nothing to put one out of humour, nothing very mortifying:—but stay, my fair philosopher, do not

judge of the day till you see its end.—Leonora was so hid from my view by the crowd of adorers, that I really did not discern her, or suspect her jealousy. I was quite natural; I thought only of myself; I declined all invitations to dance, declaring that it was so long since I had tried an English country dance, that I dared not expose my awkwardness. French country dances were mentioned, but I preferred conversation. At last L—— persecuted me to try a Polish dance with him—a multitude of voices overpowered me. I have not the talent which some of my countrywomen possess in such perfection, of being obstinate about trifles. When I can refuse with grace, 'tis well; but when that is no longer possible, it is my principle, or my weakness, to yield. I was surprised to find that L—— danced admirably. I became animated. You know how dancing animates me, when I have a partner who *can* dance—a thing not very common in this country. We ended by *waltzing*, first in the Polish, and afterwards in the Parisian manner. I certainly surpassed myself—I flew, I was borne upon the wings of the wind, I floated on the notes of the music. Animated or languid in every gradation of grace and sentiment, I abandoned myself to the inspiration of the moment; I was all soul, and the spectators were all admiration. To you, my Gabrielle, I may speak thus of myself without vanity: you know the sensation I was accustomed to produce at Paris; you may guess then what the effect must be here, where such a style of dancing has all the captivation of novelty. Had I doubted that my *success* was complete, I should have been assured of it by the faces of some prudes amongst the matrons, who affected to think that the waltz was *too much*. As L—— was leading, or rather supporting me to my seat, for I was quite exhausted, I overheard a gentleman, who was at no great distance from the place where Leonora was standing, whisper to his neighbour, "Le Valse extrême est la volupté permise." I fancy Leonora overheard these words, as well as myself, for my eyes met hers at this instant, and she coloured, and directly looked another way. L—— neither heard nor saw any thing of all this: he was intent upon procuring me a seat; and an Englishman can never see or think of two things at a time. A few minutes afterwards, whilst he was fanning me, a young awkward peasant girl, quite a stranger in this country, came up to me, and dropping her novice curtsy, said, "Here's a ring, my lady, I found on the grass; they tell me it is yours, my lady!"

"No, my good girl, it is not mine," said I.

"It is Lady Leonora's," said Mr. L——.

At the sound of her name Leonora came forward.

The girl looked alternately at us.

“Can you doubt,” cried Colonel A——, “which of these ladies is Mr. L ——‘s wife?”

“Oh, no, sir; this is she, *to be sure*,” said the girl, pointing to me.

What there was in the girl’s accent, or in L——‘s look, when she pronounced the words, or in mine, or in all three together, I cannot exactly describe; but Leonora felt it. She turned as pale as death. I looked as unconscious as I could. L—— went on fanning me, without seeing his wife’s change of countenance. Leonora—would you believe it?—sank upon a bench behind us, and fainted. How her husband started, when he felt her catch by his arm as she fell! He threw down the fan, left me, ran for water —“Oh, Lady Leonora! Lady Leonora is ill!” exclaimed every voice. The consternation was wonderful. They carried her ladyship to a spot where she could have free air. I was absolutely in an instant left alone, and seemingly as much forgotten as if I had never existed! I was indeed so much astonished, that I could not stir from the place where I stood; till, recollecting myself, I pushed my way through the crowd, and came in view of Leonora just as she opened her eyes. As soon as she came to herself, she made an effort to stand, saying that she was quite well again, but that she would go into the house and repose herself for a few minutes. As she rose, a hundred arms were offered at once to her assistance. She stepped forward; and, to my surprise, and I believe to the surprise of every body else, took mine, made a sign to her husband not to follow us, and walked quickly towards the house. Her woman, with a face of terror, met us, as we were going into Lady Leonora’s apartment, with salts and hartshorn, and I know not what in her hands.

“I am quite well, quite well again; I do not want any thing; I do not want any thing. I do not want you, Mason,” said Leonora. “Lady Olivia is so good as to assist me. I am come in only to rest for a few minutes.”

The woman gave me an evil look, and left the room. Never did I wish any thing more than that she should have stayed. I was absolutely so embarrassed, so distressed, when I found myself alone with Leonora, that I knew not what to say. I believe I began with a sentence about the night air, that was very little to the purpose. The sight of some baby-linen which the

maid had been making suggested to me something which I thought more appropriate.

“My dear creature!” said I, “why will you fatigue yourself. so terribly, and stand so much and so long in your situation?”

Leonora neither accepted nor rejected my interpretation of what had passed. She made no reply; but fixed her eyes upon me as if she would have read my very soul. Never did I see or feel eyes so expressive or so powerful as hers were at this, moment. Mine absolutely fell beneath them. What deprived me of presence of mind I know not; but I was utterly without common sense. I am sure I changed colour, and Leonora must have seen it through my rouge, for I had only the slightest tinge upon my cheeks. The consciousness that she saw me blush disconcerted me beyond recovery; it is really quite unaccountable: I trembled all over as I stood before her; I was forced to have recourse to the hartshorn and water, which stood upon the table. Leonora rose, and threw open the window to give me fresh air. She pressed my hand, but rather with an air of forgiveness than of affection; I was mortified and vexed; but my pride revived me.

“We had better return to the company as soon as possible, I believe,” said she, looking down at the moving crowd below.

“I am ready to attend you, my dear,” said I, coldly, “whenever you feel yourself sufficiently rested and composed.”

She left the room, and I followed. You have no idea of the solicitude with which the people hoped she was *better*—and *well*—and *quite well*, &c. What amazing importance a fainting fit can sometimes bestow! Her husband seemed no longer to have any eyes or soul but for her. At supper, and during the rest of the night, she occupied the whole attention of every body present. Can you conceive any thing so provoking? But L—— must be an absolute fool!—Did he never see a woman faint before?—He cannot pretend to be in love with his wife—I do not understand it.—But this I know, that he has been totally different in his manner towards me these three days past.

And now that my curiosity is satisfied about Leonora’s jealousy, I shall absolutely perish with ennui in this stupid place. Adieu, dearest Gabrielle! How I envy you! The void of my heart is insupportable. I must have some passion to keep me alive. Forward any letters from poor R——, if he has written under cover to you.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXVII.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

Take courage, my beloved daughter; take courage. Have a just confidence in yourself and in your husband. For a moment he may be fascinated by the arts of an unprincipled woman; for a moment she may triumph over his senses, and his imagination; but of his esteem, his affection, his heart, she cannot rob you. These have been, ought to be, will be yours. Trust to your mother's prophecy, my child. You may trust to it securely: for, well as she loves you—and no mother ever loved a daughter better—she does not soothe you with mere words of doting fondness; she speaks to you the language of reason and of truth.

I know what such a man as Mr. L—— must esteem and love; I know of what such a woman as my daughter is capable, when her whole happiness, and the happiness of all that is dear to her, are at stake. The loss of temporary admiration and power, the transient preference shown to a despicable rival, will not provoke you to imprudent reproach, nor sink you to helpless despair. The arts of an Olivia might continue to deceive your husband, if he were a fool; or to please him, if he were a libertine: but he has a heart formed for love, he cannot therefore be a libertine: he is a man of superior abilities, and knows women too well to be a dupe. With a penetrating and discriminative judgment of character, he is a nice observer of female manners; his taste is delicate even to excess; under a cold exterior he has a vivid imagination and strong sensibility; he has little vanity, but a superabundance of pride; he wishes to be ardently loved, but this he conceals; it is difficult to convince him that he is beloved, and scarcely possible to satisfy him by any common proofs of attachment. A coquette

will never attach Mr. L——. The admiration which others might express for her charms and accomplishments, would never pique him to competition: far from seeking “to win her praise whom all admire,” he would disdain to enter the lists with the vulgar multitude: a heart, in which he had a probability of holding only divided empire, would not appear to him worth the winning. As a coquette, whatever may be her talents, graces, accomplishments, and address, you have nothing seriously to fear from Lady Olivia.

But, my dear, Mr. L——‘s mind may be in a situation to require amusement. That species of apathy which succeeds to passion is not, as the inexperienced imagine, the death of love, but the necessary and salutary repose from which it awakens refreshed and revived. Mr. L——‘s passion for you has been not only tender, but violent, and the calm, which inevitably succeeds, should not alarm you.

When a man feels that his fondness for a wife is suspended, he is uneasy in her company, not only from the sense of decreased pleasure, but from the fear of her observation and detection. If she reproach him, affairs become worse; he blames himself, he fears to give pain whenever he is in her presence: if he attempt to conceal his feelings, and to appear what he is no longer, a lover, his attempts are awkward; he becomes more and more dissatisfied with himself; and the person who compels him to this hypocrisy, who thus degrades him in his own eyes, must certainly be in danger of becoming an object of aversion. A wife, who has sense enough to abstain from all reproaches, direct or indirect, by word or look, may reclaim her husband’s affections: the bird escapes from his cage, but returns to his nest. I am glad that you have agreeable company at your house; they will amuse Mr. L——, and relieve you from the necessity of taking a share in any conversation that you dislike. Our witty friend ——will supply your share of conversation; and as to your silence, remember that witty people are always content with those who *act audience*.

I rejoice that you persist in your daily occupations. To a mind like yours, the sense of performing your duty will, next to religion, be the firmest support upon which you can rely.

Perhaps, my dear, even when you read this, you will still be inclined to justify Lady Olivia, and to conceal from your heart the suspicions which her conduct excites. I am not surprised, that you should find it difficult to

believe, that one to whom you have behaved so generously, should treat you with treachery, and ingratitude. I am not surprised, that you who feel what it is to love, should think, that a woman whose heart is occupied by attachment to one object, must be incapable of thinking of any other. But love in such a heart as yours is totally different from what it is in the fancy of these heroines. In their imagination, the objects are as fleeting as the pictures in the clouds chased by the wind.

From Lady Olivia expect nothing: depend only on yourself. When you become, as you soon must, completely convinced that the woman, in whom your unsuspecting soul confided, is utterly unworthy of your esteem, refrain from all imprudent expressions of indignation. I despise—you will soon hate—your rival; but in the moment of detection think of what is due to yourself, and act as calmly as if you had never loved her. She will suffer no pain from the loss of your friendship: she has not a heart that can value it. Probably she is envious of you. All these women desire to mortify those whom they cannot degrade to their own level: and I am inclined to suspect that this malevolent feeling, joined to the want of occupation, may be the cause of her present conduct. Her manoeuvres will not ultimately succeed. She will be deserted by Mr. L——, disappointed and disgraced, and your husband will be more yours than ever. When this happy moment comes, my Leonora; when your husband returns, preferring yours to all other society, then will be the time to exert all your talents, all your charms, to prove your superiority in every thing, but most in love. The soothings of female tenderness, in certain situations, have power not only to calm the feelings of self-reproach, but to diffuse delight over the soul of man. The oil, which the skilful mariner throws upon the sea, not only smooths the waves in the storm, but when the sun shines, spreads the most beautiful colours over the surface of the waters.

My dear daughter, though your mother writes seemingly at her ease, you must not fancy that she does not feel for you. Do not imagine, that in the coldness of extinguished passions, and in the pride of counselling age, your mother expects to charm agony with words. No, my child, I am not so absurd, so cruel. Your letter forced tears from eyes, which are not used like sentimental eyes to weep upon every trifling occasion. My first wish was to set out immediately to see you; but whatever consolation or pleasure my company might afford, I believe it might be disadvantageous to you in your present circumstances. I could not be an hour in the room with this Lady

Olivia, without showing some portion of the indignation and contempt that I feel for her conduct. This warmth of mine might injure you in your husband's opinion. Though you would have too strong a sense of propriety, and too much dignity of mind, to make complaints of your husband to me, or to any one living; yet it might be supposed that your mother was your confidante in secret, and your partisan in public: this might destroy your domestic happiness. No husband can or ought to endure the idea of his wife's caballing against him. I admire and shall respect your dignified silence.

And now fare you well, my dearest child. May God bless you! If a mother's prayers could avail, you would be the happiest of human beings. I do, without partiality, believe you to be one of the best and most amiable of women. ——

LETTER XXVIII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Had your letter, my dearest mother, reached me a few hours sooner, I should not have exposed myself as I have done.

Yesterday, at our *fête champêtre*, you would have been ashamed of me. I am ashamed of myself. I did the very reverse of what I ought, of what I would have done, if I had been fortified by your counsel. Instead of being calm and dignified, I was agitated beyond all power of control. I lost all presence of mind, all common sense, all recollection.

I know your contempt for swooning heroines. What will you say, when you hear that your daughter fainted—fainted in public? I believe, however, that, as soon as I recovered, I had sufficient command over myself to prevent the accident from being attributed to the real cause, and I hope that the very moment I came to my recollection, my manner towards Lady Olivia was such as to preclude all possibility of her being blamed or even

suspected. From living much abroad, she has acquired a certain freedom of manner, and latitude of thinking, which expose her to suspicion; but of all serious intention to injure me, or to pass the bounds of propriety, I totally acquit her. She is not to blame for the admiration she excites, nor is she to be the sufferer for my weakness of mind or of health.

Great and unreasonable folly I am sure I showed—but I shall do so no more.

The particular circumstances I need not explain: you may be assured, that wherever I think it right to be silent, nothing shall tempt me to speak: but I understood, by the conclusion of your letter, that you expect me to preserve an absolute silence upon this subject in future: this I will not promise. I cannot conceive that I, who do not mean to injure any human being, ought, because I am unhappy, and when I am most in want of a friend, to be precluded from the indulgence of speaking of what is nearest my heart to that dear, safe, most enlightened, and honourable of friends, who has loved, guided, instructed, and encouraged me in every thing that is right from my infancy. Why should I be refused all claim to sympathy? why must my thoughts and feelings be shut up in my own breast? and why must I be a solitary being, proscribed from commerce with my own family, with my beloved mother, to whom I have been accustomed to tell every feeling and idea as they arose? No; to all that is honourable I will strictly conform; but, by the superstition of prudence, I do not hold myself bound.

Nothing could be kinder than my husband's conduct to me the evening after I was taken ill. He left home early this morning; he is gone to meet his friend, General B——, who has just returned from abroad. I hope that Mr. L —— will be absent only a few days; for it would be fatal to my happiness if he should find amusement at a distance from home. His home, at all events, shall never be made a cage to him; when he returns, I will exert myself to the utmost to make it agreeable. This I hope can be done without obtruding my company upon him, or putting myself in competition with any person. I could wish that some fortunate accident might induce Lady Olivia to leave us before Mr. L——'s return. Had I the same high opinion of her generosity that I once formed, had I the same perfect confidence in her integrity and in her friendship for me, I would go this moment and tell her all that passes in my heart: no humiliation of my vanity would cost me any thing if it could serve the interests of my love; no mean pride could stand in my mind

against the force of affection. But there is a species of pride which I cannot, will not renounce—believing, as I do, that it is the companion, the friend, the support of virtue. This pride, I trust, will never desert me: it has grown with my growth; it was implanted in my character by the education which my dear mother gave me; and now, even by her, it cannot be eradicated. Surely I have misunderstood one passage in your letter: you cannot advise your daughter to restrain just indignation against vice from any motive of policy or personal interest. You say to me, "In the moment of detection think of what is due to yourself, and act as calmly as if you had never loved her." If I *could*, I would not do this. Contempt shown by virtue is the just punishment of vice, a punishment which no selfish consideration should mitigate. If I were convinced that Lady Olivia were guilty, would you have me behave to her as if I believed her to be innocent? My countenance, my voice, my principles, would revolt from such mean and pernicious hypocrisy, degrading to the individual, and destructive to society.

May I never more see the smile of love on the lips of my husband, nor its expression in his eyes, if I do so degrade myself in my own opinion and in his! Yes, in his; for would not he, would not any man of sense or delicacy, recur to that idea so common with his sex, and so just, that if a woman will sacrifice her sense of honour to her passions in one instance, she may in another? Would he not argue, "If she will do this for me because she is in love with me, why not for a new favourite, if time or accident should make me less an object of passion?" No; I may lose his love—this would be my misfortune: but to forfeit his esteem would be my fault; and, under the remorse which I should then have to endure, I am persuaded that no power of art or nature could sustain my existence.

So much for myself. As to the general good of society, that, I confess, is not at this moment the uppermost consideration in my mind; but I will add a few words on that subject, lest you should imagine me to be hurried away by my own feelings. Public justice and reason are, I think, on my side. What would become of the good order of society or the decency of families, if every politic wife were to receive or invite, or permit her husband's mistress to reside in her house? What would become of conjugal virtue in either sex, if the wife were in this manner not only to connive at the infidelity of her husband, but to encourage and provide for his inconsistency? If she enters into bonds of amity and articles of partnership with her rival, with that

person by whom she has been most injured, instead of being the dignified sufferer, she becomes an object of contempt.

My dearest mother, my most respected friend, my sentiments on this subject cannot essentially differ from yours. I must have mistaken your meaning. Pray write quickly, and tell me so; and forgive, if you cannot approve of, the warmth with which I have spoken.

I am your truly affectionate

And grateful daughter,

LEONORA L——

LETTER XXIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME P——.

My amiable Gabrielle, I must be faithful to my promise of writing to you every week, though this place affords nothing new either in events or sentiment. Mr. L——‘s absence made this castle insupportably dull. A few days ago he returned home, and met me with an easy kind of indifference, provoking enough to a woman who has been accustomed to excite some sensation. However, I was rejoiced at this upon Leonora’s account. She was evidently delighted, and her spirits and affections seemed to overflow involuntarily upon all around her; even to me her manner became quite frank and cordial, almost caressing. She is really handsome when she is animated, and her conversation this evening quite surprised me. I saw something of that playfulness, those light touches, that versatility of expression, those words that mean more than meet the ear; every thing, in short, that could charm in the most polished foreign society. Leonora seemed to be inspired with all the art of conversation, by the simple instinct of affection. What astonished me most was the grace with which she

introduced some profound philosophical remarks. “Such pearls,” said Mr. L ——, “come from the deep.”

With all these talents, what might not Leonora be in proper hands! But now she is nothing except to her husband, and a few intimate friends. However, this is not my affair. Let me go on to what concerns myself. You may believe, my dear Gabrielle, that I piqued myself upon showing at least as much easy indifference as was shown to me: freedom encourages freedom. As there was no danger of my being too amiable, I did not think myself bound in honour or sentiment to keep myself in the shade; but I could not be as brilliant as you have seen me at your *soirées*: the magic circle of adorers, the inspiring power of numbers, the éclat of public *representation*, were wanting. I retired to my own apartment at night, quite out of humour with myself; and Josephine, as she undressed me, put me still further out of patience, by an ill-timed history of a dispute she has had with Leonora’s Swiss servant. The Swiss and Josephine, it seems, came to high words in defence of their mistresses’ charms. Josephine provoked the Swiss by saying, that his lady might possibly be handsome if she were dressed in the French taste; *mais qu’elle étoit bien Angloise*, and would be quite another thing if she had been at Paris. The Swiss retorted by observing, that Josephine’s lady had indeed learnt in perfection at Paris *the art of making herself up*, which was quite necessary to a beauty *un peu passée*. The words were not more agreeable to me than they had been to Josephine. I wonder at her assurance in repeating them—“Un peu passée!” Many a woman in England, ten, fifteen years older than I am, has inspired a violent passion; and it has been observed, that power is retained by these mature charmers, longer than conquest can be preserved by inexperienced beauties. There are women who have learnt to combine, for their own advantage, and for that of their captives, all the pleasure and *conveniences* of society, all that a thorough knowledge of the world can give—women who have a sufficient attention to appearances, joined to a real contempt of all prejudices, especially that of constancy—women who possess that knowledge of the human heart, which well compensates transient bloom; who add the expression of sentiment to beautiful features, and who employ

“Gay smiles to comfort, April showers to move,
And all the nature, all the art of Love.”

—“Un peu passée!” The Swiss is impertinent, and knows nothing of the matter. His master knows but little more. He would, however, know infinitely more if I could take the trouble to instruct him; to which I am almost tempted for want of something better to do. Adieu, my Gabrielle. R——‘s silence is perfectly incomprehensible.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

So, my amiable Gabrielle, you are really interested in my letters, *though written during my English exile*, and you are curious to know whether any of my *potent spells* can wake into life this man of marble. I candidly confess you would inspire me with an ambition to raise my poor countrymen in your opinion, if I were not restrained by the sacred sentiment of friendship, which forbids me to rival Leonora *even* in a husband’s opinion.

However, Josephine, who feels herself a party concerned ever since her battle with the Swiss, has piqued herself upon dressing me with exquisite taste. I am every day *mise à ravir*!—and with such perfection of art, that no art appears—all is negligent simplicity. I let Josephine please herself; for you know I am not bound to be frightful, because I have a friend whose husband may chance to turn his eye upon my figure, when he is tired of admiring hers. I rallied L—— the other day upon his having no eyes or ears but for his wife. Be assured I did it in such a manner that he could not be angry. Then I went on to a comparison between the *facility* of French and English society. He admitted that there was some truth and more wit in my observations. I was satisfied. With these reasonable men, the grand point for

a woman is to amuse them—they can have logic from their own sex. But, my Gabrielle, I am summoned to the *salon*, and must finish my letter another day.

Heaven! can it be a fortnight since I wrote a line to my Gabrielle!—Where was I?—"With these reasonable men the grand point for a woman is to amuse them." True—most true! L——, believing himself only amused with my lively nonsense, indulged himself with it continually. I was to believe only what he believed. Presently he could not do without my conversation for more than two hours together. What was I to do, my Gabrielle? I walked out to avoid him. He found me in the woods—rallied me on my taste for solitude, and quoted Voltaire.

This led to a metaphysical conversation, half playful, half serious:—the distinction which a man sometimes makes to his conscience between thinking a woman entertaining, and feeling her interesting, vanishes more easily, and more rapidly, than he is aware of—at least in certain situations. This was not an observation I could make to my companion in the woods, and he certainly did not make it for himself. It would have been vanity in me to have broken off our conversation, lest he should fall in love with me—it would have been blindness not to have seen that he was in some danger. I thought of Leonora—and sighed—and did all that was in my power to put him upon his guard. By way of preservative, I frankly made him a confession of my attachment to R——. This I imagined would put things upon a right footing for ever; but, on the contrary, by convincing him of my innocence, and of my having no designs on his heart, this candour has, I fear, endangered him still more; yet I know not what to think—his manner is so variable towards me—I must be convinced of what his sentiments are, before I can decide what my conduct ought to be. Adieu, my amiable Gabrielle; I wait for something decisive with an inexpressible degree of anxiety—I will not now call it curiosity.—Apropos, does R—— wish that I should forget that he exists? What is this business that detains him? But why do I condescend to inquire?

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

MY DEAR L——, London.

I send you the horse to which you took a fancy. He has killed one of his grooms, and lamed two; but you will be his master, and I hope he will know it.

I have a word to say to you on a more serious subject. Pardon me if I tell you that I think you are a happy man, and excuse me if I add, that if you do not keep yourself so I shall not think you a wise one. A good wife is better than a good-for-nothing mistress.—A self-evident proposition!—A stupid truism! Yes; but if every man who knows a self-evident proposition when he sees it on paper, always acted as if he knew it, this would be a very wise and a very happy world; and I should not have occasion to write this letter.

You say that you are only amusing yourself at the expense of a finished coquette; take care that she does not presently divert herself at yours.—"*You are proof against French coquetry and German sentiment*."—Granted—but a fine woman?—and your own vanity?—But you have no vanity.—You call it pride then, I suppose. I will not quarrel with you for a name. Pride, properly managed, will do your business as well as vanity. And no doubt Lady Olivia knows this as well as I do. I hope you may never know it better.

I am, my dear friend,

Truly yours,

J. B.

LETTER XXXII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

Advise me, dearest Gabrielle; I am in a delicate situation; and on your judgment and purity of heart I have the most perfect reliance. Know, then, that I begin to believe that Leonora's jealousy was not so absolutely absurd as I at first supposed. She understood her husband better than I did. I begin to fear that I have made a serious impression whilst I meant only to amuse myself. Heaven is my witness, I simply intended to satisfy my curiosity, and that once gratified, it was my determination to respect the weakness I discovered. To love Leonora, as once I imagined I could, is out of my power; but to disturb her peace, to destroy her happiness, to make use of the confidence she has reposed in me, the kindness she has shown by making me an inmate of her house—my soul shudders at these ideas. No—if her husband really loves me I will fly. Leonora shall see that Olivia is incapable of treachery—that Olivia has a soul generous and delicate as her own, though free from the prejudices by which she is fettered. To Leonora a husband is a lover—I shall consider him as such, and respect her *property*. You are so little used, my dear Gabrielle, to consider a husband in this point of view, that you will scarcely enter into my feelings: but put yourself in my situation, allow for nationality of principle, and I am persuaded you would act as I shall. Spare me your raillery; seriously, if Leonora's husband is in love with me, would you not advise me, my dearest friend, to fly him, "far as pole from pole?" Write to me, I conjure you, my Gabrielle—write instantly, and tell me whether R——is now at Paris. I will return thither immediately if you advise it. My mind is in such confusion, I have no power to decide; I will be guided by your advice.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXIII.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

Advice! my charming Olivia! do you ask me for advice? I never gave or took advice in my life, except for *les vapeurs noirs*. And your understanding is so far superior to mine, and you comprehend the characters of these English so much better than I do, that I cannot pretend to counsel you. This Lady Leonora is inconceivable with her passion for her own husband; but how ridiculous to let it be suspected! If her heart is so tender, cannot she, with all her charms, find a lover on whom to bestow it, without tormenting that poor Mr. L——? Evidently he is tired of her: and I am sure I should be worn to death were I in his place. Nothing so tiresome as love without mystery, and without obstacles. And this must ever be the case with conjugal love. Eighteen months married, I think you say, and Lady Leonora expects her husband to be still at her feet! And she wishes it! Truly she is the most unreasonable woman upon earth—and the most extraordinary; but I am tired of thinking of what I cannot comprehend.

Let us pass on to Mr. L——. By your last letters, I should judge that he might be an agreeable man, if his wife were out of the question. Matrimonial jealousy is a new idea to me; I can judge of it only by analogy. In affairs of gallantry, I have sometimes seen one of the parties continue to love when the other has become indifferent, and then they go on tormenting one another and being miserable, because they have not the sense to see that a fire cannot be made of ashes. Sometimes I have found romantic young people persuade themselves that they can love no more because they can love one another no longer; but if they had sufficient courage to say—I am

tired—and I cannot help it—they would come to a right understanding immediately, and part on the best terms possible; each eager to make a new choice, and to be again in love and happy. All this to be done with decency, of course. And if there be no scandal, where is the harm? Can it signify to the universe whether Mons. Un tel likes Madame Une telle or Madame Une autre? Provided there is love enough, all the world is in good humour, and that is the essential point; for without good humour, what becomes of the pleasures of society? As to the rest, I think of inconstancy, or *infidelity*, as it is called, much as our good La Fontaine did—"Quand on le sait, c'est peu de chose—quand on ne le sait pas, ce n'est rien."

To promise to love one person eternally! What a terrible engagement! It freezes my heart even to think of it. I am persuaded, that if I were bound to love him for life, I should detest the most amiable man upon earth in ten minutes—a husband more especially. Good heavens! how I should abhor M. de P—— if I saw him in this point of view! On the contrary, now I love him infinitely—that is to say, as one loves a husband. I have his interest at heart, and his glory. When I thought he was going to prison I was in despair. I was at home to no one but *Brave-et-Tendre*, and to him only to consult on the means of obtaining my husband's pardon. M. de P——is sensible of this, and on my part I have no reason to complain of his liberality. We are perfectly happy, though we meet perhaps but for a few minutes in the day; and is not this better than tiring one another for four-and-twenty hours? When I grow old—if ever I do—he will be my best friend. In the mean time I support his credit with all my influence. This very morning I concluded an affair for him, which never could have succeeded, if the intimate friend of the minister had not been also my lover. Now, why cannot your Lady Leonora and her Mr. L—— live on the same sort of terms? But if English manners will not permit of this, I have nothing more to say. Above all things a woman must respect opinion, else she cannot be well received in the world. I conclude this is the secret of Lady Leonora's conduct. But then jealousy!—no woman, I suppose, is bound, even in England, to be jealous in order to show her love for her husband. I lose myself again in trying to understand what is incomprehensible.

As to you, my dear Olivia, you also amaze me by talking of *crimes* and *horror*, and *flying from pole to pole* to avoid a man because you have made him at last find out that he has a heart! You have done him the greatest possible service: it may preserve him perhaps from hanging himself next

November—that month in which, according to Voltaire's philosophical calendar, Englishmen always hang themselves, because the atmosphere is so thick, and their ennui so heavy. Lady Leonora, if she really loves her husband, ought to be infinitely obliged to you for averting this danger. As to the rest, your heart is not concerned, so you can have nothing to fear; and as for a platonic attachment on the part of Mr. L——, his wife, even according to her own rigid principles, cannot blame you.

Adieu, my charming friend! Instead of laughing at your fit of prudery, I ought to encourage your scruples, that I might profit by them. If they should bring you to Paris immediately, with what joy should I embrace my Olivia, and how much gratitude should I owe to the jealousy of Lady Leonora L ——!

R—— is not yet returned. When I have any news to give you of him, depend upon it you shall hear from me again. Accept, my interesting Olivia, the vows of my most tender and eternal friendship.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XXXIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle, Tuesday.

Your charming letter, my Gabrielle, has at once revived my spirits and dissipated all my scruples; you mistake, however, in supposing that Leonora is in love with her husband: more and more reason have I every hour to be convinced that Leonora has never known the passion of love; consequently her jealousy was, as I at first pronounced it to be, the selfish jealousy of matrimonial power and property. Else why does it subside, why does it vanish, when, if it were a jealousy of the heart, it has now more

provocation, infinitely more than when it appeared in full force? Leonora could see that her husband distinguished me at a *fête champêtre*; she could see what the eyes of others showed her; she could hear what envy whispered, or what scandal hinted; she was mortified, she was alarmed even to fainting by a public preference, by a silly country girl's mistaking me for *the wife*, and doing homage to me as to the lady of the manor; but Leonora cannot perceive in the object of her affection the symptoms that mark the rise and progress of *a real love*. Leonora feels not the little strokes, which would be fatal blows to the peace of a truly delicate mind; she heeds not "the trifles light as air" which would be confirmation strong to a soul of genuine sensibility. My influence over the mind of L——increases rapidly, and I shall let it rise to its acmè before I seem to notice it. Leonora, re-assured, I suppose, by a few flattering words, and more, perhaps, by an exalted opinion of her own merit, has lately appeared quite at her ease, and blind to all that passes before her eyes. It is not for me to dissipate this illusion prematurely—it is not for me to weaken this confidence in her husband. To an English wife this would be death. Let her foolish security then last as long as possible. After all, how much anguish of heart, how many pangs of conscience, how much of the torture of pity, am I spared by this callous temper in my friend! I may indulge in a little harmless coquetry, without danger to her peace, and without scruple, enjoy the dear possession of power.

"Say, for you know," charming Gabrielle, what is the delight of obtaining power over the human heart? Let the lords of the creation boast of their power to govern all things; to charm these governors be ours. Let the logicians of the earth boast their power to regulate the world by reason; be it ours, Gabrielle, to intoxicate and humble proud reason to the dust beneath our feet.—And who shall blame in us this ardour for universal dominion? If they are men, I call them tyrants—if they are women, I call them hypocrites —and the two vices which I most detest are tyranny and hypocrisy. Frankly I confess, that I feel in all its restless activity the passion for general admiration. I cannot conceive—can you, Gabrielle, a pleasure more

transporting than the perception of extended and extending dominion? The struggle of the rebel heart for freedom makes the war more tempting, the victory more glorious, the triumph more splendid. Secure of your sympathy, ma belle Gabrielle, I shall not fear to tire you by my commentaries.

Male coquetry justifies female retaliation to any imaginable extent. Upon this principle, on which I have seen you act so often, and so successfully, I shall now intrepidly proceed. This man makes a show of resistance; be it at his own peril: he thinks that he is gaining power over my heart, whilst I am preparing torments for his; he fancies that he is throwing chains round me, whilst I am rivetting fetters from which he will in vain attempt to escape. He is proud, and has the insanity of desiring to be exclusively beloved, yet affects to set no value upon the preference that is shown to him; appears satisfied with his own approbation, and stoically all-sufficient to his own happiness. Leonora does not know how to manage his temper, but I do. The suspense, however, in which he keeps me is tantalizing: he shall pay for it hereafter: I had no idea, till lately, that he had so much self-command. At times he has actually made me doubt my own power. At certain moments I have been half tempted to believe that I had made no serious impression, that he had been only amusing himself at my expense, and for Leonora's gratification: but upon careful and cool observation I am convinced that his indifference is affected, that all his stoicism will prove vain. The arrow is lodged in his heart, and he must fall, whether he turn upon the enemy in anger, or fly in dismay.

My pride is exasperated. I am not accustomed to such obstinate resistance. I really almost hate this invincible man, and—strange inconsistency of the human heart!—almost love him. Heaven and pride

preserve me from such a weakness! But there is certainly something that piques and stimulates one's feelings in this species of male coquetry. L—— understands the business better than I thought he could. One moment my knowledge of the arts of his sex puts me on my guard; the next my sensibility exposes me in the most terrible manner. Experience ought to protect me, but it only shows me the peril and my inability to escape. Ah! Gabrielle, without a heart how safe we should be, how dangerous to our lovers! But cursed with sensibility, we must, alas! submit to our fate. The habit of loving, *le besoin d'aimer*, is more powerful than all sense of the folly and the danger. Nor is the tempest of the passions so dreadful as the dead calm of the soul. Why did R—— suffer my soul to sink into this ominous calm? The fault is his; let him abide the consequences. Why did he not follow me to England? why did he not write to me? or when he did write, why were his letters so cold, so spiritless? When I spoke of divorce, why did he hesitate? Why did he reason when he should have only felt? Tell him, my tender, my delicate friend, these are questions which the heart asks, and which the heart only can answer. Adieu.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXV.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

Je suis excedée! mon coeur. Alive, and but just alive, after such a day of fatigues! All morning from one minister to another! then home to my toilette! then a great dinner with a number of foreigners, each to be distinguished—then au Feydeau, where I was obliged to go to support poor S——'s play. It would be really insupportable, if it were not for the finest

music in the world, which, after all, the French music certainly is. There was a violent party against the piece; and we were so late, that it was just on the point of perishing. My ears have not yet recovered from the horrid noise. In the midst of the tumult I happily, by a master-stroke, turned the fortune of the night. I spied the shawl of an English woman hanging over the box. This, you know, like scarlet to the bull, is sufficient to enrage the Parisian pit. To the shawl I directed the fury of the mob of critics. Luckily for us, the lady was attended only by an Englishman, who of course chose to assert his right not to understand the customs of any country, or submit to any will but his own. He would not permit the shawl to be stirred. À bas! à bas: resounded from below. The uproar was inconceivable. You would have thought that the house must have come down. In the mean time the piece went on, and the shawl covered all its defects. Admire my generalship. T —— tells me I was born for a general; yet I rather think my forte is negotiation.

But I have not yet come to your affairs, for which alone I could undergo the fatigue of writing at this moment. Guess, my Olivia, what apparition I met at the door of my box to-night. But the enclosed note will save you the trouble of guessing. I could not avoid permitting him to slide his billet-doux into my hand as he put on my shawl. Adieu. I must refuse myself the pleasure of conversing longer with my sweet friend. Fresh toils await me. Madame la Grande will never forgive me if I do not appear for a moment at her soirée: and la petite Q—— will be jealous beyond recovery, if I do not give her a moment: and it is Madame R——‘s night. There I must be; for all the ambassadors, as usual, will be there; and as some of them, I have reason to believe, go on purpose to meet me, I cannot disappoint their Excellencies. My friends would never forgive it. I am positively quite weary of this life of eternal bustle; but once in the eddy, one is carried round and round; there is no stopping. Adieu, adieu. I write under the hands of Victoire. O that she had your taste to guide her, and to decide my too vacillating judgment! we should then have no occasion to dread even the elegant simplicity of Madame R——‘s toilette.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XXXVI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE F——.

My Gabrielle, I have read R——‘s note enclosed in your charming sprightly letter. What a contrast! So cold! so formal! A thousand times rather would I not have heard from him, than have received a letter so little in unison with my feelings. He talks to me of business. Business! What business ought to detain a man a moment from the woman he loves? The interests of his ambition are nothing to me. What are all these to love? Is he so mean as to hesitate between them? then I despise him! and Olivia can never love the being she despises!

Does R—— flatter himself that his power over my heart is omnipotent? Does he imagine that Olivia is to be slighted with impunity? Does R—— think that a woman, who has even nominally the honour to reign over his heart, cannot meditate new conquests? Oh, credulous vanity of man! He fancies, perhaps, that he is secure of the maturer age of one, who fondly devoted to him her inexperienced youth. “Security is the curse of fools.” Does he in his wisdom deem a woman’s age a sufficient pledge for her constancy? He might every day see examples enough to convince him of his error. In fact, the age of women has nothing to do with the number of their years. Possibly, however, the gallant gentleman may be of opinion with Leonora’s Swiss, that Lady Olivia is *un peu passée*. Adieu, my dear friend; you, who always understand and sympathize in my feelings, you will express them for me in the best manner possible. I shall not write to R ——. You will see him; and Olivia commits to you what to a woman of delicacy is more dear than her love—her just resentment.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXVII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

Pity me, dearest Gabrielle, for I am in need of all the pity which your susceptible heart can bestow. Never was woman in such a terrible situation! Yes, Gabrielle, this provoking, this incomprehensible, this too amiable man, has entangled your poor friend past recovery. Her sentiments and sensations must henceforward be in eternal opposition to each other. Friendship, gratitude, honour, virtue, all in tremendous array, forbid her to think of love; but love, imperious love, will not be so defied: he seizes upon his victim, and now, as in all the past, will be the ruler, the tyrant of Olivia's destiny. Never was confusion, amazement, terror, remorse, equal to mine, Gabrielle, when I first discovered that I loved him. Who could have foreseen, who could have imagined it? I meant but to satisfy an innocent curiosity, to indulge harmless coquetry, to gratify the natural love of admiration, and to enjoy the possession of power. Alas! I felt not that, whilst I was acquiring ascendancy over the heart of another, I was beguiled of all command over my own. I flattered myself that, when honour should bid me stop, I could pause without hesitation, without effort: I promised myself, that the moment I should discover that I was loved by the husband of my friend I should fly from him for ever. Alas! it is no longer time—to fly from him is no longer in my power. Oh. Gabrielle! I love him: he knows that I love him. Never did woman suffer more than I have done since I wrote to you last. The conflict was too violent for my feeble frame. I have been ill—very ill: a nervous fever brought me nearly to the grave. Why did I not die? I should have escaped the deep humiliation, the endless self-reproach to which my future existence is doomed.—Leonora!—Why do I start at that name? Oh! there is horror in the sound! Even now perhaps she knows and triumphs in my weakness. Even now, perhaps, her calm insensible soul blesses itself for not being made like mine. Even now perhaps her husband doubts whether he shall accept Olivia's love, or sacrifice your wretched friend to Leonora's pride. Oh, Gabrielle, no words can describe what I suffer! But I must be

calm, and explain the progress of this fatal passion. Explain—Heavens! how shall I explain what I cannot recollect without heart-rending anguish and confusion! Oh, Gabrielle! pity

Your distracted

OLIVIA.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Monday.

My dear romantic Olivia! you must have a furious passion for tormenting yourself, when you can find matter for despair in your present situation. In your place I should rejoice to find that in the moment an old passion had consumed itself, a new one, fresh and vigorous, springs from its ashes. My charming friend, understand your own interests, and do not be the dupe of those fine phrases that we are obliged to employ to deceive others. Rail at Cupid as much as you please to the men in public, *par façon*; but always remember for your private use, that love is essential to our existence in society. What is a woman when she neither loves nor is loved? a mere *personage muet* in the drama of life. Is it not from our lovers that we derive our consequence? Even a beauty without lovers is but a queen without subjects. A woman who renounces love is an abdicated sovereign, always longing to resume her empire when it is too late; continually forgetting herself, like the pseudo-philosophic Christina, talking and acting as though she had still the power of life and death in her hands; a tyrant without guards or slaves; a most awkward, pitiable, and ridiculous personage. No, my fair Olivia, let us never abjure love; even when the reign of beauty passes away, that of grace and sentiment remains. As much delicacy as you

please: without delicacy there is no grace, and without a veil, beauty loses her most captivating charms. I pity you, my dear, for having let your veil be blown aside *malheureusement*. But such accidents will happen. Who can control the passions or the winds? After all, *l'erreur d'un moment* is not irretrievable, and you reproach yourself too bitterly, my sweet friend, for your involuntary injustice to Lady Leonora. Assuredly it could not be your intention to sacrifice your repose to Mr. L——. You loved him against your will, did you not? And it is, you know, by the intention that we must judge of actions: the positive harm done to the world in general is in all cases the only just measure of criminality. Now what harm is done to the universe, and what injury can accrue to any individual, provided you keep your own counsel? As long as your friend is deceived, she is happy; it therefore becomes your duty, your virtue, to dissemble. I am no great casuist, but all this appears to me self-evident; and these I always thought were your principles of philosophy. My dear Olivia, I have drawn out my whole store of metaphysics with some difficulty for your service; I flatter myself I have set your poor distracted head to rights. One word more—for I like to go to the bottom of a subject, when I can do so in two minutes: virtue is desirable because it makes us happy; consequently, to make ourselves happy is to be truly virtuous. Methinks this is sound logic.

To tell you the truth, my dear Olivia, I do not well conceive how you have contrived to fall in love with this half-frozen Englishman. 'Tis done, however—there is no arguing against facts; and this is only one proof more of what I have always maintained, that destiny is inevitable and love irresistible. Voltaire's charming inscription on the statue of Cupid is worth all the volumes of reasoning and morality that ever were or ever will be written. Banish melancholy thoughts, my dear friend; they serve no manner of purpose but to increase your passion. Repentance softens the heart; and every body knows, that what softens the heart disposes it more to love: for which reason I never abandon myself to this dangerous luxury of repentance. Mon Dieu! why will people never benefit by experience? And to what purpose do they read history? Was not La Vallière ever penitent, and ever transgressing? ever in transports or in tears? You, at all events, my Olivia, can never become a Carmelite or a Magdalen. You have emancipated yourself from superstition: but whilst you ridicule all religious orders, do not inflict upon yourself their penances. The habit of some of the orders has been thought becoming. The modest costume of a nun is indeed

one of the prettiest dresses one can wear at a masquerade ball, and it might even be worn without a mask, if it were fashionable: but nothing that is not fashionable can be becoming.

Adieu, my adorable Olivia: I will send you, by the first opportunity, your Lyons gown, which is really charming.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER XXXIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Nov. 30th, —

Your truly philosophical letter, my infinitely various Gabrielle, infused a portion of its charming spirit into my soul. My mind was fortified and elevated by your eloquence. Who could think that a woman of such a lively genius could be so profound? and who could expect from a woman who has passed her life in the world, such original and deep reflections? You see you were mistaken when you thought that you had no genius for philosophic subjects.

After all that has been said by metaphysicians about the existence and seat of the moral sense, I think I can solve every difficulty by a new theory. You know some philosophers suppose the moral sense to be intuitive and inherent in man: others who deny the doctrine of innate ideas, treat this notion of innate sentiments as equally absurd. There they certainly are wrong, for sentiments are widely different from ideas, and I have that within me which convinces my understanding that sentiments must be innate, and proportioned to the delicacy of our sensibility; no person of common sense or feeling can doubt this. But there are other points which I own puzzled me till yesterday: some metaphysicians would seat the moral

sense inherently in the heart, others would place it intuitively in the brain, all would confine it to the soul; now in my opinion it resides primarily and principally in the nerves, and varies with their variations. Hence the difficulty of making the moral sense a universal guide of action, since it not only differs in many individuals, but in the same persons at different periods of their existence, or (as I have often experienced) at different hours of the day. All this must depend upon the mobility of the nervous system: upon this may *hinge* the great difficulties which have puzzled metaphysicians respecting consciousness, identity, &c. If they had attended less to the nature of the soul, and more to the system of the nerves, they would have avoided innumerable errors, and probably would have made incalculably important discoveries. Nothing is wanting but some great German genius to bring this idea of a moral sense in the nerves into fashion. Indeed, if our friend Mad. —— would mention it in the notes to her new novel, it would introduce it, in the most satisfactory manner possible, to all the fashionable world abroad; and we take our notions in this country implicitly from the continent. As for you, my dear Gabrielle, I know you cut the Gordian knot at once, by referring, with your favourite moralist, every principle of human nature to self-love. This does not quite accord with my ideas; there is something harsh in it that is repugnant to my sensibility; but you have a stronger mind than I have, and perhaps your theory is right.

"You tell me I contradict myself continually," says the acute and witty Duke de la Rochefoucault: "No, but the human heart, of which I treat, is in perpetual contradiction to itself." Permit me to avail myself of this answer, dear Gabrielle, if you should accuse me of contradicting in this letter all that I said to you in my last. A few hours after I had despatched it, the state of my nerves changed; I saw things of course in a new light, and repented having exposed myself to your raillery by writing in such a Magdalen strain. My nerves were more in fault than I. When one's mind, or one's nerves grow weak, the early associations and old prejudices of the nursery recur, and tyrannize over one's reason: from this evil your liberal education and enviable temperament have preserved you; but have charity for my feminine weakness of frame, which too often counteracts the masculine strength of my soul. Now that I have deprecated your ridicule for my last nervous nonsense, I will go on in a more rational manner. However my better judgment might have been clouded for a moment, I have recovered strength of mind enough to see that I am in no way to blame for any thing

that has happened. If a man is amiable, and if I have taste and sensibility, I must see and feel it. “To love,” as I remember your friend G—— once finely observed to you, “to love, is a crime only in the eyes of demons, or of priests, who resemble demons.” This is a general proposition, to which none but the prejudiced can refuse their assent: and what is true in general, must be true in particular. The *accident*, I use the term philosophically, not popularly, the accident of a man’s being married, or, in other words, having entered imprudently into a barbarous and absurd civil contract, cannot alter the nature of things. The essence of truth cannot be affected by the variation of external circumstances. Now the proper application of metaphysics frees the mind from vulgar prejudices, and dissipates the baby terrors of an ill-educated conscience. To fall in love with a married man, and the husband of your intimate friend! How dreadful this sounds to some ears! even mine were startled at first, till I called reason to my assistance. Then I had another difficulty to combat—to own, and own unasked, a passion to the object of it, would shock the false delicacy of those who are governed by common forms, and who are slaves to vulgar prejudices: but a little philosophy liberates our sex from the tyranny of custom, teaches us to disdain hypocrisy, and to glory in the simplicity of truth.

Josephine had been perfuming my hair, and I was sitting reading at my toilette; the door of my dressing-room happened to be half open; L—— was crossing the gallery, and as he passed I suppose his eye was caught by my hair, or perhaps he paused a moment, I am not certain how it was—my eyes were on my book.

“Ah! vous avez raison, monsieur, c’est la plus belle chevelure! Mais entrez donc, monsieur,” cried Josephine, whom I can never teach to comprehend or respect English customs, “Eh! entrez, entrez, monsieur; madame est à sa toilette.”

As I looked up I could not forbear smiling at the extreme ease and decision of Josephine’s manner, and the excessive doubt and anxiety in the gentleman’s appearance. My smile, which, Heaven knows, meant no encouragement, decided him; timidity instantly gave way to joy; he entered. What was to be done? I could not turn him out again; I was not answerable for any foolish conclusions he might draw, from what he ought in politeness to have considered as a thing of course. All I could do was to blame Josephine for being a French woman. To defend her, and flatter me, was the

gentleman's part; and, for an Englishman, he really acquitted himself with tolerable grace. Josephine at least was pleased, and she found such a perpetual employment for monsieur, and his advice was so necessary, that there was no chance of his departure: so we talked of French *toilettes*, &c. &c. in French, for Josephine's edification: L—— paid me some compliments upon the recovery of my looks after my illness—I thought I looked terribly languid—but he assured me that this languor, in his eyes, was an additional grace; I could not understand this: he fancied that must be because he did not express himself well in French; he explained himself more clearly in English, which Josephine, you know, does not understand, so that she was now forced to be silent, and I was compelled to take my share in the conversation. L—— made me comprehend, that languor, indicating sensibility of heart, was to him the most touching of female charms; I sighed, and took up the book I had been reading; it was the new novel which you sent me, dear Gabrielle; I talked of it, in hopes of changing the course of the conversation; alas! this led to one far more dangerous: he looked at the passage I had been reading. This brought us back to sensibility again—to sentiments and descriptions so terribly apposite! we found such a similarity in our tastes! Yet L—— spoke only in general, and he preserved a command over himself, which provoked me, though I knew it to be coquetry; I saw the struggle in his mind, and was determined to force him to be candid, and to enjoy my triumph. With these views I went farther than I had intended. The charm of sensibility he had told me was to him irresistible. Alas! I let him perceive all the weakness of my heart.—Sensibility is the worst time-keeper in the world. We were neither of us aware of its progressive motion. The Swiss—my evil genius—the Swiss knocked at the door to let me know dinner was served. Dinner! on what vulgar incidents the happiness of life depends! Dinner came between the discovery of my sentiments and that declaration of passion which I now must hear—or die.

"Le diner! mon Dieu!" cried Josephine. "Mais—finissons donc—la toilette de madame."

I heard the impertinent Swiss at the other end of the gallery at his master's door, wondering in broken English where his master could be, and conjecturing forty absurdities about his boots, and his being out riding, &c. &c. To sally forth in conscious innocence upon the enemy's spies, and to

terminate the adventure as it was begun, *à la Françoise*, was my resolution. L—— and Josephine understood me perfectly.

"Eh! Monsieur de Vaud," said Josephine to the Swiss, whom we met on the landing-place of the stairs, "madame n'est elle pas coeffée à ravir aujourd'hui? C'est que monsieur vient d'assister à la toilette de madame." The Swiss bowed, and said nothing. The bow was to his master, not to me, and it was a bow of duty, not of inclination. I never saw a man look so like a machine; he did not even raise his eyes upon me or my *coëffure* as we passed.

"Bah!" cried Josephine, with an inexpressible accent of mingled indignation and contempt. She ran down stairs, leaving the Swiss to his stupidity. I was more afraid of his penetration. But I entered the dining-room as if nothing extraordinary had happened; and after all, you know, my dear Gabrielle, nothing extraordinary had befallen us. A gentleman had assisted at a lady's toilette. Nothing more simple, nothing, more proper in the meridian of Paris; and does propriety change with meridians? There was company at dinner, and the conversation was general and uninteresting; L —— endeavoured to support his part with vivacity; but he had fits of absence and silence, which might have alarmed Leonora, if she had any suspicion. But she is now perfectly secure, and absolutely blind: therefore you see there can be no danger for her happiness in my remaining where I am. For no earthly consideration would I disturb her peace of mind; there is no sacrifice I would hesitate for a moment to make to friendship or virtue, but I cannot surely be called upon to *plant a dagger in my own heart* to destroy, for ever to destroy my own felicity without advantage to my friend. My attachment to L——, as you say, is involuntary, and my love as pure as it is fervent. I have reason to believe that his sentiments are the same for me; but of this I am not yet certain. There is the danger, and the only real danger for Leonora's happiness; for whilst this uncertainty and his consequent fits of absence and imprudence last, there is hazard every moment of her being alarmed. But when L—— once decides, every thing arranges itself, you know, Gabrielle, and prudence becomes a duty to ourselves and to Leonora. No word, or look, or coquetry could then escape us; we should be unpardonable if we did not conduct ourselves with the most scrupulous delicacy and attention to her feelings. I am amazed that L ——, who has really a good understanding, does not make these reflections, and is not determined by this calculation. For his, for my own, but most for

Leonora’s sake, I wish that this cruel suspense were at an end. Adieu, dear and amiable Gabrielle.—These things are managed better in France.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XL.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

DEAR MARGARET, L—— Castle.

I arrived here late yesterday evening in high spirits, and high hopes of surprising and delighting all the world by my unexpected appearance; but my pride was checked, and my tone changed the moment I saw Leonora. Never was any human being so altered in her looks in so short a time. I had just, and but just presence of mind enough not to say so. I am astonished that it does not strike Mr. L——. As soon as she left the room, I asked him if Lady Leonora had been ill? No; perfectly well! perfectly well!—Did not he perceive that she looked extremely ill? No; she might be paler than usual: that was all that Mr. L—— had observed. Lady Olivia, after a pause, added, that Leonora certainly had not appeared well lately, but this was nothing extraordinary in her *situation*. *Situation!* nonsense! Lady Olivia went on with sentimental hypocrisy of look and tone, saying fine things, to which I paid little attention. Virtue in words, and vice in actions! thought I. People, of certain pretensions in the court of sentiment, think that they can pass false virtues upon the world for real, as some ladies, entitled by their rank to wear jewels, appear in false stones, believing that it will be taken for granted they would wear nothing but diamonds. Not one eye in a hundred detects the difference at first, but in time the hundredth eye comes, and then they must for ever hide their diminished rays. Beware! Lady Olivia, beware!

Leonora is ill, or unhappy, or both; but she will not allow that she is either. On one subject she is impenetrable: a hundred, a thousand different

ways within these four-and-twenty hours have I led to it, with all the ingenuity and all the delicacy of which I am mistress; but all to no purpose. Neither by provocation, persuasion, laughing, teazing, questioning, cross, or round about, pushing, squeezing, encompassing, taking for granted, wondering, or blundering, could I gain my point. Every look guarded—every syllable measured—yet unequivocal—

"She said no more than just the thing she ought."

Because I could find no fault, I was half angry. I respect the motive of this reserve; but towards me it is misplaced, and ill-judged, and it must not exist. I have often declared that I would never condescend to play the part of a confidante to any princess or heroine upon earth. But Leonora is neither princess nor heroine, and I would be her confidante, but she will not let me. Now I am punished for my pride. If she would only trust me, if she would only tell me what has passed since I went, and all that now weighs upon her mind, I could certainly be of some use. I could and would say every thing that she might scruple to hint to Lady Olivia, and I will answer for it I would make her raise the siege. But I cannot believe Mr. L—— to be such a madman as to think of attaching himself seriously to a woman like Olivia, when he has such a wife as Leonora. That he was amusing himself with Olivia I saw, or thought I saw, some time ago, and I rather wondered that Leonora was uneasy: for all husbands will flirt, and all wives must bear it, thought I. When such a coquette as this fell in his way, and made advances, he would have been more than man if he had receded. Of course, I thought, he must despise and laugh at her all the time he was flattering and gallanting her ladyship. This would have been fair play, and comic; but the comedy should have ended by this time. I am now really afraid it will turn into a tragedy. I, even I! am alarmed. I must prevail upon Leonora to speak to me without reserve. I see her suffer, and I must share her grief. Have not I always done so from the time we were children? and now, when she most wants a friend, am not I worthy to share her confidence? Can she mistake friendship for impertinent curiosity? Does not she know that I would not be burthened with the secrets of any body whom I did not love? If she thinks

otherwise, she does me injustice, and I will tell her so before I sleep. She does not know how well I love her.

My dear Margaret, Leonora and I have had a quarrel—the first serious quarrel we ever had in our lives; and the end of it is, that she is an angel, and I am a fool. Just as I laid down my pen after writing to you, though it was long past midnight, I marched into Leonora's apartment, resolved to surprise or to force her confidence. I found her awake, as I expected, and up and dressed, as I did not expect, sitting in her dressing-room, her head leaning upon her hand. I knew what she was thinking of; she had a heap of Mr. L——'s old letters beside her. She denied that she was in tears, and I will not swear to the tears, but I think I saw signs of them notwithstanding. I spoke out;—but in vain—all in vain. At last I flew into a passion, and reproached her bitterly. She answered me with that air of dignified tenderness which is peculiar to her—"If you believe me to be unhappy, my dear Helen, is this a time to reproach me unjustly?" I was brought to reason and to tears, and after asking pardon, like a foolish naughty child, was kissed and forgiven, upon a promise never to do so any more; a promise which I hope Heaven will grant me grace and strength of mind enough to keep. I was certainly wrong to attempt to force her secret from her. Leonora's confidence is always given, never yielded; and in her, openness is a virtue, not a weakness. But I wish she would not contrive to be always in the right. In all our quarrels, in all the variations of my humour, I am obliged to end by doing homage to her reason, as the Chinese mariners, in every change of weather, burn incense before the needle.

Your affectionate

HELEN C——.

LETTER XLI.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

MY DEAR GENERAL, L—— Castle, Friday.

I hoped that you would have favoured us with a passing visit in your way from town, but I know you will tell me that friendship must not interfere with the interests of the service. I have reason to curse those interests; they are for ever at variance with mine. I had a particular desire to speak to you upon a subject, on which it is not agreeable to me to write. Lady Leonora also wished extremely, and disinterestedly, for your company. She does not know how much she is obliged to you. The laconic advice you gave me, some time ago, influenced my conduct longer, than counsel which is in opposition to our passions usually does, and it has haunted my imagination perpetually:—"My dear L——, do not end by being the dupe of a *Frenchified coquette*."

My dear friend, of that there is no danger. No man upon earth despises or detests coquettes more than I do, be they French or English. I think, however, that a foreign-born, or foreign-bred coquette, has more of the ease of *practice*, and less of the awkwardness of conscience, than a home-bred flirt, and is in reality less blamable, for she breaks no restraints of custom or education; she does only what she has seen her mother do before her, and what is authorized by the example of most of the fashionable ladies of her acquaintance. But let us put flirts and coquettes quite out of the question. My dear general, you know that I am used to women, and take it upon my word, that the lady to whom I allude is more tender and passionate than vain. Every woman has, or has had, a tincture of vanity; but there are a few, and those are to me the most amiable of the sex, who

"Feel every vanity in fondness lost."

You know that I am delicate, even fastidious, in my taste for female manners. Nothing can in my opinion make amends for any offence against propriety, except it be sensibility—genuine, generous sensibility. This can, in my mind, cover a multitude of faults. There is so much of selfishness, of hypocrisy, of coldness, in what is visually called female virtue, that I often turn with distaste from those to whom I am compelled to do homage, for the sake of the general good of society. I am not *charlatan* enough to pretend upon all occasions to prefer the public advantage to my own. I confess, that let a woman be ever so fair, or good, or wise:

"Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of best,
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be?"

And I will further acknowledge, that I am not easily satisfied with the manner in which a woman is kind to me: if it be duty-work kindness, I would not give thanks for it: it is done for her reputation, not for me, and let the world thank her. To *the best of wives*, I should make the worst of husbands. No—I should, I hope, pay her in her own coin, with all due observances, attentions, and respect, but without one grain of love. Love is only to be had for love; and without it, nothing a woman can give appears to me worth having. I do not desire to be loved well enough to satisfy fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts; well enough to decide a woman to marry me rather than disoblige her friends, or run the chance of having *many a worse offer*, and living perhaps to be an old maid. I do not desire to be loved well enough to keep a woman true and faithful to me "*till death us do part*:" in short, I do not desire to be loved well enough for a husband; I desire to be loved sufficiently for a lover; not only above all other persons, but above all other things, all other considerations—to be the first and last object in the heart of the woman to whom I am attached: I wish to feel that I sustain and fill the whole of her heart. I must be certain that I am every thing to her, as she is every thing to me; that there is no imaginable situation in which she would not live with me, in which she would not be happy to live with me; no possible sacrifice that she would not make for me; or

rather, that nothing she could do should appear a sacrifice. Are these exorbitant expectations? I am capable of all this, and more, for a woman I love; and it is my pride or my misfortune to be able to love upon no other terms. Such proofs of attachment it may be difficult to obtain, and even to give; more difficult, I am sensible, for a wife than for a mistress. A young lady who is married *secundum artem*, with licence and consent of friends, can give no extraordinary instances of affection. I should not consider it as an indisputable proof of love, that she does me the honour to give me her hand in a church, or that she condescends to bespeak my liveries, or to be handed into her own coach with all the blushing honours of a bride; all the paraphernalia of a wife secured, all the prudent and necessary provision made both for matrimonial love and hatred, dower, pin-money, and separate maintenance on the one hand, and on the other, lands, tenements, and hereditaments for the future son and heir, and sums without end for younger children to the tenth and twentieth possibility, *as the case may be, nothing herein contained to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding*. Such a jargon Cupid does not understand. A woman may love this most convenient personage, her lawful husband; but I should think it difficult for the delicacy of female passion to survive the cool preparations for hymeneal felicity. At all events, you will allow the lady makes no sacrifice, she shows no great generosity, and she may, or she may not, be touched at the altar by the divine flame. My good general, when you are a husband you will feel these things as I do; till then, it is very easy to talk as you do, and to admire other men's wives, and to wish Heaven had blessed you with such a treasure. For my part, the single idea, that a woman thinks it her duty to be fond of me, would deprive me of all pleasure in her love. No man can be more sensible than I am of the amiable and estimable qualities of Lady Leonora L——; I should be a brute and a liar if I hesitated to give the fullest testimony in her praise; but such is the infirmity of my nature, that I could pardon some faults more easily, than I could like some virtues. The virtues which leave me in doubt of a woman's love, I can esteem, but that is all. Lady Leonora is calm, serene, perfectly sweet-tempered, without jealousy and without suspicion; in one word, without love. If she loved me, she never could have been the wife she has been for some months past. You will laugh at my being angry with a wife for not being jealous. But so it is. Certain defects of temper I could bear, if I considered them as symptoms of strong affection. When I for a moment believed that Leonora suffered, when

I attributed her fainting at our fête champêtre to jealousy, I was so much alarmed and touched, that I absolutely forgot her rival. I did more; to prevent her feeling uneasiness, to destroy the suspicions which I imagined had been awakened in her mind, I hesitated not to sacrifice all the pleasure and all the vanity which a man of my age might reasonably be supposed to feel in the prospect of a new and not inglorious conquest; I left home immediately, and went to meet you, my dear friend, on your return from abroad. This visit I do not set down to your account, but to that of honour—foolish, unnecessary honour. You half-persuaded me, that your hearsay Parisian evidence was more to be trusted than my own judgment, and I returned home with the resolution not to be the dupe of a coquette. Leonora's reception of me was delightful; I never saw her in such spirits, or so amiable. But I could not help wishing to ascertain whether I had attributed her fainting to the real cause. This proof I tempted to my cost. Instead of showing any tender alarm at the renewal of my obvious attentions to her rival, she was perfectly calm and collected, went on with her usual occupations, fulfilled all her duties, never reproached me by word or look, never for one moment betrayed impatience, ill-humour, suspicion, or jealousy; in short, I found that I had been fool enough to attribute to excess of affection, an accident which proceeded merely from the situation of her health. If anxiety of mind had been the cause of her fainting at the fête champêtre, she would since have felt and shown agitation on a thousand occasions, where she has been perfectly tranquil. Her friend Mrs. C——, who returned here a few days ago, seems to imagine that Leonora looks ill; but I shall not again be led to mistake bodily indisposition for mental suffering. Leonora's conduct argues great insensibility of soul, or great command; great insensibility, I think: for I cannot imagine such command of temper possible to any, but a woman who feels indifference for the offender. Yet, even now that I have steeled myself with this conviction, I am scarcely bold enough to hazard the chance of giving her pain. Absurd weakness! It has been clearly proved to my understanding, that my irresolution, my scruples of conscience, my combats between love and esteem, are more likely to betray the real state of my mind than any decision that I could make. I decide, then—I determine to be happy with a woman who has a soul capable of feeling, not merely what is called conjugal affection, but the passion of love; who is capable of sacrificing every thing to love; who has given me proofs of candour and greatness of

mind, which I value far above all her wit, grace, and beauty. My dear general, I know all that you can tell, all that you can hint concerning her history abroad. I know it from her own lips. It was told to me in a manner that made her my admiration. It was told to me as a preservative against the danger of loving her. It was told to me with the generous design of protecting Leonora's happiness; and all this at the moment when I was beloved, tenderly beloved. She is above dissimulation: she scorns the arts, the fears of her sex. She knows you are her enemy, and yet she esteems you; she urged me to speak to you with the utmost openness: "Let me never," said she, "be the cause of your feeling less confidence or less affection for the best of friends."

R—— is sacrificed to me; that R——, with whose cursed name you tormented me. My dear friend, she will force your admiration, as she has won my love.

Yours sincerely,

F. L——.

LETTER XLII.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

L—— Castle.

As I am not trusted with the secret, I may, my dear Margaret, use my own eyes and ears as I please to find it out; and I know Leonora's countenance so well, that I see every thing that passes in her mind, just as clearly as if she had told it to me in words.

It grieves me, more than I can express, to see her suffering as she does. I am now convinced that she has reason to be unhappy; and what is worse, I do not see what course she can follow to recover her happiness. All her

forbearance, all her patience, all her sweet temper, I perceive, are useless, or worse than useless, injurious to her in her strange husband's opinion. I never liked him thoroughly, and now I detest him. He thinks her cold, insensible! She insensible!—Brute! Idiot! Every thing that she says or does displeases him. The merest trifles excite the most cruel suspicions. He totally misunderstands her character, and sees every thing about her in a false light. In short, he is under the dominion of an artful fiend, who works as she pleases upon his passions—upon his pride, which is his ruling passion.

This evening Lady Olivia began confessing that she had too much sensibility, that she was of an excessively susceptible temper, and that she should be terribly jealous of the affections of any person she loved. She did not know how love *could* exist without jealousy. Mr. L—— was present, and listening eagerly. Leonora's lips were silent; not so her countenance. I was in hopes Mr. L—— would have remarked its beautiful touching expression; but his eyes were fixed upon Olivia. I could have ... but let me go on. Lady Olivia had the malice suddenly to appeal to Leonora, and asked whether she was never jealous of her husband? Leonora, astonished by her assurance, paused for an instant, and then replied, "It would be difficult to convince me that I had any reason to be jealous of Mr. L——, I esteem him so much."—"I wish to Heaven!" exclaimed Lady Olivia, her eyes turned upwards with a fine St. Cecilia expression, whilst Mr. L——'s attention was fixed upon her, "Would to Heaven I was blessed with such a *reasonable* temper!"—"When you are wishing to Heaven, Lady Olivia," said I, "had not you better ask for *all you want* at once; not only such a reasonable temper, but such a feeling heart?"

Some of the company smiled. Lady Olivia, practised as she is, looked disconcerted; Mr. L—— grave and impenetrable; Leonora, blushing, turned away to the piano-forte. Mr. L—— remained talking with Lady Olivia, and he neither saw nor heard her. If Leonora had sung like an angel, it would have made no impression. She turned over the leaves of her music quickly, to a lively air, and played it immediately, to prevent my perceiving how much she felt. Poor Leonora! you are but a bad dissembler, and it is in vain to try to conceal yourself from me.

I was so sorry for her, and so incensed with Olivia this night, that I could not restrain myself, and I made matters worse. At supper I came almost to

open war with her ladyship. I cannot remember exactly what I said, but I know that I threw out the most severe inuendoes which politeness could permit: and what *was* the consequence? Mr. L—— pitied Olivia and hated me; Leonora was in misery the whole time; and her husband probably thought that she was the instigator, though she was perfectly innocent. My dear Margaret, where will all this end? and how much more mischief shall I do with the best intentions possible?

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER XLIII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Your letter has travelled after me God knows where, my dear L——, and has caught me at last with my foot in the stirrup. I have just had time to look it over. I find, in short, that you are in love. I give you joy! But be in love like a madman, not like a fool. Call a demirep an angel, and welcome; but remember, that such angels are to be had any day in the year; and such a wife as yours is not to be had for the mines of Golconda. Coin your heart, and drop your blood for it, and you will never be loved by any other woman so well as you are by Lady Leonora L——.

As to your jealous hypochondriacism, more of that when I have more leisure. In the mean time I wish it well cured.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XLIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

I Triumph! dear Gabrielle, give me joy! Never was triumph more complete. L—— loves me! That I knew long ago; but I have at last forced from his proud heart the avowal of his passion. Love and Olivia are victorious over scruples, prejudice, pride, and superstition!

Leonora feels not—sees not: she requires, she excites no pity. Long may her delusion last! But even were it this moment to dissipate, what cause have I for remorse? "Who is most to blame, he who ceases to love, or she who ceases to please?" Leonora perhaps thinks that she loves her husband; and no doubt she does so in a conjugal sort of a way: he *has* loved his wife; but be it mine to prove that his heart is suited to far other raptures; and if Olivia be called upon for sacrifices, *Olivia* can make them.

"Let wealth, let honour wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion, all those views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honour, what are you to love?"

These lines, though quoted perpetually by the tender and passionate, can never become stale and vulgar; they will always recur in certain situations to persons of delicate sensibility, for they at once express all that can be said, and justify all that can be felt. My amiable Gabrielle, adieu. Pardon me if to-day I have no soul even for friendship. This day is all for love.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XLV.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

What the devil would you have of your wife, my dear L——? You would be loved above all earthly considerations; honour, duty, virtue, and religion inclusive, would you? and you would have a wife with her head in the clouds, would you? I wish you were married to one of the all-for-love heroines, who would treat you with bowl and dagger every day of your life. In your opinion sensibility covers a multitude of faults—you would have said *sins*: so it had need, for it produces a multitude. Pray what brings hundreds and thousands of women to the Piazzas of Covent Garden but sensibility? What does the colonel's, and the captain's, and the ensign's mistress talk of but *sensibility*? And are you, my dear friend, to be duped by this hackneyed word? And should you really think it an indisputable proof of a lady's love, that she would jump out of a two pair of stairs window into your arms? Now I should think myself sure of such a woman's love only just whilst I held her, and scarcely then; for I, who in my own way am jealous as well as yourself, should in this case be jealous of wickedness, and should strongly suspect that she would love the first devil that she saw better than me.

You are always raving about sacrifices. Your Cupid must be a very vindictive little god. Mine is a good-humoured, rosy little fellow, who desires no better than to see me laugh and be happy. But to every man his own Cupid. If you cannot believe in love without sacrifices, you must have them, to be sure. And now, in sober sadness, what do you think your heroine would sacrifice for you? Her reputation? that, pardon me, is out of her power. Her virtue? I have no doubt she would. But before I can estimate

the value of this sacrifice, I must know whether she makes it to you or to her pleasure. Would she give up in any instance her pleasure for your happiness? This is not an easy matter to ascertain with respect to a mistress: but your wife has put it beyond a doubt, that she prefers your happiness not only to her pleasure, but to her pride, and to every thing that the sex usually prefer to a husband. You have been wounded by a poisoned arrow; but you have a faithful wife who can extract the poison. Lady Leonora's affection is not a mere fit of goodness and generosity, such as I have seen in many women, but it is a steadiness of attachment in the hour of trial, which I have seen in few. For several months past you have, by your own account, put her temper and her love to the most severe tests, yet she has never failed for one moment, never reproached you by word or look.—But may be she has no feeling.—No feeling! you can have none, if you say so: no penetration, if you think so. Would not you think me a tyrant if I put a poor fellow on the picket, and told you, when he bore it without a groan, that it was because he could not feel? You do worse, you torture the soul of the woman who loves you; she endures, she is calm, she smiles upon you even in agony; and you tell me she cannot feel! she cannot feel like an Olivia! No; and so much the better for her husband, for she will then have only feeling enough for him, she will not extend her charity to all his sex. But Olivia has such candour and magnanimity, that I must admire her! I humbly thank her for offering to make me her confidant, for offering to tell me what I know already, and what she is certain that I know. These were good moves, but I understand the game as well as her ladyship does. As to her making a friend of me; if she means an enemy to Lady Leonora L——, I would sooner see her—in heaven: but if she would do me the favour to think no more of your heart, which is too good for her, and to accept of my—my—what shall I say?—my devoirs, I am at her command. She shall drive my curricle, &c. &c. She would suit me vastly well for a month or two, and by that time poor R—— would make his appearance, or somebody in his stead: at the worst, I should have a chance of some blessed metaphysical quirk, which would prove that inconstancy was a virtue, or that a new love is better than an old one. When it came to that, I should make my best bow, put on my most disconsolate face, and retire.

You will read all this in a very different spirit from that in which it is written. If you are angry—no matter: I am cool. I tell you beforehand, that I will not fight you for any thing I have said in this letter, or that I ever may

say about your Olivia. Therefore, my dear L——, save yourself the trouble of challenging me. I thank God I have reputation enough to be able to dispense with the glory of blowing out your brains.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER XLVI.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

We have been very gay here the last few days: the gallant and accomplished Prince —— has been here. H——, the witty H——, who is his favourite companion, introduced him; and he seems so much charmed with the old castle, its towers and battlements, and with its *cynosure*, that I know not when he will be able to prevail upon himself to depart. To-morrow, he says; but so he has said these ten days: he cannot resist the entreaties of his kind host and hostess to stay another day. The soft accent of the beautiful Leonora will certainly detain him *one day more*, and her gracious smile will bereave him of rest for months to come. He has evidently fallen desperately in love with her. Now we shall see virtue in danger.

I have always been of opinion with St. Evremond and Ninon de l'Enclos, that no female virtue can stand every species of test; fortunately it is not always exposed to trial. Reputation may be preserved by certain persons in certain situations, upon very easy terms. Leonora, for instance, is armed so strong in character, that no common mortal will venture to attack her. It would be presumption little short of high treason to imagine the fall of the Lady Leonora L——, the daughter of the Duchess of ——, who, with a long line of immaculate baronesses in their own right, each in her armour of

stiff stays, stands frowning defiance upon the adventurous knights. More alarming still to the modern seducer, appears a judge in his long wig, and a jury with their long faces, ready to bring in their verdict, and to award damages proportionate to the rank and fortune of the parties. Then the former reputation of the lady is talked of, and the irreparable injury sustained by the disconsolate husband from the loss of the solace and affection of this paragon of wives. And it is proved that she lived in the most perfect harmony with him, till the vile seducer appeared; who, in aggravation of damages, was a confidential friend of the husband's, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.

Brave, indeed, and desperately in love must be the man, who could dare all these to deserve the fair. But princes are, it is said, naturally brave, and ambitious of conquering difficulties.

I have insinuated these reflections in a general way to L——, who applies them so as to plague himself sufficiently. Heaven is my witness, that I mean no injury to Lady Leonora; yet I fear that there are moments, when my respect for her superiority, joined to the consciousness of my own weakness, overpowers me, and I almost envy her the right she retains to the esteem of the man I love. This is a blamable weakness—I know it—I reproach myself bitterly; but all I can do is to confess it candidly. L—— sees my conflicts, and knows how to value the sensibility of my fond heart. Adieu, my Gabrielle. When shall I be happy? since even love has its torments, and I am thus doomed to be ever a victim to the tenderness of my soul.

OLIVIA.

LETTER XLVII.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

I do not know whether I pity, love, or admire Leonora most. Just when her mind was deeply wounded by her husband's neglect, and when her jealousy was worked to the highest pitch by his passion for her dangerous rival, the Prince —— arrives here, and struck by Leonora's charms of mind and person, falls passionately in love with her. Probably his highness's friend H—— had given him a hint of the existing circumstances, and he thought a more propitious moment could scarcely be found for making an impression upon a female mind. He judged of Leonora by other women. And I, like a simpleton, judged of her by myself. With shame I confess to you, my dear Margaret, that notwithstanding all my past experience, I did expect that she would have done, as I am afraid I should have done in her situation. I think that I could not have resisted the temptation of coquetting a little—a very little—just to revive the passion of the man whom I really loved. This expedient succeeds so often with that wise sex, who never rightly know the value of a heart, except when they have just won it, or at the moment when they are on the point of losing it. In Leonora's place and in such an emergency, I should certainly have employed that frightful monster jealousy to waken sleeping love; since he, and only he, can do it expeditiously and effectually. This I have hinted to Leonora, talking always *in generals*; for, since my total overthrow, I have never dared to come to particulars: but by putting cases and *confessing myself*, I contrived to make my thoughts understood. I then boasted of the extreme facility of the means I would adopt to recover a heart. Leonora answered in the words of a celebrated great man:—"C'est facile de se servir de pareils moyens; c'est difficile de s'y résoudre."

"But if no other means would succeed," said I, "would not you sacrifice your pride to your love?"

"My pride, willingly; but not my sense of what is right," said she, with an indescribable mixture of tenderness and firmness in her manner.

"Can a little coquetry in a good cause be such a heinous offence?" persisted I. I knew that I was wrong all the time; but I delighted in seeing how right she was.

No—she would not allow her mind to be cheated by female sophistry; nor yet by the male casuistry of, "the end sanctifies the means."

"If you had the misfortune to lose the affections of the man you love, and if you were quite certain of regaining them by following my recipe?" said I.

Never shall I forget the look with which Leonora left me, and the accent with which she said, “My dear Helen, if it were ever to be my misfortune to lose my husband’s love, I would not, even if I were certain of success, attempt to regain it by any unworthy arts. How could I wish to regain his love at the hazard of losing his esteem, and the certainty of forfeiting my own!”

I said no more—I had nothing more to say: I saw that I had given pain, and I have never touched upon the subject since. But her practice is even beyond her theory. Never, by deed, or look, or word, or thought (for I see all her thoughts in her eloquent countenance), has she swerved from her principles. No prudery—no coquetry—no mock-humility—no triumph. Never for an instant did she, by a proud air, say to her husband,—See what others think of me! Never did a resentful look say to him—Inconstant!—revenge is in my power! Never even did a reproachful sigh express—I am injured, yet I do not retaliate.

Mr. L——is blind; he is infatuated; he is absolutely bereaved of judgment by a perfidious, ungrateful, and cruel wretch. Let me vent my indignation to you, dear Margaret, or it will explode, perhaps, when it may do Leonora mischief. Yours affectionately, Helen C——.

LETTER XLVIII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE F——.

L—— Castle.

This Lady Leonora, in her simplicity, never dreamed of love till the prince’s passion was too visible and audible to be misunderstood: and then she changed her tone, and checked her simplicity, and was so reserved, and so dignified, and so *proper*, it was quite edifying, especially to a poor sinner of a coquette like me; nothing *piquante*; nothing *agaçante*; nothing *demi-voílée*; no retiring to be pursued; not a single manoeuvre of coquetry did she

practise. This convinces me that she cares not in the least for her husband; because, if she really loved him, and wished to reclaim his heart, what so natural or so simple as to excite his jealousy, and thus revive his love? After neglecting this golden opportunity, she can never convince me that she is really anxious about her husband's heart. This I hinted to L——, and his own susceptibility had hinted it to him efficaciously, before I spoke.

Though Leonora has been so correct hitherto, and so cold to the prince in her husband's presence, I have my suspicions that, if in his absence, proper means were taken, if her pride were roused by apt suggestions, if it were delicately pointed out to her that she is shamefully neglected, that she is a cipher in her own house, that her husband presumes too much upon her sweetness of temper, that his inconstancy is wondered at by all who have eyes, and that a little retaliation might become her ladyship, I would not answer for her forbearance, that is to say if all this were done by a dexterous man, a lover and a prince! I shall take care my opinions shall be known; for I cannot endure to have the esteem of the man I love monopolized. Exposed to temptation, as I have been, and with as ardent affections, Leonora, or I am much mistaken, would not have been more estimable. Adieu, my dearest Gabrielle. Nous verrons! nous verrons!

OLIVIA.

Sunday evening.

P.S. I open my letter to tell you that the prince is actually gone. Doubtless he will return at a more auspicious moment.

Lady M—— and all the troop of friends are to depart on Monday; all but *the* bosom friend, *l'amie intime*, that insupportable Helen, who is ever at daggers-drawing with me. So much the better! L—— sees her cabals with his wife; she is a partisan without the art to be so to any purpose, and her manoeuvres tend only to increase his partiality for his Olivia.

LETTER XLIX.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

L—— Castle.

---

months ago between her husband and me. What will be the consequence? I long, yet almost fear, to meet her again. She is now in her own apartment, writing, I presume, to her mother for advice.

LETTER L.

LEONORA TO OLIVIA.

{Left on Lady Olivia’s dressing-table.}

O you, whom no kindness can touch, whom no honour can bind, whom no faith can hold, enjoy the torments you have inflicted on me! enjoy the triumph of having betrayed a confiding friend! Friend no more—affect, presume no longer to call me friend! I am under no necessity to dissemble, and dissimulation is foreign to my habits, and abhorrent to my nature! I know you to be my enemy, and I say so—my most cruel enemy; one who

could, without reluctance or temptation, rob me of all I hold most dear. Yes, without temptation; for you do not love my husband, Olivia. On this point I cannot be mistaken; I know too well what it is to love him. Had you been struck by his great or good and amiable qualities, charmed by his engaging manners, or seduced by the violence of his passion; and had I seen you honourably endeavour to repress that passion; had I seen in you the slightest disposition to sacrifice your pleasure or your vanity to friendship or to duty, I think I could have forgiven, I am sure I should have pitied you. But you felt no pity for me, no shame for yourself; you made no attempt to avoid, you invited the danger. Mr. L—— was not the deceiver, but the deceived. By every art and every charm in your power—and you have many—you won upon his senses and worked upon his imagination; you saw, and made it your pride to conquer the scruples of that affection he once felt for his wife, and that wife was your friend. By passing bounds, which he could not conceive that any woman could pass, except in the delirium of passion, you made him believe that your love for him exceeds all that I feel. How he will find himself deceived! If you had loved him as I do, you could not so easily have forfeited all claim to his esteem. Had you loved him so much, you would have loved honour more.

It is possible that Mr. L—— may taste some pleasure with you whilst his delusion lasts, whilst his imagination paints you, as mine once did, in false colours, possessed of generous virtues, and the victim of excessive sensibility: but when he sees you such as you are, he will recoil from you with aversion, he will reject you with contempt.

Knowing my opinion of you, Lady Olivia, you will not choose to remain in this house; nor can I desire for my guest one whom I can no longer, in private or in public, make my companion.

Adieu.

Leonora L——.

LETTER LI.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

L—— Castle, Midnight.

Farewell for ever!—It must be so—Farewell for ever! Would to Heaven I had summoned courage sooner to pronounce these fatal, necessary, irrevocable words: then had I parted from you without remorse, without the obloquy to which I am now exposed. Oh, my dearest L——! Mine, do I still dare to call you? Yes, mine for the last time, I must call you, mine I must fancy you, though for the impious thought the Furies themselves were to haunt me to madness. My dearest L——, never more must we meet in this world! Think not that my weak voice alone forbids it: no, a stronger voice than mine is heard—an injured wife reclaims you. What a letter have I just received...!—from.....Leonora! She tells me that she no longer desires for her guest one whom she cannot, in public or private, make her companion —Oh, Leonora, it was sufficient to banish me from your heart! She tells me not only that I have for ever forfeited her confidence; her esteem, her affection; but that I shall soon be your aversion and contempt. Oh, cruel, cruel words! But I submit—I have deserved it all—I have robbed her of a heart above all price. Leonora, why did you not reproach me more bitterly? I desire, I implore to be crushed, to be annihilated by your vengeance! Most admirable, most virtuous, most estimable of women, best of wives, I have with sacrilegious love profaned a soul consecrated to you and conjugal virtue. I acknowledge my crime; trample upon me as you will, I am humbled in the dust. More than all your bitterest reproaches, do I feel the remorse of having, for a moment, interrupted such serenity of happiness.

Oh, why did you persuade me, L——, and why did I believe that Leonora was calm and free from all suspicion? How could I believe that any woman whom you had ever loved, could remain blind to your inconstancy, or feel secure indifference? Happy woman! in you to love is not a crime; you may glory in your passion, whilst I must hide mine from every human eye, drop in shameful secrecy the burning tear, stifle the struggling sigh, blush at the conflicts of virtue and sensibility, and carry shame and remorse with me to the grave. Happy Leonora! happy even when most injured, you have a right to complain to him you love;—he is yours—you are his wife—his esteem, his affection are yours. On Olivia he has bestowed but a transient thought, and eternal ignominy must be her portion.

So let it be—so I wish it to be. Would to Heaven I may thus atone for the past, and secure your future felicity! Fly to her, my dearest L——, I conjure you! throw yourself at her feet, entreat, implore, obtain her forgiveness. She cannot refuse it to your tears, to your caresses. To withstand them she must be more or less than woman. No, she cannot resist your voice when it speaks words of peace and love; she will press you with transport to her heart, and Olivia, poor Olivia, will be for ever forgotten; yet she will rejoice in your felicity; absolved perhaps in the eye of Heaven, though banished from your society, she will die content.

Full well am I aware of the consequences of quitting thus precipitately the house of Lady Leonora L——; but nothing that concerns myself alone can, for a moment, make me hesitate to do that, which the sentiment of virtue dictates, and which is yet more strongly urged by regard for the happiness of one, who once allowed me to call her friend. I know my reputation is irrecoverably sacrificed; but it is to one for whom I would lay down my life. Can a woman who feels as I do deem any earthly good a sacrifice for him she loves? Dear L——, adieu for ever!

Olivia.

LETTER LII.

LEONORA TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

Dearest Mother,

It is all over—my husband is gone—gone perhaps for ever—all is in vain—all is lost!

Without saying more to you than I ought, I may tell you, that in consequence of an indignant letter which I wrote last night to Lady Olivia, she left my house this morning early, before any of the family were up. Mr. L—— heard of her departure before I did. He has, I will not say followed her, for of that I am not certain; but he has quitted home, and without giving

me one kind look at parting, without even noticing a letter which I left last night upon his table. At what slight things we catch to save us from despair! How obstinate, how vain is hope! I fondly hoped, even to the last moment, that this letter, this foolish letter, would work a sudden change in my husband's heart, would operate miracles, would restore me to happiness. I fancied, absurdly fancied, that laying open my whole soul to him would have an effect upon his mind. Alas! has not my whole soul been always open to him? Could this letter tell him any thing but what he knows already, or what he will never know—how well I love him! I was weak to expect so much from it; yet as it expressed without complaint the anguish of disappointed affection, it deserved at least some acknowledgment. Could not he have said, "My dear Leonora, I thank you for your letter?"—or more colder still—"Leonora, I have received your letter?" Even that would have been some relief to me: but now all is despair. I saw him just when he was going away, but for a moment; till the last instant he was not to be seen; then, in spite of all his command of countenance, I discerned strong marks of agitation; but towards me an air of resentment, more than any disposition to kinder thoughts. I fancy that he scarcely knew what he said, nor, I am sure, did I. He talked, I remember, of having immediate business in town, and I endeavoured to believe him. Contrary to his usual composed manner, he was in such haste to be gone, that I was obliged to send his watch and purse after him, which he had left on his dressing-table. How melancholy his room looked to me! His clothes just as he had left them—a rose which Lady Olivia gave him yesterday was in water on his table. My letter was not there; so he has it, probably unread. He will read it some time or other, perhaps—and some time or other, perhaps, when I am dead and gone, he will believe I loved him. Could he have known what I felt at the moment when he turned from me, he would have pitied me; for his nature, his character, cannot be quite altered in a few months, though he has ceased to love Leonora. From the window of his own room I watched for the last glimpse of him—heard him call to the postilions, and bid them "drive fast—faster." This was the last sound I heard of his voice. When shall I hear that voice again? I think that I shall certainly hear from him the day after to-morrow—and I wish to-day and to-morrow were gone.

I am afraid that you will think me very weak; but, my dear mother, I have no motive for fortitude now; and perhaps it might have been better for me, if I had not exerted so much. I begin to fear that all my fortitude is mistaken

for indifference. Something Mr. L—— said the other day, about sensibility and sacrifices, gave me this idea. Sensibility!—It has been my hard task for some months past to repress mine, that it might not give pain or disgust. I have done all that my reason and my dearest mother counselled; surely I cannot have done wrong. How apt we are to mistake the opinion or the taste of the man we love for the rule of right! Sacrifices! What sacrifices can I make?—All that I have, is it not his?—My whole heart, is it not his? Myself, all that I am, all that I *can* be? Have I not lived with him of late, without recalling to his mind the idea that I suffer by his neglect? Have I not left his heart at liberty, and can I make a greater sacrifice? I really do not understand what he means by sacrifices. A woman who loves her husband is part of him; whatever she does for him is for herself. I wish he would explain to me what he can mean by sacrifices—but when will he ever again explain his thoughts and feelings to me?

My dearest mother, it has been a relief to my mind to write all this to you; if there is no sense in it, you will forgive and encourage me by your affection and strength of mind, which, in all situations, have such power to soothe and support your daughter.

The prince ——, who spent a fortnight here, paid me particular attention.

The prince talked of soon paying us another visit. If he should, I will not receive him in Mr. L——‘s absence. This may seem like vanity or prudery; but no matter what it appears, if it be right.

Well might you, my best friend, bid me beware of forming an intimacy with an unprincipled woman. I have suffered severely for neglecting your counsels; how much I have still to endure is yet to be tried: but I can never be entirely miserable whilst I possess, and whilst I hope that I deserve, the affection of such a mother.

LEONORA L——.

LETTER LIII.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO HER DAUGHTER.

If my approbation and affection can sustain you in this trying situation, your fortitude will not forsake you, my beloved daughter. Great minds rise in adversity; they are always equal to the trial, and superior to injustice: betrayed and deserted, they feel their own force, and they rely upon themselves. Be yourself, my Leonora! Persevere as you have begun, and, trust me, you will be happy. I abide by my first opinion, I repeat my prophecy—your husband's esteem, affection, love, will be permanently yours. Change of circumstances, however alarming, cannot shake the fixed judgment of my understanding. Character, as you justly observe, cannot utterly change in a few months. Your husband is deceived, he is now as one in the delirium of a fever: he will recover his senses, and see Lady Olivia and you such as you are.

You do not explain, and I take it for granted you have good reasons for not explaining to me more fully, the immediate cause of your letter to Lady Olivia. I am sorry that any cause should have thrown her upon the protection of Mr. L——; for a man of honour and generosity feels himself bound to treat with tenderness a woman who appears to sacrifice every thing for his sake. Consider this in another point of view, and it will afford you subject of consolation; for it is always a consolation to good minds, to think those whom they love less to blame than they appear to be. You will be more calm and patient when you reflect that your husband's absence may be prolonged by a mistaken sense of honour. From the nature of his connexion with Lady Olivia it cannot last long. Had she saved appearances, and engaged him in a sentimental affair, it might have been far more dangerous to your happiness.

I entirely approve of your conduct with respect to the prince: it is worthy of my child, and just what I should have expected from her. The artifices of coquettes, and all the *art* of love is beneath her; she has far other powers and resources, and need not strive to maintain her dignity by vengeance. I admire your magnanimity, and I still more admire your good sense; for high spirit is more common in our sex than good sense. Few know how, and when, they should sacrifice small considerations to great ones. You say that

you will not receive the prince in your husband's absence, though this may be attributed to prudery or vanity, &c. &c. You are quite right. How many silly women sacrifice the happiness of their lives to the idea of what women or men, as silly as themselves, will say or think of their motives. How many absurd heroines of romance, and of those who imitate them in real life, do we see, who can never act with common sense or presence of mind: if a man's carriage breaks down, or his horse is tired at the end of their avenues, or for some such ridiculous reason, they must do the very reverse of all they know to be prudent. Perpetually exposed, by a fatal concurrence of circumstances, to excite the jealousy of their lovers and husbands, they create the necessity to which they fall a victim. I rejoice that I cannot feel any apprehension of my daughter's conducting herself like one of these novel-bred ladies.

I am sorry, my dear, that Lady M—— and your friends have left you: yet even in this there may be good. Your affairs will be made less public, and you will be less the subject of impertinent curiosity. I advise you, however, to mix as much as usual with your neighbours in the country: your presence, and the dignity of your manners, will impose silence upon idle tongues. No wife of real spirit solicits the world for compassion: she who does not court popularity ensures respect.

Adieu, my dearest child: the time will come when your husband will feel the full merit of your fortitude; when he will know how to distinguish between true and false sensibility; between the love of an Olivia and of a Leonora. ——.

LETTER LIV.

MRS. C—— TO MISS B——.

Jan. 26.

My Dear Margaret,

I shall never forgive myself. I fear I have done Leonora irreparable injury; and, dear magnanimous sufferer, she has never reproached me! In a fit of indignation and imprudent zeal I made a discovery, which has produced a total breach between Leonora and Lady Olivia, and in consequence of this Mr. L—— has gone off with her ladyship

---

We have heard nothing from Mr. L—— since his departure, and Leonora is more unhappy than ever, and my imprudence is the cause of this. Yet she continues to love me. She is an angel! I have promised her not to mention her affairs in future even in any of my letters to you, dear Margaret. Pray quiet any reports you may hear, and stop idle tongues.

Yours affectionately,

Helen C——.

LETTER LV.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

Richmond.

My Dear Friend,

I do not think I could have borne with temper, from any other man breathing, the last letter which I received from you. I am sensible that it was written with the best intentions for my happiness; but I must now inform you, that the lady in question has accepted of my protection, and consequently no man who esteems me can treat her with disrespect.

It is no longer a question, what she will sacrifice for me; she has shown the greatest generosity and tenderness of soul; and I should despise myself, if I did not exert every power to make her happy.—We are at Richmond; but if you write, direct to me at my house in town.

Yours sincerely,

F. L——.

LETTER LVI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Dream your dream out, my dear L——. Since you are angry with me, as Solander was with Sir Joseph Banks for awakening him, I shall not take the liberty of shaking you any more. I believe I shook you rather too roughly: but I assure you it was for your good, as people always tell their friends when they do the most disagreeable things imaginable. Forgive me, and I will let you dream in peace. You will, however, allow me to watch by you, whilst you sleep; and, my dear somnambulist, I may just take care that you do not knock your head against a post, or fall into a well.

I hope you will not have any objection to my paying my respects to Lady Olivia when I come to town, which, I flatter myself, I shall be able to do shortly. The fortifications here are almost completed.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LVII.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Richmond, ——.

Happy!—No, my dear Gabrielle, nor shall I ever be happy, whilst I have not exclusive possession of the heart of the man I love. I have sacrificed every thing to him; I have a right to expect that he should sacrifice at least a wife for me—a wife whom he only esteems. But L—— has not sufficient strength of mind to liberate himself from the cobwebs which restrain those who talk of conscience, and who, in fact, are only superstitious. I see with indignation, that his soul is continually struggling between passion for me and a something, I know not what to call it, that he feels for this wife. His thoughts are turning towards home. I believe that to an Englishman's ears, there is some magic in the words *home* and *wife*. I used to think foreigners ridiculous for associating the ideas of Milord Anglois with roast beef and pudding; but I begin to see that they are quite right, and that an Englishman has a certain set of inveterate *homely* prejudices, which are necessary to his well-being, and almost to his existence. You may entice him into the land of sentiment, and for a time keep him there; but refine and polish and enlighten him, as you will, he recurs to his own plain sense, as he terms it, on the first convenient opportunity. In short, it is lost labour to civilize him, for sooner or later he will *hottentot* again. Pray introduce that term, Gabrielle—*you* can translate it. For my part, I can introduce nothing here; my manière d'être is really insupportable; my talents are lost; I, who am accustomed to shine in society, see nobody; I might, as Josephine every day observes, as well be buried alive. Retirement and love are charming; but then it must be perfect love—not the equivocating sort that L—— feels for me, which keeps the word of promise only to the ear. I bear every sort of désagrément for him; I make myself a figure for the finger of scorn to point at, and he insults me with esteem for a wife. Can you conceive this, my amiable Gabrielle?—No, there are ridiculous points in the characters of my countrymen which you will never be able to comprehend. And what is still more incomprehensible, it is my fate to love this man; yes, passionately to

love him!—But he must give me proof of reciprocal passion. I have too much spirit to sacrifice every thing for him, who will sacrifice nothing for me. Besides, I have another motive. To you, my faithful Gabrielle, I open my whole heart.—Pride inspires me as well as love. I am resolved that Leonora, the haughty Leonora, shall live to repent of having insulted and exasperated Olivia. In some situations contempt can be answered only by vengeance; and when the malice of a contracted and illiberal mind provokes it, revenge is virtue. Leonora has called me her enemy, and consequently has made me such. ‘Tis she has declared the war! ‘tis for me to decide the victory!

L——, I know, has the offer of an embassy to Petersburg.—He shall accept it.—I will accompany him thither. Lady Leonora may, in his absence, console herself with her august counsellor and mother:—that proudest of earthly paragons is yet to be taught the extent of Olivia’s power. Adieu, my charming Gabrielle! I will carry your tenderest remembrances to our brilliant Russian princess. She has often invited me, you know, to pay her a visit, and this will be the ostensible object of my journey. A horrible journey, to be sure!!!—But what will not love undertake and accomplish, especially when goaded by pride, and inspirited by great revenge?

OLIVIA.

LETTER LVIII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Victim to the delusions of passion, too well I know my danger, and now, even now, foresee my miserable fate. Too well I know, that the delicious poison which spreads through my frame exalts, entrances, but to destroy. Too well I know that the meteor fire, which shines so bright on my path,

entices me forward but to plunge me in the depths of infamy. The long warnings of recorded time teach me, that perjured man triumphs, disdains, and abandons. Too well, alas! I know these fatal truths; too well I feel my approaching doom. Yet, infatuated as I am, prescience avails not; the voice of prudence warns, the hand of Heaven beckons me in vain.

My friend! my more than friend, my lover! beloved beyond expression! you to whom I immolate myself, you for whom I sacrifice more than life. Oh, whisper words of peace! for you, and you alone, can tranquillize this agitated bosom. Assure me, L——, if with truth you can assure me, that I have no rival in your affections. Oh, tell me that the name of wife does not invalidate the claims of love! Repeat for me, a thousand times repeat, that I am sole possessor of your heart!

The moment you quit me I am overpowered with melancholy forebodings. Scarcely are you out of my sight, before I dread, that I shall never see you more, or that some fatality should deprive me of your love. When shall the sails of love waft us from this dangerous shore? Oh! when shall I dare to call you mine? Heavens! how many things may intervene...! Let nothing detain you from Richmond this evening; but come not at all—come no more, unless to reassure my trembling heart, and to convince me that love and Olivia have banished every other image.

Olivia.

LETTER LIX.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

My Dear General,

I am come to a resolution to accept of that embassy to Russia which I lately refused. My mind has been in such constant anxiety for some time past, that my health has suffered, and change of air and place are necessary to me. You will say, that the climate of Russia is a strange choice for an

invalid: I could indeed have wished for a milder; but in this world we must be content with the least of two evils. I wish to have some ostensible reason for going abroad, and this embassy is the only one that presents itself in an unquestionable shape. Any thing is better than staying where I am, and as I am. My motives are not so entirely personal and selfish as I have stated them. A man who has a grain of feeling cannot endure to see the woman whom he loves, whose only failing is her love, living in a state of dereliction, exposed to the silent scorn of her equals and inferiors, if not to open insult. All her fine talents, every advantage of nature and education sacrificed, and her sensibility to shame a perpetual source of misery. A man must be a brute if he do not feel for a woman, whose affection for him has reduced her to this situation. My delicacy as to female manners, and the high value I set upon public opinion in all that concerns the sex, make me peculiarly susceptible and wretched in my present circumstances. To raise the drooping spirits, and support the self-approbation of a woman, who is conscious that she has forfeited her claim to respect—to make love supply the place of all she has sacrificed to love, is a difficult and exquisitely painful task. My feelings render hers more acute, and the very precautions which I take, however delicate, alarm and wound her pride, by reminding her of all she wishes to forget. In this country, no woman, who is not lost to shame, can bear to live without reputation.—I pass over a great many intermediate ideas, my dear general; your sense and feeling will supply them. You see the expediency, the necessity of my accepting this embassy. Olivia urges, how can I refuse it? She wishes to accompany me. She made this offer with such decision of spirit, with such passionate tenderness, as touched me to the very soul. A woman who really loves, absolutely devotes herself, and becomes insensible to every difficulty and danger; to her all parts of the world are alike; all she fears is to be separated from the object of her affections.

But the very excess of certain passions proves them to be genuine. Even whilst we blame the rashness of those who act from the enthusiasm of their natures, whilst we foresee all the perils to which they seem blind, we tremble at their danger, we grow more and more interested for them every moment, we admire their courage, we long to snatch them from their fate, we are irresistibly hurried along with them down the precipice.

But why do I say all this to you, my dear general? To no man upon earth could it be more ineffectually addressed. Let me see you, however, before

we leave England. It would be painful to me to quit this country without taking leave of you, notwithstanding all that you have lately done to thwart my inclinations, and notwithstanding all I may expect you to say when we meet. Probably I shall be detained here some weeks, as I must wait for instructions from our court. I write this day to Lady Leonora, to inform her that I am appointed ambassador to Russia. She shall have all the honours of war; she shall be treated with all the respect to which she is so well entitled. I suppose she will wish to reside with her mother during my absence. She cannot do better: she will then be in the most eligible situation, and I shall be relieved from all anxiety upon her account. She will be perfectly happy with her mother. I have often thought that she was much happier before she married me, than she has been since our union.

I have some curiosity to know whether she will see the Prince when I am gone. Do not mistake me; I am not jealous: I have too little love, and too much esteem for Leonora, to feel the slightest jealousy. I have no doubt, that if I were to stay in Russia for ten years, and if all the princes and potentates in Europe were to be at her feet, my wife would conduct herself with the most edifying propriety: but I am a little curious to know how far vanity or pride can console a virtuous woman for the absence of love.

Yours truly,

F. L.

LETTER LX.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

You are really decided then to go to Russia, my amiable friend, and you will absolutely undertake this horrible voyage! And you are not intimidated

by the idea of the immense distance between Petersburg and Paris! Alas! I had hoped soon to see you again. The journey from my convent to Paris was the longest and most formidable that I ever undertook, and at this moment it appears to me terrible; you may conceive therefore my admiration of your courage and strength of mind, my dear Olivia, who are going to brave the ocean, turning your back on Paris, and every moment receding from our polished centre of attraction, to perish perhaps among mountains of ice. Mon Dieu! it makes me shudder to think of it. But if it please Heaven that you should once arrive at Petersburg, you will crown your tresses with diamonds, you will envelope yourself with those superb furs of the north, and smiling at all the dangers you have passed, you will be yourself a thousand times more dangerous than they. You, who have lived so long at Paris, who speak our language in all its shades of elegance; you, who have divined all our secrets of pleasing, who have caught our very air,

"Et la grace, encore plus belle que la beauté;"

you, who are absolutely a French woman, and a Parisian, what a sensation you will produce at Petersburg!—Quels succès vous attendent!—Quels hommages!

You will have the goodness to offer my tenderest sentiments, and the assurances of my perfect respect, to our dear Princess; you will also find the proper moment to remind her of the promise she made, to send me specimens of the fine ermines and sables of her country. For my part, I used to be, I confess, in a great error with respect to furs: I always acknowledged them to be rich, but avoided them as heavy; I considered them as fitter for the stiff magnificence of an Empress of all the Russias than for the light elegance of a Parisian beauty; but our charming Princess convinced me that this is a heresy in taste. When I beheld the grace with which she wore her ermine, and the art with which she knew how to vary its serpent folds as she moved, or as she spoke, the variety it gave to her costume and attitudes; the development it afforded to a fine hand and arm, the resource in the pauses of conversation, and that soft and attractive air which it seemed to impart even to the play of her wit, I could no longer refuse my homage to ermine. Such is the despotism of beauty over all the objects of taste and fashion;

and so it is, that a woman of sense, address, and sentiment, let her be born or thrown by fate where she may, will always know how to avail herself of every possible advantage of nature and art. Nothing will be too trifling or too vast for her genius.

I must make you understand me, my dear Olivia; your Gabrielle is not so frivolous as simpletons imagine. Frivolity is an excellent, because an unsuspected mask, under which serious and important designs may be safely concealed. I would explain myself further, but must now go to the opera to see the new ballet. Let me know, my interesting, my sublime Olivia, when you are positively determined on your voyage to Petersburg; and then you shall become acquainted with your friend as a politician. Her friendship for you will not be confined to a mere intercourse of sentiment, but will, if you have courage to second her views, give you a secret yet decisive weight and consequence, of which you have hitherto never dreamed.—Adieu.—These gentlemen are so impatient, I must go. Burn the last page of this letter, and the whole of my next as soon as you have read it, I conjure you, my dear.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

DEAR L——,

I have time but to write one line to satisfy that philosophical curiosity, which, according to your injunctions, I will not denominate jealousy—except when I talk to myself.

You have a philosophical curiosity to know whether your wife will see the Prince in your absence. I saw his favourite yesterday, who complained to me that his highness had been absolutely refused admittance at your castle, notwithstanding he had made many ingenious, and some bold attempts, to see Lady Leonora L—— in the absence of her faithless husband.

As to your scheme of going to Russia, you will be obliged, luckily, to wait for some time for instructions, and in the interval, it is to be hoped you will recover your senses. I shall see you as soon as possible.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LXII.

MADAME DE P—— TO LADY OLIVIA.

Paris.

As our vanity always endeavours to establish a balance between our own perfections and those of our friends, I must flatter myself, my dear Olivia, that in compensation for that courage and ardent imagination in which you are so much my superior, I possess some little advantages over you in my scientific, hereditary knowledge of court intrigue, and of the arts of representation; all which will be necessary to you in your character of ambassadress: you will in fact deserve this title, for of course you will govern the English ambassador, whom you honour with your love. And of course you will appear with splendour, and you will be particularly careful to have your *traineau* well appointed. Pray remember that one of your horses must gallop, whilst the other trots, or you are nobody. It will also be absolutely necessary to have a numerous retinue of servants, because this

suits the Russian idea of magnificence. You must have, as the Russian nobles always had in Paris, four servants constantly to attend your equipage; one to carry the flambeau, another to open the door, and a couple to carry you into and out of your carriage. I beseech you to bear in mind perpetually, that you are to be as helpless as possible. A Frenchman of my acquaintance, who spent nine years in Russia, told me, that in his first setting out at Petersburg, he was put on his guard in this particular by a speech of his Russian valet-de-chambre:—"Sir, the Englishman you visited to-day cannot be worthy of your acquaintance; he cannot be a gentleman. Son valet me dit qu'il se déshabille seul!!!"

I suppose you take Josephine with you; she will be an inestimable treasure; and I shall make it my business to send you the first advices of Paris fashions, which her talents will not fail to comprehend and execute. My charming Olivia! you will be the model of taste and elegance! Do not suspect that dress is carrying me away from politics. I assure you I know what I am about, and am going straight to my object. The art of attending to trifles is the art of governing the world, as all historians know, who have gone to the bottom of affairs. Was not the face of Europe changed by a cup of tea thrown on Mrs. Masham's gown, as Voltaire, with penetrating genius, remarks? Women, without a doubt, understand the importance of trifles better than men do, and consequently always move in secret the slight springs of that vast machine, the civilized world. Is not your ambition roused, my Olivia? You must, however, lay aside a little of your romance, and not approach the political machine whilst you are intoxicated with love, else you will blunder infallibly, and do infinite and irreparable mischief to yourself and your friends.

Permit me to tell you, that you have been a little spoiled by sentimental novels, which are good only to talk of when one must show sensibility, but destructive as rules of action. By the false lights which these writers, who know nothing of the world, have thrown upon objects, you have been deluded; you have been led to mistake the means for the end. Love has been with you the sole end of love; whereas it ought to be the beginning of power. No matter for the past: the future is yours: at our age this future must be dexterously managed. A woman of spirit, and, what is better, of sense, must always take care that in her heart, the age of love is not prolonged beyond the age of being beloved. In these times a woman has no choice at a certain period but politics, or bel esprit; for devotion, which used to be a

resource, is no longer in fashion. We must all take a part, my dear; I assure you I have taken mine decidedly, and I predict that you will take yours with brilliant success. How often must one cry in the ears of lovers—Love must die! must die! must die! But you, my dear Olivia, will not be deaf to the warning voice of common sense. Your own experience has on former occasions convinced you, that passion cannot be eternal; and at present, if I mistake not, there is in your love a certain mixture of other feelings, a certain alloy, which will make it happily ductile and manageable. When your triumph over the wife is complete, passion for the husband will insensibly decay; and this will be fortunate for you, because assuredly your ambassador would not choose to remain all the rest of his days in love and in exile at Petersburg. All these English are afflicted with the maladie du pays; and, as you observe so well, the words home and wife have ridiculous but unconquerable power over their minds. What will become of you, my friend, when this Mr. L—— chooses to return to England to his castle, &c.? You could not accompany him. You must provide in time against this catastrophe, or you will be a deserted, disgraced, undone woman, my dear friend.

No one should begin to act a romance who has not well considered the dénouement. It is a charming thing to mount with a friend in a balloon, amid crowds of spectators, who admire the fine spectacle, and applaud the courage of the aërostats: the losing sight of this earth, and the being in or above the clouds, must also be delightful: but the moment will come when the travellers descend, and then begins the danger; then they differ about throwing out the ballast, the balloon is rent in the quarrel, it sinks with frightful rapidity, and they run the hazard, like the poor Marquis D'Arlande, of being spitted upon the spire of the Invalides, or of being entangled among woods and briers—at last, alighting upon the earth, our adventurers, fatigued and bruised and disappointed, come out of their shattered triumphal car, exposed to the derision of the changeable multitude.

Every thing in this world is judged of by success. Your voyage to Petersburg, my dear Olivia, must not be a mere adventure of romance; as a party of pleasure it would be ridiculous; we must make something more of it. Enclosed is a letter to a Russian nobleman, an old lover of mine, who, I understand, is in favour. He will certainly be at your command. He is a man possessed by the desire of having reputation among foreigners, vain of the preference of our sex, generous even to prodigality. By his means you will

be immediately placed on an easy footing with all the leading persons of the Russian court. You will go on from one step to another, till you are at the height which I have in view. Now for my grand object.—No, not now—for I have forty little notes about nothings to write this morning. Great things hang upon these nothings, so they should not be neglected. I must leave you, my amiable Olivia, and defer my grand object till to-morrow.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXIII

LEONORA TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

DEAR MOTHER,

This moment I have received a letter from Mr. L——. He has accepted of an embassy to Petersburg. I cannot guess by the few lines he has written, whether or not he wishes that I should accompany him. Most ardently I wish it; but if my offer should be refused, or if it should be accepted only because it could not be well refused; if I should be a burthen, a restraint upon him, I should wish myself dead.

Perhaps he accepts of this embassy on purpose that he may leave me and take another person with him: or perhaps, dearest mother (I hardly dare to hope it)—perhaps he wishes to break off that connexion, and goes to Russia to leave temptation behind him. I know that this embassy was offered to him some weeks ago, and he had then no thoughts of accepting it.—Oh that I could see into his heart—that heart which used to be always open to me! If I could discover what his wishes are, I should know what mine ought to be. I have thoughts of going to town immediately to see him; at least I may take leave of him. Do you approve of it? Write the moment you receive this; but

I need not say that, for I am sure you will do so. Dearest mother, you have prophesied that his heart will return to me, and on this hope I live.

Your ever affectionate daughter,

LEONORA L——.

LETTER LXIV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO LEONORA.

Yes, my dear, I advise you by all means to go to town, and to see your husband. Your desire to accompany him to Russia he will know before you see him, for I have just written and despatched an express to him with your last letter, and with all those which I have received from you within these last six months. Leave Mr. L—— time to read them before he sees you; and do not hurry or fatigue yourself unnecessarily. You know that an embassy cannot be arranged in two days; therefore travel by easy journeys: you cannot do otherwise without hazard. Your courage in offering to undertake this long voyage with your husband is worthy of you, my beloved daughter. God bless and preserve you! If you go to Petersburg, let me know in time, that I may see you before you leave England. I will be at any moment at any place you appoint.

Your affectionate mother, ——.

LETTER LXV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO MR. L——.

Perhaps this letter may find you at the feet of your mistress. Spare me, sir, a few moments from your pleasures. You may perhaps expect reproaches from the mother of your wife; but let me assure you, that you have none to apprehend. For my daughter's sake, if not for yours, I would forbear. Never was departing love recalled by the voice of reproach; you shall not hear it from me, you have not heard it from Leonora. But mistake not the cause of her forbearance; let it not be attributed to pusillanimity of temper, or insensibility of heart.

Enclosed I send you all the letters which my daughter has written to me from the first day of her acquaintance with Lady Olivia to this hour. From these you will be enabled to judge of what she has felt for some months past, and of the actual state of her heart; you will see all the tenderness and all the strength of her soul.

It has ever been my fixed opinion, that a wife who loves her husband, and who has possessed his affections, may reclaim them from the lure of the most artful of her sex, by persevering kindness, temper, and good sense, unless indeed her husband be a fool or a libertine. I have prophesied that my daughter will regain your heart; and upon this prophecy, to use her own expression, she lives. And even now, when its accomplishment is far removed, I am so steady in my opinion of her and of you; so convinced of the uniform result of certain conduct upon the human mind, that undismayed I repeat my prophecy.

Were you to remain in this kingdom, I should leave things to their natural course; I should not interfere so far even as to send you Leonora's letters: but as you may be separated for years, I think it necessary now to put into your hands incontrovertible proofs of what she is, and what she has been. Do not imagine that I am so weak as to expect that the perusal of these letters will work a sudden change: but it is fit that, before you leave England, you should know that Leonora is not a cold, sullen, or offended wife; but one who loves you most tenderly, most generously; who, concealing the agony of her heart, waits with resignation for the time when she will be your refuge, and the permanent blessing of your life. ——.

LETTER LXVI.

MADAME DE P—— TO OLIVIA.

Paris.

And now, my charming Olivia, raise your fine eyes as high as ambition can look, and you will perhaps discover my grand object. You do not see it yet. Look again.—Do you not see the Emperor of Russia? What would you think of him for a lover? If it were only for novelty's sake, it would really be pleasant to have a Czar at one's feet. Reign in his heart, and you in fact seat yourself invisibly on the throne of all the Russias: thence what a commanding prospect you have of the affairs of Europe! and how we should govern the world at our ease! The project is bold, but not impracticable. The ancients represent Cupid riding the Numidian lion; and why should he not tame the Russian bear? It would make a pretty design for a vignette. I can engrave as well as La Pompadour could at least, and anticipating your victory, my charming Olivia, I will engrave Cupid leading the bear in a chain of flowers. This shall be my seal. Mon cachet de faveur.

Courage, my fair politician! You have a difficult task; but the glory is in proportion to the labour; and those who value power properly, are paid by its acquisition, for all possible fatigue and hardships. With your knowledge of our modes, you will be at Petersburg the arbitress of delights. You have a charming taste and invention for fêtes and spectacles. Teach these people to vary their pleasures. Their monarch must adore you, if you banish from his presence that most dreadful enemy of kings, and most obstinate resident of courts, *ennui*. Trust, my Olivia, neither to your wit, nor your beauty, nor your accomplishments, but employ your "various arts of trifling prettily," and, take my word for it, you will succeed.

As I may not have an opportunity of sending you another private letter, and as lemon-juice, goulard, and all those sympathetic inks, are subject to unlucky accidents, I must send you all my secret instructions by the present safe conveyance.

You must absolutely sacrifice, my dear child, all your romantic notions, and all your taste for love, to the grand object. The Czar must not have the slightest cause for jealousy. These Czars make nothing, you know, of cutting off their mistresses' pretty heads upon the bare suspicion of an intrigue. But you must do what is still more difficult than to be constant, you must yield your will, and, what is more, you must never let this Czar guess that his will is not always your pleasure. Your humour, your tastes, your wishes, must be incessantly and with alacrity sacrificed to his. You must submit to the constraint of eternal court ceremony, and court dissimulation. You must bear to be surrounded with masks, instead of the human face divine; and instead of fellow-creatures, you must content yourself with puppets. You will have the amusement of pulling the wires: but remember that you must wear a mask perpetually as well as others, and never attempt to speak, and never expect to hear the language of truth or of the heart. You must not be the dupe of attachment in those who call themselves friends, or zealous and affectionate servants, &c. &c. You must have sufficient strength of character to bear continually in mind that all these professions are mere words, that all these people are alike false, and actuated but by one motive, self-interest. To secure yourself from secret and open enemies, you must farther have sufficient courage to live without a friend or a confidante, for such persons at court are only spies, traitors in the worst forms. All this is melancholy and provoking, to be sure; but all this you must see without feeling, or at least without showing a spark of indignation. A sentimental misanthropist, male or female, is quite out of place at court. You must see all that is odious and despicable in human nature in a comic point of view; and you must consider your fellow-creatures as objects to be laughed at, not to be hated. Laughter, besides being good for the health, and consequently for the complexion, always implies superiority. Without this gratification to our vanity, there would be no possibility of enduring that eternal penance of hypocrisy, and that solitary state of suspicion, to which the ambitious condemn themselves. I fear, my romantic Olivia, that you, who are a person used to yield to first impressions, and not quite accustomed to subdue your passions to your interest, will think that politics require too much from you, almost as much as constancy or religion. But consider the difference! for Heaven's sake, my dear, consider the greatness of our object! Would to God that I had the eloquence of Bossuet! and I would make you a convert from love and a

proselyte to glory. Dare, my Olivia, to be a martyr to ambition!—See! already high in air she holds a crown over your head—it is almost within your grasp—stretch out your white arm and seize it—fear not the thorns!—every crown has thorns—but who upon that account ever yet refused one? My dear empress, I have the honour to kiss your powerful hands.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXVII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You need not hurry yourself to come to town on my account, for by this change of ministry my embassy will be delayed some weeks.

A few days ago this delay would have been a terrible disappointment to me; yet now I feel it a respite. A respite! you will exclaim. Yes, my dear friend—so it is. Such is the heart of man!—so changeable, so contradictory, so much at variance with itself from day to day, from hour to hour. I believe, from what I now feel, that every man under the dominion of passion is reduced to a most absurd and miserable condition.—I have just been reading some letters from Leonora, which have wrung my heart; letters addressed to her mother, laying open every feeling of her mind for some months. My dear friend, what injustice have I done to this admirable woman! With what tenderness, with what delicacy has she loved me! while I, mistaking modesty for coldness, fortitude for indifference, have neglected, injured, and abandoned her! With what sweetness of temper, with what persevering goodness has she borne with me, while, intoxicated with passion, I saw every thing in a false point of view! How often have I

satisfied myself with the persuasion, that she scarcely observed my attachment to Olivia, or beheld it unconcerned, secure by the absence of love from the pangs of jealousy! How often have I accused her of insensibility, whilst her heart was in tortures! Olivia was deceived also, and confirmed me in this cruel error. And all that time Leonora was defending her rival, and pleading her cause! With what generosity, with what magnanimity she speaks of Olivia in those letters! Her confidence was unbounded, her soul above suspicion; to the very last she doubted and blamed herself—dear, amiable woman! blamed herself for our faults, for feeling that jealousy, which no wife who loved as she did could possibly subdue. She never betrayed it by a single word or look of reproach. Even though she fainted at that cursed fête champêtre, yet the moment she came to her senses, she managed so, that none of the spectators could suspect she thought Olivia was her rival. My dear general, you will forgive me—as long as I praise Leonora you will understand me. At last you will acknowledge that I do justice to the merits of my wife. Justice! no—I am unworthy of her. I have no heart like hers to offer in return for such love. She wishes to go with me to Petersburg; she has forborne to make this offer directly to me; but I know it from her last letter to her mother, which now lies before me. How can I refuse?—and how can I accept? My soul is torn with violence different ways. How can I leave Leonora! and how can I tear myself from Olivia!—even if her charms had no power over my heart, how could I with honour desert the woman who has sacrificed every thing for me! I will not shield myself from you, my friend, behind the word honour. See me as you have always seen me, without disguise, and now without defence. I respect, I love Leonora—but, alas! I am in love with Olivia!

Yours ever,

F. L——.

LETTER LXVIII.

MR. L—— TO OLIVIA.

Triumphant as you are over my heart, dear enchanting Olivia! you cannot make me false. I cannot, even to appease your anger, deny this morning what I said last night. It is inconsistent with all your professions, with your character, with your generous disposition, to desire me to "*abjure Leonora for ever!*" it would be to render myself for ever unworthy of Olivia. I am convinced that had you read the letters of which I spoke, you would have been touched, you would have been struck by them as I was: instead of being hurt and displeased by the impression that they made upon me, you would have sympathized in my feelings, you would have been indignant if I had not admired, you would have detested and despised me if I could have been insensible to "*so much goodness and generosity*." I repeat my words: I will not "*retract*," I cannot "*repent of them*." My dear Olivia! when you reflect upon what is past, I am persuaded you will acknowledge that your sensibility made you unjust. Indeed, my love, you did not show your usual candour; I had just read all that Leonora had written of you, all that she had urged against her mother in your defence; even when she had most cause to be irritated against us, I could not avoid being shocked by the different manner in which you spoke of her. Perhaps I told you so too abruptly: if I had loved you less, I should have been more cautious and more calm—if I had esteemed you less, calmer still. I could then, possibly, have borne to hear you speak in a manner unbecoming yourself. Forgive me the pain I gave you—the pain I now give you, my dearest Olivia! My sincerity is the best security you can have for my future love. Banish therefore this unjust, this causeless jealousy: moderate this excessive sensibility for both our sakes, and depend upon the power you have over my heart. You cannot conceive how much I have felt from this misunderstanding—the first we have ever had. Let it be the last. I have spent a sleepless night. I am detained in town by provoking, tiresome, but necessary business. Meet me in the evening with smiles, my Olivia: let me behold in those fascinating eyes their wonted expression, and hear from your voice its usual, its natural tone of tenderness and love.

Ever devotedly yours,

F. L——.

LETTER LXIX.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

You have spoken daggers to me! Come not to Richmond this evening! I cannot—will not see you! Not for the universe would I see you with my present feelings!

Write to me more letters like that which I have just received. Dip your pen in gall; find words more bitter than those which you have already used. Accuse me of want of candour, want of generosity, want of every amiable, every estimable quality. Upbraid me with the loss of all of which you have bereft me. Recollect every sacrifice that I have made, and, if you can, imagine every sacrifice that I would still make for you—peace of mind, friends, country, fortune, fame, virtue; name them all, and triumph—and disdain your triumph! Remind me how low I am fallen—sink me lower still—insult, debase, humble me to the dust. Exalt my rival, unroll to my aching eyes the emblazoned catalogue of her merits, her claims to your esteem, your affection; number them over, dwell upon those that I have forfeited, those which can never be regained; tell me that such merits are above all price; assure me that beyond all her sex you respect, you admire, you love your wife; say it with enthusiasm, with fire in your eyes, with all the energy of passion in your voice; then bid me sympathize in your feelings—bid me banish jealousy—wonder at my alarm—call my sorrow anger—conjure me to restrain my sensibility! Restrain my sensibility! Unhappy Olivia! he is tired of your love. Let him then at once tell me the dreadful truth, and I will bear it. Any evil is better than uncertainty, than lingering hope. Drive all hope from my mind. Bid me despair and die—but do not stretch me on the rack of jealousy!—Yet if such be your cruel pleasure, enjoy it.—Determine how much I can endure and live. Stop just at the point where human nature sinks, that you may not lose your victim, that she may linger on from day to day, your sport and your derision.

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXX.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

My Dear General,

You will rejoice to hear that Olivia and I have been in a state of warfare for some days past, and you will be still more pleased when you learn the cause of our quarrel. On the day that I had been reading Leonora's letters I was rather later at Richmond than usual. Olivia, offended, insisted upon knowing by what I could possibly have been detained. Her anger knew no bounds when she heard the truth. She made use of some expressions, in speaking of my wife, which I could not, I hope, have borne at any time, but which shocked me beyond measure at that moment. I defended Leonora with warmth. Olivia, in a scornful tone, talked of my wife's coldness of disposition, and bid me compare Lady Leonora's love with hers. It was a comparison I had it more in my power to make than Olivia was aware of; it was the most disadvantageous moment for her in which that comparison could be made. She saw or suspected my feelings, and perceived that all she had said of my Leonora's *incapability of loving* produced an effect directly contrary to her expectations. Transported by jealousy, she then threw out hints respecting the Prince. I spoke as I felt, indignantly. I know not precisely what I said, but Olivia and I parted in anger. I have since received a passionately fond note from her. But I feel unhappy. Dear general, when will you come to town?

Yours truly,

F. L——

LETTER LXXI.

MRS. C—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Your grace's cautions and entreaties to Lady Leonora not to over-exert and fatigue herself were, alas! as ineffectual as mine. From the time she heard that Mr. L—— had accepted this embassy to Petersburg, she was so eager to set out on her journey to town, and so impatient to see him, that neither her mind nor her body had one moment's tranquillity. She waited with indescribable anxiety for your grace's answer to her letter; and the instant she was secure of your approbation, her carriage was ordered to the door. I saw that she was ill; but she would not listen to my fears; she repeated with triumph, that her mother made no objection to her journey, and that she had no apprehensions for herself. However, she was obliged at last to yield. The carriage was actually at the door, when she was forced to submit to be carried to her bed. For several hours she was in such danger, that I never expected she could live till this day. Thank God! she is now safe. Her infant, to her great delight, is a boy: she was extremely anxious to have a son, because Mr. L—— formerly wished for one so much. She forbids me to write to Mr. L——, lest I should communicate the account of her *sudden illness* too abruptly.

She particularly requests that your grace will mention to him this *accident* in the least alarming manner possible. I shall write again next post. Lady Leonora has now fallen asleep, and seems to sleep quietly. Who should sleep in peace if she cannot? I never saw her equal,

My dear madam,

I am,

With respect and attachment,

Your grace’s

Sincerely affectionate,

HELEN C——.

It is with extreme concern I am forced to add, that since I wrote this letter the child has been so ill that I have fears for his life.—His poor mother!

LETTER LXXII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

All is upon velvet again. Poor Olivia was excessively hurt by my letter: she was ill for two days—seriously ill. Yesterday I at length obtained admittance. Olivia was all softness, all candour: she acknowledged that she had been wrong, and in so sweet a voice! She blamed herself till I could no longer think her blamable. She seemed so much humbled and depressed, such a tender melancholy appeared in her bewitching eyes, that I could not resist the fascination. I certainly gave her some cause for displeasure that unfortunate evening; for as Olivia has strong passions and exquisite sensibility, I should not have been so abrupt. A fit of jealousy may seize the best and most generous mind, and may prompt to what it would be incapable of saying or thinking in dispassionate moments. I am sure that Olivia has, upon reflection, felt more pain from this affair than I have. My Russian embassy is still in *abeyance*. Ministers seem to know their own minds as little as I know mine. Ambition has its quarrels and follies as well as love. At all events, I shall not leave England till next month; and I shall not go down to L—— Castle till I have received my last instructions from our court, and till the day for my sailing is fixed. The parting with Leonora

will be a dreadful difficulty. I cannot think of it steadily. But as she herself says, “is it not better that she should lose a year of my affections than a life?” The Duchess is mistaken in imagining it possible that any woman, let her influence be ever so great over my heart, could prejudice me against my amiable, my admirable wife. What has just passed between Olivia and me, convinces me that it is impossible. She has too much knowledge of my character to hazard in future a similar attempt. No, my dear friend, be assured I would not suffer it. I have not yet lost all title to your esteem or to my own. This enchantress may intoxicate me with her cup, but shall never degrade me; and I should feel myself less degraded even by losing the human form than by forfeiting that principle of honour and virtue, which more nobly distinguishes man from brute.

Yours most sincerely,

F. L——.

LETTER LXXIII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is well that I did not answer your letter of Saturday before I received that of Monday. My congratulations upon your quarrel with your fair one might have come just as you were kissing hands upon a reconciliation.

I have often found a great convenience in writing a bad hand; my letters are so little like what they are intended for, and have among them such equality of unintelligibility, that each seems either; and with the slightest alteration, each will stand and serve for the other. My *m*, *n*, and *u*, are convertible letters; so are the terms and propositions of your present mode

of reasoning, my dear L——, and I perceive that you find your account in it. Upon this I congratulate you; and I congratulate Lady Leonora upon your being detained some weeks longer in England. Those who have a just cause need never pray for victory; they need only ask the gods for time. Time always brings victory to truth, and shame to falsehood. But you are not worthy of such fine apophthegms. At present "you are not fit to hear yourself convinced." I will wait for a better opportunity, and have patience with you, if I can.

You seem to plume yourself mightily upon your resolve to do justice to the merits of your wife, and upon the courage you have shown in stuffing cotton into your ears to prevent your listening to the voice of the siren: but pray take the cotton out, and hear all she can say or sing. Lady Leonora cannot be hurt by any thing Olivia can say, but her own malice may destroy herself.

In the mean time, as you tell me that you are upon velvet again, I am to presume that you are perfectly at ease; and I should be obliged to you, if, as often as you can find leisure, you would send me bulletins of your happiness. I have never yet been in love with one of these high-flown heroines, and I am really curious to know what degree of felicity they can bestow upon a man of common sense. I should be glad to benefit by the experience of a friend.

Yours truly,

J.B.

LETTER LXXIV.

OLIVIA TO MADAME DE P——.

Richmond.

Accept my sincere thanks, inimitable Gabrielle! for having taken off my hands a lover, who really has half-wearied me to death. If you had dealt more frankly with me, I could, however, have saved you much superfluous trouble and artifice. I now perfectly comprehend the cause of poor R——‘s strange silence some months ago; he was then under the influence of your charms, and it was your pleasure to deceive me even when there was no necessity for dissimulation. You knew the secret of my growing attachment to L——, and must have foreseen that R—— would be burthensome to me. You needed therefore only to have treated me with candour, and you would have gained a lover without losing a friend: but Madame de P—— is too accomplished a politician to go the simple straight road to her object. I now perfectly comprehend why she took such pains to persuade me that an imperial lover was alone worthy of my charms. She was alarmed by an imaginary danger. Believe me, I am incapable of disputing with any one *les restes d’un coeur*.

Permit me to assure you, madam, that your incomparable talents for explanation will be utterly thrown away on me in future. I am in possession of the whole truth, from a person whose information I cannot doubt: I know the precise date of the commencement of your connexion with R——, so that you must perceive it will be impracticable to make me believe that you have not betrayed my easy confidence.

I cannot, however, without those pangs of sentiment which your heart will never experience, reflect upon the treachery, the perfidy of one who has been my bosom friend.—Return my letters, Gabrielle.—With this you will receive certain *souvenirs*, at which I could never henceforward look without sighing. I return you that ring I have so long worn with delight, the picture of that treacherous eye,{1} which you know so well how to use.—Adieu, Gabrielle.—The illusion is over.—How many of the illusions of my fond heart have been dispelled by time and treachery!

OLIVIA.

{Footnote 1: Certain ladies at this time carried pictures of the eyes of their favourites.}

LETTER LXXV.

MADAME DE P—— TO MONSIEUR R——.

Paris, —— 18, ——.

I have just received the most extravagant letter imaginable from your Olivia. Really you may congratulate yourself, my dear friend, upon having recovered your liberty. ‘Twere better to be a galley slave at once than to be bound to please a woman for life, who knows not what she would have either in love or friendship. Can you conceive anything so absurd as her upbraiding me with treachery, because I know the value of a heart, of which she tells me she was more than half tired? as if I were to blame for her falling in love with Mr. L——, and as if I did not know the whole progress of her inconstancy. Her letters to me give a new history of the birth and education of Love. Here we see Love born of Envy, nursed by *Ennui*, and dandled in turn by all the Vices.

And this Lady Olivia fancies that she is a perfect French woman! There is nothing we Parisians abhor and ridicule so much as these foreign, and always awkward, caricatures of our manners. With us there are many who, according to a delicate distinction, lose their virtue without losing their taste for virtue; but I flatter myself there are few who resemble Olivia entirely—who have neither the virtues of a man nor of a woman. One cannot even say that “her head is the dupe of her heart,” since she has no heart. But enough of such a tiresome and incomprehensible subject.

How I overvalued that head, when I thought it could ever be fit for politics! ‘Tis well we did not commit ourselves. You see how prudent I am, my dear R——, and how much those are mistaken who think that we women are not fit to be trusted with secrets of state. Love and politics make the best mixture in the world. Adieu. Victoire summons me to my toilette.

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXXVI.

MADAME DE P—— TO LADY OLIVIA.

Paris,—— 18, ——.

Really, my dear Olivia, this is too childish. What! make a complaint in form against me for taking a lover off your hands when you did not know what to do with him! Do you quarrel in England every time you change partners in a country dance? But I must be serious; for the high-sounding words *treachery* and *perfidy* are surely sufficient to make any body grave. Seriously, then, if you are resolved to be tragical, *et de me faire une scène*, I must submit—console myself, and, above all things, take care not to be ridiculous.

Your letters, as you desire it so earnestly, and with so much reason, shall be returned by the first safe conveyance; but excuse me if I forbear to restore your *souvenirs*. With us Parisians, this returning of keepsakes has been out of fashion, since the days of Molière and *Le dépit amoureux*.

Adieu, my charming Olivia! I embrace you tenderly, I was going to say; but I believe, according to your English etiquette, I must now conclude with

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

GABRIELLE DE P——.

LETTER LXXVII.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Tuesday morning.

Come not to Richmond to-day; I am not in spirits to see you, my dearest L——. Allow me to indulge my melancholy retired from every human eye.

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXXVIII.

FROM LADY OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Tuesday evening.

“Explain to you the cause of my melancholy “—Vain request!—cruel as vain! Your ignorance of the cause too well justifies my sad presentiments. Were our feelings in unison, as once they were, would not every chord of your heart vibrate responsively to mine?

With me, love is an absorbing vortex of the soul, into which all other thoughts, feelings, and ideas are irresistibly impelled; with you, it is but as the stranger stream that crosses the peaceful lake, and, as it flows, wakens only the surface of the slumbering waters, communicating to them but a temporary agitation. With you, my dear, but too tranquil-minded friend, love is but one amid the vulgar crowd of pleasures; it concentrates not your ideas, it entrances not your faculties; it is not, as in my heart, the supreme delight, which renders all others tasteless, the only blessing which can make

life supportable; the sole, sufficient object of existence. Alas! how cruelly different is the feeble attachment that I have inspired from that all-powerful sentiment to which I live a victim! Countless symptoms, by you unheeded, mark to my love-watchful eye the decline of passion. How often am I secretly shocked by the cold carelessness of your words and manner! How often does the sigh burst from my bosom, the tear fall from my eye, when you have left me at leisure to recall, by memory's torturing power, instances of your increasing indifference! Seek not to calm my too well-founded fears. Professions, with all their unmeaning, inanimate formality, but irritate my anguish. Permit me to indulge, to feed upon my grief in silence. Ask me no more to explain to you the cause of my melancholy. Too plainly, alas! I feel it is beyond my utmost power to endure it. Amiable Werter—divine St. Preux—you would sympathize in my feelings! Sublime Goethe—all-eloquent Rousseau—you alone could feel as I do, and you alone could paint my anguish.

The miserable

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXXIX.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

Expect no bulletin of happiness from me, my friend. I find it impossible to make Olivia happy. She has superior talents, accomplishments, beauty, grace, all that can attract and fascinate the human heart—that could triumph over every feeling, every principle that opposed her power: she lives with the man she loves, and yet she is miserable.

Rousseau, it has been said, never really loved any woman but his own Julie; I have lately been tempted to think that Olivia never really loved any

man but St. Preux. Werter, perhaps, and some other German heroes, might dispute her heart even with St. Preux; but as for me, I begin to be aware that I am loved only as a feeble resemblance of those divine originals (to whom, however, my character bears not the slightest similarity), and I am often indirectly, and sometimes directly, reproached with my inferiority to imaginary models. But how can a plain Englishman hope to reach

"The high sublime of deep absurd?"

I am continually reviled for not using a romantic language, which I have never learned; and which, as far as I can judge, is foreign to all natural feeling. I wish to make Olivia happy. There is nothing I would not do to satisfy her of my sincerity; but nothing I can do will suffice. She has a sort of morbid sensibility, which is more alive to pain than pleasure, more susceptible of jealousy than of love. No terms are sufficiently strong to convince her of my affection, but an unguarded word makes her miserable for hours. She requires to be agitated by violent emotions, though they exhaust her mind, and leave her spiritless and discontented. In this alternation of rapture and despair all her time passes. As she says of herself, she has no soul but for love: she seems to think it a crime against sentiment, to admit of relief from common occupations or indifferent subjects; with a sort of superstitious zeal, she excludes all thoughts but those which relate to one object, and in this spirit of amorous mysticism she actually makes a penance even of love. I am astonished that her heart can endure this variety of self-inflicted torments. What will become of Olivia when she ceases to love and be loved? And what passion can be durable which is so violent as hers, and to which no respite is allowed? No affection can sustain these hourly trials of suspicion and reproach.

Jealousy of Leonora has taken such possession of Olivia's imagination, that she misinterprets all my words and actions. By restraining my thoughts, by throwing obstacles in the way of my affection for my wife, she stimulates and increases it: she forces upon me continually those comparisons which she dreads. Till I knew Olivia more intimately than the common forms of a first acquaintance, or the illusions of a treacherous passion permitted, her defects did not appear; but now that I suffer, and that

I see her suffer daily, I deplore them bitterly. Her happiness rests and weighs heavily on my honour. I feel myself bound to consider and to provide for the happiness of the woman who has sacrificed to me all independent means of felicity. A man without honour or humanity may perhaps finish an intrigue as easily as he can begin it, but this is not exactly the case of your imprudent friend,

F. L——.

LETTER LXXX.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Wednesday.

AY, ay! just as I thought it would be. This is all the comfort, my dear friend, that I can give you; all the comfort that wise people usually afford their friends in distress. Provided things happen just as they predicted, they care but little what is suffered in the accomplishment of their prophecies. But seriously, my dear L——, I am not sorry that you are in a course of vexation. The more you see of your charmer the better. She will allay your intoxication by gentle degrees, and send you sober home. Pray keep in the course you have begun, and preserve your patience as long as possible. I should be sorry that you and Olivia quarrelled violently, and parted in a passion: such quarrels of lovers are proverbially the renewal of love.

“Il faut délier l’amitie, il faut couper l’amour.”

In some cases this maxim may be just, but not in the present instance. I would rather wait till the knot is untied than cut it; for when once you see

the art with which it was woven, a similar knot can never again perplex you.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LXXXI.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond, Saturday.

You presume too much upon your power over my heart, and upon the softness of my nature. Know that I have spirit as well as tenderness—a spirit that will neither be injured nor insulted with impunity. You were amazed, you say, by the violence which I showed yesterday. Why did you provoke that violence by opposing the warmest wish of my heart, and with a calmness that excited my tenfold indignation? Imagine not that I am a tame, subjugated female, to be treated with neglect if I remonstrate, and caressed as the price of obedience. Fancy not that I am one of your chimney-corner, household goddesses, doomed to the dull uniformity of domestic worship, destined to to be adored, to be hung with garlands, or undeified or degraded with indignity! I have been accustomed to a different species of worship; and the fondness of my weak heart has not yet sunk me so low, and rendered me so abject, that I cannot assert my rights. You tell me that you are unconscious of giving me any just cause of offence. Just cause!—How I hate the cold accuracy of your words! This single expression is sufficient offence to a heart like mine. You entreat me to be reasonable. Reasonable!—did ever man talk of reason to a woman he loved? When once a man has recourse to reason and precision, there is an end of love. No just cause of offence!—What, have I no cause to be

indignant, when I find you thus trifle with my feelings, postpone from week to week, and month to month, our departure from this hateful country—

"Bid me hope on from day to day,
And wish and wish my soul away!"

Yes, you know it to be the most ardent wish of my soul to leave England; you know that I cannot enjoy a moment's peace of mind whilst I am here; yet in this racking suspense it is your pleasure to detain me. No, it shall not be—this shall not go on! It is in vain you tell me that the delay originates not with you, that you must wait for instructions, and I know not what—paltry diplomatic excuses!

OLIVIA.

LETTER LXXXII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

Richmond.

Amuse yourself, my good general, at my expense; I know that you are seriously interested for my happiness; but the way is not quite so clear before me as you imagine. It is extremely easy to be philosophic for our friends; but difficult to be so for ourselves when our passions are concerned. Indeed, this would be a contradiction in terms; you might as well talk of a cold sun, or of hot ice, as of a philosopher falling in love, or of a man in love being a philosopher. You say that Olivia will wear out my passion, and that her defects will undo the work of her charms. I acknowledge that she sometimes ravels the web she has woven; but she is

miraculously expeditious and skilful in repairing the mischief: the magical tissue again appears firm as ever, glowing with brighter colours, and exhibiting finer forms.

In plain prose, my dear friend—for as you ate not in love, you will find it difficult to follow my poetic nights—in plain prose, I must confess that Olivia has the power to charm and touch my heart, even after she has provoked me to the utmost verge of human patience. She knows her power, and I am afraid this tempts her to abuse it. Her temper, which formerly appeared to me all feminine gentleness, is now irritable and violent; but I am persuaded that this is not her natural disposition; it is the effect of her present unhappy state of mind. Tortured by remorse and jealousy, if in the height of their paroxysms, Olivia make me suffer from their fury, is it for me to complain? I, who caused, should at least endure the evil.

Every thing is arranged for my embassy, and the day is fixed for our leaving England. I go down to L—— Castle next week.

Your faithful

F. L——.

LETTER LXXXIII.

JOSEPHINE TO VICTOIRE, MAD. DE P——‘s WOMAN.

Richmond.

I am in despair, dear Victoire; and unless your genius can assist me, absolutely undone! Here is this romantic lady of mine determined upon a journey to Russia with her new English lover. What whims ladies take into their heads, and how impossible it is to make them understand reason! I have been labouring in vain to convince my Lady Olivia that this is the most absurd scheme imaginable: and I have repeated to her all I learnt from Lady F——‘s women, who are just returned from Petersburg, and whom I

met at a party last night, all declaring they would rather die a thousand deaths, than go through again what they have endured. Such seas of ice! such going in sledges! such barbarians! such beds! and scarcely a looking-glass! And nothing fit to wear but what one carries with one, and God knows how long we may stay. At Petersburg the coachmen's ears are frozen off every night on their boxes waiting for their ladies. And there are bears and wild beasts, I am told, howling with their mouths wide open night and day in the forests which we are to pass through; and even in the towns, the men, I hear, are little better; for it is the law of the country for the men to beat their wives, and many wear long beards. How horrid!—My Lady F ——'s woman, who is a Parisian born, and very pretty, if her eyes were not so small, and better dressed than her lady always, except diamonds, assures me, upon her honour, she never had a civil thing said to her whilst she was in Russia, except by one or two Frenchmen in the suite of the ambassadors.

These Russians think of nothing but drinking brandy, and they put pepper into it! Mon Dieu, what savages! Put pepper into brandy! But that is inconceivable! Positively, I will never go to Petersburg. And yet if my lady goes, what will become of me? for you know my sentiments for Brunel, and he is decided to accompany my lady, so I cannot stay behind.

But absolutely I am shocked at this intrigue with Mr. L——, and my conscience reproaches me terribly with being a party concerned in it; for in this country an affair of gallantry between married people is not so light a thing as with us. Here wives sometimes love their husbands seriously, as if they were their lovers; and my Lady Leonora L—— is one of this sort of wives. She is very unhappy, I am told. One day at L——Castle, I assure you my heart quite bled for her, when she gave me a beautiful gown of English muslin, little suspecting me then to be her enemy. She is certainly very unsuspicious, and very amiable, and I wish to Heaven her husband would think as I do, and take her with him to Petersburg, instead of carrying off my Lady Olivia and me! Adieu, mon chou! Embrace every body I know, tenderly, for me.

Josephine.

LETTER LXXXIV.

MRS. C—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I believe, when I wrote last to your grace, I said that I had no hopes of the child's life. From the moment of his birth there was but little probability of his being any thing but a source of misery to his mother. I cannot, on her account, regret that the struggle is over. He expired this morning. My poor friend had hopes to the last, though I had none; and it was most painful and alarming to see the feverish anxiety with which she watched over her little boy, frequently repeating, "Mr. L—— used to wish so much for a son.—I hope the boy will live to see his father."

Last night, partly by persuasion, partly by compulsion, I prevailed with her to let the child be taken out of her room. This morning, as soon as it was light, I heard her bell ring; the poor little thing was at that moment in convulsions; and knowing that Lady Leonora rang to inquire for it, I went to prepare her mind for what I knew must be the event. The moment I came into the room she looked eagerly in my face, but did not ask me any questions about the child. I sat down by the side of her bed; but without listening to what I said about her own health, she rang her bell again more violently than before. Susan came in. "Susan!—without my child!"—said she, starting up. Susan hesitated, but I saw by her countenance that it was all over—so did Lady Leonora. She said not a word, but drawing her curtain suddenly, she lay down, and never spoke or stirred for three hours. The first words she said afterwards were to me:

"You need not move so softly, my dear Helen; I am not asleep. Have you my mother's last letter? I think my mother says that she will be here to-morrow? She is very kind to come to me. Will you be so good as to write to her immediately, and send a servant with your letter as soon as you can to meet her on the road, that she may not be *surprised* when she arrives?"

Lady Leonora is now more composed and more like herself than she has been for some time past. I rejoice that your Grace will so soon be here, because you will be her best possible consolation; and I do not know any other person in the world who could have sufficient influence to prevent her from attempting to set out upon a journey before she can travel with safety. To do her justice, she has not hinted that such were her intentions; but still I know her mind so well, that I am certain what her thoughts are, and what her actions would be. Most ladies talk more than they act, but Leonora acts more decidedly than she talks.

Believe, me, dear madam,

With much respect,

Your Grace's

Sincerely affectionate

HELEN C——.

LETTER LXXXV.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

I thank you, my excellent friend, for the kindness of your last letter {1}, which came to me at the time I wanted it most. In the whole course of my life, I never felt so much self-reproach, as I have done since I heard of the illness of Leonora and the loss of my son. From this blow my mind will not easily recover. Of all torments self-reproach is the worst. And even now I cannot follow the dictates of my own heart, and of my better judgment.

In Olivia's company I am compelled to repress my feelings; she cannot sympathize in them; they offend her: she is dissatisfied even with my silence, and complains of my being out of spirits. Out of spirits!—How can I be otherwise at present? Has Olivia no touch of pity for a woman who was

once her friend, who always treated her with generous kindness? But perhaps I am a little unreasonable, and expect too much from female nature.

At all events, I wish that Olivia would spare me at this moment her sentimental metaphysics. She is for ever attempting to prove to me that I cannot love so well as she can. I admit that I cannot talk of love so finely. I hope all this will not go on when we arrive at Petersburg.

The ministry at last know their own minds. I saw —— to-day, and every thing will be quickly arranged; therefore, my dear friend, do not delay coming to town, to

Your obliged

F. L——.

{Footnote 1: This letter does not appear.}

LETTER LXXXVI.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

Perhaps you are a *little* unreasonable! Indeed, my dear friend, I do not think you a *little* unreasonable, but very nearly stark mad. What! quarrel with your mistress because she is not sorry that your wife is ill, and because she cannot sympathize in your grief for the loss of your son! Where, except perhaps in absurd novels, did you ever meet with these paragons of mistresses, who were so magnanimous and so generous as to sacrifice their own reputations, and then be satisfied to share the only possible good remaining to them in life, the heart of their lover, with a rival more estimable, more amiable than themselves, and who has the advantage of being a wife? This sharing of hearts, this union of souls, with this opposition of interests—this metaphysical gallantry is absolute nonsense, and all who try it in real life will find it so to their cost. Why should you,

my dear L——, expect such superlative excellence from your Olivia? Do you think that a woman by losing one virtue increases the strength of those that remain, as it is said that the loss of one of our senses renders all the others more acute? Do you think that a lady, by yielding to love, and by proving that she has not sufficient resolution or forbearance to preserve the honour of her sex, gives the best possible demonstration of her having sufficient strength of character to rise superior to all the other weaknesses incident to human, and more especially to female nature—envy and jealousy for instance?

No, no, my good friend, you have common sense, though you lately have been sparing of it in action. You had a wife, and a good wife, and you had some chance of being happy; but with a wife and a mistress, granting them to be both the best of their kind, the probabilities are rather against you. I speak only as a man of the world: morality, you know, is now merely an affair of calculation. According to the most approved tables of happiness, you have made a bad bargain. But be just, at any rate, and do not blame your Olivia for the inconveniences and evils inseparable from the species of connexion that you have been pleased to form. Do you expect the whole course of society and the nature of the human heart to change for your special accommodation? Do you believe in truth by wholesale, and yet in detail expect a happy exception in your own favour?—Seriously, my dear friend, you must either break off this connexion, or bear it. I shall see you in a few days.

Yours truly,

J. B.

LETTER LXXXVII.

MRS C—— TO MISS B——

L—— Castle.

Leonora has recovered her strength surprisingly. She was so determined to be well, that her body dared not contradict her mind. Her excellent mother has been of the greatest possible service to us, for she has had sufficient influence to prevent her daughter from exerting herself too much. Her Grace had a letter from Mr. L—— to-day—very short, but very kind—at least all that I heard read of it. He has set my heart somewhat more at ease by the comfortable assurance, that he will not leave England without seeing Lady Leonora. I have the greatest hopes from this interview! I have not felt so happy for many months—but I will not be too sanguine. Mr. L—— talks of being here the latter end of this month. The duchess, with her usual prudence, intends to leave her daughter before that time, lest Mr. L——should be constrained by her presence, or should imagine that Leonora acts from any impulse but that of her own heart. I also, though much against my inclination, shall decamp; for he might perhaps consider me as an adviser, caballer, confidante, or at least a troublesome spectator. All reconciliation scenes should be without spectators. Men do not like to be seen on their knees: they are at a loss, like Sir Walter Raleigh in "The Critic;" they cannot get off gracefully. I am, dear Margaret,

Yours affectionately,

HELEN C——.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

GENERAL B—— TO MR. L——.

MY DEAR L——, Friday.

Ask yourself, in the name of common sense, why you should go to Petersburg with this sentimental coquette, this romantic termagant, of

whom I see you are already more than half tired. As to your being bound to her in honour, I cannot see how. Why should you make honour, justice, humanity, and gratitude, plead so finely all on one side, and that the wrong side of the question? Have none of these one word to whisper in favour of any body in this world but of a worthless mistress, who makes you miserable? I think you have learned from your heroine to be so expert in sentimental logic, that you can change virtues into vices, and vices into virtues, till at last you do not know them asunder. Else why should you make it a point of conscience to abandon your wife—just at the moment, too, when you are thoroughly convinced of her love for you, when you are touched to the soul by her generous conduct, and when your heart longs to return to her?

Please to remember that this Lady Olivia's reputation was not unimpeached before her acquaintance with you, and do not take more glory or more blame to yourself than properly falls to your share. Do not forget that *poor* R—— was your predecessor, and do not let this delicate lady rest all the weight of her shame upon you, as certain Chinese culprits rest their portable pillories on the shoulders of their friends.

In two days I shall follow this letter, and repeat in person all the interrogatories I have just put to you, my dear friend. Prepare yourself to answer me sincerely such questions as I shall ask.

Yours truly,

J.B.

LETTER LXXXIX.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Monday, 12 o'clock.

For a few days did you say? To *bid adieu*? Oh! if once more you return to that fatal castle, that enchanted home, Olivia for ever loses all power over your heart. Bid her die, stab her to the heart, and she will call it mercy, and she will bless you with her dying lips; but talk not of leaving your Olivia! On her knees she writes this, her face all bathed in tears. And must she in her turn implore and supplicate? Must she abase herself even to the dust? Yes—love like hers vanquishes even the stubborn potency of female pride.

Your too fond

OLIVIA.

LETTER XC.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

{Dated a few hours after the preceding.}

Monday, half-past three.

Oh! this equivocating answer to my fond heart! Passion makes and admits of no compromise. Be mine, and wholly mine—or never, never will I survive your desertion! I can be happy only whilst I love; I can love only whilst I am beloved with fervency equal to my own; and when I cease to love, I cease to exist! No coward fears restrain my soul. The word suicide shocks not my ear, appals not my understanding. Death I consider but as the eternal rest of the wretched—the sweet, the sole refuge of despair.

Your resolute

OLIVIA.

LETTER XCI.

FROM OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Tuesday.

Return! return! on the wings of love return to the calm, the prudent, the happy, the transcendently happy Leonora! Return—but not to bid her adieu—return to be hers for ever, and only hers. I give you back your faith—I *give* you back your promises—you have *taken* back your heart.

But if you should desire once more to see Olivia, if you should have any lingering wish to bid her a last adieu, it must be this evening. To-morrow's sun rises not for Olivia. For her but a few short hours remain. Love, let them be all thy own! Intoxicate thy victim, mingle pleasure in the cup of death, and bid her fearless quaff it to the dregs!—

LETTER XCII.

MR. L—— TO GENERAL B——.

Thursday.

My Dear Friend,

You have by argument and raillery, and by every means that kindness and goodness could devise, endeavoured to expel from my mind a passion which you justly foresaw would be destructive of my happiness, and of the peace of a most estimable and amiable woman. With all the skill that a thorough knowledge of human nature in general, and of my peculiar character and foibles, could bestow, you have employed those

—“Words and spells which can control,
Between the fits, the fever of the soul.”

Circumstances have operated in conjunction with your skill to “medicine me to repose.” The fits have gradually become weaker and weaker, the fever is now gone, but I am still to suffer for the extravagances committed during its delirium. I have entered into engagements which must be fulfilled; I have involved myself in difficulties from which I see no method of extricating myself honourably. Notwithstanding all the latitude which the system of modern gallantry allows to the conscience of our sex, and in spite of the convenient maxim, which maintains that all arts are allowable in love and war, I think that a man cannot break a promise, whether made in words or by tacit implication, on the faith of which a woman sacrifices her reputation and happiness. Lady Olivia has thrown herself upon my protection. I am as sensible as you can be, my dear general, that scandal had attacked her reputation before our acquaintance commenced; but though the world had suspicions, they had no proofs: now there can be no longer any defence made for her character, there is no possibility of her returning to that rank in society to which she was entitled by her birth, and which she adorned with all the brilliant charms of wit and beauty; no happiness, no chance of happiness remains for her but from my constancy. Of naturally violent passions, unused to the control of authority, habit, reason, or religion, and at this time impelled by love and jealousy, Olivia is on the brink of despair. I am not apt to believe that women die in modern times for love, nor am I easily disposed to think that I could inspire a dangerous degree of enthusiasm; yet I am persuaded that Olivia’s passion, compounded as it is of various sentiments besides love, has taken such possession of her imagination, and is, as she fancies, so necessary to her existence, that if I were to abandon her, she would destroy that life, which she has already attempted, I thank God! ineffectually. What a spectacle is a woman in a paroxysm of rage!—a woman we love, or whom we have loved!

Excuse me, my dear friend, if I wrote incoherently, for I have been interrupted many times since I began this letter. I am this day overwhelmed by a multiplicity of affairs, which, in consequence of Olivia's urgency to leave England immediately, must be settled with an expedition for which my head is not at present well qualified. I do not feel well: I can command my attention but on one subject, and on that all my thoughts are to no purpose. Whichever way I now act, I must endure and inflict misery. I must either part from a wife who has given me the most tender, the most touching proofs of affection—a wife who is all that a man can esteem, admire, and love; or I must abandon a mistress, who loves me with all the desperation of passion to which she would fall a sacrifice. But why do I talk as if I were still at liberty to make a choice?—My head is certainly very confused. I forgot that I am bound by a solemn promise, and this is the evil which distracts me. I will give you, if I can, a clear narrative.

Last night I had a terrible scene with Olivia. I foresaw that she would be alarmed by my intended visit to L—— Castle, even though it was but to take leave of my Leonora. I abstained from seeing Olivia to avoid altercation, and with all the delicacy in my power I wrote to her, assuring her that my resolution was fixed. Note after note came from her, with pathetic and passionate appeals to my heart; but I was still resolute. At length, the day before that on which I was to set out for L—— Castle, she wrote to warn me, that if I wished to take a last farewell, I must see her that evening: her note concluded with, "To-morrow's sun will not rise for Olivia." This threat, and many strange hints of her opinions concerning suicide, I at the time disregarded, as only thrown out to intimidate a lover. However, knowing the violence of Olivia's temper, I was punctual to the appointed hour, fully determined by my firmness to convince her that these female wiles were vain.

My dear friend, I would not advise the wisest man and the most courageous upon earth to risk such dangers, confident in his strength. Even a victory may cost him too dear.

I found Olivia reclining on a sofa, her beautiful tresses unbound, her dress the perfection of elegant negligence. I half suspected that it was studied negligence: yet I could not help pausing, as I entered, to

contemplate a figure. She never looked more beautiful—more fascinating. Holding out her hand to me, she said, with her languid smile, and tender expression of voice and manner, “You *are* come then to bid me farewell. I doubted whether... But I will not upbraid—mine be all the pain of this last adieu. During the few minutes we have to pass together,

“‘Between us two let there be peace.’”

I sat down beside her, rather agitated, I confess, but commanding myself so that my emotion could not be visible. In a composed tone I asked, why she spoke of a last adieu? and observed that we should meet again in a few days.

“Never!” replied Olivia. “Weak woman as I am, love inspires me with sufficient force to make and to keep this resolution.”

As she spoke, she took from her bosom a rose, and presenting it to me in a solemn manner, “Put this rose into water to-night,” continued she; “to-morrow it will be alive!”

Her look, her expressive eyes, seemed to say, this flower will be alive, but Olivia will be dead. I am ashamed to confess that I was silent, because I could not just then speak.

“I have used some precaution,” resumed Olivia, “to spare you, my dearest L——, unnecessary pain.—Look around you.”

The room, I now for the first time observed, was ornamented with flowers.

“This apartment, I hope,” continued she, “has not the air of the chamber of death. I have endeavoured to give it a festive appearance, that the remembrance of your last interview with your once loved Olivia may be at least unmixed with horror.”

At this instant, my dear general, a confused recollection of Rousseau’s Heloise, the dying scene, and her room ornamented with flowers, came into my imagination, and destroying the idea of reality, changed suddenly the whole course of my feelings.

In a tone of raillery I represented to Olivia her resemblance to Julie, and observed that it was a pity she had not a lover whose temper was more

similar than mine to that of the divine St. Preux. Stung to the heart by my ill-timed raillery, Olivia started up from the sofa, broke from my arms with sudden force, snatched from the table a penknife, and plunged it into her side.

She was about to repeat the blow, but I caught her arm—she struggled —"promise me, then," cried she, "that you will never more see my hated rival."

"I cannot make such a promise, Olivia," said I, holding her uplifted arm forcibly. "I will not."

The words "hated rival," which showed me that Olivia was actuated more by the spirit of hatred than love, made me reply in as decided a tone as even you could have spoken, my dear general. But I was shocked, and reproached myself with cruelty, when I saw the blood flow from her side: she was terrified. I took the knife from her powerless hand, and she fainted in my arms. I had sufficient presence of mind to reflect that what had happened should be kept as secret as possible; therefore, without summoning Josephine, whose attachment to her mistress I have reason to suspect, I threw open the windows, gave Olivia air and water, and her senses returned: then I despatched my Swiss for a surgeon. I need not speak of my own feelings—no suspense could be more dreadful than that which I endured between the sending for the surgeon and the moment when he gave his opinion. He relieved me at once, by pronouncing it to be a slight flesh wound, that would be of no manner of consequence. Olivia, however, whether from alarm or pain, or from the sight of the blood, fainted three times during the dressing of her side; and though the surgeon assured her that it would be perfectly well in a few days, she was evidently apprehensive that we concealed from her the real danger. At the idea of the approach of death, which now took possession of her imagination, all courage forsook her, and for some time my efforts to support her spirits were ineffectual. She could not dispense with the services of Josephine; and from the moment this French woman entered the room, there was nothing to be heard but exclamations the most violent and noisy. As to assistance, she could give none. At last her exaggerated demonstrations of horror and grief ended with,—"Dieu merci! an moins nous voilà delivrés de ce voyage affreux. Apparemment qu'il ne sera plus question de ce vilain Petersburg pour madame."

A new train of thoughts was roused by these words in Olivia's mind; and looking at me, she eagerly inquired why the journey to Petersburg was to be given up, if she was in no danger? I assured her that Josephine spoke at random, that my intentions with regard to the embassy to Russia were unaltered.

"Seulement retardé un peu," said Josephine, who was intent only upon her own selfish object.—"Sûrement, madame ne voyagera pas dans cet état!"

Olivia started up, and looking at me with terrific wildness in her eyes, "Swear to me," said she, "swear that you will not deceive me, or I will this instant tear open this wound, and never more suffer it to be closed."

"Deceive you, Olivia!" cried I, "what deceit can you fear from me?—What is it you require of me?"

"I require from you a promise, a solemn promise, that you will go with *me* to Russia!"

"I solemnly promise that I will," said I: "now be tranquil, Olivia, I beseech you."

The surgeon represented the necessity of keeping herself quiet, and declared that he would not answer for the cure of his patient on any other terms. Satisfied by the solemnity of my promise, Olivia now suffered me to depart. This morning she sends me word that in a few days she shall be ready to leave England. Can you meet me, my dear friend, at L—— Castle? I go down there to-day, to bid adieu to Leonora. From thence I shall proceed to Yarmouth, and embark immediately. Olivia will follow me.

Your obliged

F. L——.

LETTER XCIII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

L—— Castle

Dearest Mother,

My husband is here! at home with me, with your happy Leonora—and his heart is with her. His looks, his voice, his manner tell me so, and by them I never was deceived. No, he is incapable of deceit. Whatever have been his errors, he never stooped to dissimulation. He is again my own, still capable of loving me, still worthy of all my affection. I knew that the delusion could not last long, or rather you told me so, my best friend, and I believed you; you did him justice. He was indeed deceived—who might not have been deceived by Olivia? His passions were under the power of an enchantress; but now he has triumphed over her arts. He sees her such as she is, and her influence ceases.

I am not absolutely certain of all this; but I believe, because I hope it: yet he is evidently embarrassed, and seems unhappy: what can be the meaning of this? Perhaps he does not yet know his Leonora sufficiently to be secure of her forgiveness. How I long to set his heart at ease, and to say to him, let the past be forgotten for ever! How easy it is to the happy to forgive! There have been moments when I could not, I fear, have been just, when I am sure that I could not have been generous. I shall immediately offer to accompany Mr. L—— to Russia; I can have no farther hesitation, for I see that he wishes it; indeed, just now he almost said so. His baggage is already embarked at Yarmouth—he sails in a few days—and in a few hours your daughter's fate, your daughter's happiness, will be decided. It is decided, for I am sure he loves me; I see, I hear, I feel it. Dearest mother, I write to you in the first moment of joy.—I hear his foot upon the stairs.

Your happy

LEONORA L——.

LETTER XCIV.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

L—— Castle.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

My hopes are all vain. Your prophecies will never be accomplished. We have both been mistaken in Mr. L——‘s character, and henceforward your daughter must not depend upon him for any portion of her happiness. I once thought it impossible that my love for him could be diminished: he has changed my opinion. Mine is not that species of weak or abject affection which can exist under the sense of ill-treatment and injustice, much less can my love survive esteem for its object.

I told you, my dear mother, and I believed, that his affections had returned to me; but I was mistaken. He has not sufficient strength or generosity of soul to love me, or to do justice to my love. I offered to go with him to Russia: he answered, “That is impossible.”—Impossible!—Is it then impossible for him to do that which is just or honourable? or seeing what is right, must he follow what is wrong? or can his heart never more be touched by virtuous affections? Is his taste so changed, so depraved, that he can now be pleased and charmed only by what is despicable and profligate in our sex? Then I should rejoice that we are to be separated—separated for ever. May years and years pass away and wear out, if possible, the memory of all he has been to me! I think I could better, much better bear the total loss, the death of him I have loved, than endure to feel that he had survived both my affection and esteem; to see the person the same, but the soul changed; to feel every day, every hour, that I must despise what I have so admired and loved.

Mr. L—— is gone from hence. He leaves England the day after to-morrow. Lady Olivia is to *follow* him. I am glad that public decency is not to be outraged by their embarking together. My dearest mother, be assured that at this moment your daughter’s feelings are worthy of you. Indignation and the pride of virtue support her spirit.

LEONORA L——.

LETTER XCV.

GENERAL B—— TO LADY LEONORA L——.

Yarmouth.

Had I not the highest confidence in Lady Leonora L——‘s fortitude, I should not venture to write to her at this moment, knowing as I do that she is but just recovered from a dangerous illness.

Mr. L—— had requested me to meet him at L—— Castle previously to his leaving England, but it was out of my power. I met him however on the road to Yarmouth, and as we travelled together I had full opportunity of seeing the state of his mind. Permit me—the urgency of the case requires it —to speak without reserve, with the freedom of an old friend. I imagine that your ladyship parted from Mr. L—— with feelings of indignation, at which I cannot be surprised: but if you had seen him as I saw him, indignation would have given way to pity. Loving you, madam, as you deserve to be loved, most ardently, most tenderly; touched to his inmost soul by the proofs of affection he had seen in your letters, in your whole conduct, even to the last moment of parting; my unhappy friend felt himself bound to resist the temptation of staying with you, or of accepting your generous offer to accompany him to Petersburg. He thought himself bound in honour by a promise extorted from him to save from suicide one whom he thinks he has injured, one who has thrown herself upon his protection. Of the conflict in his mind at parting with your ladyship I can judge from what he suffered afterwards. I met Mr. L—— with feelings of extreme indignation, but before I had been an hour in his company, I never pitied any man so much in my life, for I never yet saw any one so truly wretched, and so thoroughly convinced that he deserved to be so. You know that he is

not one who often gives way to his emotions, not one who expresses them much in words—but he could not command his feelings.

The struggle was too violent. I have no doubt that it was the real cause of his present illness. As the moment approached when he was to leave England, he became more and more agitated. Towards evening he sunk into a sort of apathy and gloomy silence, from which he suddenly broke into delirious raving. At twelve o'clock last night, the night he was to have sailed, he was seized with a violent and infectious fever. As to the degree of immediate danger, the physicians here cannot yet pronounce. I have sent to town for Dr. ——. Your ladyship may be certain that I shall not quit my friend, and that he shall have every possible assistance and attendance.

I am, with the truest esteem,

Your ladyship's faithful servant,

J. B.

LETTER XCVI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

DEAR MOTHER, L—— Castle.

This moment an express from General B——. Mr. L—— is dangerously ill at Yarmouth—a fever, brought on by the agitation of his mind. How unjust I have been! Forget all I said in my last. I write in the utmost haste—just setting out for Yarmouth. I hope to be there to-morrow.

Your affectionate

LEONORA L——.

I open this to enclose the general's letter, which will explain every thing.

LETTER XCVII.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

MY DEAR MADAM, Yarmouth.

Your Grace, I find, is apprised of Lady Leonora L——'s journey hither: I fear that you rely upon my prudence for preventing her exposing herself to the danger of catching this dreadful fever. But that has been beyond my power. Her ladyship arrived late last night. I had foreseen the probability of her coming, but not the possibility of her coming so soon. I had taken no precautions, and she was in the house and upon the stairs in an instant. No entreaties, no arguments could stop her; I assured her that Mr. L——'s fever was pronounced by all the physicians to be of the most infectious kind. Dr. —— joined me in representing that she would expose her life to almost certain danger if she persisted in her determination to see her husband; but she pressed forward, regardless of all that could be said. To the physicians she made no answer; to me she replied, "You are Mr. L ——'s friend, but I am his wife: you have not feared to hazard your life for him, and do you think I can hesitate?" I urged that there was no necessity for more than one person's running this hazard; and that since it had fallen to my lot to be with my friend when he was first taken ill—She interrupted me,—"Is not this taking a cruel advantage of me, general? You know that I, too, would have been with Mr. L——, if—if it had been possible." Her manner, her pathetic emphasis, and the force of her implied meaning, struck me so much, that I was silent, and suffered her to pass on; but again the idea of her danger rushing upon my mind, I sprang before her to the door of Mr. L——'s apartment, and opposed her entrance. "Then, general," said she, calmly, "perhaps you mistake me—perhaps you have heard repeated some unguarded words of mine in the moment of indignation ... unjust ... you best

know how unjust indignation!—and you infer from these that my affection for my husband is extinguished. I deserve this—but do not punish me too severely."

I still kept my hand upon the lock of the door, expostulating with Lady Leonora in your Grace's name, and in Mr. L——'s, assuring her that if he were conscious of what was passing, and able to speak, he would order me to prevent her seeing him in his present situation.

"And you, too, general!" said she, bursting into tears: "I thought you were my friend—would you prevent me from seeing him? And is not he conscious of what is passing? And is not he able to speak? Sir, I must be admitted! You have done your duty—now let me do mine. Consider, my right is superior to yours. No power on earth should or can prevent a wife from seeing her husband when he is.... Dear, dear general!" said she, clasping her raised hands, and falling suddenly at my feet, "let me see him but for one minute, and I will be grateful to you for ever!"

I could resist no longer—I tremble for the consequences. I know your Grace sufficiently to be aware that you ought to be told the whole truth. I have but little hopes of my poor friend's life.

With much respect,

Your grace's faithful servant,

J.B.

LETTER XCVIII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

A mist hung over my eyes, and “my ears with hollow murmurs rung,” when the dreadful tidings of your alarming illness were announced by your cruel messenger. My dearest L——! why does inexorable destiny doom me to be absent from you at such a crisis? Oh! this fatal wound of mine! It would, I fear, certainly open again if I were to travel. So this corporeal being must be imprisoned here, while my anxious soul, my viewless spirit, hovers near you, longing to minister each tender consolation, each nameless comfort that love alone can, with fond prescience and magic speed, summon round the couch of pain.

“O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly to you!” Why must I resign the sweetly-painful task of soothing you in the hour of sickness? And shall others with officious zeal,

“Guess the faint wish, explain the asking eye?”

Alas it must be so—even were I to fly to him, my sensibility could not support the scene. To behold him stretched on the bed of disease—perhaps of death—would be agony past endurance. Let firmer nerves than Olivia’s, and hearts more callous, assume the offices from which they shrink not. ‘Tis the fate, the hard fate of all endued with exquisite sensibility, to be palsied by the excess of their feelings, and to become imbecile at the moment their exertions are most necessary.

Your too tenderly sympathizing

OLIVIA.

LETTER XCIX.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

My husband is alive, and that is all. Never did I see, nor could I have conceived, such a change, and in so short a time! When I opened the door, his eyes turned upon me with unmeaning eagerness: he did not know me. The good general thought my voice might have some effect. I spoke, but could obtain no answer, no sign of intelligence. In vain I called upon him by every name that used to reach his heart. I kneeled beside him, and took one of his burning hands in mine. I kissed it, and suddenly he started up, exclaiming, “Olivia! Olivia!” with dreadful vehemence. In his delirium he raved about Olivia’s stabbing herself, and called upon us to hold her arm, looking wildly towards the foot of the bed, as if the figure were actually before him. Then he sunk back, as if quite exhausted, and gave a deep sigh. Some of my tears fell upon his hand; he felt them before I perceived that they had fallen, and looked so earnestly in my face, that I was in hopes his recollection was returning; but he only said, “Olivia, I believe that you love me;” then sighed more deeply than before, drew his hand away from me, and, as well as I could distinguish, said something about Leonora.

But why should I give you the pain of hearing all these circumstances, my dear mother? It is enough to say, that he passed a dreadful night. This morning the physicians say, that if he passes this night—if—my dear mother, what a terrible suspense!

LEONORA L——.

LETTER C.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Yarmouth.

Morning is at last come, and my husband is still alive: so there is yet hope. When I said I thought I could bear to survive him, how little I knew of myself, and how little, how very little I expected to be so soon tried! All evils are remediable but one, that one which I dare not name.

The physicians assure me that he is better. His friend, to whose judgment I trust more, thinks as they do. I know not what to believe. I dread to flatter myself and to be disappointed, I will write again, dearest mother, to-morrow.

Your ever affectionate

LEONORA L——.

LETTER CI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

Wednesday.

No material change since yesterday, my dear mother. This morning, as I was searching for some medicine, I saw on the chimney-piece a note from Lady Olivia ——. It might have been there yesterday, and ever since my arrival, but I did not see it. At any other time it would have excited my indignation, but my mind is now too much weakened by sorrow. My fears for my husband’s life absorb all other feelings.

LETTER CII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

Words cannot express what I have suffered since I wrote last! Oh! why do I not bear that the danger is over!—Long since would I have been with you, all that my soul holds dear, could I have escaped from these tyrants, these medical despots, who detain me by absolute force, and watch over me with unrelenting vigilance. I have consulted Dr. ——, who assures me that my fears of my wound opening, were I to take so long a journey, are too well-founded; that in the present feverish state of my mind he would not answer for the consequences. I heed him not—life I value not.—Most joyfully would I sacrifice myself for the man I love. But even could I escape from my persecutors, too well I know that to see you would be a vain attempt—too well I know that I should not be admitted. Your love, your fears for Olivia would barbarously banish her, and forbid her your dear, your dangerous atmosphere. Too justly would you urge that my rashness might prove our mutual ruin—that in the moment of crisis or of convalescence, anxiety for me might defeat the kind purpose of nature. And even were I secure of your recovery, the delay, I speak not of the danger of my catching the disease, would, circumstanced as we are, be death to our hopes. We should be compelled to part. The winds would waft you from me. The waves would bear you to another region, far—oh! far from your

OLIVIA.

LETTER CIII.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

MY DEAR MADAM, Yarmouth, Thursday,—.

Mr. L—— has had a relapse, and is now more alarmingly ill than I have yet seen him: he does not know his situation, for his delirium has returned. The physicians give him over. Dr. H—— says that we must prepare for the worst.

I have but one word of comfort for your Grace—that your admirable daughter's health has not yet suffered.

Your Grace's faithful servant,

J.B.

LETTER CIV.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

MY DEAREST MOTHER, Yarmouth.

The delirium has subsided. A few minutes ago, as I was kneeling beside him, offering up an almost hopeless prayer for his recovery, his eyes opened, and I perceived that he knew me. He closed his eyes again without speaking, opened them once more, and then looking at me fixedly, exclaimed: "It is not a dream! You are Leonora!—*my* Leonora!"

What exquisite pleasure I felt at the sound of these words, at the tone in which they were pronounced! My husband folded me in his arms; and, till I felt his burning lips, I forgot that he was ill.

When he came thoroughly to his recollection, and when the idea that his fever might be infectious occurred to him, he endeavoured to prevail upon me to leave the room. But what danger can there be for me *now*? My whole soul, my whole frame is inspired with new life. If he recover, your daughter may still be happy.

LETTER CV.

GENERAL B——TO THE DUCHESS OF——.

My Dear Madam,

A few hours ago my friend became perfectly sensible of his danger, and calling me to his bedside, told me that he was eager to make use of the little time which he might have to live. He was quite calm and collected. He employed me to write his last wishes and bequests; and I must do him the justice to declare, that the strongest idea and feeling in his mind evidently was the desire to show his entire confidence in his wife, and to give her, in his last moments, proofs of his esteem and affection. When he had settled his affairs, he begged to be left alone for some time. Between twelve and one his bell rang, and he desired to see Lady Leonora and me. He spoke to me with that warmth of friendship which he has ever felt from our childhood. Then turning to his wife, his voice utterly failed, and he could only press to his lips that hand which was held out to him in speechless agony.

“Excellent woman!” he articulated at last; then collecting his mind, he exclaimed, “My beloved Leonora, I will not die without expressing my feelings for you; I know yours for me. I do not ask for that forgiveness which your generous heart granted long before I deserved it. Your affection for me has been shown by actions, at the hazard of your life; I can only thank you with weak words. You possess my whole heart, my esteem, my admiration, my gratitude.”

Lady Leonora, at the word *gratitude*, made an effort to speak, and laid her hand upon her husband’s lips. He added, in a more enthusiastic tone, “You have my undivided love. Believe in the truth of these words—perhaps they are the last I may ever speak.”

My friend sunk back exhausted, and I carried Lady Leonora out of the room.

I returned half an hour ago, and found every thing silent: Mr. L—— is lying with his eyes closed—quite still—I hope asleep. This may be a favourable crisis. I cannot delay this letter longer.

Your Grace's faithful servant,

J. B.

LETTER CVI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

DEAREST MOTHER, Yarmouth.

He has slept several hours.—Dr. H——, the most skilful of all his physicians, says that we may now expect his recovery. Adieu. The good general will add a line to assure you that I am not deceived, nor too sanguine.

Yours most affectionately,

LEONORA L——.

Postscript by General B——.

I have some hopes—that is all I can venture to say to your grace.

LETTER CVII.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

DEAREST MOTHER, Yarmouth.

Excellent news for you to-day!—Mr. L—— is pronounced out of danger. He seems excessively touched by my coming here, and so grateful for the little kindness I have been able to show him during his illness! But alas! that fatal promise! the recollection of it comes across my mind like a spectre. Mr. L—— has never touched upon this subject,—I do all in my power to divert his thoughts to indifferent objects.

This morning when I went into his room, I found him tearing to pieces that note which I mentioned to you a few days ago. He seemed much agitated, and desired to see General B——. They are now together, and were talking so loud in the next room to me, that I was obliged to retire, lest I should overhear secrets. Mr. L—— this moment sends for me. If I should not have time to add more, this short letter will satisfy you for to-day.

Leonora L——.

I open my letter to say, that I am not so happy as I was when I began it. I have heard all the circumstances relative to this terrible affair. Mr. L—— will go to Russia. I am as far from happiness as ever.

LETTER CVIII.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

"Say, is not absence death to those that love?"

How just, how beautiful a sentiment! yet cold and callous is that heart which knows not that there is a pang more dreadful than absence—far as the death of lingering torture exceeds, in corporeal sufferance, the soft slumber of expiring nature. Suspense! suspense! compared with thy racking agony, even absence is but the blessed euthanasia of love.

My dearest L——, why this torturing silence? one line, one word, I beseech you, from *your own hand*; say but *I live and love you, my Olivia*. Hour after hour, and day after day, have I waited and waited, and hoped, and feared to hear from you. Oh, this intolerable agonizing suspense! Yet hope clings to my fond heart—hope! sweet treacherous hope!

"Non so si la Speranza
Va con l'inganno unita;
So che mantiene in vita
Qualche infelici almen."

Olivia.

LETTER CIX.

MR. L—— TO OLIVIA.

MY DEAR OLIVIA, Yarmouth.

This is the first line I have written since my illness. I could not sooner relieve you from suspense, for during most of this time I have been delirious, and never till now able to write. My physicians have this morning

pronounced me out of danger; and as soon as my strength is sufficient to bear the voyage, I shall sail, according to my promise.

Your prudence, or that of your physician, has saved me much anxiety—perhaps saved my life: for had you been so rash as to come hither, besides my fears for your safety, I should have been exposed, in the moment of my returning reason, to a conflict of passions which I could not have borne.

Leonora is with me; she arrived the night after I was taken ill, and forced her way to me, when my fever was at the highest, and while I was in a state of delirium.

Lady Leonora will stay with me till the moment I sail, which I expect to do in about ten days. I cannot say positively, for I am still very weak, and may not be able to keep my word to a day. Adieu. I hope your mind will now be at ease. I am glad to hear from the surgeon that your wound is quite closed. I will write again, and more fully, when I am better able. Believe me, Olivia, I am most anxious to secure your happiness: allow me to believe that this will be in the power of

Yours sincerely,

F. L——.

LETTER CX.

OLIVIA TO MR. L——.

Richmond.

Barbarous man! with what cold cruelty you plunge a dagger into my heart! Leonora is with you!—Leonora! Then I am undone. Yes, she will—she has resumed all her power, her rights, her habitual empire over your heart. Wretched Olivia!—But you say it is your wish to secure my happiness, you bid me allow you to believe it is in your power. What

phrases!—You will sail, *according to your promise*.—Then nothing but your honour binds you to Olivia. And even now, at this guilty instant, in your secret soul, you wish, you expect from my offended pride, from my disgusted delicacy, a renunciation of this promise, a release from all the ties that bind you to me. You are right: this is what I ought to do; what I would do, if love had not so weakened my soul, so prostrated my spirit, rendered me so abject a creature, that *I cannot* what *I would*.

I must love on—female pride and resentment call upon me in vain. I cannot hate you. Even by the feeble tie, which I see you long to break, I must hold rather than let you go for ever. I will not renounce your promise. I claim it. I adjure you by all which a man of honour holds most sacred, to quit England the moment your health will allow you to sail. No equivocating with your conscience!—I hold you to your word. Oh, my dearest L——! to feel myself reduced to use such language to you, to find myself clinging to that last resource of ship-wrecked love, *a promise*! It is with unspeakable agony I feel all this; lower I cannot sink in misery. Raise me, if indeed you wish my happiness—raise me! it is yet in your power. Tell me, that my too susceptible heart has mistaken phantoms for realities—tell me, that your last was not colder than usual; yes, I am ready to be deceived. Tell me that it was only the languor of disease; assure me that my rival forced her way only to your presence, that she has not won her easy way back to your heart—assure me that you are impatient once more to see your own

OLIVIA.

LETTER CXI.

LEONORA TO HER MOTHER.

MY DEAREST MOTHER, Yarmouth.

Can you believe or imagine that I am actually unwilling to say or to think that Mr. L—— is quite well? yet this is the fact. Such is the inconsistency and weakness of our natures—of my nature, I should say. But a short time ago I thought that no evil could be so great as his danger; now that danger is past, I dread to hear him say that he is perfectly recovered. The moment he is able he goes to Russia; that is decided irrevocably. The promise has been claimed and repeated. A solemn promise cannot be broken for any human consideration. I should despise him if he broke it; but can I love him for keeping it? His mind is at this instant agitated as much as mine is—more it cannot be. Yet I ought to be better able to part with him now than when we parted before, because I have now at least the consolation of knowing that he leaves me against his will—that his heart will not go from me. This time I cannot be deceived; I have had the most explicit assurances of his *undivided* love. And indeed I was never deceived. All the appearances of regret at parting with me were genuine. The general witnessed the consequent struggle in Mr. L——'s mind, and this fever followed.

I will endeavour to calm and content myself with the possession of his love, and with the assurance that he will return to me as soon as possible. As soon as possible! but what a vague hope! He sails with the first fair wind. What a dreadful certainty! Perhaps to-morrow! Oh, my dearest mother, perhaps to-night!

LEONORA L——.

LETTER CXII.

GENERAL B—— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

MY DEAR MADAM, Yarmouth.

Today Mr. L——, finding himself sufficiently recovered, gave orders to all his suite to embark, and the wind being fair, determined to go on board immediately. In the midst of the bustle of the preparations for his departure, Lady Leonora, exhausted by her former activity, and unable to take any part in what was passing, sat silent, pale, and motionless, opposite to a window, which looked out upon the sea; the vessel in which her husband was to sail lay in sight, and her eyes were fixed upon the streamers, watching their motion in the wind.

Mr. L—— was in his own apartment writing letters. An express arrived; and among other letters for the English ambassador to Russia, there was a large packet directed to Lady Leonora L——. Upon opening it, the crimson colour flew into her face, and she exclaimed, "Olivia's letters!—Lady Olivia——'s letters to Mad. de P——. Who could send these to me?"

"I give you joy with all my heart!" cried I; "no matter how they come—they come in the most fortunate moment possible. I would stake my life upon it they will unmask Olivia at once. Where is Mr. L——? He must read them this moment."

I was hurrying out of the room to call my friend, but Lady Leonora stopped my career, and checked the transport of my joy.

"You do not think, my dear general," said she, "that I would for any consideration do so dishonourable an action as to read these letters?"

"Only let Mr. L—— read them," interrupted I, "that is all I ask of your ladyship. Give them to me. For the soul of me I can see nothing dishonourable in this. Let Lady Olivia be judged by her own words. Your ladyship shall not be troubled with her trash, but give the letters to me, I beseech you."

"No, I cannot," said Lady Leonora, steadily. "It is a great temptation; but I ought not to yield." She deliberately folded them up in a blank cover, directed them to Lady Olivia, and sealed them; whilst I, half in admiration and half in anger, went on expostulating.

"Good God! this is being too generous! But, my dear Lady Leonora, why will you sacrifice yourself? This is misplaced delicacy! Show those letters, and I'll lay my life Mr. L—— never goes to Russia."

"My dear friend," said she, looking up with tears in her eyes, "do not tempt me beyond my power to resist. Say no more." At this instant Mr. L

——came into the room; and I am ashamed to confess to your Grace, I really was so little master of myself, that I was upon the point of seizing Olivia's letters, and putting them into his hands. "L——," said I, "here is your admirable wife absurdly, yes, I must say it, absurdly standing upon a point of honour with one who has none! That packet which she has before her—"

Lady Leonora imposed silence upon me by one of those looks which no man can resist.

"My dear Leonora, you are right," said Mr. L——; "and you are almost right, my dear general: I know what that packet contains; and without doing anything dishonourable, I hold myself absolved from my promise; I shall not go to Russia, my dearest wife!" He flew into her arms—and I left them. I question whether they either of them felt much more than I did.

For some minutes I was content with knowing that these things had really happened, that I had heard Mr. L—— say he was absolved from all promises, and that he would not go to Russia; but how did all this happen so suddenly?—How did he know the contents of Olivia's letters, and without doing any thing dishonourable? There are some people who cannot be perfectly happy till they know the *rationale* of their happiness. I am one of these. I did not feel "a sober certainty of waking bliss," till I read a letter which Mr. L—— received by the same express that brought Olivia's letters, and which he read while we were debating. I beg your Grace's pardon if I am too minute in explanation; but I do as I would be done by. The letter was from one of the private secretaries, who is, I understand, a relation and friend of Lady Leonora L——. As the original goes this night to Lady Olivia, I send your Grace a copy. You will give me credit for copying, and at such a time as this! I congratulate your Grace, and

I have the honour to be, &c.,

J. B.

LETTER CXIII

TO MR. L——

{Private.}

London, St. James's-street.

My Dear Sir,

In the same moment you receive this, your lady, for whom I have the highest regard, will receive from me a valuable present, a packet of Lady Olivia ——'s letters to one of her French friends. These letters were lately found in a French frigate, taken by one of our cruisers; and, as *intercepted correspondence* is the order of the day, these, with all the despatches on board, were transmitted to our office to be examined, in hopes of making reprisals of state secrets. Some letters about the court and Emperor of Russia led us to suppose that we should find some political manoeuvres, and we examined farther. The examination fortunately fell to my lot, as private secretary. After looking them all over, however, I found that these papers contain only family secrets: I obtained permission to send them to Lady Leonora L——, to ensure the triumph of virtue over vice—to put it into her ladyship's power completely to unmask her unworthy rival. These letters will show you by what arts you have been deceived. You will find yourself ridiculed as *a cold, awkward Englishman*; one who will *hottentot again, whatever pains may be taken to civilize him; a man of ice*, to be taken as a lover from *pure charity*, or *pure curiosity*, or the pure *besoin d'aimer*. Here are many pure motives, of which you will, my dear sir, take your choice. You will farther observe in one of her letters, that Lady Olivia premeditated the design of prevailing with you to carry her to Russia, that

she might show her power *to that proudest of earthly prudes*, the Duchess of ——, and that she might *gratify her great revenge against Lady Leonora L——*.

Sincerely hoping, my dear sir, that these letters may open your eyes, and restore you and my amiable relation to domestic happiness, I make no apology for the liberty I take, and cannot regret the momentary pain I may inflict. You are at liberty to make what use you think proper of this letter.

I have it in command from my Lord —— to add, that if your health, or any other circumstances, should render this embassy to Russia less desirable to you than it appeared some time ago, other arrangements can be made, and another friend of government is ready to supply your place.

I am, my dear sir,

Yours, &c.

To F. L——, Esq. &c.

LETTER CXIV.

FROM LADY LEONORA —— TO THE DUCHESS OF ——.

Yarmouth.

Joy, dearest mother! Come and share your daughter’s happiness!

Continued by General B——.

Lady Olivia, thus unmasked by her own hand, has fled to the continent, declaring that she will never more return to England. There she is right—

England is not a country fit for such women.—But I will never waste another word or thought upon her.

Mr. L—— has given up the Russian embassy, and returns with Lady Leonora to L—— Castle to-morrow. He has invited me to accompany them. Lady Leonora is now the happiest of wives, and your Grace the happiest of mothers.

I have the honour and the pleasure to be

Your Grace's sincerely attached,

J. B——.

LETTER CXV.

THE DUCHESS OF —— TO LADY LEONORA L——.

My beloved daughter, pride and delight of your happy mother's heart, I give you joy! Your temper, fortitude, and persevering affection, have now their just reward. Enjoy your happiness, heightened as it must be by the sense of self-approbation, and by the sympathy of all who know you. And now let me indulge the vanity of a mother; let me exult in the accomplishment of my prophecies, and let me be listened to with due humility, when I prophesy again. With as much certainty as I foretold what is now present, I foresee, my child, your future destiny, and I predict that you will preserve while you live your husband's fondest affections. Your prudence will prevent you from indulging too far your taste for retirement, or for the exclusive society of your intimate friends. Spend your winters in London: your rank, your fortune, and, I may be permitted to add, your character, manners, and abilities, give you the power of drawing round you persons of the best information and of the highest talents. Your husband will find, in such society, every thing that can attach him to his home; and in

you, his most rational friend and his most charming companion, who will excite him to every generous and noble exertion.

For the good and wise, there is in love, a power unknown to the ignorant and the vicious, a power of communicating fresh energy to all the faculties of the soul, of exalting them to the highest state of perfection. The friendship which in later life succeeds to such love is perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most permanent blessing of life.

An admirable German writer—you see, my dear, that I have no prejudices against good German writers—an admirable German writer says, that “Love is like the morning shadows, which diminish as the day advances; but friendship is like the shadows of the evening, which increase even till the setting of the sun.” ——

1805.

LETTER From A GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND,

Upon the

BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER;

WITH THE ANSWER.

I congratulate you, my dear sir, upon the birth of your daughter; and I wish that some of the fairies of ancient times were at hand to endow the damsel with health, wealth, wit, and beauty. Wit?—I should make a long pause before I accepted of this gift for a daughter—you would make none.

As I know it to be your opinion that it is in the power of education, more certainly than it was ever believed to be in the power of fairies, to bestow all mental gifts; and as I have heard you say that education should begin as early as possible, I am in haste to offer you my sentiments, lest my advice should come too late.

Your general ideas of the habits and virtues essential to the perfection of the female character nearly agree with mine; but We differ materially as to the cultivation which it is necessary or expedient to bestow upon the understandings of women. You are a champion for the rights of woman, and insist upon the equality of the sexes: but since the days of chivalry are past, and since modern gallantry permits men to speak, at least to one another, in less sublime language of the fair; I may confess to you that I see neither from experience nor analogy much reason to believe that, in the human species alone, there are no marks of inferiority in the female:—curious and admirable exceptions there may be, but many such have not fallen within my observation. I cannot say that I have been much enraptured, either on a first view or on a closer inspection, with female prodigies. Prodigies are scarcely less offensive to my taste than monsters: humanity makes us refrain from expressing disgust at the awkward shame of the one, whilst the intemperate vanity of the other justly provokes ridicule and indignation. I

have always observed in the understandings of women who have been too much cultivated, some disproportion between the different faculties of their minds. One power of the mind undoubtedly may be cultivated at the expense of the rest; as we see that one muscle or limb may acquire excessive strength, and an unnatural size, at the expense of the health of the whole body: I cannot think this desirable, either for the individual or for society.—The unfortunate people in certain mountains of Switzerland are, some of them, proud of the excrescence by which they are deformed. I have seen women vain of exhibiting mental deformities, which to me appeared no less disgusting. In the course of my life it has never been my good fortune to meet with a female whose mind, in strength, just proportion, and activity, I could compare to that of a sensible man.

Allowing, however, that women are equal to our sex in natural abilities; from their situation in society, from their domestic duties, their taste for dissipation, their love of romance, poetry, and all the lighter parts of literature, their time must be so fully occupied, that they could never have leisure for, even supposing that they were capable of, that severe application to which our sex submit.—Between persons of equal genius and equal industry, time becomes the only measure of their acquirements.—Now calculate the time which is wasted by the fair sex, and tell me how much the start of us they ought to have in the beginning of the race, if they are to reach the goal before us?—It is not possible that women should ever be our equals in knowledge, unless you assert that they are far our superiors in natural capacity.—Not only time but, opportunity must be wanting to complete female studies:—we mix with the world without restraint, we converse freely with all classes of people, with men of wit, of science, of learning, with the artist, the mechanic, the labourer; every scene of life is open to our view; every assistance that foreign or domestic ingenuity can invent, to encourage literary studies, is ours almost exclusively. From academies, colleges, public libraries, private associations of literary men, women are excluded, if not by law, at least by custom, which cannot easily be conquered.—Whenever women appear, even when we seem to admit them as our equals in understanding, every thing assumes a different form; our politeness, delicacy, habits towards the sex, forbid us to argue or to converse with them as we do with one another:—we see things as they are; but women must always see things through a veil, or cease to be women.—With these insuperable difficulties in their education and in their passage

through life, it seems impossible that their minds should ever acquire that vigour and *efficiency*, which accurate knowledge and various experience of life and manners can bestow.

Much attention has lately been paid to the education of the female sex; and you will say that we have been amply repaid for our care,—that ladies have lately exhibited such brilliant proofs of genius, as must dazzle and confound their critics. I do not ask for proofs of genius, I ask for solid proofs of utility. In which of the useful arts, in which of the exact sciences, have we been assisted by female sagacity or penetration?—I should be glad to see a list of discoveries, of inventions, of observations, evincing patient research, of truths established upon actual experiment, or deduced by just reasoning from previous principles:—if these, or any of these, can be presented by a female champion for her sex, I shall be the first to clear the way for her to the temple of Fame.

I must not speak of my contemporaries, else candour might oblige me to allow that there are some few instances of great talents applied to useful purposes:—but, except these, what have been the literary productions of women! In poetry, plays, romances, in the art of imposing upon the understanding by means of the imagination, they have excelled;—but to useful literature they have scarcely turned their thoughts. I have never heard of any female proficients in science—few have pretended to science till within these few years.

You will tell me, that in the most difficult and most extensive science of politics women have succeeded;—you will cite the names of some illustrious queens. I am inclined to think, with the Duke of Burgundy, that "queens who reigned well were governed by men, and kings who reigned ill were governed by women."

The isolated examples of a few heroines cannot convince me that it is safe or expedient to trust the sex with power:—their power over themselves has regularly been found to diminish, in proportion as their power over others has been increased. I should not refer you to the scandalous chronicles of modern times, to volumes of private anecdotes, or to the abominable secret histories of courts, where female influence and female depravity are synonymous terms; but I appeal to the open equitable page of history, to a body of evidence collected from the testimony of ages, for experiments tried upon the grandest scale of which nature admits, registered

by various hands, without the possibility of collusion, and without a view to any particular system:—from these you must be convinced, that similar consequences have uniformly resulted from the same causes, in nations the most unlike, and at periods the most distant. Trace the history of female nature, from the court of Augustus to the court of Louis the Fourteenth, and tell me whether you can hesitate to acknowledge that the influence, the liberty, and the *power* of women have been constant concomitants of the moral and political decline of empires;—I say the concomitants: where events are thus invariably connected, I might be justified in saying that they were *causes*—you would call them *effects*; but we need not dispute about the momentary precedence of evils, which are found to be inseparable companions:—they may be alternately cause and effect,—the reality of the connexion is established; it may be difficult to ascertain precisely its nature.

You will assert, that the fatal consequences which have resulted from our trusting the sex with liberty and power, have been originally occasioned by the subjection and ignorance in which they had previously been held, and of our subsequent folly and imprudence, in *throwing the reins of dominion into hands unprepared and uneducated to guide them*. I am at a loss to conceive any system of education that can properly prepare women for the exercise of power. Cultivate their understandings, "cleanse the visual orb with euphrasy and rue," till they can with one comprehensive glance take in "one half at least of round eternity;" still you have no security that their reason will govern their conduct. The moral character seems, even amongst men of superior strength of mind, to have no certain dependence upon the reasoning faculty;—habit, prejudice, taste, example, and the different strength of various passions, form the moral character. We are impelled to action, frequently contrary to the belief of our sober reason; and we pursue what we could, in the hour of deliberation, demonstrate to be inconsistent with *that greatest possible share of happiness*, which it is the object of every rational creature to secure. We frequently "think with one species of enthusiasm, and act with another:" and can we expect from women more consistency of conduct, if they are allowed the same liberty?—No one can feel, more strongly than you do, the necessity and the value of female integrity; no one can more clearly perceive how much in society depends upon the honour of women; and how much it is the interest of every individual, as well as of every state, to guard their virtue, and to preserve inviolate the purity of their manners. Allow me, then, to warn you of the

danger of talking in loud strains to the sex, of the noble contempt of prejudice. You would look with horror at one who should go to sap the foundations of the building; beware then how you venture to tear away the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together.

I am by no means disposed to indulge in the fashionable ridicule of prejudice. There is a sentimental, metaphysical argument, which, independently of all others, has lately been used, to prevail upon us to relinquish that superiority which strength of body in savage, and strength of mind in civilized nations, secure to man. We are told, that as women are reasonable creatures, they should be governed only by reason; and that we *disgrace* ourselves, and *enslave* them, when we instil even the most useful truths as prejudices.—Morality should, we are told, be founded upon demonstration, not upon sentiment; and we should not require human beings to submit to any laws or customs, without convincing their understandings of the universal utility of these political conventions. When are we to expect this conviction? We cannot expect it from childhood, scarcely from youth; but from the maturity of the understanding we are told that we may expect it with certainty.—And of what use can it then be to us? When the habits are fixed, when the character is decided, when the manners are formed, what can be done by the bare conviction of the understanding? What could we expect from that woman, whose moral education was to begin, at the moment when she was called upon to *act*; and who, without having imbibed in her early years any of the salutary prejudices of her sex, or without having been educated in the amiable acquiescence to well established maxims of female prudence, should boldly venture to conduct herself by the immediate conviction of her understanding? I care not for the names or titles of my guides; all that I shall inquire is, which is best acquainted with the road. Provided women be conducted quietly to their good, it is scarcely worth their while to dispute about the pompous metaphysical names, or precedency of their motives. Why should they deem it disgraceful to be induced to pursue their interest by what some philosophers are pleased to call *weak* motives? Is it not much less disgraceful to be peaceably governed by weak reasons, than to be incapable of being restrained by the strongest? The dignity of human nature, and the boasted free-will of rational agents, are high-sounding words, likely to impose upon the vanity of the fair sex, as well as upon the pride of ours; but if we analyze the ideas annexed to these terms, to what shall we reduce

them? Reason in its highest perfection seems just to arrive at the certainty of instinct; and truth impressed upon the mind in early youth by the united voice of affection and authority, gives all the real advantages of the most investigating spirit of philosophy. If the result of the thought, experience, and sufferings of one race of beings is, (when inculcated upon the belief of the next,) to be stigmatized as prejudice, there is an end to all the benefits of history and of education. The mutual intercourse of individuals and of nations must be only for the traffic or amusement of the day. Every age must repeat the same experiments; every man and every nation must make the same mistakes, and suffer the same miseries, whilst the civilization and happiness of the world, if not retrograde in their course, must, for ever be stationary.

Let us not then despise, or teach the other sex to despise, the traditional maxims of experience, or those early prepossessions, which may be termed prejudices, but which in reality serve as their moral instinct. I can see neither tyranny on our part, nor slavery on theirs, in this system of education. This sentimental or metaphysical appeal to our candour and generosity has then no real force; and every other argument for the *literary* and *philosophical* education of women, and for the extraordinary cultivation of their understandings, I have examined.

You probably imagine that, by the superior ingenuity and care you may bestow on your daughter's education, you shall make her an exception to general maxims; you shall give her all the blessings of a literary cultivation, and at the same time preserve her from all the follies, and faults, and evils, which have been found to attend the character of a literary lady.

Systems produce projects; and as projects in education are of all others the most hazardous, they should not be followed till after the most mature deliberation. Though it may be natural, is it wise for any man to expect extraordinary success, from his efforts or his precautions, beyond what has ever been the share of those who have had motives as strong for care and for exertion, and some of whom were possibly his equals in ability? Is it not incumbent upon you, as a parent and as a philosopher, to calculate accurately what you have to fear, as well as what you have to hope? You can at present, with a sober degree or interest, bear to hear me enumerate the evils, and ridicule the foibles, incident to literary ladies; but if your daughter were actually in this class, you would not think it friendly if I were

to attack them. In this favourable moment, then, I beg you to hear me with temper; and as I touch upon every danger and every fault, consider cautiously whether you have a certain preventive or a specific remedy in store for each of them.

Women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago. They make a class in society, they fill the public eye, and have acquired a degree of consequence and an appropriate character. The esteem of private friends, and the admiration of the public for their talents, are circumstances highly flattering to their vanity; and as such I will allow them to be substantial pleasures. I am also ready to acknowledge that a taste for literature adds much to the happiness of life, and that women may enjoy to a certain degree this happiness as well as men. But with literary women this silent happiness seems at best but a subordinate consideration; it is not by the treasures they possess, but by those which they have an opportunity of displaying, that they estimate their wealth. To obtain public applause, they are betrayed too often into a miserable ostentation of their learning. Coxe tells us, that certain Russian ladies split their pearls, in order to make a greater display of finery.

The pleasure of being admired for wit or erudition, I cannot exactly measure in a female mind; but state it to be as delightful as you can imagine it to be, there are evils attendant upon it, which, in the estimation of a prudent father, may over-balance the good. The intoxicating effect of wit upon the brain has been well remarked, by a poet, who was a friend to the fair sex: and too many ridiculous, and too many disgusting examples confirm the truth of the observation. The deference that is paid to genius, sometimes makes the fair sex forget that genius will be respected only when united with discretion. Those who have acquired fame, fancy that they can afford to sacrifice reputation. I will suppose, however, that their heads shall be strong enough to bear inebriating admiration, and that their conduct shall be essentially irreproachable; yet they will show in their manners and conversation that contempt of inferior minds, and that neglect of common forms and customs, which will provoke the indignation of fools, and which cannot escape the censure of the wise. Even whilst we are secure of their innocence, we dislike that daring spirit in the female sex, which delights to oppose the common opinions of society, and from apparent trifles we draw unfavourable omens, which experience too often confirms. You will ask me why I should suppose that wits are more liable to be spoiled by admiration

than beauties, who have usually a larger share of it, and who are not more exempt from vanity? Those who are vain of trifling accomplishments, of rank, of riches, or of beauty, depend upon the world for their immediate gratification. They are sensible of their dependence; they listen with deference to the maxims, and attend with anxiety to the opinions of those, from whom they expect their reward and their daily amusements. In their subjection consists their safety; whilst women, who neither feel dependent for amusement nor for self-approbation upon company and public places, are apt to consider this subjection as humiliating, if not insupportable: perceiving their own superiority, they despise, and even set at defiance, the opinions of their acquaintance of inferior abilities: contempt, where it cannot be openly retorted, produces aversion, not the less to be dreaded because constrained to silence: envy, considered as the involuntary tribute extorted by merit, is flattering to pride: and I know that many women delight to excite envy, even whilst they affect to fear its consequences: but they, who imprudently provoke it, are little aware of the torments they prepare for themselves.—"Cover your face well before you disturb the hornet's nest," was a maxim of the *experienced* Catherine de Medici.

Men of literature, if we may trust to the bitter expressions of anguish in their writings, and in their private letters, feel acutely all the stings of envy. Women, who have more susceptibility of temper, and less strength of mind, and who, from the delicate nature of their reputation, are more exposed to attack, are also less able to endure it. Malignant critics, when they cannot attack an author's peace in his writings, frequently scrutinize his private life; and every personal anecdote is published without regard to truth or propriety. How will the delicacy of the female character endure this treatment? How will her friends bear to see her pursued even in domestic retirement, if she should be wise enough to make that retirement her choice? How will they like to see premature memoirs, and spurious collections of familiar letters, published by needy booksellers, or designing enemies? Yet to all these things men of letters are subject; and such must literary ladies expect, if they attain to any degree of eminence.—Judging, then, from the experience of our sex, I may pronounce envy to be one of the evils which women of uncommon genius have to dread. "Censure," says a celebrated writer, "is a tax which every man must pay to the public, who seeks to be eminent." Women must expect to pay it doubly.

Your daughter, perhaps, shall be above scandal. She shall despise the idle whisper, and the common tattle of her sex; her soul shall be raised above the ignorant and the frivolous; she shall have a relish for higher conversation, and a taste for higher society; but where is she to find, or how is she to obtain this society? You make her incapable of friendship with her own sex. Where is she to look for friends, for companions, for equals? Amongst men? Amongst what class of men? Not amongst men of business, or men of gallantry, but amongst men of literature.

Learned men have usually chosen for their wives, or for their companions, women who were rather below than above the standard of mediocrity: this seems to me natural and reasonable. Such men, probably, feel their own incapacity for the daily business of life, their ignorance of the world, their slovenly habits, and neglect of domestic affairs. They do not want wives who have precisely their own defects; they rather desire to find such as shall, by the opposite habits and virtues, supply their deficiencies. I do not see why two books should marry, any more than two estates. Some few exceptions might be quoted against Stewart's observations. I have just seen, under the article "A Literary Wife," in D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature, an account of Francis Phidelphus, a great scholar in the fifteenth century, who was so desirous of acquiring the Greek language in perfection, that he travelled to Constantinople in search of a *Grecian wife*: the lady proved a scold. "But to do justice to the name of Theodora," as this author adds, "she has been honourably mentioned in the French Academy of Sciences." I hope this proved an adequate compensation to her husband for his domestic broils.

Happy Mad. Dacier! you found a husband suited to your taste! You and Mons. Dacier, if D'Alembert tells the story rightly, once cooked a dish in concert, by a receipt which you found in Apicius, and you both sat down and ate of your learned ragout till you were both like to die.

Were I sure, my dear friend, that every literary lady would be equally fortunate in finding in a husband a man who would sympathize in her tastes, I should diminish my formidable catalogue of evils. But, alas! M. Dacier is no more; "and we shall never live to see his fellow." Literary ladies will, I am afraid, be losers in love, as well as in friendship, by the superiority.—Cupid is a timid, playful child, and is frightened at the helmet of Minerva. It has been observed, that gentlemen are not apt to admire a

prodigious quantity of learning and masculine acquirements in the fair sex;—we usually consider a certain degree of weakness, both of mind and body, as friendly to female grace. I am not absolutely of this opinion; yet I do not see the advantage of supernatural force, either of body or mind, to female excellence. Hercules-Spinster found his strength rather an incumbrance than an advantage.

Superiority of mind must be united with great temper and generosity, to be tolerated by those who are forced to submit to its influence. I have seen witty and learned ladies, who did not seem to think it at all incumbent upon them to sacrifice any thing to the sense of propriety. On the contrary, they seemed to take both pride and pleasure in showing the utmost stretch of their strength, regardless of the consequences, panting only for victory. Upon such occasions, when the adversary has been a husband or a father, I must acknowledge that I have felt sensations which few ladies can easily believe they excite. Airs and graces I can bear as well as another; but airs without graces no man thinks himself bound to bear, and learned airs least of all. Ladies of high rank in the court of Parnassus are apt, sometimes, to claim precedency out of their own dominions, which creates much confusion, and generally ends in their being affronted. That knowledge of the world which keeps people in their proper places they will never learn from the Muses.

Molière has pointed out, with all the force of comic ridicule, in the Femmes Savantes, that a lady, who aspires to the sublime delights of philosophy and poetry, must forego the simple pleasures, and will despise the duties of domestic life. I should not expect that my house affairs would be with haste despatched by a Desdemona, weeping over some unvarnished tale, or petrified with some history of horrors, at the very time when she should be ordering dinner, or paying the butcher's bill.—I should have the less hope of rousing her attention to my culinary concerns and domestic grievances, because I should probably incur her contempt for hinting at these sublunary matters, and her indignation for supposing that she ought to be employed in such degrading occupations. I have heard, that if these sublime geniuses are awakened from their reveries by the *appulse* of external circumstances, they start, and exhibit all the perturbation and amazement of *cataleptic* patients.

Sir Charles Harrington, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, addressed a copy of verses to his wife, "On Women's Vertues:"—these he divides into "the private, *civill*, and heroyke;" the private belong to the country housewife, whom it concerned; chiefly—

"The fruit, malt, hops, to tend, to dry, to utter,
To beat, strip, spin the wool, the hemp, the flax,
Breed poultry, gather honey, try the wax,
And more than all, to have good cheese and butter.
Then next a step, but yet a large step higher,
Came civill vertue fitter for the citty,
With modest looks, good clothes, and answers witty.
These baser things not done, but guided by her."

As for heroyke vertue, and heroyke dames, honest Sir Charles would have nothing to do with them.

Allowing, however, that you could combine all these virtues—that you could form a perfect whole, a female wonder from every creature's best—dangers still threaten you. How will you preserve your daughter from that desire of universal admiration, which will ruin all your work? How will you, along with all the pride of knowledge, give her that "retiring modesty," which is supposed to have more charms for our sex than the fullest display of wit and beauty?

The *fair Pauca of Thoulouse* was so called because she was so fair that no one could live either with or without beholding her:—whenever she came forth from her own mansion, which, history observes, she did very seldom, such impetuous crowds rushed to obtain a sight of her, that limbs were broken and lives were lost wherever she appeared. She ventured abroad less frequently—the evil increased—till at length the magistrates of the city issued an edict commanding the fair Pauca, under the pain of perpetual imprisonment, to appear in broad daylight for one hour, every week, in the public market-place.

Modern ladies, by frequenting public places so regularly, declare their approbation of the wholesome regulations of these prudent magistrates. Very different was the crafty policy of the prophet Mahomet, who forbad

his worshippers even to paint his picture. The Turks have pictures of the hand, the foot, the features of Mahomet, but no representation of the whole face or person is allowed. The portraits of our beauties, in our exhibition-room, show a proper contempt of this insidious policy; and those learned and ingenious ladies who publish their private letters, select maxims, secret anecdotes, and family memoirs, are entitled to our thanks, for thus presenting us with full-lengths of their minds.

Can you expect, my dear sir, that your daughter, with all the genius and learning which you intend to give her, should refrain from these imprudent exhibitions? Will she "yield her charms of mind with sweet delay?" Will she, in every moment of her life, recollect that the fatal desire for universal applause always defeats its own purpose, especially if the purpose be to win our love as well as our admiration? It is in vain to tell me, that more enlarged ideas in our sex would alter our tastes, and alter even the associations which now influence our passions. The captive who has numbered the links of his chains, and has even discovered how these chains are constructed, is not therefore nearer to the recovery of his liberty.

Besides, it must take a length of time to alter associations and opinions, which, if not *just*, are at least *common* in our sex. You cannot expect even that conviction should operate immediately upon the public taste. You will, in a few years, have educated your daughter; and if the world be not educated exactly at the right time to judge of her perfections, to admire and love them, you will have wasted your labour, and you will have sacrificed your daughter's happiness: that happiness, analyze it as a man of the world or as a philosopher, must depend on friendship, love, the exercise of her virtues, the just performance of all the duties of life, and the self-approbation arising from the consciousness of good conduct.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours sincerely.

ANSWER

TO

THE PRECEDING LETTER.

I have as little taste for Mad. Dacier's learned ragout as you can have, my dear sir; and I pity the great scholar, who travelled to Constantinople for the termagant Theodora, believing, as you do, that the honourable mention made of her by the French Academy of Sciences, could be no adequate compensation to her husband for domestic disquiet: but the lady's learning was not essential to his misfortune; he might have met with a scolding dame, though he had not married a Grecian. A profusion of vulgar aphorisms in the dialects of all the counties in England, proverbs in Welsh, Scotish, French, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew, might be adduced to prove that scolds are to be found amongst all classes of women. I am, however, willing to allow, that the more learning, and wit, and eloquence a lady possesses, the more troublesome and the more dangerous she may become as a wife or daughter, unless she is also possessed of good sense and good temper. Of your honest Sir Charles Harrington's two pattern wives, I think I should prefer the country housewife, with whom I could be sure of having good cheese and butter, to the *citty dame* with her good clothes and answers witty.—I should be afraid that these answers witty might be turned against me, and might prove the torment of my life.—You, who have attended to female disputants, must have remarked, that, learned or unlearned, they seldom know how to reason; they assert and declaim, employ wit, and eloquence, and sophistry, to confute, persuade, or abash their adversaries; but distinct reasoning they neither use nor comprehend.—Till women learn to reason, it is in vain that they acquire learning.

You are satisfied, I am sure, with this acknowledgment. I will go farther, and at once give up to you all the learned ladies that exist, or that ever have existed: but when I use the term literary ladies, I mean women who have cultivated their understandings not for the purposes of parade, but with the desire to make themselves useful and agreeable. I estimate the value of a

woman's abilities and acquirements, by the degree in which they contribute to her happiness.

You think yourself happy because you are wise, said a philosopher to a pedant.—I think myself wise because I am happy.

You tell me, that even supposing I could educate my daughter so as to raise her above the common faults and follies of her sex; even supposing I could give her an enlarged understanding, and literature free from pedantry, she would be in danger of becoming unhappy, because she would not, amongst her own sex, find friends suited to her taste, nor amongst ours, admirers adequate to her expectations: you represent her as in the situation of the poor flying-fish, exposed to dangerous enemies in her own element, yet certain, if she tries to soar above them, of being pounced upon by the hawk-eyed critics of the higher regions.

You allow, however, that women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago; that they make a class in society, and have acquired a considerable degree of consequence, and an appropriate character; how can you then fear that a woman of cultivated understanding should be driven from the society of her own sex in search of dangerous companions amongst ours? In the female world she will be neither without an equal nor without a judge; she will not have much to fear from envy, because its malignant eye will not fix upon one object exclusively, when there are numbers to distract its attention, and share the stroke. The fragile nature of female friendships, the petty jealousies which break out at the ball or in the drawing-room, have been from time immemorial the jest of mankind. Trifles, light as air, will necessarily excite not only the jealousy, but the envy of those who think only of trifles. Give them more employment for their thoughts, give them a nobler spirit of emulation, and we shall hear no more of these paltry feuds; give them more useful and more interesting subjects of conversation, and they become not only more agreeable, but safer companions for each other.

Unmarried women, who have stored their minds with knowledge, who have various tastes and literary occupations, who can amuse and be amused in the conversation of well-informed people, are in no danger of becoming burthensome to their friends or to society: though they may not be seen haunting every place of amusement or of public resort, they are not isolated or forlorn; by a variety of associations they are connected with the world,

and their sympathy is expanded and supported by the cultivation of their understandings; nor can it sink, settle, and concentrate upon cats, parrots, and monkeys. How far the human heart may be contracted by ignorance it is difficult to determine; but I am little inclined to envy the *simple* pleasures of those whose understandings are totally uncultivated.—Sir William Hamilton, in his account of the last eruption of Mount Vesuvius, gives us a curious picture of the excessive ignorance and stupidity of some nuns in a convent at Torre del Greco:—one of these nuns was found warming herself at the red-hot lava, which had rolled up to the window of her cell. It was with the greatest difficulty that these scarcely rational beings could be made to comprehend the nature of their danger; and when at last they were prevailed upon to quit the convent, and were advised to carry with them whatever they thought most valuable, they loaded themselves with sweetmeats.—Those who wish for ignorant wives, may find them in other parts of the world, as well as in Italy.

I do not pretend, that even by cultivating my daughter's understanding I can secure for her a husband suited to her taste; it will therefore be prudent to make her felicity in some degree independent of matrimony. Many parents have sufficient kindness and foresight to provide, in point of fortune, for their daughters; but few consider that if a single life should be their choice or their doom, something more is necessary to secure respect and happiness for them in the decline of life. The silent *unreproved* pleasures of literature are the sure resource of those who have cultivated minds; those who have not, must wear out their disconsolate unoccupied old age as chance directs. When you say that men of superior understanding dislike the appearance of extraordinary strength of mind in the fair sex, you probably mean that the display of that strength is disgusting, and you associate with the idea of strength of mind, masculine, arrogant, or pedantic manners: but there is no necessary connexion between these things; and it seems probable that the faults usually ascribed to learned ladies, like those peculiar to learned men, may have arisen in a great measure from circumstances which the progress of civilization in society has much altered.

In the times of ignorance, men of deep science were considered by the vulgar as a class of necromancers, and they were looked upon alternately with terror and admiration; and learned men imposed upon the vulgar by assuming strange airs of mystery and self-importance, wore long beards and

solemn looks; they spoke and wrote in a phraseology peculiar to themselves, and affected to consider the rest of mankind as beneath their notice: but since knowledge has been generally diffused, all this affectation has been laid aside; and though we now and then hear of men of genius who indulge themselves in peculiarities, yet upon the whole the manners of literary men are not strikingly nor wilfully different from those of the rest of the world. The peculiarities of literary women will also disappear as their numbers increase. You are disgusted by their ostentation of learning. Have patience with them, my dear sir; their taste will become more simple when they have been taught by experience that this parade is offensive: even the bitter expression of your disgust may be advantageous to those whose manners are yet to be formed; they will at least learn from it what to avoid; and your letter may perhaps hereafter be of service in my daughter's education.—It is scarcely to be supposed, that a girl of good understanding would deliberately imitate the faults and follies which she hears ridiculed during her childhood, by those whom she esteems.

As to your dread of prodigies, that will subside:—prodigies are heard of most frequently during the ages of ignorance. A woman may now possess a considerable stock of information without being gazed upon as a miracle of learning; and there is not much danger of her being vain of accomplishments which cease to be astonishing. Nor will her peace be disturbed by the idle remarks of the ignorant vulgar.—A literary lady is no longer a sight; the spectacle is now too common to attract curiosity; the species of animal is too well known even to admit of much exaggeration in the description of its appearance, A lady riding on horseback upon a side-saddle is not thought a wonderful thing by the common people in England; but when an English lady rode upon a side-saddle in an Italian city, where the sight was unusual, she was universally gazed at by the populace; to some she appeared an object of astonishment, to others of compassion:—"Ah! poverina," they exclaimed, "n'ha che una gamba!"

The same objects excite different emotions in different situations; and to judge what will astonish or delight any given set of people some years hence, we must consider not merely what is the fashion of to-day, but whither the current of opinion runs, and what is likely to be the fashion of hereafter.—You must have observed that public opinion is at present more favourable to the cultivation of the understanding of the female sex than it was some years ago; more attention is paid to the education of women,

more knowledge and literature are expected from them in society. From the literary lady of the present day something more is expected than that she should know how to spell and to write better than Swift's celebrated Stella, whom he reproves for writing *villian* and *daenger*:—perhaps this very Stella was an object of envy in her own day to those who were her inferiors in literature. No man wishes his wife to be obviously less cultivated than those of her own rank; and something more is now required, even from ordinary talents, than what distinguished the accomplished lady of the seventeenth century. What the standard of excellence may be in the next age we cannot ascertain, but we may guess that the taste for literature will continue to be progressive; therefore, even if you assume that the education of the female sex should be guided by the taste and reigning opinions of ours, and that it should be the object of their lives to win and keep our hearts, you must admit the expediency of attending to that fashionable demand for literature and the fine arts, which has arisen in society.

No woman can foresee what may be the taste of the man with whom she may be united; much of her happiness, however, will depend upon her being able to conform her taste to his: for this reason I should therefore, in female education, cultivate the general powers of the mind, rather than any particular faculty. I do not desire to make my daughter merely a musician, a painter, or a poet; I do not desire to make her merely a botanist, a mathematician, or a chemist; but I wish to give her early the habit of industry and attention, the love of knowledge, and the power of reasoning: these will enable her to attend to excellence in any pursuit to which she may direct her talents. You will observe, that many things which formerly were thought above the comprehension of women, or unfit for their sex, are now acknowledged to be perfectly within the compass of their abilities, and suited to their situation.—Formerly the fair sex was kept in Turkish ignorance; every means of acquiring knowledge was discountenanced by fashion, and impracticable even to those who despised fashion;—our books of science were full of unintelligible jargon, and mystery veiled pompous ignorance from public contempt; but now writers must offer their discoveries to the public in distinct terms, which every body may understand; technical language no longer supplies the place of knowledge, and the art of teaching has been carried to such perfection, that a degree of knowledge may now with ease be acquired in the course of a few years, which formerly it was the business of a life to attain. All this is much in

favour of female literature. Ladies have become ambitious to superintend the education of their children, and hence they have been induced to instruct themselves, that they may be able to direct and inform their pupils. The mother, who now aspires to be the esteemed and beloved instructress of her children, must have a considerable portion of knowledge. Science has of late "*been enlisted under the banners of imagination*," by the irresistible charms of genius; by the same power, her votaries will be led "*from the looser analogies which dress out the imagery of poetry to the stricter ones which form the ratiocination of philosophy*{1}."—Botany has become fashionable; in time it may become useful, if it be not so already. Chemistry will follow botany. Chemistry is a science well suited to the talents and situation of women; it is not a science of parade; it affords occupation and infinite variety; it demands no bodily strength; it can be pursued in retirement; it applies immediately to useful and domestic purposes; and whilst the ingenuity of the most inventive mind may in this science be exercised, there is no danger of inflaming the imagination, because the mind is intent upon realities, the knowledge that is acquired is exact, and the pleasure of the pursuit is a sufficient reward for the labour.

{Footnote 1: Vide preface to Darwin's Botanic Garden.}

A clear and ready knowledge of arithmetic is surely no useless acquirement for those who are to regulate the expenses of a family. Economy is not the mean "penny wise and pound foolish" policy which some suppose it to be; it is the art of calculation joined to the habit of order, and the power of proportioning our wishes to the means of gratifying them. The little pilfering temper of a wife is despicable and odious to every man of sense; but there is a judicious, graceful species of economy, which has no connexion with an avaricious temper, and which, as it depends upon the understanding, can be expected only from cultivated minds. Women who have been well educated, far from despising domestic duties, will hold them in high respect; because they will see that the whole happiness of life is made up of the happiness of each particular day and hour, and that much of the enjoyment of these must depend upon the punctual practice of those virtues which are more valuable than splendid.

It is not, I hope, your opinion, that ignorance is the best security for female virtue. If this connexion between virtue and ignorance could once be clearly proved, we ought to drown our books deeper than ever plummet

sounded:—I say *we*—for the danger extends equally to both sexes, unless you assert that the duties of men rest upon a more certain foundation than the duties of the other sex: if our virtues can be demonstrated to be advantageous, why should theirs suffer for being exposed to the light of reason?—All social virtue conduces to our own happiness or that of our fellow-creatures; can it weaken the sense of duty to illustrate this truth?—Having once pointed out to the understanding of a sensible woman the necessary connexion between her virtues and her happiness, must not those virtues, and the means of preserving them, become in her eyes objects of the most interesting importance? But you fear, that even if their conduct continued to be irreproachable, the manners of women might be rendered less delicate by the increase of their knowledge; you dislike in the female sex that daring spirit which despises the common forms of society, and which breaks through the reserve and delicacy of female manners:—so do I:—and the best method to make my pupil respect these things is to show her how they are indispensably connected with the largest interests of society: surely this perception of the utility of forms apparently trifling, must be a strong security to the prudential reserve of the sex, and far superior to the automatic habits of those who submit to the conventions of the world without consideration or conviction. Habit, confirmed by reason, assumes the rank of virtue. The motives that restrain from vice must be increased by the clear conviction, that vice and wretchedness are inseparably united.

Do not, however, imagine, my dear sir, that I shall attempt to lay moral demonstration before *a child*, who could not possibly comprehend my meaning; do not imagine that because I intend to cultivate my daughter's understanding, I shall neglect to give her those early habits of reserve and modesty which constitute the female character.—Believing, as I do, that woman, as well as man, may be called a bundle of habits, I shall be peculiarly careful, during my child's early education, to give her as many good habits as possible; by degrees as her understanding, that is to say as her knowledge and power of reasoning shall increase, I can explain the advantages of these habits, and confirm their power by the voice of reason. I lose no time, I expose myself to no danger, by this system. On the contrary, those who depend entirely upon the force of custom and prejudice expose themselves to infinite danger. If once their pupils begin to reflect upon their own hoodwinked education, they will probably suspect that they have been deceived in all that they have been taught, and they will burst

their bonds with indignation.—Credulity is always rash in the moment she detects the impositions that have been practised upon her easy temper. In this inquiring age, few have any chance of passing through life without being excited to examine the motives and principles from which they act: is it not therefore prudent to cultivate the reasoning faculty, by which alone this examination can be made with safety? A false argument, a repartee, the charms of wit or eloquence, the voice of fashion, of folly, of numbers, might, if she had no substantial reasons to support her cause, put virtue not only out of countenance, but out of humour.

You speak of moral instinct. As far as I understand the term, it implies certain habits early acquired from education; to these I would add the power of reasoning, and then, and not till then, I should think myself safe:—for I have observed that the pupils of habit are utterly confounded when they are placed in circumstances different from those to which they have been accustomed.—It has been remarked by travellers and naturalists, that animals, notwithstanding their boasted instinctive knowledge, sometimes make strange and fatal mistakes in their conduct, when they are placed in new situations:—destitute of the reasoning faculty, and deceived by resemblances, they mistake poison for food. Thus the bull-frog will swallow burning charcoal, mistaking it for fire-flies; and the European hogs and poultry which travelled to Surinam poisoned themselves by eating plants that were unknown to them{1}.

{Footnote 1: Vide Stedmen’s Voyage to Surinam, vol. ii. p. 47.}

You seem, my dear sir, to be afraid that truth should not keep so firm a hold upon the mind as prejudice; and you produce an allusion to justify your fears. You tell us that civil society is like a building, and you warn me not to tear down the ivy which clings to the walls, and braces the loose stones together.—I believe that ivy, in some situations, tends to pull down the walls to which it clings.—You think it is not worth while to cultivate the understandings of women, because you say that you have no security that the conviction of their reason will have any permanent good effect upon their conduct; and to persuade me of this, you bid me observe that men who are superior to women in strength of mind and judgment, are frequently misled by their passions. By this mode of argument, you may conclude that reason is totally useless to the whole human race; but you cannot, with any show of justice, infer that it ought to be monopolized by one-half of

mankind. But why should you quarrel with reason, because passion sometimes conquers her?—You should endeavour to strengthen the connexion between theory and practice, if it be not sufficiently strong already; but you can gain nothing by destroying theory.—Happiness is your aim; but your unpractised or unsteady hand does not obey your will: you do not at the first trial hit the mark precisely.—Would you, because you are awkward, insist upon being blind?

The strength of mind which enables people to govern themselves by their reason, is not always connected with abilities even in their most cultivated state: I deplore the instances which I have seen of this truth, but I do not despair; on the contrary, I am excited to inquire into the causes of this phenomenon; nor, because I see some evil, would I sacrifice the good upon a bare motive of suspicion. It is a contradiction to say, that giving the power to discern what is good is giving a disposition to prefer what is bad. I acknowledge with regret, that women who have been but half instructed, who have seen only superficially the relations of moral and political ideas, and who have obtained but an imperfect knowledge of the human heart, have conducted themselves so as to disgrace their talents and their sex; these are conspicuous and melancholy examples, which are cited oftener with malice than with pity. But I appeal to examples amongst our contemporaries, to which every man of literature will immediately advert, to prove, that where the female understanding has been properly cultivated, women have not only obtained admiration by their useful abilities, but respect by their exemplary conduct.

I apprehend that many of the errors into which women of literature have fallen, may have arisen from an improper choice of books. Those who read chiefly works of imagination, receive from them false ideas of life and of the human heart. Many of these productions I should keep as I would deadly poison from my child; I should rather endeavour to turn her attention to science than to romance, and to give her early that taste for truth and utility, which, when once implanted, can scarcely be eradicated. There is a wide difference between innocence and ignorance: ignorant women may have minds the most debased and perverted, whilst the most cultivated understanding may be united with the most perfect innocence and simplicity.

Even if literature were of no other use to the fair sex than to supply them with employment, I should think the time dedicated to the cultivation of their minds well bestowed: they are surely better occupied when they are reading or writing than when coqueting or gaming, losing their fortunes or their characters. You despise the writings of women:—you think that they might have made a better use of the pen, than to write plays, and poetry, and romances. Considering that the pen was to women a new instrument, I think they have made at least as good a use of it as learned men did of the needle some centuries ago, when they set themselves to determine how many spirits could stand upon its point, and were ready to tear one another to pieces in the discussion of this sublime question. Let the sexes mutually forgive each other their follies; or, what is much better, let them combine their talents for their general advantage.—You say, that the experiments we have made do not encourage us to proceed—that the increased care and pains which have been of late years bestowed upon female education have produced no adequate returns; but you in the same breath allow that amongst your contemporaries, whom you prudently forbear to mention, there are some instances of great talents applied to useful purposes. Did you expect that the fruits of good cultivation should appear before the seed was sown? You triumphantly enumerate the disadvantages to which women, from the laws and customs of society, are liable:—they cannot converse freely with men of wit, science, and learning, nor even with the artist, or artificers; they are excluded from academies, public libraries, &c. Even our politeness prevents us, you say, from ever speaking plain truth and sense to the fair sex:—every assistance that foreign or domestic ingenuity can invent to encourage literary studies, is, as you boast, almost exclusively ours: and after pointing out all these causes for the inferiority of women in knowledge, you ask for a list of the inventions and discoveries of those who, by your own statement of the question, have not been allowed opportunities for observation. With the insulting injustice of an Egyptian task-master, you demand the work, and deny the necessary materials.

I admit, that with respect to the opportunities of acquiring knowledge, institutions and manners are, as you have stated, much in favour of our sex; but your argument concerning *time* appears to me to be unfounded.—Women who do not love dissipation must have more time for the cultivation of their understandings than men can have, if you compute the whole of life:—whilst the knowledge of the learned languages continues to form an

indispensable part of a gentleman's education, many years of childhood and youth must be devoted to their attainment.—During these studies, the general cultivation of the understanding is in some degree retarded. All the intellectual powers are cramped, except the memory, which is sufficiently exercised, but which is overloaded with words, and with words that are not always understood.—The genius of living and of dead languages differs so much, that the pains which are taken to write elegant Latin frequently spoil the English style.—Girls usually write much better than boys; they think and express their thoughts clearly at an age when young men can scarcely write an easy letter upon any common occasion. Women do not read the good authors of antiquity as school-books, but they can have excellent translations of most of them when they are capable of tasting the beauties of composition.—I know that it is supposed we cannot judge of the classics by translations, and I am sensible that much of the merit of the originals may be lost; but I think the difference in pleasure is more than overbalanced to women by the *time* that is saved, and by the labour and misapplication of abilities which are spared. If they do not acquire a classical taste, neither do they imbibe classic prejudices; nor are they early disgusted with literature by pedagogues, lexicons, grammars, and all the melancholy apparatus of learning.—Women begin to taste the pleasures of reading, and the best authors in the English language are their amusement, just at the age when young men, disgusted by their studies, begin to be ashamed of alluding to literature amongst their companions. Travelling, lounging, field sports, gaming, and what is called pleasure in various shapes, usually fill the interval between quitting the university and settling for life.—When this period is past, business, the necessity of pursuing a profession, the ambition to shine in parliament, or to rise in public life, occupy a large portion of their lives.—In many professions the understanding is but partially cultivated; and general literature must be neglected by those who are occupied in earning bread or amassing riches for their family:—men of genius are often heard to complain, that in the pursuit of a profession, they are obliged to contract their inquiries and concentrate their powers; statesmen lament that they must often pursue the *expedient* even when they discern that it is not *the right*; and men of letters, who earn their bread by their writings, inveigh bitterly against the tyranny of booksellers, who degrade them to the state of "literary artisans."—"Literary artisans," is the comprehensive term under which a celebrated philosopher {1} classes all

those who cultivate only particular talents or powers of the mind, and who suffer their other faculties to lose all strength and vigour for want of exercise. The other sex have no such constraint upon their understandings; neither the necessity of earning their bread, nor the ambition to shine in public affairs, hurry or prejudice their minds: in domestic life they have leisure to be wise.

{Footnote 1: Professor Dugald Stewart—History of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.}

Far from being ashamed that so little has been done by female abilities in science and useful literature, I am surprised that so much has been effected. On natural history, on criticism, on moral philosophy, on education, they have written with elegance, eloquence, precision, and ingenuity. Your complaint that women do not turn their attention to useful literature is surely ill-timed. If they merely increased the number of books in circulation, you might declaim against them with success; but when they add to the general fund of useful and entertaining knowledge, you cannot with any show of justice prohibit their labours: there can be no danger that the market should ever be overstocked with produce of intrinsic worth.

The despotic monarchs of Spain forbid the exploring of any new gold or silver mines without the express permission of government, and they have ordered several rich ones to be shut up as not equal to the cost of working. There is some *appearance* of reason for this exertion of power: it may prevent the world from being encumbered by nominal wealth.—But the Dutch merchants, who burn whole cargoes of spice lest they should lower the price of the commodity in which they deal, show a mean spirit of monopoly which can plead no plausible excuse.—I hope you feel nothing like a disposition to Spanish despotism or Dutch jealousy, when you would exclude female talents from the literary market.

You observe, that since censure is a tax which every man must pay who aspires to eminence, women must expect to pay it doubly. Why the tax should not be equally assessed, I am at a loss to conjecture: but in fact it does not fall very heavy upon those who have any portion of philosophy: they may, with *the poet of reason*, exclaim—

“Though doubly tax’d, how little have I lost!”

Your dread of the envy attendant upon literary excellence might with equal justice be extended to every species of merit, and might be urged against all that is good in art or nature.—Scandal is said to attack always the fairest characters, as the birds always peck most at the ripest fruit; but would you for this reason have no fruit ripen, or no characters aspire to excellence? But if it be your opinion that women are naturally inferior to us in capacity, why do you feel so much apprehension of their becoming eminent, or of their obtaining power, in consequence of the cultivation of their understandings?—These expressions of scorn and jealousy neutralize each other. If your contempt were unmixed and genuine, it would be cool and tranquil, inclining rather to pity than to anger.

You say that in all animals the female is the inferior; and you have never seen any reason to believe that the human species affords an exception to this observation.—Superiority amongst brutes depends upon force; superiority amongst the human species depends upon reason: that men are naturally stronger than women is evident; but strength of mind has no necessary connexion with strength of body; and intellectual ability has ever conquered mere physical force, from the times of Ajax and Ulysses to the present day. In civilized nations, that species of superiority which belongs to force is much reduced in value amongst the higher classes of society.—The baron who struck his sword into an oak, and defied any one to pull out the weapon, would not in these days fill the hearts of his antagonists with terror; nor would the twisting of a horse-shoe be deemed a feat worthy to decide a nation in their choice of a king.—The days of chivalry are no more: the knight no longer sallies forth in ponderous armour, mounted upon "a steed as invulnerable as himself{1}."—The damsel no longer depends upon the prowess of his mighty arm to maintain the glory of her charms, or the purity of her fame; grim barons, and castles guarded by monsters and all-devouring dragons, are no more; and from being the champions and masters of the fair sex, we are now become their friends and companions. We have not surely been losers by this change; the fading glories of romance have vanished, but the real permanent pleasures of domestic life remain in their stead; and what the fair have lost of adulation they have gained in friendship.

{Footnote 1: Condorcet.—History of the Progress of the Human Mind.}

Do not, my dear sir, call me a champion for the rights of woman; I am too much their friend to be their partisan, and I am more anxious for their happiness than intent upon a metaphysical discussion of their rights: their happiness is so nearly connected with ours, that it seems to me absurd to manage any argument so as to set the two sexes at variance by vain contention for superiority. It ought not to be our object to make an invidious division of privileges, or an ostentatious declaration of rights, but to determine what is most for our general advantage.

You fear that the minds of women should be enlarged and cultivated, lest their power in society and their liberty should consequently increase. Observe that the word *liberty*, applied to the female sex, conveys alarming ideas to our minds, because we do not stay to define the term; we have a confused notion that it implies want of reserve, want of delicacy; boldness of manners, or of conduct; in short, liberty to do wrong.—Surely this is a species of liberty which knowledge can never make desirable. Those who understand the real interests of society, who clearly see the connexion between virtue and happiness, must know that *the liberty to do wrong* is synonymous with *the liberty to make themselves miserable*. This is a privilege of which none would choose to avail themselves. When reason defines the term, there is no danger of its being misunderstood; but imagination and false associations often make this word liberty, in its perverted sense, sound delightful to those who have been kept in ignorance and slavery. Girls who have been disciplined under the strict high hand of authority, are apt to fancy that to escape from habitual restraint, to exercise their own will, no matter how, is to be free and to be happy.—Hence innumerable errors in their conduct; hence their mistaken notions of liberty, and that inordinate ambition to acquire power, which ignorant, ill-educated women show in every petty struggle, where they are permitted to act in private life. You believe this temper to be inherent in the sex; and a man, who has just published a book upon the Spanish bull-fights, declares his belief, that the passion for bull-fighting is innate in the breast of every Spaniard.—Do not, my friend, assign two causes for an effect where one is obviously adequate. The disposition to love command need not be attributed to any innate cause in the minds of females, whilst it may be fairly ascribed to their erroneous education.

I shall early cultivate my daughter’s judgment, to prevent her from being wilful or positive; I shall leave her to choose for herself in all those trifles

upon which the happiness of childhood depends; and I shall gradually teach her to reflect upon the consequences of her actions, to compare and judge of her feelings, and to compute the morn and evening to her day.—I shall thus, I hope, induce her to reason upon all subjects, even upon matters of taste, where many women think it sufficient to say, I admire; or, I detest:—Oh, charming! or, Oh, horrible!—People who have reasons for their preferences and aversions, are never so provokingly zealous in the support of their own tastes, as those usually are who have no arguments to convince themselves or others that they are in the right.

But you are apprehensive that the desire to govern, which women show in domestic life, should obtain a larger field to display itself in public affairs.—It seems to me impossible that they can ever acquire the species of direct power which you dread: their influence must be private; it is therefore of the utmost consequence that it should be judicious.—It was not Themistocles, but his wife and child, who governed the Athenians; it was therefore of some consequence that the boy who governed the mother, who governed her husband, should not be a spoiled child; and consequently that the mother who educated this child should be a reasonable woman. Thus are human affairs chained together; and female influence is a necessary and important link, which you cannot break without destroying the whole.

If it be your object, my dear sir, to monopolize power for our sex, you cannot possibly secure it better from the wishes of the other, than by enlightening their minds and enlarging their views: they will then be convinced, not by the voice of the moralist, who puts us to sleep whilst he persuades us of the vanity of all sublunary enjoyments, but by their own awakened observation: they will be convinced that power is generally an evil to its possessor; that to those who really wish for the good of their fellow-creatures, it is at best but a painful trust.—The mad philosopher in Rasselas, who imagined that he regulated the weather and distributed the seasons, could never enjoy a moment's repose, lest he should not make "to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine."—Those who are entrusted with the government of nations must, if they have an acute sense of justice, experience something like the anxiety felt by this unfortunate monarch of the clouds.

Lord Kenyon has lately decided that a woman may *be an overseer of a parish*; but you are not, I suppose, apprehensive that many ladies of

cultivated understanding should become ambitious of this honour.—One step farther in reasoning, and a woman would desire as little to be a queen or an empress, as to be the overseer of a parish.—You may perhaps reply, that men, even those of the greatest understanding, have been ambitious, and fond even to excess of power. That ambition is the glorious fault of heroes, I allow; but heroes are not always men of the most enlarged understandings—they are possessed by the spirit of military adventure—an infectious spirit, which men catch from one another in the course of their education:—to this contagion the fair sex are not exposed.

At all events, if you suppose that women are likely to acquire influence in the state, it is prudent to enlighten their understandings, that they may not make an absurd or pernicious use of their power. You appeal to history, to prove that great calamities have ensued whenever the female sex has obtained power; yet you acknowledge that we cannot with certainty determine whether these evils have been the effects of our trusting them with liberty, or of our neglecting previously to instruct them in the use of it:—upon the decision of this question rests your whole argument. In a most awful tone of declamation, you bid me follow the history of female nature, from the court of Augustus to that of Lewis XIVth, and tell you whether I can hesitate to acknowledge, that the liberty and influence of women have always been the greatest during the decline of empires.—But you have not proved to me that women had more knowledge, that they were better educated, at the court of Augustus, or during the reign of Lewis XIVth, than at any other place, or during any other period of the world; therefore your argument gains nothing by the admission of your assertions; and unless I could trace the history of female education, it is vain for me to follow what you call the history of female nature.

It is, however, remarkable, that the means by which the sex have hitherto obtained that species of power which they have abused, have arisen chiefly from their personal, and not from their mental qualifications; from their skill in the arts of persuasion, and from their accomplishments; not from their superior powers of reasoning, or from the cultivation of their understanding. The most refined species of coquetry can undoubtedly be practised in the highest perfection by women, who to personal graces unite all the fascination of wit and eloquence. There is infinite danger in permitting such women to obtain power without having acquired habits of reasoning. Rousseau admires these sirens; but the system of Rousseau,

pursued to its fullest extent, would overturn the world, would make every woman a Cleopatra, and every man an Antony; it would destroy all domestic virtue, all domestic happiness, all the pleasures of truth and love.—In the midst of that delirium of passion to which Antony gave the name of love, what must have been the state of his degraded, wretched soul, when he could suspect his mistress of designs upon his life?—To cure him of these suspicions, she at a banquet poisoned the flowers of his garland, waited till she saw him inflamed with wine, then persuaded him to break the tops of his flowers into his goblet, and just stopped him when the cup was at his lips, exclaiming—"Those flowers are poisoned: you see that I do not want the means of destroying you, if you were become tiresome to me, or if I could live without you."—And this is the happy pair who instituted the orders of *The inimitable lovers*!—and *The companions in death*!{1}

{Footnote 1: Vide Plutarch.}

These are the circumstances which should early be pointed out, to both sexes, with all the energy of truth: let them learn that the most exquisite arts of the most consummate coquette, could not obtain the confidence of him, who sacrificed to her charms, the empire of the world. It is from the experience of the past that we must form our judgment of the future. How unjustly you accuse me of desiring to destroy the memory of past experiments, the wisdom collected by the labour of ages! *You* would prohibit this treasure of knowledge to one-half of the human species; and *I* on the contrary would lay it open to all my fellow-creatures.—I speak as if it were actually in our option to retard or to accelerate the intellectual progress of the sex; but in fact it is absolutely out of our power to drive the fair sex back to their former state of darkness: the art of printing has totally changed their situation; their eyes are opened,—the classic page is unrolled, they *will* read:—all we can do is to induce them to read with judgment—to enlarge their minds so that they may take a full view of their interests and of ours. I have no fear that the truth upon any subject should injure my daughter's mind; it is falsehood that I dread. I dread that she should acquire preposterous notions of love, of happiness, from the furtive perusal of vulgar novels, or from the clandestine conversation of ignorant waiting-maids:—I dread that she should acquire, even from the enchanting eloquence of Rousseau, the fatal idea, that cunning and address are the natural resources of her sex; that coquetry is necessary to attract, and dissimulation to preserve the heart of man.—I would not, however,

proscribe an author, because I believe some of his opinions to be false; I would have my daughter read and compare various books, and correct her judgment of books by listening to the conversation of persons of sense and experience. Women may learn much of what is essential to their happiness, from the unprejudiced testimony of a father or a brother; they may learn to distinguish the pictures of real life from paintings of imaginary manners and passions which never had, which never can have, any existence.—They may learn that it is not the reserve of hypocrisy, the affected demeanour either of a prude or a coquette, that we admire; but it is the simple, graceful, natural modesty of a woman, whose mind is innocent. With this belief impressed upon her heart, do you think, my dear friend, that she who can reflect and reason would take the means to disgust where she wishes to please? or that she would incur contempt, when she knows how to secure esteem?—Do you think that she will employ artifice to entangle some heedless heart, when she knows that every heart which can be so won is not worth the winning?—She will not look upon our sex either as dupes or tyrants; she will be aware of the important difference between evanescent passion, and that affection founded upon mutual esteem, which forms the permanent happiness of life.

I am not apprehensive, my dear sir, that Cupid should be scared by the helmet of Minerva; he has conquered his idle, fears, and has been familiarized to Minerva and the Muses;

"And now of power his darts are found,
Twice ten thousand times to wound{1}."

{Footnote 1: See the introduction of Cupid to the Muses and Minerva, in a charming poem of Mrs. Barbauld's—"*The origin of song-writing*."'"—Would it not afford a beautiful subject for a picture?}

That the power of beauty over the human heart is infinitely increased by the associated ideas of virtue and intellectual excellence has been long acknowledged.—A set of features, however regular, inspire but little admiration or enthusiasm, unless they be irradiated by that sunshine of the soul which creates beauty. The expression of intelligent benevolence renders even homely features and cheeks of sorry grain{1} agreeable; and it

has been observed, that the most lasting attachments have not always been excited by the most beautiful of the sex. As men have become more cultivated, they have attended more to the expression of amiable and estimable qualities in the female countenance; and in all probability the taste for this species of beauty will increase amongst the good and wise. When agreeable qualities are connected with the view of any particular form, we learn to love that form, though it may have no other merit. Women who have no pretensions to Grecian beauty may, if their countenances are expressive of good temper and good sense, have some chance of pleasing men of cultivated minds.—In an excellent Review{2} of Gillier's Essays on the Causes of the Perfection of Antique Sculpture, which I have just seen, it is observed, that our exclusive admiration of the physiognomy of the Greeks arises from prejudice, since the Grecian countenance cannot be necessarily associated with any of the perfections which now distinguish accomplished or excellent men. This remark in a popular periodical work shows that the public mind is not bigoted in matters of taste, and that the standard is no longer supposed to be fixed by the voice of ancient authority. The changes that are made in the opinions of our sex as to female beauty, according to the different situations in which women are placed, and the different qualities on which we fix the idea of their excellence, are curious and striking. Ask a northern Indian, says a traveller who has lately visited them, ask a northern Indian what is beauty? and he will answer, a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek bones, three or four broad black lines across each cheek, a low forehead, a large broad chin, a clumsy hook nose, &c. These beauties are greatly heightened, or at least rendered more valuable, when the possessor is capable of dressing all kinds of skins, converting them into the different parts of their clothing, and able to carry eight or ten stone in summer, or haul a much greater weight in winter.—Prince Matanabbee, adds this author, prided himself much upon the height and strength of his wives, and would frequently say, few women could carry or haul heavier loads. If, some years ago, you had asked a Frenchman what he meant by beauty, he would have talked to you of *l'air piquant, l'air spirituel, l'air noble, l'air comme il faut*, and he would have referred ultimately to that *je ne sçais quoi*, for which Parisian belles were formerly celebrated.—French women mixed much in company, the charms of what they called *esprit* were admired in conversation, and the *petit minois* denoting lively wit and coquetry became fashionable in France, whilst

gallantry and a taste for the pleasures of *society* prevailed. The countenance expressive of sober sense and modest reserve continues to be the taste of the English, who wisely prefer the pleasures of domestic life.—Domestic life should, however, be enlivened and embellished with all the wit and vivacity and politeness for which French women were once admired, without admitting any of their vices or follies. The more men of literature and polished manners desire to spend their time in their own families, the more they must wish that their wives and daughters may have tastes and habits similar to their own. If they can meet with conversation suited to their taste at home, they will not be driven to clubs for companions; they will invite the men of wit and science of their acquaintance to their own houses, instead of appointing some place of meeting from which ladies are to be excluded. This mixture of the talents and knowledge of both sexes must be advantageous to the interests of society, by increasing domestic happiness. —Private *virtues* are public benefits: if each bee were content in his cell, there could be no grumbling hive; and if each cell were complete, the whole fabric must be perfect.

{Footnote 1: Milton.} {Footnote 2: Appendix to Monthly Review, from January 1798, page 516.}

When you asserted, my dear sir, that learned men usually prefer for their wives, women rather below than above the standard of mental mediocrity, you forgot many instances strongly in contradiction of this opinion.—Since I began this letter, I met with the following pathetic passage, which I cannot forbear transcribing:

“The greatest part of the observations contained in the foregoing pages were derived from a lady, who is now beyond the reach of being affected by any thing in this sublunary world. Her beneficence of disposition induced her never to overlook any fact or circumstance that fell within the sphere of her observation, which promised to be in any respect beneficial to her fellow-creatures. To her gentle influence the public are indebted, if they be indeed indebted at all, for whatever useful hints may at any time have dropped from my pen. A being, she thought, who must depend so much as man does on the assistance of others, owes, as a debt to his fellow-creatures, the communication of the little useful knowledge that chance may have thrown in his way. Such has been my constant aim; such were the views of the wife of my bosom, the friend of my heart, who supported and

assisted me in all my pursuits.—I now feel a melancholy satisfaction in contemplating those objects she once delighted to elucidate."{1}

{Footnote 1: J. Anderson—Essay on the Management of a Dairy}

Dr. Gregory, Haller, and Lord Lyttleton, have, in the language of affection, poetry, and truth, described the pleasures which men of science and literature enjoy in an union with women who can sympathize in all their thoughts and feelings, who can converse with them as equals, and live with them as friends; who can assist them in the important and delightful duty of educating their children; who can make their family their most agreeable society, and their home the attractive centre of happiness.

Can women of uncultivated understandings make such wives or such mothers?

LETTERS

OF

JULIA AND CAROLINE.

No penance can absolve their guilty fame,
Nor tears, that wash out guilt, can wash out shame.

PRIOR.

LETTER I.

JULIA TO CAROLINE.

In vain, dear Caroline, you urge me to *think*; I profess only to *feel*.

"*Reflect upon my own feelings!* Analyze my notions of happiness! explain to you my system!"—My system! But I have no system: that is the very difference between us. My notions of happiness cannot be resolved into simple, fixed principles. Nor dare I even attempt to analyze them; the subtle essence would escape in the process: just punishment to the alchymist in morality!

You, Caroline, are of a more sedate, contemplative character. Philosophy becomes the rigid mistress of your life, enchanting enthusiasm the companion of mine. Suppose she lead me now and then in pursuit of a meteor; am not I happy in the chase? When one illusion vanishes, another shall appear, and, still leading me forward towards an horizon that retreats as I advance, the happy prospect of futurity shall vanish only with my existence.

"Reflect upon my feelings!"—Dear Caroline, is it not enough that I do feel?—All that I dread is that *apathy* which philosophers call tranquillity. You tell me that by continually *indulging*, I shall weaken my natural

sensibility;—are not all the faculties of the soul improved, refined by exercise? and why shall *this* be excepted from the general law?

But I must not, you tell me, indulge my taste for romance and poetry, lest I waste that sympathy on *fiction* which *reality* so much better deserves. My dear friend, let us cherish the precious propensity to pity! no matter what the object; sympathy with fiction or reality arises from the same disposition.

When the sigh of compassion rises in my bosom, when the spontaneous tear starts from my eye, what frigid moralist shall "stop the genial current of the soul?" shall say to the tide of passion, *So far shall thou go, and no farther?*—Shall man presume to circumscribe that which Providence has left unbounded?

But oh, Caroline! if our feelings as well as our days are numbered; if, by the immutable law of nature, apathy be the sleep of passion, and languor the necessary consequence of exertion; if indeed the pleasures of life are so ill proportioned to its duration, oh, may that duration be shortened to me!—Kind Heaven, let not my soul die before my body!

Yes, if at this instant my guardian genius were to appear before me, and offering me the choice of my future destiny; on the one hand, the even temper, the poised judgment, the stoical serenity of philosophy; on the other, the eager genius, the exquisite sensibility of enthusiasm: if the genius said to me, "Choose"—the lot of the one is great pleasure, and great pain—great virtues, and great defects—ardent hope, and severe disappointment—ecstasy, and despair:—the lot of the other is calm happiness unmixed with violent grief—virtue without heroism—respect without admiration—and a length of life, in which to every moment is allotted its proper portion of felicity:—Gracious genius! I should exclaim, if half my existence must be the sacrifice, take it; *enthusiasm is my choice*.

Such, my dear friend, would be my choice were I a man; as a woman, how much more readily should I determine!

What has woman to do with philosophy? The graces flourish not under her empire: a woman's part in life is to please, and Providence has assigned to her *success*, all the pride and pleasure of her being.

Then leave us our weakness, leave us our follies; they are our best arms:—

“Leave us to trifle with more grace and ease,
Whom folly pleases and whose follies please”

The moment grave sense and solid merit appear, adieu the bewitching caprice, the “*lively nonsense*,” the exquisite, yet childish susceptibility which charms, interests, captivates.—Believe me, our *amiable defects* win more than our noblest virtues. Love requires sympathy, and sympathy is seldom connected with a sense of superiority. I envy none their “*painful pre-eminence*.” Alas! whether it be deformity or excellence which makes us say with Richard the Third,

“I am myself alone!”

it comes to much the same thing. Then let us, Caroline, content ourselves to gain in love, what we lose in esteem.

Man is to be held only by the *slightest* chains; with the idea that he can break them at pleasure, he submits to them in sport; but his pride revolts against the power to which his *reason* tells him he ought to submit. What then can woman gain by reason? Can she prove by argument that she is amiable? or demonstrate that she is an angel?

Vain was the industry of the artist, who, to produce the image of perfect beauty, selected from the fairest faces their most faultless features. Equally vain must be the efforts of the philosopher, who would excite the idea of mental perfection, by combining an assemblage of party-coloured virtues.

Such, I had almost said, is my *system*, but I mean my *sentiments*. I am not accurate enough to compose a *system*. After all, how vain are systems, and theories, and reasonings!

We may *declaim*, but what do we really know? All is uncertainty—human prudence does nothing—fortune every thing: I leave every thing therefore to fortune; *you* leave nothing. Such is the difference between us,—and which shall be the happiest, time alone can decide. Farewell, dear Caroline; I love you better than I thought I could love a philosopher.

Your ever affectionate

JULIA.

LETTER II.

CAROLINE'S ANSWER TO JULIA.

At the hazard of ceasing to be "*charming*," "*interesting*," "*captivating*," I must, dear Julia, venture to reason with you, to examine your favourite doctrine of "*amiable defects*," and, if possible, to dissipate that unjust dread of perfection which you seem to have continually before your eyes.

It is the sole object of a woman's life, you say, to *please*. Her amiable defects *please* more than her noblest virtues, her follies more than her wisdom, her caprice more than her temper, and *something*, a nameless something, which no art can imitate and no science can teach, more than all.

Art, you say, spoils the graces, and corrupts the heart of woman; and at best can produce only a cold model of perfection; which though perhaps strictly conformable to *rule*, can never touch the soul, or please the unprejudiced taste, like one simple stroke of genuine nature.

I have often observed, dear Julia, that an inaccurate use of words produces such a strange confusion in all reasoning, that in the heat of debate, the combatants, unable to distinguish their friends from their foes, fall promiscuously on both. A skilful disputant knows well how to take advantage of this confusion, and sometimes endeavours to create it. I do not know whether I am to suspect you of such a design; but I must guard against it.

You have with great address availed yourself of the *two* ideas connected with the word *art*: first, as opposed to simplicity, it implies artifice; and next, as opposed to ignorance, it comprehends all the improvements of

science, which leading us to search for general causes, rewards us with a dominion over their dependent effects:—that which instructs how to pursue the objects which we may have in view with the greatest probability of success. All men who act from general principles are so far philosophers. Their objects may be, when attained, insufficient to their happiness, or they may not previously have known all the necessary means to obtain them: but they must not therefore complain, if they do not meet with success which they have no reason to expect.

Parrhasius, in collecting the most admired excellences from various models, to produce perfection, concluded, from general principles that mankind would be pleased again with what had once excited their admiration.—So far he was a philosopher: but he was disappointed of success:—yes, for he was ignorant of the cause necessary to produce it. The separate features might be perfect, but they were unsuited to each other, and in their forced union he could not give to the whole countenance symmetry and an appropriate expression.

There was, as you say, a *something* wanting, which his science had not taught him. He should then have set himself to examine what that *something* was, and how it was to be obtained. His want of success arose from the *insufficiency*, not the *fallacy*, of theory. Your object, dear Julia, we will suppose is "to please." If general observation and experience have taught you, that slight accomplishments and a trivial character succeed more certainly in obtaining this end, than higher worth and sense, you act from principle in rejecting the one and aiming at the other. You have discovered, or think you have discovered, the secret causes which produce the desired effect, and you employ them. Do not call this *instinct* or *nature*; this also, though you scorn it, is *philosophy*.

But when you come soberly to reflect, you have a feeling in your mind, that reason and cool judgment disapprove of the part you are acting.

Let us, however, distinguish between disapprobation of the *object*, and the means.

Averse as enthusiasm is from the retrograde motion of analysis, let me, my dear friend, lead you one step backward.

Why do you wish to please? I except at present from the question, the desire to please, arising from a passion which requires a reciprocal return. Confined as *this* wish must be in a woman's heart to one object alone, when

you say, Julia, *that the admiration of others* will be absolutely necessary to your happiness, I must suppose you mean to express only a *general* desire to please?

Then under this limitation—let me ask you again, why do you wish to please?

Do not let a word stop you. The word *vanity* conveys to us a disagreeable idea. There seems something *selfish* in the sentiment—that all the pleasure we feel in pleasing others arises from the gratification it affords to our own *vanity*.

We refine, and explain, and never can bring ourselves fairly to make a confession, which we are sensible must lower us in the opinion of others, and consequently mortify the very *vanity* we would conceal. So strangely then do we deceive ourselves as to deny the existence of a motive, which at the instant prompts the denial. But let us, dear Julia, exchange the word *vanity* for a less odious word, self-complacency; let us acknowledge that we wish to please, because the success raises our self-complacency. If you ask why raising our self-approbation gives us pleasure, I must answer, that I do not know. Yet I see and feel that it does; I observe that the voice of numbers is capable of raising the highest transport or the most fatal despair. The eye of man seems to possess a fascinating power over his fellow-creatures, to raise the blush of shame, or the glow of pride.

I look around me, and I see riches, titles, dignities, pursued with such eagerness by thousands, only as the signs of distinction. Nay, are not all these things sacrificed the moment they cease to be distinctions? The moment the prize of glory is to be won by other means, do not millions sacrifice their fortunes, their peace, their health, their lives, for *fame*? Then amongst the highest pleasures of human beings I must place self-approbation. With this belief, let us endeavour to secure it in the greatest extent, and to the longest duration.

Then, Julia, the wish to please becomes only a secondary motive, subordinate to the desire I have to secure my own self-complacency. We will examine how far they are connected.

In reflecting upon my own mind, I observe that I am flattered by the opinion of others, in proportion to the opinion I have previously formed of their judgment; or I perceive that the opinion of numbers, merely as numbers, has power to give me great pleasure or great pain. I would unite

both these pleasures if I could, but in general I cannot—they are incompatible. The opinion of the vulgar crowd and the enlightened individual, the applause of the highest and the lowest of mankind, cannot be obtained by the same means.

Another question then arises,—whom shall we wish to please? We must choose, and be decided in the choice.

You say that you are proud; I am prouder.—You will be content with indiscriminate admiration—nothing will content me but what is *select*. As long as I have the use of my reason—as long as my heart can feel the delightful sense of a "well-earned praise," I will fix my eye on the highest pitch of excellence, and steadily endeavour to attain it.

Conscious of her worth, and daring to assert it, I would have a woman early in life know that she is capable of filling the heart of a man of sense and merit; that she is worthy to be his companion and friend. With all the energy of her soul, with all the powers of her understanding, I would have a woman endeavour to please those whom she esteems and loves.

She runs a risk, you will say, of never meeting her equal. Hearts and understandings of a superior order are seldom met with in the world; or when met with, it may not be a particular good fortune to win them.—True; but if ever she *wins*, she will *keep* them; and the prize appears to me well worth the pains and difficulty of attaining.

I, Julia, admire and feel enthusiasm; but I would have philosophy directed to the highest objects. I dread apathy as much as you can; and I would endeavour to prevent it, not by sacrificing half my existence, but by enjoying the whole with moderation.

You ask, why exercise does not increase sensibility, and why sympathy with imaginary distress will not also increase the disposition to sympathize with what is real?—Because pity should, I think, always be associated with the active desire to relieve. If it be suffered to become a *passive sensation*, it is a *useless weakness*, not a virtue. The species of reading you speak of must be hurtful, even in this respect, to the mind, as it indulges all the luxury of woe in sympathy with fictitious distress, without requiring the exertion which reality demands: besides, universal experience proves to us that habit, so far from increasing sensibility, absolutely destroys it, by familiarizing it with objects of compassion.

Let me, my dear friend, appeal even to your own experience in the very instance you mention. Is there any pathetic writer in the world who could move you as much at the "twentieth reading as at the first{1}?" Speak naturally, and at the third or fourth reading, you would probably say, It is very pathetic, but I have read it before—I liked it better the first time; that is to say, it *did* touch me once—I know it *ought* to touch me now, but it *does not*. Beware of this! Do not let life become *as tedious as a twice-told tale*.

Farewell, dear Julia: this is the answer of fact against eloquence, philosophy against enthusiasm. You appeal from my understanding to my heart—I appeal from the heart to the understanding of my judge; and ten years hence the decision perhaps will be in my favour.

Yours sincerely,

CAROLINE.

{Footnote 1: Hume said, that Parnell's poems were as fresh at the twentieth reading as at the first.}

LETTER III.

CAROLINE TO JULIA.

On her intended marriage.

Indeed, my dear Julia, I hardly know how to venture to give you my advice upon a subject which ought to depend so much upon your own taste and feelings. My opinion and my wishes I could readily tell you: the idea of seeing you united and attached to my brother is certainly the most agreeable to me; but I am to divest myself of the partiality of a sister, and to consider my brother and Lord V—— as equal candidates for your preference—equal, I mean, in your regard; for you say that "Your heart is not yet decided in its choice.—If that oracle would declare itself in intelligible terms, you

would not hesitate a moment to obey its dictates." But, my dear Julia, is there not another, a *safer*, I do not say a *better* oracle, to be consulted—your reason? Whilst the "doubtful beam still nods from side to side," you may with a steady hand weigh your own motives, and determine what things will be essential to your happiness, and what *price* you will pay for them; for

"Each pleasure has its *price*; and they who pay
Too much of pain, but squander life away."

Do me the justice to believe that I do not quote these lines of Dryden as being the finest poetry he ever wrote; for poets, you know, as Waller wittily observed, never succeed so well in truth as in fiction.

Since we cannot in life expect to realize all our wishes, we must distinguish those which claim the rank of wants. We must separate the fanciful from the real, or at least make the one subservient to the other.

It is of the utmost importance to you, more particularly, to take every precaution before you decide for life, because disappointment and restraint afterwards would be insupportable to your temper.

You have often declared to me, my dear friend, that your love of poetry, and of all the refinements of literary and romantic pursuits, is so intimately "interwoven in your mind, that nothing could separate them, without destroying the whole fabric."

Your tastes, you say, are fixed; if they are so, you must be doubly careful to ensure their gratification. If you cannot make *them* subservient to external circumstances, you should certainly, if it be in your power, choose a situation in which circumstances will be subservient to them. If you are convinced that you could not adopt the tastes of another, it will be absolutely necessary for your happiness to live with one whose tastes are similar to your own.

The belief in that sympathy of souls, which the poets suppose declares itself between two people at first sight, is perhaps as absurd as the late fashionable belief in animal magnetism: but there is a sympathy which, if it be not the foundation, may be called the cement of affection. Two people could not, I should think, retain any lasting affection for each other, without

a mutual sympathy in taste and in their diurnal occupations and domestic pleasures. This, you will allow, my dear Julia, even in a fuller extent than I do. Now, my brother's tastes, character, and habits of life, are so very different from Lord V——'s, that I scarcely know how you can compare them; at least before you can decide which of the two would make you the happiest in life, you must determine what kind of life you may wish to lead; for my brother, though he might make you very happy in domestic life, would not make the Countess of V—— happy; nor would Lord V—— make Mrs. Percy happy. They must be two different women, with different habits, and different wishes; so that you must divide yourself, my dear Julia, like Araspes, into two selves; I do not say into a bad and a good self; choose some other epithets to distinguish them, but distinct they must be: so let them now declare and decide their pretensions; and let the victor have not only the honours of a triumph, but all the prerogatives of victory. Let the subdued be subdued for life—let the victor take every precaution which policy can dictate, to prevent the possibility of future contests with the vanquished.

But without talking poetry to you, my dear friend, let me seriously recommend it to you to examine your own mind carefully; and if you find that public diversions and public admiration, dissipation, and all the pleasures of riches and high rank, are really and truly essential to your happiness, direct your choice accordingly. Marry Lord V——: he has a large fortune, extensive connexions, and an exalted station; his own taste for show and expense, his family pride, and personal vanity, will all tend to the end you propose. Your house, table, equipages, may be all in the highest style of magnificence. Lord V——'s easiness of temper, and fondness for you, will readily give you that entire ascendancy over his pleasures, which your abilities give you over his understanding. He will not control your wishes; you may gratify them to the utmost bounds of his fortune, and perhaps beyond those bounds; you may have entire command at home and abroad. If these are your objects, Julia, take them; they are in your power. But remember, you must take them with their necessary concomitants—the restraints upon your time, upon the choice of your friends and your company, which high life imposes; the *ennui* subsequent to dissipation; the mortifications of rivalship in beauty, wit, rank, and magnificence; the trouble of managing a large fortune, and the chance of involving your affairs and your family in difficulty and distress; these and a thousand more

evils you must submit to. You must renounce all the pleasures of the heart and of the imagination; you must give up the idea of cultivating literary taste; you must not expect from your husband friendship and confidence, or any of the delicacies of affection:—you govern him, he cannot therefore be your equal; you may be a fond mother, but you cannot educate your children; you will neither have the time nor the power to do it; you must trust them to a governess. In the selection of your friends, and in the enjoyment of their company and conversation, you will be still more restrained: in short, you must give up the pleasures of domestic life; for that is not in this case the life you have chosen. But you will exclaim against me for supposing you capable of making such a choice—such sacrifices!—I am sure, *next to my brother*, I am the last person in the world who would wish you to make them.

You have another choice, my dear Julia: domestic life is offered to you by one who has every wish and every power to make it agreeable to you; by one whose tastes resemble your own; who would be a judge and a fond admirer of all your perfections. You would have perpetual motives to cultivate every talent, and to exert every power of pleasing for his sake—for *his* sake, whose penetration no improvement would escape, and whose affection would be susceptible of every proof of yours. Am I drawing too flattering a picture?—A sister's hand may draw a partial likeness, but still it will be a likeness. At all events, my dear Julia, you would be certain of the mode of life you would lead with my brother. The regulation of your time and occupations would be your own. In the education of your family, you would meet with no interruptions or restraint. You would have no governess to counteract, no strangers to intrude; you might follow your own judgment, or yield to the judgment of one who would never require you to submit to his opinion, but to his reasons.

All the pleasures of friendship you would enjoy in your own family in the highest perfection, and you would have for your sister the friend of your infancy,

CAROLINE.

LETTER IV.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——.

Upon her intended separation from her husband.

You need not fear, my dear Lady V——, that I should triumph in the accomplishment of my prophecies; or that I should reproach you for having preferred your own opinion to my advice. Believe me, my dear Julia, I am your friend, nor would the name of sister have increased my friendship.

Five years have made then so great a change in your feelings and views of life, that a few days ago, when my letter to you on your marriage accidentally fell into your hands, "*you were struck with a species of astonishment at your choice, and you burst into tears in an agony of despair, on reading the wretched doom foretold to the wife of Lord V——. A doom,*" you add, "*which I feel hourly accomplishing, and which I see no possibility of averting, but by a separation from a husband, with whom, I now think, it was madness to unite myself.*" Your opinion I must already know upon this subject, "*as the same arguments which should have prevented me from making such a choice, ought now to determine me to abjure it.*"

You say, dear Julia, that my letter struck you with despair.—Despair is either madness or folly; it obtains, it deserves nothing from mankind but pity; and pity, though it be akin to love, has yet a secret affinity to contempt. In strong minds, despair is an acute disease; the prelude to great exertion. In weak minds, it is a chronic distemper, followed by incurable indolence. Let the crisis be favourable, and resume your wonted energy. Instead of suffering the imagination to dwell with unavailing sorrow on the past, let us turn our attention towards the future. When an evil is irremediable, let us acknowledge it to be such, and bear it:—there is no power to which we submit so certainly as to necessity. With our hopes, our wishes cease. Imagination has a contracting, as well as an expansive faculty. The prisoner, who, deprived of all that we conceive to constitute the pleasures of life, could interest or occupy himself with the labours of a spider, was certainly a

philosopher. He enjoyed all the means of happiness that were left in his power.

I know, my dear Lady V——, that words have little effect over grief; and I do not, I assure you, mean to insult you with the parade of stoic philosophy. But consider, your error is not perhaps so great as you imagine. Certainly, they who at the beginning of life can with a steady eye look through the long perspective of distant years, who can in one view comprise all the different objects of happiness and misery, who can compare accurately, and justly estimate their respective degrees of importance; and who, after having formed such a calculation, are capable of acting uniformly, in consequence of their own conviction, are the *wisest*, and, as far as prudence can influence our fortune, the *happiest* of human beings. Next to this favoured class are those who can perceive and repair their own errors; who can stop at any given period to take a new view of life. If unfortunate circumstances have denied you a place in the first rank, you may, dear Julia, secure yourself a station in the second. Is not the conduct of a woman, after her marriage, of infinitely more importance than her previous choice, whatever it may have been? Then now consider what yours should be.

You say that it is easier to *break* a chain than to *stretch* it; but remember that when broken, your part of the chain, Julia, will still remain with you, and fetter and disgrace you through life. Why should a woman be so circumspect in her choice? Is it not because when once made she must abide by it? “She sets her life upon the cast, and she must stand the hazard of the die.” From domestic uneasiness a man has a thousand resources: in middling life, the tavern, in high life, the gaming-table, suspends the anxiety of thought. Dissipation, ambition, business, the occupation of a profession, change of place, change of company, afford him agreeable and honourable relief from domestic chagrin. If his home become tiresome, he leaves it; if his wife become disagreeable to him, he leaves her, and in leaving her loses *only* a wife. But what resource has a woman?—Precluded from all the occupations common to the other sex, she loses even those peculiar to her own. She has no remedy, from the company of a man she dislikes, but a separation; and this remedy, desperate as it is, is allowed only to a certain class of women in society; to those whose fortune affords them the means of subsistence, and whose friends have secured to them a separate maintenance. A peeress then, probably, can leave her husband if

she wish it; a peasant's wife cannot; she depends upon the character and privileges of a wife for actual subsistence. Her domestic care, if not her affection, is secured to her husband; and it is just that it should. He sacrifices his liberty, his labour, his ingenuity, his time, for the support and protection of his wife; and in proportion to his protection is his power.

In higher life, where the sacrifices of both parties in the original union are more equal, the evils of a separation are more nearly balanced. But even here, the wife who has hazarded least, suffers the most by the dissolution of the partnership; she loses a great part of her fortune, and of the conveniences and luxuries of life. She loses her home, her rank in society. She loses both the repellant and the attractive power of a mistress of a family. "Her occupation is gone." She becomes a wanderer. Whilst her youth and beauty last, she may enjoy that species of delirium, caused by public admiration; fortunate if habit does not destroy the power of this charm, before the season of its duration expire. It was said to be the wish of a celebrated modern beauty, "that she might not survive her nine-and-twentieth birth-day." I have often heard this wish quoted for its extravagance; but I always admired it for its good sense. The lady foresaw the inevitable doom of her declining years. Her apprehensions for the future embittered even her enjoyment of the present; and she had resolution enough to offer to take "a bond of fate," to sacrifice one-half of her life, to secure the pleasure of the other.

But, dear Lady V——, probably this wish was made at some distance from the destined period of its accomplishment. On the eve of her nine-and-twentieth birth-day, the lady perhaps might have felt inclined to retract her prayer. At least we should provide for the cowardice which might seize the female mind at such an instant. Even the most wretched life has power to attach us; none can be more wretched than the old age of a dissipated beauty:—unless, Lady V——, it be that of a woman, who, to all her evils has the addition of remorse, for having abjured her duties and abandoned her family. Such is the situation of a woman who separates from her husband. Reduced to go the same insipid round of public amusements, yet more restrained than an unmarried beauty in youth, yet more miserable in age, the superiority of her genius and the sensibility of her heart become her greatest evils. She, indeed, must pray for indifference. Avoided by all her family connexions, hated and despised where she might have been loved

and respected, solitary in the midst of society, she feels herself deserted at the time of life when she most wants social comfort and assistance.

Dear Julia, whilst it is yet in your power secure to yourself a happier fate; retire to the bosom of your own family; prepare for yourself a new society; perform the duties, and you shall soon enjoy the pleasures of domestic life; educate your children; whilst they are young, it shall be your occupation; as they grow up, it shall be your glory. Let me anticipate your future success, when they shall appear such as you can make them; when the world shall ask "who educated these amiable young women? Who formed their character? Who cultivated the talents of this promising young man? Why does this whole family live together in such perfect union?" With one voice, dear Julia, your children shall name their mother; she who in the bloom of youth checked herself in the career of dissipation, and turned all the ability and energy of her mind to their education.

Such will be your future fame. In the mean time, before you have formed for yourself companions in your own family, you will want a society suited to your taste. "Disgusted as you have been with frivolous company, you say that you wish to draw around you a society of literary and estimable friends, whose conversation and talents shall delight you, and who at the same time that they are excited to display their own abilities, shall be a judge of yours."

But, dear Lady V——, the possibility of your forming such a society must depend on your having a home to receive, a character and consequence in life to invite and attach friends. The opinion of numbers is necessary to excite the ambition of individuals. To be a female Mecaenas you must have power to confer favours, as well as judgment to discern merit.

What castles in the air are built by the synthetic wand of imagination, which vanish when exposed to the analysis of reason!

Then, Julia, supposing that Lord V——, as your husband, becomes a negative quantity as to your happiness, yet he will acquire another species of value as the master of your family and the father of your children; as a person who supports your public consequence, and your private self-complacency. Yes, dear Lady V——, he will increase your self-complacency; for do you not think, that when your husband sees his children prosper under your care, his family united under your management

—whilst he feels your merit at home, and hears your praises abroad, do you not think he will himself learn to respect and love you? You say that "*he is not a judge of female excellence; that he has no real taste; that vanity is his ruling passion*." Then if his judgment be dependent on the opinions of others, he will be the more easily led by the public voice, and you will command the suffrages of the public. If he has not taste enough to approve, he will have vanity enough to be proud of you; and a vain man insensibly begins to love that of which he is proud. Why does Lord V—— love his buildings, his paintings, his equipages? It is not for their intrinsic value; but because they are means of distinction to him. Let his wife become a greater distinction to him, and on the same principles he will prefer her. Set an example, then, dear Lady V——, of domestic virtue; your talents shall make it admired, your rank shall make it conspicuous. You are ambitious, Julia, you love praise; you have been used to it; you cannot live happily without it.

Praise is a mental luxury, which becomes from habit absolutely necessary to our existence; and in purchasing it we must pay the price set upon it by society. The more curious, the more avaricious we become of this "aerial coin," the more it is our interest to preserve its currency and increase its value. You, my dear Julia, in particular, who have amassed so much of it, should not cry down its price, for your own sake!—Do not then say in a fit of disgust, that "you are grown too wise now to value applause."

If, during youth, your appetite for applause was indiscriminate, and indulged to excess, you are now more difficult in your choice, and are become an *epicure* in your *taste* for praise.

Adieu, my dear Julia; I hope still to see you as happy in domestic life as

Your ever affectionate and sincere friend,

CAROLINE.

LETTER V.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——.

On her conduct after her separation from her husband.

A delicacy, of which I now begin to repent, has of late prevented me from writing to you. I am afraid I shall be abrupt, but it is necessary to be explicit. Your conduct, ever since your separation from your husband, has been anxiously watched from a variety of motives, by his family and your own;—it has been blamed. Reflect upon your own mind, and examine with what justice.

Last summer, when I was with you, I observed a change in your conversation, and the whole turn of your thoughts. I perceived an unusual impatience of restraint; a confusion in your ideas when you began to reason, —an eloquence in your language when you began to declaim, which convinced me that from some secret cause the powers of your reason had been declining, and those of your imagination rapidly increasing; the boundaries of right and wrong seemed to be no longer marked in your mind. Neither the rational hope of happiness, nor a sense of duty governed you; but some unknown, wayward power seemed to have taken possession of your understanding, and to have thrown every thing into confusion. You appeared peculiarly averse to philosophy: let me recall your own words to you; you asked "of what use philosophy could be to beings who had no free will, and how the ideas of just punishment and involuntary crime could be reconciled?"

Your understanding involved itself in metaphysical absurdity. In conversing upon literary subjects one evening, in speaking of the striking difference between the conduct and the understanding of the great Lord Bacon, you said, that "It by no means surprised you; that to an enlarged mind, accustomed to consider the universe as one vast *whole*, the conduct of that little animated atom, that inconsiderable part *self*, must be too insignificant to fix or merit attention. It was nothing," you said, "in the general mass of vice and virtue, happiness and misery." I believe I answered, "that it might be *nothing* compared to the great *whole*, but it was *every thing* to the individual." Such were your opinions in theory; you must know enough of the human heart to perceive their tendency when reduced

to practice. Speculative opinions, I know, have little influence over the practice of those who *act* much and think little; but I should conceive their power to be considerable over the conduct of those who have much time for reflection and little necessity for action. In one case the habit of action governs the thoughts upon any sudden emergency; in the other, the thoughts govern the actions. The truth or falsehood then of speculative opinions is of much greater consequence to our sex than to the other; as we live a life of reflection, they of action.

Retrace, then, dear Julia, in your mind the course of your thoughts for some time past; discover the cause of this revolution in your opinions; judge yourself; and remember, that in the *mind* as well as in the body, the highest pitch of disease is often attended with an unconsciousness of its existence. If, then, Lady V——, upon receiving my letter, you should feel averse to this self-examination, or if you should imagine it to be useless, I no longer advise, I command you to quit your present abode; come to me: fly from the danger, and be safe.

Dear Julia, I must assume this peremptory tone: if you are angry, I must disregard your anger; it is the anger of disease, the anger of one who is roused from that sleep which would end in death.

I respect the equality of friendship; but this equality permits, nay requires, the temporary ascendancy I assume. In real friendship, the judgment, the genius, the prudence of each party become the common property of both. Even if they are equals, they may not be so *always*. Those transient fits of passion, to which the best and wisest are liable, may deprive even the superior of the advantage of their reason. She then has still in her friend an *impartial*, though perhaps an inferior judgment; each becomes the guardian of the other, as their mutual safety may require.

Heaven seems to have granted this double chance of virtue and happiness, as the peculiar reward of friendship.

Use it, then, my dear friend; accept the assistance you could so well return. Obey me; I shall judge of you by your resolution at this crisis: on it depends your fate, and my friendship.

Your sincere and affectionate CAROLINE.

LETTER VI.

CAROLINE TO LADY V——.

Just before she went to France.

The time is now come, Lady V——, when I must bid you an eternal adieu. With what deep regret, I need not, Julia, I cannot tell you.

I burned your letter the moment I had read it. Your past confidence I never will betray; but I must renounce all future intercourse with you. I am a sister, a wife, a mother; all these connexions forbid me to be longer your friend. In misfortune, in sickness, or in poverty, I never would have forsaken you; but infamy I cannot share. I would have gone, I went, to the brink of the precipice to save you; with all my force I held you back; but in vain. But why do I vindicate my conduct to you now? Accustomed as I have always been to think your approbation necessary to my happiness, I forgot that henceforward your opinion is to be nothing to me, or mine to you.

Oh, Julia! the idea, the certainty, that you must, if you live, be in a few years, in a few months, perhaps, reduced to absolute want, in a foreign country—without a friend—a protector, the fate of women who have fallen from a state as high as yours, the names of L——, of G——, the horror I feel at joining your name to theirs, impels me to make one more attempt to save you.

Companion of my earliest years! friend of my youth! my beloved Julia! by the happy innocent hours we have spent together, by the love you had for me, by the respect you bear to the memory of your mother, by the agony with which your father will hear of the loss of his daughter, by all that has power to touch your mind—I conjure you, I implore you to pause!—Farewell!

CAROLINE.

LETTER VII.

CAROLINE TO LORD V——.

Written a few months after the date of the preceding letter.

My lord,

Though I am too sensible that all connexion between my unfortunate friend and her family must for some time have been dissolved, I venture now to address myself to your lordship.

On Wednesday last, about half after six o'clock in the evening, the following note was brought to me. It had been written with such a trembling hand that it was scarcely legible; but I knew the writing too well.

"If you ever loved me, Caroline, read this—do not tear it the moment you see the name of Julia: she has suffered—she is humbled. I left France with the hope of seeing you once more; but now I am so near you, my courage fails, and my heart sinks within me. I have no friend upon earth—I deserve none; yet I cannot help wishing to see, once more before I die, the friend of my youth, to thank her with my last breath.

"But, dear Caroline, if I must not see you, write to me, if possible, one line of consolation.

"Tell me, is my father living—do you know any thing of my children?—I dare not ask for my husband. Adieu! I am so weak that I can scarcely write —I hope I shall soon be no more. Farewell!

"JULIA."

I immediately determined to follow the bearer of this letter. Julia was waiting for my answer at a small inn in a neighbouring village, at a few miles' distance. It was night when I got there: every thing was silent—all the houses were shut up, excepting one, in which we saw two or three lights glimmering through the window—this was the inn: as your lordship may imagine, it was a very miserable place. The mistress of the house seemed to be touched with pity for the stranger: she opened the door of a small room, where she said the poor lady was resting; and retired as I entered.

Upon a low matted seat beside the fire sat Lady V——; she was in black; her knees were crossed, and her white but emaciated arms flung on one side over her lap; her hands were clasped together, and her eyes fixed upon the fire: she seemed neither to hear nor see any thing round her, but, totally absorbed in her own reflections, to have sunk into insensibility. I dreaded to rouse her from this state of torpor; and I believe I stood for some moments motionless: at last I moved softly towards her—she turned her head—started up—a scarlet blush overspread her face—she grew livid again instantly, gave a faint shriek, and sunk senseless into my arms.

When she returned to herself, and found her head lying upon my shoulder, and heard my voice soothing her with all the expressions of kindness I could think of, she smiled with a look of gratitude, which I never shall forget. Like one who had been long unused to kindness, she seemed ready to pour forth all the fondness of her heart: but, as if recollecting herself better, she immediately checked her feelings—withdrew her hand from mine—thanked me—said she was quite well again—cast down her eyes, and her manner changed from tenderness to timidity. She seemed to think that she had lost all right to sympathy, and received even the common offices of humanity with surprise: her high spirit, I saw, was quite broken.

I think I never felt such sorrow as I did in contemplating Julia at this instant: she who stood before me, sinking under the sense of inferiority, I knew to be my equal—my superior; yet by fatal imprudence, by one rash step, all her great, and good, and amiable qualities were irretrievably lost to the world and to herself.

When I thought that she was a little recovered, I begged of her, if she was not too much fatigued, to let me carry her home. At these words she looked at me with surprise. Her eyes filled with tears; but without making any other reply, she suffered me to draw her arm within mine, and attempted to

follow me. I did not know how feeble she was till she began to walk; it was with the utmost difficulty I supported her to the door; and by the assistance of the people of the house she was lifted into the carriage: we went very slowly. When the carriage stopped she was seized with an universal tremor; she started when the man knocked at the door, and seemed to dread its being opened. The appearance of light and the sound of cheerful voices struck her with horror.

I could not myself help being shocked with the contrast between the dreadful situation of my friend, and the happiness of the family to which I was returning.

"Oh!" said she, "what are these voices?—Whither are you taking me?—For Heaven's sake do not let any body see me!"

I assured her that she should go directly to her own apartment, and that no human being should approach her without her express permission.

Alas! it happened at this very moment that all my children came running with the utmost gaiety into the hall to meet us, and the very circumstance which I had been so anxious to prevent happened—little Julia was amongst them. The gaiety of the children suddenly ceased the moment they saw Lady V—— coming up the steps—they were struck with her melancholy air and countenance: she, leaning upon my arm, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, let me lead her in, and sunk upon the first chair she came to. I made a sign to the children to retire; but the moment they began to move, Lady V—— looked up—saw her daughter—and now for the first time burst into tears The little girl did not recollect her poor mother till she heard the sound of her voice; and then she threw her arms round her neck, crying, "Is it you, mamma?"—and all the children immediately crowded round and asked, "if this was the same Lady V—— who used to play with them?"

It is impossible to describe the effect these simple questions had on Julia: a variety of emotions seemed struggling in her countenance; she rose and made an attempt to break from the children, but could not—she had not strength to support herself. We carried her away and put her to bed; she took no notice of any body, nor did she even seem to know that I was with her: I thought she was insensible, but as I drew the curtains I heard her give a deep sigh.

I left her, and carried away her little girl, who had followed us up stairs and begged to stay with her mother; but I was apprehensive that the sight of

her might renew her agitation.

After I was gone, they told me that she was perfectly still, with her eyes closed; and I stayed away some time in hopes that she might sleep: however, about midnight she sent to beg to speak to me: she was very ill—she beckoned to me to sit down by her bedside—every one left the room; and when Julia saw herself alone with me, she took my hand, and in a low but calm voice she said, "I have not many hours to live—my heart is broken—I wished to see you, to thank you whilst it was yet in my power." She pressed my hand to her trembling lips: "Your kindness," added she, "touches me more than all the rest; but how ashamed you must be of such a friend! Oh, Caroline! to die a disgrace to all who ever loved me!"

The tears trickled down her face, and choked her utterance: she wiped them away hastily. "But it is not now a time," said she, "to think of myself—can I see my daughter?" The little girl was asleep: she was awakened, and I brought her to her mother. Julia raised herself in her bed, and summoning up all her strength, "My dearest friend!" said she, putting her child's hand into mine, "when I am gone, be a mother to this child—let her know my whole history, let nothing be concealed from her. Poor girl! you will live to blush at your mother's name." She paused and leaned back: I was going to take the child away, but she held out her arms again for her, and kissed her several times. "Farewell!" said she; "I shall never see you again." The little girl burst into tears. Julia wished to say something more—she raised herself again—at last she uttered these words with energy:—"My love, *be good and happy*;" she then sunk down on the pillow quite exhausted—she never spoke afterwards: I took her hand—it was cold—her pulse scarcely beat—her eyes rolled without meaning—in a few moments she expired.

Painful as it has been to me to recall the circumstances of her death to my imagination, I have given your lordship this exact and detailed account of my unfortunate friend's behaviour in her last moments. Whatever may have been her errors, her soul never became callous from vice. The sense of her own ill conduct, was undoubtedly the immediate cause of her illness, and the remorse which had long preyed upon her mind, at length brought her to the grave—

I have the honour to be, My lord, &c. CAROLINE.

Written in 1787. Published in 1795.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TALES AND NOVELS — VOLUME 08 ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works

based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice

indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply

with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you

may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.