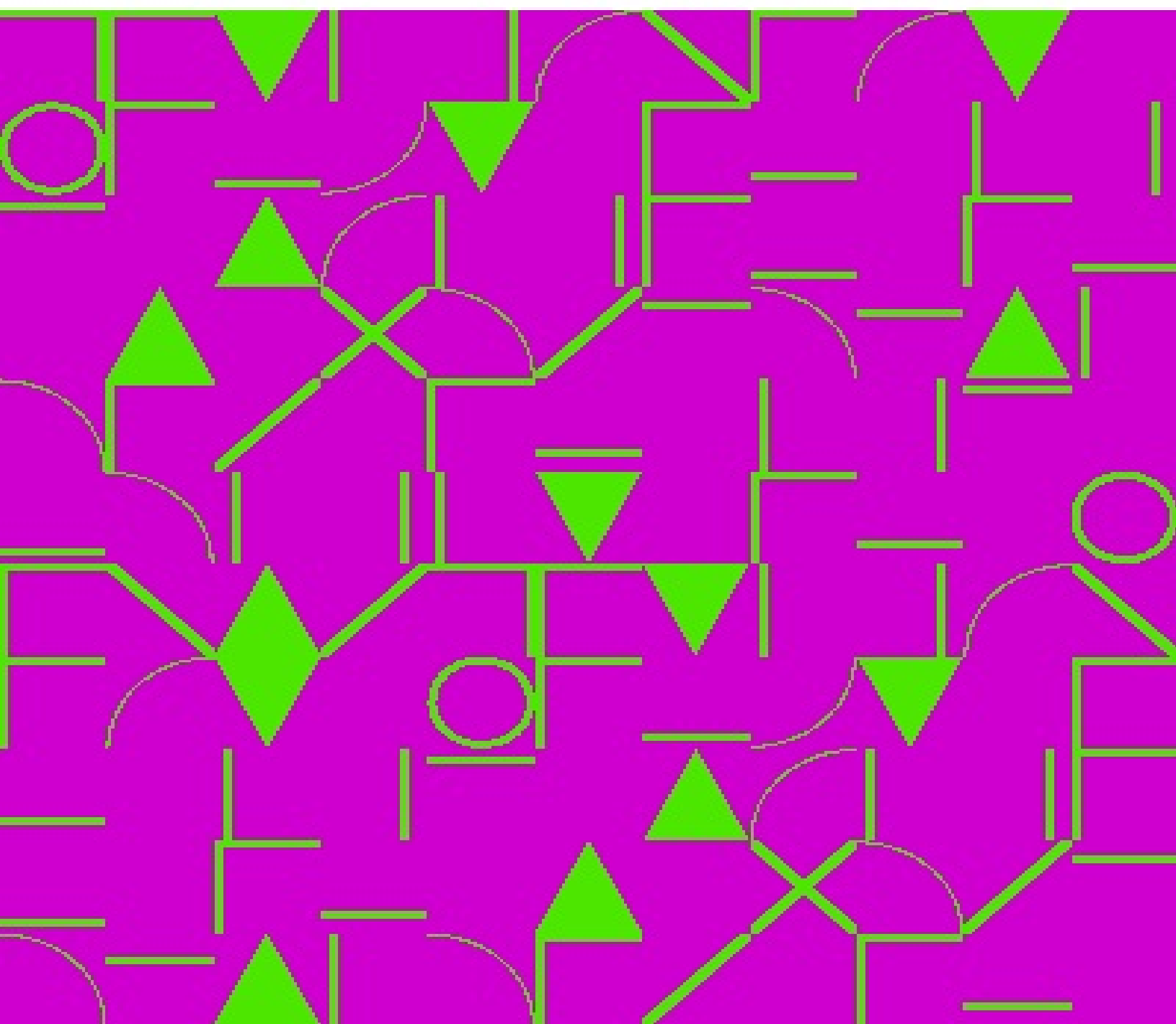


Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

Mary Wollstonecraft



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Author: Mary Wollstonecraft

Editor: William Godwin

Release Date: October 29, 2007 [EBook #23233]
Last Updated: May 4, 2018

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POSTHUMOUS WORKS ***

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HTML file revised by David Widger

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

CONTENTS

Modern Text

[VOL. I.](#) AND [II.](#)

The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria; a Fragment: to which is added, the First Book of a Series of Lessons for Children.

[VOL. III.](#) AND [IV.](#)

Letters and Miscellaneous Pieces.

Text in 'Long S' Format

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Transcriber's Notes

1. Corrections which have been made are indicated by dotted lines under the corrected text. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.
2. This text contains blank space and lines of "———" and "*" characters. These are replicated from the printed pages, presumably they indicate censored text from the original source.
3. The listed errata at the beginning of Volume 1 and Volume 4 have been applied to the text.
4. The text as printed used incipits and long s font. The incipits have not been replicated in this version, but can be viewed on the page images. A version of the text containing the long s font has been made available.

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VOL. I.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

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THE
WRONGS OF WOMAN:
OR,
MARIA.

A FRAGMENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



VOL. I.



PREFACE.

THE public are here presented with the last literary attempt of an author, whose fame has been uncommonly extensive, and whose talents have probably been most admired, by the persons by whom talents are estimated with the greatest accuracy and discrimination. There are few, to whom her writings could in any case have given pleasure, that would have wished that this fragment should have been suppressed, because it is a fragment. There is a sentiment, very dear to minds of taste and imagination, that finds a melancholy delight in contemplating these unfinished productions of genius, these sketches of what, if they had been filled up in a manner adequate to the writer's conception, would perhaps have given a new impulse to the manners of a world.

The purpose and structure of the following work, had long formed a favourite subject of meditation with its author, and she judged them capable of producing an important effect. The composition had been in progress for a period of twelve months. She was anxious to do justice to her conception, and recommenced and revised the manuscript several different times. So much of it as is here given to the public, she was far from considering as finished, and, in a letter to a friend directly written on this subject, she says, "I am perfectly aware that some of the incidents ought to be transposed, and heightened by more harmonious shading; and I wished in some degree to avail myself of criticism, before I began to adjust my events into a story, the outline of which I had sketched in my mind^[x-A]." The only friends to whom the author communicated her manuscript, were Mr. Dyson, the translator of the Sorcerer, and the present editor; and it was impossible for the most inexperienced author to display a stronger desire of profiting by the censures and sentiments that might be suggested^[x-B].

In revising these sheets for the press, it was necessary for the editor, in some places, to connect the more finished parts with the pages of an older copy, and a line or two in addition sometimes appeared requisite for that purpose. Wherever such a liberty has been taken, the additional phrases will be found inclosed in brackets; it being the editor's most earnest desire, to intrude nothing of himself into the work, but to give to the public the words, as well as ideas, of the real author.

What follows in the ensuing pages, is not a preface regularly drawn out by the author, but merely hints for a preface, which, though never filled up in the manner the writer intended, appeared to be worth preserving.

W. GODWIN.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Wrongs of Woman, like the wrongs of the oppressed part of mankind, may be deemed necessary by their oppressors: but surely there are a few, who will dare to advance before the improvement of the age, and grant that my sketches are not the abortion of a distempered fancy, or the strong delineations of a wounded heart.

In writing this novel, I have rather endeavoured to pourtray passions than manners.

In many instances I could have made the incidents more dramatic, would I have sacrificed my main object, the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society.

In the invention of the story, this view restrained my fancy; and the history ought rather to be considered, as of woman, than of an individual.

The sentiments I have embodied.

In many works of this species, the hero is allowed to be mortal, and to become wise and virtuous as well as happy, by a train of events and circumstances. The heroines, on the contrary, are to be born immaculate; and to act like goddesses of wisdom, just come forth highly finished Minervas from the head of Jove.

[The following is an extract of a letter from the author to a friend, to whom she communicated her manuscript.]

For my part, I cannot suppose any situation more distressing, than for a woman of sensibility, with an improving mind, to be bound to such a man as I have described for life; obliged to renounce all the humanizing affections, and to avoid cultivating her taste, lest her perception of grace and refinement of sentiment, should sharpen to agony the pangs of disappointment. Love, in which the imagination mingles its bewitching colouring, must be fostered by delicacy. I should despise, or rather call her an ordinary woman, who could endure such a husband as I have sketched.

These appear to me (matrimonial despotism of heart and conduct) to be the peculiar Wrongs of Woman, because they degrade the mind. What are termed great misfortunes, may more forcibly impress the mind of common readers; they have more of what may justly be termed *stage-effect*; but it is the delineation of finer sensations, which, in my opinion, constitutes the merit of our best novels. This is what I have in view; and to show the wrongs of different classes of women, equally oppressive, though, from the difference of education, necessarily various.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[x-A\]](#) A more copious extract of this letter is subjoined to the author's preface.

[\[x-B\]](#) The part communicated consisted of the first fourteen chapters.

ERRATA.

Page 3, line 2, *dele* half.

P. 81 and 118, *for* brackets [—], *read* inverted commas " thus "

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WRONGS

OF

WOMAN.



CHAP. I.

ABODES of horror have frequently been described, and castles, filled with spectres and chimeras, conjured up by the magic spell of genius to harrow the soul, and absorb the wondering mind. But, formed of such stuff as dreams are made of, what were they to the mansion of despair, in one corner of which Maria sat, endeavouring to recal her scattered thoughts!

Surprise, astonishment, that bordered on distraction, seemed to have suspended her faculties, till, waking by degrees to a keen sense of anguish, a whirlwind of rage and indignation roused her torpid pulse. One recollection with frightful velocity following another, threatened to fire her brain, and make her a fit companion for the terrific inhabitants, whose groans and shrieks were no unsubstantial sounds of whistling winds, or startled birds, modulated by a romantic fancy, which amuse while they affright; but such tones of misery as carry a dreadful certainty directly to the heart. What effect must they then have produced on one, true to the touch of sympathy, and tortured by maternal apprehension!

Her infant's image was continually floating on Maria's sight, and the first smile of intelligence remembered, as none but a mother, an unhappy mother, can conceive. She heard her half speaking cooing, and felt the little twinkling fingers on her burning bosom—a bosom bursting with the nutriment for which this cherished child might now be pining in vain. From a stranger she could indeed receive the maternal aliment, Maria was grieved at the thought—but who would watch her with a mother's tenderness, a mother's self-denial?

The retreating shadows of former sorrows rushed back in a gloomy train, and seemed to be pictured on the walls of her prison, magnified by the state of mind in which they were viewed—Still she mourned for her child, lamented she was a daughter, and anticipated the aggravated ills of life that her sex rendered almost inevitable, even while dreading she was no more. To think that she was blotted out of existence was agony, when the imagination had been long employed to expand her faculties; yet to suppose her turned adrift on an unknown sea, was scarcely less afflicting.

After being two days the prey of impetuous, varying emotions, Maria began to reflect more calmly on her present situation, for she had actually been rendered incapable of sober reflection, by the discovery of the act of atrocity of which she was the victim. She could not have imagined, that, in all the fermentation of civilized depravity, a similar plot could have entered a human mind. She had been stunned by an unexpected blow; yet life, however joyless, was not to be indolently resigned, or misery endured without exertion, and proudly termed patience. She had hitherto meditated only to point the dart of anguish, and suppressed the heart heavings of indignant nature merely by the force of contempt. Now she endeavoured to brace her mind to fortitude, and to ask herself what was to be her employment in her dreary cell? Was it not to effect her escape, to fly to the succour of her child, and to baffle the selfish schemes of her tyrant—her husband?

These thoughts roused her sleeping spirit, and the self-possession returned, that seemed to have abandoned her in the infernal solitude into which she had been precipitated. The first emotions of overwhelming impatience began to subside, and resentment gave place to tenderness, and more tranquil meditation; though anger once more stopt the calm current of reflection, when she attempted to move her manacled arms. But this was an outrage that could only excite momentary feelings of scorn, which evaporated in a faint smile; for Maria was far from thinking a personal insult the most difficult to endure

with magnanimous indifference.

She approached the small grated window of her chamber, and for a considerable time only regarded the blue expanse; though it commanded a view of a desolate garden, and of part of a huge pile of buildings, that, after having been suffered, for half a century, to fall to decay, had undergone some clumsy repairs, merely to render it habitable. The ivy had been torn off the turrets, and the stones not wanted to patch up the breaches of time, and exclude the warring elements, left in heaps in the disordered court. Maria contemplated this scene she knew not how long; or rather gazed on the walls, and pondered on her situation. To the master of this most horrid of prisons, she had, soon after her entrance, raved of injustice, in accents that would have justified his treatment, had not a malignant smile, when she appealed to his judgment, with a dreadful conviction stifled her remonstrating complaints. By force, or openly, what could be done? But surely some expedient might occur to an active mind, without any other employment, and possessed of sufficient resolution to put the risk of life into the balance with the chance of freedom.

A woman entered in the midst of these reflections, with a firm, deliberate step, strongly marked features, and large black eyes, which she fixed steadily on Maria's, as if she designed to intimidate her, saying at the same time—"You had better sit down and eat your dinner, than look at the clouds."

"I have no appetite," replied Maria, who had previously determined to speak mildly, "why then should I eat?"

"But, in spite of that, you must and shall eat something. I have had many ladies under my care, who have resolved to starve themselves; but, soon or late, they gave up their intent, as they recovered their senses."

"Do you really think me mad?" asked Maria, meeting the searching glance of her eye.

"Not just now. But what does that prove?—only that you must be the more carefully watched, for appearing at times so reasonable. You have not touched a morsel since you entered the house."—Maria sighed intelligibly.—"Could any thing but madness produce such a disgust for food?"

"Yes, grief; you would not ask the question if you knew what it was." The attendant shook her head; and a ghastly smile of desperate fortitude served as a forcible reply, and made Maria pause, before she added—"Yet I will take some refreshment: I mean not to die.—No; I will preserve my senses; and convince even you, sooner than you are aware of, that my intellects have never been disturbed, though the exertion of them may have been suspended by some infernal drug."

Doubt gathered still thicker on the brow of her guard, as she attempted to convict her of mistake.

"Have patience!" exclaimed Maria, with a solemnity that inspired awe. "My God! how have I been schooled into the practice!" A suffocation of voice betrayed the agonizing emotions she was labouring to keep down; and conquering a qualm of disgust, she calmly endeavoured to eat enough to prove her docility, perpetually turning to the suspicious female, whose observation she courted, while she was making the bed and adjusting the room.

"Come to me often," said Maria, with a tone of persuasion, in consequence of a vague plan that she had hastily adopted, when, after surveying this woman's form and features, she felt convinced that she had an understanding above the common standard; "and believe me mad, till you are obliged to acknowledge the contrary." The woman was no fool, that is, she was superior to her class; nor had misery quite petrified the life's-blood of humanity, to which reflections on our own misfortunes only give a more orderly course. The manner, rather than the expostulations, of Maria made a slight suspicion dart into her mind with

corresponding sympathy, which various other avocations, and the habit of banishing compunction, prevented her, for the present, from examining more minutely.

But when she was told that no person, excepting the physician appointed by her family, was to be permitted to see the lady at the end of the gallery, she opened her keen eyes still wider, and uttered a—"hem!" before she enquired—"Why?" She was briefly told, in reply, that the malady was hereditary, and the fits not occurring but at very long and irregular intervals, she must be carefully watched; for the length of these lucid periods only rendered her more mischievous, when any vexation or caprice brought on the paroxysm of phrensy.

Had her master trusted her, it is probable that neither pity nor curiosity would have made her swerve from the straight line of her interest; for she had suffered too much in her intercourse with mankind, not to determine to look for support, rather to humouring their passions, than courting their approbation by the integrity of her conduct. A deadly blight had met her at the very threshold of existence; and the wretchedness of her mother seemed a heavy weight fastened on her innocent neck, to drag her down to perdition. She could not heroically determine to succour an unfortunate; but, offended at the bare supposition that she could be deceived with the same ease as a common servant, she no longer curbed her curiosity; and, though she never seriously fathomed her own intentions, she would sit, every moment she could steal from observation, listening to the tale, which Maria was eager to relate with all the persuasive eloquence of grief.

It is so cheering to see a human face, even if little of the divinity of virtue beam in it, that Maria anxiously expected the return of the attendant, as of a gleam of light to break the gloom of idleness. Indulged sorrow; she perceived, must blunt or sharpen the faculties to the two opposite extremes; producing stupidity, the moping melancholy of indolence; or the restless activity of a disturbed imagination. She sunk into one state, after being fatigued by the other: till the want of occupation became even more painful than the actual pressure or apprehension of sorrow; and the confinement that froze her into a nook of existence, with an unvaried prospect before her, the most insupportable of evils. The lamp of life seemed to be spending itself to chase the vapours of a dungeon which no art could dissipate.—And to what purpose did she rally all her energy?—Was not the world a vast prison, and women born slaves?

Though she failed immediately to rouse a lively sense of injustice in the mind of her guard, because it had been sophisticated into misanthropy, she touched her heart. Jemima (she had only a claim to a Christian name, which had not procured her any Christian privileges) could patiently hear of Maria's confinement on false pretences; she had felt the crushing hand of power, hardened by the exercise of injustice, and ceased to wonder at the perversions of the understanding, which systematize oppression; but, when told that her child, only four months old, had been torn from her, even while she was discharging the tenderest maternal office, the woman awoke in a bosom long estranged from feminine emotions, and Jemima determined to alleviate all in her power, without hazarding the loss of her place, the sufferings of a wretched mother, apparently injured, and certainly unhappy. A sense of right seems to result from the simplest act of reason, and to preside over the faculties of the mind, like the master-sense of feeling, to rectify the rest; but (for the comparison may be carried still farther) how often is the exquisite sensibility of both weakened or destroyed by the vulgar occupations, and ignoble pleasures of life?

The preserving her situation was, indeed, an important object to Jemima, who had been hunted from hole to hole, as if she had been a beast of prey, or infected with a moral plague. The wages she received, the greater part of which she hoarded, as her only chance for independence, were much more considerable than she could reckon on obtaining any where else, were it possible that she, an outcast from society, could be permitted to earn a subsistence in a reputable family. Hearing Maria perpetually complain of

listlessness, and the not being able to beguile grief by resuming her customary pursuits, she was easily prevailed on, by compassion, and that involuntary respect for abilities, which those who possess them can never eradicate, to bring her some books and implements for writing. Maria's conversation had amused and interested her, and the natural consequence was a desire, scarcely observed by herself, of obtaining the esteem of a person she admired. The remembrance of better days was rendered more lively; and the sentiments then acquired appearing less romantic than they had for a long period, a spark of hope roused her mind to new activity.

How grateful was her attention to Maria! Oppressed by a dead weight of existence, or preyed on by the gnawing worm of discontent, with what eagerness did she endeavour to shorten the long days, which left no traces behind! She seemed to be sailing on the vast ocean of life, without seeing any land-mark to indicate the progress of time; to find employment was then to find variety, the animating principle of nature.

CHAP. II.

EARNESTLY as Maria endeavoured to soothe, by reading, the anguish of her wounded mind, her thoughts would often wander from the subject she was led to discuss, and tears of maternal tenderness obscured the reasoning page. She descanted on "the ills which flesh is heir to," with bitterness, when the recollection of her babe was revived by a tale of fictitious woe, that bore any resemblance to her own; and her imagination was continually employed, to conjure up and embody the various phantoms of misery, which folly and vice had let loose on the world. The loss of her babe was the tender string; against other cruel remembrances she laboured to steel her bosom; and even a ray of hope, in the midst of her gloomy reveries, would sometimes gleam on the dark horizon of futurity, while persuading herself that she ought to cease to hope, since happiness was no where to be found.—But of her child, debilitated by the grief with which its mother had been assailed before it saw the light, she could not think without an impatient struggle.

"I, alone, by my active tenderness, could have saved," she would exclaim, "from an early blight, this sweet blossom; and, cherishing it, I should have had something still to love."

In proportion as other expectations were torn from her, this tender one had been fondly clung to, and knit into her heart.

The books she had obtained, were soon devoured, by one who had no other resource to escape from sorrow, and the feverish dreams of ideal wretchedness or felicity, which equally weaken the intoxicated sensibility. Writing was then the only alternative, and she wrote some rhapsodies descriptive of the state of her mind; but the events of her past life pressing on her, she resolved circumstantially to relate them, with the sentiments that experience, and more matured reason, would naturally suggest. They might perhaps instruct her daughter, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid.

This thought gave life to her diction, her soul flowed into it, and she soon found the task of recollecting almost obliterated impressions very interesting. She lived again in the revived emotions of youth, and forgot her present in the retrospect of sorrows that had assumed an unalterable character.

Though this employment lightened the weight of time, yet, never losing sight of her main object, Maria did not allow any opportunity to slip of winning on the affections of Jemima; for she discovered in her a strength of mind, that excited her esteem, clouded as it was by the misanthropy of despair.

An insulated being, from the misfortune of her birth, she despised and preyed on the society by which she had been oppressed, and loved not her fellow-creatures, because she had never been beloved. No mother had ever fondled her, no father or brother had protected her from outrage; and the man who had plunged her into infamy, and deserted her when she stood in greatest need of support, deigned not to smooth with kindness the road to ruin. Thus degraded, was she let loose on the world; and virtue, never nurtured by affection, assumed the stern aspect of selfish independence.

This general view of her life, Maria gathered from her exclamations and dry remarks. Jemima indeed displayed a strange mixture of interest and suspicion; for she would listen to her with earnestness, and then suddenly interrupt the conversation, as if afraid of resigning, by giving way to her sympathy, her dear-bought knowledge of the world.

Maria alluded to the possibility of an escape, and mentioned a compensation, or reward; but the style in which she was repulsed made her cautious, and determine not to renew the subject, till she knew more of the character she had to work on. Jemima's countenance, and dark hints, seemed to say, "You are an extraordinary woman; but let me consider, this may only be one of your lucid intervals." Nay, the very energy of Maria's character, made her suspect that the extraordinary animation she perceived might be the effect of madness. "Should her husband then substantiate his charge, and get possession of her estate, from whence would come the promised annuity, or more desired protection? Besides, might not a woman, anxious to escape, conceal some of the circumstances which made against her? Was truth to be expected from one who had been entrapped, kidnapped, in the most fraudulent manner?"

In this train Jemima continued to argue, the moment after compassion and respect seemed to make her swerve; and she still resolved not to be wrought on to do more than soften the rigour of confinement, till she could advance on surer ground.

Maria was not permitted to walk in the garden; but sometimes, from her window, she turned her eyes from the gloomy walls, in which she pined life away, on the poor wretches who strayed along the walks, and contemplated the most terrific of ruins—that of a human soul. What is the view of the fallen column, the mouldering arch, of the most exquisite workmanship, when compared with this living memento of the fragility, the instability, of reason, and the wild luxuriancy of noxious passions? Enthusiasm turned adrift, like some rich stream overflowing its banks, rushes forward with destructive velocity, inspiring a sublime concentration of thought. Thus thought Maria—These are the ravages over which humanity must ever mournfully ponder, with a degree of anguish not excited by crumbling marble, or cankering brass, unfaithful to the trust of monumental fame. It is not over the decaying productions of the mind, embodied with the happiest art, we grieve most bitterly. The view of what has been done by man, produces a melancholy, yet aggrandizing, sense of what remains to be achieved by human intellect; but a mental convulsion, which, like the devastation of an earthquake, throws all the elements of thought and imagination into confusion, makes contemplation giddy, and we fearfully ask on what ground we ourselves stand.

Melancholy and imbecility marked the features of the wretches allowed to breathe at large; for the frantic, those who in a strong imagination had lost a sense of woe, were closely confined. The playful tricks and mischievous devices of their disturbed fancy, that suddenly broke out, could not be guarded against, when they were permitted to enjoy any portion of freedom; for, so active was their imagination, that every new object which accidentally struck their senses, awoke to phrenzy their restless passions; as Maria learned from the burden of their incessant ravings.

Sometimes, with a strict injunction of silence, Jemima would allow Maria, at the close of evening, to stray along the narrow avenues that separated the dungeon-like apartments, leaning on her arm. What a change of scene! Maria wished to pass the threshold of her prison, yet, when by chance she met the eye of rage glaring on her, yet unfaithful to its office, she shrunk back with more horror and affright, than if she had stumbled over a mangled corpse. Her busy fancy pictured the misery of a fond heart, watching over a friend thus estranged, absent, though present—over a poor wretch lost to reason and the social joys of existence; and losing all consciousness of misery in its excess. What a task, to watch the light of reason quivering in the eye, or with agonizing expectation to catch the beam of recollection; tantalized by hope, only to feel despair more keenly, at finding a much loved face or voice, suddenly remembered, or pathetically implored, only to be immediately forgotten, or viewed with indifference or abhorrence!

The heart-rending sigh of melancholy sunk into her soul; and when she retired to rest, the petrified figures she had encountered, the only human forms she was doomed to observe, haunting her dreams with tales of

mysterious wrongs, made her wish to sleep to dream no more.

Day after day rolled away, and tedious as the present moment appeared, they passed in such an unvaried tenor, Maria was surprised to find that she had already been six weeks buried alive, and yet had such faint hopes of effecting her enlargement. She was, earnestly as she had sought for employment, now angry with herself for having been amused by writing her narrative; and grieved to think that she had for an instant thought of any thing, but contriving to escape.

Jemima had evidently pleasure in her society: still, though she often left her with a glow of kindness, she returned with the same chilling air; and, when her heart appeared for a moment to open, some suggestion of reason forcibly closed it, before she could give utterance to the confidence Maria's conversation inspired.

Discouraged by these changes, Maria relapsed into despondency, when she was cheered by the alacrity with which Jemima brought her a fresh parcel of books; assuring her, that she had taken some pains to obtain them from one of the keepers, who attended a gentleman confined in the opposite corner of the gallery.

Maria took up the books with emotion. "They come," said she, "perhaps, from a wretch condemned, like me, to reason on the nature of madness, by having wrecked minds continually under his eye; and almost to wish himself—as I do—mad, to escape from the contemplation of it." Her heart throbbed with sympathetic alarm; and she turned over the leaves with awe, as if they had become sacred from passing through the hands of an unfortunate being, oppressed by a similar fate.

Dryden's Fables, Milton's Paradise Lost, with several modern productions, composed the collection. It was a mine of treasure. Some marginal notes, in Dryden's Fables, caught her attention: they were written with force and taste; and, in one of the modern pamphlets, there was a fragment left, containing various observations on the present state of society and government, with a comparative view of the politics of Europe and America. These remarks were written with a degree of generous warmth, when alluding to the enslaved state of the labouring majority, perfectly in unison with Maria's mode of thinking.

She read them over and over again; and fancy, treacherous fancy, began to sketch a character, congenial with her own, from these shadowy outlines.—"Was he mad?" She re-perused the marginal notes, and they seemed the production of an animated, but not of a disturbed imagination. Confined to this speculation, every time she re-read them, some fresh refinement of sentiment, or acuteness of thought impressed her, which she was astonished at herself for not having before observed.

What a creative power has an affectionate heart! There are beings who cannot live without loving, as poets love; and who feel the electric spark of genius, wherever it awakens sentiment or grace. Maria had often thought, when disciplining her wayward heart, "that to charm, was to be virtuous." "They who make me wish to appear the most amiable and good in their eyes, must possess in a degree," she would exclaim, "the graces and virtues they call into action."

She took up a book on the powers of the human mind; but, her attention strayed from cold arguments on the nature of what she felt, while she was feeling, and she snapt the chain of the theory to read Dryden's Guiscard and Sigismunda.

Maria, in the course of the ensuing day, returned some of the books, with the hope of getting others—and more marginal notes. Thus shut out from human intercourse, and compelled to view nothing but the prison of vexed spirits, to meet a wretch in the same situation, was more surely to find a friend, than to imagine a

countryman one, in a strange land, where the human voice conveys no information to the eager ear.

"Did you ever see the unfortunate being to whom these books belong?" asked Maria, when Jemima brought her supper. "Yes. He sometimes walks out, between five and six, before the family is stirring, in the morning, with two keepers; but even then his hands are confined."

"What! is he so unruly?" enquired Maria, with an accent of disappointment.

"No, not that I perceive," replied Jemima; "but he has an untamed look, a vehemence of eye, that excites apprehension. Were his hands free, he looks as if he could soon manage both his guards: yet he appears tranquil."

"If he be so strong, he must be young," observed Maria.

"Three or four and thirty, I suppose; but there is no judging of a person in his situation."

"Are you sure that he is mad?" interrupted Maria with eagerness. Jemima quitted the room, without replying.

"No, no, he certainly is not!" exclaimed Maria, answering herself; "the man who could write those observations was not disordered in his intellects."

She sat musing, gazing at the moon, and watching its motion as it seemed to glide under the clouds. Then, preparing for bed, she thought, "Of what use could I be to him, or he to me, if it be true that he is unjustly confined?—Could he aid me to escape, who is himself more closely watched?—Still I should like to see him." She went to bed, dreamed of her child, yet woke exactly at half after five o'clock, and starting up, only wrapped a gown around her, and ran to the window. The morning was chill, it was the latter end of September; yet she did not retire to warm herself and think in bed, till the sound of the servants, moving about the house, convinced her that the unknown would not walk in the garden that morning. She was ashamed at feeling disappointed; and began to reflect, as an excuse to herself, on the little objects which attract attention when there is nothing to divert the mind; and how difficult it was for women to avoid growing romantic, who have no active duties or pursuits.

At breakfast, Jemima enquired whether she understood French? for, unless she did, the stranger's stock of books was exhausted. Maria replied in the affirmative; but forbore to ask any more questions respecting the person to whom they belonged. And Jemima gave her a new subject for contemplation, by describing the person of a lovely maniac, just brought into an adjoining chamber. She was singing the pathetic ballad of old Rob with the most heart-melting falls and pauses. Jemima had half-opened the door, when she distinguished her voice, and Maria stood close to it, scarcely daring to respire, lest a modulation should escape her, so exquisitely sweet, so passionately wild. She began with sympathy to pourtray to herself another victim, when the lovely warbler flew, as it were, from the spray, and a torrent of unconnected exclamations and questions burst from her, interrupted by fits of laughter, so horrid, that Maria shut the door, and, turning her eyes up to heaven, exclaimed—"Gracious God!"

Several minutes elapsed before Maria could enquire respecting the rumour of the house (for this poor wretch was obviously not confined without a cause); and then Jemima could only tell her, that it was said, "she had been married, against her inclination, to a rich old man, extremely jealous (no wonder, for she was a charming creature); and that, in consequence of his treatment, or something which hung on her mind, she had, during her first lying-in, lost her senses."

What a subject of meditation—even to the very confines of madness.

"Woman, fragile flower! why were you suffered to adorn a world exposed to the inroad of such stormy elements?" thought Maria, while the poor maniac's strain was still breathing on her ear, and sinking into her very soul.

Towards the evening, Jemima brought her Rousseau's *Héloïse*; and she sat reading with eyes and heart, till the return of her guard to extinguish the light. One instance of her kindness was, the permitting Maria to have one, till her own hour of retiring to rest. She had read this work long since; but now it seemed to open a new world to her—the only one worth inhabiting. Sleep was not to be wooed; yet, far from being fatigued by the restless rotation of thought, she rose and opened her window, just as the thin watery clouds of twilight made the long silent shadows visible. The air swept across her face with a voluptuous freshness that thrilled to her heart, awakening indefinable emotions; and the sound of a waving branch, or the twittering of a startled bird, alone broke the stillness of reposing nature. Absorbed by the sublime sensibility which renders the consciousness of existence felicity, Maria was happy, till an autumnal scent, wafted by the breeze of morn from the fallen leaves of the adjacent wood, made her recollect that the season had changed since her confinement; yet life afforded no variety to solace an afflicted heart. She returned dispirited to her couch, and thought of her child till the broad glare of day again invited her to the window. She looked not for the unknown, still how great was her vexation at perceiving the back of a man, certainly he, with his two attendants, as he turned into a side-path which led to the house! A confused recollection of having seen somebody who resembled him, immediately occurred, to puzzle and torment her with endless conjectures. Five minutes sooner, and she should have seen his face, and been out of suspense—was ever any thing so unlucky! His steady, bold step, and the whole air of his person, bursting as it were from a cloud, pleased her, and gave an outline to the imagination to sketch the individual form she wished to recognize.

Feeling the disappointment more severely than she was willing to believe, she flew to Rousseau, as her only refuge from the idea of him, who might prove a friend, could she but find a way to interest him in her fate; still the personification of Saint Preux, or of an ideal lover far superior, was after this imperfect model, of which merely a glance had been caught, even to the minutiae of the coat and hat of the stranger. But if she lent St. Preux, or the demi-god of her fancy, his form, she richly repaid him by the donation of all St. Preux's sentiments and feelings, culled to gratify her own, to which he seemed to have an undoubted right, when she read on the margin of an impassioned letter, written in the well-known hand—"Rousseau alone, the true Prometheus of sentiment, possessed the fire of genius necessary to pourtray the passion, the truth of which goes so directly to the heart."

Maria was again true to the hour, yet had finished Rousseau, and begun to transcribe some selected passages; unable to quit either the author or the window, before she had a glimpse of the countenance she daily longed to see; and, when seen, it conveyed no distinct idea to her mind where she had seen it before. He must have been a transient acquaintance; but to discover an acquaintance was fortunate, could she contrive to attract his attention, and excite his sympathy.

Every glance afforded colouring for the picture she was delineating on her heart; and once, when the window was half open, the sound of his voice reached her. Conviction flashed on her; she had certainly, in a moment of distress, heard the same accents. They were manly, and characteristic of a noble mind; nay, even sweet—or sweet they seemed to her attentive ear.

She started back, trembling, alarmed at the emotion a strange coincidence of circumstances inspired, and wondering why she thought so much of a stranger, obliged as she had been by his timely interference; [for she recollected, by degrees, all the circumstances of their former meeting.] She found however that she could think of nothing else; or, if she thought of her daughter, it was to wish that she had a father whom her

mother could respect and love.

CHAP. III.

WHEN perusing the first parcel of books, Maria had, with her pencil, written in one of them a few exclamations, expressive of compassion and sympathy, which she scarcely remembered, till turning over the leaves of one of the volumes, lately brought to her, a slip of paper dropped out, which Jemima hastily snatched up.

"Let me see it," demanded Maria impatiently, "You surely are not afraid of trusting me with the effusions of a madman?" "I must consider," replied Jemima; and withdrew, with the paper in her hand.

In a life of such seclusion, the passions gain undue force; Maria therefore felt a great degree of resentment and vexation, which she had not time to subdue, before Jemima, returning, delivered the paper.

"Whoever you are, who partake of my fate, accept my sincere commiseration—I would have said protection; but the privilege of man is denied me.

"My own situation forces a dreadful suspicion on my mind—I may not always languish in vain for freedom—say are you—I cannot ask the question; yet I will remember you when my remembrance can be of any use. I will enquire, *why* you are so mysteriously detained—and I *will* have an answer.

"HENRY DARNFORD."

By the most pressing intreaties, Maria prevailed on Jemima to permit her to write a reply to this note. Another and another succeeded, in which explanations were not allowed relative to their present situation; but Maria, with sufficient explicitness, alluded to a former obligation; and they insensibly entered on an interchange of sentiments on the most important subjects. To write these letters was the business of the day, and to receive them the moment of sunshine. By some means, Darnford having discovered Maria's window, when she next appeared at it, he made her, behind his keepers, a profound bow of respect and recognition.

Two or three weeks glided away in this kind of intercourse, during which period Jemima, to whom Maria had given the necessary information respecting her family, had evidently gained some intelligence, which increased her desire of pleasing her charge, though she could not yet determine to liberate her. Maria took advantage of this favourable charge, without too minutely enquiring into the cause; and such was her eagerness to hold human converse, and to see her former protector, still a stranger to her, that she incessantly requested her guard to gratify her more than curiosity.

Writing to Darnford, she was led from the sad objects before her, and frequently rendered insensible to the horrid noises around her, which previously had continually employed her feverish fancy. Thinking it selfish to dwell on her own sufferings, when in the midst of wretches, who had not only lost all that endears life, but their very selves, her imagination was occupied with melancholy earnestness to trace the mazes of misery, through which so many wretches must have passed to this gloomy receptacle of disjointed souls, to the grand source of human corruption. Often at midnight was she waked by the dismal shrieks of demoniac rage, or of excruciating despair, uttered in such wild tones of indescribable anguish as proved the total absence of reason, and roused phantoms of horror in her mind, far more terrific than all that dreaming superstition ever drew. Besides, there was frequently something so inconceivably picturesque in the varying gestures of unrestrained passion, so irresistibly comic in their sallies, or so heart-piercingly pathetic in the little airs they would sing, frequently bursting out after an awful silence, as to fascinate the attention, and amuse the fancy, while torturing the soul. It was the uproar of the passions which she was compelled to observe; and to mark the lucid beam of reason, like a light trembling in a socket, or like the flash which divides the threatening clouds of angry heaven only to display the horrors which darkness shrouded.

Jemima would labour to beguile the tedious evenings, by describing the persons and manners of the unfortunate beings, whose figures or voices awoke sympathetic sorrow in Maria's bosom; and the stories she told were the more interesting, for perpetually leaving room to conjecture something extraordinary. Still Maria, accustomed to generalize her observations, was led to conclude from all she heard, that it was a vulgar error to suppose that people of abilities were the most apt to lose the command of reason. On the contrary, from most of the instances she could investigate, she thought it resulted, that the passions only appeared strong and disproportioned, because the judgment was weak and unexercised; and that they

gained strength by the decay of reason, as the shadows lengthen during the sun's decline.

Maria impatiently wished to see her fellow-sufferer; but Darnford was still more earnest to obtain an interview. Accustomed to submit to every impulse of passion, and never taught, like women, to restrain the most natural, and acquire, instead of the bewitching frankness of nature, a factitious propriety of behaviour, every desire became a torrent that bore down all opposition.

His travelling trunk, which contained the books lent to Maria, had been sent to him, and with a part of its contents he bribed his principal keeper; who, after receiving the most solemn promise that he would return to his apartment without attempting to explore any part of the house, conducted him, in the dusk of the evening, to Maria's room.

Jemima had apprized her charge of the visit, and she expected with trembling impatience, inspired by a vague hope that he might again prove her deliverer, to see a man who had before rescued her from oppression. He entered with an animation of countenance, formed to captivate an enthusiast; and, hastily turned his eyes from her to the apartment, which he surveyed with apparent emotions of compassionate indignation. Sympathy illuminated his eye, and, taking her hand, he respectfully bowed on it, exclaiming—"This is extraordinary!—again to meet you, and in such circumstances!" Still, impressive as was the coincidence of events which brought them once more together, their full hearts did not overflow.—[\[54-A\]](#)

[And though, after this first visit, they were permitted frequently to repeat their interviews, they were for some time employed in] a reserved conversation, to which all the world might have listened; excepting, when discussing some literary subject, flashes of sentiment, enforced by each relaxing feature, seemed to remind them that their minds were already acquainted.

[By degrees, Darnford entered into the particulars of his story.] In a few words, he informed her that he had been a thoughtless, extravagant young man; yet, as he described his faults, they appeared to be the generous luxuriancy of a noble mind. Nothing like meanness tarnished the lustre of his youth, nor had the worm of selfishness lurked in the unfolding bud, even while he had been the dupe of others. Yet he tardily acquired the experience necessary to guard him against future imposition.

"I shall weary you," continued he, "by my egotism; and did not powerful emotions draw me to you,"—his eyes glistened as he spoke, and a trembling seemed to run through his manly frame,—"I would not waste these precious moments in talking of myself.

"My father and mother were people of fashion; married by their parents. He was fond of the turf, she of the card-table. I, and two or three other children since dead, were kept at home till we became intolerable. My father and mother had a visible dislike to each other, continually displayed; the servants were of the depraved kind usually found in the houses of people of fortune. My brothers and parents all dying, I was left to the care of guardians, and sent to Eton. I never knew the sweets of domestic affection, but I felt the want of indulgence and frivolous respect at school. I will not disgust you with a recital of the vices of my youth, which can scarcely be comprehended by female delicacy. I was taught to love by a creature I am ashamed to mention; and the other women with whom I afterwards became intimate, were of a class of which you can have no knowledge. I formed my acquaintance with them at the theatres; and, when vivacity danced in their eyes, I was not easily disgusted by the vulgarity which flowed from their lips. Having spent, a few years after I was of age, [the whole of] a considerable patrimony, excepting a few hundreds, I had no recourse but to purchase a commission in a new-raised regiment, destined to subjugate America. The regret I felt to renounce a life of pleasure, was counter-balanced by the curiosity I

had to see America, or rather to travel; [nor had any of those circumstances occurred to my youth, which might have been calculated] to bind my country to my heart. I shall not trouble you with the details of a military life. My blood was still kept in motion; till, towards the close of the contest, I was wounded and taken prisoner.

"Confined to my bed, or chair, by a lingering cure, my only refuge from the preying activity of my mind, was books, which I read with great avidity, profiting by the conversation of my host, a man of sound understanding. My political sentiments now underwent a total change; and, dazzled by the hospitality of the Americans, I determined to take up my abode with freedom. I, therefore, with my usual impetuosity, sold my commission, and travelled into the interior parts of the country, to lay out my money to advantage. Added to this, I did not much like the puritanical manners of the large towns. Inequality of condition was there most disgustingly galling. The only pleasure wealth afforded, was to make an ostentatious display of it; for the cultivation of the fine arts, or literature, had not introduced into the first circles that polish of manners which renders the rich so essentially superior to the poor in Europe. Added to this, an influx of vices had been let in by the Revolution, and the most rigid principles of religion shaken to the centre, before the understanding could be gradually emancipated from the prejudices which led their ancestors undauntedly to seek an inhospitable clime and unbroken soil. The resolution, that led them, in pursuit of independence, to embark on rivers like seas, to search for unknown shores, and to sleep under the hovering mists of endless forests, whose baleful damps agued their limbs, was now turned into commercial speculations, till the national character exhibited a phenomenon in the history of the human mind—a head enthusiastically enterprising, with cold selfishness of heart. And woman, lovely woman!—they charm every where—still there is a degree of prudery, and a want of taste and ease in the manners of the American women, that renders them, in spite of their roses and lilies, far inferior to our European charmers. In the country, they have often a bewitching simplicity of character; but, in the cities, they have all the airs and ignorance of the ladies who give the tone to the circles of the large trading towns in England. They are fond of their ornaments, merely because they are good, and not because they embellish their persons; and are more gratified to inspire the women with jealousy of these exterior advantages, than the men with love. All the frivolity which often (excuse me, Madam) renders the society of modest women so stupid in England, here seemed to throw still more leaden fetters on their charms. Not being an adept in gallantry, I found that I could only keep myself awake in their company by making downright love to them.

"But, not to intrude on your patience, I retired to the track of land which I had purchased in the country, and my time passed pleasantly enough while I cut down the trees, built my house, and planted my different crops. But winter and idleness came, and I longed for more elegant society, to hear what was passing in the world, and to do something better than vegetate with the animals that made a very considerable part of my household. Consequently, I determined to travel. Motion was a substitute for variety of objects; and, passing over immense tracks of country, I exhausted my exuberant spirits, without obtaining much experience. I every where saw industry the fore-runner and not the consequence, of luxury; but this country, every thing being on an ample scale, did not afford those picturesque views, which a certain degree of cultivation is necessary gradually to produce. The eye wandered without an object to fix upon over immeasurable plains, and lakes that seemed replenished by the ocean, whilst eternal forests of small clustering trees, obstructed the circulation of air, and embarrassed the path, without gratifying the eye of taste. No cottage smiling in the waste, no travellers hailed us, to give life to silent nature; or, if perchance we saw the print of a footstep in our path, it was a dreadful warning to turn aside; and the head ached as if assailed by the scalping knife. The Indians who hovered on the skirts of the European settlements had only learned of their neighbours to plunder, and they stole their guns from them to do it with more safety.

"From the woods and back settlements, I returned to the towns, and learned to eat and drink most valiantly; but without entering into commerce (and I detested commerce) I found I could not live there; and, growing heartily weary of the land of liberty and vulgar aristocracy, seated on her bags of dollars, I resolved once more to visit Europe. I wrote to a distant relation in England, with whom I had been educated, mentioning the vessel in which I intended to sail. Arriving in London, my senses were intoxicated. I ran from street to street, from theatre to theatre, and the women of the town (again I must beg pardon for my habitual frankness) appeared to me like angels.

"A week was spent in this thoughtless manner, when, returning very late to the hotel in which I had lodged ever since my arrival, I was knocked down in a private street, and hurried, in a state of insensibility, into a coach, which brought me hither, and I only recovered my senses to be treated like one who had lost them. My keepers are deaf to my remonstrances and enquiries, yet assure me that my confinement shall not last long. Still I cannot guess, though I weary myself with conjectures, why I am confined, or in what part of England this house is situated. I imagine sometimes that I hear the sea roar, and wished myself again on the Atlantic, till I had a glimpse of you^[65-A]."

A few moments were only allowed to Maria to comment on this narrative, when Darnford left her to her own thoughts, to the "never ending, still beginning," task of weighing his words, recollecting his tones of voice, and feeling them reverberate on her heart.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[54-A\]](#) The copy which had received the author's last corrections, breaks off in this place, and the pages which follow, to the end of Chap. IV, are printed from a copy in a less finished state.

[\[65-A\]](#) The introduction of Darnford as the deliverer of Maria in a former instance, appears to have been an after-thought of the author. This has occasioned the omission of any allusion to that circumstance in the preceding narration.

EDITOR.

CHAP. IV.

PITY, and the forlorn seriousness of adversity, have both been considered as dispositions favourable to love, while satirical writers have attributed the relaxing effect of idleness, what chance then had Maria of escaping, when pity, sorrow, and solitude all conspired to soften her mind, and nourish romantic wishes, and, from a natural progress, romantic expectations?

Maria was six-and-twenty. But, such was the native soundness of her constitution, that time had only given to her countenance the character of her mind. Revolving thought, and exercised affections had banished some of the playful graces of innocence, producing insensibly that irregularity of features which the struggles of the understanding to trace or govern the strong emotions of the heart, are wont to imprint on the yielding mass. Grief and care had mellowed, without obscuring, the bright tints of youth, and the thoughtfulness which resided on her brow did not take from the feminine softness of her features; nay, such was the sensibility which often mantled over it, that she frequently appeared, like a large proportion of her sex, only born to feel; and the activity of her well-proportioned, and even almost voluptuous figure, inspired the idea of strength of mind, rather than of body. There was a simplicity sometimes indeed in her manner, which bordered on infantine ingenuousness, that led people of common discernment to underrate her talents, and smile at the flights of her imagination. But those who could not comprehend the delicacy of her sentiments, were attached by her unfailing sympathy, so that she was very generally beloved by characters of very different descriptions; still, she was too much under the influence of an ardent imagination to adhere to common rules.

There are mistakes of conduct which at five-and-twenty prove the strength of the mind, that, ten or fifteen years after, would demonstrate its weakness, its incapacity to acquire a sane judgment. The youths who are satisfied with the ordinary pleasures of life, and do not sigh after ideal phantoms of love and friendship, will never arrive at great maturity of understanding; but if these reveries are cherished, as is too frequently the case with women, when experience ought to have taught them in what human happiness consists, they become as useless as they are wretched. Besides, their pains and pleasures are so dependent on outward circumstances, on the objects of their affections, that they seldom act from the impulse of a nerved mind, able to choose its own pursuit.

Having had to struggle incessantly with the vices of mankind, Maria's imagination found repose in pourtraying the possible virtues the world might contain. Pygmalion formed an ivory maid, and longed for an informing soul. She, on the contrary, combined all the qualities of a hero's mind, and fate presented a statue in which she might enshrine them.

We mean not to trace the progress of this passion, or recount how often Darnford and Maria were obliged to part in the midst of an interesting conversation. Jemima ever watched on the tip-toe of fear, and frequently separated them on a false alarm, when they would have given worlds to remain a little longer together.

A magic lamp now seemed to be suspended in Maria's prison, and fairy landscapes flitted round the gloomy walls, late so blank. Rushing from the depth of despair, on the seraph wing of hope, she found herself happy.—She was beloved, and every emotion was rapturous.

To Darnford she had not shown a decided affection; the fear of outrunning his, a sure proof of love, made

her often assume a coldness and indifference foreign from her character; and, even when giving way to the playful emotions of a heart just loosened from the frozen bond of grief, there was a delicacy in her manner of expressing her sensibility, which made him doubt whether it was the effect of love.

One evening, when Jemima left them, to listen to the sound of a distant footstep, which seemed cautiously to approach, he seized Maria's hand—it was not withdrawn. They conversed with earnestness of their situation; and, during the conversation, he once or twice gently drew her towards him. He felt the fragrance of her breath, and longed, yet feared, to touch the lips from which it issued; spirits of purity seemed to guard them, while all the enchanting graces of love sported on her cheeks, and languished in her eyes.

Jemima entering, he reflected on his diffidence with poignant regret, and, she once more taking alarm, he ventured, as Maria stood near his chair, to approach her lips with a declaration of love. She drew back with solemnity, he hung down his head abashed; but lifting his eyes timidly, they met her's; she had determined, during that instant, and suffered their rays to mingle. He took, with more ardour, reassured, a half-consenting, half-reluctant kiss, reluctant only from modesty; and there was a sacredness in her dignified manner of reclining her glowing face on his shoulder, that powerfully impressed him. Desire was lost in more ineffable emotions, and to protect her from insult and sorrow—to make her happy, seemed not only the first wish of his heart, but the most noble duty of his life. Such angelic confidence demanded the fidelity of honour; but could he, feeling her in every pulsation, could he ever change, could he be a villain? The emotion with which she, for a moment, allowed herself to be pressed to his bosom, the tear of rapturous sympathy, mingled with a soft melancholy sentiment of recollected disappointment, said—more of truth and faithfulness, than the tongue could have given utterance to in hours! They were silent—yet discoursed, how eloquently? till, after a moment's reflection, Maria drew her chair by the side of his, and, with a composed sweetness of voice, and supernatural benignity of countenance, said, "I must open my whole heart to you; you must be told who I am, why I am here, and why, telling you I am a wife, I blush not to"—the blush spoke the rest.

Jemima was again at her elbow, and the restraint of her presence did not prevent an animated conversation, in which love, sly urchin, was ever at bo-peep.

So much of heaven did they enjoy, that paradise bloomed around them; or they, by a powerful spell, had been transported into Armida's garden. Love, the grand enchanter, "lapt them in Elysium," and every sense was harmonized to joy and social extacy. So animated, indeed, were their accents of tenderness, in discussing what, in other circumstances, would have been common-place subjects, that Jemima felt, with surprise, a tear of pleasure trickling down her rugged cheeks. She wiped it away, half ashamed; and when Maria kindly enquired the cause, with all the eager solicitude of a happy being wishing to impart to all nature its overflowing felicity, Jemima owned that it was the first tear that social enjoyment had ever drawn from her. She seemed indeed to breathe more freely; the cloud of suspicion cleared away from her brow; she felt herself, for once in her life, treated like a fellow-creature.

Imagination! who can paint thy power; or reflect the evanescent tints of hope fostered by thee? A despondent gloom had long obscured Maria's horizon—now the sun broke forth, the rainbow appeared, and every prospect was fair. Horror still reigned in the darkened cells, suspicion lurked in the passages, and whispered along the walls. The yells of men possessed, sometimes made them pause, and wonder that they felt so happy, in a tomb of living death. They even chid themselves for such apparent insensibility; still the world contained not three happier beings. And Jemima, after again patrolling the passage, was so softened by the air of confidence which breathed around her, that she voluntarily began an account of herself.

CHAP. V.

"MY father," said Jemima, "seduced my mother, a pretty girl, with whom he lived fellow-servant; and she no sooner perceived the natural, the dreaded consequence, than the terrible conviction flashed on her—that she was ruined. Honesty, and a regard for her reputation, had been the only principles inculcated by her mother; and they had been so forcibly impressed, that she feared shame, more than the poverty to which it would lead. Her incessant importunities to prevail upon my father to screen her from reproach by marrying her, as he had promised in the fervour of seduction, estranged him from her so completely, that her very person became distasteful to him; and he began to hate, as well as despise me, before I was born.

"My mother, grieved to the soul by his neglect, and unkind treatment, actually resolved to famish herself; and injured her health by the attempt; though she had not sufficient resolution to adhere to her project, or renounce it entirely. Death came not at her call; yet sorrow, and the methods she adopted to conceal her condition, still doing the work of a house-maid, had such an effect on her constitution, that she died in the wretched garret, where her virtuous mistress had forced her to take refuge in the very pangs of labour, though my father, after a slight reproof, was allowed to remain in his place—allowed by the mother of six children, who, scarcely permitting a footstep to be heard, during her month's indulgence, felt no sympathy for the poor wretch, denied every comfort required by her situation.

"The day my mother died, the ninth after my birth, I was consigned to the care of the cheapest nurse my father could find; who suckled her own child at the same time, and lodged as many more as she could get, in two cellar-like apartments.

"Poverty, and the habit of seeing children die off her hands, had so hardened her heart, that the office of a mother did not awaken the tenderness of a woman; nor were the feminine caresses which seem a part of the rearing of a child, ever bestowed on me. The chicken has a wing to shelter under; but I had no bosom to nestle in, no kindred warmth to foster me. Left in dirt, to cry with cold and hunger till I was weary, and sleep without ever being prepared by exercise, or lulled by kindness to rest; could I be expected to become any thing but a weak and rickety babe? Still, in spite of neglect, I continued to exist, to learn to curse existence," her countenance grew ferocious as she spoke, "and the treatment that rendered me miserable, seemed to sharpen my wits. Confined then in a damp hovel, to rock the cradle of the succeeding tribe, I looked like a little old woman, or a hag shrivelling into nothing. The furrows of reflection and care contracted the youthful cheek, and gave a sort of supernatural wildness to the ever watchful eye. During this period, my father had married another fellow-servant, who loved him less, and knew better how to manage his passion, than my mother. She likewise proving with child, they agreed to keep a shop: my step-mother, if, being an illegitimate offspring, I may venture thus to characterize her, having obtained a sum of a rich relation, for that purpose.

"Soon after her lying-in, she prevailed on my father to take me home, to save the expence of maintaining me, and of hiring a girl to assist her in the care of the child. I was young, it was true, but appeared a knowing little thing, and might be made handy. Accordingly I was brought to her house; but not to a home—for a home I never knew. Of this child, a daughter, she was extravagantly fond; and it was a part of my employment, to assist to spoil her, by humouring all her whims, and bearing all her caprices. Feeling her own consequence, before she could speak, she had learned the art of tormenting me, and if I ever dared to resist, I received blows, laid on with no compunctious hand, or was sent to bed dinnerless, as well as

supperless. I said that it was a part of my daily labour to attend this child, with the servility of a slave; still it was but a part. I was sent out in all seasons, and from place to place, to carry burdens far above my strength, without being allowed to draw near the fire, or ever being cheered by encouragement or kindness. No wonder then, treated like a creature of another species, that I began to envy, and at length to hate, the darling of the house. Yet, I perfectly remember, that it was the caresses, and kind expressions of my step-mother, which first excited my jealous discontent. Once, I cannot forget it, when she was calling in vain her wayward child to kiss her, I ran to her, saying, 'I will kiss you, ma'am!' and how did my heart, which was in my mouth, sink, what was my debasement of soul, when pushed away with—'I do not want you, pert thing!' Another day, when a new gown had excited the highest good humour, and she uttered the appropriate *dear*, addressed unexpectedly to me, I thought I could never do enough to please her; I was all alacrity, and rose proportionably in my own estimation.

"As her daughter grew up, she was pampered with cakes and fruit, while I was, literally speaking, fed with the refuse of the table, with her leavings. A liquorish tooth is, I believe, common to children, and I used to steal any thing sweet, that I could catch up with a chance of concealment. When detected, she was not content to chastize me herself at the moment, but, on my father's return in the evening (he was a shopman), the principal discourse was to recount my faults, and attribute them to the wicked disposition which I had brought into the world with me, inherited from my mother. He did not fail to leave the marks of his resentment on my body, and then solaced himself by playing with my sister.—I could have murdered her at those moments. To save myself from these unmerciful corrections, I resorted to falshood, and the untruths which I sturdily maintained, were brought in judgment against me, to support my tyrant's inhuman charge of my natural propensity to vice. Seeing me treated with contempt, and always being fed and dressed better, my sister conceived a contemptuous opinion of me, that proved an obstacle to all affection; and my father, hearing continually of my faults, began to consider me as a curse entailed on him for his sins: he was therefore easily prevailed on to bind me apprentice to one of my step-mother's friends, who kept a slop-shop in Wapping. I was represented (as it was said) in my true colours; but she, 'warranted,' snapping her fingers, 'that she should break my spirit or heart.'

"My mother replied, with a whine, 'that if any body could make me better, it was such a clever woman as herself; though, for her own part, she had tried in vain; but good-nature was her fault.'

"I shudder with horror, when I recollect the treatment I had now to endure. Not only under the lash of my task-mistress, but the drudge of the maid, apprentices and children, I never had a taste of human kindness to soften the rigour of perpetual labour. I had been introduced as an object of abhorrence into the family; as a creature of whom my step-mother, though she had been kind enough to let me live in the house with her own child, could make nothing. I was described as a wretch, whose nose must be kept to the grinding stone—and it was held there with an iron grasp. It seemed indeed the privilege of their superior nature to kick me about, like the dog or cat. If I were attentive, I was called fawning, if refractory, an obstinate mule, and like a mule I received their censure on my loaded back. Often has my mistress, for some instance of forgetfulness, thrown me from one side of the kitchen to the other, knocked my head against the wall, spit in my face, with various refinements on barbarity that I forbear to enumerate, though they were all acted over again by the servant, with additional insults, to which the appellation of *bastard*, was commonly added, with taunts or sneers. But I will not attempt to give you an adequate idea of my situation, lest you, who probably have never been drenched with the dregs of human misery, should think I exaggerate.

"I stole now, from absolute necessity,—bread; yet whatever else was taken, which I had it not in my power to take, was ascribed to me. I was the filching cat, the ravenous dog, the dumb brute, who must

bear all; for if I endeavoured to exculpate myself, I was silenced, without any enquiries being made, with 'Hold your tongue, you never tell truth.' Even the very air I breathed was tainted with scorn; for I was sent to the neighbouring shops with Glutton, Liar, or Thief, written on my forehead. This was, at first, the most bitter punishment; but sullen pride, or a kind of stupid desperation, made me, at length, almost regardless of the contempt, which had wrung from me so many solitary tears at the only moments when I was allowed to rest.

"Thus was I the mark of cruelty till my sixteenth year; and then I have only to point out a change of misery; for a period I never knew. Allow me first to make one observation. Now I look back, I cannot help attributing the greater part of my misery, to the misfortune of having been thrown into the world without the grand support of life—a mother's affection. I had no one to love me; or to make me respected, to enable me to acquire respect. I was an egg dropped on the sand; a pauper by nature, shunted from family to family, who belonged to nobody—and nobody cared for me. I was despised from my birth, and denied the chance of obtaining a footing for myself in society. Yes; I had not even the chance of being considered as a fellow-creature—yet all the people with whom I lived, brutalized as they were by the low cunning of trade, and the despicable shifts of poverty, were not without bowels, though they never yearned for me. I was, in fact, born a slave, and chained by infamy to slavery during the whole of existence, without having any companions to alleviate it by sympathy, or teach me how to rise above it by their example. But, to resume the thread of my tale—

"At sixteen, I suddenly grew tall, and something like comeliness appeared on a Sunday, when I had time to wash my face, and put on clean clothes. My master had once or twice caught hold of me in the passage; but I instinctively avoided his disgusting caresses. One day however, when the family were at a methodist meeting, he contrived to be alone in the house with me, and by blows—yes; blows and menaces, compelled me to submit to his ferocious desire; and, to avoid my mistress's fury, I was obliged in future to comply, and skulk to my loft at his command, in spite of increasing loathing.

"The anguish which was now pent up in my bosom, seemed to open a new world to me: I began to extend my thoughts beyond myself, and grieve for human misery, till I discovered, with horror—ah! what horror!—that I was with child. I know not why I felt a mixed sensation of despair and tenderness, excepting that, ever called a bastard, a bastard appeared to me an object of the greatest compassion in creation.

"I communicated this dreadful circumstance to my master, who was almost equally alarmed at the intelligence; for he feared his wife, and public censure at the meeting. After some weeks of deliberation had elapsed, I in continual fear that my altered shape would be noticed, my master gave me a medicine in a phial, which he desired me to take, telling me, without any circumlocution, for what purpose it was designed. I burst into tears, I thought it was killing myself—yet was such a self as I worth preserving? He cursed me for a fool, and left me to my own reflections. I could not resolve to take this infernal potion; but I wrapped it up in an old gown, and hid it in a corner of my box.

"Nobody yet suspected me, because they had been accustomed to view me as a creature of another species. But the threatening storm at last broke over my devoted head—never shall I forget it! One Sunday evening when I was left, as usual, to take care of the house, my master came home intoxicated, and I became the prey of his brutal appetite. His extreme intoxication made him forget his customary caution, and my mistress entered and found us in a situation that could not have been more hateful to her than me. Her husband was 'pot-valiant,' he feared her not at the moment, nor had he then much reason, for she instantly turned the whole force of her anger another way. She tore off my cap, scratched, kicked, and buffeted me, till she had exhausted her strength, declaring, as she rested her arm, 'that I had wheedled her husband from her.—But, could any thing better be expected from a wretch, whom she had taken into her

house out of pure charity?' What a torrent of abuse rushed out? till, almost breathless, she concluded with saying, 'that I was born a strumpet; it ran in my blood, and nothing good could come to those who harboured me.'

"My situation was, of course, discovered, and she declared that I should not stay another night under the same roof with an honest family. I was therefore pushed out of doors, and my trumpery thrown after me, when it had been contemptuously examined in the passage, lest I should have stolen any thing.

"Behold me then in the street, utterly destitute! Whither could I creep for shelter? To my father's roof I had no claim, when not pursued by shame—now I shrunk back as from death, from my mother's cruel reproaches, my father's execrations. I could not endure to hear him curse the day I was born, though life had been a curse to me. Of death I thought, but with a confused emotion of terror, as I stood leaning my head on a post, and starting at every footstep, lest it should be my mistress coming to tear my heart out. One of the boys of the shop passing by, heard my tale, and immediately repaired to his master, to give him a description of my situation; and he touched the right key—the scandal it would give rise to, if I were left to repeat my tale to every enquirer. This plea came home to his reason, who had been sobered by his wife's rage, the fury of which fell on him when I was out of her reach, and he sent the boy to me with half-a-guinea, desiring him to conduct me to a house, where beggars, and other wretches, the refuse of society, nightly lodged.

"This night was spent in a state of stupefaction, or desperation. I detested mankind, and abhorred myself.

"In the morning I ventured out, to throw myself in my master's way, at his usual hour of going abroad. I approached him, he 'damned me for a b——, declared I had disturbed the peace of the family, and that he had sworn to his wife, never to take any more notice of me.' He left me; but, instantly returning, he told me that he should speak to his friend, a parish-officer, to get a nurse for the brat I laid to him; and advised me, if I wished to keep out of the house of correction, not to make free with his name.

"I hurried back to my hole, and, rage giving place to despair, sought for the potion that was to procure abortion, and swallowed it, with a wish that it might destroy me, at the same time that it stopped the sensations of new-born life, which I felt with indescribable emotion. My head turned round, my heart grew sick, and in the horrors of approaching dissolution, mental anguish was swallowed up. The effect of the medicine was violent, and I was confined to my bed several days; but, youth and a strong constitution prevailing, I once more crawled out, to ask myself the cruel question, 'Whither I should go?' I had but two shillings left in my pocket, the rest had been expended, by a poor woman who slept in the same room, to pay for my lodging, and purchase the necessaries of which she partook.

"With this wretch I went into the neighbouring streets to beg, and my disconsolate appearance drew a few pence from the idle, enabling me still to command a bed; till, recovering from my illness, and taught to put on my rags to the best advantage, I was accosted from different motives, and yielded to the desire of the brutes I met, with the same detestation that I had felt for my still more brutal master. I have since read in novels of the blandishments of seduction, but I had not even the pleasure of being enticed into vice.

"I shall not," interrupted Jemima, "lead your imagination into all the scenes of wretchedness and depravity, which I was condemned to view; or mark the different stages of my debasing misery. Fate dragged me through the very kennels of society; I was still a slave, a bastard, a common property. Become familiar with vice, for I wish to conceal nothing from you, I picked the pockets of the drunkards who abused me; and proved by my conduct, that I deserved the epithets, with which they loaded me at moments when distrust ought to cease.

"Detesting my nightly occupation, though valuing, if I may so use the word, my independence, which only consisted in choosing the street in which I should wander, or the roof, when I had money, in which I should hide my head, I was some time before I could prevail on myself to accept of a place in a house of ill fame, to which a girl, with whom I had accidentally conversed in the street, had recommended me. I had been hunted almost into a fever, by the watchmen of the quarter of the town I frequented; one, whom I had unwittingly offended, giving the word to the whole pack. You can scarcely conceive the tyranny exercised by these wretches: considering themselves as the instruments of the very laws they violate, the pretext which steels their conscience, hardens their heart. Not content with receiving from us, outlaws of society (let other women talk of favours) a brutal gratification gratuitously as a privilege of office, they extort a tithe of prostitution, and harass with threats the poor creatures whose occupation affords not the means to silence the growl of avarice. To escape from this persecution, I once more entered into servitude.

"A life of comparative regularity restored my health; and—do not start—my manners were improved, in a situation where vice sought to render itself alluring, and taste was cultivated to fashion the person, if not to refine the mind. Besides, the common civility of speech, contrasted with the gross vulgarity to which I had been accustomed, was something like the polish of civilization. I was not shut out from all intercourse of humanity. Still I was galled by the yoke of service, and my mistress often flying into violent fits of passion, made me dread a sudden dismissal, which I understood was always the case. I was therefore prevailed on, though I felt a horror of men, to accept the offer of a gentleman, rather in the decline of years, to keep his house, pleasantly situated in a little village near Hampstead.

"He was a man of great talents, and of brilliant wit; but, a worn-out votary of voluptuousness, his desires became fastidious in proportion as they grew weak, and the native tenderness of his heart was undermined by a vitiated imagination. A thoughtless career of libertinism and social enjoyment, had injured his health to such a degree, that, whatever pleasure his conversation afforded me (and my esteem was ensured by proofs of the generous humanity of his disposition), the being his mistress was purchasing it at a very dear rate. With such a keen perception of the delicacies of sentiment, with an imagination invigorated by the exercise of genius, how could he sink into the grossness of sensuality!

"But, to pass over a subject which I recollect with pain, I must remark to you, as an answer to your often-repeated question, 'Why my sentiments and language were superior to my station?' that I now began to read, to beguile the tediousness of solitude, and to gratify an inquisitive, active mind. I had often, in my childhood, followed a ballad-singer, to hear the sequel of a dismal story, though sure of being severely punished for delaying to return with whatever I was sent to purchase. I could just spell and put a sentence together, and I listened to the various arguments, though often mingled with obscenity, which occurred at the table where I was allowed to preside: for a literary friend or two frequently came home with my master, to dine and pass the night. Having lost the privileged respect of my sex, my presence, instead of restraining, perhaps gave the reins to their tongues; still I had the advantage of hearing discussions, from which, in the common course of life, women are excluded.

"You may easily imagine, that it was only by degrees that I could comprehend some of the subjects they investigated, or acquire from their reasoning what might be termed a moral sense. But my fondness of reading increasing, and my master occasionally shutting himself up in this retreat, for weeks together, to write, I had many opportunities of improvement. At first, considering money I was right!" (exclaimed Jemima, altering her tone of voice) "as the only means, after my loss of reputation, of obtaining respect, or even the toleration of humanity, I had not the least scruple to secrete a part of the sums intrusted to me, and to screen myself from detection by a system of falshood. But, acquiring new principles, I began to have

the ambition of returning to the respectable part of society, and was weak enough to suppose it possible. The attention of my unassuming instructor, who, without being ignorant of his own powers, possessed great simplicity of manners, strengthened the illusion. Having sometimes caught up hints for thought, from my untutored remarks, he often led me to discuss the subjects he was treating, and would read to me his productions, previous to their publication, wishing to profit by the criticism of unsophisticated feeling. The aim of his writings was to touch the simple springs of the heart; for he despised the would-be oracles, the self-elected philosophers, who fright away fancy, while sifting each grain of thought to prove that slowness of comprehension is wisdom.

"I should have distinguished this as a moment of sunshine, a happy period in my life, had not the repugnance the disgusting libertinism of my protector inspired, daily become more painful.—And, indeed, I soon did recollect it as such with agony, when his sudden death (for he had recourse to the most exhilarating cordials to keep up the convivial tone of his spirits) again threw me into the desert of human society. Had he had any time for reflection, I am certain he would have left the little property in his power to me: but, attacked by the fatal apoplexy in town, his heir, a man of rigid morals, brought his wife with him to take possession of the house and effects, before I was even informed of his death,—'to prevent,' as she took care indirectly to tell me, 'such a creature as she supposed me to be, from purloining any of them, had I been apprized of the event in time.'

"The grief I felt at the sudden shock the information gave me, which at first had nothing selfish in it, was treated with contempt, and I was ordered to pack up my clothes; and a few trinkets and books, given me by the generous deceased, were contested, while they piously hoped, with a reprobating shake of the head, 'that God would have mercy on his sinful soul!' With some difficulty, I obtained my arrears of wages; but asking—such is the spirit-grinding consequence of poverty and infamy—for a character for honesty and economy, which God knows I merited, I was told by this—why must I call her woman?—'that it would go against her conscience to recommend a kept mistress.' Tears started in my eyes, burning tears; for there are situations in which a wretch is humbled by the contempt they are conscious they do not deserve.

"I returned to the metropolis; but the solitude of a poor lodging was inconceivably dreary, after the society I had enjoyed. To be cut off from human converse, now I had been taught to relish it, was to wander a ghost among the living. Besides, I foresaw, to aggravate the severity of my fate, that my little pittance would soon melt away. I endeavoured to obtain needlework; but, not having been taught early, and my hands being rendered clumsy by hard work, I did not sufficiently excel to be employed by the ready-made linen shops, when so many women, better qualified, were suing for it. The want of a character prevented my getting a place; for, irksome as servitude would have been to me, I should have made another trial, had it been feasible. Not that I disliked employment, but the inequality of condition to which I must have submitted. I had acquired a taste for literature, during the five years I had lived with a literary man, occasionally conversing with men of the first abilities of the age; and now to descend to the lowest vulgarity, was a degree of wretchedness not to be imagined unfelt. I had not, it is true, tasted the charms of affection, but I had been familiar with the graces of humanity.

"One of the gentlemen, whom I had frequently dined in company with, while I was treated like a companion, met me in the street, and enquired after my health. I seized the occasion, and began to describe my situation; but he was in haste to join, at dinner, a select party of choice spirits; therefore, without waiting to hear me, he impatiently put a guinea into my hand, saying, 'It was a pity such a sensible woman should be in distress—he wished me well from his soul.'

"To another I wrote, stating my case, and requesting advice. He was an advocate for unequivocal

sincerity; and had often, in my presence, descanted on the evils which arise in society from the despotism of rank and riches.

"In reply, I received a long essay on the energy of the human mind, with continual allusions to his own force of character. He added, 'That the woman who could write such a letter as I had sent him, could never be in want of resources, were she to look into herself, and exert her powers; misery was the consequence of indolence, and, as to my being shut out from society, it was the lot of man to submit to certain privations.'

"How often have I heard," said Jemima, interrupting her narrative, "in conversation, and read in books, that every person willing to work may find employment? It is the vague assertion, I believe, of insensible indolence, when it relates to men; but, with respect to women, I am sure of its fallacy, unless they will submit to the most menial bodily labour; and even to be employed at hard labour is out of the reach of many, whose reputation misfortune or folly has tainted.

"How writers, professing to be friends to freedom, and the improvement of morals, can assert that poverty is no evil, I cannot imagine."

"No more can I," interrupted Maria, "yet they even expatiate on the peculiar happiness of indigence, though in what it can consist, excepting in brutal rest, when a man can barely earn a subsistence, I cannot imagine. The mind is necessarily imprisoned in its own little tenement; and, fully occupied by keeping it in repair, has not time to rove abroad for improvement. The book of knowledge is closely clasped, against those who must fulfil their daily task of severe manual labour or die; and curiosity, rarely excited by thought or information, seldom moves on the stagnate lake of ignorance."

"As far as I have been able to observe," replied Jemima, "prejudices, caught up by chance, are obstinately maintained by the poor, to the exclusion of improvement; they have not time to reason or reflect to any extent, or minds sufficiently exercised to adopt the principles of action, which form perhaps the only basis of contentment in every station^[114-A]."

"And independence," said Darnford, "they are necessarily strangers to, even the independence of despising their persecutors. If the poor are happy, or can be happy, *things are very well as they are*. And I cannot conceive on what principle those writers contend for a change of system, who support this opinion. The authors on the other side of the question are much more consistent, who grant the fact; yet, insisting that it is the lot of the majority to be oppressed in this life, kindly turn them over to another, to rectify the false weights and measures of this, as the only way to justify the dispensations of Providence. I have not," continued Darnford, "an opinion more firmly fixed by observation in my mind, than that, though riches may fail to produce proportionate happiness, poverty most commonly excludes it, by shutting up all the avenues to improvement."

"And as for the affections," added Maria, with a sigh, "how gross, and even tormenting do they become, unless regulated by an improving mind! The culture of the heart ever, I believe, keeps pace with that of the mind. But pray go on," addressing Jemima, "though your narrative gives rise to the most painful reflections on the present state of society."

"Not to trouble you," continued she, "with a detailed description of all the painful feelings of unavailing exertion, I have only to tell you, that at last I got recommended to wash in a few families, who did me the favour to admit me into their houses, without the most strict enquiry, to wash from one in the morning till eight at night, for eighteen or twenty-pence a day. On the happiness to be enjoyed over a washing-tub I

need not comment; yet you will allow me to observe, that this was a wretchedness of situation peculiar to my sex. A man with half my industry, and, I may say, abilities, could have procured a decent livelihood, and discharged some of the duties which knit mankind together; whilst I, who had acquired a taste for the rational, nay, in honest pride let me assert it, the virtuous enjoyments of life, was cast aside as the filth of society. Condemned to labour, like a machine, only to earn bread, and scarcely that, I became melancholy and desperate.

"I have now to mention a circumstance which fills me with remorse, and fear it will entirely deprive me of your esteem. A tradesman became attached to me, and visited me frequently,—and I at last obtained such a power over him, that he offered to take me home to his house.—Consider, dear madam, I was famishing: wonder not that I became a wolf!—The only reason for not taking me home immediately, was the having a girl in the house, with child by him—and this girl—I advised him—yes, I did! would I could forget it!—to turn out of doors: and one night he determined to follow my advice, Poor wretch! she fell upon her knees, reminded him that he had promised to marry her, that her parents were honest!—What did it avail?—She was turned out.

"She approached her father's door, in the skirts of London,—listened at the shutters,—but could not knock. A watchman had observed her go and return several times—Poor wretch!—" The remorse Jemima spoke of, seemed to be stinging her to the soul, as she proceeded."

"She left it, and, approaching a tub where horses were watered, she sat down in it, and, with desperate resolution, remained in that attitude—till resolution was no longer necessary!

"I happened that morning to be going out to wash, anticipating the moment when I should escape from such hard labour. I passed by, just as some men, going to work, drew out the stiff, cold corpse—Let me not recal the horrid moment!—I recognized her pale visage; I listened to the tale told by the spectators, and my heart did not burst. I thought of my own state, and wondered how I could be such a monster!—I worked hard; and, returning home, I was attacked by a fever. I suffered both in body and mind. I determined not to live with the wretch. But he did not try me; he left the neighbourhood. I once more returned to the wash-tub.

"Still this state, miserable as it was, admitted of aggravation. Lifting one day a heavy load, a tub fell against my shin, and gave me great pain. I did not pay much attention to the hurt, till it became a serious wound; being obliged to work as usual, or starve. But, finding myself at length unable to stand for any time, I thought of getting into an hospital. Hospitals, it should seem (for they are comfortless abodes for the sick) were expressly endowed for the reception of the friendless; yet I, who had on that plea a right to assistance, wanted the recommendation of the rich and respectable, and was several weeks languishing for admittance; fees were demanded on entering; and, what was still more unreasonable, security for burying me, that expence not coming into the letter of the charity. A guinea was the stipulated sum—I could as soon have raised a million; and I was afraid to apply to the parish for an order, lest they should have passed me, I knew not whither. The poor woman at whose house I lodged, compassionating my state, got me into the hospital; and the family where I received the hurt, sent me five shillings, three and six-pence of which I gave at my admittance—I know not for what.

"My leg grew quickly better; but I was dismissed before my cure was completed, because I could not afford to have my linen washed to appear decently, as the virago of a nurse said, when the gentlemen (the surgeons) came. I cannot give you an adequate idea of the wretchedness of an hospital; every thing is left to the care of people intent on gain. The attendants seem to have lost all feeling of compassion in the bustling discharge of their offices; death is so familiar to them, that they are not anxious to ward it off.

Every thing appeared to be conducted for the accommodation of the medical men and their pupils, who came to make experiments on the poor, for the benefit of the rich. One of the physicians, I must not forget to mention, gave me half-a-crown, and ordered me some wine, when I was at the lowest ebb. I thought of making my case known to the lady-like matron; but her forbidding countenance prevented me. She condescended to look on the patients, and make general enquiries, two or three times a week; but the nurses knew the hour when the visit of ceremony would commence, and every thing was as it should be.

"After my dismissal, I was more at a loss than ever for a subsistence, and, not to weary you with a repetition of the same unavailing attempts, unable to stand at the washing-tub, I began to consider the rich and poor as natural enemies, and became a thief from principle. I could not now cease to reason, but I hated mankind. I despised myself, yet I justified my conduct. I was taken, tried, and condemned to six months' imprisonment in a house of correction. My soul recoils with horror from the remembrance of the insults I had to endure, till, branded with shame, I was turned loose in the street, pennyless. I wandered from street to street, till, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, I sunk down senseless at a door, where I had vainly demanded a morsel of bread. I was sent by the inhabitant to the work-house, to which he had surlily bid me go, saying, he 'paid enough in conscience to the poor,' when, with parched tongue, I implored his charity. If those well-meaning people who exclaim against beggars, were acquainted with the treatment the poor receive in many of these wretched asylums, they would not stifle so easily involuntary sympathy, by saying that they have all parishes to go to, or wonder that the poor dread to enter the gloomy walls. What are the common run of work-houses, but prisons, in which many respectable old people, worn out by immoderate labour, sink into the grave in sorrow, to which they are carried like dogs!"

Alarmed by some indistinct noise, Jemima rose hastily to listen, and Maria, turning to Darnford, said, "I have indeed been shocked beyond expression when I have met a pauper's funeral. A coffin carried on the shoulders of three or four ill-looking wretches, whom the imagination might easily convert into a band of assassins, hastening to conceal the corpse, and quarrelling about the prey on their way. I know it is of little consequence how we are consigned to the earth; but I am led by this brutal insensibility, to what even the animal creation appears forcibly to feel, to advert to the wretched, deserted manner in which they died."

"True," rejoined Darnford, "and, till the rich will give more than a part of their wealth, till they will give time and attention to the wants of the distressed, never let them boast of charity. Let them open their hearts, and not their purses, and employ their minds in the service, if they are really actuated by humanity; or charitable institutions will always be the prey of the lowest order of knaves."

Jemima returning, seemed in haste to finish her tale. "The overseer farmed the poor of different parishes, and out of the bowels of poverty was wrung the money with which he purchased this dwelling, as a private receptacle for madness. He had been a keeper at a house of the same description, and conceived that he could make money much more readily in his old occupation. He is a shrewd—shall I say it?—villain. He observed something resolute in my manner, and offered to take me with him, and instruct me how to treat the disturbed minds he meant to intrust to my care. The offer of forty pounds a year, and to quit a workhouse, was not to be despised, though the condition of shutting my eyes and hardening my heart was annexed to it.

"I agreed to accompany him; and four years have I been attendant on many wretches, and"—she lowered her voice,— "the witness of many enormities. In solitude my mind seemed to recover its force, and many of the sentiments which I imbibed in the only tolerable period of my life, returned with their full force. Still what should induce me to be the champion for suffering humanity?—Who ever risked any thing for

me?—Who ever acknowledged me to be a fellow-creature?"—

Maria took her hand, and Jemima, more overcome by kindness than she had ever been by cruelty, hastened out of the room to conceal her emotions.

Darnford soon after heard his summons, and, taking leave of him, Maria promised to gratify his curiosity, with respect to herself, the first opportunity.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[114-A\]](#) The copy which appears to have received the author's last corrections, ends at this place.

CHAP. VI.

ACTIVE as love was in the heart of Maria, the story she had just heard made her thoughts take a wider range. The opening buds of hope closed, as if they had put forth too early, and the the happiest day of her life was overcast by the most melancholy reflections. Thinking of Jemima's peculiar fate and her own, she was led to consider the oppressed state of women, and to lament that she had given birth to a daughter. Sleep fled from her eyelids, while she dwelt on the wretchedness of unprotected infancy, till sympathy with Jemima changed to agony, when it seemed probable that her own babe might even now be in the very state she so forcibly described.

Maria thought, and thought again. Jemima's humanity had rather been benumbed than killed, by the keen frost she had to brave at her entrance into life; an appeal then to her feelings, on this tender point, surely would not be fruitless; and Maria began to anticipate the delight it would afford her to gain intelligence of her child. This project was now the only subject of reflection; and she watched impatiently for the dawn of day, with that determinate purpose which generally insures success.

At the usual hour, Jemima brought her breakfast, and a tender note from Darnford. She ran her eye hastily over it, and her heart calmly hoarded up the rapture a fresh assurance of affection, affection such as she wished to inspire, gave her, without diverting her mind a moment from its design. While Jemima waited to take away the breakfast, Maria alluded to the reflections, that had haunted her during the night to the exclusion of sleep. She spoke with energy of Jemima's unmerited sufferings, and of the fate of a number of deserted females, placed within the sweep of a whirlwind, from which it was next to impossible to escape. Perceiving the effect her conversation produced on the countenance of her guard, she grasped the arm of Jemima with that irresistible warmth which defies repulse, exclaiming—"With your heart, and such dreadful experience, can you lend your aid to deprive my babe of a mother's tenderness, a mother's care? In the name of God, assist me to snatch her from destruction! Let me but give her an education—let me but prepare her body and mind to encounter the ills which await her sex, and I will teach her to consider you as her second mother, and herself as the prop of your age. Yes, Jemima, look at me—observe me closely, and read my very soul; you merit a better fate;" she held out her hand with a firm gesture of assurance; "and I will procure it for you, as a testimony of my esteem, as well as of my gratitude."

Jemima had not power to resist this persuasive torrent; and, owning that the house in which she was confined, was situated on the banks of the Thames, only a few miles from London, and not on the sea-coast, as Darnford had supposed, she promised to invent some excuse for her absence, and go herself to trace the situation, and enquire concerning the health, of this abandoned daughter. Her manner implied an intention to do something more, but she seemed unwilling to impart her design; and Maria, glad to have obtained the main point, thought it best to leave her to the workings of her own mind; convinced that she had the power of interesting her still more in favour of herself and child, by a simple recital of facts.

In the evening, Jemima informed the impatient mother, that on the morrow she should hasten to town before the family hour of rising, and received all the information necessary, as a clue to her search. The "Good night!" Maria uttered was peculiarly solemn and affectionate. Glad expectation sparkled in her eye; and, for the first time since her detention, she pronounced the name of her child with pleasureable fondness; and, with all the garrulity of a nurse, described her first smile when she recognized her mother.

Recollecting herself, a still kinder "Adieu!" with a "God bless you!"—that seemed to include a maternal benediction, dismissed Jemima.

The dreary solitude of the ensuing day, lengthened by impatiently dwelling on the same idea, was intolerably wearisome. She listened for the sound of a particular clock, which some directions of the wind allowed her to hear distinctly. She marked the shadow gaining on the wall; and, twilight thickening into darkness, her breath seemed oppressed while she anxiously counted nine.—The last sound was a stroke of despair on her heart; for she expected every moment, without seeing Jemima, to have her light extinguished by the savage female who supplied her place. She was even obliged to prepare for bed, restless as she was, not to disoblige her new attendant. She had been cautioned not to speak too freely to her; but the caution was needless, her countenance would still more emphatically have made her shrink back. Such was the ferocity of manner, conspicuous in every word and gesture of this hag, that Maria was afraid to enquire, why Jemima, who had faithfully promised to see her before her door was shut for the night, came not?—and, when the key turned in the lock, to consign her to a night of suspense, she felt a degree of anguish which the circumstances scarcely justified.

Continually on the watch, the shutting of a door, or the sound of a footstep, made her start and tremble with apprehension, something like what she felt, when, at her entrance, dragged along the gallery, she began to doubt whether she were not surrounded by demons?

Fatigued by an endless rotation of thought and wild alarms, she looked like a spectre, when Jemima entered in the morning; especially as her eyes darted out of her head, to read in Jemima's countenance, almost as pallid, the intelligence she dared not trust her tongue to demand. Jemima put down the tea-things, and appeared very busy in arranging the table. Maria took up a cup with trembling hand, then forcibly recovering her fortitude, and restraining the convulsive movement which agitated the muscles of her mouth, she said, "Spare yourself the pain of preparing me for your information, I adjure you!—My child is dead!" Jemima solemnly answered, "Yes;" with a look expressive of compassion and angry emotions. "Leave me," added Maria, making a fresh effort to govern her feelings, and hiding her face in her handkerchief, to conceal her anguish—"It is enough—I know that my babe is no more—I will hear the particulars when I am"—*calmer*, she could not utter; and Jemima, without importuning her by idle attempts to console her, left the room.

Plunged in the deepest melancholy, she would not admit Darnford's visits; and such is the force of early associations even on strong minds, that, for a while, she indulged the superstitious notion that she was justly punished by the death of her child, for having for an instant ceased to regret her loss. Two or three letters from Darnford, full of soothing, manly tenderness, only added poignancy to these accusing emotions; yet the passionate style in which he expressed, what he termed the first and fondest wish of his heart, "that his affection might make her some amends for the cruelty and injustice she had endured," inspired a sentiment of gratitude to heaven; and her eyes filled with delicious tears, when, at the conclusion of his letter, wishing to supply the place of her unworthy relations, whose want of principle he execrated, he assured her, calling her his dearest girl, "that it should henceforth be the business of his life to make her happy."

He begged, in a note sent the following morning, to be permitted to see her, when his presence would be no intrusion on her grief; and so earnestly intreated to be allowed, according to promise, to beguile the tedious moments of absence, by dwelling on the events of her past life, that she sent him the memoirs which had been written for her daughter, promising Jemima the perusal as soon as he returned them.

CHAP. VII.

"ADDRESSING these memoirs to you, my child, uncertain whether I shall ever have an opportunity of instructing you, many observations will probably flow from my heart, which only a mother—a mother schooled in misery, could make.

"The tenderness of a father who knew the world, might be great; but could it equal that of a mother—of a mother, labouring under a portion of the misery, which the constitution of society seems to have entailed on all her kind? It is, my child, my dearest daughter, only such a mother, who will dare to break through all restraint to provide for your happiness—who will voluntarily brave censure herself, to ward off sorrow from your bosom. From my narrative, my dear girl, you may gather the instruction, the counsel, which is meant rather to exercise than influence your mind.—Death may snatch me from you, before you can weigh my advice, or enter into my reasoning: I would then, with fond anxiety, lead you very early in life to form your grand principle of action, to save you from the vain regret of having, through irresolution, let the spring-tide of existence pass away, unimproved, unenjoyed.—Gain experience—ah! gain it—while experience is worth having, and acquire sufficient fortitude to pursue your own happiness; it includes your utility, by a direct path. What is wisdom too often, but the owl of the goddess, who sits moping in a desolated heart; around me she shrieks, but I would invite all the gay warblers of spring to nestle in your blooming bosom.—Had I not wasted years in deliberating, after I ceased to doubt, how I ought to have acted—I might now be useful and happy.—For my sake, warned by my example, always appear what you are, and you will not pass through existence without enjoying its genuine blessings, love and respect.

"Born in one of the most romantic parts of England, an enthusiastic fondness for the varying charms of nature is the first sentiment I recollect; or rather it was the first consciousness of pleasure that employed and formed my imagination.

"My father had been a captain of a man of war; but, disgusted with the service, on account of the preferment of men whose chief merit was their family connections or borough interest, he retired into the country; and, not knowing what to do with himself—married. In his family, to regain his lost consequence, he determined to keep up the same passive obedience, as in the vessels in which he had commanded. His orders were not to be disputed; and the whole house was expected to fly, at the word of command, as if to man the shrouds, or mount aloft in an elemental strife, big with life or death. He was to be instantaneously obeyed, especially by my mother, whom he very benevolently married for love; but took care to remind her of the obligation, when she dared, in the slightest instance, to question his absolute authority. My eldest brother, it is true, as he grew up, was treated with more respect by my father; and became in due form the deputy-tyrant of the house. The representative of my father, a being privileged by nature—a boy, and the darling of my mother, he did not fail to act like an heir apparent. Such indeed was my mother's extravagant partiality, that, in comparison with her affection for him, she might be said not to love the rest of her children. Yet none of the children seemed to have so little affection for her. Extreme indulgence had rendered him so selfish, that he only thought of himself; and from tormenting insects and animals, he became the despot of his brothers, and still more of his sisters.

"It is perhaps difficult to give you an idea of the petty cares which obscured the morning of my life; continual restraint in the most trivial matters; unconditional submission to orders, which, as a mere child, I soon discovered to be unreasonable, because inconsistent and contradictory. Thus are we destined to

experience a mixture of bitterness, with the recollection of our most innocent enjoyments.

"The circumstances which, during my childhood, occurred to fashion my mind, were various; yet, as it would probably afford me more pleasure to revive the fading remembrance of new-born delight, than you, my child, could feel in the perusal, I will not entice you to stray with me into the verdant meadow, to search for the flowers that youthful hopes scatter in every path; though, as I write, I almost scent the fresh green of spring—of that spring which never returns!

"I had two sisters, and one brother, younger than myself; my brother Robert was two years older, and might truly be termed the idol of his parents, and the torment of the rest of the family. Such indeed is the force of prejudice, that what was called spirit and wit in him, was cruelly repressed as forwardness in me.

"My mother had an indolence of character, which prevented her from paying much attention to our education. But the healthy breeze of a neighbouring heath, on which we bounded at pleasure, volatilized the humours that improper food might have generated. And to enjoy open air and freedom, was paradise, after the unnatural restraint of our fire-side, where we were often obliged to sit three or four hours together, without daring to utter a word, when my father was out of humour, from want of employment, or of a variety of boisterous amusement. I had however one advantage, an instructor, the brother of my father, who, intended for the church, had of course received a liberal education. But, becoming attached to a young lady of great beauty and large fortune, and acquiring in the world some opinions not consonant with the profession for which he was designed, he accepted, with the most sanguine expectations of success, the offer of a nobleman to accompany him to India, as his confidential secretary.

"A correspondence was regularly kept up with the object of his affection; and the intricacies of business, peculiarly wearisome to a man of a romantic turn of mind, contributed, with a forced absence, to increase his attachment. Every other passion was lost in this master-one, and only served to swell the torrent. Her relations, such were his waking dreams, who had despised him, would court in their turn his alliance, and all the blandishments of taste would grace the triumph of love.—While he basked in the warm sunshine of love, friendship also promised to shed its dewy freshness; for a friend, whom he loved next to his mistress, was the confidant, who forwarded the letters from one to the other, to elude the observation of prying relations. A friend false in similar circumstances, is, my dearest girl, an old tale; yet, let not this example, or the frigid caution of cold-blooded moralists, make you endeavour to stifle hopes, which are the buds that naturally unfold themselves during the spring of life! Whilst your own heart is sincere, always expect to meet one glowing with the same sentiments; for to fly from pleasure, is not to avoid pain!

"My uncle realized, by good luck, rather than management, a handsome fortune; and returning on the wings of love, lost in the most enchanting reveries, to England, to share it with his mistress and his friend, he found them—united.

"There were some circumstances, not necessary for me to recite, which aggravated the guilt of the friend beyond measure, and the deception, that had been carried on to the last moment, was so base, it produced the most violent effect on my uncle's health and spirits. His native country, the world! lately a garden of blooming sweets, blasted by treachery, seemed changed into a parched desert, the abode of hissing serpents. Disappointment rankled in his heart; and, brooding over his wrongs, he was attacked by a raging fever, followed by a derangement of mind, which only gave place to habitual melancholy, as he recovered more strength of body.

"Declaring an intention never to marry, his relations were ever clustering about him, paying the grossest adulation to a man, who, disgusted with mankind, received them with scorn, or bitter sarcasms. Something in my countenance pleased him, when I began to prattle. Since his return, he appeared dead to affection; but I soon, by showing him innocent fondness, became a favourite; and endeavouring to enlarge and strengthen my mind, I grew dear to him in proportion as I imbibed his sentiments. He had a forcible manner of speaking, rendered more so by a certain impressive wildness of look and gesture, calculated to engage the attention of a young and ardent mind. It is not then surprising that I quickly adopted his opinions in preference, and revered him as one of a superior order of beings. He inculcated, with great warmth, self-respect, and a lofty consciousness of acting right, independent of the censure or applause of the world; nay, he almost taught me to brave, and even despise its censure, when convinced of the rectitude of my own intentions.

"Endeavouring to prove to me that nothing which deserved the name of love or friendship, existed in the world, he drew such animated pictures of his own feelings, rendered permanent by disappointment, as imprinted the sentiments strongly on my heart, and animated my imagination. These remarks are necessary to elucidate some peculiarities in my character, which by the world are indefinitely termed romantic.

"My uncle's increasing affection led him to visit me often. Still, unable to rest in any place, he did not remain long in the country to soften domestic tyranny; but he brought me books, for which I had a passion, and they conspired with his conversation, to make me form an ideal picture of life. I shall pass over the tyranny of my father, much as I suffered from it; but it is necessary to notice, that it undermined my mother's health; and that her temper, continually irritated by domestic bickering, became intolerably peevish.

"My eldest brother was articled to a neighbouring attorney, the shrewdest, and, I may add, the most unprincipled man in that part of the country. As my brother generally came home every Saturday, to astonish my mother by exhibiting his attainments, he gradually assumed a right of directing the whole family, not excepting my father. He seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in tormenting and humbling me; and if I ever ventured to complain of this treatment to either my father or mother, I was rudely rebuffed for presuming to judge of the conduct of my eldest brother.

"About this period a merchant's family came to settle in our neighbourhood. A mansion-house in the village, lately purchased, had been preparing the whole spring, and the sight of the costly furniture, sent from London, had excited my mother's envy, and roused my father's pride. My sensations were very different, and all of a pleasurable kind. I longed to see new characters, to break the tedious monotony of my life; and to find a friend, such as fancy had pourtrayed. I cannot then describe the emotion I felt, the Sunday they made their appearance at church. My eyes were rivetted on the pillar round which I expected first to catch a glimpse of them, and darted forth to meet a servant who hastily preceded a group of ladies, whose white robes and waving plumes, seemed to stream along the gloomy aisle, diffusing the light, by which I contemplated their figures.

"We visited them in form; and I quickly selected the eldest daughter for my friend. The second son, George, paid me particular attention, and finding his attainments and manners superior to those of the young men of the village, I began to imagine him superior to the rest of mankind. Had my home been more comfortable, or my previous acquaintance more numerous, I should not probably have been so eager to open my heart to new affections.

"Mr. Venables, the merchant, had acquired a large fortune by unremitting attention to business; but his health declining rapidly, he was obliged to retire, before his son, George, had acquired sufficient

experience, to enable him to conduct their affairs on the same prudential plan, his father had invariably pursued. Indeed, he had laboured to throw off his authority, having despised his narrow plans and cautious speculation. The eldest son could not be prevailed on to enter the firm; and, to oblige his wife, and have peace in the house, Mr. Venables had purchased a commission for him in the guards.

"I am now alluding to circumstances which came to my knowledge long after; but it is necessary, my dearest child, that you should know the character of your father, to prevent your despising your mother; the only parent inclined to discharge a parent's duty. In London, George had acquired habits of libertinism, which he carefully concealed from his father and his commercial connections. The mask he wore, was so complete a covering of his real visage, that the praise his father lavished on his conduct, and, poor mistaken man! on his principles, contrasted with his brother's, rendered the notice he took of me peculiarly flattering. Without any fixed design, as I am now convinced, he continued to single me out at the dance, press my hand at parting, and utter expressions of unmeaning passion, to which I gave a meaning naturally suggested by the romantic turn of my thoughts. His stay in the country was short; his manners did not entirely please me; but, when he left us, the colouring of my picture became more vivid—Whither did not my imagination lead me? In short, I fancied myself in love—in love with the disinterestedness, fortitude, generosity, dignity, and humanity, with which I had invested the hero I dubbed. A circumstance which soon after occurred, rendered all these virtues palpable. [The incident is perhaps worth relating on other accounts, and therefore I shall describe it distinctly.]

"I had a great affection for my nurse, old Mary, for whom I used often to work, to spare her eyes. Mary had a younger sister, married to a sailor, while she was suckling me; for my mother only suckled my eldest brother, which might be the cause of her extraordinary partiality. Peggy, Mary's sister, lived with her, till her husband, becoming a mate in a West-India trader, got a little before-hand in the world. He wrote to his wife from the first port in the Channel, after his most successful voyage, to request her to come to London to meet him; he even wished her to determine on living there for the future, to save him the trouble of coming to her the moment he came on shore; and to turn a penny by keeping a green-stall. It was too much to set out on a journey the moment he had finished a voyage, and fifty miles by land, was worse than a thousand leagues by sea.

"She packed up her alls, and came to London—but did not meet honest Daniel. A common misfortune prevented her, and the poor are bound to suffer for the good of their country—he was pressed in the river—and never came on shore.

"Peggy was miserable in London, not knowing, as she said, 'the face of any living soul.' Besides, her imagination had been employed, anticipating a month or six weeks' happiness with her husband. Daniel was to have gone with her to Sadler's Wells, and Westminster Abbey, and to many sights, which he knew she never heard of in the country. Peggy too was thrifty, and how could she manage to put his plan in execution alone? He had acquaintance; but she did not know the very name of their places of abode. His letters were made up of—How do you do, and God bless you,—information was reserved for the hour of meeting.

"She too had her portion of information, near at heart. Molly and Jacky were grown such little darlings, she was almost angry that daddy did not see their tricks. She had not half the pleasure she should have had from their prattle, could she have recounted to him each night the pretty speeches of the day. Some stories, however, were stored up—and Jacky could say papa with such a sweet voice, it must delight his heart. Yet when she came, and found no Daniel to greet her, when Jacky called papa, she wept, bidding 'God bless his innocent soul, that did not know what sorrow was.'—But more sorrow was in store for Peggy, innocent as she was.—Daniel was killed in the first engagement, and then the *papa* was agony, sounding

to the heart.

"She had lived sparingly on his wages, while there was any hope of his return; but, that gone, she returned with a breaking heart to the country, to a little market town, nearly three miles from our village. She did not like to go to service, to be snubbed about, after being her own mistress. To put her children out to nurse was impossible: how far would her wages go? and to send them to her husband's parish, a distant one, was to lose her husband twice over.

"I had heard all from Mary, and made my uncle furnish a little cottage for her, to enable her to sell—so sacred was poor Daniel's advice, now he was dead and gone—a little fruit, toys and cakes. The minding of the shop did not require her whole time, nor even the keeping her children clean, and she loved to see them clean; so she took in washing, and altogether made a shift to earn bread for her children, still weeping for Daniel, when Jacky's arch looks made her think of his father.—It was pleasant to work for her children.—'Yes; from morning till night, could she have had a kiss from their father, God rest his soul! Yes; had it pleased Providence to have let him come back without a leg or an arm, it would have been the same thing to her—for she did not love him because he maintained them—no; she had hands of her own.'

"The country people were honest, and Peggy left her linen out to dry very late. A recruiting party, as she supposed, passing through, made free with a large wash; for it was all swept away, including her own and her children's little stock.

"This was a dreadful blow; two dozen of shirts, stocks and handkerchiefs. She gave the money which she had laid by for half a year's rent, and promised to pay two shillings a week till all was cleared; so she did not lose her employment. This two shillings a week, and the buying a few necessities for the children, drove her so hard, that she had not a penny to pay her rent with, when a twelvemonth's became due.

"She was now with Mary, and had just told her tale, which Mary instantly repeated—it was intended for my ear. Many houses in this town, producing a borough-interest, were included in the estate purchased by Mr. Venables, and the attorney with whom my brother lived, was appointed his agent, to collect and raise the rents.

"He demanded Peggy's, and, in spite of her intreaties, her poor goods had been seized and sold. So that she had not, and what was worse her children, 'for she had known sorrow enough,' a bed to lie on. She knew that I was good-natured—right charitable, yet not liking to ask for more than needs must, she scorned to petition while people could any how be made to wait. But now, should she be turned out of doors, she must expect nothing less than to lose all her customers, and then she must beg or starve—and what would become of her children?—'had Daniel not been pressed—but God knows best—all this could not have happened.'

"I had two mattresses on my bed; what did I want with two, when such a worthy creature must lie on the ground? My mother would be angry, but I could conceal it till my uncle came down; and then I would tell him all the whole truth, and if he absolved me, heaven would.

"I begged the house-maid to come up stairs with me (servants always feel for the distresses of poverty, and so would the rich if they knew what it was). She assisted me to tie up the mattress; I discovering, at the same time, that one blanket would serve me till winter, could I persuade my sister, who slept with me, to keep my secret. She entering in the midst of the package, I gave her some new feathers, to silence her. We got the mattress down the back stairs, unperceived, and I helped to carry it, taking with me all the money I had, and what I could borrow from my sister.

"When I got to the cottage, Peggy declared that she would not take what I had brought secretly; but, when, with all the eager eloquence inspired by a decided purpose, I grasped her hand with weeping eyes, assuring her that my uncle would screen me from blame, when he was once more in the country, describing, at the same time, what she would suffer in parting with her children, after keeping them so long from being thrown on the parish, she reluctantly consented.

"My project of usefulness ended not here; I determined to speak to the attorney; he frequently paid me compliments. His character did not intimidate me; but, imagining that Peggy must be mistaken, and that no man could turn a deaf ear to such a tale of complicated distress, I determined to walk to the town with Mary the next morning, and request him to wait for the rent, and keep my secret, till my uncle's return.

"My repose was sweet; and, waking with the first dawn of day, I bounded to Mary's cottage. What charms do not a light heart spread over nature! Every bird that twittered in a bush, every flower that enlivened the hedge, seemed placed there to awaken me to rapture—yes; to rapture. The present moment was full fraught with happiness; and on futurity I bestowed not a thought, excepting to anticipate my success with the attorney.

"This man of the world, with rosy face and simpering features, received me politely, nay kindly; listened with complacency to my remonstrances, though he scarcely heeded Mary's tears. I did not then suspect, that my eloquence was in my complexion, the blush of seventeen, or that, in a world where humanity to women is the characteristic of advancing civilization, the beauty of a young girl was so much more interesting than the distress of an old one. Pressing my hand, he promised to let Peggy remain in the house as long as I wished.—I more than returned the pressure—I was so grateful and so happy. Emboldened by my innocent warmth, he then kissed me—and I did not draw back—I took it for a kiss of charity.

"Gay as a lark, I went to dine at Mr. Venables'. I had previously obtained five shillings from my father, towards re-clothing the poor children of my care, and prevailed on my mother to take one of the girls into the house, whom I determined to teach to work and read.

"After dinner, when the younger part of the circle retired to the music room, I recounted with energy my tale; that is, I mentioned Peggy's distress, without hinting at the steps I had taken to relieve her. Miss Venables gave me half-a-crown; the heir five shillings; but George sat unmoved. I was cruelly distressed by the disappointment—I scarcely could remain on my chair; and, could I have got out of the room unperceived, I should have flown home, as if to run away from myself. After several vain attempts to rise, I leaned my head against the marble chimney-piece, and gazing on the evergreens that filled the fire-place, moralized on the vanity of human expectations; regardless of the company. I was roused by a gentle tap on my shoulder from behind Charlotte's chair. I turned my head, and George slid a guinea into my hand, putting his finger to his mouth, to enjoin me silence.

"What a revolution took place, not only in my train of thoughts, but feelings! I trembled with emotion—now, indeed, I was in love. Such delicacy too, to enhance his benevolence! I felt in my pocket every five minutes, only to feel the guinea; and its magic touch invested my hero with more than mortal beauty. My fancy had found a basis to erect its model of perfection on; and quickly went to work, with all the happy credulity of youth, to consider that heart as devoted to virtue, which had only obeyed a virtuous impulse. The bitter experience was yet to come, that has taught me how very distinct are the principles of virtue, from the casual feelings from which they germinate.

CHAP. VIII.

"I HAVE perhaps dwelt too long on a circumstance, which is only of importance as it marks the progress of a deception that has been so fatal to my peace; and introduces to your notice a poor girl, whom, intending to serve, I led to ruin. Still it is probable that I was not entirely the victim of mistake; and that your father, gradually fashioned by the world, did not quickly become what I hesitate to call him—out of respect to my daughter.

"But, to hasten to the more busy scenes of my life. Mr. Venables and my mother died the same summer; and, wholly engrossed by my attention to her, I thought of little else. The neglect of her darling, my brother Robert, had a violent effect on her weakened mind; for, though boys may be reckoned the pillars of the house without doors, girls are often the only comfort within. They but too frequently waste their health and spirits attending a dying parent, who leaves them in comparative poverty. After closing, with filial piety, a father's eyes, they are chased from the paternal roof, to make room for the first-born, the son, who is to carry the empty family-name down to posterity; though, occupied with his own pleasures, he scarcely thought of discharging, in the decline of his parent's life, the debt contracted in his childhood. My mother's conduct led me to make these reflections. Great as was the fatigue I endured, and the affection my unceasing solicitude evinced, of which my mother seemed perfectly sensible, still, when my brother, whom I could hardly persuade to remain a quarter of an hour in her chamber, was with her alone, a short time before her death, she gave him a little hoard, which she had been some years accumulating.

"During my mother's illness, I was obliged to manage my father's temper, who, from the lingering nature of her malady, began to imagine that it was merely fancy. At this period, an artful kind of upper servant attracted my father's attention, and the neighbours made many remarks on the finery, not honestly got, exhibited at evening service. But I was too much occupied with my mother to observe any change in her dress or behaviour, or to listen to the whisper of scandal.

"I shall not dwell on the death-bed scene, lively as is the remembrance, or on the emotion produced by the last grasp of my mother's cold hand; when blessing me, she added, 'A little patience, and all will be over!' Ah! my child, how often have those words rung mournfully in my ears—and I have exclaimed—'A little more patience, and I too shall be at rest!'

"My father was violently affected by her death, recollected instances of his unkindness, and wept like a child.

"My mother had solemnly recommended my sisters to my care, and bid me be a mother to them. They, indeed, became more dear to me as they became more forlorn; for, during my mother's illness, I discovered the ruined state of my father's circumstances, and that he had only been able to keep up appearances, by the sums which he borrowed of my uncle.

"My father's grief, and consequent tenderness to his children, quickly abated, the house grew still more gloomy or riotous; and my refuge from care was again at Mr. Venables'; the young 'squire having taken his father's place, and allowing, for the present, his sister to preside at his table. George, though dissatisfied with his portion of the fortune, which had till lately been all in trade, visited the family as usual. He was now full of speculations in trade, and his brow became clouded by care. He seemed to relax in his attention to me, when the presence of my uncle gave a new turn to his behaviour. I was too unsuspecting,

too disinterested, to trace these changes to their source.

My home every day became more and more disagreeable to me; my liberty was unnecessarily abridged, and my books, on the pretext that they made me idle, taken from me. My father's mistress was with child, and he, doating on her, allowed or overlooked her vulgar manner of tyrannizing over us. I was indignant, especially when I saw her endeavouring to attract, shall I say seduce? my younger brother. By allowing women but one way of rising in the world, the fostering the libertinism of men, society makes monsters of them, and then their ignoble vices are brought forward as a proof of inferiority of intellect.

The wearisomeness of my situation can scarcely be described. Though my life had not passed in the most even tenour with my mother, it was paradise to that I was destined to endure with my father's mistress, jealous of her illegitimate authority. My father's former occasional tenderness, in spite of his violence of temper, had been soothing to me; but now he only met me with reproofs or portentous frowns. The house-keeper, as she was now termed, was the vulgar despot of the family; and assuming the new character of a fine lady, she could never forgive the contempt which was sometimes visible in my countenance, when she uttered with pomposity her bad English, or affected to be well bred.

To my uncle I ventured to open my heart; and he, with his wonted benevolence, began to consider in what manner he could extricate me out of my present irksome situation. In spite of his own disappointment, or, most probably, actuated by the feelings that had been petrified, not cooled, in all their sanguine fervour, like a boiling torrent of lava suddenly dashing into the sea, he thought a marriage of mutual inclination (would envious stars permit it) the only chance for happiness in this disastrous world. George Venables had the reputation of being attentive to business, and my father's example gave great weight to this circumstance; for habits of order in business would, he conceived, extend to the regulation of the affections in domestic life. George seldom spoke in my uncle's company, except to utter a short, judicious question, or to make a pertinent remark, with all due deference to his superior judgment; so that my uncle seldom left his company without observing, that the young man had more in him than people supposed.

In this opinion he was not singular; yet, believe me, and I am not swayed by resentment, these speeches so justly poised, this silent deference, when the animal spirits of other young people were throwing off youthful ebullitions, were not the effect of thought or humility, but sheer barrenness of mind, and want of imagination. A colt of mettle will curvet and shew his paces. Yes; my dear girl, these prudent young men want all the fire necessary to ferment their faculties, and are characterized as wise, only because they are not foolish. It is true, that George was by no means so great a favourite of mine as during the first year of our acquaintance; still, as he often coincided in opinion with me, and echoed my sentiments; and having myself no other attachment, I heard with pleasure my uncle's proposal; but thought more of obtaining my freedom, than of my lover. But, when George, seemingly anxious for my happiness, pressed me to quit my present painful situation, my heart swelled with gratitude—I knew not that my uncle had promised him five thousand pounds.

Had this truly generous man mentioned his intention to me, I should have insisted on a thousand pounds being settled on each of my sisters; George would have contested; I should have seen his selfish soul; and—gracious God! have been spared the misery of discovering, when too late, that I was united to a heartless, unprincipled wretch. All my schemes of usefulness would not then have been blasted. The tenderness of my heart would not have heated my imagination with visions of the ineffable delight of happy love; nor would the sweet duty of a mother have been so cruelly interrupted.

But I must not suffer the fortitude I have so hardly acquired, to be undermined by unavailing regret. Let me hasten forward to describe the turbid stream in which I had to wade—but let me exultingly declare that it

is passed—my soul holds fellowship with him no more. He cut the Gordian knot, which my principles, mistaken ones, respected; he dissolved the tie, the fetters rather, that ate into my very vitals—and I should rejoice, conscious that my mind is freed, though confined in hell itself; the only place that even fancy can imagine more dreadful than my present abode.

These varying emotions will not allow me to proceed. I heave sigh after sigh; yet my heart is still oppressed. For what am I reserved? Why was I not born a man, or why was I born at all?

END OF VOL. I.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

VOL. I.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

THE

WRONGS OF WOMAN:

OR,

MARIA.

A FRAGMENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PREFACE.

THE public are here presented with the last literary attempt of an author, whose fame has been uncommonly extensive, and whose talents have probably been most admired, by the persons by whom talents are estimated with the greatest accuracy and discrimination. There are few, to whom her writings could in any case have given pleasure, that would have wished that this fragment should have been suppressed, because it is a fragment. There is a sentiment, very dear to minds of taste and imagination, that finds a melancholy delight in contemplating these unfinished productions of genius, these sketches of what, if they had been filled up in a manner adequate to the writer's conception, would perhaps have given a new impulse to the manners of a world.

The purpose and structure of the following work, had long formed a favourite subject of meditation with its author, and she judged them capable of producing an important effect. The composition had been in progress for a period of twelve months. She was anxious to do justice to her conception, and recommenced and revised the manuscript several different times. So much of it as is here given to the public, she was far from considering as finished, and, in a letter to a friend directly written on this subject, she says, "I am perfectly aware that some of the incidents ought to be transposed, and heightened by more harmonious shading; and I wished in some degree to avail myself of criticism, before I began to adjust my events into a story, the outline of which I had sketched in my mind^[x-A]." The only friends to whom the author communicated her manuscript, were Mr. Dylon, the translator of the Sorcerer, and the present editor; and it was impossible for the most inexperienced author to display a stronger desire of profiting by the censures and sentiments that might be suggested^[x-B].

In revising these sheets for the press, it was necessary for the editor, in some places, to connect the more finished parts with the pages of an older copy, and a line or two in addition sometimes appeared requisite for that purpose. Wherever such a liberty has been taken, the additional phrases will be found inclosed in brackets; it being the editor's most earnest desire, to intrude nothing of himself into the work, but to give to the public the words, as well as ideas, of the real author.

What follows in the ensuing pages, is not a preface regularly drawn out by the author, but merely hints for a preface, which, though never filled up in the manner the writer intended, appeared to be worth preserving.

W. GODWIN.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Wrongs of Woman, like the wrongs of the oppressed part of mankind, may be deemed necessary by their oppressors: but surely there are a few, who will dare to advance before the improvement of the age, and grant that my sketches are not the abortion of a distempered fancy, or the strong delineations of a wounded heart.

In writing this novel, I have rather endeavoured to portray passions than manners.

In many instances I could have made the incidents more dramatic, would I have sacrificed my main object, the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society.

In the invention of the story, this view restrained my fancy; and the history ought rather to be considered, as of woman, than of an individual.

The sentiments I have embodied.

In many works of this species, the hero is allowed to be mortal, and to become wise and virtuous as well as happy, by a train of events and circumstances. The heroines, on the contrary, are to be born immaculate; and to act like goddesses of wisdom, just come forth highly finished Minervas from the head of Jove.

[The following is an extract of a letter from the author to a friend, to whom she communicated her manuscript.]

For my part, I cannot suppose any situation more distressing, than for a woman of sensibility, with an improving mind, to be bound to such a man as I have described for life; obliged to renounce all the humanizing affections, and to avoid cultivating her taste, lest her perception of grace and refinement of sentiment, should sharpen to agony the pangs of disappointment. Love, in which the imagination mingles its bewitching colouring, must be fostered by delicacy. I should despise, or rather call her an ordinary woman, who could endure such a husband as I have sketched.

These appear to me (matrimonial despotism of heart and conduct) to be the peculiar Wrongs of Woman, because they degrade the mind. What are termed great misfortunes, may more forcibly impress the mind of common readers; they have more of what may justly be termed *stage-effect*; but it is the delineation of finer sensations, which, in my opinion, constitutes the merit of our best novels. This is what I have in view; and to show the wrongs of different classes of women, equally oppressive, though, from the difference of education, necessarily various.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[x-A\]](#) A more copious extract of this letter is subjoined to the author's preface.

[\[x-B\]](#) The part communicated consisted of the first fourteen chapters.

ERRATA.

Page 3, line 2, *dele* half.

P. 81 and 118, *for* brackets [—], *read* inverted commas " thus "

CONTENTS.

[VOL. I.](#) AND [II.](#)

The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria; a Fragment: to which is added, the First Book of a Series of Lessons for Children.

[VOL. III.](#) AND [IV.](#)

Letters and Miscellaneous Pieces.

WRONGS

OF

WOMAN.



CHAP. I.

ABODES of horror have frequently been described, and castles, filled with spectres and chimeras, conjured up by the magic spell of genius to harrow the soul, and absorb the wondering mind. But, formed of such stuff as dreams are made of, what were they to the mansion of despair, in one corner of which Maria sat, endeavouring to recal her scattered thoughts!

Surprise, astonishment, that bordered on distraction, seemed to have suspended her faculties, till, waking by degrees to a keen sense of anguish, a whirlwind of rage and indignation roused her torpid pulse. One recollection with frightful velocity following another, threatened to fire her brain, and make her a fit companion for the terrific inhabitants, whose groans and shrieks were no unsubstantial sounds of whistling winds, or startled birds, modulated by a romantic fancy, which amuse while they affright; but such tones of misery as carry a dreadful certainty directly to the heart. What effect must they then have produced on one, true to the touch of sympathy, and tortured by maternal apprehension!

Her infant's image was continually floating on Maria's sight, and the first smile of intelligence remembered, as none but a mother, an unhappy mother, can conceive. She heard her half speaking cooing, and felt the little twinkling fingers on her burning bosom—a bosom bursting with the nutriment for which this cherished child might now be pining in vain. From a stranger she could indeed receive the maternal aliment, Maria was grieved at the thought—but who would watch her with a mother's tenderness, a mother's self-denial?

The retreating shadows of former sorrows rushed back in a gloomy train, and seemed to be pictured on the walls of her prison, magnified by the state of mind in which they were viewed—Still she mourned for her child, lamented she was a daughter, and anticipated the aggravated ills of life that her sex rendered almost inevitable, even while dreading she was no more. To think that she was blotted out of existence was agony, when the imagination had been long employed to expand her faculties; yet to suppose her turned adrift on an unknown sea, was scarcely less afflicting.

After being two days the prey of impetuous, varying emotions, Maria began to reflect more calmly on her present situation, for she had actually been rendered incapable of sober reflection, by the discovery of the act of atrocity of which she was the victim. She could not have imagined, that, in all the fermentation of civilized depravity, a similar plot could have entered a human mind. She had been stunned by an unexpected blow; yet life, however joyless, was not to be indolently resigned, or misery endured without exertion, and proudly termed patience. She had hitherto meditated only to point the dart of anguish, and suppressed the heart heavings of indignant nature merely by the force of contempt. Now she endeavoured to brace her mind to fortitude, and to ask herself what was to be her employment in her dreary cell? Was it not to effect her escape, to fly to the succour of her child, and to baffle the selfish schemes of her tyrant—her husband?

These thoughts roused her sleeping spirit, and the self-possession returned, that seemed to have abandoned her in the infernal solitude into which she had been precipitated. The first emotions of overwhelming impatience began to subside, and repentment gave place to tenderness, and more tranquil meditation; though anger once more stopt the calm current of reflection, when she attempted to move her manacled arms. But this was an outrage that could only excite momentary feelings of scorn, which evaporated in a faint smile; for Maria was far from thinking a personal insult the most difficult to endure with magnanimous

indifference.

She approached the small grated window of her chamber, and for a considerable time only regarded the blue expanse; though it commanded a view of a desolate garden, and of part of a huge pile of buildings, that, after having been suffered, for half a century, to fall to decay, had undergone some clumsy repairs, merely to render it habitable. The ivy had been torn off the turrets, and the stones not wanted to patch up the breaches of time, and exclude the warring elements, left in heaps in the disordered court. Maria contemplated this scene she knew not how long; or rather gazed on the walls, and pondered on her situation. To the master of this most horrid of prisons, she had, soon after her entrance, raved of injustice, in accents that would have justified his treatment, had not a malignant smile, when she appealed to his judgment, with a dreadful conviction stifled her remonstrating complaints. By force, or openly, what could be done? But surely some expedient might occur to an active mind, without any other employment, and possessed of sufficient resolution to put the risk of life into the balance with the chance of freedom.

A woman entered in the midst of these reflections, with a firm, deliberate step, strongly marked features, and large black eyes, which she fixed steadily on Maria's, as if she designed to intimidate her, saying at the same time—"You had better sit down and eat your dinner, than look at the clouds."

"I have no appetite," replied Maria, who had previously determined to speak mildly, "why then should I eat?"

"But, in spite of that, you must and shall eat something. I have had many ladies under my care, who have resolved to starve themselves; but, soon or late, they gave up their intent, as they recovered their senses."

"Do you really think me mad?" asked Maria, meeting the searching glance of her eye.

"Not just now. But what does that prove?—only that you must be the more carefully watched, for appearing at times so reasonable. You have not touched a morsel since you entered the house."—Maria sighed intelligibly.—"Could any thing but madness produce such a disgust for food?"

"Yes, grief; you would not ask the question if you knew what it was." The attendant shook her head; and a ghastly smile of desperate fortitude served as a forcible reply, and made Maria pause, before she added—"Yet I will take some refreshment: I mean not to die.—No; I will preserve my senses; and convince even you, sooner than you are aware of, that my intellects have never been disturbed, though the exertion of them may have been suspended by some infernal drug."

Doubt gathered still thicker on the brow of her guard, as she attempted to convict her of mistake.

"Have patience!" exclaimed Maria, with a solemnity that inspired awe. "My God! how have I been schooled into the practice!" A suffocation of voice betrayed the agonizing emotions she was labouring to keep down; and conquering a qualm of disgust, she calmly endeavoured to eat enough to prove her docility, perpetually turning to the suspicious female, whose observation she courted, while she was making the bed and adjusting the room.

"Come to me often," said Maria, with a tone of persuasion, in consequence of a vague plan that she had hastily adopted, when, after surveying this woman's form and features, she felt convinced that she had an understanding above the common standard; "and believe me mad, till you are obliged to acknowledge the contrary." The woman was no fool, that is, she was superior to her class; nor had misery quite petrified the life's-blood of humanity, to which reflections on our own misfortunes only give a more orderly course. The manner, rather than the expostulations, of Maria made a slight suspicion dart into her mind with

corresponding sympathy, which various other avocations, and the habit of banishing compunction, prevented her, for the present, from examining more minutely.

But when she was told that no person, excepting the physician appointed by her family, was to be permitted to see the lady at the end of the gallery, she opened her keen eyes still wider, and uttered a—"hem!" before she enquired—"Why?" She was briefly told, in reply, that the malady was hereditary, and the fits not occurring but at very long and irregular intervals, she must be carefully watched; for the length of these lucid periods only rendered her more mischievous, when any vexation or caprice brought on the paroxysm of phrensy.

Had her master trusted her, it is probable that neither pity nor curiosity would have made her swerve from the straight line of her interest; for she had suffered too much in her intercourse with mankind, not to determine to look for support, rather to humouring their passions, than courting their approbation by the integrity of her conduct. A deadly blight had met her at the very threshold of existence; and the wretchedness of her mother seemed a heavy weight fastened on her innocent neck, to drag her down to perdition. She could not heroically determine to succour an unfortunate; but, offended at the bare supposition that she could be deceived with the same ease as a common servant, she no longer curbed her curiosity; and, though she never seriously fathomed her own intentions, she would sit, every moment she could steal from observation, listening to the tale, which Maria was eager to relate with all the persuasive eloquence of grief.

It is so cheering to see a human face, even if little of the divinity of virtue beam in it, that Maria anxiously expected the return of the attendant, as of a gleam of light to break the gloom of idleness. Indulged sorrow; she perceived, must blunt or sharpen the faculties to the two opposite extremes; producing stupidity, the moping melancholy of indolence; or the restless activity of a disturbed imagination. She sunk into one state, after being fatigued by the other: till the want of occupation became even more painful than the actual pressure or apprehension of sorrow; and the confinement that froze her into a nook of existence, with an unvaried prospect before her, the most insupportable of evils. The lamp of life seemed to be spending itself to chafe the vapours of a dungeon which no art could dissipate.—And to what purpose did she rally all her energy?—Was not the world a vast prison, and women born slaves?

Though she failed immediately to rouse a lively sense of injustice in the mind of her guard, because it had been sophisticated into misanthropy, she touched her heart. Jemima (she had only a claim to a Christian name, which had not procured her any Christian privileges) could patiently hear of Maria's confinement on false pretences; she had felt the crushing hand of power, hardened by the exercise of injustice, and ceased to wonder at the perversions of the understanding, which systematize oppression; but, when told that her child, only four months old, had been torn from her, even while she was discharging the tenderest maternal office, the woman awoke in a bosom long estranged from feminine emotions, and Jemima determined to alleviate all in her power, without hazarding the loss of her place, the sufferings of a wretched mother, apparently injured, and certainly unhappy. A sense of right seems to result from the simplest act of reason, and to preside over the faculties of the mind, like the master-sense of feeling, to rectify the rest; but (for the comparison may be carried still farther) how often is the exquisite sensibility of both weakened or destroyed by the vulgar occupations, and ignoble pleasures of life?

The preserving her situation was, indeed, an important object to Jemima, who had been hunted from hole to hole, as if she had been a beast of prey, or infected with a moral plague. The wages she received, the greater part of which she hoarded, as her only chance for independence, were much more considerable than she could reckon on obtaining any where else, were it possible that she, an outcast from society, could be permitted to earn a subsistence in a reputable family. Hearing Maria perpetually complain of

littleness, and the not being able to beguile grief by resuming her customary pursuits, she was easily prevailed on, by compassion, and that involuntary respect for abilities, which those who possess them can never eradicate, to bring her some books and implements for writing. Maria's conversation had amused and interested her, and the natural consequence was a desire, scarcely observed by herself, of obtaining the esteem of a person she admired. The remembrance of better days was rendered more lively; and the sentiments then acquired appearing less romantic than they had for a long period, a spark of hope roused her mind to new activity.

How grateful was her attention to Maria! Oppressed by a dead weight of existence, or preyed on by the gnawing worm of discontent, with what eagerness did she endeavour to shorten the long days, which left no traces behind! She seemed to be sailing on the vast ocean of life, without seeing any land-mark to indicate the progress of time; to find employment was then to find variety, the animating principle of nature.

CHAP. II.

EARNESTLY as Maria endeavoured to soothe, by reading, the anguish of her wounded mind, her thoughts would often wander from the subject she was led to discuss, and tears of maternal tenderness obscured the reasoning page. She descanted on "the ills which flesh is heir to," with bitterness, when the recollection of her babe was revived by a tale of fictitious woe, that bore any resemblance to her own; and her imagination was continually employed, to conjure up and embody the various phantoms of misery, which folly and vice had let loose on the world. The loss of her babe was the tender string; against other cruel remembrances she laboured to steel her bosom; and even a ray of hope, in the midst of her gloomy reveries, would sometimes gleam on the dark horizon of futurity, while persuading herself that she ought to cease to hope, since happiness was no where to be found.—But of her child, debilitated by the grief with which its mother had been assailed before it saw the light, she could not think without an impatient struggle.

"I, alone, by my active tenderness, could have saved," she would exclaim, "from an early blight, this sweet blossom; and, cherishing it, I should have had something still to love."

In proportion as other expectations were torn from her, this tender one had been fondly clung to, and knit into her heart.

The books she had obtained, were soon devoured, by one who had no other resource to escape from sorrow, and the feverish dreams of ideal wretchedness or felicity, which equally weaken the intoxicated sensibility. Writing was then the only alternative, and she wrote some rhapsodies descriptive of the state of her mind; but the events of her past life pressing on her, she resolved circumstantially to relate them, with the sentiments that experience, and more matured reason, would naturally suggest. They might perhaps instruct her daughter, and shield her from the misery, the tyranny, her mother knew not how to avoid.

This thought gave life to her diction, her soul flowed into it, and she soon found the task of recollecting almost obliterated impressions very interesting. She lived again in the revived emotions of youth, and forgot her present in the retrospect of sorrows that had assumed an unalterable character.

Though this employment lightened the weight of time, yet, never losing sight of her main object, Maria did not allow any opportunity to slip of winning on the affections of Jemima; for she discovered in her a strength of mind, that excited her esteem, clouded as it was by the misanthropy of despair.

An insulated being, from the misfortune of her birth, she despised and preyed on the society by which she had been oppressed, and loved not her fellow-creatures, because she had never been beloved. No mother had ever fondled her, no father or brother had protected her from outrage; and the man who had plunged her into infamy, and deserted her when she stood in greatest need of support, deigned not to smooth with kindness the road to ruin. Thus degraded, was she let loose on the world; and virtue, never nurtured by affection, assumed the stern aspect of selfish independence.

This general view of her life, Maria gathered from her exclamations and dry remarks. Jemima indeed displayed a strange mixture of interest and suspicion; for she would listen to her with earnestness, and then suddenly interrupt the conversation, as if afraid of resigning, by giving way to her sympathy, her dear-bought knowledge of the world.

Maria alluded to the possibility of an escape, and mentioned a compensation, or reward; but the style in which she was repulsed made her cautious, and determine not to renew the subject, till she knew more of the character she had to work on. Jemima's countenance, and dark hints, seemed to say, "You are an extraordinary woman; but let me consider, this may only be one of your lucid intervals." Nay, the very energy of Maria's character, made her suspect that the extraordinary animation she perceived might be the effect of madness. "Should her husband then substantiate his charge, and get possession of her estate, from whence would come the promised annuity, or more desired protection? Besides, might not a woman, anxious to escape, conceal some of the circumstances which made against her? Was truth to be expected from one who had been entrapped, kidnapped, in the most fraudulent manner?"

In this train Jemima continued to argue, the moment after compassion and respect seemed to make her swerve; and she still resolved not to be wrought on to do more than soften the rigour of confinement, till she could advance on surer ground.

Maria was not permitted to walk in the garden; but sometimes, from her window, she turned her eyes from the gloomy walls, in which she pined life away, on the poor wretches who strayed along the walks, and contemplated the most terrific of ruins—that of a human soul. What is the view of the fallen column, the mouldering arch, of the most exquisite workmanship, when compared with this living memento of the fragility, the instability, of reason, and the wild luxuriance of noxious passions? Enthusiasm turned adrift, like some rich stream overflowing its banks, rushes forward with destructive velocity, inspiring a sublime concentration of thought. Thus thought Maria—These are the ravages over which humanity must ever mournfully ponder, with a degree of anguish not excited by crumbling marble, or cankering brass, unfaithful to the trust of monumental fame. It is not over the decaying productions of the mind, embodied with the happiest art, we grieve most bitterly. The view of what has been done by man, produces a melancholy, yet aggrandizing, sense of what remains to be achieved by human intellect; but a mental convulsion, which, like the devastation of an earthquake, throws all the elements of thought and imagination into confusion, makes contemplation giddy, and we fearfully ask on what ground we ourselves stand.

Melancholy and imbecility marked the features of the wretches allowed to breathe at large; for the frantic, those who in a strong imagination had lost a sense of woe, were closely confined. The playful tricks and mischievous devices of their disturbed fancy, that suddenly broke out, could not be guarded against, when they were permitted to enjoy any portion of freedom; for, so active was their imagination, that every new object which accidentally struck their senses, awoke to phrenzy their restless passions; as Maria learned from the burden of their incessant ravings.

Sometimes, with a strict injunction of silence, Jemima would allow Maria, at the close of evening, to stray along the narrow avenues that separated the dungeon-like apartments, leaning on her arm. What a change of scene! Maria wished to pass the threshold of her prison, yet, when by chance she met the eye of rage glaring on her, yet unfaithful to its office, she shrunk back with more horror and affright, than if she had stumbled over a mangled corpse. Her busy fancy pictured the misery of a fond heart, watching over a friend thus estranged, absent, though present—over a poor wretch lost to reason and the social joys of existence; and losing all consciousness of misery in its excess. What a task, to watch the light of reason quivering in the eye, or with agonizing expectation to catch the beam of recollection; tantalized by hope, only to feel despair more keenly, at finding a much loved face or voice, suddenly remembered, or pathetically implored, only to be immediately forgotten, or viewed with indifference or abhorrence!

The heart-rending sigh of melancholy sunk into her soul; and when she retired to rest, the petrified figures she had encountered, the only human forms she was doomed to observe, haunting her dreams with tales of

myfterious wrongs, made her wifh to fleep to dream no more.

Day after day rolled away, and tedious as the prefent moment appeared, they paffed in fuch an unvaried tenor, Maria was furprifed to find that fhe had already been fix weeks buried alive, and yet had fuch faint hopes of effecting her enlargement. She was, earneftly as fhe had fought for employment, now angry with herfelf for having been amufed by writing her narrative; and grieved to think that fhe had for an infant thought of any thing, but contriving to efcape.

Jemima had evidently pleafure in her fociety: ftill, though fhe often left her with a glow of kindnefs, fhe returned with the fame chilling air; and, when her heart appeared for a moment to open, fome fuggeltion of reafon forcibly clofed it, before fhe could give utterance to the confidence Maria's converfation infpired.

Discouraged by thefe changes, Maria relapfed into defpondency, when fhe was cheered by the alacrity with which Jemima brought her a frefh parcel of books; affuring her, that fhe had taken fome pains to obtain them from one of the keepers, who attended a gentleman confined in the oppofite corner of the gallery.

Maria took up the books with emotion. "They come," faid fhe, "perhaps, from a wretch condemned, like me, to reafon on the nature of madnefs, by having wrecked minds continually under his eye; and almoft to wifh himfelf—as I do—mad, to efcape from the contemplation of it." Her heart throbbed with fympathetic alarm; and fhe turned over the leaves with awe, as if they had become facred from paffing through the hands of an unfortunate being, oppreffed by a fimilar fate.

Dryden's Fables, Milton's Paradife Loft, with feveral modern productions, compofed the collection. It was a mine of treafure. Some marginal notes, in Dryden's Fables, caught her attention: they were written with force and tafte; and, in one of the modern pamphlets, there was a fragment left, containing various obfervations on the prefent ftate of fociety and government, with a comparative view of the politics of Europe and America. Thefe remarks were written with a degree of generous warmth, when alluding to the enflaved ftate of the labouring majority, perfectly in unifon with Maria's mode of thinking.

She read them over and over again; and fancy, treacherous fancy, began to fketeh a character, congenial with her own, from thefe fhadowy outlines.—"Was he mad?" She re-perufed the marginal notes, and they feemed the production of an animated, but not of a difturbed imagination. Confined to this fpeculation, every time fhe re-read them, fome frefh refinement of fentiment, or acutenefs of thought impreffed her, which fhe was aftonifhed at herfelf for not having before obferved.

What a creative power has an affectionate heart! There are beings who cannot live without loving, as poets love; and who feel the electric fpark of genius, wherever it awakens fentiment or grace. Maria had often thought, when difcipling her wayward heart, "that to charm, was to be virtuous." "They who make me wifh to appear the moft amiable and good in their eyes, muft poffefs in a degree," fhe would exclaim, "the graces and virtues they call into action."

She took up a book on the powers of the human mind; but, her attention ftrayed from cold arguments on the nature of what fhe felt, while fhe was feeling, and fhe fnapt the chain of the theory to read Dryden's Guifcard and Sigifmunda.

Maria, in the courfe of the enfuing day, returned fome of the books, with the hope of getting others—and more marginal notes. Thus fhut out from human intercourfe, and compelled to view nothing but the prifon of vexed fpirits, to meet a wretch in the fame fituation, was more furely to find a friend, than to imagine a countryman one, in a ftrange land, where the human voice conveys no information to the eager ear.

"Did you ever see the unfortunate being to whom these books belong?" asked Maria, when Jemima brought her supper. "Yes. He sometimes walks out, between five and six, before the family is stirring, in the morning, with two keepers; but even then his hands are confined."

"What! is he so unruly?" enquired Maria, with an accent of disappointment.

"No, not that I perceive," replied Jemima; "but he has an untamed look, a vehemence of eye, that excites apprehension. Were his hands free, he looks as if he could soon manage both his guards: yet he appears tranquil."

"If he be so strong, he must be young," observed Maria.

"Three or four and thirty, I suppose; but there is no judging of a person in his situation."

"Are you sure that he is mad?" interrupted Maria with eagerness. Jemima quitted the room, without replying.

"No, no, he certainly is not!" exclaimed Maria, answering herself; "the man who could write those observations was not disordered in his intellects."

She sat musing, gazing at the moon, and watching its motion as it seemed to glide under the clouds. Then, preparing for bed, she thought, "Of what use could I be to him, or he to me, if it be true that he is unjustly confined?—Could he aid me to escape, who is himself more closely watched?—Still I should like to see him." She went to bed, dreamed of her child, yet woke exactly at half after five o'clock, and starting up, only wrapped a gown around her, and ran to the window. The morning was chill, it was the latter end of September; yet she did not retire to warm herself and think in bed, till the sound of the servants, moving about the house, convinced her that the unknown would not walk in the garden that morning. She was ashamed at feeling disappointed; and began to reflect, as an excuse to herself, on the little objects which attract attention when there is nothing to divert the mind; and how difficult it was for women to avoid growing romantic, who have no active duties or pursuits.

At breakfast, Jemima enquired whether she understood French? for, unless she did, the stranger's stock of books was exhausted. Maria replied in the affirmative; but forbore to ask any more questions respecting the person to whom they belonged. And Jemima gave her a new subject for contemplation, by describing the person of a lovely maniac, just brought into an adjoining chamber. She was singing the pathetic ballad of old Rob with the most heart-melting falls and pauses. Jemima had half-opened the door, when she distinguished her voice, and Maria stood close to it, scarcely daring to respire, lest a modulation should escape her, so exquisitely sweet, so passionately wild. She began with sympathy to pourtray to herself another victim, when the lovely warbler flew, as it were, from the spray, and a torrent of unconnected exclamations and questions burst from her, interrupted by fits of laughter, so horrid, that Maria shut the door, and, turning her eyes up to heaven, exclaimed—"Gracious God!"

Several minutes elapsed before Maria could enquire respecting the rumour of the house (for this poor wretch was obviously not confined without a cause); and then Jemima could only tell her, that it was said, "he had been married, against her inclination, to a rich old man, extremely jealous (no wonder, for she was a charming creature); and that, in consequence of his treatment, or something which hung on her mind, she had, during her first lying-in, lost her senses."

What a subject of meditation—even to the very confines of madness.

"Woman, fragile flower! why were you suffered to adorn a world exposed to the inroad of such stormy

elements?" thought Maria, while the poor maniac's strain was still breathing on her ear, and sinking into her very soul.

Towards the evening, Jemima brought her Rousseau's *Héloïse*; and she sat reading with eyes and heart, till the return of her guard to extinguish the light. One instance of her kindness was, the permitting Maria to have one, till her own hour of retiring to rest. She had read this work long since; but now it seemed to open a new world to her—the only one worth inhabiting. Sleep was not to be wooed; yet, far from being fatigued by the restless rotation of thought, she rose and opened her window, just as the thin watery clouds of twilight made the long silent shadows visible. The air swept across her face with a voluptuous freshness that thrilled to her heart, awakening indefinable emotions; and the sound of a waving branch, or the twittering of a startled bird, alone broke the stillness of reposing nature. Absorbed by the sublime sensibility which renders the consciousness of existence felicity, Maria was happy, till an autumnal scent, wafted by the breeze of morn from the fallen leaves of the adjacent wood, made her recollect that the season had changed since her confinement; yet life afforded no variety to solace an afflicted heart. She returned dispirited to her couch, and thought of her child till the broad glare of day again invited her to the window. She looked not for the unknown, still how great was her vexation at perceiving the back of a man, certainly he, with his two attendants, as he turned into a side-path which led to the house! A confused recollection of having seen somebody who resembled him, immediately occurred, to puzzle and torment her with endless conjectures. Five minutes sooner, and she should have seen his face, and been out of suspense—was ever any thing so unlucky! His steady, bold step, and the whole air of his person, bursting as it were from a cloud, pleased her, and gave an outline to the imagination to sketch the individual form she wished to recognize.

Feeling the disappointment more severely than she was willing to believe, she flew to Rousseau, as her only refuge from the idea of him, who might prove a friend, could she but find a way to interest him in her fate; still the personification of Saint Preux, or of an ideal lover far superior, was after this imperfect model, of which merely a glance had been caught, even to the minutiae of the coat and hat of the stranger. But if she lent St. Preux, or the demi-god of her fancy, his form, she richly repaid him by the donation of all St. Preux's sentiments and feelings, culled to gratify her own, to which he seemed to have an undoubted right, when she read on the margin of an impassioned letter, written in the well-known hand—"Rousseau alone, the true Prometheus of sentiment, possessed the fire of genius necessary to portray the passion, the truth of which goes so directly to the heart."

Maria was again true to the hour, yet had finished Rousseau, and begun to transcribe some selected passages; unable to quit either the author or the window, before she had a glimpse of the countenance she daily longed to see; and, when seen, it conveyed no distinct idea to her mind where she had seen it before. He must have been a transient acquaintance; but to discover an acquaintance was fortunate, could she contrive to attract his attention, and excite his sympathy.

Every glance afforded colouring for the picture she was delineating on her heart; and once, when the window was half open, the sound of his voice reached her. Conviction flashed on her; she had certainly, in a moment of distress, heard the same accents. They were manly, and characteristic of a noble mind; nay, even sweet—or sweet they seemed to her attentive ear.

She started back, trembling, alarmed at the emotion a strange coincidence of circumstances inspired, and wondering why she thought so much of a stranger, obliged as she had been by his timely interference; [for she recollected, by degrees, all the circumstances of their former meeting.] She found however that she could think of nothing else; or, if she thought of her daughter, it was to wish that she had a father whom her mother could respect and love.

CHAP. III.

WHEN perusing the first parcel of books, Maria had, with her pencil, written in one of them a few exclamations, expressive of compassion and sympathy, which she scarcely remembered, till turning over the leaves of one of the volumes, lately brought to her, a slip of paper dropped out, which Jemima hastily snatched up.

"Let me see it," demanded Maria impatiently, "You surely are not afraid of trusting me with the effusions of a madman?" "I must consider," replied Jemima; and withdrew, with the paper in her hand.

In a life of such seclusion, the passions gain undue force; Maria therefore felt a great degree of resentment and vexation, which she had not time to subdue, before Jemima, returning, delivered the paper.

"Whoever you are, who partake of my fate, accept my sincere commiseration—I would have laid protection; but the privilege of man is denied me.

"My own situation forces a dreadful suspicion on my mind—I may not always languish in vain for freedom—say are you—I cannot ask the question; yet I will remember you when my remembrance can be of any use. I will enquire, *why* you are so mysteriously detained—and I *will* have an answer.

"HENRY DARNFORD."

By the most pressing intreaties, Maria prevailed on Jemima to permit her to write a reply to this note. Another and another succeeded, in which explanations were not allowed relative to their present situation; but Maria, with sufficient explicitness, alluded to a former obligation; and they insensibly entered on an interchange of sentiments on the most important subjects. To write these letters was the business of the day, and to receive them the moment of sunshine. By some means, Darnford having discovered Maria's window, when she next appeared at it, he made her, behind his keepers, a profound bow of respect and recognition.

Two or three weeks glided away in this kind of intercourse, during which period Jemima, to whom Maria had given the necessary information respecting her family, had evidently gained some intelligence, which increased her desire of pleasing her charge, though she could not yet determine to liberate her. Maria took advantage of this favourable charge, without too minutely enquiring into the cause; and such was her eagerness to hold human converse, and to see her former protector, still a stranger to her, that she incessantly requested her guard to gratify her more than curiosity.

Writing to Darnford, she was led from the sad objects before her, and frequently rendered insensible to the horrid noises around her, which previously had continually employed her feverish fancy. Thinking it selfish to dwell on her own sufferings, when in the midst of wretches, who had not only lost all that endears life, but their very selves, her imagination was occupied with melancholy earnestness to trace the mazes of misery, through which so many wretches must have passed to this gloomy receptacle of disjointed souls, to the grand source of human corruption. Often at midnight was she waked by the dismal shrieks of demoniac rage, or of excruciating despair, uttered in such wild tones of indescribable anguish as proved the total absence of reason, and roused phantoms of horror in her mind, far more terrific than all that dreaming superstition ever drew. Besides, there was frequently something so inconceivably picturesque in the varying gestures of unrestrained passion, so irresistibly comic in their sallies, or so heart-piercingly pathetic in the little airs they would sing, frequently bursting out after an awful silence, as to fascinate the attention, and amuse the fancy, while torturing the soul. It was the uproar of the passions which she was compelled to observe; and to mark the lucid beam of reason, like a light trembling in a socket, or like the flash which divides the threatening clouds of angry heaven only to display the horrors which darkness shrouded.

Jemima would labour to beguile the tedious evenings, by describing the persons and manners of the unfortunate beings, whose figures or voices awoke sympathetic sorrow in Maria's bosom; and the stories she told were the more interesting, for perpetually leaving room to conjecture something extraordinary. Still Maria, accustomed to generalize her observations, was led to conclude from all she heard, that it was a vulgar error to suppose that people of abilities were the most apt to lose the command of reason. On the contrary, from most of the instances she could investigate, she thought it resulted, that the passions only appeared strong and disproportioned, because the judgment was weak and unexercised; and that they gained strength by the decay of reason, as the shadows lengthen during the sun's decline.

Maria impatiently wished to see her fellow-sufferer; but Darnford was still more earnest to obtain an interview. Accustomed to submit to every impulse of passion, and never taught, like women, to restrain the most natural, and acquire, instead of the bewitching frankness of nature, a factitious propriety of behaviour, every desire became a torrent that bore down all opposition.

His travelling trunk, which contained the books lent to Maria, had been sent to him, and with a part of its contents he bribed his principal keeper; who, after receiving the most solemn promise that he would return to his apartment without attempting to explore any part of the house, conducted him, in the dusk of the evening, to Maria's room.

Jemima had apprized her charge of the visit, and she expected with trembling impatience, inspired by a vague hope that he might again prove her deliverer, to see a man who had before rescued her from oppression. He entered with an animation of countenance, formed to captivate an enthusiast; and, hastily turned his eyes from her to the apartment, which he surveyed with apparent emotions of compassionate indignation. Sympathy illuminated his eye, and, taking her hand, he respectfully bowed on it, exclaiming—"This is extraordinary!—again to meet you, and in such circumstances!" Still, impressive as was the coincidence of events which brought them once more together, their full hearts did not overflow.—[54-A]

[And though, after this first visit, they were permitted frequently to repeat their interviews, they were for some time employed in] a reserved conversation, to which all the world might have listened; excepting, when discussing some literary subject, flashes of sentiment, enforced by each relaxing feature, seemed to remind them that their minds were already acquainted.

[By degrees, Darnford entered into the particulars of his story.] In a few words, he informed her that he had been a thoughtless, extravagant young man; yet, as he described his faults, they appeared to be the generous luxuriancy of a noble mind. Nothing like meanness tarnished the lustre of his youth, nor had the worm of selfishness lurked in the unfolding bud, even while he had been the dupe of others. Yet he tardily acquired the experience necessary to guard him against future imposition.

"I shall weary you," continued he, "by my egotism; and did not powerful emotions draw me to you,"—his eyes glistened as he spoke, and a trembling seemed to run through his manly frame,—"I would not waste these precious moments in talking of myself.

"My father and mother were people of fashion; married by their parents. He was fond of the turf, she of the card-table. I, and two or three other children since dead, were kept at home till we became intolerable. My father and mother had a visible dislike to each other, continually displayed; the servants were of the depraved kind usually found in the houses of people of fortune. My brothers and parents all dying, I was left to the care of guardians, and sent to Eton. I never knew the sweets of domestic affection, but I felt the want of indulgence and frivolous respect at school. I will not disgust you with a recital of the vices of my youth, which can scarcely be comprehended by female delicacy. I was taught to love by a creature I am ashamed to mention; and the other women with whom I afterwards became intimate, were of a class of which you can have no knowledge. I formed my acquaintance with them at the theatres; and, when vivacity danced in their eyes, I was not easily disgusted by the vulgarity which flowed from their lips. Having spent, a few years after I was of age, [the whole of] a considerable patrimony, excepting a few hundreds, I had no recourse but to purchase a commission in a new-raised regiment, destined to subjugate America. The regret I felt to renounce a life of pleasure, was counter-balanced by the curiosity I had to see America, or rather to travel; [nor had any of those circumstances occurred to my youth, which might have been calculated] to bind my country to my heart. I shall not trouble you with the details of a military life. My

blood was still kept in motion; till, towards the close of the contest, I was wounded and taken prisoner.

"Confined to my bed, or chair, by a lingering cure, my only refuge from the preying activity of my mind, was books, which I read with great avidity, profiting by the conversation of my host, a man of sound understanding. My political sentiments now underwent a total change; and, dazzled by the hospitality of the Americans, I determined to take up my abode with freedom. I, therefore, with my usual impetuosity, sold my commission, and travelled into the interior parts of the country, to lay out my money to advantage. Added to this, I did not much like the puritanical manners of the large towns. Inequality of condition was there most disgustingly galling. The only pleasure wealth afforded, was to make an ostentatious display of it; for the cultivation of the fine arts, or literature, had not introduced into the first circles that polish of manners which renders the rich so essentially superior to the poor in Europe. Added to this, an influx of vices had been let in by the Revolution, and the most rigid principles of religion shaken to the centre, before the understanding could be gradually emancipated from the prejudices which led their ancestors undauntedly to seek an inhospitable clime and unbroken foil. The resolution, that led them, in pursuit of independence, to embark on rivers like seas, to search for unknown shores, and to sleep under the hovering mists of endless forests, whose baleful damps agued their limbs, was now turned into commercial speculations, till the national character exhibited a phenomenon in the history of the human mind—a head enthusiastically enterprising, with cold selfishness of heart. And woman, lovely woman!—they charm every where—still there is a degree of prudery, and a want of taste and ease in the manners of the American women, that renders them, in spite of their roses and lilies, far inferior to our European charmers. In the country, they have often a bewitching simplicity of character; but, in the cities, they have all the airs and ignorance of the ladies who give the tone to the circles of the large trading towns in England. They are fond of their ornaments, merely because they are good, and not because they embellish their persons; and are more gratified to inspire the women with jealousy of these exterior advantages, than the men with love. All the frivolity which often (excuse me, Madam) renders the society of modest women so stupid in England, here seemed to throw still more leaden fetters on their charms. Not being an adept in gallantry, I found that I could only keep myself awake in their company by making downright love to them.

"But, not to intrude on your patience, I retired to the track of land which I had purchased in the country, and my time passed pleasantly enough while I cut down the trees, built my house, and planted my different crops. But winter and idleness came, and I longed for more elegant society, to hear what was passing in the world, and to do something better than vegetate with the animals that made a very considerable part of my household. Consequently, I determined to travel. Motion was a substitute for variety of objects; and, passing over immense tracks of country, I exhausted my exuberant spirits, without obtaining much experience. I every where saw industry the fore-runner and not the consequence, of luxury; but this country, every thing being on an ample scale, did not afford those picturesque views, which a certain degree of cultivation is necessary gradually to produce. The eye wandered without an object to fix upon over immeasurable plains, and lakes that seemed replenished by the ocean, whilst eternal forests of small clustering trees, obstructed the circulation of air, and embarrassed the path, without gratifying the eye of taste. No cottage smiling in the waste, no travellers hailed us, to give life to silent nature; or, if perchance we saw the print of a footstep in our path, it was a dreadful warning to turn aside; and the head ached as if assailed by the scalping knife. The Indians who hovered on the skirts of the European settlements had only learned of their neighbours to plunder, and they stole their guns from them to do it with more safety.

"From the woods and back settlements, I returned to the towns, and learned to eat and drink most valiantly; but without entering into commerce (and I detested commerce) I found I could not live there; and, growing heartily weary of the land of liberty and vulgar aristocracy, seated on her bags of dollars, I resolved once more to visit Europe. I wrote to a distant relation in England, with whom I had been educated, mentioning

the vessel in which I intended to sail. Arriving in London, my senses were intoxicated. I ran from street to street, from theatre to theatre, and the women of the town (again I must beg pardon for my habitual frankness) appeared to me like angels.

"A week was spent in this thoughtless manner, when, returning very late to the hotel in which I had lodged ever since my arrival, I was knocked down in a private street, and hurried, in a state of insensibility, into a coach, which brought me hither, and I only recovered my senses to be treated like one who had lost them. My keepers are deaf to my remonstrances and enquiries, yet assure me that my confinement shall not last long. Still I cannot guess, though I weary myself with conjectures, why I am confined, or in what part of England this house is situated. I imagine sometimes that I hear the sea roar, and wished myself again on the Atlantic, till I had a glimpse of you^[65-A]."

A few moments were only allowed to Maria to comment on this narrative, when Darnford left her to her own thoughts, to the "never ending, still beginning," talk of weighing his words, recollecting his tones of voice, and feeling them reverberate on her heart.

FOOTNOTES:

^[54-A] The copy which had received the author's last corrections, breaks off in this place, and the pages which follow, to the end of Chap. IV, are printed from a copy in a less finished state.

^[65-A] The introduction of Darnford as the deliverer of Maria in a former instance, appears to have been an after-thought of the author. This has occasioned the omission of any allusion to that circumstance in the preceding narration.

EDITOR.

CHAP. IV.

PITY, and the forlorn seriousness of adversity, have both been considered as dispositions favourable to love, while satirical writers have attributed the propensity to the relaxing effect of idleness, what chance then had Maria of escaping, when pity, sorrow, and solitude all conspired to soften her mind, and nourish romantic wishes, and, from a natural progress, romantic expectations?

Maria was sixteen-and-twenty. But, such was the native soundness of her constitution, that time had only given to her countenance the character of her mind. Revolving thought, and exercised affections had banished some of the playful graces of innocence, producing insensibly that irregularity of features which the struggles of the understanding to trace or govern the strong emotions of the heart, are wont to imprint on the yielding mafs. Grief and care had mellowed, without obscuring, the bright tints of youth, and the thoughtfulness which resided on her brow did not take from the feminine softness of her features; nay, such was the sensibility which often mantled over it, that she frequently appeared, like a large proportion of her sex, only born to feel; and the activity of her well-proportioned, and even almost voluptuous figure, inspired the idea of strength of mind, rather than of body. There was a simplicity sometimes indeed in her manner, which bordered on infantine ingenuousness, that led people of common discernment to underrate her talents, and smile at the flights of her imagination. But those who could not comprehend the delicacy of her sentiments, were attached by her unfailing sympathy, so that she was very generally beloved by characters of very different descriptions; still, she was too much under the influence of an ardent imagination to adhere to common rules.

There are mistakes of conduct which at five-and-twenty prove the strength of the mind, that, ten or fifteen years after, would demonstrate its weakness, its incapacity to acquire a sane judgment. The youths who are satisfied with the ordinary pleasures of life, and do not sigh after ideal phantoms of love and friendship, will never arrive at great maturity of understanding; but if these reveries are cherished, as is too frequently the case with women, when experience ought to have taught them in what human happiness consists, they become as useless as they are wretched. Besides, their pains and pleasures are so dependent on outward circumstances, on the objects of their affections, that they seldom act from the impulse of a nerved mind, able to choose its own pursuit.

Having had to struggle incessantly with the vices of mankind, Maria's imagination found repose in portraying the possible virtues the world might contain. Pygmalion formed an ivory maid, and longed for an informing soul. She, on the contrary, combined all the qualities of a hero's mind, and fate presented a statue in which she might enshrine them.

We mean not to trace the progress of this passion, or recount how often Darnford and Maria were obliged to part in the midst of an interesting conversation. Jemima ever watched on the tip-toe of fear, and frequently separated them on a false alarm, when they would have given worlds to remain a little longer together.

A magic lamp now seemed to be suspended in Maria's prison, and fairy landscapes flitted round the gloomy walls, late so blank. Rushing from the depth of despair, on the seraph wing of hope, she found herself happy.—She was beloved, and every emotion was rapturous.

To Darnford she had not shown a decided affection; the fear of outrunning his, a sure proof of love, made

her often assume a coldness and indifference foreign from her character; and, even when giving way to the playful emotions of a heart just loosened from the frozen bond of grief, there was a delicacy in her manner of expressing her sensibility, which made him doubt whether it was the effect of love.

One evening, when Jemima left them, to listen to the sound of a distant footstep, which seemed cautiously to approach, he seized Maria's hand—it was not withdrawn. They conversed with earnestness of their situation; and, during the conversation, he once or twice gently drew her towards him. He felt the fragrance of her breath, and longed, yet feared, to touch the lips from which it issued; spirits of purity seemed to guard them, while all the enchanting graces of love sported on her cheeks, and languished in her eyes.

Jemima entering, he reflected on his diffidence with poignant regret, and, she once more taking alarm, he ventured, as Maria stood near his chair, to approach her lips with a declaration of love. She drew back with solemnity, he hung down his head abashed; but lifting his eyes timidly, they met her's; she had determined, during that instant, and suffered their rays to mingle. He took, with more ardour, reassured, a half-consenting, half-reluctant kiss, reluctant only from modesty; and there was a sacredness in her dignified manner of reclining her glowing face on his shoulder, that powerfully impressed him. Desire was lost in more ineffable emotions, and to protect her from insult and sorrow—to make her happy, seemed not only the first wish of his heart, but the most noble duty of his life. Such angelic confidence demanded the fidelity of honour; but could he, feeling her in every pulsation, could he ever change, could he be a villain? The emotion with which she, for a moment, allowed herself to be pressed to his bosom, the tear of rapturous sympathy, mingled with a soft melancholy sentiment of recollected disappointment, said—more of truth and faithfulness, than the tongue could have given utterance to in hours! They were silent—yet discoursed, how eloquently? till, after a moment's reflection, Maria drew her chair by the side of his, and, with a composed sweetness of voice, and supernatural benignity of countenance, said, "I must open my whole heart to you; you must be told who I am, why I am here, and why, telling you I am a wife, I blush not to"—the blush spoke the rest.

Jemima was again at her elbow, and the restraint of her presence did not prevent an animated conversation, in which love, fly urchin, was ever at bo-peep.

So much of heaven did they enjoy, that paradise bloomed around them; or they, by a powerful spell, had been transported into Armida's garden. Love, the grand enchanter, "lapt them in Elysium," and every sense was harmonized to joy and social extacy. So animated, indeed, were their accents of tenderness, in discussing what, in other circumstances, would have been common-place subjects, that Jemima felt, with surprise, a tear of pleasure trickling down her rugged cheeks. She wiped it away, half ashamed; and when Maria kindly enquired the cause, with all the eager solicitude of a happy being wishing to impart to all nature its overflowing felicity, Jemima owned that it was the first tear that social enjoyment had ever drawn from her. She seemed indeed to breathe more freely; the cloud of suspicion cleared away from her brow; she felt herself, for once in her life, treated like a fellow-creature.

Imagination! who can paint thy power; or reflect the evanescent tints of hope fostered by thee? A despondent gloom had long obscured Maria's horizon—now the sun broke forth, the rainbow appeared, and every prospect was fair. Horror still reigned in the darkened cells, suspicion lurked in the passages, and whispered along the walls. The yells of men possessed, sometimes made them pause, and wonder that they felt so happy, in a tomb of living death. They even chid themselves for such apparent insensibility; still the world contained not three happier beings. And Jemima, after again patrolling the passage, was so softened by the air of confidence which breathed around her, that she voluntarily began an account of herself.

CHAP. V.

"My father," said Jemima, "seduced my mother, a pretty girl, with whom he lived fellow-servant; and she no sooner perceived the natural, the dreaded consequence, than the terrible conviction flashed on her—that she was ruined. Honesty, and a regard for her reputation, had been the only principles inculcated by her mother; and they had been so forcibly impressed, that she feared shame, more than the poverty to which it would lead. Her incessant importunities to prevail upon my father to screen her from reproach by marrying her, as he had promised in the fervour of seduction, estranged him from her so completely, that her very person became distasteful to him; and he began to hate, as well as despise me, before I was born.

"My mother, grieved to the soul by his neglect, and unkind treatment, actually resolved to famish herself; and injured her health by the attempt; though she had not sufficient resolution to adhere to her project, or renounce it entirely. Death came not at her call; yet sorrow, and the methods she adopted to conceal her condition, still doing the work of a house-maid, had such an effect on her constitution, that she died in the wretched garret, where her virtuous mistress had forced her to take refuge in the very pangs of labour, though my father, after a slight reproof, was allowed to remain in his place—allowed by the mother of six children, who, scarcely permitting a footstep to be heard, during her month's indulgence, felt no sympathy for the poor wretch, denied every comfort required by her situation.

"The day my mother died, the ninth after my birth, I was consigned to the care of the cheapest nurse my father could find; who suckled her own child at the same time, and lodged as many more as she could get, in two cellar-like apartments.

"Poverty, and the habit of seeing children die off her hands, had so hardened her heart, that the office of a mother did not awaken the tenderness of a woman; nor were the feminine caresses which seem a part of the rearing of a child, ever bestowed on me. The chicken has a wing to shelter under; but I had no bosom to nestle in, no kindred warmth to foster me. Left in dirt, to cry with cold and hunger till I was weary, and sleep without ever being prepared by exercise, or lulled by kindness to rest; could I be expected to become any thing but a weak and rickety babe? Still, in spite of neglect, I continued to exist, to learn to curse existence," her countenance grew ferocious as she spoke, "and the treatment that rendered me miserable, seemed to sharpen my wits. Confined then in a damp hovel, to rock the cradle of the succeeding tribe, I looked like a little old woman, or a hag shrivelling into nothing. The furrows of reflection and care contracted the youthful cheek, and gave a sort of supernatural wildness to the ever watchful eye. During this period, my father had married another fellow-servant, who loved him less, and knew better how to manage his passion, than my mother. She likewise proving with child, they agreed to keep a shop: my step-mother, if, being an illegitimate offspring, I may venture thus to characterize her, having obtained a sum of a rich relation, for that purpose.

"Soon after her lying-in, she prevailed on my father to take me home, to save the expence of maintaining me, and of hiring a girl to assist her in the care of the child. I was young, it was true, but appeared a knowing little thing, and might be made handy. Accordingly I was brought to her house; but not to a home—for a home I never knew. Of this child, a daughter, she was extravagantly fond; and it was a part of my employment, to assist to spoil her, by humouring all her whims, and bearing all her caprices. Feeling her own consequence, before she could speak, she had learned the art of tormenting me, and if I ever dared to resist, I received blows, laid on with no compunctious hand, or was sent to bed dinnerless, as well as

supperless. I said that it was a part of my daily labour to attend this child, with the servility of a slave; still it was but a part. I was sent out in all seasons, and from place to place, to carry burdens far above my strength, without being allowed to draw near the fire, or ever being cheered by encouragement or kindness. No wonder then, treated like a creature of another species, that I began to envy, and at length to hate, the darling of the house. Yet, I perfectly remember, that it was the caresses, and kind expressions of my step-mother, which first excited my jealous discontent. Once, I cannot forget it, when she was calling in vain her wayward child to kiss her, I ran to her, saying, 'I will kiss you, ma'am!' and how did my heart, which was in my mouth, sink, what was my debasement of soul, when pushed away with—'I do not want you, pert thing!' Another day, when a new gown had excited the highest good humour, and she uttered the appropriate *dear*, addressed unexpectedly to me, I thought I could never do enough to please her; I was all alacrity, and rose proportionably in my own estimation.

"As her daughter grew up, she was pampered with cakes and fruit, while I was, literally speaking, fed with the refuse of the table, with her leavings. A liquorish tooth is, I believe, common to children, and I used to steal any thing sweet, that I could catch up with a chance of concealment. When detected, she was not content to chastize me herself at the moment, but, on my father's return in the evening (he was a shopman), the principal discourse was to recount my faults, and attribute them to the wicked disposition which I had brought into the world with me, inherited from my mother. He did not fail to leave the marks of his resentment on my body, and then solaced himself by playing with my sister.—I could have murdered her at those moments. To save myself from these unmerciful corrections, I resorted to falsehood, and the untruths which I sturdily maintained, were brought in judgment against me, to support my tyrant's inhuman charge of my natural propensity to vice. Seeing me treated with contempt, and always being fed and dressed better, my sister conceived a contemptuous opinion of me, that proved an obstacle to all affection; and my father, hearing continually of my faults, began to consider me as a curse entailed on him for his sins: he was therefore easily prevailed on to bind me apprentice to one of my step-mother's friends, who kept a flop-shop in Wapping. I was represented (as it was said) in my true colours; but she, 'warranted,' snapping her fingers, 'that she should break my spirit or heart.'

"My mother replied, with a whine, 'that if any body could make me better, it was such a clever woman as herself; though, for her own part, she had tried in vain; but good-nature was her fault.'

"I shudder with horror, when I recollect the treatment I had now to endure. Not only under the lash of my task-mistress, but the drudge of the maid, apprentices and children, I never had a taste of human kindness to soften the rigour of perpetual labour. I had been introduced as an object of abhorrence into the family; as a creature of whom my step-mother, though she had been kind enough to let me live in the house with her own child, could make nothing. I was described as a wretch, whose nose must be kept to the grinding stone—and it was held there with an iron grasp. It seemed indeed the privilege of their superior nature to kick me about, like the dog or cat. If I were attentive, I was called fawning, if refractory, an obstinate mule, and like a mule I received their censure on my loaded back. Often has my mistress, for some instance of forgetfulness, thrown me from one side of the kitchen to the other, knocked my head against the wall, spit in my face, with various refinements on barbarity that I forbear to enumerate, though they were all acted over again by the servant, with additional insults, to which the appellation of *bastard*, was commonly added, with taunts or sneers. But I will not attempt to give you an adequate idea of my situation, lest you, who probably have never been drenched with the dregs of human misery, should think I exaggerate.

"I stole now, from absolute necessity,—bread; yet whatever else was taken, which I had it not in my power to take, was ascribed to me. I was the filching cat, the ravenous dog, the dumb brute, who must bear all; for if I endeavoured to exculpate myself, I was silenced, without any enquiries being made, with 'Hold

your tongue, you never tell truth.' Even the very air I breathed was tainted with scorn; for I was sent to the neighbouring shops with Glutton, Liar, or Thief, written on my forehead. This was, at first, the most bitter punishment; but fullen pride, or a kind of stupid desperation, made me, at length, almost regardless of the contempt, which had wrung from me so many solitary tears at the only moments when I was allowed to rest.

"Thus was I the mark of cruelty till my sixteenth year; and then I have only to point out a change of misery; for a period I never knew. Allow me first to make one observation. Now I look back, I cannot help attributing the greater part of my misery, to the misfortune of having been thrown into the world without the grand support of life—a mother's affection. I had no one to love me; or to make me respected, to enable me to acquire respect. I was an egg dropped on the sand; a pauper by nature, shunted from family to family, who belonged to nobody—and nobody cared for me. I was despised from my birth, and denied the chance of obtaining a footing for myself in society. Yes; I had not even the chance of being considered as a fellow-creature—yet all the people with whom I lived, brutalized as they were by the low cunning of trade, and the despicable shifts of poverty, were not without bowels, though they never yearned for me. I was, in fact, born a slave, and chained by infamy to slavery during the whole of existence, without having any companions to alleviate it by sympathy, or teach me how to rise above it by their example. But, to resume the thread of my tale—

"At sixteen, I suddenly grew tall, and something like comeliness appeared on a Sunday, when I had time to wash my face, and put on clean clothes. My master had once or twice caught hold of me in the passage; but I instinctively avoided his disgusting caresses. One day however, when the family were at a methodist meeting, he contrived to be alone in the house with me, and by blows—yes; blows and menaces, compelled me to submit to his ferocious desire; and, to avoid my mistress's fury, I was obliged in future to comply, and skulk to my loft at his command, in spite of increasing loathing.

"The anguish which was now pent up in my bosom, seemed to open a new world to me: I began to extend my thoughts beyond myself, and grieve for human misery, till I discovered, with horror—ah! what horror!—that I was with child. I know not why I felt a mixed sensation of despair and tenderness, excepting that, ever called a bastard, a bastard appeared to me an object of the greatest compassion in creation.

"I communicated this dreadful circumstance to my master, who was almost equally alarmed at the intelligence; for he feared his wife, and public censure at the meeting. After some weeks of deliberation had elapsed, I in continual fear that my altered shape would be noticed, my master gave me a medicine in a phial, which he desired me to take, telling me, without any circumlocution, for what purpose it was designed. I burst into tears, I thought it was killing myself—yet was such a self as I worth preserving? He cursed me for a fool, and left me to my own reflections. I could not resolve to take this infernal potion; but I wrapped it up in an old gown, and hid it in a corner of my box.

"Nobody yet suspected me, because they had been accustomed to view me as a creature of another species. But the threatening storm at last broke over my devoted head—never shall I forget it! One Sunday evening when I was left, as usual, to take care of the house, my master came home intoxicated, and I became the prey of his brutal appetite. His extreme intoxication made him forget his customary caution, and my mistress entered and found us in a situation that could not have been more hateful to her than me. Her husband was 'pot-valiant,' he feared her not at the moment, nor had he then much reason, for she instantly turned the whole force of her anger another way. She tore off my cap, scratched, kicked, and buffeted me, till she had exhausted her strength, declaring, as she rested her arm, 'that I had wheedled her husband from her.—But, could any thing better be expected from a wretch, whom she had taken into her house out of pure charity?' What a torrent of abuse rushed out? till, almost breathless, she concluded with saying, 'that I

was born a strumpet; it ran in my blood, and nothing good could come to those who harboured me.'

"My situation was, of course, discovered, and she declared that I should not stay another night under the same roof with an honest family. I was therefore pushed out of doors, and my trumpery thrown after me, when it had been contemptuously examined in the passage, lest I should have stolen any thing.

"Behold me then in the street, utterly destitute! Whither could I creep for shelter? To my father's roof I had no claim, when not pursued by shame—now I shrunk back as from death, from my mother's cruel reproaches, my father's execrations. I could not endure to hear him curse the day I was born, though life had been a curse to me. Of death I thought, but with a confused emotion of terror, as I stood leaning my head on a post, and starting at every footstep, lest it should be my mistress coming to tear my heart out. One of the boys of the shop passing by, heard my tale, and immediately repaired to his master, to give him a description of my situation; and he touched the right key—the scandal it would give rise to, if I were left to repeat my tale to every enquirer. This plea came home to his reason, who had been sobered by his wife's rage, the fury of which fell on him when I was out of her reach, and he sent the boy to me with half-a-guinea, desiring him to conduct me to a house, where beggars, and other wretches, the refuse of society, nightly lodged.

"This night was spent in a state of stupefaction, or desperation. I detested mankind, and abhorred myself.

"In the morning I ventured out, to throw myself in my master's way, at his usual hour of going abroad. I approached him, he 'damned me for a b——, declared I had disturbed the peace of the family, and that he had sworn to his wife, never to take any more notice of me.' He left me; but, instantly returning, he told me that he should speak to his friend, a parish-officer, to get a nurse for the brat I laid to him; and advised me, if I wished to keep out of the house of correction, not to make free with his name.

"I hurried back to my hole, and, rage giving place to despair, sought for the potion that was to procure abortion, and swallowed it, with a wish that it might destroy me, at the same time that it stopped the sensations of new-born life, which I felt with indescribable emotion. My head turned round, my heart grew sick, and in the horrors of approaching dissolution, mental anguish was swallowed up. The effect of the medicine was violent, and I was confined to my bed several days; but, youth and a strong constitution prevailing, I once more crawled out, to ask myself the cruel question, 'Whither I should go?' I had but two shillings left in my pocket, the rest had been expended, by a poor woman who slept in the same room, to pay for my lodging, and purchase the necessaries of which she partook.

"With this wretch I went into the neighbouring streets to beg, and my disconsolate appearance drew a few pence from the idle, enabling me still to command a bed; till, recovering from my illness, and taught to put on my rags to the best advantage, I was accosted from different motives, and yielded to the desire of the brutes I met, with the same detestation that I had felt for my still more brutal master. I have since read in novels of the blandishments of seduction, but I had not even the pleasure of being enticed into vice.

"I shall not," interrupted Jemima, "lead your imagination into all the scenes of wretchedness and depravity, which I was condemned to view; or mark the different stages of my debasing misery. Fate dragged me through the very kennels of society; I was still a slave, a bastard, a common property. Become familiar with vice, for I wish to conceal nothing from you, I picked the pockets of the drunkards who abused me; and proved by my conduct, that I deserved the epithets, with which they loaded me at moments when distrust ought to cease.

"Detesting my nightly occupation, though valuing, if I may so use the word, my independence, which only consisted in choosing the street in which I should wander, or the roof, when I had money, in which I should

hide my head, I was some time before I could prevail on myself to accept of a place in a house of ill fame, to which a girl, with whom I had accidentally conversed in the street, had recommended me. I had been hunted almost into a fever, by the watchmen of the quarter of the town I frequented; one, whom I had unwittingly offended, giving the word to the whole pack. You can scarcely conceive the tyranny exercised by these wretches: considering themselves as the instruments of the very laws they violate, the pretext which steels their conscience, hardens their heart. Not content with receiving from us, outlaws of society (let other women talk of favours) a brutal gratification gratuitously as a privilege of office, they extort a tithe of prostitution, and harrahs with threats the poor creatures whose occupation affords not the means to silence the growl of avarice. To escape from this persecution, I once more entered into servitude.

"A life of comparative regularity restored my health; and—do not start—my manners were improved, in a situation where vice sought to render itself alluring, and taste was cultivated to fashion the person, if not to refine the mind. Besides, the common civility of speech, contrasted with the gross vulgarity to which I had been accustomed, was something like the polish of civilization. I was not shut out from all intercourse of humanity. Still I was galled by the yoke of service, and my mistresses often flying into violent fits of passion, made me dread a sudden dismissal, which I understood was always the case. I was therefore prevailed on, though I felt a horror of men, to accept the offer of a gentleman, rather in the decline of years, to keep his house, pleasantly situated in a little village near Hampstead.

"He was a man of great talents, and of brilliant wit; but, a worn-out votary of voluptuousness, his desires became fastidious in proportion as they grew weak, and the native tenderness of his heart was undermined by a vitiated imagination. A thoughtless career of libertinism and social enjoyment, had injured his health to such a degree, that, whatever pleasure his conversation afforded me (and my esteem was ensured by proofs of the generous humanity of his disposition), the being his mistress was purchasing it at a very dear rate. With such a keen perception of the delicacies of sentiment, with an imagination invigorated by the exercise of genius, how could he sink into the grossness of sensuality!

"But, to pass over a subject which I recollect with pain, I must remark to you, as an answer to your often-repeated question, 'Why my sentiments and language were superior to my station?' that I now began to read, to beguile the tediousness of solitude, and to gratify an inquisitive, active mind. I had often, in my childhood, followed a ballad-singer, to hear the sequel of a dismal story, though sure of being severely punished for delaying to return with whatever I was sent to purchase. I could just spell and put a sentence together, and I listened to the various arguments, though often mingled with obscenity, which occurred at the table where I was allowed to preside: for a literary friend or two frequently came home with my master, to dine and pass the night. Having lost the privileged respect of my sex, my presence, instead of restraining, perhaps gave the reins to their tongues; still I had the advantage of hearing discussions, from which, in the common course of life, women are excluded.

"You may easily imagine, that it was only by degrees that I could comprehend some of the subjects they investigated, or acquire from their reasoning what might be termed a moral sense. But my fondness of reading increasing, and my master occasionally shutting himself up in this retreat, for weeks together, to write, I had many opportunities of improvement. At first, considering money I was right!" (exclaimed Jemima, altering her tone of voice) "as the only means, after my loss of reputation, of obtaining respect, or even the toleration of humanity, I had not the least scruple to secrete a part of the sums intrusted to me, and to screen myself from detection by a system of falsehood. But, acquiring new principles, I began to have the ambition of returning to the respectable part of society, and was weak enough to suppose it possible. The attention of my unassuming instructor, who, without being ignorant of his own powers, possessed great simplicity of manners, strengthened the illusion. Having sometimes caught up hints for thought, from my

untutored remarks, he often led me to discuss the subjects he was treating, and would read to me his productions, previous to their publication, wishing to profit by the criticism of unsophisticated feeling. The aim of his writings was to touch the simple springs of the heart; for he despised the would-be oracles, the self-elected philosophers, who fright away fancy, while lifting each grain of thought to prove that flowiness of comprehension is wisdom.

"I should have distinguished this as a moment of sunshine, a happy period in my life, had not the repugnance the disgusting libertinism of my protector inspired, daily become more painful.—And, indeed, I soon did recollect it as such with agony, when his sudden death (for he had recourse to the most exhilarating cordials to keep up the convivial tone of his spirits) again threw me into the desert of human society. Had he had any time for reflection, I am certain he would have left the little property in his power to me: but, attacked by the fatal apoplexy in town, his heir, a man of rigid morals, brought his wife with him to take possession of the house and effects, before I was even informed of his death,—'to prevent,' as she took care indirectly to tell me, 'such a creature as she supposed me to be, from purloining any of them, had I been apprized of the event in time.'

"The grief I felt at the sudden shock the information gave me, which at first had nothing selfish in it, was treated with contempt, and I was ordered to pack up my clothes; and a few trinkets and books, given me by the generous deceased, were contested, while they piously hoped, with a reprobating shake of the head, 'that God would have mercy on his sinful soul!' With some difficulty, I obtained my arrears of wages; but asking—such is the spirit-grinding consequence of poverty and infamy—for a character for honesty and economy, which God knows I merited, I was told by this—why must I call her woman?—'that it would go against her conscience to recommend a kept mistress.' Tears started in my eyes, burning tears; for there are situations in which a wretch is humbled by the contempt they are conscious they do not deserve.

"I returned to the metropolis; but the solitude of a poor lodging was inconceivably dreary, after the society I had enjoyed. To be cut off from human converse, now I had been taught to relish it, was to wander a ghost among the living. Besides, I foresaw, to aggravate the severity of my fate, that my little pittance would soon melt away. I endeavoured to obtain needlework; but, not having been taught early, and my hands being rendered clumsy by hard work, I did not sufficiently excel to be employed by the ready-made linen shops, when so many women, better qualified, were suing for it. The want of a character prevented my getting a place; for, irksome as servitude would have been to me, I should have made another trial, had it been feasible. Not that I disliked employment, but the inequality of condition to which I must have submitted. I had acquired a taste for literature, during the five years I had lived with a literary man, occasionally conversing with men of the first abilities of the age; and now to descend to the lowest vulgarity, was a degree of wretchedness not to be imagined unfelt. I had not, it is true, tasted the charms of affection, but I had been familiar with the graces of humanity.

"One of the gentlemen, whom I had frequently dined in company with, while I was treated like a companion, met me in the street, and enquired after my health. I seized the occasion, and began to describe my situation; but he was in haste to join, at dinner, a select party of choice spirits; therefore, without waiting to hear me, he impatiently put a guinea into my hand, saying, 'It was a pity such a sensible woman should be in distress—he wished me well from his soul.'

"To another I wrote, stating my case, and requesting advice. He was an advocate for unequivocal sincerity; and had often, in my presence, descanted on the evils which arise in society from the despotism of rank and riches.

"In reply, I received a long essay on the energy of the human mind, with continual allusions to his own

force of character. He added, 'That the woman who could write such a letter as I had sent him, could never be in want of resources, were she to look into herself, and exert her powers; misery was the consequence of indolence, and, as to my being shut out from society, it was the lot of man to submit to certain privations.'

"How often have I heard," said Jemima, interrupting her narrative, "in conversation, and read in books, that every person willing to work may find employment? It is the vague assertion, I believe, of insensible indolence, when it relates to men; but, with respect to women, I am sure of its fallacy, unless they will submit to the most menial bodily labour; and even to be employed at hard labour is out of the reach of many, whose reputation misfortune or folly has tainted.

"How writers, professing to be friends to freedom, and the improvement of morals, can assert that poverty is no evil, I cannot imagine."

"No more can I," interrupted Maria, "yet they even expatiate on the peculiar happiness of indigence, though in what it can consist, excepting in brutal rest, when a man can barely earn a subsistence, I cannot imagine. The mind is necessarily imprisoned in its own little tenement; and, fully occupied by keeping it in repair, has not time to rove abroad for improvement. The book of knowledge is closely clasped, against those who must fulfil their daily task of severe manual labour or die; and curiosity, rarely excited by thought or information, seldom moves on the stagnate lake of ignorance."

"As far as I have been able to observe," replied Jemima, "prejudices, caught up by chance, are obstinately maintained by the poor, to the exclusion of improvement; they have not time to reason or reflect to any extent, or minds sufficiently exercised to adopt the principles of action, which form perhaps the only basis of contentment in every station^[114-A]."

"And independence," said Darnford, "they are necessarily strangers to, even the independence of despising their persecutors. If the poor are happy, or can be happy, *things are very well as they are*. And I cannot conceive on what principle those writers contend for a change of system, who support this opinion. The authors on the other side of the question are much more consistent, who grant the fact; yet, insisting that it is the lot of the majority to be oppressed in this life, kindly turn them over to another, to rectify the false weights and measures of this, as the only way to justify the dispensations of Providence. I have not," continued Darnford, "an opinion more firmly fixed by observation in my mind, than that, though riches may fail to produce proportionate happiness, poverty most commonly excludes it, by shutting up all the avenues to improvement."

"And as for the affections," added Maria, with a sigh, "how gross, and even tormenting do they become, unless regulated by an improving mind! The culture of the heart ever, I believe, keeps pace with that of the mind. But pray go on," addressing Jemima, "though your narrative gives rise to the most painful reflections on the present state of society."

"Not to trouble you," continued she, "with a detailed description of all the painful feelings of unavailing exertion, I have only to tell you, that at last I got recommended to wash in a few families, who did me the favour to admit me into their houses, without the most strict enquiry, to wash from one in the morning till eight at night, for eighteen or twenty-pence a day. On the happiness to be enjoyed over a washing-tub I need not comment; yet you will allow me to observe, that this was a wretchedness of situation peculiar to my sex. A man with half my industry, and, I may say, abilities, could have procured a decent livelihood, and discharged some of the duties which knit mankind together; whilst I, who had acquired a taste for the

rational, nay, in honest pride let me assert it, the virtuous enjoyments of life, was cast aside as the filth of society. Condemned to labour, like a machine, only to earn bread, and scarcely that, I became melancholy and desperate.

"I have now to mention a circumstance which fills me with remorse, and fear it will entirely deprive me of your esteem. A tradesman became attached to me, and visited me frequently,—and I at last obtained such a power over him, that he offered to take me home to his house.—Consider, dear madam, I was famishing: wonder not that I became a wolf!—The only reason for not taking me home immediately, was the having a girl in the house, with child by him—and this girl—I advised him—yes, I did! would I could forget it!—to turn out of doors: and one night he determined to follow my advice, Poor wretch! she fell upon her knees, reminded him that he had promised to marry her, that her parents were honest!—What did it avail?—She was turned out.

"She approached her father's door, in the skirts of London,—listened at the shutters,—but could not knock. A watchman had observed her go and return several times—Poor wretch!—" The remorse Jemima spoke of, seemed to be stinging her to the soul, as she proceeded."

"She left it, and, approaching a tub where horses were watered, she sat down in it, and, with desperate resolution, remained in that attitude—till resolution was no longer necessary!

"I happened that morning to be going out to wash, anticipating the moment when I should escape from such hard labour. I passed by, just as some men, going to work, drew out the stiff, cold corpse—Let me not recal the horrid moment!—I recognized her pale visage; I listened to the tale told by the spectators, and my heart did not burst. I thought of my own state, and wondered how I could be such a monster!—I worked hard; and, returning home, I was attacked by a fever. I suffered both in body and mind. I determined not to live with the wretch. But he did not try me; he left the neighbourhood. I once more returned to the wash-tub.

"Still this state, miserable as it was, admitted of aggravation. Lifting one day a heavy load, a tub fell against my shin, and gave me great pain. I did not pay much attention to the hurt, till it became a serious wound; being obliged to work as usual, or starve. But, finding myself at length unable to stand for any time, I thought of getting into an hospital. Hospitals, it should seem (for they are comfortless abodes for the sick) were expressly endowed for the reception of the friendless; yet I, who had on that plea a right to assistance, wanted the recommendation of the rich and respectable, and was several weeks languishing for admittance; fees were demanded on entering; and, what was still more unreasonable, security for burying me, that expence not coming into the letter of the charity. A guinea was the stipulated sum—I could as soon have raised a million; and I was afraid to apply to the parish for an order, lest they should have passed me, I knew not whither. The poor woman at whose house I lodged, compassionating my state, got me into the hospital; and the family where I received the hurt, sent me five shillings, three and six-pence of which I gave at my admittance—I know not for what.

"My leg grew quickly better; but I was dismissed before my cure was completed, because I could not afford to have my linen washed to appear decently, as the virago of a nurse said, when the gentlemen (the surgeons) came. I cannot give you an adequate idea of the wretchedness of an hospital; every thing is left to the care of people intent on gain. The attendants seem to have lost all feeling of compassion in the bustling discharge of their offices; death is so familiar to them, that they are not anxious to ward it off. Every thing appeared to be conducted for the accommodation of the medical men and their pupils, who came to make experiments on the poor, for the benefit of the rich. One of the physicians, I must not forget to mention, gave me half-a-crown, and ordered me some wine, when I was at the lowest ebb. I thought of making my case known to the lady-like matron; but her forbidding countenance prevented me. She

condescended to look on the patients, and make general enquiries, two or three times a week; but the nurses knew the hour when the visit of ceremony would commence, and every thing was as it should be.

"After my dismissal, I was more at a loss than ever for a subsistence, and, not to weary you with a repetition of the same unavailing attempts, unable to stand at the washing-tub, I began to consider the rich and poor as natural enemies, and became a thief from principle. I could not now cease to reason, but I hated mankind. I despised myself, yet I justified my conduct. I was taken, tried, and condemned to six months' imprisonment in a house of correction. My soul recoils with horror from the remembrance of the insults I had to endure, till, branded with shame, I was turned loose in the street, penniless. I wandered from street to street, till, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, I sunk down senseless at a door, where I had vainly demanded a morsel of bread. I was sent by the inhabitant to the work-house, to which he had surlily bid me go, saying, he 'paid enough in conscience to the poor,' when, with parched tongue, I implored his charity. If those well-meaning people who exclaim against beggars, were acquainted with the treatment the poor receive in many of these wretched asylums, they would not stifle so easily involuntary sympathy, by saying that they have all parishes to go to, or wonder that the poor dread to enter the gloomy walls. What are the common run of work-houses, but prisons, in which many respectable old people, worn out by immoderate labour, sink into the grave in sorrow, to which they are carried like dogs!"

Alarmed by some indistinct noise, Jemima rose hastily to listen, and Maria, turning to Darnford, said, "I have indeed been shocked beyond expression when I have met a pauper's funeral. A coffin carried on the shoulders of three or four ill-looking wretches, whom the imagination might easily convert into a band of assassins, hastening to conceal the corpse, and quarrelling about the prey on their way. I know it is of little consequence how we are consigned to the earth; but I am led by this brutal insensibility, to what even the animal creation appears forcibly to feel, to advert to the wretched, deserted manner in which they died."

"True," rejoined Darnford, "and, till the rich will give more than a part of their wealth, till they will give time and attention to the wants of the distressed, never let them boast of charity. Let them open their hearts, and not their purses, and employ their minds in the service, if they are really actuated by humanity; or charitable institutions will always be the prey of the lowest order of knaves."

Jemima returning, seemed in haste to finish her tale. "The overseer farmed the poor of different parishes, and out of the bowels of poverty was wrung the money with which he purchased this dwelling, as a private receptacle for madmen. He had been a keeper at a house of the same description, and conceived that he could make money much more readily in his old occupation. He is a shrewd—shall I say it?—villain. He observed something resolute in my manner, and offered to take me with him, and instruct me how to treat the disturbed minds he meant to intrust to my care. The offer of forty pounds a year, and to quit a workhouse, was not to be despised, though the condition of shutting my eyes and hardening my heart was annexed to it.

"I agreed to accompany him; and four years have I been attendant on many wretches, and"—she lowered her voice,— "the witness of many enormities. In solitude my mind seemed to recover its force, and many of the sentiments which I imbibed in the only tolerable period of my life, returned with their full force. Still what should induce me to be the champion for suffering humanity?—Who ever risked any thing for me?—Who ever acknowledged me to be a fellow-creature?"—

Maria took her hand, and Jemima, more overcome by kindness than she had ever been by cruelty, hastened out of the room to conceal her emotions.

Darnford soon after heard his summons, and, taking leave of him, Maria promised to gratify his curiosity,

with respect to herself, the first opportunity.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[114-A\]](#) The copy which appears to have received the author's laft corrections, ends at this place.

CHAP. VI.

ACTIVE as love was in the heart of Maria, the story she had just heard made her thoughts take a wider range. The opening buds of hope closed, as if they had put forth too early, and the the happiest day of her life was overcast by the most melancholy reflections. Thinking of Jemima's peculiar fate and her own, she was led to consider the oppressed state of women, and to lament that she had given birth to a daughter. Sleep fled from her eyelids, while she dwelt on the wretchedness of unprotected infancy, till sympathy with Jemima changed to agony, when it seemed probable that her own babe might even now be in the very state she so forcibly described.

Maria thought, and thought again. Jemima's humanity had rather been benumbed than killed, by the keen frost she had to brave at her entrance into life; an appeal then to her feelings, on this tender point, surely would not be fruitless; and Maria began to anticipate the delight it would afford her to gain intelligence of her child. This project was now the only subject of reflection; and she watched impatiently for the dawn of day, with that determinate purpose which generally infuses success.

At the usual hour, Jemima brought her breakfast, and a tender note from Darnford. She ran her eye hastily over it, and her heart calmly hoarded up the rapture a fresh assurance of affection, affection such as she wished to inspire, gave her, without diverting her mind a moment from its design. While Jemima waited to take away the breakfast, Maria alluded to the reflections, that had haunted her during the night to the exclusion of sleep. She spoke with energy of Jemima's unmerited sufferings, and of the fate of a number of deserted females, placed within the sweep of a whirlwind, from which it was next to impossible to escape. Perceiving the effect her conversation produced on the countenance of her guard, she grasped the arm of Jemima with that irresistible warmth which defies repulse, exclaiming—"With your heart, and such dreadful experience, can you lend your aid to deprive my babe of a mother's tenderness, a mother's care? In the name of God, assist me to snatch her from destruction! Let me but give her an education—let me but prepare her body and mind to encounter the ills which await her sex, and I will teach her to consider you as her second mother, and herself as the prop of your age. Yes, Jemima, look at me—observe me closely, and read my very soul; you merit a better fate;" she held out her hand with a firm gesture of assurance; "and I will procure it for you, as a testimony of my esteem, as well as of my gratitude."

Jemima had not power to resist this persuasive torrent; and, owning that the house in which she was confined, was situated on the banks of the Thames, only a few miles from London, and not on the sea-coast, as Darnford had supposed, she promised to invent some excuse for her absence, and go herself to trace the situation, and enquire concerning the health, of this abandoned daughter. Her manner implied an intention to do something more, but she seemed unwilling to impart her design; and Maria, glad to have obtained the main point, thought it best to leave her to the workings of her own mind; convinced that she had the power of interesting her still more in favour of herself and child, by a simple recital of facts.

In the evening, Jemima informed the impatient mother, that on the morrow she should hasten to town before the family hour of rising, and received all the information necessary, as a clue to her search. The "Good night!" Maria uttered was peculiarly solemn and affectionate. Glad expectation sparkled in her eye; and, for the first time since her detention, she pronounced the name of her child with pleasureable fondness; and, with all the garrulity of a nurse, described her first smile when she recognized her mother. Recollecting herself, a still kinder "Adieu!" with a "God bless you!"—that seemed to include a maternal benediction,

dismissed Jemima.

The dreary solitude of the ensuing day, lengthened by impatiently dwelling on the same idea, was intolerably wearisome. She listened for the sound of a particular clock, which some directions of the wind allowed her to hear distinctly. She marked the shadow gaining on the wall; and, twilight thickening into darkness, her breath seemed oppressed while she anxiously counted nine.—The last sound was a stroke of despair on her heart; for she expected every moment, without seeing Jemima, to have her light extinguished by the savage female who supplied her place. She was even obliged to prepare for bed, restless as she was, not to disoblige her new attendant. She had been cautioned not to speak too freely to her; but the caution was needless, her countenance would still more emphatically have made her shrink back. Such was the ferocity of manner, conspicuous in every word and gesture of this hag, that Maria was afraid to enquire, why Jemima, who had faithfully promised to see her before her door was shut for the night, came not?—and, when the key turned in the lock, to consign her to a night of suspense, she felt a degree of anguish which the circumstances scarcely justified.

Continually on the watch, the shutting of a door, or the sound of a footstep, made her start and tremble with apprehension, something like what she felt, when, at her entrance, dragged along the gallery, she began to doubt whether she were not surrounded by demons?

Fatigued by an endless rotation of thought and wild alarms, she looked like a spectre, when Jemima entered in the morning; especially as her eyes darted out of her head, to read in Jemima's countenance, almost as pallid, the intelligence she dared not trust her tongue to demand. Jemima put down the tea-things, and appeared very busy in arranging the table. Maria took up a cup with trembling hand, then forcibly recovering her fortitude, and restraining the convulsive movement which agitated the muscles of her mouth, she said, "Spare yourself the pain of preparing me for your information, I adjure you!—My child is dead!" Jemima solemnly answered, "Yes;" with a look expressive of compassion and angry emotions. "Leave me," added Maria, making a fresh effort to govern her feelings, and hiding her face in her handkerchief, to conceal her anguish—"It is enough—I know that my babe is no more—I will hear the particulars when I am"—*calmer*, she could not utter; and Jemima, without importuning her by idle attempts to console her, left the room.

Plunged in the deepest melancholy, she would not admit Darnford's visits; and such is the force of early associations even on strong minds, that, for a while, she indulged the superstitious notion that she was justly punished by the death of her child, for having for an instant ceased to regret her loss. Two or three letters from Darnford, full of soothing, manly tendernefs, only added poignancy to these accusing emotions; yet the passionate style in which he expressed, what he termed the first and fondest wish of his heart, "that his affection might make her some amends for the cruelty and injustice she had endured," inspired a sentiment of gratitude to heaven; and her eyes filled with delicious tears, when, at the conclusion of his letter, wishing to supply the place of her unworthy relations, whose want of principle he execrated, he assured her, calling her his dearest girl, "that it should henceforth be the business of his life to make her happy."

He begged, in a note sent the following morning, to be permitted to see her, when his presence would be no intrusion on her grief; and so earnestly intreated to be allowed, according to promise, to beguile the tedious moments of absence, by dwelling on the events of her past life, that she sent him the memoirs which had been written for her daughter, promising Jemima the perusal as soon as he returned them.

CHAP. VII.

"ADDRESSING these memoirs to you, my child, uncertain whether I shall ever have an opportunity of instructing you, many observations will probably flow from my heart, which only a mother—a mother schooled in misery, could make.

"The tenderness of a father who knew the world, might be great; but could it equal that of a mother—of a mother, labouring under a portion of the misery, which the constitution of society seems to have entailed on all her kind? It is, my child, my dearest daughter, only such a mother, who will dare to break through all restraint to provide for your happiness—who will voluntarily brave censure herself, to ward off sorrow from your bosom. From my narrative, my dear girl, you may gather the instruction, the counsel, which is meant rather to exercise than influence your mind.—Death may snatch me from you, before you can weigh my advice, or enter into my reasoning: I would then, with fond anxiety, lead you very early in life to form your grand principle of action, to save you from the vain regret of having, through irresolution, let the spring-tide of existence pass away, unimproved, unenjoyed.—Gain experience—ah! gain it—while experience is worth having, and acquire sufficient fortitude to pursue your own happiness; it includes your utility, by a direct path. What is wisdom too often, but the owl of the goddess, who sits moping in a desolated heart; around me she shrieks, but I would invite all the gay warblers of spring to nestle in your blooming bosom.—Had I not wasted years in deliberating, after I ceased to doubt, how I ought to have acted—I might now be useful and happy.—For my sake, warned by my example, always appear what you are, and you will not pass through existence without enjoying its genuine blessings, love and respect.

"Born in one of the most romantic parts of England, an enthusiastic fondness for the varying charms of nature is the first sentiment I recollect; or rather it was the first consciousness of pleasure that employed and formed my imagination.

"My father had been a captain of a man of war; but, disgusted with the service, on account of the preferment of men whose chief merit was their family connections or borough interest, he retired into the country; and, not knowing what to do with himself—married. In his family, to regain his lost consequence, he determined to keep up the same passive obedience, as in the vessels in which he had commanded. His orders were not to be disputed; and the whole house was expected to fly, at the word of command, as if to man the shrouds, or mount aloft in an elemental strife, big with life or death. He was to be instantaneously obeyed, especially by my mother, whom he very benevolently married for love; but took care to remind her of the obligation, when she dared, in the slightest instance, to question his absolute authority. My eldest brother, it is true, as he grew up, was treated with more respect by my father; and became in due form the deputy-tyrant of the house. The representative of my father, a being privileged by nature—a boy, and the darling of my mother, he did not fail to act like an heir apparent. Such indeed was my mother's extravagant partiality, that, in comparison with her affection for him, she might be said not to love the rest of her children. Yet none of the children seemed to have so little affection for her. Extreme indulgence had rendered him so selfish, that he only thought of himself; and from tormenting insects and animals, he became the despot of his brothers, and still more of his sisters.

"It is perhaps difficult to give you an idea of the petty cares which obscured the morning of my life; continual restraint in the most trivial matters; unconditional submission to orders, which, as a mere child, I soon discovered to be unreasonable, because inconsistent and contradictory. Thus are we destined to

experience a mixture of bitterness, with the recollection of our most innocent enjoyments.

"The circumstances which, during my childhood, occurred to fashion my mind, were various; yet, as it would probably afford me more pleasure to revive the fading remembrance of new-born delight, than you, my child, could feel in the perusal, I will not entice you to stray with me into the verdant meadow, to search for the flowers that youthful hopes scatter in every path; though, as I write, I almost scent the fresh green of spring—of that spring which never returns!

"I had two sisters, and one brother, younger than myself; my brother Robert was two years older, and might truly be termed the idol of his parents, and the torment of the rest of the family. Such indeed is the force of prejudice, that what was called spirit and wit in him, was cruelly repressed as forwardness in me.

"My mother had an indolence of character, which prevented her from paying much attention to our education. But the healthy breeze of a neighbouring heath, on which we bounded at pleasure, volatilized the humours that improper food might have generated. And to enjoy open air and freedom, was paradise, after the unnatural restraint of our fire-side, where we were often obliged to sit three or four hours together, without daring to utter a word, when my father was out of humour, from want of employment, or of a variety of boisterous amusement. I had however one advantage, an instructor, the brother of my father, who, intended for the church, had of course received a liberal education. But, becoming attached to a young lady of great beauty and large fortune, and acquiring in the world some opinions not consonant with the profession for which he was designed, he accepted, with the most sanguine expectations of success, the offer of a nobleman to accompany him to India, as his confidential secretary.

"A correspondence was regularly kept up with the object of his affection; and the intricacies of business, peculiarly wearisome to a man of a romantic turn of mind, contributed, with a forced absence, to increase his attachment. Every other passion was lost in this master-one, and only served to swell the torrent. Her relations, such were his waking dreams, who had despised him, would court in their turn his alliance, and all the blandishments of taste would grace the triumph of love.—While he basked in the warm sunshine of love, friendship also promised to shed its dewy freshness; for a friend, whom he loved next to his mistress, was the confidant, who forwarded the letters from one to the other, to elude the observation of prying relations. A friend false in similar circumstances, is, my dearest girl, an old tale; yet, let not this example, or the frigid caution of cold-blooded moralists, make you endeavour to stifle hopes, which are the buds that naturally unfold themselves during the spring of life! Whilst your own heart is sincere, always expect to meet one glowing with the same sentiments; for to fly from pleasure, is not to avoid pain!

"My uncle realized, by good luck, rather than management, a handsome fortune; and returning on the wings of love, lost in the most enchanting reveries, to England, to share it with his mistress and his friend, he found them—united.

"There were some circumstances, not necessary for me to recite, which aggravated the guilt of the friend beyond measure, and the deception, that had been carried on to the last moment, was so base, it produced the most violent effect on my uncle's health and spirits. His native country, the world! lately a garden of blooming sweets, blasted by treachery, seemed changed into a parched desert, the abode of hissing serpents. Disappointment rankled in his heart; and, brooding over his wrongs, he was attacked by a raging fever, followed by a derangement of mind, which only gave place to habitual melancholy, as he recovered more strength of body.

"Declaring an intention never to marry, his relations were ever clustering about him, paying the grossest adulation to a man, who, disgusted with mankind, received them with scorn, or bitter sarcasms. Something

in my countenance pleased him, when I began to prattle. Since his return, he appeared dead to affection; but I soon, by showing him innocent fondness, became a favourite; and endeavouring to enlarge and strengthen my mind, I grew dear to him in proportion as I imbibed his sentiments. He had a forcible manner of speaking, rendered more so by a certain impressive wildness of look and gesture, calculated to engage the attention of a young and ardent mind. It is not then surprising that I quickly adopted his opinions in preference, and revered him as one of a superior order of beings. He inculcated, with great warmth, self-respect, and a lofty consciousness of acting right, independent of the censure or applause of the world; nay, he almost taught me to brave, and even despise its censure, when convinced of the rectitude of my own intentions.

"Endavouring to prove to me that nothing which deserved the name of love or friendship, existed in the world, he drew such animated pictures of his own feelings, rendered permanent by disappointment, as imprinted the sentiments strongly on my heart, and animated my imagination. These remarks are necessary to elucidate some peculiarities in my character, which by the world are indefinitely termed romantic.

"My uncle's increasing affection led him to visit me often. Still, unable to rest in any place, he did not remain long in the country to soften domestic tyranny; but he brought me books, for which I had a passion, and they conspired with his conversation, to make me form an ideal picture of life. I shall pass over the tyranny of my father, much as I suffered from it; but it is necessary to notice, that it undermined my mother's health; and that her temper, continually irritated by domestic bickering, became intolerably peevish.

"My eldest brother was articled to a neighbouring attorney, the shrewdest, and, I may add, the most unprincipled man in that part of the country. As my brother generally came home every Saturday, to astonish my mother by exhibiting his attainments, he gradually assumed a right of directing the whole family, not excepting my father. He seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in tormenting and humbling me; and if I ever ventured to complain of this treatment to either my father or mother, I was rudely rebuffed for presuming to judge of the conduct of my eldest brother.

"About this period a merchant's family came to settle in our neighbourhood. A mansion-house in the village, lately purchased, had been preparing the whole spring, and the sight of the costly furniture, sent from London, had excited my mother's envy, and roused my father's pride. My sensations were very different, and all of a pleasurable kind. I longed to see new characters, to break the tedious monotony of my life; and to find a friend, such as fancy had portrayed. I cannot then describe the emotion I felt, the Sunday they made their appearance at church. My eyes were rivetted on the pillar round which I expected first to catch a glimpse of them, and darted forth to meet a servant who hastily preceded a group of ladies, whose white robes and waving plumes, seemed to stream along the gloomy aisle, diffusing the light, by which I contemplated their figures.

"We visited them in form; and I quickly selected the eldest daughter for my friend. The second son, George, paid me particular attention, and finding his attainments and manners superior to those of the young men of the village, I began to imagine him superior to the rest of mankind. Had my home been more comfortable, or my previous acquaintance more numerous, I should not probably have been so eager to open my heart to new affections.

"Mr. Venables, the merchant, had acquired a large fortune by unremitting attention to business; but his health declining rapidly, he was obliged to retire, before his son, George, had acquired sufficient experience, to enable him to conduct their affairs on the same prudential plan, his father had invariably pursued. Indeed, he had laboured to throw off his authority, having despised his narrow plans and cautious speculation. The eldest son could not be prevailed on to enter the firm; and, to oblige his wife, and have

peace in the house, Mr. Venables had purchased a commission for him in the guards.

"I am now alluding to circumstances which came to my knowledge long after; but it is necessary, my dearest child, that you should know the character of your father, to prevent your despising your mother; the only parent inclined to discharge a parent's duty. In London, George had acquired habits of libertinism, which he carefully concealed from his father and his commercial connections. The mask he wore, was so complete a covering of his real visage, that the praise his father lavished on his conduct, and, poor mistaken man! on his principles, contrasted with his brother's, rendered the notice he took of me peculiarly flattering. Without any fixed design, as I am now convinced, he continued to fingle me out at the dance, press my hand at parting, and utter expressions of unmeaning passion, to which I gave a meaning naturally suggested by the romantic turn of my thoughts. His stay in the country was short; his manners did not entirely please me; but, when he left us, the colouring of my picture became more vivid—Whither did not my imagination lead me? In short, I fancied myself in love—in love with the disinterestedness, fortitude, generosity, dignity, and humanity, with which I had invested the hero I dubbed. A circumstance which soon after occurred, rendered all these virtues palpable. [The incident is perhaps worth relating on other accounts, and therefore I shall describe it distinctly.]

"I had a great affection for my nurse, old Mary, for whom I used often to work, to spare her eyes. Mary had a younger sister, married to a sailor, while she was suckling me; for my mother only suckled my eldest brother, which might be the cause of her extraordinary partiality. Peggy, Mary's sister, lived with her, till her husband, becoming a mate in a West-India trader, got a little before-hand in the world. He wrote to his wife from the first port in the Channel, after his most successful voyage, to request her to come to London to meet him; he even wished her to determine on living there for the future, to save him the trouble of coming to her the moment he came on shore; and to turn a penny by keeping a green-stall. It was too much to set out on a journey the moment he had finished a voyage, and fifty miles by land, was worse than a thousand leagues by sea.

"She packed up her alls, and came to London—but did not meet honest Daniel. A common misfortune prevented her, and the poor are bound to suffer for the good of their country—he was pressed in the river—and never came on shore.

"Peggy was miserable in London, not knowing, as she said, 'the face of any living soul.' Besides, her imagination had been employed, anticipating a month or six weeks' happiness with her husband. Daniel was to have gone with her to Sadler's Wells, and Westminster Abbey, and to many fights, which he knew she never heard of in the country. Peggy too was thrifty, and how could she manage to put his plan in execution alone? He had acquaintance; but she did not know the very name of their places of abode. His letters were made up of—How do you do, and God bless you,—information was reserved for the hour of meeting.

"She too had her portion of information, near at heart. Molly and Jacky were grown such little darlings, she was almost angry that daddy did not see their tricks. She had not half the pleasure she should have had from their prattle, could she have recounted to him each night the pretty speeches of the day. Some stories, however, were stored up—and Jacky could say papa with such a sweet voice, it must delight his heart. Yet when she came, and found no Daniel to greet her, when Jacky called papa, she wept, bidding 'God bless his innocent soul, that did not know what sorrow was.'—But more sorrow was in store for Peggy, innocent as she was.—Daniel was killed in the first engagement, and then the *papa* was agony, founding to the heart.

"She had lived sparingly on his wages, while there was any hope of his return; but, that gone, she returned

with a breaking heart to the country, to a little market town, nearly three miles from our village. She did not like to go to service, to be snubbed about, after being her own mistress. To put her children out to nurse was impossible: how far would her wages go? and to send them to her husband's parish, a distant one, was to lose her husband twice over.

"I had heard all from Mary, and made my uncle furnish a little cottage for her, to enable her to sell—so sacred was poor Daniel's advice, now he was dead and gone—a little fruit, toys and cakes. The minding of the shop did not require her whole time, nor even the keeping her children clean, and she loved to see them clean; so she took in washing, and altogether made a shift to earn bread for her children, still weeping for Daniel, when Jacky's arch looks made her think of his father.—It was pleasant to work for her children.—'Yes; from morning till night, could she have had a kiss from their father, God rest his soul! Yes; had it pleased Providence to have let him come back without a leg or an arm, it would have been the same thing to her—for she did not love him because he maintained them—no; she had hands of her own.'

"The country people were honest, and Peggy left her linen out to dry very late. A recruiting party, as she supposed, passing through, made free with a large wash; for it was all swept away, including her own and her children's little stock.

"This was a dreadful blow; two dozen of shirts, stocks and handkerchiefs. She gave the money which she had laid by for half a year's rent, and promised to pay two shillings a week till all was cleared; so she did not lose her employment. This two shillings a week, and the buying a few necessaries for the children, drove her so hard, that she had not a penny to pay her rent with, when a twelvemonth's became due.

"She was now with Mary, and had just told her tale, which Mary instantly repeated—it was intended for my ear. Many houses in this town, producing a borough-interest, were included in the estate purchased by Mr. Venables, and the attorney with whom my brother lived, was appointed his agent, to collect and raise the rents.

"He demanded Peggy's, and, in spite of her intreaties, her poor goods had been seized and sold. So that she had not, and what was worse her children, 'for she had known sorrow enough,' a bed to lie on. She knew that I was good-natured—right charitable, yet not liking to ask for more than needs must, she scorned to petition while people could any how be made to wait. But now, should she be turned out of doors, she must expect nothing less than to lose all her customers, and then she must beg or starve—and what would become of her children?—'had Daniel not been pressed—but God knows best—all this could not have happened.'

"I had two mattresses on my bed; what did I want with two, when such a worthy creature must lie on the ground? My mother would be angry, but I could conceal it till my uncle came down; and then I would tell him all the whole truth, and if he absolved me, heaven would.

"I begged the house-maid to come up stairs with me (servants always feel for the distressed of poverty, and so would the rich if they knew what it was). She assisted me to tie up the mattresses; I discovering, at the same time, that one blanket would serve me till winter, could I persuade my sister, who slept with me, to keep my secret. She entering in the midst of the package, I gave her some new feathers, to silence her. We got the mattresses down the back stairs, unperceived, and I helped to carry it, taking with me all the money I had, and what I could borrow from my sister.

"When I got to the cottage, Peggy declared that she would not take what I had brought secretly; but, when, with all the eager eloquence inspired by a decided purpose, I grasped her hand with weeping eyes, assuring her that my uncle would screen me from blame, when he was once more in the country, describing,

at the same time, what she would suffer in parting with her children, after keeping them so long from being thrown on the parish, she reluctantly consented.

"My project of usefulness ended not here; I determined to speak to the attorney; he frequently paid me compliments. His character did not intimidate me; but, imagining that Peggy must be mistaken, and that no man could turn a deaf ear to such a tale of complicated distress, I determined to walk to the town with Mary the next morning, and request him to wait for the rent, and keep my secret, till my uncle's return.

"My repose was sweet; and, waking with the first dawn of day, I bounded to Mary's cottage. What charms do not a light heart spread over nature! Every bird that twittered in a bush, every flower that enlivened the hedge, seemed placed there to awaken me to rapture—yes; to rapture. The present moment was full fraught with happiness; and on futurity I bestowed not a thought, excepting to anticipate my success with the attorney.

"This man of the world, with rosy face and simpering features, received me politely, nay kindly; listened with complacency to my remonstrances, though he scarcely heeded Mary's tears. I did not then suspect, that my eloquence was in my complexion, the blush of seventeen, or that, in a world where humanity to women is the characteristic of advancing civilization, the beauty of a young girl was so much more interesting than the distress of an old one. Pressing my hand, he promised to let Peggy remain in the house as long as I wished.—I more than returned the pressure—I was so grateful and so happy. Emboldened by my innocent warmth, he then kissed me—and I did not draw back—I took it for a kiss of charity.

"Gay as a lark, I went to dine at Mr. Venables'. I had previously obtained five shillings from my father, towards re-clothing the poor children of my care, and prevailed on my mother to take one of the girls into the house, whom I determined to teach to work and read.

"After dinner, when the younger part of the circle retired to the music room, I recounted with energy my tale; that is, I mentioned Peggy's distress, without hinting at the steps I had taken to relieve her. Miss Venables gave me half-a-crown; the heir five shillings; but George sat unmoved. I was cruelly distressed by the disappointment—I scarcely could remain on my chair; and, could I have got out of the room unperceived, I should have flown home, as if to run away from myself. After several vain attempts to rise, I leaned my head against the marble chimney-piece, and gazing on the evergreens that filled the fire-place, moralized on the vanity of human expectations; regardless of the company. I was roused by a gentle tap on my shoulder from behind Charlotte's chair. I turned my head, and George slid a guinea into my hand, putting his finger to his mouth, to enjoin me silence.

"What a revolution took place, not only in my train of thoughts, but feelings! I trembled with emotion—now, indeed, I was in love. Such delicacy too, to enhance his benevolence! I felt in my pocket every five minutes, only to feel the guinea; and its magic touch invested my hero with more than mortal beauty. My fancy had found a basis to erect its model of perfection on; and quickly went to work, with all the happy credulity of youth, to consider that heart as devoted to virtue, which had only obeyed a virtuous impulse. The bitter experience was yet to come, that has taught me how very distinct are the principles of virtue, from the casual feelings from which they germinate.

CHAP. VIII.

"I HAVE perhaps dwelt too long on a circumstance, which is only of importance as it marks the progress of a deception that has been so fatal to my peace; and introduces to your notice a poor girl, whom, intending to serve, I led to ruin. Still it is probable that I was not entirely the victim of mistake; and that your father, gradually fashioned by the world, did not quickly become what I hesitate to call him—out of respect to my daughter.

"But, to hasten to the more busy scenes of my life. Mr. Venables and my mother died the same summer; and, wholly engrossed by my attention to her, I thought of little else. The neglect of her darling, my brother Robert, had a violent effect on her weakened mind; for, though boys may be reckoned the pillars of the house without doors, girls are often the only comfort within. They but too frequently waste their health and spirits attending a dying parent, who leaves them in comparative poverty. After closing, with filial piety, a father's eyes, they are chased from the paternal roof, to make room for the first-born, the son, who is to carry the empty family-name down to posterity; though, occupied with his own pleasures, he scarcely thought of discharging, in the decline of his parent's life, the debt contracted in his childhood. My mother's conduct led me to make these reflections. Great as was the fatigue I endured, and the affection my unceasing solicitude evinced, of which my mother seemed perfectly sensible, still, when my brother, whom I could hardly persuade to remain a quarter of an hour in her chamber, was with her alone, a short time before her death, she gave him a little hoard, which she had been some years accumulating.

"During my mother's illness, I was obliged to manage my father's temper, who, from the lingering nature of her malady, began to imagine that it was merely fancy. At this period, an artful kind of upper servant attracted my father's attention, and the neighbours made many remarks on the finery, not honestly got, exhibited at evening service. But I was too much occupied with my mother to observe any change in her dress or behaviour, or to listen to the whisper of scandal.

"I shall not dwell on the death-bed scene, lively as is the remembrance, or on the emotion produced by the last grasp of my mother's cold hand; when blessing me, she added, 'A little patience, and all will be over!' Ah! my child, how often have those words rung mournfully in my ears—and I have exclaimed—'A little more patience, and I too shall be at rest!'

"My father was violently affected by her death, recollected instances of his unkindness, and wept like a child.

"My mother had solemnly recommended my sisters to my care, and bid me be a mother to them. They, indeed, became more dear to me as they became more forlorn; for, during my mother's illness, I discovered the ruined state of my father's circumstances, and that he had only been able to keep up appearances, by the sums which he borrowed of my uncle.

"My father's grief, and consequent tenderness to his children, quickly abated, the house grew still more gloomy or riotous; and my refuge from care was again at Mr. Venables'; the young 'squire having taken his father's place, and allowing, for the present, his sister to preside at his table. George, though dissatisfied with his portion of the fortune, which had till lately been all in trade, visited the family as usual. He was now full of speculations in trade, and his brow became clouded by care. He seemed to relax in his attention to me, when the presence of my uncle gave a new turn to his behaviour. I was too unsuspecting,

too difinterefted, to trace thefe changes to their fource.

My home every day became more and more difagreeable to me; my liberty was unneceffarily abridged, and my books, on the pretext that they made me idle, taken from me. My father's miftrefs was with child, and he, doating on her, allowed or overlooked her vulgar manner of tyrannizing over us. I was indignant, efpecially when I faw her endeavouring to attract, fhall I fay seduce? my younger brother. By allowing women but one way of rifing in the world, the foftering the libertinifm of men, fociety makes monfters of them, and then their ignoble vices are brought forward as a proof of inferiority of intellect.

The wearifomenefs of my fituation can fcarcely be defcribed. Though my life had not paffed in the moft even tenour with my mother, it was paradife to that I was deftined to endure with my father's miftrefs, jealous of her illegitimate authority. My father's former occafional tendernefs, in fpite of his violence of temper, had been foothing to me; but now he only met me with reproofs or portentous frowns. The houfe-keeper, as fhe was now termed, was the vulgar despot of the family; and affuming the new character of a fine lady, fhe could never forgive the contempt which was fometimes vifible in my countenance, when fhe uttered with pompoſity her bad Englifh, or affected to be well bred.

To my uncle I ventured to open my heart; and he, with his wonted benevolence, began to confider in what manner he could extricate me out of my prefent irkfome fituation. In fpite of his own difappointment, or, moft probably, actuated by the feelings that had been petrified, not cooled, in all their fanguine fervour, like a boiling torrent of lava fuddenly dafhing into the fea, he thought a marriage of mutual inclination (would envious ftars permit it) the only chance for happinefs in this difaftrous world. George Venables had the reputation of being attentive to bufinefs, and my father's example gave great weight to this circumftance; for habits of order in bufinefs would, he conceived, extend to the regulation of the affections in domeftic life. George feldom fpoke in my uncle's company, except to utter a fhort, judicious queftion, or to make a pertinent remark, with all due deference to his fuperior judgment; fo that my uncle feldom left his company without obferving, that the young man had more in him than people fuppoſed.

In this opinion he was not fingular; yet, believe me, and I am not fwayed by repentment, thefe fpeeches fo juftly poized, this filent deference, when the animal fpirits of other young people were throwing off youthful ebullitions, were not the effect of thought or humility, but sheer barrennefs of mind, and want of imagination. A colt of mettle will curvet and fhew his paces. Yes; my dear girl, thefe prudent young men want all the fire neceffary to ferment their faculties, and are characterized as wife, only becaufe they are not foolifh. It is true, that George was by no means fo great a favourite of mine as during the firft year of our acquaintance; ftill, as he often coincided in opinion with me, and echoed my fentiments; and having myfelf no other attachment, I heard with pleafure my uncle's propoſal; but thought more of obtaining my freedom, than of my lover. But, when George, feemingly anxious for my happinefs, preffed me to quit my prefent painful fituation, my heart fwelled with gratitude—I knew not that my uncle had promifed him five thouſand pounds.

Had this truly generous man mentioned his intention to me, I fhould have infifted on a thouſand pounds being fettled on each of my fifters; George would have contefted; I fhould have feen his selfish foul; and—gracious God! have been fpared the mifery of difcovering, when too late, that I was united to a heartlefs, unprincipled wretch. All my fchemes of ufefulness would not then have been blaſted. The tendernefs of my heart would not have heated my imagination with vifions of the ineffable delight of happy love; nor would the fweet duty of a mother have been fo cruelly interrupted.

But I muft not fuffer the fortitude I have fo hardly acquired, to be undermined by unavailing regret. Let me haften forward to defcribe the turbid ftream in which I had to wade—but let me exultingly declare that it

is passed—my foul holds fellowship with him no more. He cut the Gordian knot, which my principles, mistaken ones, respected; he dissolved the tie, the fetters rather, that ate into my very vitals—and I should rejoice, conscious that my mind is freed, though confined in hell itself; the only place that even fancy can imagine more dreadful than my present abode.

These varying emotions will not allow me to proceed. I heave sigh after sigh; yet my heart is still oppressed. For what am I reserved? Why was I not born a man, or why was I born at all?

END OF VOL. I.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

VOL. II.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

THE
WRONGS OF WOMAN:
OR,
MARIA.

A FRAGMENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WRONGS

OF

WOMAN.



CHAP. IX.

"I RESUME my pen to fly from thought. I was married; and we hastened to London. I had purposed taking one of my sisters with me; for a strong motive for marrying, was the desire of having a home at which I could receive them, now their own grew so uncomfortable, as not to deserve the cheering appellation. An objection was made to her accompanying me, that appeared plausible; and I reluctantly acquiesced. I was however willingly allowed to take with me Molly, poor Peggy's daughter. London and preferment, are ideas commonly associated in the country; and, as blooming as May, she bade adieu to Peggy with weeping eyes. I did not even feel hurt at the refusal in relation to my sister, till hearing what my uncle had done for me, I had the simplicity to request, speaking with warmth of their situation, that he would give them a thousand pounds a-piece, which seemed to me but justice. He asked me, giving me a kiss, 'If I had lost my senses?' I started back, as if I had found a wasp in a rose-bush. I expostulated. He sneered; and the demon of discord entered our paradise, to poison with his pestiferous breath every opening joy.

"I had sometimes observed defects in my husband's understanding; but, led astray by a prevailing opinion, that goodness of disposition is of the first importance in the relative situations of life, in proportion as I perceived the narrowness of his understanding, fancy enlarged the boundary of his heart. Fatal error! How quickly is the so much vaunted milkiness of nature turned into gall, by an intercourse with the world, if more generous juices do not sustain the vital source of virtue!

"One trait in my character was extreme credulity; but, when my eyes were once opened, I saw but too clearly all I had before overlooked. My husband was sunk in my esteem; still there are youthful emotions, which, for a while, fill up the chasm of love and friendship. Besides, it required some time to enable me to see his whole character in a just light, or rather to allow it to become fixed. While circumstances were ripening my faculties, and cultivating my taste, commerce and gross relaxations were shutting his against any possibility of improvement, till, by stifling every spark of virtue in himself, he began to imagine that it no where existed.

"Do not let me lead you astray, my child, I do not mean to assert, that any human being is entirely incapable of feeling the generous emotions, which are the foundation of every true principle of virtue; but they are frequently, I fear, so feeble, that, like the inflammable quality which more or less lurks in all bodies, they often lie for ever dormant; the circumstances never occurring, necessary to call them into action.

"I discovered however by chance, that, in consequence of some losses in trade, the natural effect of his gambling desire to start suddenly into riches, the five thousand pounds given me by my uncle, had been paid very opportunely. This discovery, strange as you may think the assertion, gave me pleasure; my husband's embarrassments endeared him to me. I was glad to find an excuse for his conduct to my sisters, and my mind became calmer.

"My uncle introduced me to some literary society; and the theatres were a never-failing source of amusement to me. My delighted eye followed Mrs. Siddons, when, with dignified delicacy, she played Calista; and I involuntarily repeated after her, in the same tone, and with a long-drawn sigh,

'Hearts like our's were pair'd—not match'd.'

"These were, at first, spontaneous emotions, though, becoming acquainted with men of wit and polished manners, I could not sometimes help regretting my early marriage; and that, in my haste to escape from a temporary dependence, and expand my newly fledged wings, in an unknown sky, I had been caught in a trap, and caged for life. Still the novelty of London, and the attentive fondness of my husband, for he had some personal regard for me, made several months glide away. Yet, not forgetting the situation of my sisters, who were still very young, I prevailed on my uncle to settle a thousand pounds on each; and to place them in a school near town, where I could frequently visit, as well as have them at home with me.

"I now tried to improve my husband's taste, but we had few subjects in common; indeed he soon appeared to have little relish for my society, unless he was hinting to me the use he could make of my uncle's wealth. When we had company, I was disgusted by an ostentatious display of riches, and I have often quitted the room, to avoid listening to exaggerated tales of money obtained by lucky hits.

"With all my attention and affectionate interest, I perceived that I could not become the friend or confident of my husband. Every thing I learned relative to his affairs I gathered up by accident; and I vainly endeavoured to establish, at our fire-side, that social converse, which often renders people of different characters dear to each other. Returning from the theatre, or any amusing party, I frequently began to relate what I had seen and highly relished; but with sullen taciturnity he soon silenced me. I seemed therefore gradually to lose, in his society, the soul, the energies of which had just been in action. To such a degree, in fact, did his cold, reserved manner affect me, that, after spending some days with him alone, I have imagined myself the most stupid creature in the world, till the abilities of some casual visitor convinced me that I had some dormant animation, and sentiments above the dust in which I had been groveling. The very countenance of my husband changed; his complexion became sallow, and all the charms of youth were vanishing with its vivacity.

"I give you one view of the subject; but these experiments and alterations took up the space of five years; during which period, I had most reluctantly extorted several sums from my uncle, to save my husband, to use his own words, from destruction. At first it was to prevent bills being noted, to the injury of his credit; then to bail him; and afterwards to prevent an execution from entering the house. I began at last to conclude, that he would have made more exertions of his own to extricate himself, had he not relied on mine, cruel as was the task he imposed on me; and I firmly determined that I would make use of no more pretexts.

"From the moment I pronounced this determination, indifference on his part was changed into rudeness, or something worse.

"He now seldom dined at home, and continually returned at a late hour, drunk, to bed. I retired to another apartment; I was glad, I own, to escape from his; for personal intimacy without affection, seemed, to me the most degrading, as well as the most painful state in which a woman of any taste, not to speak of the peculiar delicacy of fostered sensibility, could be placed. But my husband's fondness for women was of the grossest kind, and imagination was so wholly out of the question, as to render his indulgences of this sort entirely promiscuous, and of the most brutal nature. My health suffered, before my heart was entirely estranged by the loathsome information; could I then have returned to his sullied arms, but as a victim to the prejudices of mankind, who have made women the property of their husbands? I discovered even, by his conversation, when intoxicated, that his favourites were wantons of the lowest class, who could by their vulgar, indecent mirth, which he called nature, rouse his sluggish spirits. Meretricious ornaments and manners were necessary to attract his attention. He seldom looked twice at a modest woman, and sat silent in their company; and the charms of youth and beauty had not the slightest effect on his senses, unless the possessors were initiated in vice. His intimacy with profligate women, and his habits of

thinking, gave him a contempt for female endowments; and he would repeat, when wine had loosed his tongue, most of the common-place sarcasms levelled at them, by men who do not allow them to have minds, because mind would be an impediment to gross enjoyment. Men who are inferior to their fellow men, are always most anxious to establish their superiority over women. But where are these reflections leading me?

"Women who have lost their husband's affection, are justly reprov'd for neglecting their persons, and not taking the same pains to keep, as to gain a heart; but who thinks of giving the same advice to men, though women are continually stigmatized for being attached to fops; and from the nature of their education, are more susceptible of disgust? Yet why a woman should be expected to endure a sloven, with more patience than a man, and magnanimously to govern herself, I cannot conceive; unless it be supposed arrogant in her to look for respect as well as a maintenance. It is not easy to be pleased, because, after promising to love, in different circumstances, we are told that it is our duty. I cannot, I am sure (though, when attending the sick, I never felt disgust) forget my own sensations, when rising with health and spirit, and after scenting the sweet morning, I have met my husband at the breakfast table. The active attention I had been giving to domestic regulations, which were generally settled before he rose, or a walk, gave a glow to my countenance, that contrasted with his squalid appearance. The squeamishness of stomach alone, produced by the last night's intemperance, which he took no pains to conceal, destroyed my appetite. I think I now see him lolling in an arm-chair, in a dirty powdering gown, soiled linen, ungartered stockings, and tangled hair, yawning and stretching himself. The newspaper was immediately called for, if not brought in on the tea-board, from which he would scarcely lift his eyes while I poured out the tea, excepting to ask for some brandy to put into it, or to declare that he could not eat. In answer to any question, in his best humour, it was a drawling 'What do you say, child?' But if I demanded money for the house expences, which I put off till the last moment, his customary reply, often prefaced with an oath, was, 'Do you think me, madam, made of money?'—The butcher, the baker, must wait; and, what was worse, I was often obliged to witness his surly dismissal of tradesmen, who were in want of their money, and whom I sometimes paid with the presents my uncle gave me for my own use.

"At this juncture my father's mistress, by terrifying his conscience, prevailed on him to marry her; he was already become a methodist; and my brother, who now practised for himself, had discovered a flaw in the settlement made on my mother's children, which set it aside, and he allowed my father, whose distress made him submit to any thing, a tithe of his own, or rather our fortune.

"My sisters had left school, but were unable to endure home, which my father's wife rendered as disagreeable as possible, to get rid of girls whom she regarded as spies on her conduct. They were accomplished, yet you can (may you never be reduced to the same destitute state!) scarcely conceive the trouble I had to place them in the situation of governesses, the only one in which even a well-educated woman, with more than ordinary talents, can struggle for a subsistence; and even this is a dependence next to menial. Is it then surprising, that so many forlorn women, with human passions and feelings, take refuge in infamy? Alone in large mansions, I say alone, because they had no companions with whom they could converse on equal terms, or from whom they could expect the endearments of affection, they grew melancholy, and the sound of joy made them sad; and the youngest, having a more delicate frame, fell into a decline. It was with great difficulty that I, who now almost supported the house by loans from my uncle, could prevail on the *master* of it, to allow her a room to die in. I watched her sick bed for some months, and then closed her eyes, gentle spirit! for ever. She was pretty, with very engaging manners; yet had never an opportunity to marry, excepting to a very old man. She had abilities sufficient to have shone in any profession, had there been any professions for women, though she shrunk at the name of milliner or mantua-maker as degrading to a gentlewoman. I would not term this feeling false pride to any one but you,

my child, whom I fondly hope to see (yes; I will indulge the hope for a moment!) possessed of that energy of character which gives dignity to any station; and with that clear, firm spirit that will enable you to choose a situation for yourself, or submit to be classed in the lowest, if it be the only one in which you can be the mistress of your own actions.

"Soon after the death of my sister, an incident occurred, to prove to me that the heart of a libertine is dead to natural affection; and to convince me, that the being who has appeared all tenderness, to gratify a selfish passion, is as regardless of the innocent fruit of it, as of the object, when the fit is over. I had casually observed an old, mean-looking woman, who called on my husband every two or three months to receive some money. One day entering the passage of his little counting-house, as she was going out, I heard her say, 'The child is very weak; she cannot live long, she will soon die out of your way, so you need not grudge her a little physic.'

"'So much the better,' he replied, 'and pray mind your own business, good woman.'

"I was struck by his unfeeling, inhuman tone of voice, and drew back, determined when the woman came again, to try to speak to her, not out of curiosity, I had heard enough, but with the hope of being useful to a poor, outcast girl.

"A month or two elapsed before I saw this woman again; and then she had a child in her hand that tottered along, scarcely able to sustain her own weight. They were going away, to return at the hour Mr. Venables was expected; he was now from home. I desired the woman to walk into the parlour. She hesitated, yet obeyed. I assured her that I should not mention to my husband (the word seemed to weigh on my respiration), that I had seen her, or his child. The woman stared at me with astonishment; and I turned my eyes on the squalid object [that accompanied her.] She could hardly support herself, her complexion was sallow, and her eyes inflamed, with an indescribable look of cunning, mixed with the wrinkles produced by the peevishness of pain.

"'Poor child!' I exclaimed. 'Ah! you may well say poor child,' replied the woman. 'I brought her here to see whether he would have the heart to look at her, and not get some advice. I do not know what they deserve who nursed her. Why, her legs bent under her like a bow when she came to me, and she has never been well since; but, if they were no better paid than I am, it is not to be wondered at, sure enough.'

"On further enquiry I was informed, that this miserable spectacle was the daughter of a servant, a country girl, who caught Mr. Venables' eye, and whom he seduced. On his marriage he sent her away, her situation being too visible. After her delivery, she was thrown on the town; and died in an hospital within the year. The babe was sent to a parish-nurse, and afterwards to this woman, who did not seem much better; but what was to be expected from such a close bargain? She was only paid three shillings a week for board and washing.

"The woman begged me to give her some old clothes for the child, assuring me, that she was almost afraid to ask master for money to buy even a pair of shoes.

"I grew sick at heart. And, fearing Mr. Venables might enter, and oblige me to express my abhorrence, I hastily enquired where she lived, promised to pay her two shillings a week more, and to call on her in a day or two; putting a trifle into her hand as a proof of my good intention.

"If the state of this child affected me, what were my feelings at a discovery I made respecting Peggy——?

FOOTNOTES:

[\[22-A\]](#) The manuscript is imperfect here. An episode seems to have been intended, which was never committed to paper.

EDITOR.

CHAP. X.

"My father's situation was now so distressing, that I prevailed on my uncle to accompany me to visit him; and to lend me his assistance, to prevent the whole property of the family from becoming the prey of my brother's rapacity; for, to extricate himself out of present difficulties, my father was totally regardless of futurity. I took down with me some presents for my step-mother; it did not require an effort for me to treat her with civility, or to forget the past.

"This was the first time I had visited my native village, since my marriage. But with what different emotions did I return from the busy world, with a heavy weight of experience benumbing my imagination, to scenes, that whispered recollections of joy and hope most eloquently to my heart! The first scent of the wild flowers from the heath, thrilled through my veins, awakening every sense to pleasure. The icy hand of despair seemed to be removed from my bosom; and—forgetting my husband—the nurtured visions of a romantic mind, bursting on me with all their original wildness and gay exuberance, were again hailed as sweet realities. I forgot, with equal facility, that I ever felt sorrow, or knew care in the country; while a transient rainbow stole athwart the cloudy sky of despondency. The picturesque form of several favourite trees, and the porches of rude cottages, with their smiling hedges, were recognized with the gladsome playfulness of childish vivacity. I could have kissed the chickens that pecked on the common; and longed to pat the cows, and frolic with the dogs that sported on it. I gazed with delight on the windmill, and thought it lucky that it should be in motion, at the moment I passed by; and entering the dear green lane, which led directly to the village, the sound of the well-known rookery gave that sentimental tinge to the varying sensations of my active soul, which only served to heighten the lustre of the luxuriant scenery. But, spying, as I advanced, the spire, peeping over the withered tops of the aged elms that composed the rookery, my thoughts flew immediately to the church-yard, and tears of affection, such was the effect of my imagination, bedewed my mother's grave! Sorrow gave place to devotional feelings. I wandered through the church in fancy, as I used sometimes to do on a Saturday evening. I recollected with what fervour I addressed the God of my youth: and once more with rapturous love looked above my sorrows to the Father of nature. I pause—feeling forcibly all the emotions I am describing; and (reminded, as I register my sorrows, of the sublime calm I have felt, when in some tremendous solitude, my soul rested on itself, and seemed to fill the universe) I insensibly breathe soft, hushing every wayward emotion, as if fearing to sully with a sigh, a contentment so extatic.

"Having settled my father's affairs, and, by my exertions in his favour, made my brother my sworn foe, I returned to London. My husband's conduct was now changed; I had during my absence, received several affectionate, penitential letters from him; and he seemed on my arrival, to wish by his behaviour to prove his sincerity. I could not then conceive why he acted thus; and, when the suspicion darted into my head, that it might arise from observing my increasing influence with my uncle, I almost despised myself for imagining that such a degree of debasing selfishness could exist.

"He became, unaccountable as was the change, tender and attentive; and, attacking my weak side, made a confession of his follies, and lamented the embarrassments in which I, who merited a far different fate, might be involved. He besought me to aid him with my counsel, praised my understanding, and appealed to the tenderness of my heart.

"This conduct only inspired me with compassion. I wished to be his friend; but love had spread his rosy

pinions, and fled far, far away; and had not (like some exquisite perfumes, the fine spirit of which is continually mingling with the air) left a fragrance behind, to mark where he had shook his wings. My husband's renewed caresses then became hateful to me; his brutality was tolerable, compared to his distasteful fondness. Still, compassion, and the fear of insulting his supposed feelings, by a want of sympathy, made me dissemble, and do violence to my delicacy. What a task!

"Those who support a system of what I term false refinement, and will not allow great part of love in the female, as well as male breast, to spring in some respects involuntarily, may not admit that charms are as necessary to feed the passion, as virtues to convert the mellowing spirit into friendship. To such observers I have nothing to say, any more than to the moralists, who insist that women ought to, and can love their husbands, because it is their duty. To you, my child, I may add, with a heart tremblingly alive to your future conduct, some observations, dictated by my present feelings, on calmly reviewing this period of my life. When novelists or moralists praise as a virtue, a woman's coldness of constitution, and want of passion; and make her yield to the ardour of her lover out of sheer compassion, or to promote a frigid plan of future comfort, I am disgusted. They may be good women, in the ordinary acceptance of the phrase, and do no harm; but they appear to me not to have those 'finely fashioned nerves,' which render the senses exquisite. They may possess tenderness; but they want that fire of the imagination, which produces *active* sensibility, and *positive* virtue. How does the woman deserve to be characterized, who marries one man, with a heart and imagination devoted to another? Is she not an object of pity or contempt, when thus sacrilegiously violating the purity of her own feelings? Nay, it is as indelicate, when she is indifferent, unless she be constitutionally insensible; then indeed it is a mere affair of barter; and I have nothing to do with the secrets of trade. Yes; eagerly as I wish you to possess true rectitude of mind, and purity of affection, I must insist that a heartless conduct is the contrary of virtuous. Truth is the only basis of virtue; and we cannot, without depraving our minds, endeavour to please a lover or husband, but in proportion as he pleases us. Men, more effectually to enslave us, may inculcate this partial morality, and lose sight of virtue in subdividing it into the duties of particular stations; but let us not blush for nature without a cause!

"After these remarks, I am ashamed to own, that I was pregnant. The greatest sacrifice of my principles in my whole life, was the allowing my husband again to be familiar with my person, though to this cruel act of self-denial, when I wished the earth to open and swallow me, you owe your birth; and I the unutterable pleasure of being a mother. There was something of delicacy in my husband's bridal attentions; but now his tainted breath, pimpled face, and blood-shot eyes, were not more repugnant to my senses, than his gross manners, and loveless familiarity to my taste.

"A man would only be expected to maintain; yes, barely grant a subsistence, to a woman rendered odious by habitual intoxication; but who would expect him, or think it possible to love her? And unless 'youth, and genial years were flown,' it would be thought equally unreasonable to insist, [under penalty of] forfeiting almost every thing reckoned valuable in life, that he should not love another: whilst woman, weak in reason, impotent in will, is required to moralize, sentimentalize herself to stone, and pine her life away, labouring to reform her embruted mate. He may even spend in dissipation, and intemperance, the very intemperance which renders him so hateful, her property, and by stinting her expences, not permit her to beguile in society, a wearisome, joyless life; for over their mutual fortune she has no power, it must all pass through his hand. And if she be a mother, and in the present state of women, it is a great misfortune to be prevented from discharging the duties, and cultivating the affections of one, what has she not to endure?—But I have suffered the tenderness of one to lead me into reflections that I did not think of making, to interrupt my narrative—yet the full heart will overflow.

"Mr. Venables' embarrassments did not now endear him to me; still, anxious to befriend him, I

endeavoured to prevail on him to retrench his expences; but he had always some plausible excuse to give, to justify his not following my advice. Humanity, compassion, and the interest produced by a habit of living together, made me try to relieve, and sympathize with him; but, when I recollected that I was bound to live with such a being for ever—my heart died within me; my desire of improvement became languid, and baleful, corroding melancholy took possession of my soul. Marriage had bastilled me for life. I discovered in myself a capacity for the enjoyment of the various pleasures existence affords; yet, fettered by the partial laws of society, this fair globe was to me an universal blank.

"When I exhorted my husband to economy, I referred to himself. I was obliged to practise the most rigid, or contract debts, which I had too much reason to fear would never be paid. I despised this paltry privilege of a wife, which can only be of use to the vicious or inconsiderate, and determined not to increase the torrent that was bearing him down. I was then ignorant of the extent of his fraudulent speculations, whom I was bound to honour and obey.

"A woman neglected by her husband, or whose manners form a striking contrast with his, will always have men on the watch to soothe and flatter her. Besides, the forlorn state of a neglected woman, not destitute of personal charms, is particularly interesting, and rouses that species of pity, which is so near akin, it easily slides into love. A man of feeling thinks not of seducing, he is himself seduced by all the noblest emotions of his soul. He figures to himself all the sacrifices a woman of sensibility must make, and every situation in which his imagination places her, touches his heart, and fires his passions. Longing to take to his bosom the shorn lamb, and bid the drooping buds of hope revive, benevolence changes into passion: and should he then discover that he is beloved, honour binds him fast, though foreseeing that he may afterwards be obliged to pay severe damages to the man, who never appeared to value his wife's society, till he found that there was a chance of his being indemnified for the loss of it.

"Such are the partial laws enacted by men; for, only to lay a stress on the dependent state of a woman in the grand question of the comforts arising from the possession of property, she is [even in this article] much more injured by the loss of the husband's affection, than he by that of his wife; yet where is she, condemned to the solitude of a deserted home, to look for a compensation from the woman, who seduces him from her? She cannot drive an unfaithful husband from his house, nor separate, or tear, his children from him, however culpable he may be; and he, still the master of his own fate, enjoys the smiles of a world, that would brand her with infamy, did she, seeking consolation, venture to retaliate.

"These remarks are not dictated by experience; but merely by the compassion I feel for many amiable women, the *out-laws* of the world. For myself, never encouraging any of the advances that were made to me, my lovers dropped off like the untimely shoots of spring. I did not even coquet with them; because I found, on examining myself, I could not coquet with a man without loving him a little; and I perceived that I should not be able to stop at the line of what are termed *innocent freedoms*, did I suffer any. My reserve was then the consequence of delicacy. Freedom of conduct has emancipated many women's minds; but my conduct has most rigidly been governed by my principles, till the improvement of my understanding has enabled me to discern the fallacy of prejudices at war with nature and reason.

"Shortly after the change I have mentioned in my husband's conduct, my uncle was compelled by his declining health, to seek the succour of a milder climate, and embark for Lisbon. He left his will in the hands of a friend, an eminent solicitor; he had previously questioned me relative to my situation and state of mind, and declared very freely, that he could place no reliance on the stability of my husband's professions. He had been deceived in the unfolding of his character; he now thought it fixed in a train of actions that would inevitably lead to ruin and disgrace.

"The evening before his departure, which we spent alone together, he folded me to his heart, uttering the endearing appellation of 'child.'—My more than father! why was I not permitted to perform the last duties of one, and smooth the pillow of death? He seemed by his manner to be convinced that he should never see me more; yet requested me, most earnestly, to come to him, should I be obliged to leave my husband. He had before expressed his sorrow at hearing of my pregnancy, having determined to prevail on me to accompany him, till I informed him of that circumstance. He expressed himself unfeignedly sorry that any new tie should bind me to a man whom he thought so incapable of estimating my value; such was the kind language of affection.

"I must repeat his own words; they made an indelible impression on my mind:

""The marriage state is certainly that in which women, generally speaking, can be most useful; but I am far from thinking that a woman, once married, ought to consider the engagement as indissoluble (especially if there be no children to reward her for sacrificing her feelings) in case her husband merits neither her love, nor esteem. Esteem will often supply the place of love; and prevent a woman from being wretched, though it may not make her happy. The magnitude of a sacrifice ought always to bear some proportion to the utility in view; and for a woman to live with a man, for whom she can cherish neither affection nor esteem, or even be of any use to him, excepting in the light of a house-keeper, is an abjectness of condition, the enduring of which no concurrence of circumstances can ever make a duty in the sight of God or just men. If indeed she submits to it merely to be maintained in idleness, she has no right to complain bitterly of her fate; or to act, as a person of independent character might, as if she had a title to disregard general rules.

""But the misfortune is, that many women only submit in appearance, and forfeit their own respect to secure their reputation in the world. The situation of a woman separated from her husband, is undoubtedly very different from that of a man who has left his wife. He, with lordly dignity, has shaken of a clog; and the allowing her food and raiment, is thought sufficient to secure his reputation from taint. And, should she have been inconsiderate, he will be celebrated for his generosity and forbearance. Such is the respect paid to the master-key of property! A woman, on the contrary, resigning what is termed her natural protector (though he never was so, but in name) is despised and shunned, for asserting the independence of mind distinctive of a rational being, and spurning at slavery.'

"During the remainder of the evening, my uncle's tenderness led him frequently to revert to the subject, and utter, with increasing warmth, sentiments to the same purport. At length it was necessary to say 'Farewell!'—and we parted—gracious God! to meet no more.

CHAP. XI.

"A GENTLEMAN of large fortune and of polished manners, had lately visited very frequently at our house, and treated me, if possible, with more respect than Mr. Venables paid him; my pregnancy was not yet visible, his society was a great relief to me, as I had for some time past, to avoid expence, confined myself very much at home. I ever disdained unnecessary, perhaps even prudent concealments; and my husband, with great ease, discovered the amount of my uncle's parting present. A copy of a writ was the stale pretext to extort it from me; and I had soon reason to believe that it was fabricated for the purpose. I acknowledge my folly in thus suffering myself to be continually imposed on. I had adhered to my resolution not to apply to my uncle, on the part of my husband, any more; yet, when I had received a sum sufficient to supply my own wants, and to enable me to pursue a plan I had in view, to settle my younger brother in a respectable employment, I allowed myself to be duped by Mr. Venables' shallow pretences, and hypocritical professions.

"Thus did he pillage me and my family, thus frustrate all my plans of usefulness. Yet this was the man I was bound to respect and esteem: as if respect and esteem depended on an arbitrary will of our own! But a wife being as much a man's property as his horse, or his ass, she has nothing she can call her own. He may use any means to get at what the law considers as his, the moment his wife is in possession of it, even to the forcing of a lock, as Mr. Venables did, to search for notes in my writing-desk—and all this is done with a show of equity, because, forsooth, he is responsible for her maintenance.

"The tender mother cannot *lawfully* snatch from the gripe of the gambling spendthrift, or beastly drunkard, unmindful of his offspring, the fortune which falls to her by chance; or (so flagrant is the injustice) what she earns by her own exertions. No; he can rob her with impunity, even to waste publicly on a courtesan; and the laws of her country—if women have a country—afford her no protection or redress from the oppressor, unless she have the plea of bodily fear; yet how many ways are there of goading the soul almost to madness, equally unmanly, though not so mean? When such laws were framed, should not impartial lawgivers have first decreed, in the style of a great assembly, who recognized the existence of an *être suprême*, to fix the national belief, that the husband should always be wiser and more virtuous than his wife, in order to entitle him, with a show of justice, to keep this idiot, or perpetual minor, for ever in bondage. But I must have done—on this subject, my indignation continually runs away with me.

"The company of the gentleman I have already mentioned, who had a general acquaintance with literature and subjects of taste, was grateful to me; my countenance brightened up as he approached, and I unaffectedly expressed the pleasure I felt. The amusement his conversation afforded me, made it easy to comply with my husband's request, to endeavour to render our house agreeable to him.

"His attentions became more pointed; but, as I was not of the number of women, whose virtue, as it is termed, immediately takes alarm, I endeavoured, rather by raillery than serious expostulation, to give a different turn to his conversation. He assumed a new mode of attack, and I was, for a while, the dupe of his pretended friendship.

"I had, merely in the style of *badinage*, boasted of my conquest, and repeated his lover-like compliments to my husband. But he begged me, for God's sake, not to affront his friend, or I should destroy all his projects, and be his ruin. Had I had more affection for my husband, I should have expressed my contempt of this time-serving politeness: now I imagined that I only felt pity; yet it would have puzzled a casuist to

point out in what the exact difference consisted.

"This friend began now, in confidence, to discover to me the real state of my husband's affairs. 'Necessity,' said Mr. S——; why should I reveal his name? for he affected to palliate the conduct he could not excuse, 'had led him to take such steps, by accommodation bills, buying goods on credit, to sell them for ready money, and similar transactions, that his character in the commercial world was gone. He was considered,' he added, lowering his voice, 'on 'Change as a swindler.'

"I felt at that moment the first maternal pang. Aware of the evils my sex have to struggle with, I still wished, for my own consolation, to be the mother of a daughter; and I could not bear to think, that the *sins* of her father's entailed disgrace, should be added to the ills to which woman is heir.

"So completely was I deceived by these shows of friendship (nay, I believe, according to his interpretation, Mr. S—— really was my friend) that I began to consult him respecting the best mode of retrieving my husband's character: it is the good name of a woman only that sets to rise no more. I knew not that he had been drawn into a whirlpool, out of which he had not the energy to attempt to escape. He seemed indeed destitute of the power of employing his faculties in any regular pursuit. His principles of action were so loose, and his mind so uncultivated, that every thing like order appeared to him in the shape of restraint; and, like men in the savage state, he required the strong stimulus of hope or fear, produced by wild speculations, in which the interests of others went for nothing, to keep his spirits awake. He one time possessed patriotism, but he knew not what it was to feel honest indignation; and pretended to be an advocate for liberty, when, with as little affection for the human race as for individuals, he thought of nothing but his own gratification. He was just such a citizen, as a father. The sums he adroitly obtained by a violation of the laws of his country, as well as those of humanity, he would allow a mistress to squander; though she was, with the same *sang froid*, consigned, as were his children, to poverty, when another proved more attractive.

"On various pretences, his friend continued to visit me; and, observing my want of money, he tried to induce me to accept of pecuniary aid; but this offer I absolutely rejected, though it was made with such delicacy, I could not be displeased.

"One day he came, as I thought accidentally, to dinner. My husband was very much engaged in business, and quitted the room soon after the cloth was removed. We conversed as usual, till confidential advice led again to love. I was extremely mortified. I had a sincere regard for him, and hoped that he had an equal friendship for me. I therefore began mildly to expostulate with him. This gentleness he mistook for coy encouragement; and he would not be diverted from the subject. Perceiving his mistake, I seriously asked him how, using such language to me, he could profess to be my husband's friend? A significant sneer excited my curiosity, and he, supposing this to be my only scruple, took a letter deliberately out of his pocket, saying, 'Your husband's honour is not inflexible. How could you, with your discernment, think it so? Why, he left the room this very day on purpose to give me an opportunity to explain myself; *he* thought me too timid—too tardy.'

"I snatched the letter with indescribable emotion. The purport of it was to invite him to dinner, and to ridicule his chivalrous respect for me. He assured him, 'that every woman had her price, and, with gross indecency, hinted, that he should be glad to have the duty of a husband taken off his hands. These he termed *liberal sentiments*. He advised him not to shock my romantic notions, but to attack my credulous generosity, and weak pity; and concluded with requesting him to lend him five hundred pounds for a month or six weeks.' I read this letter twice over; and the firm purpose it inspired, calmed the rising tumult of my soul. I rose deliberately, requested Mr. S—— to wait a moment, and instantly going into the counting-

house, desired Mr. Venables to return with me to the dining-parlour.

"He laid down his pen, and entered with me, without observing any change in my countenance. I shut the door, and, giving him the letter, simply asked, 'whether he wrote it, or was it a forgery?'

"Nothing could equal his confusion. His friend's eye met his, and he muttered something about a joke—But I interrupted him—'It is sufficient—We part for ever.'

"I continued, with solemnity, 'I have borne with your tyranny and infidelities. I disdain to utter what I have borne with. I thought you unprincipled, but not so decidedly vicious. I formed a tie, in the sight of heaven—I have held it sacred; even when men, more conformable to my taste, have made me feel—I despise all subterfuge!—that I was not dead to love. Neglected by you, I have resolutely stifled the enticing emotions, and respected the plighted faith you outraged. And you dare now to insult me, by selling me to prostitution!—Yes—equally lost to delicacy and principle—you dared sacrilegiously to barter the honour of the mother of your child.'

"Then, turning to Mr. S——, I added, 'I call on you, Sir, to witness,' and I lifted my hands and eyes to heaven, 'that, as solemnly as I took his name, I now abjure it,' I pulled off my ring, and put it on the table; 'and that I mean immediately to quit his house, never to enter it more. I will provide for myself and child. I leave him as free as I am determined to be myself—he shall be answerable for no debts of mine.'

"Astonishment closed their lips, till Mr. Venables, gently pushing his friend, with a forced smile, out of the room, nature for a moment prevailed, and, appearing like himself, he turned round, burning with rage, to me: but there was no terror in the frown, excepting when contrasted with the malignant smile which preceded it. He bade me 'leave the house at my peril; told me he despised my threats; I had no resource; I could not swear the peace against him!—I was not afraid of my life!—he had never struck me!'

"He threw the letter in the fire, which I had incautiously left in his hands; and, quitting the room, locked the door on me.

"When left alone, I was a moment or two before I could recollect myself. One scene had succeeded another with such rapidity, I almost doubted whether I was reflecting on a real event. 'Was it possible? Was I, indeed, free?'—Yes; free I termed myself, when I decidedly perceived the conduct I ought to adopt. How had I panted for liberty—liberty, that I would have purchased at any price, but that of my own esteem! I rose, and shook myself; opened the window, and methought the air never smelled so sweet. The face of heaven grew fairer as I viewed it, and the clouds seemed to flit away obedient to my wishes, to give my soul room to expand. I was all soul, and (wild as it may appear) felt as if I could have dissolved in the soft balmy gale that kissed my cheek, or have glided below the horizon on the glowing, descending beams. A seraphic satisfaction animated, without agitating my spirits; and my imagination collected, in visions sublimely terrible, or soothingly beautiful, an immense variety of the endless images, which nature affords, and fancy combines, of the grand and fair. The lustre of these bright picturesque sketches faded with the setting sun; but I was still alive to the calm delight they had diffused through my heart.

"There may be advocates for matrimonial obedience, who, making a distinction between the duty of a wife and of a human being, may blame my conduct.—To them I write not—my feelings are not for them to analyze; and may you, my child, never be able to ascertain, by heart-rending experience, what your mother felt before the present emancipation of her mind!

"I began to write a letter to my father, after closing one to my uncle; not to ask advice, but to signify my determination; when I was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Venables. His manner was changed. His

views on my uncle's fortune made him averse to my quitting his house, or he would, I am convinced, have been glad to have shaken off even the slight restraint my presence imposed on him; the restraint of showing me some respect. So far from having an affection for me, he really hated me, because he was convinced that I must despise him.

"He told me, that, 'As I now had had time to cool and reflect, he did not doubt but that my prudence, and nice sense of propriety, would lead me to overlook what was passed.'

"Reflection,' I replied, 'had only confirmed my purpose, and no power on earth could divert me from it.'

"Endeavouring to assume a soothing voice and look, when he would willingly have tortured me, to force me to feel his power, his countenance had an infernal expression, when he desired me, 'Not to expose myself to the servants, by obliging him to confine me in my apartment; if then I would give my promise not to quit the house precipitately, I should be free—and—.' I declared, interrupting him, 'that I would promise nothing. I had no measures to keep with him—I was resolved, and would not condescend to subterfuge.'

"He muttered, 'that I should soon repent of these preposterous airs;' and, ordering tea to be carried into my little study, which had a communication with my bed-chamber, he once more locked the door upon me, and left me to my own meditations. I had passively followed him up stairs, not wishing to fatigue myself with unavailing exertion.

"Nothing calms the mind like a fixed purpose. I felt as if I had heaved a thousand weight from my heart; the atmosphere seemed lightened; and, if I execrated the institutions of society, which thus enable men to tyrannize over women, it was almost a disinterested sentiment. I disregarded present inconveniences, when my mind had done struggling with itself,—when reason and inclination had shaken hands and were at peace. I had no longer the cruel task before me, in endless perspective, aye, during the tedious for ever of life, of labouring to overcome my repugnance—of labouring to extinguish the hopes, the maybes of a lively imagination. Death I had hailed as my only chance for deliverance; but, while existence had still so many charms, and life promised happiness, I shrunk from the icy arms of an unknown tyrant, though far more inviting than those of the man, to whom I supposed myself bound without any other alternative; and was content to linger a little longer, waiting for I knew not what, rather than leave 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day,' and all the unenjoyed affection of my nature.

"My present situation gave a new turn to my reflection; and I wondered (now the film seemed to be withdrawn, that obscured the piercing sight of reason) how I could, previously to the deciding outrage, have considered myself as everlastingly united to vice and folly? 'Had an evil genius cast a spell at my birth; or a demon stalked out of chaos, to perplex my understanding, and enchain my will, with delusive prejudices?'

"I pursued this train of thinking; it led me out of myself, to expatiate on the misery peculiar to my sex. 'Are not,' I thought, 'the despots for ever stigmatized, who, in the wantonness of power, commanded even the most atrocious criminals to be chained to dead bodies? though surely those laws are much more inhuman, which forge adamantine fetters to bind minds together, that never can mingle in social communion! What indeed can equal the wretchedness of that state, in which there is no alternative, but to extinguish the affections, or encounter infamy?'

CHAP. XII.

"TOWARDS midnight Mr. Venables entered my chamber; and, with calm audacity preparing to go to bed, he bade me make haste, 'for that was the best place for husbands and wives to end their differences. He had been drinking plentifully to aid his courage.

"I did not at first deign to reply. But perceiving that he affected to take my silence for consent, I told him that, 'If he would not go to another bed, or allow me, I should sit up in my study all night.' He attempted to pull me into the chamber, half joking. But I resisted; and, as he had determined not to give me any reason for saying that he used violence, after a few more efforts, he retired, cursing my obstinacy, to bed.

"I sat musing some time longer; then, throwing my cloak around me, prepared for sleep on a sofa. And, so fortunate seemed my deliverance, so sacred the pleasure of being thus wrapped up in myself, that I slept profoundly, and woke with a mind composed to encounter the struggles of the day. Mr. Venables did not wake till some hours after; and then he came to me half-dressed, yawning and stretching, with haggard eyes, as if he scarcely recollected what had passed the preceding evening. He fixed his eyes on me for a moment, then, calling me a fool, asked 'How long I intended to continue this pretty farce? For his part, he was devilish sick of it; but this was the plague of marrying women who pretended to know something.'

"I made no other reply to this harangue, than to say, 'That he ought to be glad to get rid of a woman so unfit to be his companion—and that any change in my conduct would be mean dissimulation; for maturer reflection only gave the sacred seal of reason to my first resolution.'

"He looked as if he could have stamped with impatience, at being obliged to stifle his rage; but, conquering his anger (for weak people, whose passions seem the most ungovernable, restrain them with the greatest ease, when they have a sufficient motive), he exclaimed, 'Very pretty, upon my soul! very pretty, theatrical flourishes! Pray, fair Roxana, stoop from your altitudes, and remember that you are acting a part in real life.'

"He uttered this speech with a self-satisfied air, and went down stairs to dress.

"In about an hour he came to me again; and in the same tone said, 'That he came as my gentleman-usher to hand me down to breakfast.

"'Of the black rod?' asked I.

"This question, and the tone in which I asked it, a little disconcerted him. To say the truth, I now felt no resentment; my firm resolution to free myself from my ignoble thralldom, had absorbed the various emotions which, during six years, had racked my soul. The duty pointed out by my principles seemed clear; and not one tender feeling intruded to make me swerve: The dislike which my husband had inspired was strong; but it only led me to wish to avoid, to wish to let him drop out of my memory; there was no misery, no torture that I would not deliberately have chosen, rather than renew my lease of servitude.

"During the breakfast, he attempted to reason with me on the folly of romantic sentiments; for this was the indiscriminate epithet he gave to every mode of conduct or thinking superior to his own. He asserted, 'that all the world were governed by their own interest; those who pretended to be actuated by different motives, were only deeper knaves, or fools crazed by books, who took for gospel all therodomantade

nonsense written by men who knew nothing of the world. For his part, he thanked God, he was no hypocrite; and, if he stretched a point sometimes, it was always with an intention of paying every man his own.'

"He then artfully insinuated, 'that he daily expected a vessel to arrive, a successful speculation, that would make him easy for the present, and that he had several other schemes actually depending, that could not fail. He had no doubt of becoming rich in a few years, though he had been thrown back by some unlucky adventures at the setting out.'

"I mildly replied, 'That I wished he might not involve himself still deeper.'

"He had no notion that I was governed by a decision of judgment, not to be compared with a mere spurt of resentment. He knew not what it was to feel indignation against vice, and often boasted of his placable temper, and readiness to forgive injuries. True; for he only considered the being deceived, as an effort of skill he had not guarded against; and then, with a cant of candour, would observe, 'that he did not know how he might himself have been tempted to act in the same circumstances.' And, as his heart never opened to friendship, it never was wounded by disappointment. Every new acquaintance he protested, it is true, was 'the cleverest fellow in the world;_' and he really thought so; till the novelty of his conversation or manners ceased to have any effect on his sluggish spirits. His respect for rank or fortune was more permanent, though he chanced to have no design of availing himself of the influence of either to promote his own views.

"After a prefatory conversation,—my blood (I thought it had been cooler) flushed over my whole countenance as he spoke—he alluded to my situation. He desired me to reflect—'and act like a prudent woman, as the best proof of my superior understanding; for he must own I had sense, did I know how to use it. I was not,' he laid a stress on his words, 'without my passions; and a husband was a convenient cloke.—He was liberal in his way of thinking; and why might not we, like many other married people, who were above vulgar prejudices, tacitly consent to let each other follow their own inclination?—He meant nothing more, in the letter I made the ground of complaint; and the pleasure which I seemed to take in Mr. S.'s company, led him to conclude, that he was not disagreeable to me.'

"A clerk brought in the letters of the day, and I, as I often did, while he was discussing subjects of business, went to the *piano forte*, and began to play a favourite air to restore myself, as it were, to nature, and drive the sophisticated sentiments I had just been obliged to listen to, out of my soul.

"They had excited sensations similar to those I have felt, in viewing the squalid inhabitants of some of the lanes and back streets of the metropolis, mortified at being compelled to consider them as my fellow-creatures, as if an ape had claimed kindred with me. Or, as when surrounded by a mephitical fog, I have wished to have a volley of cannon fired, to clear the incumbered atmosphere, and give me room to breathe and move.

"My spirits were all in arms, and I played a kind of extemporary prelude. The cadence was probably wild and impassioned, while, lost in thought, I made the sounds a kind of echo to my train of thinking.

"Pausing for a moment, I met Mr. Venables' eyes. He was observing me with an air of conceited satisfaction, as much as to say—'My last insinuation has done the business—she begins to know her own interest.' Then gathering up his letters, he said, 'That he hoped he should hear no more romantic stuff, well enough in a miss just come from boarding school;' and went, as was his custom, to the counting-house. I still continued playing; and, turning to a sprightly lesson, I executed it with uncommon vivacity. I heard footsteps approach the door, and was soon convinced that Mr. Venables was listening; the consciousness

only gave more animation to my fingers. He went down into the kitchen, and the cook, probably by his desire, came to me, to know what I would please to order for dinner. Mr. Venables came into the parlour again, with apparent carelessness. I perceived that the cunning man was over-reaching himself; and I gave my directions as usual, and left the room.

"While I was making some alteration in my dress, Mr. Venables peeped in, and, begging my pardon for interrupting me, disappeared. I took up some work (I could not read), and two or three messages were sent to me, probably for no other purpose, but to enable Mr. Venables to ascertain what I was about.

"I listened whenever I heard the street-door open; at last I imagined I could distinguish Mr. Venables' step, going out. I laid aside my work; my heart palpitated; still I was afraid hastily to enquire; and I waited a long half hour, before I ventured to ask the boy whether his master was in the counting-house?

"Being answered in the negative, I bade him call me a coach, and collecting a few necessaries hastily together, with a little parcel of letters and papers which I had collected the preceding evening, I hurried into it, desiring the coachman to drive to a distant part of the town.

"I almost feared that the coach would break down before I got out of the street; and, when I turned the corner, I seemed to breathe a freer air. I was ready to imagine that I was rising above the thick atmosphere of earth; or I felt, as wearied souls might be supposed to feel on entering another state of existence.

"I stopped at one or two stands of coaches to elude pursuit, and then drove round the skirts of the town to seek for an obscure lodging, where I wished to remain concealed, till I could avail myself of my uncle's protection. I had resolved to assume my own name immediately, and openly to avow my determination, without any formal vindication, the moment I had found a home, in which I could rest free from the daily alarm of expecting to see Mr. Venables enter.

"I looked at several lodgings; but finding that I could not, without a reference to some acquaintance, who might inform my tyrant, get admittance into a decent apartment—men have not all this trouble—I thought of a woman whom I had assisted to furnish a little haberdasher's shop, and who I knew had a first floor to let.

"I went to her, and though I could not persuade her, that the quarrel between me and Mr. Venables would never be made up, still she agreed to conceal me for the present; yet assuring me at the same time, shaking her head, that, when a woman was once married, she must bear every thing. Her pale face, on which appeared a thousand haggard lines and delving wrinkles, produced by what is emphatically termed fretting, enforced her remark; and I had afterwards an opportunity of observing the treatment she had to endure, which grizzled her into patience. She toiled from morning till night; yet her husband would rob the till, and take away the money reserved for paying bills; and, returning home drunk, he would beat her if she chanced to offend him, though she had a child at the breast.

"These scenes awoke me at night; and, in the morning, I heard her, as usual, talk to her dear Johnny—he, forsooth, was her master; no slave in the West Indies had one more despotic; but fortunately she was of the true Russian breed of wives.

"My mind, during the few past days, seemed, as it were, disengaged from my body; but, now the struggle was over, I felt very forcibly the effect which perturbation of spirits produces on a woman in my situation.

"The apprehension of a miscarriage, obliged me to confine myself to my apartment near a fortnight; but I wrote to my uncle's friend for money, promising 'to call on him, and explain my situation, when I was well

enough to go out; mean time I earnestly intreated him, not to mention my place of abode to any one, lest my husband—such the law considered him—should disturb the mind he could not conquer. I mentioned my intention of setting out for Lisbon, to claim my uncle's protection, the moment my health would permit.'

"The tranquillity however, which I was recovering, was soon interrupted. My landlady came up to me one day, with eyes swollen with weeping, unable to utter what she was commanded to say. She declared, 'That she was never so miserable in her life; that she must appear an ungrateful monster; and that she would readily go down on her knees to me, to intreat me to forgive her, as she had done to her husband to spare her the cruel task.' Sobs prevented her from proceeding, or answering my impatient enquiries, to know what she meant.

"When she became a little more composed, she took a newspaper out of her pocket, declaring, 'that her heart smote her, but what could she do?—she must obey her husband.' I snatched the paper from her. An advertisement quickly met my eye, purporting, that 'Maria Venables had, without any assignable cause, absconded from her husband; and any person harbouring her, was menaced with the utmost severity of the law.'

"Perfectly acquainted with Mr. Venables' meanness of soul, this step did not excite my surprise, and scarcely my contempt. Resentment in my breast, never survived love. I bade the poor woman, in a kind tone, wipe her eyes, and request her husband to come up, and speak to me himself.

"My manner awed him. He respected a lady, though not a woman; and began to mutter out an apology.

"'Mr. Venables was a rich gentleman; he wished to oblige me, but he had suffered enough by the law already, to tremble at the thought; besides, for certain, we should come together again, and then even I should not thank him for being accessory to keeping us asunder.—A husband and wife were, God knows, just as one,—and all would come round at last.' He uttered a drawling 'Hem!' and then with an arch look, added—'Master might have had his little frolics—but—Lord bless your heart!—men would be men while the world stands.'

"To argue with this privileged first-born of reason, I perceived, would be vain. I therefore only requested him to let me remain another day at his house, while I sought for a lodging; and not to inform Mr. Venables that I had ever been sheltered there.

"He consented, because he had not the courage to refuse a person for whom he had an habitual respect; but I heard the pent-up choler burst forth in curses, when he met his wife, who was waiting impatiently at the foot of the stairs, to know what effect my expostulations would have on him.

"Without wasting any time in the fruitless indulgence of vexation, I once more set out in search of an abode in which I could hide myself for a few weeks.

"Agreeing to pay an exorbitant price, I hired an apartment, without any reference being required relative to my character: indeed, a glance at my shape seemed to say, that my motive for concealment was sufficiently obvious. Thus was I obliged to shroud my head in infamy.

"To avoid all danger of detection—I use the appropriate word, my child, for I was hunted out like a felon—I determined to take possession of my new lodgings that very evening.

"I did not inform my landlady where I was going. I knew that she had a sincere affection for me, and would willingly have run any risk to show her gratitude; yet I was fully convinced, that a few kind words from Johnny would have found the woman in her, and her dear benefactress, as she termed me in an agony

of tears, would have been sacrificed, to recompense her tyrant for condescending to treat her like an equal. He could be kind-hearted, as she expressed it, when he pleased. And this thawed sternness, contrasted with his habitual brutality, was the more acceptable, and could not be purchased at too dear a rate.

"The sight of the advertisement made me desirous of taking refuge with my uncle, let what would be the consequence; and I repaired in a hackney coach (afraid of meeting some person who might chance to know me, had I walked) to the chambers of my uncle's friend.

"He received me with great politeness (my uncle had already prepossessed him in my favour), and listened, with interest, to my explanation of the motives which had induced me to fly from home, and skulk in obscurity, with all the timidity of fear that ought only to be the companion of guilt. He lamented, with rather more gallantry than, in my situation, I thought delicate, that such a woman should be thrown away on a man insensible to the charms of beauty or grace. He seemed at a loss what to advise me to do, to evade my husband's search, without hastening to my uncle, whom, he hesitating said, I might not find alive. He uttered this intelligence with visible regret; requested me, at least, to wait for the arrival of the next packet; offered me what money I wanted, and promised to visit me.

"He kept his word; still no letter arrived to put an end to my painful state of suspense. I procured some books and music, to beguile the tedious solitary days.

'Come, ever smiling Liberty,
'And with thee bring thy jocund train:'

I sung—and sung till, saddened by the strain of joy, I bitterly lamented the fate that deprived me of all social pleasure. Comparative liberty indeed I had possessed myself of; but the jocund train lagged far behind!

CHAP. XIII.

"By watching my only visitor, my uncle's friend, or by some other means, Mr. Venables discovered my residence, and came to enquire for me. The maid-servant assured him there was no such person in the house. A bustle ensued—I caught the alarm—listened—distinguished his voice, and immediately locked the door. They suddenly grew still; and I waited near a quarter of an hour, before I heard him open the parlour door, and mount the stairs with the mistress of the house, who obsequiously declared that she knew nothing of me.

"Finding my door locked, she requested me to 'open it, and prepare to go home with my husband, poor gentleman! to whom I had already occasioned sufficient vexation.' I made no reply. Mr. Venables then, in an assumed tone of softness, intreated me, 'to consider what he suffered, and my own reputation, and get the better of childish resentment.' He ran on in the same strain, pretending to address me, but evidently adapting his discourse to the capacity of the landlady; who, at every pause, uttered an exclamation of pity; or 'Yes, to be sure—Very true, sir.'

"Sick of the farce, and perceiving that I could not avoid the hated interview, I opened the door, and he entered. Advancing with easy assurance to take my hand, I shrunk from his touch, with an involuntary start, as I should have done from a noisome reptile, with more disgust than terror. His conductress was retiring, to give us, as she said, an opportunity to accommodate matters. But I bade her come in, or I would go out; and curiosity impelled her to obey me.

"Mr. Venables began to expostulate; and this woman, proud of his confidence, to second him. But I calmly silenced her, in the midst of a vulgar harangue, and turning to him, asked, 'Why he vainly tormented me?' declaring that no power on earth should force me back to his house.'

"After a long altercation, the particulars of which, it would be to no purpose to repeat, he left the room. Some time was spent in loud conversation in the parlour below, and I discovered that he had brought his friend, an attorney, with him.

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* * The tumult on the landing place, brought out a gentleman, who had recently taken apartments in the house; he enquired why I was thus assailed^[91-A]? The voluble attorney instantly repeated the trite tale. The stranger turned to me, observing, with the most soothing politeness and manly interest, that 'my countenance told a very different story.' He added, 'that I should not be insulted, or forced out of the house, by any body.'

"'Not by her husband?' asked the attorney.

"'No, sir, not by her husband.' Mr. Venables advanced towards him—But there was a decision in his attitude, that so well seconded that of his voice,

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* * They left the house: at the same time protesting, that any one that should dare to protect me, should be prosecuted with the utmost rigour.

"They were scarcely out of the house, when my landlady came up to me again, and begged my pardon, in a very different tone. For, though Mr. Venables had bid her, at her peril, harbour me, he had not attended, I found, to her broad hints, to discharge the lodging. I instantly promised to pay her, and make her a present to compensate for my abrupt departure, if she would procure me another lodging, at a sufficient distance; and she, in return, repeating Mr. Venables' plausible tale, I raised her indignation, and excited her sympathy, by telling her briefly the truth.

"She expressed her commiseration with such honest warmth, that I felt soothed; for I have none of that fastidious sensitiveness, which a vulgar accent or gesture can alarm to the disregard of real kindness. I was ever glad to perceive in others the humane feelings I delighted to exercise; and the recollection of some ridiculous characteristic circumstances, which have occurred in a moment of emotion, has convulsed me with laughter, though at the instant I should have thought it sacrilegious to have smiled. Your improvement, my dearest girl, being ever present to me while I write, I note these feelings, because women, more accustomed to observe manners than actions, are too much alive to ridicule. So much so, that their boasted sensibility is often stifled by false delicacy. True sensibility, the sensibility which is the auxiliary of virtue, and the soul of genius, is in society so occupied with the feelings of others, as scarcely to regard its own sensations. With what reverence have I looked up at my uncle, the dear parent of my mind! when I have seen the sense of his own sufferings, of mind and body, absorbed in a desire to comfort those, whose misfortunes were comparatively trivial. He would have been ashamed of being as indulgent to himself, as he was to others. 'Genuine fortitude,' he would assert, 'consisted in governing our own emotions, and making allowance for the weaknesses in our friends, that we would not tolerate in ourselves.' But where is my fond regret leading me!

"'Women must be submissive,' said my landlady. 'Indeed what could most women do? Who had they to maintain them, but their husbands? Every woman, and especially a lady, could not go through rough and smooth, as she had done, to earn a little bread.'

"She was in a talking mood, and proceeded to inform me how she had been used in the world. 'She knew what it was to have a bad husband, or she did not know who should.' I perceived that she would be very much mortified, were I not to attend to her tale, and I did not attempt to interrupt her, though I wished her, as soon as possible, to go out in search of a new abode for me, where I could once more hide my head.

"She began by telling me, 'That she had saved a little money in service; and was over-persuaded (we must all be in love once in our lives) to marry a likely man, a footman in the family, not worth a groat. My plan,' she continued, 'was to take a house, and let out lodgings; and all went on well, till my husband got acquainted with an impudent slut, who chose to live on other people's means—and then all went to rack and ruin. He ran in debt to buy her fine clothes, such clothes as I never thought of wearing myself, and—would you believe it?—he signed an execution on my very goods, bought with the money I worked so hard to get; and they came and took my bed from under me, before I heard a word of the matter. Aye, madam, these are misfortunes that you gentlefolks know nothing of,—but sorrow is sorrow, let it come which way it will.

"'I sought for a service again—very hard, after having a house of my own!—but he used to follow me, and kick up such a riot when he was drunk, that I could not keep a place; nay, he even stole my clothes, and pawned them; and when I went to the pawnbroker's, and offered to take my oath that they were not bought with a farthing of his money, they said, 'It was all as one, my husband had a right to whatever I had.'

"At last he listed for a soldier, and I took a house, making an agreement to pay for the furniture by degrees; and I almost starved myself, till I once more got before-hand in the world.

"After an absence of six years (God forgive me! I thought he was dead) my husband returned; found me out, and came with such a penitent face, I forgave him, and clothed him from head to foot. But he had not been a week in the house, before some of his creditors arrested him; and, he selling my goods, I found myself once more reduced to beggary; for I was not as well able to work, go to bed late, and rise early, as when I quitted service; and then I thought it hard enough. He was soon tired of me, when there was nothing more to be had, and left me again.

"I will not tell you how I was buffeted about, till, hearing for certain that he had died in an hospital abroad, I once more returned to my old occupation; but have not yet been able to get my head above water: so, madam, you must not be angry if I am afraid to run any risk, when I know so well, that women have always the worst of it, when law is to decide.'

"After uttering a few more complaints, I prevailed on my landlady to go out in quest of a lodging; and, to be more secure, I condescended to the mean shift of changing my name.

"But why should I dwell on similar incidents!—I was hunted, like an infected beast, from three different apartments, and should not have been allowed to rest in any, had not Mr. Venables, informed of my uncle's dangerous state of health, been inspired with the fear of hurrying me out of the world as I advanced in my pregnancy, by thus tormenting and obliging me to take sudden journeys to avoid him; and then his speculations on my uncle's fortune must prove abortive.

"One day, when he had pursued me to an inn, I fainted, hurrying from him; and, falling down, the sight of my blood alarmed him, and obtained a respite for me. It is strange that he should have retained any hope, after observing my unwavering determination; but, from the mildness of my behaviour, when I found all my endeavours to change his disposition unavailing, he formed an erroneous opinion of my character, imagining that, were we once more together, I should part with the money he could not legally force from me, with the same facility as formerly. My forbearance and occasional sympathy he had mistaken for weakness of character; and, because he perceived that I disliked resistance, he thought my indulgence and compassion mere selfishness, and never discovered that the fear of being unjust, or of unnecessarily wounding the feelings of another, was much more painful to me, than any thing I could have to endure myself. Perhaps it was pride which made me imagine, that I could bear what I dreaded to inflict; and that it was often easier to suffer, than to see the sufferings of others.

"I forgot to mention that, during this persecution, I received a letter from my uncle, informing me, 'that he only found relief from continual change of air; and that he intended to return when the spring was a little more advanced (it was now the middle of February), and then we would plan a journey to Italy, leaving the fogs and cares of England far behind.' He approved of my conduct, promised to adopt my child, and seemed to have no doubt of obliging Mr. Venables to hear reason. He wrote to his friend, by the same post, desiring him to call on Mr. Venables in his name; and, in consequence of the remonstrances he dictated, I was permitted to lie-in tranquilly.

"The two or three weeks previous, I had been allowed to rest in peace; but, so accustomed was I to pursuit and alarm, that I seldom closed my eyes without being haunted by Mr. Venables' image, who seemed to assume terrific or hateful forms to torment me, wherever I turned.—Sometimes a wild cat, a roaring bull, or hideous assassin, whom I vainly attempted to fly; at others he was a demon, hurrying me to the brink of a precipice, plunging me into dark waves, or horrid gulfs; and I woke, in violent fits of

trembling anxiety, to assure myself that it was all a dream, and to endeavour to lure my waking thoughts to wander to the delightful Italian vales, I hoped soon to visit; or to picture some august ruins, where I reclined in fancy on a mouldering column, and escaped, in the contemplation of the heart-enlarging virtues of antiquity, from the turmoil of cares that had depressed all the daring purposes of my soul. But I was not long allowed to calm my mind by the exercise of my imagination; for the third day after your birth, my child, I was surprised by a visit from my elder brother; who came in the most abrupt manner, to inform me of the death of my uncle. He had left the greater part of his fortune to my child, appointing me its guardian; in short, every step was taken to enable me to be mistress of his fortune, without putting any part of it in Mr. Venables' power. My brother came to vent his rage on me, for having, as he expressed himself, 'deprived him, my uncle's eldest nephew, of his inheritance;' though my uncle's property, the fruit of his own exertion, being all in the funds, or on landed securities, there was not a shadow of justice in the charge.

"As I sincerely loved my uncle, this intelligence brought on a fever, which I struggled to conquer with all the energy of my mind; for, in my desolate state, I had it very much at heart to suckle you, my poor babe. You seemed my only tie to life, a cherub, to whom I wished to be a father, as well as a mother; and the double duty appeared to me to produce a proportionate increase of affection. But the pleasure I felt, while sustaining you, snatched from the wreck of hope, was cruelly damped by melancholy reflections on my widowed state—widowed by the death of my uncle. Of Mr. Venables I thought not, even when I thought of the felicity of loving your father, and how a mother's pleasure might be exalted, and her care softened by a husband's tenderness.—'Ought to be!' I exclaimed; and I endeavoured to drive away the tenderness that suffocated me; but my spirits were weak, and the unbidden tears would flow. 'Why was I,' I would ask thee, but thou didst not heed me,—'cut off from the participation of the sweetest pleasure of life?' I imagined with what extacy, after the pains of child-bed, I should have presented my little stranger, whom I had so long wished to view, to a respectable father, and with what maternal fondness I should have pressed them both to my heart!—Now I kissed her with less delight, though with the most endearing compassion, poor helpless one! when I perceived a slight resemblance of him, to whom she owed her existence; or, if any gesture reminded me of him, even in his best days, my heart heaved, and I pressed the innocent to my bosom, as if to purify it—yes, I blushed to think that its purity had been sullied, by allowing such a man to be its father.

"After my recovery, I began to think of taking a house in the country, or of making an excursion on the continent, to avoid Mr. Venables; and to open my heart to new pleasures and affection. The spring was melting into summer, and you, my little companion, began to smile—that smile made hope bud out afresh, assuring me the world was not a desert. Your gestures were ever present to my fancy; and I dwelt on the joy I should feel when you would begin to walk and lisp. Watching your wakening mind, and shielding from every rude blast my tender blossom, I recovered my spirits—I dreamed not of the frost—'the killing frost,' to which you were destined to be exposed.—But I lose all patience—and execrate the injustice of the world—folly! ignorance!—I should rather call it; but, shut up from a free circulation of thought, and always pondering on the same griefs, I writhe under the torturing apprehensions, which ought to excite only honest indignation, or active compassion; and would, could I view them as the natural consequence of things. But, born a woman—and born to suffer, in endeavouring to repress my own emotions, I feel more acutely the various ills my sex are fated to bear—I feel that the evils they are subject to endure, degrade them so far below their oppressors, as almost to justify their tyranny; leading at the same time superficial reasoners to term that weakness the cause, which is only the consequence of short-sighted despotism.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[91-A\]](#) The introduction of Darnford as the deliverer of Maria, in an early stage of the history, is already stated (Chap. III.) to have been an after-thought of the author. This has probably caused the imperfectness of the manuscript in the above passage; though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged to be somewhat uncertain, whether Darnford is the stranger intended in this place. It appears from Chap. XVII. that an interference of a more decisive nature was designed to be attributed to him.

EDITOR.

CHAP. XIV.

"As my mind grew calmer, the visions of Italy again returned with their former glow of colouring; and I resolved on quitting the kingdom for a time, in search of the cheerfulness, that naturally results from a change of scene, unless we carry the barbed arrow with us, and only see what we feel.

"During the period necessary to prepare for a long absence, I sent a supply to pay my father's debts, and settled my brothers in eligible situations; but my attention was not wholly engrossed by my family, though I do not think it necessary to enumerate the common exertions of humanity. The manner in which my uncle's property was settled, prevented me from making the addition to the fortune of my surviving sister, that I could have wished; but I had prevailed on him to bequeath her two thousand pounds, and she determined to marry a lover, to whom she had been some time attached. Had it not been for this engagement, I should have invited her to accompany me in my tour; and I might have escaped the pit, so artfully dug in my path, when I was the least aware of danger.

"I had thought of remaining in England, till I weaned my child; but this state of freedom was too peaceful to last, and I had soon reason to wish to hasten my departure. A friend of Mr. Venables, the same attorney who had accompanied him in several excursions to hunt me from my hiding places, waited on me to propose a reconciliation. On my refusal, he indirectly advised me to make over to my husband—for husband he would term him—the greater part of the property I had at command, menacing me with continual persecution unless I complied, and that, as a last resort, he would claim the child. I did not, though intimidated by the last insinuation, scruple to declare, that I would not allow him to squander the money left to me for far different purposes, but offered him five hundred pounds, if he would sign a bond not to torment me any more. My maternal anxiety made me thus appear to waver from my first determination, and probably suggested to him, or his diabolical agent, the infernal plot, which has succeeded but too well.

"The bond was executed; still I was impatient to leave England. Mischief hung in the air when we breathed the same; I wanted seas to divide us, and waters to roll between, till he had forgotten that I had the means of helping him through a new scheme. Disturbed by the late occurrences, I instantly prepared for my departure. My only delay was waiting for a maid-servant, who spoke French fluently, and had been warmly recommended to me. A valet I was advised to hire, when I fixed on my place of residence for any time.

"My God, with what a light heart did I set out for Dover!—It was not my country, but my cares, that I was leaving behind. My heart seemed to bound with the wheels, or rather appeared the centre on which they twirled. I clasped you to my bosom, exclaiming 'And you will be safe—quite safe—when—we are once on board the packet.—Would we were there!' I smiled at my idle fears, as the natural effect of continual alarm; and I scarcely owned to myself that I dreaded Mr. Venables's cunning, or was conscious of the horrid delight he would feel, at forming stratagem after stratagem to circumvent me. I was already in the snare—I never reached the packet—I never saw thee more.—I grow breathless. I have scarcely patience to write down the details. The maid—the plausible woman I had hired—put, doubtless, some stupifying potion in what I ate or drank, the morning I left town. All I know is, that she must have quitted the chaise, shameless wretch! and taken (from my breast) my babe with her. How could a creature in a female form see me caress thee, and steal thee from my arms! I must stop, stop to repress a mother's anguish; left, in

bitterness of soul, I imprecate the wrath of heaven on this tiger, who tore my only comfort from me.

"How long I slept I know not; certainly many hours, for I woke at the close of day, in a strange confusion of thought. I was probably roused to recollection by some one thundering at a huge, unwieldy gate. Attempting to ask where I was, my voice died away, and I tried to raise it in vain, as I have done in a dream. I looked for my babe with affright; feared that it had fallen out of my lap, while I had so strangely forgotten her; and, such was the vague intoxication, I can give it no other name, in which I was plunged, I could not recollect when or where I last saw you; but I sighed, as if my heart wanted room to clear my head.

"The gates opened heavily, and the sullen sound of many locks and bolts drawn back, grated on my very soul, before I was appalled by the creaking of the dismal hinges, as they closed after me. The gloomy pile was before me, half in ruins; some of the aged trees of the avenue were cut down, and left to rot where they fell; and as we approached some mouldering steps, a monstrous dog darted forwards to the length of his chain, and barked and growled infernally.

"The door was opened slowly, and a murderous visage peeped out, with a lantern. 'Hush!' he uttered, in a threatening tone, and the affrighted animal stole back to his kennel. The door of the chaise flew back, the stranger put down the lantern, and clasped his dreadful arms around me. It was certainly the effect of the soporific draught, for, instead of exerting my strength, I sunk without motion, though not without sense, on his shoulder, my limbs refusing to obey my will. I was carried up the steps into a close-shut hall. A candle flaring in the socket, scarcely dispersed the darkness, though it displayed to me the ferocious countenance of the wretch who held me.

"He mounted a wide staircase. Large figures painted on the walls seemed to start on me, and glaring eyes to meet me at every turn. Entering a long gallery, a dismal shriek made me spring out of my conductor's arms, with I know not what mysterious emotion of terror; but I fell on the floor, unable to sustain myself.

"A strange-looking female started out of one of the recesses, and observed me with more curiosity than interest; till, sternly bid retire, she flitted back like a shadow. Other faces, strongly marked, or distorted, peeped through the half-opened doors, and I heard some incoherent sounds. I had no distinct idea where I could be—I looked on all sides, and almost doubted whether I was alive or dead.

"Thrown on a bed, I immediately sunk into insensibility again; and next day, gradually recovering the use of reason, I began, starting affrighted from the conviction, to discover where I was confined—I insisted on seeing the master of the mansion—I saw him—and perceived that I was buried alive.—

"Such, my child, are the events of thy mother's life to this dreadful moment—Should she ever escape from the fangs of her enemies, she will add the secrets of her prison-house—and—"

Some lines were here crossed out, and the memoirs broke off abruptly with the names of Jemima and Darnford.

APPENDIX.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

THE performance, with a fragment of which the reader has now been presented, was designed to consist of three parts. The preceding sheets were considered as constituting one of those parts. Those persons who in the perusal of the chapters, already written and in some degree finished by the author, have felt their hearts awakened, and their curiosity excited as to the sequel of the story, will, of course, gladly accept even of the broken paragraphs and half-finished sentences, which have been found committed to paper, as materials for the remainder. The fastidious and cold-hearted critic may perhaps feel himself repelled by the incoherent form in which they are presented. But an inquisitive temper willingly accepts the most imperfect and mutilated information, where better is not to be had: and readers, who in any degree resemble the author in her quick apprehension of sentiment, and of the pleasures and pains of imagination, will, I believe, find gratification, in contemplating sketches, which were designed in a short time to have received the finishing touches of her genius; but which must now for ever remain a mark to record the triumphs of mortality, over schemes of usefulness, and projects of public interest.]

CHAP. XV.

DARNFORD returned the memoirs to Maria, with a most affectionate letter, in which he reasoned on "the absurdity of the laws respecting matrimony, which, till divorces could be more easily obtained, was," he declared, "the most insufferable bondage. Ties of this nature could not bind minds governed by superior principles; and such beings were privileged to act above the dictates of laws they had no voice in framing, if they had sufficient strength of mind to endure the natural consequence. In her case, to talk of duty, was a farce, excepting what was due to herself. Delicacy, as well as reason, forbade her ever to think of returning to her husband: was she then to restrain her charming sensibility through mere prejudice? These arguments were not absolutely impartial, for he disdained to conceal, that, when he appealed to her reason, he felt that he had some interest in her heart.—The conviction was not more transporting, than sacred—a thousand times a day, he asked himself how he had merited such happiness?—and as often he determined to purify the heart she deigned to inhabit—He intreated to be again admitted to her presence."

He was; and the tear which glistened in his eye, when he respectfully pressed her to his bosom, rendered him peculiarly dear to the unfortunate mother. Grief had stilled the transports of love, only to render their mutual tenderness more touching. In former interviews, Darnford had contrived, by a hundred little pretexts, to sit near her, to take her hand, or to meet her eyes—now it was all soothing affection, and esteem seemed to have rivalled love. He adverted to her narrative, and spoke with warmth of the oppression she had endured.—His eyes, glowing with a lambent flame, told her how much he wished to restore her to liberty and love; but he kissed her hand, as if it had been that of a saint; and spoke of the loss of her child, as if it had been his own.—What could have been more flattering to Maria?—Every instance of self-denial was registered in her heart, and she loved him, for loving her too well to give way to the transports of passion.

They met again and again; and Darnford declared, while passion suffused his cheeks, that he never before knew what it was to love.—

One morning Jemima informed Maria, that her master intended to wait on her, and speak to her without witnesses. He came, and brought a letter with him, pretending that he was ignorant of its contents, though he insisted on having it returned to him. It was from the attorney already mentioned, who informed her of the death of her child, and hinted, "that she could not now have a legitimate heir, and that, would she make over the half of her fortune during life, she should be conveyed to Dover, and permitted to pursue her plan of travelling."

Maria answered with warmth, "That she had no terms to make with the murderer of her babe, nor would she purchase liberty at the price of her own respect."

She began to expostulate with her jailor; but he sternly bade her "Be silent—he had not gone so far, not to go further."

Darnford came in the evening. Jemima was obliged to be absent, and she, as usual, locked the door on them, to prevent interruption or discovery.—The lovers were, at first, embarrassed; but fell insensibly into confidential discourse. Darnford represented, "that they might soon be parted," and wished her "to put it out of the power of fate to separate them."

As her husband she now received him, and he solemnly pledged himself as her protector—and eternal friend.—

There was one peculiarity in Maria's mind: she was more anxious not to deceive, than to guard against deception; and had rather trust without sufficient reason, than be for ever the prey of doubt. Besides, what are we, when the mind has, from reflection, a certain kind of elevation, which exalts the contemplation above the little concerns of prudence! We see what we wish, and make a world of our own—and, though reality may sometimes open a door to misery, yet the moments of happiness procured by the imagination, may, without a paradox, be reckoned among the solid comforts of life. Maria now, imagining that she had found a being of celestial mould—was happy,—nor was she deceived.—He was then plastic in her impassioned hand—and reflected all the sentiments which animated and warmed her. — —

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CHAP. XVI.

ONE morning confusion seemed to reign in the house, and Jemima came in terror, to inform Maria, "that her master had left it, with a determination, she was assured (and too many circumstances corroborated the opinion, to leave a doubt of its truth) of never returning. I am prepared then," said Jemima, "to accompany you in your flight."

Maria started up, her eyes darting towards the door, as if afraid that some one should fasten it on her for ever.

Jemima continued, "I have perhaps no right now to expect the performance of your promise; but on you it depends to reconcile me with the human race."

"But Darnford!"—exclaimed Maria, mournfully—sitting down again, and crossing her arms—"I have no child to go to, and liberty has lost its sweets."

"I am much mistaken, if Darnford is not the cause of my master's flight—his keepers assure me, that they have promised to confine him two days longer, and then he will be free—you cannot see him; but they will give a letter to him the moment he is free.—In that inform him where he may find you in London; fix on some hotel. Give me your clothes; I will send them out of the house with mine, and we will slip out at the garden-gate. Write your letter while I make these arrangements, but lose no time!"

In an agitation of spirit, not to be calmed, Maria began to write to Darnford. She called him by the sacred name of "husband," and bade him "hasten to her, to share her fortune, or she would return to him."—An hotel in the Adelphi was the place of rendezvous.

The letter was sealed and given in charge; and with light footsteps, yet terrified at the sound of them, she descended, scarcely breathing, and with an indistinct fear that she should never get out at the garden gate. Jemima went first.

A being, with a visage that would have suited one possessed by a devil, crossed the path, and seized Maria by the arm. Maria had no fear but of being detained—"Who are you? what are you?" for the form was scarcely human. "If you are made of flesh and blood," his ghastly eyes glared on her, "do not stop me!"

"Woman," interrupted a sepulchral voice, "what have I to do with thee?"—Still he grasped her hand, muttering a curse.

"No, no; you have nothing to do with me," she exclaimed, "this is a moment of life and death!"—

With supernatural force she broke from him, and, throwing her arms round Jemima, cried, "Save me!" The being, from whose grasp she had loosed herself, took up a stone as they opened the door, and with a kind of hellish sport threw it after them. They were out of his reach.

When Maria arrived in town, she drove to the hotel already fixed on. But she could not sit still—her child was ever before her; and all that had passed during her confinement, appeared to be a dream. She went to the house in the suburbs, where, as she now discovered, her babe had been sent. The moment she entered, her heart grew sick; but she wondered not that it had proved its grave. She made the necessary enquiries,

and the church-yard was pointed out, in which it rested under a turf. A little frock which the nurse's child wore (Maria had made it herself) caught her eye. The nurse was glad to sell it for half-a-guinea, and Maria hastened away with the relic, and, re-entering the hackney-coach which waited for her, gazed on it, till she reached her hotel.

She then waited on the attorney who had made her uncle's will, and explained to him her situation. He readily advanced her some of the money which still remained in his hands, and promised to take the whole of the case into consideration. Maria only wished to be permitted to remain in quiet—She found that several bills, apparently with her signature, had been presented to her agent, nor was she for a moment at a loss to guess by whom they had been forged; yet, equally averse to threaten or intreat, she requested her friend [the solicitor] to call on Mr. Venables. He was not to be found at home; but at length his agent, the attorney, offered a conditional promise to Maria, to leave her in peace, as long as she behaved with propriety, if she would give up the notes. Maria inconsiderately consented—Darnford was arrived, and she wished to be only alive to love; she wished to forget the anguish she felt whenever she thought of her child.

They took a ready furnished lodging together, for she was above disguise; Jemima insisting on being considered as her house-keeper, and to receive the customary stipend. On no other terms would she remain with her friend.

Darnford was indefatigable in tracing the mysterious circumstances of his confinement. The cause was simply, that a relation, a very distant one, to whom he was heir, had died intestate, leaving a considerable fortune. On the news of Darnford's arrival [in England, a person, intrusted with the management of the property, and who had the writings in his possession, determining, by one bold stroke, to strip Darnford of the succession,] had planned his confinement; and [as soon as he had taken the measures he judged most conducive to his object, this ruffian, together with his instrument,] the keeper of the private mad-house, left the kingdom. Darnford, who still pursued his enquiries, at last discovered that they had fixed their place of refuge at Paris.

Maria and he determined therefore, with the faithful Jemima, to visit that metropolis, and accordingly were preparing for the journey, when they were informed that Mr. Venables had commenced an action against Darnford for seduction and adultery. The indignation Maria felt cannot be explained; she repented of the forbearance she had exercised in giving up the notes. Darnford could not put off his journey, without risking the loss of his property: Maria therefore furnished him with money for his expedition; and determined to remain in London till the termination of this affair.

She visited some ladies with whom she had formerly been intimate, but was refused admittance; and at the opera, or Ranelagh, they could not recollect her. Among these ladies there were some, not her most intimate acquaintance, who were generally supposed to avail themselves of the cloke of marriage, to conceal a mode of conduct, that would for ever have damned their fame, had they been innocent, seduced girls. These particularly stood aloof.—Had she remained with her husband, practising insincerity, and neglecting her child to manage an intrigue, she would still have been visited and respected. If, instead of openly living with her lover, she could have condescended to call into play a thousand arts, which, degrading her own mind, might have allowed the people who were not deceived, to pretend to be so, she would have been caressed and treated like an honourable woman. "And Brutus^[138-A] is an honourable man!" said Mark-Antony with equal sincerity.

With Darnford she did not taste uninterrupted felicity; there was a volatility in his manner which often distressed her; but love gladdened the scene; besides, he was the most tender, sympathizing creature in the

world. A fondness for the sex often gives an appearance of humanity to the behaviour of men, who have small pretensions to the reality; and they seem to love others, when they are only pursuing their own gratification. Darnford appeared ever willing to avail himself of her taste and acquirements, while she endeavoured to profit by his decision of character, and to eradicate some of the romantic notions, which had taken root in her mind, while in adversity she had brooded over visions of unattainable bliss.

The real affections of life, when they are allowed to burst forth, are buds pregnant with joy and all the sweet emotions of the soul; yet they branch out with wild ease, unlike the artificial forms of felicity, sketched by an imagination painful alive. The substantial happiness, which enlarges and civilizes the mind, may be compared to the pleasure experienced in roving through nature at large, inhaling the sweet gale natural to the clime; while the reveries of a feverish imagination continually sport themselves in gardens full of aromatic shrubs, which cloy while they delight, and weaken the sense of pleasure they gratify. The heaven of fancy, below or beyond the stars, in this life, or in those ever-smiling regions surrounded by the unmarked ocean of futurity, have an insipid uniformity which palls. Poets have imagined scenes of bliss; but, fencing out sorrow, all the extatic emotions of the soul, and even its grandeur, seem to be equally excluded. We dose over the unruffled lake, and long to scale the rocks which fence the happy valley of contentment, though serpents hiss in the pathless desert, and danger lurks in the unexplored wiles. Maria found herself more indulgent as she was happier, and discovered virtues, in characters she had before disregarded, while chasing the phantoms of elegance and excellence, which sported in the meteors that exhale in the marshes of misfortune. The heart is often shut by romance against social pleasure; and, fostering a sickly sensibility, grows callous to the soft touches of humanity.

To part with Darnford was indeed cruel.—It was to feel most painfully alone; but she rejoiced to think, that she should spare him the care and perplexity of the suit, and meet him again, all his own. Marriage, as at present constituted, she considered as leading to immorality—yet, as the odium of society impedes usefulness, she wished to avow her affection to Darnford, by becoming his wife according to established rules; not to be confounded with women who act from very different motives, though her conduct would be just the same without the ceremony as with it, and her expectations from him not less firm. The being summoned to defend herself from a charge which she was determined to plead guilty to, was still galling, as it roused bitter reflections on the situation of women in society.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[138-A\]](#) The name in the manuscript is by mistake written Cæsar.

EDITOR.

CHAP. XVII.

SUCH was her state of mind when the dogs of law were let loose on her. Maria took the task of conducting Darnford's defence upon herself. She instructed his counsel to plead guilty to the charge of adultery; but to deny that of seduction.

The counsel for the plaintiff opened the cause, by observing, "that his client had ever been an indulgent husband, and had borne with several defects of temper, while he had nothing criminal to lay to the charge of his wife. But that she left his house without assigning any cause. He could not assert that she was then acquainted with the defendant; yet, when he was once endeavouring to bring her back to her home, this man put the peace-officers to flight, and took her he knew not whither. After the birth of her child, her conduct was so strange, and a melancholy malady having afflicted one of the family, which delicacy forbade the dwelling on, it was necessary to confine her. By some means the defendant enabled her to make her escape, and they had lived together, in despite of all sense of order and decorum. The adultery was allowed, it was not necessary to bring any witnesses to prove it; but the seduction, though highly probable from the circumstances which he had the honour to state, could not be so clearly proved.—It was of the most atrocious kind, as decency was set at defiance, and respect for reputation, which shows internal compunction, utterly disregarded."

A strong sense of injustice had silenced every emotion, which a mixture of true and false delicacy might otherwise have excited in Maria's bosom. She only felt in earnest to insist on the privilege of her nature. The sarcasms of society, and the condemnation of a mistaken world, were nothing to her, compared with acting contrary to those feelings which were the foundation of her principles. [She therefore eagerly put herself forward, instead of desiring to be absent, on this memorable occasion.]

Convinced that the subterfuges of the law were disgraceful, she wrote a paper, which she expressly desired might be read in court:

"Married when scarcely able to distinguish the nature of the engagement, I yet submitted to the rigid laws which enslave women, and obeyed the man whom I could no longer love. Whether the duties of the state are reciprocal, I mean not to discuss; but I can prove repeated infidelities which I overlooked or pardoned. Witnesses are not wanting to establish these facts. I at present maintain the child of a maid servant, sworn to him, and born after our marriage. I am ready to allow, that education and circumstances lead men to think and act with less delicacy, than the preservation of order in society demands from women; but surely I may without assumption declare, that, though I could excuse the birth, I could not the desertion of this unfortunate babe:—and, while I despised the man, it was not easy to venerate the husband. With proper restrictions however, I revere the institution which fraternizes the world. I exclaim against the laws which throw the whole weight of the yoke on the weaker shoulders, and force women, when they claim protectorship as mothers, to sign a contract, which renders them dependent on the caprice of the tyrant, whom choice or necessity has appointed to reign over them. Various are the cases, in which a woman ought to separate herself from her husband; and mine, I may be allowed emphatically to insist, comes under the description of the most aggravated.

"I will not enlarge on those provocations which only the individual can estimate; but will bring forward such charges only, the truth of which is an insult upon humanity. In order to promote certain destructive speculations, Mr. Venables prevailed on me to borrow certain sums of a wealthy relation; and, when I

refused further compliance, he thought of bartering my person; and not only allowed opportunities to, but urged, a friend from whom he borrowed money, to seduce me. On the discovery of this act of atrocity, I determined to leave him, and in the most decided manner, for ever. I consider all obligation as made void by his conduct; and hold, that schisms which proceed from want of principles, can never be healed.

"He received a fortune with me to the amount of five thousand pounds. On the death of my uncle, convinced that I could provide for my child, I destroyed the settlement of that fortune. I required none of my property to be returned to me, nor shall enumerate the sums extorted from me during six years that we lived together.

"After leaving, what the law considers as my home, I was hunted like a criminal from place to place, though I contracted no debts, and demanded no maintenance—yet, as the laws sanction such proceeding, and make women the property of their husbands, I forbear to animadvert. After the birth of my daughter, and the death of my uncle, who left a very considerable property to myself and child, I was exposed to new persecution; and, because I had, before arriving at what is termed years of discretion, pledged my faith, I was treated by the world, as bound for ever to a man whose vices were notorious. Yet what are the vices generally known, to the various miseries that a woman may be subject to, which, though deeply felt, eating into the soul, elude description, and may be glossed over! A false morality is even established, which makes all the virtue of women consist in chastity, submission, and the forgiveness of injuries.

"I pardon my oppressor—bitterly as I lament the loss of my child, torn from me in the most violent manner. But nature revolts, and my soul sickens at the bare supposition, that it could ever be a duty to pretend affection, when a separation is necessary to prevent my feeling hourly aversion.

"To force me to give my fortune, I was imprisoned—yes; in a private mad-house.—There, in the heart of misery, I met the man charged with seducing me. We became attached—I deemed, and ever shall deem, myself free. The death of my babe dissolved the only tie which subsisted between me and my, what is termed, lawful husband.

"To this person, thus encountered, I voluntarily gave myself, never considering myself as any more bound to transgress the laws of moral purity, because the will of my husband might be pleaded in my excuse, than to transgress those laws to which [the policy of artificial society has] annexed [positive] punishments.—While no command of a husband can prevent a woman from suffering for certain crimes, she must be allowed to consult her conscience, and regulate her conduct, in some degree, by her own sense of right. The respect I owe to myself, demanded my strict adherence to my determination of never viewing Mr. Venables in the light of a husband, nor could it forbid me from encouraging another. If I am unfortunately united to an unprincipled man, am I for ever to be shut out from fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother?—I wish my country to approve of my conduct; but, if laws exist, made by the strong to oppress the weak, I appeal to my own sense of justice, and declare that I will not live with the individual, who has violated every moral obligation which binds man to man.

"I protest equally against any charge being brought to criminate the man, whom I consider as my husband. I was six-and-twenty when I left Mr. Venables' roof; if ever I am to be supposed to arrive at an age to direct my own actions, I must by that time have arrived at it.—I acted with deliberation.—Mr. Darnford found me a forlorn and oppressed woman, and promised the protection women in the present state of society want.—But the man who now claims me—was he deprived of my society by this conduct? The question is an insult to common sense, considering where Mr. Darnford met me.—Mr. Venables' door was indeed open to me—nay, threats and intreaties were used to induce me to return; but why? Was affection or honour the motive?—I cannot, it is true, dive into the recesses of the human heart—yet I presume to

assert, [borne out as I am by a variety of circumstances,] that he was merely influenced by the most rapacious avarice.

"I claim then a divorce, and the liberty of enjoying, free from molestation, the fortune left to me by a relation, who was well aware of the character of the man with whom I had to contend.—I appeal to the justice and humanity of the jury—a body of men, whose private judgment must be allowed to modify laws, that must be unjust, because definite rules can never apply to indefinite circumstances—and I deprecate punishment upon the man of my choice, freeing him, as I solemnly do, from the charge of seduction.]

"I did not put myself into a situation to justify a charge of adultery, till I had, from conviction, shaken off the fetters which bound me to Mr. Venables.—While I lived with him, I defy the voice of calumny to sully what is termed the fair fame of woman.—Neglected by my husband, I never encouraged a lover; and preserved with scrupulous care, what is termed my honour, at the expence of my peace, till he, who should have been its guardian, laid traps to ensnare me. From that moment I believed myself, in the sight of heaven, free—and no power on earth shall force me to renounce my resolution."

The judge, in summing up the evidence, alluded to "the fallacy of letting women plead their feelings, as an excuse for the violation of the marriage-vow. For his part, he had always determined to oppose all innovation, and the new-fangled notions which incroached on the good old rules of conduct. We did not want French principles in public or private life—and, if women were allowed to plead their feelings, as an excuse or palliation of infidelity, it was opening a flood-gate for immorality. What virtuous woman thought of her feelings?—It was her duty to love and obey the man chosen by her parents and relations, who were qualified by their experience to judge better for her, than she could for herself. As to the charges brought against the husband, they were vague, supported by no witnesses, excepting that of imprisonment in a private mad-house. The proofs of an insanity in the family, might render that however a prudent measure; and indeed the conduct of the lady did not appear that of a person of sane mind. Still such a mode of proceeding could not be justified, and might perhaps entitle the lady [in another court] to a sentence of separation from bed and board, during the joint lives of the parties; but he hoped that no Englishman would legalize adultery, by enabling the adulteress to enrich her seducer. Too many restrictions could not be thrown in the way of divorces, if we wished to maintain the sanctity of marriage; and, though they might bear a little hard on a few, very few individuals, it was evidently for the good of the whole."

CONCLUSION,

BY THE EDITOR.

VERY few hints exist respecting the plan of the remainder of the work. I find only two detached sentences, and some scattered heads for the continuation of the story. I transcribe the whole.

I.

"Darnford's letters were affectionate; but circumstances occasioned delays, and the miscarriage of some letters rendered the reception of wished-for answers doubtful: his return was necessary to calm Maria's mind."

II.

"As Darnford had informed her that his business was settled, his delaying to return seemed extraordinary; but love to excess, excludes fear or suspicion."

The scattered heads for the continuation of the story, are as follow^[159-A].

I.

"Trial for adultery—Maria defends herself—A separation from bed and board is the consequence—Her fortune is thrown into chancery—Darnford obtains a part of his property—Maria goes into the country."

II.

"A prosecution for adultery commenced—Trial—Darnford sets out for France—Letters—Once more pregnant—He returns—Mysterious behaviour—Visit—Expectation—Discovery—Interview—Consequence."

III.

"Sued by her husband—Damages awarded to him—Separation from bed and board—Darnford goes abroad—Maria into the country—Provides for her father—Is shunned—Returns to London—Expects to see her lover—The rack of expectation—Finds herself again with child—Delighted—A discovery—A visit—A miscarriage—Conclusion."

IV.

"Divorced by her husband—Her lover unfaithful—Pregnancy—Miscarriage—Suicide."

[The following passage appears in some respects to deviate from the preceding hints. It is superscribed]

"THE END.

"She swallowed the laudanum; her soul was calm—the tempest had subsided—and nothing remained but

an eager longing to forget herself—to fly from the anguish she endured to escape from thought—from this hell of disappointment.

"Still her eyes closed not—one remembrance with frightful velocity followed another—All the incidents of her life were in arms, embodied to assail her, and prevent her sinking into the sleep of death.—Her murdered child again appeared to her, mourning for the babe of which she was the tomb.—'And could it have a nobler?—Surely it is better to die with me, than to enter on life without a mother's care!—I cannot live!—but could I have deserted my child the moment it was born?—thrown it on the troubled wave of life, without a hand to support it?'—She looked up: 'What have I not suffered!—may I find a father where I am going!'—Her head turned; a stupor ensued; a faintness—'Have a little patience,' said Maria, holding her swimming head (she thought of her mother), 'this cannot last long; and what is a little bodily pain to the pangs I have endured?'

"A new vision swam before her. Jemima seemed to enter—leading a little creature, that, with tottering footsteps, approached the bed. The voice of Jemima sounding as at a distance, called her—she tried to listen, to speak, to look!

"Behold your child!" exclaimed Jemima. Maria started off the bed, and fainted.—Violent vomiting followed.

"When she was restored to life, Jemima addressed her with great solemnity: '——— led me to suspect, that your husband and brother had deceived you, and secreted the child. I would not torment you with doubtful hopes, and I left you (at a fatal moment) to search for the child!—I snatched her from misery—and (now she is alive again) would you leave her alone in the world, to endure what I have endured?'

"Maria gazed wildly at her, her whole frame was convulsed with emotion; when the child, whom Jemima had been tutoring all the journey, uttered the word 'Mamma!' She caught her to her bosom, and burst into a passion of tears—then, resting the child gently on the bed, as if afraid of killing it,—she put her hand to her eyes, to conceal as it were the agonizing struggle of her soul. She remained silent for five minutes, crossing her arms over her bosom, and reclining her head,—then exclaimed: 'The conflict is over!—I will live for my child!'"

A few readers perhaps, in looking over these hints, will wonder how it could have been practicable, without tediousness, or remitting in any degree the interest of the story, to have filled, from these slight sketches, a number of pages, more considerable than those which have been already presented. But, in reality, these hints, simple as they are, are pregnant with passion and distress. It is the refuge of barren authors only, to crowd their fictions with so great a number of events, as to suffer no one of them to sink into the reader's mind. It is the province of true genius to develop events, to discover their capabilities, to ascertain the different passions and sentiments with which they are fraught, and to diversify them with incidents, that give reality to the picture, and take a hold upon the mind of a reader of taste, from which they can never be loosened. It was particularly the design of the author, in the present instance, to make her story subordinate to a great moral purpose, that "of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society.—This view restrained her fancy^[166-A]." It was necessary for her, to place in a striking point of view, evils that are too frequently overlooked, and to drag into light those details of oppression, of which the grosser and more insensible part of mankind make little account.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[159-A\]](#) To understand these minutes, it is necessary the reader should consider each of them as setting out from the same point in the story, viz. the point to which it is brought down in the preceding chapter.

[\[166-A\]](#) See author's preface.

LESSONS.

ADVERTISEMENT,

BY THE EDITOR.

THE following pages will, I believe, be judged by every reader of taste to have been worth preserving, among the other testimonies the author left behind her, of her genius and the soundness of her understanding. To such readers I leave the task of comparing these lessons, with other works of the same nature previously published. It is obvious that the author has struck out a path of her own, and by no means intrenched upon the plans of her predecessors.

It may however excite surprise in some persons to find these papers annexed to the conclusion of a novel. All I have to offer on this subject, consists in the following considerations:

First, something is to be allowed for the difficulty of arranging the miscellaneous papers upon very different subjects, which will frequently constitute an author's posthumous works.

Secondly, the small portion they occupy in the present volume, will perhaps be accepted as an apology, by such good-natured readers (if any such there are), to whom the perusal of them shall be a matter of perfect indifference.

Thirdly, the circumstance which determined me in annexing them to the present work, was the slight association (in default of a strong one) between the affectionate and pathetic manner in which Maria Venables addresses her infant, in the Wrongs of Woman; and the agonising and painful sentiment with which the author originally bequeathed these papers, as a legacy for the benefit of her child.

LESSONS.

The first book of a series which I intended to have written for my unfortunate girl^[175-A].

LESSON I.

Cat. Dog. Cow. Horse. Sheep. Pig. Bird. Fly.

Man. Boy. Girl. Child.

Head. Hair. Face. Nose. Mouth. Chin. Neck. Arms. Hand. Leg. Foot. Back. Breast.

House. Wall. Field. Street. Stone. Grass.

Bed. Chair. Door. Pot. Spoon. Knife. Fork. Plate. Cup. Box. Boy. Bell.

Tree. Leaf. Stick. Whip. Cart. Coach.

Frock. Hat. Coat. Shoes. Shift. Cap.

Bread. Milk. Tea. Meat. Drink. Cake.

LESSON II.

Come. Walk. Run. Go. Jump. Dance. Ride. Sit. Stand. Play. Hold. Shake. Speak. Sing. Cry. Laugh. Call. Fall.

Day. Night. Sun. Moon. Light. Dark. Sleep. Wake.

Wash. Dress. Kiss. Comb.

Fire. Hot. Burn. Wind. Rain. Cold.

Hurt. Tear. Break. Spill.

Book. See. Look.

Sweet. Good. Clean.

Gone. Lost. Hide. Keep. Give. Take.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

White. Black. Red. Blue. Green. Brown.

LESSON III.

STROKE the cat. Play with the Dog. Eat the bread. Drink the milk. Hold the cup. Lay down the knife.

Look at the fly. See the horse. Shut the door. Bring the chair. Ring the bell. Get your book.

Hide your face. Wipe your nose. Wash your hands. Dirty hands. Why do you cry? A clean mouth. Shake

hands. I love you. Kiss me now. Good girl.

The bird sings. The fire burns. The cat jumps. The dog runs. The bird flies. The cow lies down. The man laughs. The child cries.

LESSON IV.

LET me comb your head. Ask Betty to wash your face. Go and see for some bread. Drink milk, if you are dry. Play on the floor with the ball. Do not touch the ink; you will black your hands.

What do you want to say to me? Speak slow, not so fast. Did you fall? You will not cry, not you; the baby cries. Will you walk in the fields?

LESSON V.

COME to me, my little girl. Are you tired of playing? Yes. Sit down and rest yourself, while I talk to you.

Have you seen the baby? Poor little thing. O here it comes. Look at him. How helpless he is. Four years ago you were as feeble as this very little boy.

See, he cannot hold up his head. He is forced to lie on his back, if his mamma do not turn him to the right or left side, he will soon begin to cry. He cries to tell her, that he is tired with lying on his back.

LESSON VI.

PERHAPS he is hungry. What shall we give him to eat? Poor fellow, he cannot eat. Look in his mouth, he has no teeth.

How did you do when you were a baby like him? You cannot tell. Do you want to know? Look then at the dog, with her pretty puppy. You could not help yourself as well as the puppy. You could only open your mouth, when you were lying, like William, on my knee. So I put you to my breast, and you sucked, as the puppy sucks now, for there was milk enough for you.

LESSON VII.

WHEN you were hungry, you began to cry, because you could not speak. You were seven months without teeth, always sucking. But after you got one, you began to gnaw a crust of bread. It was not long before another came pop. At ten months you had four pretty white teeth, and you used to bite me. Poor mamma! Still I did not cry, because I am not a child, but you hurt me very much. So I said to papa, it is time the little girl should eat. She is not naughty, yet she hurts me. I have given her a crust of bread, and I must look for some other milk.

The cow has got plenty, and her jumping calf eats grass very well. He has got more teeth than my little girl. Yes, says papa, and he tapped you on the cheek, you are old enough to learn to eat? Come to me, and I will teach you, my little dear, for you must not hurt poor mamma, who has given you her milk, when you could not take any thing else.

LESSON VIII.

YOU were then on the carpet, for you could not walk well. So when you were in a hurry, you used to run quick, quick, quick, on your hands and feet, like the dog.

Away you ran to papa, and putting both your arms round his leg, for your hands were not big enough, you

looked up at him, and laughed. What did this laugh say, when you could not speak? Cannot you guess by what you now say to papa?—Ah! it was, Play with me, papa!—play with me!

Papa began to smile, and you knew that the smile was always—Yes. So you got a ball, and papa threw it along the floor—Roll—roll—roll; and you ran after it again—and again. How pleased you were. Look at William, he smiles; but you could laugh loud—Ha! ha! ha!—Papa laughed louder than the little girl, and rolled the ball still faster.

Then he put the ball on a chair, and you were forced to take hold of the back, and stand up to reach it. At last you reached too far, and down you fell: not indeed on your face, because you put out your hands. You were not much hurt; but the palms of your hands smarted with the pain, and you began to cry, like a little child.

It is only very little children who cry when they are hurt; and it is to tell their mamma, that something is the matter with them. Now you can come to me, and say, Mamma, I have hurt myself. Pray rub my hand: it smarted. Put something on it, to make it well. A piece of rag, to stop the blood. You are not afraid of a little blood—not you. You scratched your arm with a pin: it bled a little; but it did you no harm. See, the skin is grown over it again.

LESSON IX.

TAKE care not to put pins in your mouth, because they will stick in your throat, and give you pain. Oh! you cannot think what pain a pin would give you in your throat, should it remain there: but, if you by chance swallow it, I should be obliged to give you, every morning, something bitter to drink. You never tasted any thing so bitter! and you would grow very sick. I never put pins in my mouth; but I am older than you, and know how to take care of myself.

My mamma took care of me, when I was a little girl, like you. She bade me never put any thing in my mouth, without asking her what it was.

When you were a baby, with no more sense than William, you put every thing in your mouth to gnaw, to help your teeth to cut through the skin. Look at the puppy, how he bites that piece of wood. William presses his gums against my finger. Poor boy! he is so young, he does not know what he is doing. When you bite any thing, it is because you are hungry.

LESSON X.

SEE how much taller you are than William. In four years you have learned to eat, to walk, to talk. Why do you smile? You can do much more, you think: you can wash your hands and face. Very well. I should never kiss a dirty face. And you can comb your head with the pretty comb you always put by in your own drawer. To be sure, you do all this to be ready to take a walk with me. You would be obliged to stay at home, if you could not comb your own hair. Betty is busy getting the dinner ready, and only brushes William's hair, because he cannot do it for himself.

Betty is making an apple-pye. You love an apple-pye; but I do not bid you make one. Your hands are not strong enough to mix the butter and flour together; and you must not try to pare the apples, because you cannot manage a great knife.

Never touch the large knives: they are very sharp, and you might cut your finger to the bone. You are a little girl, and ought to have a little knife. When you are as tall as I am, you shall have a knife as large as mine; and when you are as strong as I am, and have learned to manage it, you will not hurt yourself.

You can trundle a hoop, you say; and jump over a stick. O, I forgot!—and march like the men in the red coats, when papa plays a pretty tune on the fiddle.

LESSON XI.

WHAT, you think that you shall soon be able to dress yourself entirely? I am glad of it: I have something else to do. You may go, and look for your frock in the drawer; but I will tie it, till you are stronger. Betty will tie it, when I am busy.

I button my gown myself: I do not want a maid to assist me, when I am dressing. But you have not yet got sense enough to do it properly, and must beg somebody to help you, till you are older.

Children grow older and wiser at the same time. William is not able to take a piece of meat, because he has not got the sense which would make him think that, without teeth, meat would do him harm. He cannot tell what is good for him.

The sense of children grows with them. You know much more than William, now you walk alone, and talk; but you do not know as much as the boys and girls you see playing yonder, who are half as tall again as you; and they do not know half as much as their fathers and mothers, who are men and women grown. Papa and I were children, like you; and men and women took care of us. I carry William, because he is too weak to walk. I lift you over a stile, and over the gutter, when you cannot jump over it.

You know already, that potatoes will not do you any harm: but I must pluck the fruit for you, till you are wise enough to know the ripe apples and pears. The hard ones would make you sick, and then you must take physic. You do not love physic: I do not love it any more than you. But I have more sense than you; therefore I take care not to eat unripe fruit, or any thing else that would make my stomach ache, or bring out ugly red spots on my face.

When I was a child, my mamma chose the fruit for me, to prevent my making myself sick. I was just like you; I used to ask for what I saw, without knowing whether it was good or bad. Now I have lived a long time, I know what is good; I do not want any body to tell me.

LESSON XII.

LOOK at those two dogs. The old one brings the ball to me in a moment; the young one does not know how. He must be taught.

I can cut your shift in a proper shape. You would not know how to begin. You would spoil it; but you will learn.

John digs in the garden, and knows when to put the seed in the ground. You cannot tell whether it should be in the winter or summer. Try to find it out. When do the trees put out their leaves? In the spring, you say, after the cold weather. Fruit would not grow ripe without very warm weather. Now I am sure you can guess why the summer is the season for fruit.

Papa knows that peas and beans are good for us to eat with our meat. You are glad when you see them; but if he did not think for you, and have the seed put in the ground, we should have no peas or beans.

LESSON XIII.

POOR child, she cannot do much for herself. When I let her do any thing for me, it is to please her: for I could do it better myself.

Oh! the poor puppy has tumbled off the stool. Run and stroak him. Put a little milk in a saucer to comfort him. You have more sense than he. You can pour the milk into the saucer without spilling it. He would cry for a day with hunger, without being able to get it. You are wiser than the dog, you must help him. The dog will love you for it, and run after you. I feed you and take care of you: you love me and follow me for it.

When the book fell down on your foot, it gave you great pain. The poor dog felt the same pain just now.

Take care not to hurt him when you play with him. And every morning leave a little milk in your bason for him. Do not forget to put the bason in a corner, lest somebody should fall over it.

When the snow covers the ground, save the crumbs of bread for the birds. In the summer they find feed enough, and do not want you to think about them.

I make broth for the poor man who is sick. A sick man is like a child, he cannot help himself.

LESSON X.

WHEN I caught cold some time ago, I had such a pain in my head, I could scarcely hold it up. Papa opened the door very softly, because he loves me. You love me, yet you made a noise. You had not the sense to know that it made my head worse, till papa told you.

Papa had a pain in the stomach, and he would not eat the fine cherries or grapes on the table. When I brought him a cup of camomile tea, he drank it without saying a word, or making an ugly face. He knows that I love him, and that I would not give him any thing to drink that has a bad taste, if it were not to do him good.

You asked me for some apples when your stomach ached; but I was not angry with you. If you had been as wise as papa, you would have said, I will not eat the apples to-day, I must take some camomile tea.

You say that you do not know how to think. Yes; you do a little. The other day papa was tired; he had been walking about all the morning. After dinner he fell asleep on the sophia. I did not bid you be quiet; but you thought of what papa said to you, when my head ached. This made you think that you ought not to make a noise, when papa was resting himself. So you came to me, and said to me, very softly, Pray reach me my ball, and I will go and play in the garden, till papa wakes.

You were going out; but thinking again, you came back to me on your tip-toes. Whisper——whisper. Pray mama, call me, when papa wakes; for I shall be afraid to open the door to see, lest I should disturb him.

Away you went.—Creep—creep—and shut the door as softly as I could have done myself.

That was thinking. When a child does wrong at first, she does not know any better. But, after she has been told that she must not disturb mama, when poor mama is unwell, she thinks herself, that she must not wake papa when he is tired.

Another day we will see if you can think about any thing else.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

[175-A] This title which is indorsed on the back of the manuscript, I conclude to have been written in a period of

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

VOL. II.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

THE
WRONGS OF WOMAN:
OR,
MARIA.

A FRAGMENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WRONGS

OF

WOMAN.



CHAP. IX.

"I RESUME my pen to fly from thought. I was married; and we hastened to London. I had purposed taking one of my sisters with me; for a strong motive for marrying, was the desire of having a home at which I could receive them, now their own grew so uncomfortable, as not to deserve the cheering appellation. An objection was made to her accompanying me, that appeared plausible; and I reluctantly acquiesced. I was however willingly allowed to take with me Molly, poor Peggy's daughter. London and preferment, are ideas commonly associated in the country; and, as blooming as May, she bade adieu to Peggy with weeping eyes. I did not even feel hurt at the refusal in relation to my sister, till hearing what my uncle had done for me, I had the simplicity to request, speaking with warmth of their situation, that he would give them a thousand pounds a-piece, which seemed to me but justice. He asked me, giving me a kiss, 'If I had lost my senses?' I started back, as if I had found a wasp in a rose-bush. I expostulated. He sneered; and the demon of discord entered our paradise, to poison with his pestiferous breath every opening joy.

"I had sometimes observed defects in my husband's understanding; but, led astray by a prevailing opinion, that goodness of disposition is of the first importance in the relative situations of life, in proportion as I perceived the narrowness of his understanding, fancy enlarged the boundary of his heart. Fatal error! How quickly is the so much vaunted milkiness of nature turned into gall, by an intercourse with the world, if more generous juices do not sustain the vital source of virtue!

"One trait in my character was extreme credulity; but, when my eyes were once opened, I saw but too clearly all I had before overlooked. My husband was sunk in my esteem; still there are youthful emotions, which, for a while, fill up the chasm of love and friendship. Besides, it required some time to enable me to see his whole character in a just light, or rather to allow it to become fixed. While circumstances were ripening my faculties, and cultivating my taste, commerce and gross relaxations were shutting his against any possibility of improvement, till, by stifling every spark of virtue in himself, he began to imagine that it no where existed.

"Do not let me lead you astray, my child, I do not mean to assert, that any human being is entirely incapable of feeling the generous emotions, which are the foundation of every true principle of virtue; but they are frequently, I fear, so feeble, that, like the inflammable quality which more or less lurks in all bodies, they often lie for ever dormant; the circumstances never occurring, necessary to call them into action.

"I discovered however by chance, that, in consequence of some losses in trade, the natural effect of his gambling desire to start suddenly into riches, the five thousand pounds given me by my uncle, had been paid very opportunely. This discovery, strange as you may think the assertion, gave me pleasure; my husband's embarrassments endeared him to me. I was glad to find an excuse for his conduct to my sisters, and my mind became calmer.

"My uncle introduced me to some literary society; and the theatres were a never-failing source of amusement to me. My delighted eye followed Mrs. Siddons, when, with dignified delicacy, she played Calista; and I involuntarily repeated after her, in the same tone, and with a long-drawn sigh,

'Hearts like our's were pair'd—not match'd.'

"These were, at first, spontaneous emotions, though, becoming acquainted with men of wit and polished

manners, I could not sometimes help regretting my early marriage; and that, in my haste to escape from a temporary dependence, and expand my newly fledged wings, in an unknown sky, I had been caught in a trap, and caged for life. Still the novelty of London, and the attentive fondness of my husband, for he had some personal regard for me, made several months glide away. Yet, not forgetting the situation of my sisters, who were still very young, I prevailed on my uncle to settle a thousand pounds on each; and to place them in a school near town, where I could frequently visit, as well as have them at home with me.

"I now tried to improve my husband's taste, but we had few subjects in common; indeed he soon appeared to have little relish for my society, unless he was hinting to me the use he could make of my uncle's wealth. When we had company, I was disgusted by an ostentatious display of riches, and I have often quitted the room, to avoid listening to exaggerated tales of money obtained by lucky hits.

"With all my attention and affectionate interest, I perceived that I could not become the friend or confidant of my husband. Every thing I learned relative to his affairs I gathered up by accident; and I vainly endeavoured to establish, at our fire-side, that social converse, which often renders people of different characters dear to each other. Returning from the theatre, or any amusing party, I frequently began to relate what I had seen and highly relished; but with sullen taciturnity he soon silenced me. I seemed therefore gradually to lose, in his society, the soul, the energies of which had just been in action. To such a degree, in fact, did his cold, reserved manner affect me, that, after spending some days with him alone, I have imagined myself the most stupid creature in the world, till the abilities of some casual visitor convinced me that I had some dormant animation, and sentiments above the dust in which I had been groveling. The very countenance of my husband changed; his complexion became fallow, and all the charms of youth were vanishing with its vivacity.

"I give you one view of the subject; but these experiments and alterations took up the space of five years; during which period, I had most reluctantly extorted several sums from my uncle, to save my husband, to use his own words, from destruction. At first it was to prevent bills being noted, to the injury of his credit; then to bail him; and afterwards to prevent an execution from entering the house. I began at last to conclude, that he would have made more exertions of his own to extricate himself, had he not relied on mine, cruel as was the task he imposed on me; and I firmly determined that I would make use of no more pretexts.

"From the moment I pronounced this determination, indifference on his part was changed into rudeness, or something worse.

"He now seldom dined at home, and continually returned at a late hour, drunk, to bed. I retired to another apartment; I was glad, I own, to escape from his; for personal intimacy without affection, seemed, to me the most degrading, as well as the most painful state in which a woman of any taste, not to speak of the peculiar delicacy of fostered sensibility, could be placed. But my husband's fondness for women was of the grossest kind, and imagination was so wholly out of the question, as to render his indulgences of this sort entirely promiscuous, and of the most brutal nature. My health suffered, before my heart was entirely estranged by the loathsome information; could I then have returned to his sullied arms, but as a victim to the prejudices of mankind, who have made women the property of their husbands? I discovered even, by his conversation, when intoxicated, that his favourites were wantons of the lowest class, who could by their vulgar, indecent mirth, which he called nature, rouse his sluggish spirits. Meretricious ornaments and manners were necessary to attract his attention. He seldom looked twice at a modest woman, and sat silent in their company; and the charms of youth and beauty had not the slightest effect on his senses, unless the possessors were initiated in vice. His intimacy with profligate women, and his habits of thinking, gave him a contempt for female endowments; and he would repeat, when wine had loosed his tongue, most of the

common-place farcafms levelled at them, by men who do not allow them to have minds, becaufe mind would be an impediment to grofs enjoyment. Men who are inferior to their fellow men, are always moft anxious to eftablifh their fuperiority over women. But where are thefe reflections leading me?

"Women who have loft their husband's affection, are juftly reproved for neglecting their perfons, and not taking the fame pains to keep, as to gain a heart; but who thinks of giving the fame advice to men, though women are continually ftigmatized for being attached to fops; and from the nature of their education, are more fufceptible of difgult? Yet why a woman fhould be expected to endure a floven, with more patience than a man, and magnanimoufly to govern herfelf, I cannot conceive; unlefs it be fupposed arrogant in her to look for refpect as well as a maintenance. It is not eafy to be pleafed, becaufe, after promifing to love, in different circumftances, we are told that it is our duty. I cannot, I am fure (though, when attending the fick, I never felt difgult) forget my own fenfations, when rifing with health and fpirit, and after fcenting the fweet morning, I have met my husband at the breakfast table. The active attention I had been giving to domeftic regulations, which were generally fettled before he rofe, or a walk, gave a glow to my countenance, that contrafted with his fquallid appearance. The fqueamifhnefs of ftomach alone, produced by the laft night's intemperance, which he took no pains to conceal, deftroyed my appetite. I think I now fee him loling in an arm-chair, in a dirty powdering gown, foiled linen, ungartered ftockings, and tangled hair, yawning and ftretching himfelf. The newfpaper was immediately called for, if not brought in on the tea-board, from which he would fcarcely lift his eyes while I poured out the tea, excepting to afk for fome brandy to put into it, or to declare that he could not eat. In anfwer to any queftion, in his beft humour, it was a drawling 'What do you fay, child?' But if I demanded money for the houfe expences, which I put off till the laft moment, his cuftomary reply, often prefaced with an oath, was, 'Do you think me, madam, made of money?'—The butcher, the baker, muft wait; and, what was worfe, I was often obliged to witnefs his furly difmiffion of tradefmen, who were in want of their money, and whom I fometimes paid with the prefents my uncle gave me for my own ufe.

"At this juncture my father's miftrefs, by terrifying his confcience, prevailed on him to marry her; he was already become a methodift; and my brother, who now practifed for himfelf, had difcovered a flaw in the fettlement made on my mother's children, which fet it afide, and he allowed my father, whose diftrefs made him fubmit to any thing, a tithe of his own, or rather our fortune.

"My fifters had left fchool, but were unable to endure home, which my father's wife rendered as difagreeable as poffible, to get rid of girls whom fhe regarded as fpies on her conduct. They were accomplifhed, yet you can (may you never be reduced to the fame deftitute ftate!) fcarcely conceive the trouble I had to place them in the fituation of governeffes, the only one in which even a well-educated woman, with more than ordinary talents, can ftuggle for a fubfiftence; and even this is a dependence next to menial. Is it then furprifing, that fo many forlorn women, with human paffions and feelings, take refuge in infamy? Alone in large manfions, I fay alone, becaufe they had no companions with whom they could converfe on equal terms, or from whom they could expect the endearments of affection, they grew melancholy, and the found of joy made them fad; and the youngft, having a more delicate frame, fell into a decline. It was with great difficulty that I, who now almoft fupported the houfe by loans from my uncle, could prevail on the *mafter* of it, to allow her a room to die in. I watched her fick bed for fome months, and then clofed her eyes, gentle fpirit! for ever. She was pretty, with very engaging manners; yet had never an opportunity to marry, excepting to a very old man. She had abilities fufficient to have fhone in any profeflion, had there been any profefions for women, though fhe fhrank at the name of milliner or mantua-maker as degrading to a gentlewoman. I would not term this feeling falfe pride to any one but you, my child, whom I fondly hope to fee (yes; I will indulge the hope for a moment!) poffeffed of that energy of character which gives dignity to any ftation; and with that clear, firm fpirit that will enable you to choofe a

situation for yourself, or submit to be classed in the lowest, if it be the only one in which you can be the mistress of your own actions.

"Soon after the death of my sister, an incident occurred, to prove to me that the heart of a libertine is dead to natural affection; and to convince me, that the being who has appeared all tenderness, to gratify a selfish passion, is as regardless of the innocent fruit of it, as of the object, when the fit is over. I had casually observed an old, mean-looking woman, who called on my husband every two or three months to receive some money. One day entering the passage of his little counting-house, as she was going out, I heard her say, 'The child is very weak; she cannot live long, she will soon die out of your way, so you need not grudge her a little physic.'

"So much the better,' he replied, 'and pray mind your own business, good woman.'

"I was struck by his unfeeling, inhuman tone of voice, and drew back, determined when the woman came again, to try to speak to her, not out of curiosity, I had heard enough, but with the hope of being useful to a poor, outcast girl.

"A month or two elapsed before I saw this woman again; and then she had a child in her hand that tottered along, scarcely able to sustain her own weight. They were going away, to return at the hour Mr. Venables was expected; he was now from home. I desired the woman to walk into the parlour. She hesitated, yet obeyed. I assured her that I should not mention to my husband (the word seemed to weigh on my respiration), that I had seen her, or his child. The woman stared at me with astonishment; and I turned my eyes on the squalid object [that accompanied her.] She could hardly support herself, her complexion was fallow, and her eyes inflamed, with an indescribable look of cunning, mixed with the wrinkles produced by the peevishness of pain.

"Poor child!' I exclaimed. 'Ah! you may well say poor child,' replied the woman. 'I brought her here to see whether he would have the heart to look at her, and not get some advice. I do not know what they deserve who nursed her. Why, her legs bent under her like a bow when she came to me, and she has never been well since; but, if they were no better paid than I am, it is not to be wondered at, sure enough.'

"On further enquiry I was informed, that this miserable spectacle was the daughter of a servant, a country girl, who caught Mr. Venables' eye, and whom he seduced. On his marriage he sent her away, her situation being too visible. After her delivery, she was thrown on the town; and died in an hospital within the year. The babe was sent to a parish-nurse, and afterwards to this woman, who did not seem much better; but what was to be expected from such a close bargain? She was only paid three shillings a week for board and washing.

"The woman begged me to give her some old clothes for the child, assuring me, that she was almost afraid to ask master for money to buy even a pair of shoes.

"I grew sick at heart. And, fearing Mr. Venables might enter, and oblige me to express my abhorrence, I hastily enquired where she lived, promised to pay her two shillings a week more, and to call on her in a day or two; putting a trifle into her hand as a proof of my good intention.

"If the state of this child affected me, what were my feelings at a discovery I made respecting Peggy——?
[22-A]

FOOTNOTES:

[\[22-A\]](#) The manuscript is imperfect here. An episode seems to have been intended, which was never committed to paper.

EDITOR.

CHAP. X.

"My father's situation was now so distressing, that I prevailed on my uncle to accompany me to visit him; and to lend me his assistance, to prevent the whole property of the family from becoming the prey of my brother's rapacity; for, to extricate himself out of present difficulties, my father was totally regardless of futurity. I took down with me some presents for my step-mother; it did not require an effort for me to treat her with civility, or to forget the past.

"This was the first time I had visited my native village, since my marriage. But with what different emotions did I return from the busy world, with a heavy weight of experience benumbing my imagination, to scenes, that whispered recollections of joy and hope most eloquently to my heart! The first scent of the wild flowers from the heath, thrilled through my veins, awakening every sense to pleasure. The icy hand of despair seemed to be removed from my bosom; and—forgetting my husband—the nurtured visions of a romantic mind, bursting on me with all their original wildness and gay exuberance, were again hailed as sweet realities. I forgot, with equal facility, that I ever felt sorrow, or knew care in the country; while a transient rainbow stole athwart the cloudy sky of despondency. The picturesque form of several favourite trees, and the porches of rude cottages, with their smiling hedges, were recognized with the gladsome playfulness of childish vivacity. I could have kissed the chickens that pecked on the common; and longed to pat the cows, and frolic with the dogs that sported on it. I gazed with delight on the windmill, and thought it lucky that it should be in motion, at the moment I passed by; and entering the dear green lane, which led directly to the village, the sound of the well-known rookery gave that sentimental tinge to the varying sensations of my active soul, which only served to heighten the lustre of the luxuriant scenery. But, spying, as I advanced, the spire, peeping over the withered tops of the aged elms that composed the rookery, my thoughts flew immediately to the church-yard, and tears of affection, such was the effect of my imagination, bedewed my mother's grave! Sorrow gave place to devotional feelings. I wandered through the church in fancy, as I used sometimes to do on a Saturday evening. I recollected with what fervour I addressed the God of my youth: and once more with rapturous love looked above my sorrows to the Father of nature. I pause—feeling forcibly all the emotions I am describing; and (reminded, as I register my sorrows, of the sublime calm I have felt, when in some tremendous solitude, my soul rested on itself, and seemed to fill the universe) I insensibly breathe soft, hushing every wayward emotion, as if fearing to fully with a sigh, a contentment so extatic.

"Having settled my father's affairs, and, by my exertions in his favour, made my brother my sworn foe, I returned to London. My husband's conduct was now changed; I had during my absence, received several affectionate, penitential letters from him; and he seemed on my arrival, to wish by his behaviour to prove his sincerity. I could not then conceive why he acted thus; and, when the suspicion darted into my head, that it might arise from observing my increasing influence with my uncle, I almost despised myself for imagining that such a degree of debasing selfishness could exist.

"He became, unaccountable as was the change, tender and attentive; and, attacking my weak side, made a confession of his follies, and lamented the embarrassments in which I, who merited a far different fate, might be involved. He besought me to aid him with my counsel, praised my understanding, and appealed to the tenderness of my heart.

"This conduct only inspired me with compassion. I wished to be his friend; but love had spread his rosy

pinions, and fled far, far away; and had not (like some exquisite perfumes, the fine spirit of which is continually mingling with the air) left a fragrance behind, to mark where he had shook his wings. My husband's renewed caresses then became hateful to me; his brutality was tolerable, compared to his distasteful fondness. Still, compassion, and the fear of insulting his supposed feelings, by a want of sympathy, made me dissemble, and do violence to my delicacy. What a task!

"Those who support a system of what I term false refinement, and will not allow great part of love in the female, as well as male breast, to spring in some respects involuntarily, may not admit that charms are as necessary to feed the passion, as virtues to convert the mellowing spirit into friendship. To such observers I have nothing to say, any more than to the moralists, who insist that women ought to, and can love their husbands, because it is their duty. To you, my child, I may add, with a heart tremblingly alive to your future conduct, some observations, dictated by my present feelings, on calmly reviewing this period of my life. When novelists or moralists praise as a virtue, a woman's coldness of constitution, and want of passion; and make her yield to the ardour of her lover out of sheer compassion, or to promote a frigid plan of future comfort, I am disgusted. They may be good women, in the ordinary acceptance of the phrase, and do no harm; but they appear to me not to have those 'finely fashioned nerves,' which render the senses exquisite. They may possess tenderness; but they want that fire of the imagination, which produces *active* sensibility, and *positive* virtue. How does the woman deserve to be characterized, who marries one man, with a heart and imagination devoted to another? Is she not an object of pity or contempt, when thus sacrilegiously violating the purity of her own feelings? Nay, it is as indelicate, when she is indifferent, unless she be constitutionally insensible; then indeed it is a mere affair of barter; and I have nothing to do with the secrets of trade. Yes; eagerly as I wish you to possess true rectitude of mind, and purity of affection, I must insist that a heartless conduct is the contrary of virtuous. Truth is the only basis of virtue; and we cannot, without depraving our minds, endeavour to please a lover or husband, but in proportion as he pleases us. Men, more effectually to enslave us, may inculcate this partial morality, and lose sight of virtue in subdividing it into the duties of particular stations; but let us not blush for nature without a cause!

"After these remarks, I am ashamed to own, that I was pregnant. The greatest sacrifice of my principles in my whole life, was the allowing my husband again to be familiar with my person, though to this cruel act of self-denial, when I wished the earth to open and swallow me, you owe your birth; and I the unutterable pleasure of being a mother. There was something of delicacy in my husband's bridal attentions; but now his tainted breath, pimpled face, and blood-shot eyes, were not more repugnant to my senses, than his gross manners, and loveless familiarity to my taste.

"A man would only be expected to maintain; yes, barely grant a subsistence, to a woman rendered odious by habitual intoxication; but who would expect him, or think it possible to love her? And unless 'youth, and genial years were flown,' it would be thought equally unreasonable to insist, [under penalty of] forfeiting almost every thing reckoned valuable in life, that he should not love another: whilst woman, weak in reason, impotent in will, is required to moralize, sentimentalize herself to stone, and pine her life away, labouring to reform her embruted mate. He may even spend in dissipation, and intemperance, the very intemperance which renders him so hateful, her property, and by stinting her expences, not permit her to beguile in society, a wearisome, joyless life; for over their mutual fortune she has no power, it must all pass through his hand. And if she be a mother, and in the present state of women, it is a great misfortune to be prevented from discharging the duties, and cultivating the affections of one, what has she not to endure?—But I have suffered the tenderness of one to lead me into reflections that I did not think of making, to interrupt my narrative—yet the full heart will overflow.

"Mr. Venables' embarrassments did not now endear him to me; still, anxious to befriend him, I

endeavoured to prevail on him to retrench his expences; but he had always some plausible excuse to give, to justify his not following my advice. Humanity, compassion, and the interest produced by a habit of living together, made me try to relieve, and sympathize with him; but, when I recollected that I was bound to live with such a being for ever—my heart died within me; my desire of improvement became languid, and baleful, corroding melancholy took possession of my soul. Marriage had bastilled me for life. I discovered in myself a capacity for the enjoyment of the various pleasures existence affords; yet, fettered by the partial laws of society, this fair globe was to me an universal blank.

"When I exhorted my husband to economy, I referred to himself. I was obliged to practise the most rigid, or contract debts, which I had too much reason to fear would never be paid. I despised this paltry privilege of a wife, which can only be of use to the vicious or inconsiderate, and determined not to increase the torrent that was bearing him down. I was then ignorant of the extent of his fraudulent speculations, whom I was bound to honour and obey.

"A woman neglected by her husband, or whose manners form a striking contrast with his, will always have men on the watch to soothe and flatter her. Besides, the forlorn state of a neglected woman, not destitute of personal charms, is particularly interesting, and rouses that species of pity, which is so near akin, it easily slides into love. A man of feeling thinks not of seducing, he is himself seduced by all the noblest emotions of his soul. He figures to himself all the sacrifices a woman of sensibility must make, and every situation in which his imagination places her, touches his heart, and fires his passions. Longing to take to his bosom the thorn lamb, and bid the drooping buds of hope revive, benevolence changes into passion: and should he then discover that he is beloved, honour binds him fast, though foreseeing that he may afterwards be obliged to pay severe damages to the man, who never appeared to value his wife's society, till he found that there was a chance of his being indemnified for the loss of it.

"Such are the partial laws enacted by men; for, only to lay a stress on the dependent state of a woman in the grand question of the comforts arising from the possession of property, she is [even in this article] much more injured by the loss of the husband's affection, than he by that of his wife; yet where is she, condemned to the solitude of a deserted home, to look for a compensation from the woman, who seduces him from her? She cannot drive an unfaithful husband from his house, nor separate, or tear, his children from him, however culpable he may be; and he, still the master of his own fate, enjoys the smiles of a world, that would brand her with infamy, did she, seeking consolation, venture to retaliate.

"These remarks are not dictated by experience; but merely by the compassion I feel for many amiable women, the *out-laws* of the world. For myself, never encouraging any of the advances that were made to me, my lovers dropped off like the untimely shoots of spring. I did not even coquet with them; because I found, on examining myself, I could not coquet with a man without loving him a little; and I perceived that I should not be able to stop at the line of what are termed *innocent freedoms*, did I suffer any. My reserve was then the consequence of delicacy. Freedom of conduct has emancipated many women's minds; but my conduct has most rigidly been governed by my principles, till the improvement of my understanding has enabled me to discern the fallacy of prejudices at war with nature and reason.

"Shortly after the change I have mentioned in my husband's conduct, my uncle was compelled by his declining health, to seek the succour of a milder climate, and embark for Lisbon. He left his will in the hands of a friend, an eminent solicitor; he had previously questioned me relative to my situation and state of mind, and declared very freely, that he could place no reliance on the stability of my husband's professions. He had been deceived in the unfolding of his character; he now thought it fixed in a train of actions that would inevitably lead to ruin and disgrace.

"The evening before his departure, which we spent alone together, he folded me to his heart, uttering the endearing appellation of 'child.'—My more than father! why was I not permitted to perform the last duties of one, and smooth the pillow of death? He seemed by his manner to be convinced that he should never see me more; yet requested me, most earnestly, to come to him, should I be obliged to leave my husband. He had before expressed his sorrow at hearing of my pregnancy, having determined to prevail on me to accompany him, till I informed him of that circumstance. He expressed himself unfeignedly sorry that any new tie should bind me to a man whom he thought so incapable of estimating my value; such was the kind language of affection.

"I must repeat his own words; they made an indelible impression on my mind:

""The marriage state is certainly that in which women, generally speaking, can be most useful; but I am far from thinking that a woman, once married, ought to consider the engagement as indissoluble (especially if there be no children to reward her for sacrificing her feelings) in case her husband merits neither her love, nor esteem. Esteem will often supply the place of love; and prevent a woman from being wretched, though it may not make her happy. The magnitude of a sacrifice ought always to bear some proportion to the utility in view; and for a woman to live with a man, for whom she can cherish neither affection nor esteem, or even be of any use to him, excepting in the light of a house-keeper, is an abjectness of condition, the enduring of which no concurrence of circumstances can ever make a duty in the sight of God or just men. If indeed she submits to it merely to be maintained in idleness, she has no right to complain bitterly of her fate; or to act, as a person of independent character might, as if she had a title to disregard general rules.

""But the misfortune is, that many women only submit in appearance, and forfeit their own respect to secure their reputation in the world. The situation of a woman separated from her husband, is undoubtedly very different from that of a man who has left his wife. He, with lordly dignity, has shaken of a clog; and the allowing her food and raiment, is thought sufficient to secure his reputation from taint. And, should she have been inconsiderate, he will be celebrated for his generosity and forbearance. Such is the respect paid to the master-key of property! A woman, on the contrary, resigning what is termed her natural protector (though he never was so, but in name) is despised and shunned, for asserting the independence of mind distinctive of a rational being, and spurning at slavery.'

"During the remainder of the evening, my uncle's tenderness led him frequently to revert to the subject, and utter, with increasing warmth, sentiments to the same purport. At length it was necessary to say 'Farewell!'—and we parted—gracious God! to meet no more.

CHAP. XI.

"A GENTLEMAN of large fortune and of polished manners, had lately visited very frequently at our house, and treated me, if possible, with more respect than Mr. Venables paid him; my pregnancy was not yet visible, his society was a great relief to me, as I had for some time past, to avoid expence, confined myself very much at home. I ever disdained unnecessary, perhaps even prudent concealments; and my husband, with great ease, discovered the amount of my uncle's parting present. A copy of a writ was the stale pretext to extort it from me; and I had soon reason to believe that it was fabricated for the purpose. I acknowledge my folly in thus suffering myself to be continually imposed on. I had adhered to my resolution not to apply to my uncle, on the part of my husband, any more; yet, when I had received a sum sufficient to supply my own wants, and to enable me to pursue a plan I had in view, to settle my younger brother in a respectable employment, I allowed myself to be duped by Mr. Venables' shallow pretences, and hypocritical professions.

"Thus did he pillage me and my family, thus frustrate all my plans of usefulness. Yet this was the man I was bound to respect and esteem: as if respect and esteem depended on an arbitrary will of our own! But a wife being as much a man's property as his horse, or his ass, she has nothing she can call her own. He may use any means to get at what the law considers as his, the moment his wife is in possession of it, even to the forcing of a lock, as Mr. Venables did, to search for notes in my writing-desk—and all this is done with a show of equity, because, forsooth, he is responsible for her maintenance.

"The tender mother cannot *lawfully* snatch from the gripe of the gambling spendthrift, or beastly drunkard, unmindful of his offspring, the fortune which falls to her by chance; or (so flagrant is the injustice) what she earns by her own exertions. No; he can rob her with impunity, even to waste publicly on a courtesan; and the laws of her country—if women have a country—afford her no protection or redress from the oppressor, unless she have the plea of bodily fear; yet how many ways are there of goading the soul almost to madness, equally unmanly, though not so mean? When such laws were framed, should not impartial lawgivers have first decreed, in the style of a great assembly, who recognized the existence of an *être suprême*, to fix the national belief, that the husband should always be wiser and more virtuous than his wife, in order to entitle him, with a show of justice, to keep this idiot, or perpetual minor, for ever in bondage. But I must have done—on this subject, my indignation continually runs away with me.

"The company of the gentleman I have already mentioned, who had a general acquaintance with literature and subjects of taste, was grateful to me; my countenance brightened up as he approached, and I unaffectedly expressed the pleasure I felt. The amusement his conversation afforded me, made it easy to comply with my husband's request, to endeavour to render our house agreeable to him.

"His attentions became more pointed; but, as I was not of the number of women, whose virtue, as it is termed, immediately takes alarm, I endeavoured, rather by raillery than serious expostulation, to give a different turn to his conversation. He assumed a new mode of attack, and I was, for a while, the dupe of his pretended friendship.

"I had, merely in the style of *badinage*, boasted of my conquest, and repeated his lover-like compliments to my husband. But he begged me, for God's sake, not to affront his friend, or I should destroy all his projects, and be his ruin. Had I had more affection for my husband, I should have expressed my contempt of this time-serving politeness: now I imagined that I only felt pity; yet it would have puzzled a casuist to

point out in what the exact difference consisted.

"This friend began now, in confidence, to discover to me the real state of my husband's affairs. 'Necessity,' said Mr. S——; why should I reveal his name? for he affected to palliate the conduct he could not excuse, 'had led him to take such steps, by accommodation bills, buying goods on credit, to sell them for ready money, and similar transactions, that his character in the commercial world was gone. He was considered,' he added, lowering his voice, 'on 'Change as a swindler.'

"I felt at that moment the first maternal pang. Aware of the evils my sex have to struggle with, I still wished, for my own consolation, to be the mother of a daughter; and I could not bear to think, that the *fins* of her father's entailed disgrace, should be added to the ills to which woman is heir.

"So completely was I deceived by these shows of friendship (nay, I believe, according to his interpretation, Mr. S—— really was my friend) that I began to consult him respecting the best mode of retrieving my husband's character: it is the good name of a woman only that sets to rise no more. I knew not that he had been drawn into a whirlpool, out of which he had not the energy to attempt to escape. He seemed indeed destitute of the power of employing his faculties in any regular pursuit. His principles of action were so loose, and his mind so uncultivated, that every thing like order appeared to him in the shape of restraint; and, like men in the savage state, he required the strong stimulus of hope or fear, produced by wild speculations, in which the interests of others went for nothing, to keep his spirits awake. He one time possessed patriotism, but he knew not what it was to feel honest indignation; and pretended to be an advocate for liberty, when, with as little affection for the human race as for individuals, he thought of nothing but his own gratification. He was just such a citizen, as a father. The sums he adroitly obtained by a violation of the laws of his country, as well as those of humanity, he would allow a mistress to squander; though she was, with the same *sang froid*, consigned, as were his children, to poverty, when another proved more attractive.

"On various pretences, his friend continued to visit me; and, observing my want of money, he tried to induce me to accept of pecuniary aid; but this offer I absolutely rejected, though it was made with such delicacy, I could not be displeased.

"One day he came, as I thought accidentally, to dinner. My husband was very much engaged in business, and quitted the room soon after the cloth was removed. We conversed as usual, till confidential advice led again to love. I was extremely mortified. I had a sincere regard for him, and hoped that he had an equal friendship for me. I therefore began mildly to expostulate with him. This gentleness he mistook for coy encouragement; and he would not be diverted from the subject. Perceiving his mistake, I seriously asked him how, using such language to me, he could profess to be my husband's friend? A significant sneer excited my curiosity, and he, supposing this to be my only scruple, took a letter deliberately out of his pocket, saying, 'Your husband's honour is not inflexible. How could you, with your discernment, think it so? Why, he left the room this very day on purpose to give me an opportunity to explain myself; *he* thought me too timid—too tardy.'

"I snatched the letter with indescribable emotion. The purport of it was to invite him to dinner, and to ridicule his chivalrous respect for me. He assured him, 'that every woman had her price, and, with gross indecency, hinted, that he should be glad to have the duty of a husband taken off his hands. These he termed *liberal sentiments*. He advised him not to shock my romantic notions, but to attack my credulous generosity, and weak pity; and concluded with requesting him to lend him five hundred pounds for a month or six weeks.' I read this letter twice over; and the firm purpose it inspired, calmed the rising tumult of my soul. I rose deliberately, requested Mr. S—— to wait a moment, and instantly going into the counting-

house, desired Mr. Venables to return with me to the dining-parlour.

"He laid down his pen, and entered with me, without observing any change in my countenance. I shut the door, and, giving him the letter, simply asked, 'whether he wrote it, or was it a forgery?'

"Nothing could equal his confusion. His friend's eye met his, and he muttered something about a joke—But I interrupted him—'It is sufficient—We part for ever.'

"I continued, with solemnity, 'I have borne with your tyranny and infidelities. I disdain to utter what I have borne with. I thought you unprincipled, but not so decidedly vicious. I formed a tie, in the sight of heaven—I have held it sacred; even when men, more conformable to my taste, have made me feel—I despise all subterfuge!—that I was not dead to love. Neglected by you, I have resolutely stifled the enticing emotions, and respected the plighted faith you outraged. And you dare now to insult me, by selling me to prostitution!—Yes—equally lost to delicacy and principle—you dared sacrilegiously to barter the honour of the mother of your child.'

"Then, turning to Mr. S——, I added, 'I call on you, Sir, to witness,' and I lifted my hands and eyes to heaven, 'that, as solemnly as I took his name, I now abjure it,' I pulled off my ring, and put it on the table; 'and that I mean immediately to quit his house, never to enter it more. I will provide for myself and child. I leave him as free as I am determined to be myself—he shall be answerable for no debts of mine.'

"Astonishment closed their lips, till Mr. Venables, gently pushing his friend, with a forced smile, out of the room, nature for a moment prevailed, and, appearing like himself, he turned round, burning with rage, to me: but there was no terror in the frown, excepting when contrasted with the malignant smile which preceded it. He bade me 'leave the house at my peril; told me he despised my threats; I had no resource; I could not swear the peace against him!—I was not afraid of my life!—he had never struck me!'

"He threw the letter in the fire, which I had incautiously left in his hands; and, quitting the room, locked the door on me.

"When left alone, I was a moment or two before I could recollect myself. One scene had succeeded another with such rapidity, I almost doubted whether I was reflecting on a real event. 'Was it possible? Was I, indeed, free?'—Yes; free I termed myself, when I decidedly perceived the conduct I ought to adopt. How had I panted for liberty—liberty, that I would have purchased at any price, but that of my own esteem! I rose, and shook myself; opened the window, and methought the air never smelled so sweet. The face of heaven grew fairer as I viewed it, and the clouds seemed to flit away obedient to my wishes, to give my soul room to expand. I was all soul, and (wild as it may appear) felt as if I could have dissolved in the soft balmy gale that kissed my cheek, or have glided below the horizon on the glowing, descending beams. A seraphic satisfaction animated, without agitating my spirits; and my imagination collected, in visions sublimely terrible, or soothingly beautiful, an immense variety of the endless images, which nature affords, and fancy combines, of the grand and fair. The lustre of these bright picturesque sketches faded with the setting sun; but I was still alive to the calm delight they had diffused through my heart.

"There may be advocates for matrimonial obedience, who, making a distinction between the duty of a wife and of a human being, may blame my conduct.—To them I write not—my feelings are not for them to analyze; and may you, my child, never be able to ascertain, by heart-rending experience, what your mother felt before the present emancipation of her mind!

"I began to write a letter to my father, after closing one to my uncle; not to ask advice, but to signify my determination; when I was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Venables. His manner was changed. His views on my uncle's fortune made him averse to my quitting his house, or he would, I am convinced, have

been glad to have shaken off even the slight restraint my preference imposed on him; the restraint of showing me some respect. So far from having an affection for me, he really hated me, because he was convinced that I must despise him.

"He told me, that, 'As I now had had time to cool and reflect, he did not doubt but that my prudence, and nice sense of propriety, would lead me to overlook what was passed.'

"'Reflection,' I replied, 'had only confirmed my purpose, and no power on earth could divert me from it.'

"Endeavouring to assume a soothing voice and look, when he would willingly have tortured me, to force me to feel his power, his countenance had an infernal expression, when he desired me, 'Not to expose myself to the servants, by obliging him to confine me in my apartment; if then I would give my promise not to quit the house precipitately, I should be free—and—.' I declared, interrupting him, 'that I would promise nothing. I had no measures to keep with him—I was resolved, and would not condescend to subterfuge.'

"He muttered, 'that I should soon repent of these preposterous airs;' and, ordering tea to be carried into my little study, which had a communication with my bed-chamber, he once more locked the door upon me, and left me to my own meditations. I had passively followed him up stairs, not wishing to fatigue myself with unavailing exertion.

"Nothing calms the mind like a fixed purpose. I felt as if I had heaved a thousand weight from my heart; the atmosphere seemed lightened; and, if I execrated the institutions of society, which thus enable men to tyrannize over women, it was almost a disinterested sentiment. I disregarded present inconveniences, when my mind had done struggling with itself,—when reason and inclination had shaken hands and were at peace. I had no longer the cruel task before me, in endless perspective, aye, during the tedious for ever of life, of labouring to overcome my repugnance—of labouring to extinguish the hopes, the maybes of a lively imagination. Death I had hailed as my only chance for deliverance; but, while existence had still so many charms, and life promised happiness, I shrunk from the icy arms of an unknown tyrant, though far more inviting than those of the man, to whom I supposed myself bound without any other alternative; and was content to linger a little longer, waiting for I knew not what, rather than leave 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day,' and all the unenjoyed affection of my nature.

"My present situation gave a new turn to my reflection; and I wondered (now the film seemed to be withdrawn, that obscured the piercing light of reason) how I could, previously to the deciding outrage, have considered myself as everlastingly united to vice and folly? 'Had an evil genius cast a spell at my birth; or a demon stalked out of chaos, to perplex my understanding, and enchain my will, with delusive prejudices?'

"I pursued this train of thinking; it led me out of myself, to expatiate on the misery peculiar to my sex. 'Are not,' I thought, 'the despots for ever stigmatized, who, in the wantonness of power, commanded even the most atrocious criminals to be chained to dead bodies? though surely those laws are much more inhuman, which forge adamantine fetters to bind minds together, that never can mingle in social communion! What indeed can equal the wretchedness of that state, in which there is no alternative, but to extinguish the affections, or encounter infamy?'

CHAP. XII.

"TOWARDS midnight Mr. Venables entered my chamber; and, with calm audacity preparing to go to bed, he bade me make hafte, 'for that was the best place for husbands and wives to end their differences. He had been drinking plentifully to aid his courage.

"I did not at first deign to reply. But perceiving that he affected to take my silence for consent, I told him that, 'If he would not go to another bed, or allow me, I should sit up in my study all night.' He attempted to pull me into the chamber, half joking. But I resisted; and, as he had determined not to give me any reason for saying that he used violence, after a few more efforts, he retired, cursing my obstinacy, to bed.

"I sat musing some time longer; then, throwing my cloak around me, prepared for sleep on a sofa. And, so fortunate seemed my deliverance, so sacred the pleasure of being thus wrapped up in myself, that I slept profoundly, and woke with a mind composed to encounter the struggles of the day. Mr. Venables did not wake till some hours after; and then he came to me half-dressed, yawning and stretching, with haggard eyes, as if he scarcely recollected what had passed the preceding evening. He fixed his eyes on me for a moment, then, calling me a fool, asked 'How long I intended to continue this pretty farce? For his part, he was devilish sick of it; but this was the plague of marrying women who pretended to know something.'

"I made no other reply to this harangue, than to say, 'That he ought to be glad to get rid of a woman so unfit to be his companion—and that any change in my conduct would be mean dissimulation; for maturer reflection only gave the sacred seal of reason to my first resolution.'

"He looked as if he could have stamped with impatience, at being obliged to stifle his rage; but, conquering his anger (for weak people, whose passions seem the most ungovernable, restrain them with the greatest ease, when they have a sufficient motive), he exclaimed, 'Very pretty, upon my soul! very pretty, theatrical flourishes! Pray, fair Roxana, stoop from your altitudes, and remember that you are acting a part in real life.'

"He uttered this speech with a self-satisfied air, and went down stairs to dress.

"In about an hour he came to me again; and in the same tone said, 'That he came as my gentleman-usher to hand me down to breakfast.

"'Of the black rod?' asked I.

"This question, and the tone in which I asked it, a little disconcerted him. To say the truth, I now felt no resentment; my firm resolution to free myself from my ignoble thralldom, had absorbed the various emotions which, during six years, had racked my soul. The duty pointed out by my principles seemed clear; and not one tender feeling intruded to make me swerve: The dislike which my husband had inspired was strong; but it only led me to wish to avoid, to wish to let him drop out of my memory; there was no misery, no torture that I would not deliberately have chosen, rather than renew my lease of servitude.

"During the breakfast, he attempted to reason with me on the folly of romantic sentiments; for this was the indiscriminate epithet he gave to every mode of conduct or thinking superior to his own. He asserted, 'that all the world were governed by their own interest; those who pretended to be actuated by different motives, were only deeper knaves, or fools crazed by books, who took for gospel all therodomantade

nonfence written by men who knew nothing of the world. For his part, he thanked God, he was no hypocrite; and, if he stretched a point sometimes, it was always with an intention of paying every man his own.'

"He then artfully insinuated, 'that he daily expected a vessel to arrive, a successful speculation, that would make him easy for the present, and that he had several other schemes actually depending, that could not fail. He had no doubt of becoming rich in a few years, though he had been thrown back by some unlucky adventures at the setting out.'

"I mildly replied, 'That I wished he might not involve himself still deeper.'

"He had no notion that I was governed by a decision of judgment, not to be compared with a mere spurt of repentment. He knew not what it was to feel indignation against vice, and often boasted of his placable temper, and readiness to forgive injuries. True; for he only considered the being deceived, as an effort of skill he had not guarded against; and then, with a cant of candour, would observe, 'that he did not know how he might himself have been tempted to act in the same circumstances.' And, as his heart never opened to friendship, it never was wounded by disappointment. Every new acquaintance he protested, it is true, was 'the cleverest fellow in the world; and he really thought so; till the novelty of his conversation or manners ceased to have any effect on his sluggish spirits. His respect for rank or fortune was more permanent, though he chanced to have no design of availing himself of the influence of either to promote his own views.

"After a prefatory conversation,—my blood (I thought it had been cooler) flushed over my whole countenance as he spoke—he alluded to my situation. He desired me to reflect—'and act like a prudent woman, as the best proof of my superior understanding; for he must own I had sense, did I know how to use it. I was not,' he laid a stress on his words, 'without my passions; and a husband was a convenient cloke.—He was liberal in his way of thinking; and why might not we, like many other married people, who were above vulgar prejudices, tacitly consent to let each other follow their own inclination?—He meant nothing more, in the letter I made the ground of complaint; and the pleasure which I seemed to take in Mr. S.'s company, led him to conclude, that he was not disagreeable to me.'

"A clerk brought in the letters of the day, and I, as I often did, while he was discussing subjects of business, went to the *piano forte*, and began to play a favourite air to restore myself, as it were, to nature, and drive the sophisticated sentiments I had just been obliged to listen to, out of my soul.

"They had excited sensations similar to those I have felt, in viewing the squalid inhabitants of some of the lanes and back streets of the metropolis, mortified at being compelled to consider them as my fellow-creatures, as if an ape had claimed kindred with me. Or, as when surrounded by a mephitical fog, I have wished to have a volley of cannon fired, to clear the incumbered atmosphere, and give me room to breathe and move.

"My spirits were all in arms, and I played a kind of extemporary prelude. The cadence was probably wild and impassioned, while, lost in thought, I made the sounds a kind of echo to my train of thinking.

"Pausing for a moment, I met Mr. Venables' eyes. He was observing me with an air of conceited satisfaction, as much as to say—'My last insinuation has done the business—she begins to know her own interest.' Then gathering up his letters, he said, 'That he hoped he should hear no more romantic stuff, well enough in a miss just come from boarding school;' and went, as was his custom, to the counting-house. I still continued playing; and, turning to a sprightly lesson, I executed it with uncommon vivacity. I heard footsteps approach the door, and was soon convinced that Mr. Venables was listening; the consciousness

only gave more animation to my fingers. He went down into the kitchen, and the cook, probably by his desire, came to me, to know what I would please to order for dinner. Mr. Venables came into the parlour again, with apparent carelessness. I perceived that the cunning man was over-reaching himself; and I gave my directions as usual, and left the room.

"While I was making some alteration in my dress, Mr. Venables peeped in, and, begging my pardon for interrupting me, disappeared. I took up some work (I could not read), and two or three messages were sent to me, probably for no other purpose, but to enable Mr. Venables to ascertain what I was about.

"I listened whenever I heard the street-door open; at last I imagined I could distinguish Mr. Venables' step, going out. I laid aside my work; my heart palpitated; still I was afraid hastily to enquire; and I waited a long half hour, before I ventured to ask the boy whether his master was in the counting-house?

"Being answered in the negative, I bade him call me a coach, and collecting a few necessaries hastily together, with a little parcel of letters and papers which I had collected the preceding evening, I hurried into it, desiring the coachman to drive to a distant part of the town.

"I almost feared that the coach would break down before I got out of the street; and, when I turned the corner, I seemed to breathe a freer air. I was ready to imagine that I was rising above the thick atmosphere of earth; or I felt, as wearied souls might be supposed to feel on entering another state of existence.

"I stopped at one or two stands of coaches to elude pursuit, and then drove round the skirts of the town to seek for an obscure lodging, where I wished to remain concealed, till I could avail myself of my uncle's protection. I had resolved to assume my own name immediately, and openly to avow my determination, without any formal vindication, the moment I had found a home, in which I could rest free from the daily alarm of expecting to see Mr. Venables enter.

"I looked at several lodgings; but finding that I could not, without a reference to some acquaintance, who might inform my tyrant, get admittance into a decent apartment—men have not all this trouble—I thought of a woman whom I had assisted to furnish a little haberdasher's shop, and who I knew had a first floor to let.

"I went to her, and though I could not persuade her, that the quarrel between me and Mr. Venables would never be made up, still she agreed to conceal me for the present; yet assuring me at the same time, shaking her head, that, when a woman was once married, she must bear every thing. Her pale face, on which appeared a thousand haggard lines and delving wrinkles, produced by what is emphatically termed fretting, enforced her remark; and I had afterwards an opportunity of observing the treatment she had to endure, which grizzled her into patience. She toiled from morning till night; yet her husband would rob the till, and take away the money reserved for paying bills; and, returning home drunk, he would beat her if she chanced to offend him, though she had a child at the breast.

"These scenes awoke me at night; and, in the morning, I heard her, as usual, talk to her dear Johnny—he, forsooth, was her master; no slave in the West Indies had one more despotic; but fortunately she was of the true Ruffian breed of wives.

"My mind, during the few past days, seemed, as it were, disengaged from my body; but, now the struggle was over, I felt very forcibly the effect which perturbation of spirits produces on a woman in my situation.

"The apprehension of a miscarriage, obliged me to confine myself to my apartment near a fortnight; but I wrote to my uncle's friend for money, promising 'to call on him, and explain my situation, when I was well

enough to go out; mean time I earnestly intreated him, not to mention my place of abode to any one, lest my husband—such the law considered him—should disturb the mind he could not conquer. I mentioned my intention of setting out for Lisbon, to claim my uncle's protection, the moment my health would permit.'

"The tranquillity however, which I was recovering, was soon interrupted. My landlady came up to me one day, with eyes swollen with weeping, unable to utter what she was commanded to say. She declared, 'That she was never so miserable in her life; that she must appear an ungrateful monster; and that she would readily go down on her knees to me, to intreat me to forgive her, as she had done to her husband to spare her the cruel task.' Sobs prevented her from proceeding, or answering my impatient enquiries, to know what she meant.

"When she became a little more composed, she took a newspaper out of her pocket, declaring, 'that her heart smote her, but what could she do?—she must obey her husband.' I snatched the paper from her. An advertisement quickly met my eye, purporting, that 'Maria Venables had, without any assignable cause, absconded from her husband; and any person harbouring her, was menaced with the utmost severity of the law.'

"Perfectly acquainted with Mr. Venables' meannesses of soul, this step did not excite my surprise, and scarcely my contempt. Repentment in my breast, never survived love. I bade the poor woman, in a kind tone, wipe her eyes, and request her husband to come up, and speak to me himself.

"My manner awed him. He respected a lady, though not a woman; and began to mutter out an apology.

"'Mr. Venables was a rich gentleman; he wished to oblige me, but he had suffered enough by the law already, to tremble at the thought; besides, for certain, we should come together again, and then even I should not thank him for being accessory to keeping us asunder.—A husband and wife were, God knows, just as one,—and all would come round at last.' He uttered a drawling 'Hem!' and then with an arch look, added—'Master might have had his little frolics—but—Lord bless your heart!—men would be men while the world stands.'

"To argue with this privileged first-born of reason, I perceived, would be vain. I therefore only requested him to let me remain another day at his house, while I sought for a lodging; and not to inform Mr. Venables that I had ever been sheltered there.

"He consented, because he had not the courage to refuse a person for whom he had an habitual respect; but I heard the pent-up choler burst forth in curses, when he met his wife, who was waiting impatiently at the foot of the stairs, to know what effect my expostulations would have on him.

"Without wasting any time in the fruitless indulgence of vexation, I once more set out in search of an abode in which I could hide myself for a few weeks.

"Agreeing to pay an exorbitant price, I hired an apartment, without any reference being required relative to my character: indeed, a glance at my shape seemed to say, that my motive for concealment was sufficiently obvious. Thus was I obliged to shroud my head in infamy.

"To avoid all danger of detection—I use the appropriate word, my child, for I was hunted out like a felon—I determined to take possession of my new lodgings that very evening.

"I did not inform my landlady where I was going. I knew that she had a sincere affection for me, and would willingly have run any risk to show her gratitude; yet I was fully convinced, that a few kind words from Johnny would have found the woman in her, and her dear benefactress, as she termed me in an agony

of tears, would have been sacrificed, to recompense her tyrant for condescending to treat her like an equal. He could be kind-hearted, as she expressed it, when he pleased. And this thawed sternness, contrasted with his habitual brutality, was the more acceptable, and could not be purchased at too dear a rate.

"The sight of the advertisement made me desirous of taking refuge with my uncle, let what would be the consequence; and I repaired in a hackney coach (afraid of meeting some person who might chance to know me, had I walked) to the chambers of my uncle's friend.

"He received me with great politeness (my uncle had already prepossessed him in my favour), and listened, with interest, to my explanation of the motives which had induced me to fly from home, and skulk in obscurity, with all the timidity of fear that ought only to be the companion of guilt. He lamented, with rather more gallantry than, in my situation, I thought delicate, that such a woman should be thrown away on a man insensible to the charms of beauty or grace. He seemed at a loss what to advise me to do, to evade my husband's search, without hastening to my uncle, whom, he hesitating said, I might not find alive. He uttered this intelligence with visible regret; requested me, at least, to wait for the arrival of the next packet; offered me what money I wanted, and promised to visit me.

"He kept his word; still no letter arrived to put an end to my painful state of suspense. I procured some books and music, to beguile the tedious solitary days.

'Come, ever smiling Liberty,
'And with thee bring thy jocund train:'

I sung—and sung till, saddened by the strain of joy, I bitterly lamented the fate that deprived me of all social pleasure. Comparative liberty indeed I had possessed myself of; but the jocund train lagged far behind!

CHAP. XIII.

"By watching my only visitor, my uncle's friend, or by some other means, Mr. Venables discovered my residence, and came to enquire for me. The maid-servant assured him there was no such person in the house. A bustle ensued—I caught the alarm—listened—distinguished his voice, and immediately locked the door. They suddenly grew still; and I waited near a quarter of an hour, before I heard him open the parlour door, and mount the stairs with the mistress of the house, who obsequiously declared that she knew nothing of me.

"Finding my door locked, she requested me to 'open it, and prepare to go home with my husband, poor gentleman! to whom I had already occasioned sufficient vexation.' I made no reply. Mr. Venables then, in an assumed tone of softness, intreated me, 'to consider what he suffered, and my own reputation, and get the better of childish resentment.' He ran on in the same strain, pretending to address me, but evidently adapting his discourse to the capacity of the landlady; who, at every pause, uttered an exclamation of pity; or 'Yes, to be sure—Very true, sir.'

"Sick of the farce, and perceiving that I could not avoid the hated interview, I opened the door, and he entered. Advancing with easy assurance to take my hand, I shrunk from his touch, with an involuntary start, as I should have done from a noisome reptile, with more disgust than terror. His conductress was retiring, to give us, as she said, an opportunity to accommodate matters. But I bade her come in, or I would go out; and curiosity impelled her to obey me.

"Mr. Venables began to expostulate; and this woman, proud of his confidence, to second him. But I calmly silenced her, in the midst of a vulgar harangue, and turning to him, asked, 'Why he vainly tormented me?' declaring that no power on earth should force me back to his house.'

"After a long altercation, the particulars of which, it would be to no purpose to repeat, he left the room. Some time was spent in loud conversation in the parlour below, and I discovered that he had brought his friend, an attorney, with him.

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* * The tumult on the landing place, brought out a gentleman, who had recently taken apartments in the house; he enquired why I was thus assailed^[91-A]? The voluble attorney instantly repeated the trite tale. The stranger turned to me, observing, with the most soothing politeness and manly interest, that 'my countenance told a very different story.' He added, 'that I should not be insulted, or forced out of the house, by any body.'

"'Not by her husband?' asked the attorney.

"'No, sir, not by her husband.' Mr. Venables advanced towards him—But there was a decision in his attitude, that so well seconded that of his voice,

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* * They left the house: at the same time protesting, that any one that should dare to protect me, should be prosecuted with the utmost rigour.

"They were scarcely out of the house, when my landlady came up to me again, and begged my pardon, in a very different tone. For, though Mr. Venables had bid her, at her peril, harbour me, he had not attended, I found, to her broad hints, to discharge the lodging. I instantly promised to pay her, and make her a present to compensate for my abrupt departure, if she would procure me another lodging, at a sufficient distance; and she, in return, repeating Mr. Venables' plausible tale, I raised her indignation, and excited her sympathy, by telling her briefly the truth.

"She expressed her commiseration with such honest warmth, that I felt soothed; for I have none of that fastidious sensitiveness, which a vulgar accent or gesture can alarm to the disregard of real kindness. I was ever glad to perceive in others the humane feelings I delighted to exercise; and the recollection of some ridiculous characteristic circumstances, which have occurred in a moment of emotion, has convulsed me with laughter, though at the instant I should have thought it sacrilegious to have smiled. Your improvement, my dearest girl, being ever present to me while I write, I note these feelings, because women, more accustomed to observe manners than actions, are too much alive to ridicule. So much so, that their boasted sensibility is often stifled by false delicacy. True sensibility, the sensibility which is the auxiliary of virtue, and the soul of genius, is in society so occupied with the feelings of others, as scarcely to regard its own sensations. With what reverence have I looked up at my uncle, the dear parent of my mind! when I have seen the sense of his own sufferings, of mind and body, absorbed in a desire to comfort those, whose misfortunes were comparatively trivial. He would have been ashamed of being as indulgent to himself, as he was to others. 'Genuine fortitude,' he would assert, 'consisted in governing our own emotions, and making allowance for the weaknesses in our friends, that we would not tolerate in ourselves.' But where is my fond regret leading me!

"'Women must be submissive,' said my landlady. 'Indeed what could most women do? Who had they to maintain them, but their husbands? Every woman, and especially a lady, could not go through rough and smooth, as she had done, to earn a little bread.'

"She was in a talking mood, and proceeded to inform me how she had been used in the world. 'She knew what it was to have a bad husband, or she did not know who should.' I perceived that she would be very much mortified, were I not to attend to her tale, and I did not attempt to interrupt her, though I wished her, as soon as possible, to go out in search of a new abode for me, where I could once more hide my head.

"She began by telling me, 'That she had saved a little money in service; and was over-persuaded (we must all be in love once in our lives) to marry a likely man, a footman in the family, not worth a groat. My plan,' she continued, 'was to take a house, and let out lodgings; and all went on well, till my husband got acquainted with an impudent flut, who chose to live on other people's means—and then all went to rack and ruin. He ran in debt to buy her fine clothes, such clothes as I never thought of wearing myself, and—would you believe it?—he signed an execution on my very goods, bought with the money I worked so hard to get; and they came and took my bed from under me, before I heard a word of the matter. Aye, madam, these are misfortunes that you gentlefolks know nothing of,—but sorrow is sorrow, let it come which way it will.

"'I fought for a service again—very hard, after having a house of my own!—but he used to follow me, and kick up such a riot when he was drunk, that I could not keep a place; nay, he even stole my clothes, and pawned them; and when I went to the pawnbroker's, and offered to take my oath that they were not bought with a farthing of his money, they said, 'It was all as one, my husband had a right to whatever I had.'

"At last he lifted for a soldier, and I took a house, making an agreement to pay for the furniture by degrees; and I almost starved myself, till I once more got before-hand in the world.

"After an absence of six years (God forgive me! I thought he was dead) my husband returned; found me out, and came with such a penitent face, I forgave him, and clothed him from head to foot. But he had not been a week in the house, before some of his creditors arrested him; and, he selling my goods, I found myself once more reduced to beggary; for I was not as well able to work, go to bed late, and rise early, as when I quitted service; and then I thought it hard enough. He was soon tired of me, when there was nothing more to be had, and left me again.

"I will not tell you how I was buffeted about, till, hearing for certain that he had died in an hospital abroad, I once more returned to my old occupation; but have not yet been able to get my head above water: so, madam, you must not be angry if I am afraid to run any risk, when I know so well, that women have always the worst of it, when law is to decide.'

"After uttering a few more complaints, I prevailed on my landlady to go out in quest of a lodging; and, to be more secure, I condescended to the mean shift of changing my name.

"But why should I dwell on similar incidents!—I was hunted, like an infected beast, from three different apartments, and should not have been allowed to rest in any, had not Mr. Venables, informed of my uncle's dangerous state of health, been inspired with the fear of hurrying me out of the world as I advanced in my pregnancy, by thus tormenting and obliging me to take sudden journeys to avoid him; and then his speculations on my uncle's fortune must prove abortive.

"One day, when he had pursued me to an inn, I fainted, hurrying from him; and, falling down, the sight of my blood alarmed him, and obtained a respite for me. It is strange that he should have retained any hope, after observing my unwavering determination; but, from the mildness of my behaviour, when I found all my endeavours to change his disposition unavailing, he formed an erroneous opinion of my character, imagining that, were we once more together, I should part with the money he could not legally force from me, with the same facility as formerly. My forbearance and occasional sympathy he had mistaken for weakness of character; and, because he perceived that I disliked resistance, he thought my indulgence and compassion mere selfishness, and never discovered that the fear of being unjust, or of unnecessarily wounding the feelings of another, was much more painful to me, than any thing I could have to endure myself. Perhaps it was pride which made me imagine, that I could bear what I dreaded to inflict; and that it was often easier to suffer, than to see the sufferings of others.

"I forgot to mention that, during this persecution, I received a letter from my uncle, informing me, 'that he only found relief from continual change of air; and that he intended to return when the spring was a little more advanced (it was now the middle of February), and then we would plan a journey to Italy, leaving the fogs and cares of England far behind.' He approved of my conduct, promised to adopt my child, and seemed to have no doubt of obliging Mr. Venables to hear reason. He wrote to his friend, by the same post, desiring him to call on Mr. Venables in his name; and, in consequence of the remonstrances he dictated, I was permitted to lie-in tranquilly.

"The two or three weeks previous, I had been allowed to rest in peace; but, so accustomed was I to pursuit and alarm, that I seldom closed my eyes without being haunted by Mr. Venables' image, who seemed to assume terrific or hateful forms to torment me, wherever I turned.—Sometimes a wild cat, a roaring bull, or hideous assassin, whom I vainly attempted to fly; at others he was a demon, hurrying me to the brink of a precipice, plunging me into dark waves, or horrid gulfs; and I woke, in violent fits of trembling anxiety, to

assure myself that it was all a dream, and to endeavour to lure my waking thoughts to wander to the delightful Italian vales, I hoped soon to visit; or to picture some august ruins, where I reclined in fancy on a mouldering column, and escaped, in the contemplation of the heart-enlarging virtues of antiquity, from the turmoil of cares that had depressed all the daring purposes of my soul. But I was not long allowed to calm my mind by the exercise of my imagination; for the third day after your birth, my child, I was surprised by a visit from my elder brother; who came in the most abrupt manner, to inform me of the death of my uncle. He had left the greater part of his fortune to my child, appointing me its guardian; in short, every step was taken to enable me to be mistress of his fortune, without putting any part of it in Mr. Venables' power. My brother came to vent his rage on me, for having, as he expressed himself, 'deprived him, my uncle's eldest nephew, of his inheritance;' though my uncle's property, the fruit of his own exertion, being all in the funds, or on landed securities, there was not a shadow of justice in the charge.

"As I sincerely loved my uncle, this intelligence brought on a fever, which I struggled to conquer with all the energy of my mind; for, in my desolate state, I had it very much at heart to suckle you, my poor babe. You seemed my only tie to life, a cherub, to whom I wished to be a father, as well as a mother; and the double duty appeared to me to produce a proportionate increase of affection. But the pleasure I felt, while sustaining you, snatched from the wreck of hope, was cruelly damped by melancholy reflections on my widowed state—widowed by the death of my uncle. Of Mr. Venables I thought not, even when I thought of the felicity of loving your father, and how a mother's pleasure might be exalted, and her care softened by a husband's tenderness.—'Ought to be!' I exclaimed; and I endeavoured to drive away the tenderness that suffocated me; but my spirits were weak, and the unbidden tears would flow. 'Why was I,' I would ask thee, but thou didst not heed me,—'cut off from the participation of the sweetest pleasure of life?' I imagined with what extacy, after the pains of child-bed, I should have presented my little stranger, whom I had so long wished to view, to a respectable father, and with what maternal fondness I should have pressed them both to my heart!—Now I kissed her with less delight, though with the most endearing compassion, poor helpless one! when I perceived a flight resemblance of him, to whom she owed her existence; or, if any gesture reminded me of him, even in his best days, my heart heaved, and I pressed the innocent to my bosom, as if to purify it—yes, I blushed to think that its purity had been sullied, by allowing such a man to be its father.

"After my recovery, I began to think of taking a house in the country, or of making an excursion on the continent, to avoid Mr. Venables; and to open my heart to new pleasures and affection. The spring was melting into summer, and you, my little companion, began to smile—that smile made hope bud out afresh, assuring me the world was not a desert. Your gestures were ever present to my fancy; and I dwelt on the joy I should feel when you would begin to walk and lip. Watching your wakening mind, and shielding from every rude blast my tender blossom, I recovered my spirits—I dreamed not of the frost—'the killing frost,' to which you were destined to be exposed.—But I lose all patience—and execrate the injustice of the world—folly! ignorance!—I should rather call it; but, shut up from a free circulation of thought, and always pondering on the same griefs, I writhe under the torturing apprehensions, which ought to excite only honest indignation, or active compassion; and would, could I view them as the natural consequence of things. But, born a woman—and born to suffer, in endeavouring to repress my own emotions, I feel more acutely the various ills my sex are fated to bear—I feel that the evils they are subject to endure, degrade them so far below their oppressors, as almost to justify their tyranny; leading at the same time superficial reasoners to term that weakness the cause, which is only the consequence of short-sighted despotism.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[91-A\]](#) The introduction of Darnford as the deliverer of Maria, in an early stage of the history, is already stated (Chap. III.) to have been an after-thought of the author. This has probably caused the imperfectness of the manuscript in the above passage; though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged to be somewhat uncertain, whether Darnford is the stranger intended in this place. It appears from Chap. XVII. that an interference of a more decisive nature was designed to be attributed to him.

EDITOR.

CHAP. XIV.

"As my mind grew calmer, the visions of Italy again returned with their former glow of colouring; and I resolved on quitting the kingdom for a time, in search of the cheerfulness, that naturally results from a change of scene, unless we carry the barbed arrow with us, and only see what we feel.

"During the period necessary to prepare for a long absence, I sent a supply to pay my father's debts, and settled my brothers in eligible situations; but my attention was not wholly engrossed by my family, though I do not think it necessary to enumerate the common exertions of humanity. The manner in which my uncle's property was settled, prevented me from making the addition to the fortune of my surviving sister, that I could have wished; but I had prevailed on him to bequeath her two thousand pounds, and she determined to marry a lover, to whom she had been some time attached. Had it not been for this engagement, I should have invited her to accompany me in my tour; and I might have escaped the pit, so artfully dug in my path, when I was the least aware of danger.

"I had thought of remaining in England, till I weaned my child; but this state of freedom was too peaceful to last, and I had soon reason to wish to hasten my departure. A friend of Mr. Venables, the same attorney who had accompanied him in several excursions to hunt me from my hiding places, waited on me to propose a reconciliation. On my refusal, he indirectly advised me to make over to my husband—for husband he would term him—the greater part of the property I had at command, menacing me with continual persecution unless I complied, and that, as a last resort, he would claim the child. I did not, though intimidated by the last insinuation, scruple to declare, that I would not allow him to squander the money left to me for far different purposes, but offered him five hundred pounds, if he would sign a bond not to torment me any more. My maternal anxiety made me thus appear to waver from my first determination, and probably suggested to him, or his diabolical agent, the infernal plot, which has succeeded but too well.

"The bond was executed; still I was impatient to leave England. Mischiefs hung in the air when we breathed the same; I wanted seas to divide us, and waters to roll between, till he had forgotten that I had the means of helping him through a new scheme. Disturbed by the late occurrences, I instantly prepared for my departure. My only delay was waiting for a maid-servant, who spoke French fluently, and had been warmly recommended to me. A valet I was advised to hire, when I fixed on my place of residence for any time.

"My God, with what a light heart did I set out for Dover!—It was not my country, but my cares, that I was leaving behind. My heart seemed to bound with the wheels, or rather appeared the centre on which they twirled. I clasped you to my bosom, exclaiming 'And you will be safe—quite safe—when—we are once on board the packet.—Would we were there!' I smiled at my idle fears, as the natural effect of continual alarm; and I scarcely owned to myself that I dreaded Mr. Venables's cunning, or was conscious of the horrid delight he would feel, at forming stratagem after stratagem to circumvent me. I was already in the snare—I never reached the packet—I never saw thee more.—I grow breathless. I have scarcely patience to write down the details. The maid—the plausible woman I had hired—put, doubtless, some stupifying potion in what I ate or drank, the morning I left town. All I know is, that she must have quitted the chaise, shameless wretch! and taken (from my breast) my babe with her. How could a creature in a female form see me care for thee, and steal thee from my arms! I must stop, stop to represent a mother's anguish; left, in

bitterness of soul, I imprecate the wrath of heaven on this tiger, who tore my only comfort from me.

"How long I slept I know not; certainly many hours, for I woke at the close of day, in a strange confusion of thought. I was probably roused to recollection by some one thundering at a huge, unwieldy gate. Attempting to ask where I was, my voice died away, and I tried to raise it in vain, as I have done in a dream. I looked for my babe with affright; feared that it had fallen out of my lap, while I had so strangely forgotten her; and, such was the vague intoxication, I can give it no other name, in which I was plunged, I could not recollect when or where I last saw you; but I sighed, as if my heart wanted room to clear my head.

"The gates opened heavily, and the fullen sound of many locks and bolts drawn back, grated on my very soul, before I was appalled by the creaking of the dismal hinges, as they closed after me. The gloomy pile was before me, half in ruins; some of the aged trees of the avenue were cut down, and left to rot where they fell; and as we approached some mouldering steps, a monstrous dog darted forwards to the length of his chain, and barked and growled infernally.

"The door was opened slowly, and a murderous visage peeped out, with a lantern. 'Hush!' he uttered, in a threatening tone, and the affrighted animal stole back to his kennel. The door of the chaise flew back, the stranger put down the lantern, and clasped his dreadful arms around me. It was certainly the effect of the soporific draught, for, instead of exerting my strength, I sunk without motion, though not without sense, on his shoulder, my limbs refusing to obey my will. I was carried up the steps into a close-shut hall. A candle flaring in the socket, scarcely dispersed the darkness, though it displayed to me the ferocious countenance of the wretch who held me.

"He mounted a wide staircase. Large figures painted on the walls seemed to start on me, and glaring eyes to meet me at every turn. Entering a long gallery, a dismal shriek made me spring out of my conductor's arms, with I know not what mysterious emotion of terror; but I fell on the floor, unable to sustain myself.

"A strange-looking female started out of one of the recesses, and observed me with more curiosity than interest; till, sternly bid retire, she flitted back like a shadow. Other faces, strongly marked, or distorted, peeped through the half-opened doors, and I heard some incoherent sounds. I had no distinct idea where I could be—I looked on all sides, and almost doubted whether I was alive or dead.

"Thrown on a bed, I immediately sunk into insensibility again; and next day, gradually recovering the use of reason, I began, starting affrighted from the conviction, to discover where I was confined—I insisted on seeing the master of the mansion—I saw him—and perceived that I was buried alive.—

"Such, my child, are the events of thy mother's life to this dreadful moment—Should she ever escape from the fangs of her enemies, she will add the secrets of her prison-house—and—"

Some lines were here crossed out, and the memoirs broke off abruptly with the names of Jemima and Darnford.

APPENDIX.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

THE performance, with a fragment of which the reader has now been presented, was designed to consist of three parts. The preceding sheets were considered as constituting one of those parts. Those persons who in the perusal of the chapters, already written and in some degree finished by the author, have felt their hearts awakened, and their curiosity excited as to the sequel of the story, will, of course, gladly accept even of the broken paragraphs and half-finished sentences, which have been found committed to paper, as materials for the remainder. The fastidious and cold-hearted critic may perhaps feel himself repelled by the incoherent form in which they are presented. But an inquisitive temper willingly accepts the most imperfect and mutilated information, where better is not to be had: and readers, who in any degree resemble the author in her quick apprehension of sentiment, and of the pleasures and pains of imagination, will, I believe, find gratification, in contemplating sketches, which were designed in a short time to have received the finishing touches of her genius; but which must now for ever remain a mark to record the triumphs of mortality, over schemes of usefulness, and projects of public interest.]

CHAP. XV.

DARNFORD returned the memoirs to Maria, with a most affectionate letter, in which he reasoned on "the absurdity of the laws respecting matrimony, which, till divorces could be more easily obtained, was," he declared, "the most insufferable bondage. Ties of this nature could not bind minds governed by superior principles; and such beings were privileged to act above the dictates of laws they had no voice in framing, if they had sufficient strength of mind to endure the natural consequence. In her case, to talk of duty, was a farce, excepting what was due to herself. Delicacy, as well as reason, forbade her ever to think of returning to her husband: was she then to restrain her charming sensibility through mere prejudice? These arguments were not absolutely impartial, for he disdained to conceal, that, when he appealed to her reason, he felt that he had some interest in her heart.—The conviction was not more transporting, than sacred—a thousand times a day, he asked himself how he had merited such happiness?—and as often he determined to purify the heart she deigned to inhabit—He intreated to be again admitted to her presence."

He was; and the tear which glistened in his eye, when he respectfully pressed her to his bosom, rendered him peculiarly dear to the unfortunate mother. Grief had stilled the transports of love, only to render their mutual tenderness more touching. In former interviews, Darnford had contrived, by a hundred little pretexts, to sit near her, to take her hand, or to meet her eyes—now it was all soothing affection, and esteem seemed to have rivalled love. He adverted to her narrative, and spoke with warmth of the oppression she had endured.—His eyes, glowing with a lambent flame, told her how much he wished to restore her to liberty and love; but he kissed her hand, as if it had been that of a saint; and spoke of the loss of her child, as if it had been his own.—What could have been more flattering to Maria?—Every instance of self-denial was registered in her heart, and she loved him, for loving her too well to give way to the transports of passion.

They met again and again; and Darnford declared, while passion suffused his cheeks, that he never before knew what it was to love.—

One morning Jemima informed Maria, that her master intended to wait on her, and speak to her without witnesses. He came, and brought a letter with him, pretending that he was ignorant of its contents, though he insisted on having it returned to him. It was from the attorney already mentioned, who informed her of the death of her child, and hinted, "that she could not now have a legitimate heir, and that, would she make over the half of her fortune during life, she should be conveyed to Dover, and permitted to pursue her plan of travelling."

Maria answered with warmth, "That she had no terms to make with the murderer of her babe, nor would she purchase liberty at the price of her own respect."

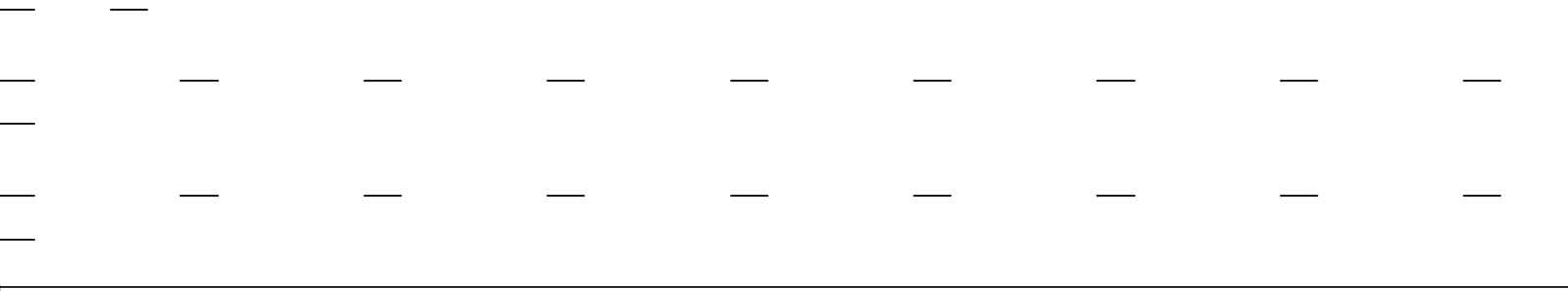
She began to expostulate with her jailor; but he sternly bade her "Be silent—he had not gone so far, not to go further."

Darnford came in the evening. Jemima was obliged to be absent, and she, as usual, locked the door on them, to prevent interruption or discovery.—The lovers were, at first, embarrassed; but fell insensibly into confidential discourse. Darnford represented, "that they might soon be parted," and wished her "to put it out of the power of fate to separate them."

As her husband she now received him, and he solemnly pledged himself as her protector—and eternal

friend.—

There was one peculiarity in Maria's mind: she was more anxious not to deceive, than to guard against deception; and had rather trust without sufficient reason, than be for ever the prey of doubt. Besides, what are we, when the mind has, from reflection, a certain kind of elevation, which exalts the contemplation above the little concerns of prudence! We see what we wish, and make a world of our own—and, though reality may sometimes open a door to misery, yet the moments of happiness procured by the imagination, may, without a paradox, be reckoned among the solid comforts of life. Maria now, imagining that she had found a being of celestial mould—was happy,—nor was she deceived.—He was then plastic in her impassioned hand—and reflected all the sentiments which animated and warmed her.



CHAP. XVI.

ONE morning confusion seemed to reign in the house, and Jemima came in terror, to inform Maria, "that her master had left it, with a determination, she was assured (and too many circumstances corroborated the opinion, to leave a doubt of its truth) of never returning. I am prepared then," said Jemima, "to accompany you in your flight."

Maria started up, her eyes darting towards the door, as if afraid that some one should fasten it on her for ever.

Jemima continued, "I have perhaps no right now to expect the performance of your promise; but on you it depends to reconcile me with the human race."

"But Darnford!"—exclaimed Maria, mournfully—sitting down again, and crossing her arms—"I have no child to go to, and liberty has lost its sweets."

"I am much mistaken, if Darnford is not the cause of my master's flight—his keepers assure me, that they have promised to confine him two days longer, and then he will be free—you cannot see him; but they will give a letter to him the moment he is free.—In that inform him where he may find you in London; fix on some hotel. Give me your clothes; I will send them out of the house with mine, and we will slip out at the garden-gate. Write your letter while I make these arrangements, but lose no time!"

In an agitation of spirit, not to be calmed, Maria began to write to Darnford. She called him by the sacred name of "husband," and bade him "hasten to her, to share her fortune, or she would return to him."—An hotel in the Adelphi was the place of rendezvous.

The letter was sealed and given in charge; and with light footsteps, yet terrified at the sound of them, she descended, scarcely breathing, and with an indistinct fear that she should never get out at the garden gate. Jemima went first.

A being, with a visage that would have suited one possessed by a devil, crossed the path, and seized Maria by the arm. Maria had no fear but of being detained—"Who are you? what are you?" for the form was scarcely human. "If you are made of flesh and blood," his ghastly eyes glared on her, "do not stop me!"

"Woman," interrupted a sepulchral voice, "what have I to do with thee?"—Still he grasped her hand, muttering a curse.

"No, no; you have nothing to do with me," she exclaimed, "this is a moment of life and death!"—

With supernatural force she broke from him, and, throwing her arms round Jemima, cried, "Save me!" The being, from whose grasp she had loosed herself, took up a stone as they opened the door, and with a kind of hellish sport threw it after them. They were out of his reach.

When Maria arrived in town, she drove to the hotel already fixed on. But she could not sit still—her child was ever before her; and all that had passed during her confinement, appeared to be a dream. She went to the house in the suburbs, where, as she now discovered, her babe had been sent. The moment she entered, her heart grew sick; but she wondered not that it had proved its grave. She made the necessary enquiries, and the church-yard was pointed out, in which it rested under a turf. A little frock which the nurse's child

wore (Maria had made it herself) caught her eye. The nurse was glad to sell it for half-a-guinea, and Maria hastened away with the relic, and, re-entering the hackney-coach which waited for her, gazed on it, till she reached her hotel.

She then waited on the attorney who had made her uncle's will, and explained to him her situation. He readily advanced her some of the money which still remained in his hands, and promised to take the whole of the case into consideration. Maria only wished to be permitted to remain in quiet—She found that several bills, apparently with her signature, had been presented to her agent, nor was she for a moment at a loss to guess by whom they had been forged; yet, equally averse to threaten or intreat, she requested her friend [the solicitor] to call on Mr. Venables. He was not to be found at home; but at length his agent, the attorney, offered a conditional promise to Maria, to leave her in peace, as long as she behaved with propriety, if she would give up the notes. Maria inconsiderately consented—Darnford was arrived, and she wished to be only alive to love; she wished to forget the anguish she felt whenever she thought of her child.

They took a ready furnished lodging together, for she was above disguise; Jemima insinuating on being considered as her house-keeper, and to receive the customary stipend. On no other terms would she remain with her friend.

Darnford was indefatigable in tracing the mysterious circumstances of his confinement. The cause was simply, that a relation, a very distant one, to whom he was heir, had died intestate, leaving a considerable fortune. On the news of Darnford's arrival [in England, a person, intrusted with the management of the property, and who had the writings in his possession, determining, by one bold stroke, to strip Darnford of the succession,] had planned his confinement; and [as soon as he had taken the measures he judged most conducive to his object, this ruffian, together with his instrument,] the keeper of the private mad-house, left the kingdom. Darnford, who still pursued his enquiries, at last discovered that they had fixed their place of refuge at Paris.

Maria and he determined therefore, with the faithful Jemima, to visit that metropolis, and accordingly were preparing for the journey, when they were informed that Mr. Venables had commenced an action against Darnford for seduction and adultery. The indignation Maria felt cannot be explained; she repented of the forbearance she had exercised in giving up the notes. Darnford could not put off his journey, without risking the loss of his property: Maria therefore furnished him with money for his expedition; and determined to remain in London till the termination of this affair.

She visited some ladies with whom she had formerly been intimate, but was refused admittance; and at the opera, or Ranelagh, they could not recollect her. Among these ladies there were some, not her most intimate acquaintance, who were generally supposed to avail themselves of the cloak of marriage, to conceal a mode of conduct, that would for ever have damned their fame, had they been innocent, seduced girls. These particularly stood aloof.—Had she remained with her husband, practising insincerity, and neglecting her child to manage an intrigue, she would still have been visited and respected. If, instead of openly living with her lover, she could have condescended to call into play a thousand arts, which, degrading her own mind, might have allowed the people who were not deceived, to pretend to be so, she would have been caressed and treated like an honourable woman. "And Brutus^[138-A] is an honourable man!" said Mark-Antony with equal sincerity.

With Darnford she did not taste uninterrupted felicity; there was a volatility in his manner which often distressed her; but love gladdened the scene; besides, he was the most tender, sympathizing creature in the world. A fondness for the sex often gives an appearance of humanity to the behaviour of men, who have

small pretensions to the reality; and they seem to love others, when they are only pursuing their own gratification. Darnford appeared ever willing to avail himself of her taste and acquirements, while she endeavoured to profit by his decision of character, and to eradicate some of the romantic notions, which had taken root in her mind, while in adversity she had brooded over visions of unattainable bliss.

The real affections of life, when they are allowed to burst forth, are buds pregnant with joy and all the sweet emotions of the soul; yet they branch out with wild ease, unlike the artificial forms of felicity, sketched by an imagination painful alive. The substantial happiness, which enlarges and civilizes the mind, may be compared to the pleasure experienced in roving through nature at large, inhaling the sweet gale natural to the clime; while the reveries of a feverish imagination continually sport themselves in gardens full of aromatic shrubs, which cloy while they delight, and weaken the sense of pleasure they gratify. The heaven of fancy, below or beyond the stars, in this life, or in those ever-smiling regions surrounded by the unmarked ocean of futurity, have an insipid uniformity which palls. Poets have imagined scenes of bliss; but, fencing out sorrow, all the extatic emotions of the soul, and even its grandeur, seem to be equally excluded. We dote over the unruffled lake, and long to scale the rocks which fence the happy valley of contentment, though serpents hiss in the pathless desert, and danger lurks in the unexplored wiles. Maria found herself more indulgent as she was happier, and discovered virtues, in characters she had before disregarded, while chasing the phantoms of elegance and excellence, which sported in the meteors that exhale in the marshes of misfortune. The heart is often shut by romance against social pleasure; and, fostering a fickle sensibility, grows callous to the soft touches of humanity.

To part with Darnford was indeed cruel.—It was to feel most painfully alone; but she rejoiced to think, that she should spare him the care and perplexity of the suit, and meet him again, all his own. Marriage, as at present constituted, she considered as leading to immorality—yet, as the odium of society impedes usefulness, she wished to avow her affection to Darnford, by becoming his wife according to established rules; not to be confounded with women who act from very different motives, though her conduct would be just the same without the ceremony as with it, and her expectations from him not less firm. The being summoned to defend herself from a charge which she was determined to plead guilty to, was still galling, as it roused bitter reflections on the situation of women in society.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[138-A\]](#) The name in the manuscript is by mistake written Cæsar.

EDITOR.

CHAP. XVII.

SUCH was her state of mind when the dogs of law were let loose on her. Maria took the task of conducting Darnford's defence upon herself. She instructed his counsel to plead guilty to the charge of adultery; but to deny that of seduction.

The counsel for the plaintiff opened the cause, by observing, "that his client had ever been an indulgent husband, and had borne with several defects of temper, while he had nothing criminal to lay to the charge of his wife. But that she left his house without assigning any cause. He could not assert that she was then acquainted with the defendant; yet, when he was once endeavouring to bring her back to her home, this man put the peace-officers to flight, and took her he knew not whither. After the birth of her child, her conduct was so strange, and a melancholy malady having afflicted one of the family, which delicacy forbade the dwelling on, it was necessary to confine her. By some means the defendant enabled her to make her escape, and they had lived together, in despite of all sense of order and decorum. The adultery was allowed, it was not necessary to bring any witnesses to prove it; but the seduction, though highly probable from the circumstances which he had the honour to state, could not be so clearly proved.—It was of the most atrocious kind, as decency was set at defiance, and respect for reputation, which shows internal compunction, utterly disregarded."

A strong sense of injustice had silenced every emotion, which a mixture of true and false delicacy might otherwise have excited in Maria's bosom. She only felt in earnest to insist on the privilege of her nature. The sarcasms of society, and the condemnation of a mistaken world, were nothing to her, compared with acting contrary to those feelings which were the foundation of her principles. [She therefore eagerly put herself forward, instead of desiring to be absent, on this memorable occasion.]

Convinced that the subtleties of the law were disgraceful, she wrote a paper, which she expressly desired might be read in court:

"Married when scarcely able to distinguish the nature of the engagement, I yet submitted to the rigid laws which enslave women, and obeyed the man whom I could no longer love. Whether the duties of the state are reciprocal, I mean not to discuss; but I can prove repeated infidelities which I overlooked or pardoned. Witnesses are not wanting to establish these facts. I at present maintain the child of a maid servant, sworn to him, and born after our marriage. I am ready to allow, that education and circumstances lead men to think and act with less delicacy, than the preservation of order in society demands from women; but surely I may without assumption declare, that, though I could excuse the birth, I could not the desertion of this unfortunate babe:—and, while I despised the man, it was not easy to venerate the husband. With proper restrictions however, I revere the institution which fraternizes the world. I exclaim against the laws which throw the whole weight of the yoke on the weaker shoulders, and force women, when they claim protectorship as mothers, to sign a contract, which renders them dependent on the caprice of the tyrant, whom choice or necessity has appointed to reign over them. Various are the cases, in which a woman ought to separate herself from her husband; and mine, I may be allowed emphatically to insist, comes under the description of the most aggravated.

"I will not enlarge on those provocations which only the individual can estimate; but will bring forward such charges only, the truth of which is an insult upon humanity. In order to promote certain destructive speculations, Mr. Venables prevailed on me to borrow certain sums of a wealthy relation; and, when I

refused further compliance, he thought of bartering my person; and not only allowed opportunities to, but urged, a friend from whom he borrowed money, to seduce me. On the discovery of this act of atrocity, I determined to leave him, and in the most decided manner, for ever. I consider all obligation as made void by his conduct; and hold, that schisms which proceed from want of principles, can never be healed.

"He received a fortune with me to the amount of five thousand pounds. On the death of my uncle, convinced that I could provide for my child, I destroyed the settlement of that fortune. I required none of my property to be returned to me, nor shall enumerate the sums extorted from me during six years that we lived together.

"After leaving, what the law considers as my home, I was hunted like a criminal from place to place, though I contracted no debts, and demanded no maintenance—yet, as the laws sanction such proceeding, and make women the property of their husbands, I forbear to animadvert. After the birth of my daughter, and the death of my uncle, who left a very considerable property to myself and child, I was exposed to new persecution; and, because I had, before arriving at what is termed years of discretion, pledged my faith, I was treated by the world, as bound for ever to a man whose vices were notorious. Yet what are the vices generally known, to the various miseries that a woman may be subject to, which, though deeply felt, eating into the soul, elude description, and may be glossed over! A false morality is even established, which makes all the virtue of women consist in chastity, submission, and the forgiveness of injuries.

"I pardon my oppressor—bitterly as I lament the loss of my child, torn from me in the most violent manner. But nature revolts, and my soul sickens at the bare supposition, that it could ever be a duty to pretend affection, when a separation is necessary to prevent my feeling hourly aversion.

"To force me to give my fortune, I was imprisoned—yes; in a private mad-house.—There, in the heart of misery, I met the man charged with seducing me. We became attached—I deemed, and ever shall deem, myself free. The death of my babe dissolved the only tie which subsisted between me and my, what is termed, lawful husband.

"To this person, thus encountered, I voluntarily gave myself, never considering myself as any more bound to transgress the laws of moral purity, because the will of my husband might be pleaded in my excuse, than to transgress those laws to which [the policy of artificial society has] annexed [positive] punishments.—While no command of a husband can prevent a woman from suffering for certain crimes, she must be allowed to consult her conscience, and regulate her conduct, in some degree, by her own sense of right. The respect I owe to myself, demanded my strict adherence to my determination of never viewing Mr. Venables in the light of a husband, nor could it forbid me from encouraging another. If I am unfortunately united to an unprincipled man, am I for ever to be shut out from fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother?—I wish my country to approve of my conduct; but, if laws exist, made by the strong to oppress the weak, I appeal to my own sense of justice, and declare that I will not live with the individual, who has violated every moral obligation which binds man to man.

"I protest equally against any charge being brought to criminate the man, whom I consider as my husband. I was six-and-twenty when I left Mr. Venables' roof; if ever I am to be supposed to arrive at an age to direct my own actions, I must by that time have arrived at it.—I acted with deliberation.—Mr. Darnford found me a forlorn and oppressed woman, and promised the protection women in the present state of society want.—But the man who now claims me—was he deprived of my society by this conduct? The question is an insult to common sense, considering where Mr. Darnford met me.—Mr. Venables' door was indeed open to me—nay, threats and intreaties were used to induce me to return; but why? Was affection or honour the motive?—I cannot, it is true, dive into the recesses of the human heart—yet I presume to assert,

[borne out as I am by a variety of circumstances,] that he was merely influenced by the most rapacious avarice.

"I claim then a divorce, and the liberty of enjoying, free from molestation, the fortune left to me by a relation, who was well aware of the character of the man with whom I had to contend.—I appeal to the justice and humanity of the jury—a body of men, whose private judgment must be allowed to modify laws, that must be unjust, because definite rules can never apply to indefinite circumstances—and I deprecate punishment upon the man of my choice, freeing him, as I solemnly do, from the charge of seduction.]

"I did not put myself into a situation to justify a charge of adultery, till I had, from conviction, shaken off the fetters which bound me to Mr. Venables.—While I lived with him, I defy the voice of calumny to sully what is termed the fair fame of woman.—Neglected by my husband, I never encouraged a lover; and preserved with scrupulous care, what is termed my honour, at the expence of my peace, till he, who should have been its guardian, laid traps to ensnare me. From that moment I believed myself, in the sight of heaven, free—and no power on earth shall force me to renounce my resolution."

The judge, in summing up the evidence, alluded to "the fallacy of letting women plead their feelings, as an excuse for the violation of the marriage-vow. For his part, he had always determined to oppose all innovation, and the new-fangled notions which incroached on the good old rules of conduct. We did not want French principles in public or private life—and, if women were allowed to plead their feelings, as an excuse or palliation of infidelity, it was opening a flood-gate for immorality. What virtuous woman thought of her feelings?—It was her duty to love and obey the man chosen by her parents and relations, who were qualified by their experience to judge better for her, than she could for herself. As to the charges brought against the husband, they were vague, supported by no witnesses, excepting that of imprisonment in a private mad-house. The proofs of an insanity in the family, might render that however a prudent measure; and indeed the conduct of the lady did not appear that of a person of sane mind. Still such a mode of proceeding could not be justified, and might perhaps entitle the lady [in another court] to a sentence of separation from bed and board, during the joint lives of the parties; but he hoped that no Englishman would legalize adultery, by enabling the adulterers to enrich her seducer. Too many restrictions could not be thrown in the way of divorces, if we wished to maintain the sanctity of marriage; and, though they might bear a little hard on a few, very few individuals, it was evidently for the good of the whole."

CONCLUSION,

BY THE EDITOR.

VERY few hints exist respecting the plan of the remainder of the work. I find only two detached sentences, and some scattered heads for the continuation of the story. I transcribe the whole.

I.

"Darnford's letters were affectionate; but circumstances occasioned delays, and the miscarriage of some letters rendered the reception of wished-for answers doubtful: his return was necessary to calm Maria's mind."

II.

"As Darnford had informed her that his business was settled, his delaying to return seemed extraordinary; but love to excess, excludes fear or suspicion."

The scattered heads for the continuation of the story, are as follow^[159-A].

I.

"Trial for adultery—Maria defends herself—A separation from bed and board is the consequence—Her fortune is thrown into chancery—Darnford obtains a part of his property—Maria goes into the country."

II.

"A prosecution for adultery commenced—Trial—Darnford sets out for France—Letters—Once more pregnant—He returns—Mysterious behaviour—Visit—Expectation—Discovery—Interview—Consequence."

III.

"Sued by her husband—Damages awarded to him—Separation from bed and board—Darnford goes abroad—Maria into the country—Provides for her father—Is shunned—Returns to London—Expects to see her lover—The rack of expectation—Finds herself again with child—Delighted—A discovery—A visit—A miscarriage—Conclusion."

IV.

"Divorced by her husband—Her lover unfaithful—Pregnancy—Miscarriage—Suicide."

[The following passage appears in some respects to deviate from the preceding hints. It is superscribed]

"THE END.

"She swallowed the laudanum; her soul was calm—the tempest had subsided—and nothing remained but

an eager longing to forget herself—to fly from the anguish she endured to escape from thought—from this hell of disappointment.

"Still her eyes closed not—one remembrance with frightful velocity followed another—All the incidents of her life were in arms, embodied to assail her, and prevent her sinking into the sleep of death.—Her murdered child again appeared to her, mourning for the babe of which she was the tomb.—'And could it have a nobler?—Surely it is better to die with me, than to enter on life without a mother's care!—I cannot live!—but could I have deserted my child the moment it was born?—thrown it on the troubled wave of life, without a hand to support it?'—She looked up: 'What have I not suffered!—may I find a father where I am going!'—Her head turned; a stupor ensued; a faintness—'Have a little patience,' said Maria, holding her swimming head (she thought of her mother), 'this cannot last long; and what is a little bodily pain to the pangs I have endured?'

"A new vision swam before her. Jemima seemed to enter—leading a little creature, that, with tottering footsteps, approached the bed. The voice of Jemima sounding as at a distance, called her—she tried to listen, to speak, to look!

"Behold your child!" exclaimed Jemima. Maria started off the bed, and fainted.—Violent vomiting followed.

"When she was restored to life, Jemima addressed her with great solemnity: '——— led me to suspect, that your husband and brother had deceived you, and secreted the child. I would not torment you with doubtful hopes, and I left you (at a fatal moment) to search for the child!—I snatched her from misery—and (now she is alive again) would you leave her alone in the world, to endure what I have endured?'

"Maria gazed wildly at her, her whole frame was convulsed with emotion; when the child, whom Jemima had been tutoring all the journey, uttered the word 'Mamma!' She caught her to her bosom, and burst into a passion of tears—then, resting the child gently on the bed, as if afraid of killing it,—she put her hand to her eyes, to conceal as it were the agonizing struggle of her soul. She remained silent for five minutes, crossing her arms over her bosom, and reclining her head,—then exclaimed: 'The conflict is over!—I will live for my child!'"

A few readers perhaps, in looking over these hints, will wonder how it could have been practicable, without tediousness, or remitting in any degree the interest of the story, to have filled, from these slight sketches, a number of pages, more considerable than those which have been already presented. But, in reality, these hints, simple as they are, are pregnant with passion and distress. It is the refuge of barren authors only, to crowd their fictions with so great a number of events, as to suffer no one of them to sink into the reader's mind. It is the province of true genius to develop events, to discover their capabilities, to ascertain the different passions and sentiments with which they are fraught, and to diversify them with incidents, that give reality to the picture, and take a hold upon the mind of a reader of taste, from which they can never be loosened. It was particularly the design of the author, in the present instance, to make her story subordinate to a great moral purpose, that "of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society.—This view restrained her fancy^[166-A]." It was necessary for her, to place in a striking point of view, evils that are too frequently overlooked, and to drag into light those details of oppression, of which the grosser and more insensible part of mankind make little account.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[159-A\]](#) To understand these minutes, it is necessary the reader should consider each of them as setting out from the same point in the story, viz. the point to which it is brought down in the preceding chapter.

[\[166-A\]](#) See author's preface.

LESSONS.

ADVERTISEMENT,

BY THE EDITOR.

THE following pages will, I believe, be judged by every reader of taste to have been worth preserving, among the other testimonies the author left behind her, of her genius and the soundness of her understanding. To such readers I leave the task of comparing these lessons, with other works of the same nature previously published. It is obvious that the author has struck out a path of her own, and by no means intrenched upon the plans of her predecessors.

It may however excite surprise in some persons to find these papers annexed to the conclusion of a novel. All I have to offer on this subject, consists in the following considerations:

First, something is to be allowed for the difficulty of arranging the miscellaneous papers upon very different subjects, which will frequently constitute an author's posthumous works.

Secondly, the small portion they occupy in the present volume, will perhaps be accepted as an apology, by such good-natured readers (if any such there are), to whom the perusal of them shall be a matter of perfect indifference.

Thirdly, the circumstance which determined me in annexing them to the present work, was the slight association (in default of a strong one) between the affectionate and pathetic manner in which Maria Venables addresses her infant, in the Wrongs of Woman; and the agonising and painful sentiment with which the author originally bequeathed these papers, as a legacy for the benefit of her child.

LESSONS.

The first book of a series which I intended to have written for my unfortunate girl^[175-A].

LESSON I.

Cat. Dog. Cow. Horse. Sheep. Pig. Bird. Fly.

Man. Boy. Girl. Child.

Head. Hair. Face. Nose. Mouth. Chin. Neck. Arms. Hand. Leg. Foot. Back. Breast.

House. Wall. Field. Street. Stone. Grass.

Bed. Chair. Door. Pot. Spoon. Knife. Fork. Plate. Cup. Box. Boy. Bell.

Tree. Leaf. Stick. Whip. Cart. Coach.

Frock. Hat. Coat. Shoes. Shift. Cap.

Bread. Milk. Tea. Meat. Drink. Cake.

LESSON II.

Come. Walk. Run. Go. Jump. Dance. Ride. Sit. Stand. Play. Hold. Shake. Speak. Sing. Cry. Laugh. Call. Fall.

Day. Night. Sun. Moon. Light. Dark. Sleep. Wake.

Wash. Dress. Kiss. Comb.

Fire. Hot. Burn. Wind. Rain. Cold.

Hurt. Tear. Break. Spill.

Book. See. Look.

Sweet. Good. Clean.

Gone. Lost. Hide. Keep. Give. Take.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

White. Black. Red. Blue. Green. Brown.

LESSON III.

STROKE the cat. Play with the Dog. Eat the bread. Drink the milk. Hold the cup. Lay down the knife.

Look at the fly. See the horse. Shut the door. Bring the chair. Ring the bell. Get your book.

Hide your face. Wipe your nose. Wash your hands. Dirty hands. Why do you cry? A clean mouth. Shake

hands. I love you. Kifs me now. Good girl.

The bird fings. The fire burns. The cat jumps. The dog runs. The bird flies. The cow lies down. The man laughs. The child cries.

LESSON IV.

LET me comb your head. Ask Betty to wash your face. Go and see for some bread. Drink milk, if you are dry. Play on the floor with the ball. Do not touch the ink; you will black your hands.

What do you want to say to me? Speak slow, not so fast. Did you fall? You will not cry, not you; the baby cries. Will you walk in the fields?

LESSON V.

COME to me, my little girl. Are you tired of playing? Yes. Sit down and rest yourself, while I talk to you.

Have you seen the baby? Poor little thing. O here it comes. Look at him. How helpless he is. Four years ago you were as feeble as this very little boy.

See, he cannot hold up his head. He is forced to lie on his back, if his mamma do not turn him to the right or left side, he will soon begin to cry. He cries to tell her, that he is tired with lying on his back.

LESSON VI.

PERHAPS he is hungry. What shall we give him to eat? Poor fellow, he cannot eat. Look in his mouth, he has no teeth.

How did you do when you were a baby like him? You cannot tell. Do you want to know? Look then at the dog, with her pretty puppy. You could not help yourself as well as the puppy. You could only open your mouth, when you were lying, like William, on my knee. So I put you to my breast, and you sucked, as the puppy sucks now, for there was milk enough for you.

LESSON VII.

WHEN you were hungry, you began to cry, because you could not speak. You were seven months without teeth, always sucking. But after you got one, you began to gnaw a crust of bread. It was not long before another came pop. At ten months you had four pretty white teeth, and you used to bite me. Poor mamma! Still I did not cry, because I am not a child, but you hurt me very much. So I said to papa, it is time the little girl should eat. She is not naughty, yet she hurts me. I have given her a crust of bread, and I must look for some other milk.

The cow has got plenty, and her jumping calf eats grass very well. He has got more teeth than my little girl. Yes, says papa, and he tapped you on the cheek, you are old enough to learn to eat? Come to me, and I will teach you, my little dear, for you must not hurt poor mamma, who has given you her milk, when you could not take any thing else.

LESSON VIII.

YOU were then on the carpet, for you could not walk well. So when you were in a hurry, you used to run quick, quick, quick, on your hands and feet, like the dog.

Away you ran to papa, and putting both your arms round his leg, for your hands were not big enough, you

looked up at him, and laughed. What did this laugh say, when you could not speak? Cannot you guess by what you now say to papa?—Ah! it was, Play with me, papa!—play with me!

Papa began to smile, and you knew that the smile was always—Yes. So you got a ball, and papa threw it along the floor—Roll—roll—roll; and you ran after it again—and again. How pleased you were. Look at William, he smiles; but you could laugh loud—Ha! ha! ha!—Papa laughed louder than the little girl, and rolled the ball still faster.

Then he put the ball on a chair, and you were forced to take hold of the back, and stand up to reach it. At last you reached too far, and down you fell: not indeed on your face, because you put out your hands. You were not much hurt; but the palms of your hands smarted with the pain, and you began to cry, like a little child.

It is only very little children who cry when they are hurt; and it is to tell their mamma, that something is the matter with them. Now you can come to me, and say, Mamma, I have hurt myself. Pray rub my hand: it smart. Put something on it, to make it well. A piece of rag, to stop the blood. You are not afraid of a little blood—not you. You scratched your arm with a pin: it bled a little; but it did you no harm. See, the skin is grown over it again.

LESSON IX.

TAKE care not to put pins in your mouth, because they will stick in your throat, and give you pain. Oh! you cannot think what pain a pin would give you in your throat, should it remain there: but, if you by chance swallow it, I should be obliged to give you, every morning, something bitter to drink. You never tasted any thing so bitter! and you would grow very sick. I never put pins in my mouth; but I am older than you, and know how to take care of myself.

My mamma took care of me, when I was a little girl, like you. She bade me never put any thing in my mouth, without asking her what it was.

When you were a baby, with no more sense than William, you put every thing in your mouth to gnaw, to help your teeth to cut through the skin. Look at the puppy, how he bites that piece of wood. William presses his gums against my finger. Poor boy! he is so young, he does not know what he is doing. When you bite any thing, it is because you are hungry.

LESSON X.

SEE how much taller you are than William. In four years you have learned to eat, to walk, to talk. Why do you smile? You can do much more, you think: you can wash your hands and face. Very well. I should never kiss a dirty face. And you can comb your head with the pretty comb you always put by in your own drawer. To be sure, you do all this to be ready to take a walk with me. You would be obliged to stay at home, if you could not comb your own hair. Betty is busy getting the dinner ready, and only brushes William's hair, because he cannot do it for himself.

Betty is making an apple-pie. You love an apple-pie; but I do not bid you make one. Your hands are not strong enough to mix the butter and flour together; and you must not try to pare the apples, because you cannot manage a great knife.

Never touch the large knives: they are very sharp, and you might cut your finger to the bone. You are a little girl, and ought to have a little knife. When you are as tall as I am, you shall have a knife as large as mine; and when you are as strong as I am, and have learned to manage it, you will not hurt yourself.

You can trundle a hoop, you say; and jump over a ftick. O, I forgot!—and march like the men in the red coats, when papa plays a pretty tune on the fiddle.

LESSON XI.

WHAT, you think that you fhall foon be able to drefs yourself entirely? I am glad of it: I have fomething elfe to do. You may go, and look for your frock in the drawer; but I will tie it, till you are ftronger. Betty will tie it, when I am bufy.

I button my gown myfelf: I do not want a maid to affift me, when I am dressing. But you have not yet got fenfe enough to do it properly, and muft beg fomebody to help you, till you are older.

Children grow older and wifer at the fame time. William is not able to take a piece of meat, becaufe he has not got the fenfe which would make him think that, without teeth, meat would do him harm. He cannot tell what is good for him.

The fenfe of children grows with them. You know much more than William, now you walk alone, and talk; but you do not know as much as the boys and girls you fee playing yonder, who are half as tall again as you; and they do not know half as much as their fathers and mothers, who are men and women grown. Papa and I were children, like you; and men and women took care of us. I carry William, becaufe he is too weak to walk. I lift you over a ftile, and over the gutter, when you cannot jump over it.

You know already, that potatoes will not do you any harm: but I muft pluck the fruit for you, till you are wife enough to know the ripe apples and pears. The hard ones would make you fick, and then you muft take phyfic. You do not love phyfic: I do not love it any more than you. But I have more fenfe than you; therefore I take care not to eat unripe fruit, or any thing elfe that would make my ftomach ache, or bring out ugly red fpots on my face.

When I was a child, my mamma chofe the fruit for me, to prevent my making myfelf fick. I was juft like you; I ufed to afk for what I faw, without knowing whether it was good or bad. Now I have lived a long time, I know what is good; I do not want any body to tell me.

LESSON XII.

LOOK at thofe two dogs. The old one brings the ball to me in a moment; the young one does not know how. He muft be taught.

I can cut your fhift in a proper fhape. You would not know how to begin. You would fpoil it; but you will learn.

John digs in the garden, and knows when to put the feed in the ground. You cannot tell whether it fhould be in the winter or fummer. Try to find it out. When do the trees put out their leaves? In the fpring, you fay, after the cold weather. Fruit would not grow ripe without very warm weather. Now I am fure you can guefs why the fummer is the feafon for fruit.

Papa knows that peas and beans are good for us to eat with our meat. You are glad when you fee them; but if he did not think for you, and have the feed put in the ground, we fhould have no peas or beans.

LESSON XIII.

POOR child, fhe cannot do much for herfelf. When I let her do any thing for me, it is to please her: for I could do it better myfelf.

Oh! the poor puppy has tumbled off the stool. Run and stroak him. Put a little milk in a saucer to comfort him. You have more sense than he. You can pour the milk into the saucer without spilling it. He would cry for a day with hunger, without being able to get it. You are wiser than the dog, you must help him. The dog will love you for it, and run after you. I feed you and take care of you: you love me and follow me for it.

When the book fell down on your foot, it gave you great pain. The poor dog felt the same pain just now.

Take care not to hurt him when you play with him. And every morning leave a little milk in your basin for him. Do not forget to put the basin in a corner, lest somebody should fall over it.

When the snow covers the ground, save the crumbs of bread for the birds. In the summer they find feed enough, and do not want you to think about them.

I make broth for the poor man who is sick. A sick man is like a child, he cannot help himself.

LESSON X.

WHEN I caught cold some time ago, I had such a pain in my head, I could scarcely hold it up. Papa opened the door very softly, because he loves me. You love me, yet you made a noise. You had not the sense to know that it made my head worse, till papa told you.

Papa had a pain in the stomach, and he would not eat the fine cherries or grapes on the table. When I brought him a cup of camomile tea, he drank it without saying a word, or making an ugly face. He knows that I love him, and that I would not give him any thing to drink that has a bad taste, if it were not to do him good.

You asked me for some apples when your stomach ached; but I was not angry with you. If you had been as wise as papa, you would have said, I will not eat the apples to-day, I must take some camomile tea.

You say that you do not know how to think. Yes; you do a little. The other day papa was tired; he had been walking about all the morning. After dinner he fell asleep on the sofa. I did not bid you be quiet; but you thought of what papa said to you, when my head ached. This made you think that you ought not to make a noise, when papa was resting himself. So you came to me, and said to me, very softly, Pray reach me my ball, and I will go and play in the garden, till papa wakes.

You were going out; but thinking again, you came back to me on your tip-toes. Whisper——whisper. Pray mama, call me, when papa wakes; for I shall be afraid to open the door to see, lest I should disturb him.

Away you went.—Creep—creep—and shut the door as softly as I could have done myself.

That was thinking. When a child does wrong at first, she does not know any better. But, after she has been told that she must not disturb mama, when poor mama is unwell, she thinks herself, that she must not wake papa when he is tired.

Another day we will see if you can think about any thing else.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

[175-A] This title which is indorsed on the back of the manuscript, I conclude to have been written in a period of

POSTHUMOUS WORKS
OF THE
AUTHOR
OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PREFACE.

THE following Letters may possibly be found to contain the finest examples of the language of sentiment and passion ever presented to the world. They bear a striking resemblance to the celebrated romance of Werter, though the incidents to which they relate are of a very different cast. Probably the readers to whom Werter is incapable of affording pleasure, will receive no delight from the present publication. The editor apprehends that, in the judgment of those best qualified to decide upon the comparison, these Letters will be admitted to have the superiority over the fiction of Goethe. They are the offspring of a glowing imagination, and a heart penetrated with the passion it essays to describe.

To the series of letters constituting the principal article in these two volumes, are added various pieces, none of which, it is hoped, will be found discreditable to the talents of the author. The slight fragment of Letters on the Management of Infants, may be thought a trifle; but it seems to have some value, as presenting to us with vividness the intention of the writer on this important subject. The publication of a few select Letters to Mr. Johnson, appeared to be at once a just monument to the sincerity of his friendship, and a valuable and interesting specimen of the mind of the writer. The Letter on the Present Character of the French Nation, the Extract of the Cave of Fancy, a Tale, and the Hints for the Second Part of the Rights of Woman, may, I believe, safely be left to speak for themselves. The Essay on Poetry and our Relish for the Beauties of Nature, appeared in the Monthly Magazine for April last, and is the only piece in this collection which has previously found its way to the press.

LETTERS.

LETTER I

Two o'Clock.

My dear love, after making my arrangements for our snug dinner to-day, I have been taken by storm, and obliged to promise to dine, at an early hour, with the Miss ——s, the *only* day they intend to pass here. I shall however leave the key in the door, and hope to find you at my fire-side when I return, about eight o'clock. Will you not wait for poor Joan?—whom you will find better, and till then think very affectionately of her.

Yours, truly,

* * * *

I am sitting down to dinner; so do not send an answer.

LETTER II

Past Twelve o'Clock, Monday night.
[August.]

I OBEY an emotion of my heart, which made me think of wishing thee, my love, good-night! before I go to rest, with more tenderness than I can to-morrow, when writing a hasty line or two under Colonel ——'s eye. You can scarcely imagine with what pleasure I anticipate the day, when we are to begin almost to live together; and you would smile to hear how many plans of employment I have in my head, now that I am confident my heart has found peace in your bosom.—Cherish me with that dignified tenderness, which I have only found in you; and your own dear girl will try to keep under a quickness of feeling, that has sometimes given you pain—Yes, I will be *good*, that I may deserve to be happy; and whilst you love me, I cannot again fall into the miserable state, which rendered life a burthen almost too heavy to be borne.

But, good-night!—God bless you! Sterne says, that is equal to a kiss—yet I would rather give you the kiss into the bargain, glowing with gratitude to Heaven, and affection to you. I like the word affection, because it signifies something habitual; and we are soon to meet, to try whether we have mind enough to keep our hearts warm.

* * * *

I will be at the barrier a little after ten o'clock to-morrow^[4-A].—Yours—

LETTER III

Wednesday Morning.

You have often called me, dear girl, but you would now say good, did you know how very attentive I have been to the —— ever since I came to Paris. I am not however going to trouble you with the account, because I like to see your eyes praise me; and, Milton insinuates, that, during such recitals, there are interruptions, not ungrateful to the heart, when the honey that drops from the lips is not merely words.

Yet, I shall not (let me tell you before these people enter, to force me to huddle away my letter) be content with only a kiss of DUTY—you *must* be glad to see me—because you are glad—or I will make love to the *shade* of Mirabeau, to whom my heart continually turned, whilst I was talking with Madame ——, forcibly telling me, that it will ever have sufficient warmth to love, whether I will or not, sentiment, though I so highly respect principle.——

Not that I think Mirabeau utterly devoid of principles—Far from it—and, if I had not begun to form a new theory respecting men, I should, in the vanity of my heart, have *imagined* that *I* could have made something of his——it was composed of such materials—Hush! here they come—and love flies away in the twinkling of an eye, leaving a little brush of his wing on my pale cheeks.

I hope to see Dr. —— this morning; I am going to Mr. ——'s to meet him. ——, and some others, are invited to dine with us to-day; and to-morrow I am to spend the day with ——.

I shall probably not be able to return to —— to-morrow; but it is no matter, because I must take a carriage, I have so many books, that I immediately want, to take with me.—On Friday then I shall expect you to dine with me—and, if you come a little before dinner, it is so long since I have seen you, you will not be scolded by yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER IV^[7-A].

Friday Morning [September.]

A MAN, whom a letter from Mr. —— previously announced, called here yesterday for the payment of a draft; and, as he seemed disappointed at not finding you at home, I sent him to Mr. ——. I have since seen him, and he tells me that he has settled the business.

So much for business!—May I venture to talk a little longer about less weighty affairs?—How are you?—I have been following you all along the road this comfortless weather; for, when I am absent from those I love, my imagination is as lively, as if my senses had never been gratified by their presence—I was going to say caresses—and why should I not? I have found out that I have more mind than you, in one respect; because I can, without any violent effort of reason, find food for love in the same object, much longer than you can.—The way to my senses is through my heart; but, forgive me! I think there is sometimes a shorter cut to yours.

With ninety-nine men out of a hundred, a very sufficient dash of folly is necessary to render a woman *piquante*, a soft word for desirable; and, beyond these casual ebullitions of sympathy, few look for enjoyment by fostering a passion in their hearts. One reason, in short, why I wish my whole sex to become wiser, is, that the foolish ones may not, by their pretty folly, rob those whose sensibility keeps down their vanity, of the few roses that afford them some solace in the thorny road of life.

I do not know how I fell into these reflections, excepting one thought produced it—that these continual

separations were necessary to warm your affection.—Of late, we are always separating.—Crack!—crack!—and away you go.—This joke wears the sallow cast of thought; for, though I began to write cheerfully, some melancholy tears have found their way into my eyes, that linger there, whilst a glow of tenderness at my heart whispers that you are one of the best creatures in the world.—Pardon then the vagaries of a mind, that has been almost "crazed by care," as well as "crossed in hapless love," and bear with me a *little* longer!—When we are settled in the country together, more duties will open before me, and my heart, which now, trembling into peace, is agitated by every emotion that awakens the remembrance of old griefs, will learn to rest on yours, with that dignity your character, not to talk of my own, demands.

Take care of yourself—and write soon to your own girl (you may add dear, if you please) who sincerely loves you, and will try to convince you of it, by becoming happier.

* * * *



LETTER V

Sunday Night.

I HAVE just received your letter, and feel as if I could not go to bed tranquilly without saying a few words in reply—merely to tell you, that my mind is serene, and my heart affectionate.

Ever since you last saw me inclined to faint, I have felt some gentle twitches, which make me begin to think, that I am nourishing a creature who will soon be sensible of my care.—This thought has not only produced an overflowing of tenderness to you, but made me very attentive to calm my mind and take exercise, lest I should destroy an object, in whom we are to have a mutual interest, you know. Yesterday—do not smile!—finding that I had hurt myself by lifting precipitately a large log of wood, I sat down in an agony, till I felt those said twitches again.

Are you very busy?

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So you may reckon on its being finished soon, though not before you come home, unless you are detained longer than I now allow myself to believe you will.—

Be that as it may, write to me, my best love, and bid me be patient—kindly—and the expressions of

kindness will again beguile the time, as sweetly as they have done to-night.—Tell me also over and over again, that your happiness (and you deserve to be happy!) is closely connected with mine, and I will try to dissipate, as they rise, the fumes of former discontent, that have too often clouded the sunshine, which you have endeavoured to diffuse through my mind. God bless you! Take care of yourself, and remember with tenderness your affectionate

* * * *

I am going to rest very happy, and you have made me so.—This is the kindest good-night I can utter.

LETTER VI

Friday Morning.

I AM glad to find that other people can be unreasonable, as well as myself—for be it known to thee, that I answered thy *first* letter, the very night it reached me (Sunday), though thou couldst not receive it before Wednesday, because it was not sent off till the next day.—There is a full, true, and particular account.—

Yet I am not angry with thee, my love, for I think that it is a proof of stupidity, and likewise of a milk-and-water affection, which comes to the same thing, when the temper is governed by a square and compass.—There is nothing picturesque in this straight-lined equality, and the passions always give grace to the actions.

Recollection now makes my heart bound to thee; but, it is not to thy money-getting face, though I cannot be seriously displeased with the exertion which increases my esteem, or rather is what I should have expected from thy character.—No; I have thy honest countenance before me—Pop—relaxed by tenderness; a little—little wounded by my whims; and thy eyes glistening with sympathy.—Thy lips then feel softer than soft—and I rest my cheek on thine, forgetting all the world.—I have not left the hue of love out of the picture—the rosy glow; and fancy has spread it over my own cheeks, I believe, for I feel them burning, whilst a delicious tear trembles in my eye, that would be all your own, if a grateful emotion directed to the Father of nature, who has made me thus alive to happiness, did not give more warmth to the sentiment it divides—I must pause a moment.

Need I tell you that I am tranquil after writing thus?—I do not know why, but I have more confidence in your affection, when absent, than present; nay, I think that you must love me, for, in the sincerity of my heart let me say it, I believe I deserve your tenderness, because I am true, and have a degree of sensibility that you can see and relish.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER VII

Sunday Morning [December 29.]

You seem to have taken up your abode at H——. Pray sir! when do you think of coming home? or, to write very considerably, when will business permit you? I shall expect (as the country people say in England) that you will make a *power* of money to indemnify me for your absence.

Well! but, my love, to the old story—am I to see you this week, or this month?—I do not know what you are about—for, as you did not tell me, I would not ask Mr. —, who is generally pretty communicative.

I long to see Mrs. —; not to hear from you, so do not give yourself airs, but to get a letter from Mr. —. And I am half angry with you for not informing me whether she had brought one with her or not.—On this score I will cork up some of the kind things that were ready to drop from my pen, which has never been dipt in gall when addressing you; or, will only suffer an exclamation—"The creature!" or a kind look, to escape me, when I pass the slippers—which I could not remove from my *salle* door, though they are not the handsomest of their kind.

Be not too anxious to get money!—for nothing worth having is to be purchased. God bless you.

Yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER VIII

Monday Night [December 30.]

My best love, your letter to-night was particularly grateful to my heart, depressed by the letters I received by —, for he brought me several, and the parcel of books directed to Mr. — was for me. Mr. —'s letter was long and very affectionate; but the account he gives me of his own affairs, though he obviously makes the best of them, has vexed me.

A melancholy letter from my sister — has also harrassed my mind—that from my brother would have given me sincere pleasure; but for — —

There is a spirit of independence in his letter, that will please you; and you shall see it, when we are once more over the fire together.—I think that you would hail him as a brother, with one of your tender looks, when your heart not only gives a lustre to your eye, but a dance of playfulness, that he would meet with a glow half made up of bashfulness, and a desire to please the——where shall I find a word to express the relationship which subsists between us?—Shall I ask the little twitcher?—But I have dropt half the sentence that was to tell you how much he would be inclined to love the man loved by his sister. I have been fancying myself sitting between you, ever since I began to write, and my heart has leaped at the thought!—You see how I chat to you.

I did not receive your letter till I came home; and I did not expect it, for the post came in much later than usual. It was a cordial to me—and I wanted one.

Mr. —— tells me that he has written again and again.—Love him a little!—It would be a kind of separation, if you did not love those I love.

There was so much considerate tenderness in your epistle to-night, that, if it has not made you dearer to me, it has made me forcibly feel how very dear you are to me, by charming away half my cares.

Yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER IX

Tuesday Morning [December 31.]

THOUGH I have just sent a letter off, yet, as captain —— offers to take one, I am not willing to let him go

without a kind greeting, because trifles of this sort, without having any effect on my mind, damp my spirits:—and you, with all your struggles to be manly, have some of this same sensibility.—Do not bid it begone, for I love to see it striving to master your features; besides, these kind of sympathies are the life of affection: and why, in cultivating our understandings, should we try to dry up these springs of pleasure, which gush out to give a freshness to days browned by care!

The books sent to me are such as we may read together; so I shall not look into them till you return; when you shall read, whilst I mend my stockings.

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER X

Wednesday Night [January 1.]

As I have been, you tell me, three days without writing, I ought not to complain of two: yet, as I expected to receive a letter this afternoon, I am hurt; and why should I, by concealing it, affect the heroism I do not feel?

I hate commerce. How differently must ——'s head and heart be organized from mine! You will tell me, that exertions are necessary: I am weary of them! The face of things, public and private, vexes me. The "peace" and clemency which seemed to be dawning a few days ago, disappear again. "I am fallen," as Milton said, "on evil days;" for I really believe that Europe will be in a state of convulsion, during half a century at least. Life is but a labour of patience: it is always rolling a great stone up a hill; for, before a person can find a resting-place, imagining it is lodged, down it comes again, and all the work is to be done over anew!

Should I attempt to write any more, I could not change the strain. My head aches, and my heart is heavy. The world appears an "unweeded garden," where "things rank and vile" flourish best.

If you do not return soon—or, which is no such mighty matter, talk of it—I will throw your slippers out at window, and be off—nobody knows where.

* * * *

Finding that I was observed, I told the good women, the two Mrs. ——s, simply that I was with child: and let them stare! and ——, and ——, nay, all the world, may know it for aught I care!—Yet I wish to avoid ——'s coarse jokes.

Considering the care and anxiety a woman must have about a child before it comes into the world, it seems to me, by a *natural right*, to belong to her. When men get immersed in the world, they seem to lose all sensations, excepting those necessary to continue or produce life!—Are these the privileges of reason? Amongst the feathered race, whilst the hen keeps the young warm, her mate stays by to cheer her; but it is sufficient for man to condescend to get a child, in order to claim it.—A man is a tyrant!

You may now tell me, that, if it were not for me, you would be laughing away with some honest fellows in L—n. The casual exercise of social sympathy would not be sufficient for me—I should not think such an heartless life worth preserving.—It is necessary to be in good-humour with you, to be pleased with the

world.

Thursday Morning.

I WAS very low-spirited last night, ready to quarrel with your cheerful temper, which makes absence easy to you.—And, why should I mince the the matter? I was offended at your not even mentioning it.—I do not want to be loved like a goddess; but I wish to be necessary to you. God bless you^[27-A]!

LETTER XI

Monday Night.

I HAVE just received your kind and rational letter, and would fain hide my face, glowing with shame for my folly.—I would hide it in your bosom, if you would again open it to me, and nestle closely till you bade my fluttering heart be still, by saying that you forgave me. With eyes overflowing with tears, and in the humblest attitude, I intreat you.—Do not turn from me, for indeed I love you fondly, and have been very wretched, since the night I was so cruelly hurt by thinking that you had no confidence in me——

It is time for me to grow more reasonable, a few more of these caprices of sensibility would destroy me. I have, in fact, been very much indisposed for a few days past, and the notion that I was tormenting, or perhaps killing, a poor little animal, about whom I am grown anxious and tender, now I feel it alive, made me worse. My bowels have been dreadfully disordered, and every thing I ate or drank disagreed with my stomach; still I feel intimations of its existence, though they have been fainter.

Do you think that the creature goes regularly to sleep? I am ready to ask as many questions as Voltaire's Man of Forty Crowns. Ah! do not continue to be angry with me! You perceive that I am already smiling through my tears—You have lightened my heart, and my frozen spirits are melting into playfulness.

Write the moment you receive this. I shall count the minutes. But drop not an angry word—I cannot now bear it. Yet, if you think I deserve a scolding (it does not admit of a question, I grant), wait till you come back—and then, if you are angry one day, I shall be sure of seeing you the next.

——— did not write to you, I suppose, because he talked of going to H——. Hearing that I was ill, he called very kindly on me, not dreaming that it was some words that he incautiously let fall, which rendered me so.

God bless you, my love; do not shut your heart against a return of tenderness; and, as I now in fancy cling to you, be more than ever my support.—Feel but as affectionate when you read this letter, as I did writing it, and you will make happy, your

* * * *

LETTER XII

Wednesday Morning.

I WILL never, if I am not entirely cured of quarrelling, begin to encourage "quick-coming fancies," when we are separated. Yesterday, my love, I could not open your letter for some time; and, though it was not

half as severe as I merited, it threw me into such a fit of trembling, as seriously alarmed me. I did not, as you may suppose, care for a little pain on my own account; but all the fears which I have had for a few days past, returned with fresh force. This morning I am better; will you not be glad to hear it? You perceive that sorrow has almost made a child of me, and that I want to be soothed to peace.

One thing you mistake in my character, and imagine that to be coldness which is just the contrary. For, when I am hurt by the person most dear to me, I must let out a whole torrent of emotions, in which tenderness would be uppermost, or stifle them altogether; and it appears to me almost a duty to stifle them, when I imagine *that I am treated with coldness*.

I am afraid that I have vexed you, my own ——. I know the quickness of your feelings—and let me, in the sincerity of my heart, assure you, there is nothing I would not suffer to make you happy. My own happiness wholly depends on you—and, knowing you, when my reason is not clouded, I look forward to a rational prospect of as much felicity as the earth affords—with a little dash of rapture into the bargain, if you will look at me, when we meet again, as you have sometimes greeted, your humbled, yet most affectionate

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LETTER XIII

Thursday Night.

I HAVE been wishing the time away, my kind love, unable to rest till I knew that my penitential letter had reached your hand—and this afternoon, when your tender epistle of Tuesday gave such exquisite pleasure to your poor sick girl, her heart smote her to think that you were still to receive another cold one.—Burn it also, my ——; yet do not forget that even those letters were full of love; and I shall ever recollect, that you did not wait to be mollified by my penitence, before you took me again to your heart.

I have been unwell, and would not, now I am recovering, take a journey, because I have been seriously alarmed and angry with myself, dreading continually the fatal consequence of my folly.—But, should you think it right to remain at H—, I shall find some opportunity, in the course of a fortnight, or less perhaps, to come to you, and before then I shall be strong again.—Yet do not be uneasy! I am really better, and never took such care of myself, as I have done since you restored my peace of mind. The girl is come to warm my bed—so I will tenderly say, good night! and write a line or two in the morning.

Morning.

I WISH you were here to walk with me this fine morning! yet your absence shall not prevent me. I have stayed at home too much; though, when I was so dreadfully out of spirits, I was careless of every thing.

I will now sally forth (you will go with me in my heart) and try whether this fine bracing air will not give the vigour to the poor babe, it had, before I so inconsiderately gave way to the grief that deranged my bowels, and gave a turn to my whole system.

Yours truly

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LETTER XIV

Saturday Morning.

THE two or three letters, which I have written to you lately, my love, will serve as an answer to your explanatory one. I cannot but respect your motives and conduct. I always respected them; and was only hurt, by what seemed to me a want of confidence, and consequently affection.—I thought also, that if you were obliged to stay three months at H—, I might as well have been with you.—Well! well, what signifies what I brooded over—Let us now be friends!

I shall probably receive a letter from you to-day, sealing my pardon—and I will be careful not to torment you with my querulous humours, at least, till I see you again. Act as circumstances direct, and I will not enquire when they will permit you to return, convinced that you will hasten to your * * * *, when you have attained (or lost sight of) the object of your journey.

What a picture have you sketched of our fire-side! Yes, my love, my fancy was instantly at work, and I found my head on your shoulder, whilst my eyes were fixed on the little creatures that were clinging about your knees. I did not absolutely determine that there should be six—if you have not set your heart on this round number.

I am going to dine with Mrs. ——. I have not been to visit her since the first day she came to Paris. I wish indeed to be out in the air as much as I can; for the exercise I have taken these two or three days past, has been of such service to me, that I hope shortly to tell you, that I am quite well. I have scarcely slept before last night, and then not much.—The two Mrs. ———s have been very anxious and tender.

Yours truly

* * * *

I need not desire you to give the colonel a good bottle of wine.

LETTER XV

Sunday Morning.

I WROTE to you yesterday, my ———; but, finding that the colonel is still detained (for his passport was forgotten at the office yesterday) I am not willing to let so many days elapse without your hearing from me, after having talked of illness and apprehensions.

I cannot boast of being quite recovered, yet I am (I must use my Yorkshire phrase; for, when my heart is warm, pop come the expressions of childhood into my head) so *lightsome*, that I think it will not *go badly with me*.—And nothing shall be wanting on my part, I assure you; for I am urged on, not only by an enlivened affection for you, but by a new-born tenderness that plays cheerly round my dilating heart.

I was therefore, in defiance of cold and dirt, out in the air the greater part of yesterday; and, if I get over this evening without a return of the fever that has tormented me, I shall talk no more of illness. I have promised the little creature, that its mother, who ought to cherish it, will not again plague it, and begged it to pardon me; and, since I could not hug either it or you to my breast, I have to my heart.—I am afraid to read over this prattle—but it is only for your eye.

I have been seriously vexed, to find that, whilst you were harrassed by impediments in your undertakings, I was giving you additional uneasiness.—If you can make any of your plans answer—it is well, I do not think a *little* money inconvenient; but, should they fail, we will struggle cheerfully together—drawn closer by the pinching blasts of poverty.

Adieu, my love! Write often to your poor girl, and write long letters; for I not only like them for being longer, but because more heart steals into them; and I am happy to catch your heart whenever I can.

Yours sincerely

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LETTER XVI

Tuesday Morning.

I SEIZE this opportunity to inform you, that I am to set out on Thursday with Mr. ———, and hope to tell you soon (on your lips) how glad I shall be to see you. I have just got my passport, so I do not foresee any impediment to my reaching H——, to bid you good-night next Friday in my new apartment—where I am to meet you and love, in spite of care, to smile me to sleep—for I have not caught much rest since we parted.

You have, by your tenderness and worth, twisted yourself more artfully round my heart, than I supposed possible.—Let me indulge the thought, that I have thrown out some tendrils to cling to the elm by which I wish to be supported.—This is talking a new language for me!—But, knowing that I am not a parasite-plant, I am willing to receive the proofs of affection, that every pulse replies to, when I think of being once more in the same house with you.—God bless you!

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER XVII

Wednesday Morning.

I ONLY send this as an *avant-coureur*, without jack-boots, to tell you, that I am again on the wing, and hope to be with you a few hours after you receive it. I shall find you well, and composed, I am sure; or, more properly speaking, cheerful.—What is the reason that my spirits are not as manageable as yours? Yet, now I think of it, I will not allow that your temper is even, though I have promised myself, in order to obtain my own forgiveness, that I will not ruffle it for a long, long time—I am afraid to say never.

Farewell for a moment!—Do not forget that I am driving towards you in person! My mind, unfettered, has flown to you long since, or rather has never left you.

I am well, and have no apprehension that I shall find the journey too fatiguing, when I follow the lead of my heart.—With my face turned to H— my spirits will not sink—and my mind has always hitherto enabled my body to do whatever I wished.

Yours affectionately

LETTER XVIII

H—, Thursday Morning, March 12.

WE are such creatures of habit, my love, that, though I cannot say I was sorry, childishly so, for your going, when I knew that you were to stay such a short time, and I had a plan of employment; yet I could not sleep.—I turned to your side of the bed, and tried to make the most of the comfort of the pillow, which you used to tell me I was churlish about; but all would not do.—I took nevertheless my walk before breakfast, though the weather was not very inviting—and here I am, wishing you a finer day, and seeing you peep over my shoulder, as I write, with one of your kindest looks—when your eyes glisten, and a suffusion creeps over your relaxing features.

But I do not mean to dally with you this morning—So God bless you! Take care of yourself—and sometimes fold to your heart your affectionate

LETTER XIX

DO not call me stupid, for leaving on the table the little bit of paper I was to inclose.—This comes of being in love at the fag-end of a letter of business.—You know, you say, they will not chime together.—I had got you by the fire-side, with the *gigot* smoking on the board, to lard your poor bare ribs—and behold, I closed my letter without taking the paper up, that was directly under my eyes!—What had I got in them to render me so blind?—I give you leave to answer the question, if you will not scold; for I am

Yours most affectionately

LETTER XX

Sunday, August 17.

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I have promised ——— to go with him to his country-house, where he is now permitted to dine—I, and the little darling, to be sure^[47-A]—whom I cannot help kissing with more fondness, since you left us. I think I shall enjoy the fine prospect, and that it will rather enliven, than satiate my imagination.

I have called on Mrs. ———. She has the manners of a gentlewoman, with a dash of the easy French coquetry, which renders her *piquante*.—But *Monsieur* her husband, whom nature never dreamed of casting in either the mould of a gentleman or lover, makes but an awkward figure in the foreground of the picture.

The H——s are very ugly, without doubt—and the house smelt of commerce from top to toe—so that his abortive attempt to display taste, only proved it to be one of the things not to be bought with gold. I was in a room a moment alone, and my attention was attracted by the *pendule*—A nymph was offering up her vows before a smoking altar, to a fat-bottomed Cupid (saving your presence), who was kicking his heels in the air.—Ah! kick on, thought I; for the demon of traffic will ever fright away the loves and graces, that streak with the rosy beams of infant fancy the *sombre* day of life—whilst the imagination, not allowing us to see things as they are, enables us to catch a hasty draught of the running stream of delight, the thirst for which seems to be given only to tantalize us.

But I am philosophizing; nay, perhaps you will call me severe, and bid me let the square-headed money-getters alone.—Peace to them! though none of the social sprites (and there are not a few of different descriptions, who sport about the various inlets to my heart) gave me a twitch to restrain my pen.

I have been writing on, expecting poor ——— to come; for, when I began, I merely thought of business; and, as this is the idea that most naturally associates with your image, I wonder I stumbled on any other.

Yet, as common life, in my opinion, is scarcely worth having, even with a *gigot* every day, and a pudding added thereunto, I will allow you to cultivate my judgment, if you will permit me to keep alive the sentiments in your heart, which may be termed romantic, because, the offspring of the senses and the imagination, they resemble the mother more than the father^[50-A], when they produce the suffusion I admire.—In spite of icy age, I hope still to see it, if you have not determined only to eat and drink, and be stupidly useful to the stupid—

Yours

* * * *

LETTER XXI

H—, August 19, Tuesday.

I RECEIVED both your letters to-day—I had reckoned on hearing from you yesterday, therefore was disappointed, though I imputed your silence to the right cause. I intended answering your kind letter immediately, that you might have felt the pleasure it gave me; but ——— came in, and some other things interrupted me; so that the fine vapour has evaporated—yet, leaving a sweet scent behind, I have only to tell you, what is sufficiently obvious, that the earnest desire I have shown to keep my place, or gain more ground in your heart, is a sure proof how necessary your affection is to my happiness.—Still I do not think it false delicacy, or foolish pride, to wish that your attention to my happiness should arise *as much* from love, which is always rather a selfish passion, as reason—that is, I want you to promote my felicity, by seeking your own.—For, whatever pleasure it may give me to discover your generosity of soul, I would not be dependent for your affection on the very quality I most admire. No; there are qualities in your heart, which demand my affection; but, unless the attachment appears to me clearly mutual, I shall labour only to esteem your character, instead of cherishing a tenderness for your person.

I write in a hurry, because the little one, who has been sleeping a long time, begins to call for me. Poor thing! when I am sad, I lament that all my affections grow on me, till they become too strong for my peace, though they all afford me snatches of exquisite enjoyment—This for our little girl was at first very reasonable—more the effect of reason, a sense of duty, than feeling—now, she has got into my heart and imagination, and when I walk out without her, her little figure is ever dancing before me.

You too have somehow clung round my heart—I found I could not eat my dinner in the great room—and, when I took up the large knife to carve for myself, tears rushed into my eyes.—Do not however suppose that I am melancholy—for, when you are from me, I not only wonder how I can find fault with you—but how I can doubt your affection.

I will not mix any comments on the inclosed (it roused my indignation) with the effusion of tenderness, with which I assure you, that you are the friend of my bosom, and the prop of my heart.

* * * *

LETTER XXII

H—, August 20.

I WANT to know what steps you have taken respecting —— . Knavery always rouses my indignation—I should be gratified to hear that the law had chastised —— severely; but I do not wish you to see him, because the business does not now admit of peaceful discussion, and I do not exactly know how you would express your contempt.

Pray ask some questions about Tallien—I am still pleased with the dignity of his conduct.—The other day, in the cause of humanity, he made use of a degree of address, which I admire—and mean to point out to you, as one of the few instances of address which do credit to the abilities of the man, without taking away from that confidence in his openness of heart, which is the true basis of both public and private friendship.

Do not suppose that I mean to allude to a little reserve of temper in you, of which I have sometimes complained! You have been used to a cunning woman, and you almost look for cunning—Nay, in *managing* my happiness, you now and then wounded my sensibility, concealing yourself, till honest sympathy, giving you to me without disguise, lets me look into a heart, which my half-broken one wishes to creep into, to be revived and cherished.—You have frankness of heart, but not often exactly that overflowing (*épanchement de cœur*), which becoming almost childish, appears a weakness only to the weak.

But I have left poor Tallien. I wanted you to enquire likewise whether, as a member declared in the convention, Robespierre really maintained a *number* of mistresses.—Should it prove so, I suspect that they rather flattered his vanity than his senses.

Here is a chatting, desultory epistle! But do not suppose that I mean to close it without mentioning the little damsel—who has been almost springing out of my arm—she certainly looks very like you—but I do not love her the less for that, whether I am angry or pleased with you.—

Yours affectionately

LETTER XXIII^[58-A].

September 22.

I HAVE just written two letters, that are going by other conveyances, and which I reckon on your receiving long before this. I therefore merely write, because I know I should be disappointed at seeing any one who had left you, if you did not send a letter, were it ever so short, to tell me why you did not write a longer—and you will want to be told, over and over again, that our little Hercules is quite recovered.

Besides looking at me, there are three other things, which delight her—to ride in a coach, to look at a scarlet waistcoat, and hear loud music—yesterday, at the *fête*, she enjoyed the two latter; but, to honour J. J. Rousseau, I intend to give her a sash, the first she has ever had round her—and why not?—for I have always been half in love with him.

Well, this you will say is trifling—shall I talk about alum or soap? There is nothing picturesque in your present pursuits; my imagination then rather chuses to ramble back to the barrier with you, or to see you coming to meet me, and my basket of grapes.—With what pleasure do I recollect your looks and words, when I have been sitting on the window, regarding the waving corn!

Believe me, sage sir, you have not sufficient respect for the imagination—I could prove to you in a trice that it is the mother of sentiment, the great distinction of our nature, the only purifier of the passions—animals have a portion of reason, and equal, if not more exquisite, senses; but no trace of imagination, or her offspring taste, appears in any of their actions. The impulse of the senses, passions, if you will, and the conclusions of reason, draw men together; but the imagination is the true fire, stolen from heaven, to animate this cold creature of clay, producing all those fine sympathies that lead to rapture, rendering men social by expanding their hearts, instead of leaving them leisure to calculate how many comforts society affords.

If you call these observations romantic, a phrase in this place which would be tantamount to nonsensical, I shall be apt to retort, that you are embruted by trade, and the vulgar enjoyments of life—Bring me then back your barrier-face, or you shall have nothing to say to my barrier-girl; and I shall fly from you, to cherish the remembrances that will ever be dear to me; for I am yours truly

* * * *

LETTER XXIV

Evening, Sept. 23.

I HAVE been playing and laughing with the little girl so long, that I cannot take up my pen to address you without emotion. Pressing her to my bosom, she looked so like you (*entre nous*, your best looks, for I do not admire your commercial face) every nerve seemed to vibrate to the touch, and I began to think that there was something in the assertion of man and wife being one—for you seemed to pervade my whole frame, quickening the beat of my heart, and lending me the sympathetic tears you excited.

Have I any thing more to say to you? No; not for the present—the rest is all flown away; and, indulging

tenderness for you, I cannot now complain of some people here, who have ruffled my temper for two or three days past.



Morning.

YESTERDAY B—— sent to me for my packet of letters. He called on me before; and I like him better than I did—that is, I have the same opinion of his understanding, but I think with you, he has more tenderness and real delicacy of feeling with respect to women, than are commonly to be met with. His manner too of speaking of his little girl, about the age of mine, interested me. I gave him a letter for my sister, and requested him to see her.

I have been interrupted. Mr. —— I suppose will write about business. Public affairs I do not descant on, except to tell you that they write now with great freedom and truth, and this liberty of the press will overthrow the Jacobins, I plainly perceive.

I hope you take care of your health. I have got a habit of restlessness at night, which arises, I believe, from activity of mind; for, when I am alone, that is, not near one to whom I can open my heart, I sink into reveries and trains of thinking, which agitate and fatigue me.

This is my third letter; when am I to hear from you? I need not tell you, I suppose, that I am now writing with somebody in the room with me, and —— is waiting to carry this to Mr. ——'s. I will then kiss the girl for you, and bid you adieu.

I desired you, in one of my other letters, to bring back to me your barrier-face—or that you should not be loved by my barrier-girl. I know that you will love her more and more, for she is a little affectionate, intelligent creature, with as much vivacity, I should think, as you could wish for.

I was going to tell you of two or three things which displease me here; but they are not of sufficient consequence to interrupt pleasing sensations. I have received a letter from Mr. —— . I want you to bring —— with you. Madame S—— is by me, reading a German translation of your letters—she desires me to give her love to you, on account of what you say of the negroes.

Yours most affectionately,

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LETTER XXV

Paris, Sept. 28.

I HAVE written to you three or four letters; but different causes have prevented my sending them by the persons who promised to take or forward them. The inclosed is one I wrote to go by B——; yet, finding that he will not arrive, before I hope, and believe, you will have set out on your return, I inclose it to you, and shall give it in charge to ——, as Mr. —— is detained, to whom I also gave a letter.

I cannot help being anxious to hear from you; but I shall not harrass you with accounts of inquietudes, or of cares that arise from peculiar circumstances.—I have had so many little plagues here, that I have almost lamented that I left H——. ——, who is at best a most helpless creature, is now, on account of her pregnancy, more trouble than use to me, so that I still continue to be almost a slave to the child.—She indeed rewards me, for she is a sweet little creature; for, setting aside a mother's fondness (which, by the

bye, is growing on me, her little intelligent smiles sinking into my heart), she has an astonishing degree of sensibility and observation. The other day by B——'s child, a fine one, she looked like a little sprite.—She is all life and motion, and her eyes are not the eyes of a fool—I will swear.

I slept at St. Germain's, in the very room (if you have not forgot) in which you pressed me very tenderly to your heart.—I did not forget to fold my darling to mine, with sensations that are almost too sacred to be alluded to.

Adieu, my love! Take care of yourself, if you wish to be the protector of your child, and the comfort of her mother.

I have received, for you, letters from ————. I want to hear how that affair finishes, though I do not know whether I have most contempt for his folly or knavery.

Your own

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LETTER XXVI

October 1.

It is a heartless task to write letters, without knowing whether they will ever reach you.—I have given two to ——, who has been a-going, a-going, every day, for a week past; and three others, which were written in a low-spirited strain, a little querulous or so, I have not been able to forward by the opportunities that were mentioned to me. *Tant mieux!* you will say, and I will not say nay; for I should be sorry that the contents of a letter, when you are so far away, should damp the pleasure that the sight of it would afford—judging of your feelings by my own. I just now stumbled on one of the kind letters, which you wrote during your last absence. You are then a dear affectionate creature, and I will not plague you. The letter which you chance to receive, when the absence is so long, ought to bring only tears of tenderness, without any bitter alloy, into your eyes.

After your return I hope indeed, that you will not be so immersed in business, as during the last three or four months past—for even money, taking into the account all the future comforts it is to procure, may be gained at too dear a rate, if painful impressions are left on the mind.—These impressions were much more lively, soon after you went away, than at present—for a thousand tender recollections efface the melancholy traces they left on my mind—and every emotion is on the same side as my reason, which always was on yours.—Separated, it would be almost impious to dwell on real or imaginary imperfections of character.—I feel that I love you; and, if I cannot be happy with you, I will seek it no where else.

My little darling grows every day more dear to me—and she often has a kiss, when we are alone together, which I give her for you, with all my heart.

I have been interrupted—and must send off my letter. The liberty of the press will produce a great effect here—the *cry of blood will not be vain!*—Some more monsters will perish—and the Jacobins are conquered.—Yet I almost fear the last slap of the tail of the beast.

I have had several trifling teasing inconveniencies here, which I shall not now trouble you with a detail of.—I am sending —— back; her pregnancy rendered her useless. The girl I have got has more vivacity,

which is better for the child.

I long to hear from you.—Bring a copy of —— and —— with you.

—— is still here: he is a lost man.—He really loves his wife, and is anxious about his children; but his indiscriminate hospitality and social feelings have given him an inveterate habit of drinking, that destroys his health, as well as renders his person disgusting.—If his wife had more sense, or delicacy, she might restrain him: as it is, nothing will save him.

Yours most truly and affectionately

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LETTER XXVII

October 26.

My dear love, I began to wish so earnestly to hear from you, that the sight of your letters occasioned such pleasurable emotions, I was obliged to throw them aside till the little girl and I were alone together; and this said little girl, our darling, is become a most intelligent little creature, and as gay as a lark, and that in the morning too, which I do not find quite so convenient. I once told you, that the sensations before she was born, and when she is sucking, were pleasant; but they do not deserve to be compared to the emotions I feel, when she stops to smile upon me, or laughs outright on meeting me unexpectedly in the street, or after a short absence. She has now the advantage of having two good nurses, and I am at present able to discharge my duty to her, without being the slave of it.

I have therefore employed and amused myself since I got rid of ——, and am making a progress in the language amongst other things. I have also made some new acquaintance. I have almost *charmed* a judge of the tribunal, R——, who, though I should not have thought it possible, has humanity, if not *beaucoup d'esprit*. But let me tell you, if you do not make haste back, I shall be half in love with the author of the *Marseillaise*, who is a handsome man, a little too broad-faced or so, and plays sweetly on the violin.

What do you say to this threat?—why, *entre nous*, I like to give way to a sprightly vein, when writing to you, that is, when I am pleased with you. "The devil," you know, is proverbially said to be "in a good humour, when he is pleased." Will you not then be a good boy, and come back quickly to play with your girls? but I shall not allow you to love the new-comer best.

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My heart longs for your return, my love, and only looks for, and seeks happiness with you; yet do not

imagine that I childishly wish you to come back, before you have arranged things in such a manner, that it will not be necessary for you to leave us soon again; or to make exertions which injure your constitution.

Yours most truly and tenderly
* * * *

P.S. "You would oblige me by delivering the inclosed to Mr. ———, and pray call for an answer.—It is for a person uncomfortably situated.



LETTER XXVIII

Dec. 26.

I HAVE been, my love, for some days tormented by fears, that I would not allow to assume a form—I had been expecting you daily—and I heard that many vessels had been driven on shore during the late gale.—Well, I now see your letter—and find that you are safe; I will not regret then that your exertions have hitherto been so unavailing.

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Be that as it may, return to me when you have arranged the other matters, which ——— has been crowding on you. I want to be sure that you are safe—and not separated from me by a sea that must be passed. For, feeling that I am happier than I ever was, do you wonder at my sometimes dreading that fate has not done persecuting me? Come to me, my dearest friend, husband, father of my child!—All these fond ties glow at my heart at this moment, and dim my eyes.—With you an independence is desirable; and it is always within our reach, if affluence escapes us—without you the world again appears empty to me. But I am recurring to some of the melancholy thoughts that have flitted across my mind for some days past, and haunted my dreams.

My little darling is indeed a sweet child; and I am sorry that you are not here, to see her little mind unfold itself. You talk of "dalliance;" but certainly no lover was ever more attached to his mistress, than she is to me. Her eyes follow me every where, and by affection I have the most despotic power over her. She is all vivacity or softness—yes; I love her more than I thought I should. When I have been hurt at your stay, I have embraced her as my only comfort—when pleased with you, for looking and laughing like you; nay, I cannot, I find, long be angry with you, whilst I am kissing her for resembling you. But there would be no end to these details. Fold us both to your heart; for I am truly and affectionately

Yours
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LETTER XXIX

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I do, my love, indeed sincerely sympathize with you in all your disappointments.—Yet, knowing that you are well, and think of me with affection, I only lament other disappointments, because I am sorry that you should thus exert yourself in vain, and that you are kept from me.

———, I know, urges you to stay, and is continually branching out into new projects, because he has the idle desire to amass a large fortune, rather an immense one, merely to have the credit of having made it. But we who are governed by other motives, ought not to be led on by him. When we meet, we will discuss this subject—You will listen to reason, and it has probably occurred to you, that it will be better, in future, to pursue some sober plan, which may demand more time, and still enable you to arrive at the same end. It appears to me absurd to waste life in preparing to live.

Would it not now be possible to arrange your business in such a manner as to avoid the inquietudes, of which I have had my share since your departure? Is it not possible to enter into business, as an employment necessary to keep the faculties awake, and (to sink a little in the expressions) the pot boiling, without suffering what must ever be considered as a secondary object, to engross the mind, and drive sentiment and affection out of the heart?

I am in a hurry to give this letter to the person who has promised to forward it with ——'s. I wish then to counteract, in some measure, what he has doubtless recommended most warmly.

Stay, my friend, whilst it is *absolutely* necessary.—I will give you no tenderer name, though it glows at my heart, unless you come the moment the settling the *present* objects permit.—*I do not consent* to your taking any other journey—or the little woman and I will be off, the Lord knows where. But, as I had rather owe every thing to your affection, and, I may add, to your reason, (for this immoderate desire of wealth, which makes —— so eager to have you remain, is contrary to your principles of action), I will not importune you.—I will only tell you, that I long to see you—and, being at peace with you, I shall be hurt, rather than made angry, by delays.—Having suffered so much in life, do not be surprised if I sometimes, when left to myself, grow gloomy, and suppose that it was all a dream, and that my happiness is not to last. I say happiness, because remembrance retrenches all the dark shades of the picture.

My little one begins to show her teeth, and use her legs—She wants you to bear your part in the nursing business, for I am fatigued with dancing her, and yet she is not satisfied—she wants you to thank her mother for taking such care of her, as you only can.

Yours truly

* * * *

December 29.

THOUGH I suppose you have later intelligence, yet, as ——— has just informed me that he has an opportunity of sending immediately to you, I take advantage of it to inclose you

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—
How I hate this crooked business! This intercourse with the world, which obliges one to see the worst side of human nature! Why cannot you be content with the object you had first in view, when you entered into this wearisome labyrinth?—I know very well that you have imperceptibly been drawn on; yet why does one project, successful or abortive, only give place to two others? Is it not sufficient to avoid poverty?—I am contented to do my part; and, even here, sufficient to escape from wretchedness is not difficult to obtain. And, let me tell you, I have my project also—and, if you do not soon return, the little girl and I will take care of ourselves; we will not accept any of your cold kindness—your distant civilities—no; not we.

This is but half jesting, for I am really tormented by the desire which ——— manifests to have you remain where you are.—Yet why do I talk to you?—If he can persuade you—let him!—for, if you are not happier with me, and your own wishes do not make you throw aside these eternal projects, I am above using any arguments, though reason as well as affection seems to offer them—if our affection be mutual, they will occur to you—and you will act accordingly.

Since my arrival here, I have found the German lady, of whom you have heard me speak. Her first child died in the month; but she has another, about the age of my ———, a fine little creature. They are still but contriving to live——earning their daily bread—yet, though they are but just above poverty, I envy them.—She is a tender, affectionate mother—fatigued even by her attention.—However she has an affectionate husband in her turn, to render her care light, and to share her pleasure.

I will own to you that, feeling extreme tenderness for my little girl, I grow sad very often when I am playing with her, that you are not here, to observe with me how her mind unfolds, and her little heart becomes attached!—These appear to me to be true pleasures—and still you suffer them to escape you, in search of what we may never enjoy.—It is your own maxim to "live in the present moment."—*If you do*—stay, for God's sake; but tell me the truth—if not, tell me when I may expect to see you, and let me not be always vainly looking for you, till I grow sick at heart.

Adieu! I am a little hurt.—I must take my darling to my bosom to comfort me.

* * * *

LETTER XXXI

December 30.

SHOULD you receive three or four of the letters at once which I have written lately, do not think of Sir John Brute, for I do not mean to wife you. I only take advantage of every occasion, that one out of three of my epistles may reach your hands, and inform you that I am not of ———'s opinion, who talks till he makes me angry, of the necessity of your staying two or three months longer. I do not like this life of continual inquietude—and, *entre nous*, I am determined to try to earn some money here myself, in order to convince

you that, if you chuse to run about the world to get a fortune, it is for yourself—for the little girl and I will live without your assistance, unless you are with us. I may be termed proud—Be it so—but I will never abandon certain principles of action.

The common run of men have such an ignoble way of thinking, that, if they debauch their hearts, and prostitute their persons, following perhaps a gust of inebriation, they suppose the wife, slave rather, whom they maintain, has no right to complain, and ought to receive the sultan, whenever he deigns to return, with open arms, though his have been polluted by half an hundred promiscuous amours during his absence.

I consider fidelity and constancy as two distinct things; yet the former is necessary, to give life to the other—and such a degree of respect do I think due to myself, that, if only probity, which is a good thing in its place, brings you back, never return!—for, if a wandering of the heart, or even a caprice of the imagination detains you—there is an end of all my hopes of happiness—I could not forgive it, if I would.

I have gotten into a melancholy mood, you perceive. You know my opinion of men in general; you know that I think them systematic tyrants, and that it is the rarest thing in the world, to meet with a man with sufficient delicacy of feeling to govern desire. When I am thus sad, I lament that my little darling, fondly as I doat on her, is a girl.—I am sorry to have a tie to a world that for me is ever sown with thorns.

You will call this an ill-humoured letter, when, in fact, it is the strongest proof of affection I can give, to dread to lose you. ——— has taken such pains to convince me that you must and ought to stay, that it has inconceivably depressed my spirits—You have always known my opinion—I have ever declared, that two people, who mean to live together, ought not to be long separated.—If certain things are more necessary to you than me—search for them—Say but one word, and you shall never hear of me more.—If not—for God's sake, let us struggle with poverty—with any evil, but these continual inquietudes of business, which I have been told were to last but a few months, though every day the end appears more distant! This is the first letter in this strain that I have determined to forward to you; the rest lie by, because I was unwilling to give you pain, and I should not now write, if I did not think that there would be no conclusion to the schemes, which demand, as I am told, your presence.

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LETTER XXXII

January 9.

I JUST now received one of your hasty *notes*; for business so entirely occupies you, that you have not time, or sufficient command of thought, to write letters. Beware! you seem to be got into a whirl of projects and schemes, which are drawing you into a gulph, that, if it do not absorb your happiness, will infallibly destroy mine.

Fatigued during my youth by the most arduous struggles, not only to obtain independence, but to render myself useful, not merely pleasure, for which I had the most lively taste, I mean the simple pleasures that flow from passion and affection, escaped me, but the most melancholy views of life were impressed by a disappointed heart on my mind. Since I knew you, I have been endeavouring to go back to my former nature, and have allowed some time to glide away, winged with the delight which only spontaneous enjoyment can give.—Why have you so soon dissolved the charm?

I am really unable to bear the continual inquietude which your and ——'s never-ending plans produce. This you may term want of firmness—but you are mistaken—I have still sufficient firmness to pursue my principle of action. The present misery, I cannot find a softer word to do justice to my feelings, appears to me unnecessary—and therefore I have not firmness to support it as you may think I ought. I should have been content, and still wish, to retire with you to a farm—My God! any thing, but these continual anxieties—any thing but commerce, which debases the mind, and roots out affection from the heart.

I do not mean to complain of subordinate inconveniences——yet I will simply observe, that, led to expect you every week, I did not make the arrangements required by the present circumstances, to procure the necessaries of life. In order to have them, a servant, for that purpose only, is indispensable—The want of wood, has made me catch the most violent cold I ever had; and my head is so disturbed by continual coughing, that I am unable to write without stopping frequently to recollect myself.—This however is one of the common evils which must be borne with——bodily pain does not touch the heart, though it fatigues the spirits.

Still as you talk of your return, even in February, doubtingly, I have determined, the moment the weather changes, to wean my child.—It is too soon for her to begin to divide sorrow!—And as one has well said, "despair is a freeman," we will go and seek our fortune together.

This is not a caprice of the moment—for your absence has given new weight to some conclusions, that I was very reluctantly forming before you left me.—I do not chuse to be a secondary object.—If your feelings were in unison with mine, you would not sacrifice so much to visionary prospects of future advantage.

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LETTER XXXIII

Jan. 15.

I WAS just going to begin my letter with the fag end of a song, which would only have told you, what I may as well say simply, that it is pleasant to forgive those we love. I have received your two letters, dated the 26th and 28th of December, and my anger died away. You can scarcely conceive the effect some of your letters have produced on me. After longing to hear from you during a tedious interval of suspense, I have seen a superscription written by you.—Promising myself pleasure, and feeling emotion, I have laid it by me, till the person who brought it, left the room—when, behold! on opening it, I have found only half a dozen hasty lines, that have damped all the rising affection of my soul.

Well, now for business—

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My animal is well; I have not yet taught her to eat, but nature is doing the business. I gave her a crust to assist the cutting of her teeth; and now she has two, she makes good use of them to gnaw a crust, biscuit, &c. You would laugh to see her; she is just like a little squirrel; she will guard a crust for two hours; and, after fixing her eye on an object for some time, dart on it with an aim as sure as a bird of prey—nothing can equal her life and spirits. I suffer from a cold; but it does not affect her. Adieu! do not forget to love us—and come soon to tell us that you do.

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LETTER XXXIV

Jan. 30.

FROM the purport of your last letters, I would suppose that this will scarcely reach you; and I have already written so many letters, that you have either not received, or neglected to acknowledge, I do not find it pleasant, or rather I have no inclination, to go over the same ground again. If you have received them, and are still detained by new projects, it is useless for me to say any more on the subject. I have done with it for ever—yet I ought to remind you that your pecuniary interest suffers by your absence.

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For my part, my head is turned giddy, by only hearing of plans to make money, and my contemptuous feelings have sometimes burst out. I therefore was glad that a violent cold gave me a pretext to stay at home, lest I should have uttered unseasonable truths.

My child is well, and the spring will perhaps restore me to myself.—I have endured many inconveniences this winter, which should I be ashamed to mention, if they had been unavoidable. "The secondary pleasures of life," you say, "are very necessary to my comfort:" it may be so; but I have ever considered them as secondary. If therefore you accuse me of wanting the resolution necessary to bear the *common*^[100-A] evils of life; I should answer, that I have not fashioned my mind to sustain them, because I would avoid them, cost what it would——

Adieu!

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LETTER XXXV

February 9.

THE melancholy presentiment has for some time hung on my spirits, that we were parted for ever; and the

letters I received this day, by Mr. —, convince me that it was not without foundation. You allude to some other letters, which I suppose have miscarried; for most of those I have got, were only a few hasty lines, calculated to wound the tenderness the sight of the superscriptions excited.

I mean not however to complain; yet so many feelings are struggling for utterance, and agitating a heart almost bursting with anguish, that I find it very difficult to write with any degree of coherence.

You left me indisposed, though you have taken no notice of it; and the most fatiguing journey I ever had, contributed to continue it. However, I recovered my health; but a neglected cold, and continual inquietude during the last two months, have reduced me to a state of weakness I never before experienced. Those who did not know that the canker-worm was at work at the core, cautioned me about suckling my child too long.—God preserve this poor child, and render her happier than her mother!

But I am wandering from my subject: indeed my head turns giddy, when I think that all the confidence I have had in the affection of others is come to this.

I did not expect this blow from you. I have done my duty to you and my child; and if I am not to have any return of affection to reward me, I have the sad consolation of knowing that I deserved a better fate. My soul is weary—I am sick at heart; and, but for this little darling, I would cease to care about a life, which is now stripped of every charm.

You see how stupid I am, uttering declamation, when I meant simply to tell you, that I consider your requesting me to come to you, as merely dictated by honour.—Indeed, I scarcely understand you.—You request me to come, and then tell me, that you have not given up all thoughts of returning to this place.

When I determined to live with you, I was only governed by affection.—I would share poverty with you, but I turn with affright from the sea of trouble on which you are entering.—I have certain principles of action: I know what I look for to found my happiness on.—It is not money.—With you I wished for sufficient to procure the comforts of life—as it is, less will do.—I can still exert myself to obtain the necessaries of life for my child, and she does not want more at present.—I have two or three plans in my head to earn our subsistence; for do not suppose that, neglected by you, I will lie under obligations of a pecuniary kind to you!—No; I would sooner submit to menial service.—I wanted the support of your affection—that gone, all is over!—I did not think, when I complained of —'s contemptible avidity to accumulate money, that he would have dragged you into his schemes.

I cannot write.—I inclose a fragment of a letter, written soon after your departure, and another which tenderness made me keep back when it was written.—You will see then the sentiments of a calmer, though not a more determined, moment.—Do not insult me by saying, that "our being together is paramount to every other consideration!" Were it, you would not be running after a bubble, at the expence of my peace of mind.

Perhaps this is the last letter you will ever receive from me.

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LETTER XXXVI

Feb. 10.

You talk of "permanent views and future comfort"—not for me, for I am dead to hope. The inquietudes of the last winter have finished the business, and my heart is not only broken, but my constitution destroyed. I conceive myself in a galloping consumption, and the continual anxiety I feel at the thought of leaving my child, feeds the fever that nightly devours me. It is on her account that I again write to you, to conjure you, by all that you hold sacred, to leave her here with the German lady you may have heard me mention! She has a child of the same age, and they may be brought up together, as I wish her to be brought up. I shall write more fully on the subject. To facilitate this, I shall give up my present lodgings, and go into the same house. I can live much cheaper there, which is now become an object. I have had 3000 livres from ——, and I shall take one more, to pay my servant's wages, &c. and then I shall endeavour to procure what I want by my own exertions. I shall entirely give up the acquaintance of the Americans.

—— and I have not been on good terms a long time. Yesterday he very unmanlily exulted over me, on account of your determination to stay. I had provoked it, it is true, by some asperities against commerce, which have dropped from me, when we have argued about the propriety of your remaining where you are; and it is no matter, I have drunk too deep of the bitter cup to care about trifles.

When you first entered into these plans, you bounded your views to the gaining of a thousand pounds. It was sufficient to have procured a farm in America, which would have been an independence. You find now that you did not know yourself, and that a certain situation in life is more necessary to you than you imagined—more necessary than an uncorrupted heart—For a year or two, you may procure yourself what you call pleasure; eating, drinking, and women; but, in the solitude of declining life, I shall be remembered with regret—I was going to say with remorse, but checked my pen.

As I have never concealed the nature of my connection with you, your reputation will not suffer. I shall never have a confidant: I am content with the approbation of my own mind; and, if there be a searcher of hearts, mine will not be despised. Reading what you have written relative to the desertion of women, I have often wondered how theory and practice could be so different, till I recollected, that the sentiments of passion, and the resolves of reason, are very distinct. As to my sisters, as you are so continually hurried with business, you need not write to them—I shall, when my mind is calmer. God bless you! Adieu!

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This has been such a period of barbarity and misery, I ought not to complain of having my share. I wish one moment that I had never heard of the cruelties that have been practised here, and the next envy the mothers who have been killed with their children. Surely I had suffered enough in life, not to be cursed with a fondness, that burns up the vital stream I am imparting. You will think me mad: I would I were so, that I could forget my misery—so that my head or heart would be still.—

LETTER XXXVII

Feb. 19.

WHEN I first received your letter, putting off your return to an indefinite time, I felt so hurt, that I know not what I wrote. I am now calmer, though it was not the kind of wound over which time has the quickest effect; on the contrary, the more I think, the sadder I grow. Society fatigues me inexpressibly—So much so, that finding fault with every one, I have only reason enough, to discover that the fault is in myself. My child alone interests me, and, but for her, I should not take any pains to recover my health.

As it is, I shall wean her, and try if by that step (to which I feel a repugnance, for it is my only solace) I can get rid of my cough. Physicians talk much of the danger attending any complaint on the lungs, after a woman has suckled for some months. They lay a stress also on the necessity of keeping the mind tranquil—and, my God! how has mine been harrassed! But whilst the caprices of other women are gratified, "the wind of heaven not suffered to visit them too rudely," I have not found a guardian angel, in heaven or on earth, to ward off sorrow or care from my bosom.

What sacrifices have you not made for a woman you did not respect!—But I will not go over this ground—I want to tell you that I do not understand you. You say that you have not given up all thoughts of returning here—and I know that it will be necessary—nay, is. I cannot explain myself; but if you have not lost your memory, you will easily divine my meaning. What! is our life then only to be made up of separations? and am I only to return to a country, that has not merely lost all charms for me, but for which I feel a repugnance that almost amounts to horror, only to be left there a prey to it!

Why is it so necessary that I should return?—brought up here, my girl would be freer. Indeed, expecting you to join us, I had formed some plans of usefulness that have now vanished with my hopes of happiness.

In the bitterness of my heart, I could complain with reason, that I am left here dependent on a man, whose avidity to acquire a fortune has rendered him callous to every sentiment connected with social or affectionate emotions.—With a brutal insensibility, he cannot help displaying the pleasure your determination to stay gives him, in spite of the effect it is visible it has had on me.

Till I can earn money, I shall endeavour to borrow some, for I want to avoid asking him continually for the sum necessary to maintain me.—Do not mistake me, I have never been refused.—Yet I have gone half a dozen times to the house to ask for it, and come away without speaking—you must guess why—Besides, I wish to avoid hearing of the eternal projects to which you have sacrificed my peace—not remembering—but I will be silent for ever.—

LETTER XXXVIII

April 7.

HERE I am at H——, on the wing towards you, and I write now, only to tell you, that you may expect me in the course of three or four days; for I shall not attempt to give vent to the different emotions which agitate my heart—You may term a feeling, which appears to me to be a degree of delicacy that naturally arises from sensibility, pride—Still I cannot indulge the very affectionate tenderness which glows in my bosom, without trembling, till I see, by your eyes, that it is mutual.

I sit, lost in thought, looking at the sea—and tears rush into my eyes, when I find that I am cherishing any fond expectations.—I have indeed been so unhappy this winter, I find it as difficult to acquire fresh hopes, as to regain tranquillity.—Enough of this—lie still, foolish heart!—But for the little girl, I could almost wish that it should cease to beat, to be no more alive to the anguish of disappointment.

Sweet little creature! I deprived myself of my only pleasure, when I weaned her, about ten days ago.—I am however glad I conquered my repugnance.—It was necessary it should be done soon, and I did not wish to embitter the renewal of your acquaintance with her, by putting it off till we met.—It was a painful exertion to me, and I thought it best to throw this inquietude with the rest, into the sack that I would fain throw over my shoulder.—I wished to endure it alone, in short—Yet, after sending her to sleep in the next

room for three or four nights, you cannot think with what joy I took her back again to sleep in my bosom!

I suppose I shall find you, when I arrive, for I do not see any necessity for your coming to me.—Pray inform Mr. ———, that I have his little friend with me.—My wishing to oblige him, made me put myself to some inconvenience——and delay my departure; which was irksome to me, who have not quite as much philosophy, I would not for the world say indifference, as you. God bless you!

Yours truly,

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LETTER XXXIX

Brighthelmstone, Saturday, April 11.

HERE we are, my love, and mean to set out early in the morning; and, if I can find you, I hope to dine with you to-morrow.—I shall drive to ———'s hotel, where ——— tells me you have been—and, if you have left it, I hope you will take care to be there to receive us.

I have brought with me Mr. ——'s little friend, and a girl whom I like to take care of our little darling—not on the way, for that fell to my share.—But why do I write about trifles?—or any thing?—Are we not to meet soon?—What does your heart say!

Yours truly

* * * *

I have weaned my ——, and she is now eating away at the white bread.

LETTER XL

London, Friday, May 22.

I HAVE just received your affectionate letter, and am distressed to think that I have added to your embarrassments at this troublesome juncture, when the exertion of all the faculties of your mind appears to be necessary, to extricate you out of your pecuniary difficulties. I suppose it was something relative to the circumstance you have mentioned, which made —— request to see me to-day, to *converse about a matter of great importance*. Be that as it may, his letter (such is the state of my spirits) inconceivably alarmed me, and rendered the last night as distressing, as the two former had been.

I have laboured to calm my mind since you left me—Still I find that tranquillity is not to be obtained by exertion; it is a feeling so different from the resignation of despair!—I am however no longer angry with you—nor will I ever utter another complaint—there are arguments which convince the reason, whilst they carry death to the heart.—We have had too many cruel explanations, that not only cloud every future prospect; but embitter the remembrances which alone give life to affection.—Let the subject never be revived!

It seems to me that I have not only lost the hope, but the power of being happy.—Every emotion is now sharpened by anguish.—My soul has been shook, and my tone of feelings destroyed.—I have gone out—and sought for dissipation, if not amusement, merely to fatigue still more, I find, my irritable nerves——

My friend—my dear friend—examine yourself well—I am out of the question; for, alas! I am nothing—and discover what you wish to do—what will render you most comfortable—or, to be more explicit—whether you desire to live with me, or part for ever? When you can once ascertain it, tell me frankly, I conjure you!—for, believe me, I have very involuntarily interrupted your peace.

I shall expect you to dinner on Monday, and will endeavour to assume a cheerful face to greet you—at any rate I will avoid conversations, which only tend to harrass your feelings, because I am most affectionately yours,

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LETTER XLI

Wednesday.

I INCLOSE you the letter, which you desired me to forward, and I am tempted very laconically to wish you a good morning—not because I am angry, or have nothing to say; but to keep down a wounded spirit.—I shall make every effort to calm my mind—yet a strong conviction seems to whirl round in the very centre of my brain, which, like the fiat of fate, emphatically assures me, that grief has a firm hold of my heart.

God bless you!

Yours sincerely

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LETTER XLII

—, Wednesday, Two o'Clock.

WE arrived here about an hour ago. I am extremely fatigued with the child, who would not rest quiet with any body but me, during the night—and now we are here in a comfortless, damp room, in a sort of a tomb-like house. This however I shall quickly remedy, for, when I have finished this letter, (which I must do immediately, because the post goes out early), I shall sally forth, and enquire about a vessel and an inn.

I will not distress you by talking of the depression of my spirits, or the struggle I had to keep alive my dying heart.—It is even now too full to allow me to write with composure.—*****,—dear *****, —am I always to be tossed about thus?—shall I never find an asylum to rest *contented* in? How can you love to fly about continually—dropping down, as it were, in a new world—cold and strange!—every other day? Why do you not attach those tender emotions round the idea of home, which even now dim my eyes?—This alone is affection—every thing else is only humanity, electrified by sympathy.

I will write to you again to-morrow, when I know how long I am to be detained—and hope to get a letter quickly from you, to cheer yours sincerely and affectionately

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——— is playing near me in high spirits. She was so pleased with the noise of the mail-horn, she has been continually imitating it.—Adieu!

LETTER XLIII

Thursday.

A LADY has just sent to offer to take me to ———. I have then only a moment to exclaim against the vague manner in which people give information

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But why talk of inconveniences, which are in fact trifling, when compared with the sinking of the heart I have felt! I did not intend to touch this painful string—God bless you!

Yours truly,

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LETTER XLIV

Friday, June 12.

I HAVE just received yours dated the 9th, which I suppose was a mistake, for it could scarcely have loitered so long on the road. The general observations which apply to the state of your own mind, appear to me just, as far as they go; and I shall always consider it as one of the most serious misfortunes of my life, that I did not meet you, before satiety had rendered your senses so fastidious, as almost to close up every tender avenue of sentiment and affection that leads to your sympathetic heart. You have a heart, my friend, yet, hurried away by the impetuosity of inferior feelings, you have sought in vulgar excesses, for that gratification which only the heart can bestow.

The common run of men, I know, with strong health and gross appetites, must have variety to banish *ennui*, because the imagination never lends its magic wand, to convert appetite into love, cemented by according reason.—Ah! my friend, you know not the ineffable delight, the exquisite pleasure, which arises from a unison of affection and desire, when the whole soul and senses are abandoned to a lively imagination, that renders every emotion delicate and rapturous. Yes; these are emotions, over which satiety has no power, and the recollection of which, even disappointment cannot disenchant; but they do not exist without self-denial. These emotions, more or less strong, appear to me to be the distinctive characteristic of genius, the foundation of taste, and of that exquisite relish for the beauties of nature, of which the common herd of eaters and drinkers and *child-begeters*, certainly have no idea. You will smile at an observation that has just occurred to me:—I consider those minds as the most strong and original, whose imagination acts as the stimulus to their senses.

Well! you will ask, what is the result of all this reasoning? Why I cannot help thinking that it is possible for you, having great strength of mind, to return to nature, and regain a sanity of constitution, and purity of feeling—which would open your heart to me.—I would fain rest there!

Yet, convinced more than ever of the sincerity and tenderness of my attachment to you, the involuntary hopes, which a determination to live has revived, are not sufficiently strong to dissipate the cloud, that despair has spread over futurity. I have looked at the sea, and at my child, hardly daring to own to myself the secret wish, that it might become our tomb; and that the heart, still so alive to anguish, might there be quieted by death. At this moment ten thousand complicated sentiments press for utterance, weigh on my heart, and obscure my sight.

Are we ever to meet again? and will you endeavour to render that meeting happier than the last? Will you endeavour to restrain your caprices, in order to give vigour to affection, and to give play to the checked sentiments that nature intended should expand your heart? I cannot indeed, without agony, think of your bosom's being continually contaminated; and bitter are the tears which exhaust my eyes, when I recollect why my child and I are forced to stray from the asylum, in which, after so many storms, I had hoped to rest, smiling at angry fate.—These are not common sorrows; nor can you perhaps conceive, how much active fortitude it requires to labour perpetually to blunt the shafts of disappointment.

Examine now yourself, and ascertain whether you can live in something-like a settled stile. Let our confidence in future be unbounded; consider whether you find it necessary to sacrifice me to what you term "the zest of life;" and, when you have once a clear view of your own motives, of your own incentive to action, do not deceive me!

The train of thoughts which the writing of this epistle awoke, makes me so wretched, that I must take a walk, to rouse and calm my mind. But first, let me tell you, that, if you really wish to promote my happiness, you will endeavour to give me as much as you can of yourself. You have great mental energy; and your judgment seems to me so just, that it is only the dupe of your inclination in discussing one subject.

The post does not go out to-day. To-morrow I may write more tranquilly. I cannot yet say when the vessel will sail in which I have determined to depart.

Saturday Morning.

Your second letter reached me about an hour ago. You were certainly wrong, in supposing that I did not mention you with respect; though, without my being conscious of it, some sparks of resentment may have animated the gloom of despair—Yes; with less affection, I should have been more respectful. However the regard which I have for you, is so unequivocal to myself, I imagine that it must be sufficiently obvious to every body else. Besides, the only letter I intended for the public eye was to ———, and that I destroyed from delicacy before you saw them, because it was only written (of course warmly in your praise) to prevent any odium being thrown on you^[133-A].

I am harrassed by your embarrassments, and shall certainly use all my efforts, to make the business terminate to your satisfaction in which I am engaged.

My friend—my dearest friend—I feel my fate united to yours by the most sacred principles of my soul, and the yearns of—yes, I will say it—a true, unsophisticated heart.

Yours most truly

If the wind be fair, the captain talks of sailing on Monday; but I am afraid I shall be detained some days longer. At any rate, continue to write, (I want this support) till you are sure I am where I cannot expect a letter; and, if any should arrive after my departure, a gentleman (not Mr. ——'s friend, I promise you) from whom I have received great civilities, will send them after me.

Do write by every occasion! I am anxious to hear how your affairs go on; and, still more, to be convinced that you are not separating yourself from us. For my little darling is calling papa, and adding her parrot word—Come, Come! And will you not come, and let us exert ourselves?—I shall recover all my energy, when I am convinced that my exertions will draw us more closely together. One more adieu!

LETTER XLV

Sunday, June 14.

I RATHER expected to hear from you to-day—I wish you would not fail to write to me for a little time, because I am not quite well—Whether I have any good sleep or not, I wake in the morning in violent fits of trembling—and, in spite of all my efforts, the child—every thing—fatigues me, in which I seek for solace or amusement.

Mr. —— forced on me a letter to a physician of this place; it was fortunate, for I should otherwise have had some difficulty to obtain the necessary information. His wife is a pretty woman (I can admire, you know, a pretty woman, when I am alone) and he an intelligent and rather interesting man.—They have behaved to me with great hospitality; and poor —— was never so happy in her life, as amongst their young brood.

They took me in their carriage to ——, and I ran over my favourite walks, with a vivacity that would have astonished you.—The town did not please me quite so well as formerly—It appeared so diminutive; and, when I found that many of the inhabitants had lived in the same houses ever since I left it, I could not help wondering how they could thus have vegetated, whilst I was running over a world of sorrow, snatching at pleasure, and throwing off prejudices. The place where I at present am, is much improved; but it is astonishing what strides aristocracy and fanaticism have made, since I resided in this country.

The wind does not appear inclined to change, so I am still forced to linger—When do you think that you shall be able to set out for France? I do not entirely like the aspect of your affairs, and still less your connections on either side of the water. Often do I sigh, when I think of your entanglements in business, and your extreme restlessness of mind.—Even now I am almost afraid to ask you, whether the pleasure of being free, does not over-balance the pain you felt at parting with me? Sometimes I indulge the hope that you will feel me necessary to you—or why should we meet again?—but, the moment after, despair damps my rising spirits, aggravated by the emotions of tenderness, which ought to soften the cares of life.—God bless you!

Yours sincerely and affectionately

LETTER XLVI

I WANT to know how you have settled with respect to ———. In short, be very particular in your account of all your affairs—let our confidence, my dear, be unbounded.—The last time we were separated, was a separation indeed on your part—Now you have acted more ingenuously, let the most affectionate interchange of sentiments fill up the aching void of disappointment. I almost dread that your plans will prove abortive—yet should the most unlucky turn send you home to us, convinced that a true friend is a treasure, I should not much mind having to struggle with the world again. Accuse me not of pride—yet sometimes, when nature has opened my heart to its author, I have wondered that you did not set a higher value on my heart.

Receive a kiss from ———, I was going to add, if you will not take one from me, and believe me yours

Sincerely

* * * *

The wind still continues in the same quarter.

LETTER XLVII

Tuesday Morning.

THE captain has just sent to inform me, that I must be on board in the course of a few hours.—I wished to have stayed till to-morrow. It would have been a comfort to me to have received another letter from you—Should one arrive, it will be sent after me.

My spirits are agitated, I scarcely know why——The quitting England seems to be a fresh parting.—Surely you will not forget me.—A thousand weak forebodings assault my soul, and the state of my health renders me sensible to every thing. It is surprising that in London, in a continual conflict of mind, I was still growing better—whilst here, bowed down by the despotic hand of fate, forced into resignation by despair, I seem to be fading away—perishing beneath a cruel blight, that withers up all my faculties.

The child is perfectly well. My hand seems unwilling to add adieu! I know not why this inexpressible sadness has taken possession of me.—It is not a presentiment of ill. Yet, having been so perpetually the sport of disappointment,—having a heart that has been as it were a mark for misery, I dread to meet wretchedness in some new shape.—Well, let it come—I care not!—what have I to dread, who have so little to hope for! God bless you—I am most affectionately and sincerely yours

* * * *

LETTER XLVIII

Wednesday Morning.

I WAS hurried on board yesterday about three o'clock, the wind having changed. But before evening it veered round to the old point; and here we are, in the midst of mists and water, only taking advantage of the tide to advance a few miles.

You will scarcely suppose that I left the town with reluctance—yet it was even so—for I wished to receive another letter from you, and I felt pain at parting, for ever perhaps, from the amiable family, who had treated me with so much hospitality and kindness. They will probably send me your letter, if it arrives this morning; for here we are likely to remain, I am afraid to think how long.

The vessel is very commodious, and the captain a civil, open-hearted kind of man. There being no other passengers, I have the cabin to myself, which is pleasant; and I have brought a few books with me to beguile weariness; but I seem inclined, rather to employ the dead moments of suspense in writing some effusions, than in reading.

What are you about? How are your affairs going on? It may be a long time before you answer these questions. My dear friend, my heart sinks within me!—Why am I forced thus to struggle continually with my affections and feelings?—Ah! why are those affections and feelings the source of so much misery,

when they seem to have been given to vivify my heart, and extend my usefulness! But I must not dwell on this subject.—Will you not endeavour to cherish all the affection you can for me? What am I saying?—Rather forget me, if you can—if other gratifications are dearer to you.—How is every remembrance of mine embittered by disappointment? What a world is this!—They only seem happy, who never look beyond sensual or artificial enjoyments.—Adieu!

—— begins to play with the cabin-boy, and is as gay as a lark.—I will labour to be tranquil; and am in every mood,

Yours sincerely

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LETTER XLIX

Thursday.

HERE I am still—and I have just received your letter of Monday by the pilot, who promised to bring it to me, if we were detained, as he expected, by the wind.—It is indeed wearisome to be thus tossed about without going forward.—I have a violent head-ache—yet I am obliged to take care of the child, who is a little tormented by her teeth, because —— is unable to do any thing, she is rendered so sick by the motion of the ship, as we ride at anchor.

These are however trifling inconveniences, compared with anguish of mind—compared with the sinking of a broken heart.—To tell you the truth, I never suffered in my life so much from depression of spirits—from despair.—I do not sleep—or, if I close my eyes, it is to have the most terrifying dreams, in which I often meet you with different casts of countenance.

I will not, my dear ——, torment you by dwelling on my sufferings—and will use all my efforts to calm my mind, instead of deadening it—at present it is most painfully active. I find I am not equal to these continual struggles—yet your letter this morning has afforded me some comfort—and I will try to revive hope. One thing let me tell you—when we meet again—surely we are to meet!—it must be to part no more. I mean not to have seas between us—it is more than I can support.

The pilot is hurrying me—God bless you.

In spite of the commodiousness of the vessel, every thing here would disgust my senses, had I nothing else to think of—"When the mind's free, the body's delicate;"—mine has been too much hurt to regard trifles.

Yours most truly

* * * *

LETTER L

Saturday.

THIS is the fifth dreary day I have been imprisoned by the wind, with every outward object to disgust the senses, and unable to banish the remembrances that sadden my heart.

How am I altered by disappointment!—When going to ——, ten years ago, the elasticity of my mind was sufficient to ward off weariness—and the imagination still could dip her brush in the rainbow of fancy, and sketch futurity in smiling colours. Now I am going towards the North in search of sunbeams!—Will any ever warm this desolated heart? All nature seems to frown—or rather mourn with me.—Every thing is cold—cold as my expectations! Before I left the shore, tormented, as I now am, by these North east *chillers*, I could not help exclaiming—Give me, gracious Heaven! at least, genial weather, if I am never to meet the genial affection that still warms this agitated bosom—compelling life to linger there.

I am now going on shore with the captain, though the weather be rough, to seek for milk, &c. at a little village, and to take a walk—after which I hope to sleep—for, confined here, surrounded by disagreeable smells, I have lost the little appetite I had; and I lie awake, till thinking almost drives me to the brink of madness—only to the brink, for I never forget, even in the feverish slumbers I sometimes fall into, the misery I am labouring to blunt the the sense of, by every exertion in my power.

Poor —— still continues sick, and —— grows weary when the weather will not allow her to remain on deck.

I hope this will be the last letter I shall write from England to you—are you not tired of this lingering adieu?

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER LI

Sunday Morning.

THE captain last night, after I had written my letter to you intended to be left at a little village, offered to go to —— to pass to-day. We had a troublesome sail—and now I must hurry on board again, for the wind has changed.

I half expected to find a letter from you here. Had you written one haphazard, it would have been kind and considerate—you might have known, had you thought, that the wind would not permit me to depart. These are attentions, more grateful to the heart than offers of service—But why do I foolishly continue to look for them?

Adieu! adieu! My friend—your friendship is very cold—you see I am hurt.—God bless you! I may perhaps be, some time or other, independent in every sense of the word—Ah! there is but one sense of it of consequence. I will break or bend this weak heart—yet even now it is full.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

The child is well; I did not leave her on board.

LETTER LII

June 27, Saturday.

I ARRIVED in ——— this afternoon, after vainly attempting to land at ———. I have now but a moment, before the post goes out, to inform you we have got here; though not without considerable difficulty, for we were set ashore in a boat above twenty miles below.

What I suffered in the vessel I will not now descant upon—nor mention the pleasure I received from the sight of the rocky coast.—This morning however, walking to join the carriage that was to transport us to this place, I fell, without any previous warning, senseless on the rocks—and how I escaped with life I can scarcely guess. I was in a stupour for a quarter of an hour; the suffusion of blood at last restored me to my senses—the contusion is great, and my brain confused. The child is well.

Twenty miles ride in the rain, after my accident, has sufficiently deranged me—and here I could not get a fire to warm me, or any thing warm to eat; the inns are mere stables—I must nevertheless go to bed. For God's sake, let me hear from you immediately, my friend! I am not well and yet you see I cannot die.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER LIII

June 29.

I WROTE to you by the last post, to inform you of my arrival; and I believe I alluded to the extreme fatigue I endured on ship-board, owing to ———'s illness, and the roughness of the weather—I likewise mentioned to you my fall, the effects of which I still feel, though I do not think it will have any serious consequences.

——— will go with me, if I find it necessary to go to ———. The inns here are so bad, I was forced to accept of an apartment in his house. I am overwhelmed with civilities on all sides, and fatigued with the endeavours to amuse me, from which I cannot escape.

My friend—my friend, I am not well—a deadly weight of sorrow lies heavily on my heart. I am again tossed on the troubled billows of life; and obliged to cope with difficulties, without being buoyed up by the hopes that alone render them bearable. "How flat, dull, and unprofitable," appears to me all the bustle into which I see people here so eagerly enter! I long every night to go to bed, to hide my melancholy face in my pillow; but there is a canker-worm in my bosom that never sleeps.

* * * *

LETTER LIV

July 1.

I LABOUR in vain to calm my mind—my soul has been overwhelmed by sorrow and disappointment. Every thing fatigues me—this is a life that cannot last long. It is you who must determine with respect to futurity—and, when you have, I will act accordingly—I mean, we must either resolve to live together, or part for ever, I cannot bear these continual struggles—But I wish you to examine carefully your own heart and mind; and, if you perceive the least chance of being happier without me than with me, or if your inclination leans capriciously to that side, do not dissemble; but tell me frankly that you will never see me

more. I will then adopt the plan I mentioned to you—for we must either live together, or I will be entirely independent.

My heart is so oppressed, I cannot write with precision—You know however that what I so imperfectly express, are not the crude sentiments of the moment—You can only contribute to my comfort (it is the consolation I am in need of) by being with me—and, if the tenderest friendship is of any value, why will you not look to me for a degree of satisfaction that heartless affections cannot bestow?

Tell me then, will you determine to meet me at Basle?—I shall, I should imagine, be at ——— before the close of August; and, after you settle your affairs at Paris, could we not meet there?

God bless you!

Yours truly

* * * *

Poor ——— has suffered during the journey with her teeth.

LETTER LV

July 3.

THERE was a gloominess diffused through your last letter, the impression of which still rests on my mind—though, recollecting how quickly you throw off the forcible feelings of the moment, I flatter myself it has long since given place to your usual cheerfulness.

Believe me (and my eyes fill with tears of tenderness as I assure you) there is nothing I would not endure in the way of privation, rather than disturb your tranquillity.—If I am fated to be unhappy, I will labour to hide my sorrows in my own bosom; and you shall always find me a faithful, affectionate friend.

I grow more and more attached to my little girl—and I cherish this affection without fear, because it must be a long time before it can become bitterness of soul.—She is an interesting creature.—On ship-board, how often as I gazed at the sea, have I longed to bury my troubled bosom in the less troubled deep; asserting with Brutus, "that the virtue I had followed too far, was merely an empty name!" and nothing but the sight of her—her playful smiles, which seemed to cling and twine round my heart—could have stopped me.

What peculiar misery has fallen to my share! To act up to my principles, I have laid the strictest restraint on my very thoughts—yes; not to sully the delicacy of my feelings, I have reined in my imagination; and started with affright from every sensation, (I allude to ———) that stealing with balmy sweetness into my soul, led me to scent from afar the fragrance of reviving nature.

My friend, I have dearly paid for one conviction.—Love, in some minds, is an affair of sentiment, arising from the same delicacy of perception (or taste) as renders them alive to the beauties of nature, poetry, &c., alive to the charms of those evanescent graces that are, as it were, impalpable—they must be felt, they cannot be described.

Love is a want of my heart. I have examined myself lately with more care than formerly, and find, that to deaden is not to calm the mind—Aiming at tranquillity, I have almost destroyed all the energy of my soul

—almost rooted out what renders it estimable—Yes, I have damped that enthusiasm of character, which converts the grossest materials into a fuel, that imperceptibly feeds hopes, which aspire above common enjoyment. Despair, since the birth of my child, has rendered me stupid—soul and body seemed to be fading away before the withering touch of disappointment.

I am now endeavouring to recover myself—and such is the elasticity of my constitution, and the purity of the atmosphere here, that health unsought for, begins to reanimate my countenance.

I have the sincerest esteem and affection for you—but the desire of regaining peace, (do you understand me?) has made me forget the respect due to my own emotions—sacred emotions, that are the sure harbingers of the delights I was formed to enjoy—and shall enjoy, for nothing can extinguish the heavenly spark.

Still, when we meet again, I will not torment you, I promise you. I blush when I recollect my former conduct—and will not in future confound myself with the beings whom I feel to be my inferiors.—I will listen to delicacy, or pride.

LETTER LVI

July 4.

I HOPE to hear from you by to-morrow's mail. My dearest friend! I cannot tear my affections from you—and, though every remembrance stings me to the soul, I think of you, till I make allowance for the very defects of character, that have given such a cruel stab to my peace.

Still however I am more alive, than you have seen me for a long, long time. I have a degree of vivacity, even in my grief, which is preferable to the benumbing stupour that, for the last year, has frozen up all my faculties.—Perhaps this change is more owing to returning health, than to the vigour of my reason—for, in spite of sadness (and surely I have had my share), the purity of this air, and the being continually out in it, for I sleep in the country every night, has made an alteration in my appearance that really surprises me.—The rosy fingers of health already streak my cheeks—and I have seen a *physical* life in my eyes, after I have been climbing the rocks, that resembled the fond, credulous hopes of youth.

With what a cruel sigh have I recollected that I had forgotten to hope!—Reason, or rather experience, does not thus cruelly damp poor ——'s pleasures; she plays all day in the garden with ——'s children, and makes friends for herself.

Do not tell me, that you are happier without us—Will you not come to us in Switzerland? Ah, why do not you love us with more sentiment?—why are you a creature of such sympathy, that the warmth of your feelings, or rather quickness of your senses, hardens your heart? It is my misfortune, that my imagination is perpetually shading your defects, and lending you charms, whilst the grossness of your senses makes you (call me not vain) overlook graces in me, that only dignity of mind, and the sensibility of an expanded heart can give.—God bless you! Adieu.

LETTER LVII

July 7.

I COULD not help feeling extremely mortified last post, at not receiving a letter from you. My being at —— was but a chance, and you might have hazarded it; and would a year ago.

I shall not however complain—There are misfortunes so great, as to silence the usual expressions of sorrow—Believe me, there is such a thing as a broken heart! There are characters whose very energy preys upon them; and who, ever inclined to cherish by reflection some passion, cannot rest satisfied with the common comforts of life. I have endeavoured to fly from myself, and launched into all the dissipation possible here, only to feel keener anguish, when alone with my child.

Still, could any thing please me—had not disappointment cut me off from life, this romantic country, these fine evenings, would interest me.—My God! can any thing? and am I ever to feel alive only to painful sensations?—But it cannot—it shall not last long.

The post is again arrived; I have sent to seek for letters, only to be wounded to the soul by a negative.—My brain seems on fire, I must go into the air.

* * * *

LETTER LVIII

July 14.

I AM now on my journey to ——. I felt more at leaving my child, than I thought I should—and, whilst at night I imagined every instant that I heard the half-formed sounds of her voice,—I asked myself how I could think of parting with her for ever, of leaving her thus helpless?

Poor lamb! It may run very well in a tale, that "God will temper the winds to the shorn lamb!" but how can I expect that she will be shielded, when my naked bosom has had to brave continually the pitiless storm? Yes; I could add, with poor Lear—What is the war of elements to the pangs of disappointed affection, and the horror arising from a discovery of a breach of confidence, that snaps every social tie!

All is not right somewhere!—When you first knew me, I was not thus lost. I could still confide—for I opened my heart to you—of this only comfort you have deprived me, whilst my happiness, you tell me, was your first object. Strange want of judgment!

I will not complain; but, from the soundness of your understanding, I am convinced, if you give yourself leave to reflect, you will also feel, that your conduct to me, so far from being generous, has not been just.—I mean not to allude to factitious principles of morality; but to the simple basis of all rectitude.—However I did not intend to argue—Your not writing is cruel—and my reason is perhaps disturbed by constant wretchedness.

Poor —— would fain have accompanied me, out of tenderness; for my fainting, or rather convulsion, when I landed, and my sudden changes of countenance since, have alarmed her so much, that she is perpetually afraid of some accident—But it would have injured the child this warm season, as she is cutting her teeth.

I hear not of your having written to me at ——. Very well! Act as you please—there is nothing I fear or care for! When I see whether I can, or cannot obtain the money I am come here about, I will not trouble you with letters to which you do not reply.

LETTER LIX

July 18.

I AM here in ——, separated from my child—and here I must remain a month at least, or I might as well never have come.

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I have begun ————— which will, I hope, discharge all my obligations of a pecuniary kind.—I am lowered in my own eyes, on account of my not having done it sooner.

I shall make no further comments on your silence. God bless you!

* * * *

LETTER LX

July 30.

I HAVE just received two of your letters, dated the 26th and 30th of June; and you must have received several from me, informing you of my detention, and how much I was hurt by your silence.

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Write to me then, my friend, and write explicitly. I have suffered, God knows, since I left you. Ah! you have never felt this kind of sickness of heart!—My mind however is at present painfully active, and the sympathy I feel almost rises to agony. But this is not a subject of complaint, it has afforded me pleasure,—and reflected pleasure is all I have to hope for—if a spark of hope be yet alive in my forlorn bosom.

I will try to write with a degree of composure. I wish for us to live together, because I want you to

acquire an habitual tenderness for my poor girl. I cannot bear to think of leaving her alone in the world, or that she should only be protected by your sense of duty. Next to preserving her, my most earnest wish is not to disturb your peace. I have nothing to expect, and little to fear, in life—There are wounds that can never be healed—but they may be allowed to fester in silence without wincing.

When we meet again, you shall be convinced that I have more resolution than you give me credit for. I will not torment you. If I am destined always to be disappointed and unhappy, I will conceal the anguish I cannot dissipate; and the tightened cord of life or reason will at last snap, and set me free.

Yes; I shall be happy—This heart is worthy of the bliss its feelings anticipate—and I cannot even persuade myself, wretched as they have made me, that my principles and sentiments are not founded in nature and truth. But to have done with these subjects.

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I have been seriously employed in this way since I came to —; yet I never was so much in the air.—I walk, I ride on horseback—row, bathe, and even sleep in the fields; my health is consequently improved. The child, ——— informs me, is well. I long to be with her.

Write to me immediately—were I only to think of myself, I could wish you to return to me, poor, with the simplicity of character, part of which you seem lately to have lost, that first attached to you.

Yours most affectionately
* * * * *

I have been subscribing other letters—so I mechanically did the same to yours.

LETTER LXI

August 5.

EMPLOYMENT and exercise have been of great service to me; and I have entirely recovered the strength and activity I lost during the time of my nursing. I have seldom been in better health; and my mind, though trembling to the touch of anguish, is calmer—yet still the same.—I have, it is true, enjoyed some tranquillity, and more happiness here, than for a long—long time past.—(I say happiness, for I can give no other appellation to the exquisite delight this wild country and fine summer have afforded me.)—Still, on examining my heart, I find that it is so constituted, I cannot live without some particular affection—I am afraid not without a passion—and I feel the want of it more in society, than in solitude—

— — — — —
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having so long importuned you with my affection.——

My child is very well. We shall soon meet, to part no more, I hope—I mean, I and my girl.—I shall wait with some degree of anxiety till I am informed how your affairs terminate.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER LXIV

August 26.

I ARRIVED here last night, and with the most exquisite delight, once more pressed my babe to my heart. We shall part no more. You perhaps cannot conceive the pleasure it gave me, to see her run about, and play alone. Her increasing intelligence attaches me more and more to her. I have promised her that I will fulfil my duty to her; and nothing in future shall make me forget it. I will also exert myself to obtain an independence for her; but I will not be too anxious on this head.

I have already told you, that I have recovered my health. Vigour, and even vivacity of mind, have returned with a renovated constitution. As for peace, we will not talk of it. I was not made, perhaps, to enjoy the calm contentment so termed.—

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You tell me that my letters torture you; I will not describe the effect yours have on me. I received three this morning, the last dated the 7th of this month. I mean not to give vent to the emotions they produced.— Certainly you are right; our minds are not congenial. I have lived in an ideal world, and fostered sentiments that you do not comprehend—or you would not treat me thus. I am not, I will not be, merely an object of compassion—a clog, however light, to teize you. Forget that I exist: I will never remind you. Something emphatical whispers me to put an end to these struggles. Be free—I will not torment, when I cannot please. I can take care of my child; you need not continually tell me that our fortune is inseparable, *that you will try to cherish tenderness* for me. Do no violence to yourself! When we are separated, our interest, since you give so much weight to pecuniary considerations, will be entirely divided. I want not protection without affection; and support I need not, whilst my faculties are undisturbed. I had a dislike to living in England; but painful feelings must give way to superior considerations. I may not be able to acquire the sum necessary to maintain my child and self elsewhere. It is too late to go to Switzerland. I shall not remain at ——, living expensively. But be not alarmed! I shall not force myself on you any more.

Adieu! I am agitated—my whole frame is convulsed—my lips tremble, as if shook by cold, though fire seems to be circulating in my veins.

God bless you.

LETTER LXV

September 6.

I RECEIVED just now your letter of the 20th. I had written you a letter last night, into which imperceptibly slipt some of my bitterness of soul. I will copy the part relative to business. I am not sufficiently vain to imagine that I can, for more than a moment, cloud your enjoyment of life—to prevent even that, you had better never hear from me—and repose on the idea that I am happy.

Gracious God! It is impossible for me to stifle something like resentment, when I receive fresh proofs of your indifference. What I have suffered this last year, is not to be forgotten! I have not that happy substitute for wisdom, insensibility—and the lively sympathies which bind me to my fellow-creatures, are all of a painful kind.—They are the agonies of a broken heart—pleasure and I have shaken hands.

I see here nothing but heaps of ruins, and only converse with people immersed in trade and sensuality.

I am weary of travelling—yet seem to have no home—no resting place to look to.—I am strangely cast off.—How often, passing through the rocks, I have thought, "But for this child, I would lay my head on one of them, and never open my eyes again!" With a heart feelingly alive to all the affections of my nature—I have never met with one, softer than the stone that I would fain take for my last pillow. I once thought I had, but it was all a delusion. I meet with families continually, who are bound together by affection or principle—and, when I am conscious that I have fulfilled the duties of my station, almost to a forgetfulness of myself, I am ready to demand, in a murmuring tone, of Heaven, "Why am I thus abandoned?"

You say now — — —
 — — — — — — — —
 —
 — — — — — — — —
 —

I do not understand you. It is necessary for you to write more explicitly—and determine on some mode of conduct.—I cannot endure this suspense—Decide—Do you fear to strike another blow? We live together, or eternally part!—I shall not write to you again, till I receive an answer to this. I must compose my tortured soul, before I write on indifferent subjects. — —

— — — — — — — —
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I do not know whether I write intelligibly, for my head is disturbed.—But this you ought to pardon—for it is with difficulty frequently that I make out what you mean to say—You write, I suppose, at Mr. ——'s after dinner, when your head is not the clearest—and as for your heart, if you have one, I see nothing like the dictates of affection, unless a glimpse when you mention, the child.—Adieu!

LETTER LXVI

September 25.

I HAVE just finished a letter, to be given in charge to captain ———. In that I complained of your silence, and expressed my surprise that three mails should have arrived without bringing a line for me. Since I closed it, I hear of another, and still no letter.—I am labouring to write calmly—this silence is a refinement on cruelty. Had captain ——— remained a few days longer, I would have returned with him to England. What have I to do here? I have repeatedly written to you fully. Do you do the same—and quickly. Do not leave me in suspense. I have not deserved this of you. I cannot write, my mind is so distressed. Adieu!

* * * *

END VOL. III.

FOOTNOTES:

[4-A] The child is in a subsequent letter called the "barrier girl," probably from a supposition that she owed her existence to this interview.

EDITOR.

[7-A] This and the thirteen following letters appear to have been written during a separation of several months; the date, Paris.

[27-A] Some further letters, written during the remainder of the week, in a similar strain to the preceding, appear to have been destroyed by the person to whom they were addressed.

[47-A] The child spoken of in some preceding letters, had now been born a considerable time.

[50-A] She means, "the latter more than the former."

EDITOR.

[58-A] This is the first of a series of letters written during a separation of many months, to which no cordial meeting ever succeeded. They were sent from Paris, and bear the address of London.

[91-A] The person to whom the letters are addressed, was about this time at Ramsgate, on his return, as he professed, to Paris, when he was recalled, as it should seem, to London, by the further pressure of business now accumulated upon him.

[100-A] This probably alludes to some expression of the person to whom the letters are addressed, in which he treated as common evils, things upon which the letter writer was disposed to bestow a different appellation.

EDITOR.

[133-A] This passage refers to letters written under a purpose of suicide, and not intended to be opened till after the catastrophe.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



VOL. I.



PREFACE.

THE following Letters may possibly be found to contain the finest examples of the language of sentiment and passion ever presented to the world. They bear a striking resemblance to the celebrated romance of Werter, though the incidents to which they relate are of a very different cast. Probably the readers to whom Werter is incapable of affording pleasure, will receive no delight from the present publication. The editor apprehends that, in the judgment of those best qualified to decide upon the comparison, these Letters will be admitted to have the superiority over the fiction of Goethe. They are the offspring of a glowing imagination, and a heart penetrated with the passion it essays to describe.

To the series of letters constituting the principal article in these two volumes, are added various pieces, none of which, it is hoped, will be found discreditable to the talents of the author. The slight fragment of Letters on the Management of Infants, may be thought a trifle; but it seems to have some value, as presenting to us with vividness the intention of the writer on this important subject. The publication of a few select Letters to Mr. Johnson, appeared to be at once a just monument to the sincerity of his friendship, and a valuable and interesting specimen of the mind of the writer. The Letter on the Present Character of the French Nation, the Extract of the Cave of Fancy, a Tale, and the Hints for the Second Part of the Rights of Woman, may, I believe, safely be left to speak for themselves. The Essay on Poetry and our Relish for the Beauties of Nature, appeared in the Monthly Magazine for April last, and is the only piece in this collection which has previously found its way to the press.

LETTERS.

LETTER I

Two o'Clock.

My dear love, after making my arrangements for our snug dinner to-day, I have been taken by storm, and obliged to promise to dine, at an early hour, with the Mifs ——s, the *only* day they intend to pass here. I shall however leave the key in the door, and hope to find you at my fire-side when I return, about eight o'clock. Will you not wait for poor Joan?—whom you will find better, and till then think very affectionately of her.

Yours, truly,

* * * *

I am sitting down to dinner; so do not send an answer.

LETTER II

Past Twelve o'Clock, Monday night.
[August.]

I OBEY an emotion of my heart, which made me think of wishing thee, my love, good-night! before I go to rest, with more tenderness than I can to-morrow, when writing a hasty line or two under Colonel ——'s eye. You can scarcely imagine with what pleasure I anticipate the day, when we are to begin almost to live together; and you would smile to hear how many plans of employment I have in my head, now that I am confident my heart has found peace in your bosom.—Cherish me with that dignified tenderness, which I have only found in you; and your own dear girl will try to keep under a quickness of feeling, that has sometimes given you pain—Yes, I will be *good*, that I may deserve to be happy; and whilst you love me, I cannot again fall into the miserable state, which rendered life a burthen almost too heavy to be borne.

But, good-night!—God bless you! Sterne says, that is equal to a kiss—yet I would rather give you the kiss into the bargain, glowing with gratitude to Heaven, and affection to you. I like the word affection, because it signifies something habitual; and we are soon to meet, to try whether we have mind enough to keep our hearts warm.

* * * *

I will be at the barrier a little after ten o'clock to-morrow^[4-A].—Yours—

LETTER III

Wednesday Morning.

You have often called me, dear girl, but you would now say good, did you know how very attentive I have been to the —— ever since I came to Paris. I am not however going to trouble you with the account, because I like to see your eyes praise me; and, Milton insinuates, that, during such recitals, there are interruptions, not ungrateful to the heart, when the honey that drops from the lips is not merely words.

Yet, I shall not (let me tell you before these people enter, to force me to huddle away my letter) be content with only a kiss of DUTY—you *must* be glad to see me—because you are glad—or I will make love to the *shade* of Mirabeau, to whom my heart continually turned, whilst I was talking with Madame ——, forcibly telling me, that it will ever have sufficient warmth to love, whether I will or not, sentiment, though I so highly respect principle.——

Not that I think Mirabeau utterly devoid of principles—Far from it—and, if I had not begun to form a new theory respecting men, I should, in the vanity of my heart, have *imagined* that *I* could have made something of his——it was composed of such materials—Hush! here they come—and love flies away in the twinkling of an eye, leaving a little brush of his wing on my pale cheeks.

I hope to see Dr. —— this morning; I am going to Mr. ——'s to meet him. ——, and some others, are invited to dine with us to-day; and to-morrow I am to spend the day with ——.

I shall probably not be able to return to —— to-morrow; but it is no matter, because I must take a carriage, I have so many books, that I immediately want, to take with me.—On Friday then I shall expect you to dine with me—and, if you come a little before dinner, it is so long since I have seen you, you will not be scolded by yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER IV^[7-A].

Friday Morning [September.]

A MAN, whom a letter from Mr. —— previously announced, called here yesterday for the payment of a draft; and, as he seemed disappointed at not finding you at home, I sent him to Mr. ——. I have since seen him, and he tells me that he has settled the business.

So much for business!—May I venture to talk a little longer about less weighty affairs?—How are you?—I have been following you all along the road this comfortable weather; for, when I am absent from those I love, my imagination is as lively, as if my senses had never been gratified by their presence—I was going to say caresses—and why should I not? I have found out that I have more mind than you, in one respect; because I can, without any violent effort of reason, find food for love in the same object, much longer than you can.—The way to my senses is through my heart; but, forgive me! I think there is sometimes a shorter cut to yours.

With ninety-nine men out of a hundred, a very sufficient dash of folly is necessary to render a woman *piquante*, a soft word for desirable; and, beyond these casual ebullitions of sympathy, few look for enjoyment by fostering a passion in their hearts. One reason, in short, why I wish my whole sex to become wiser, is, that the foolish ones may not, by their pretty folly, rob those whose sensibility keeps down their vanity, of the few roses that afford them some solace in the thorny road of life.

I do not know how I fell into these reflections, excepting one thought produced it—that these continual

separations were necessary to warm your affection.—Of late, we are always separating.—Crack!—crack!—and away you go.—This joke wears the fallow coat of thought; for, though I began to write cheerfully, some melancholy tears have found their way into my eyes, that linger there, whilst a glow of tenderness at my heart whispers that you are one of the best creatures in the world.—Pardon then the vagaries of a mind, that has been almost "crazed by care," as well as "crossed in hapless love," and bear with me a *little* longer!—When we are settled in the country together, more duties will open before me, and my heart, which now, trembling into peace, is agitated by every emotion that awakens the remembrance of old griefs, will learn to rest on yours, with that dignity your character, not to talk of my own, demands.

Take care of yourself—and write soon to your own girl (you may add dear, if you please) who sincerely loves you, and will try to convince you of it, by becoming happier.

* * * *



LETTER V

Sunday Night.

I HAVE just received your letter, and feel as if I could not go to bed tranquilly without saying a few words in reply—merely to tell you, that my mind is serene, and my heart affectionate.

Ever since you last saw me inclined to faint, I have felt some gentle twitches, which make me begin to think, that I am nourishing a creature who will soon be sensible of my care.—This thought has not only produced an overflowing of tenderness to you, but made me very attentive to calm my mind and take exercise, lest I should destroy an object, in whom we are to have a mutual interest, you know. Yesterday—do not smile!—finding that I had hurt myself by lifting precipitately a large log of wood, I sat down in an agony, till I felt those laid twitches again.

Are you very busy?

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So you may reckon on its being finished soon, though not before you come home, unless you are detained longer than I now allow myself to believe you will.—

Be that as it may, write to me, my best love, and bid me be patient—kindly—and the expressions of kindness will again beguile the time, as sweetly as they have done to-night.—Tell me also over and over

again, that your happiness (and you deserve to be happy!) is closely connected with mine, and I will try to dissipate, as they rise, the fumes of former discontent, that have too often clouded the sunshine, which you have endeavoured to diffuse through my mind. God bless you! Take care of yourself, and remember with tenderness your affectionate

* * * *

I am going to rest very happy, and you have made me so.—This is the kindest good-night I can utter.

LETTER VI

Friday Morning.

I AM glad to find that other people can be unreasonable, as well as myself—for be it known to thee, that I answered thy *first* letter, the very night it reached me (Sunday), though thou couldst not receive it before Wednesday, because it was not sent off till the next day.—There is a full, true, and particular account.—

Yet I am not angry with thee, my love, for I think that it is a proof of stupidity, and likewise of a milk-and-water affection, which comes to the same thing, when the temper is governed by a square and compass.—There is nothing picturesque in this straight-lined equality, and the passions always give grace to the actions.

Recollection now makes my heart bound to thee; but, it is not to thy money-getting face, though I cannot be seriously displeased with the exertion which increases my esteem, or rather is what I should have expected from thy character.—No; I have thy honest countenance before me—Pop—relaxed by tenderness; a little—little wounded by my whims; and thy eyes glistening with sympathy.—Thy lips then feel softer than soft—and I rest my cheek on thine, forgetting all the world.—I have not left the hue of love out of the picture—the rosy glow; and fancy has spread it over my own cheeks, I believe, for I feel them burning, whilst a delicious tear trembles in my eye, that would be all your own, if a grateful emotion directed to the Father of nature, who has made me thus alive to happiness, did not give more warmth to the sentiment it divides—I must pause a moment.

Need I tell you that I am tranquil after writing thus?—I do not know why, but I have more confidence in your affection, when absent, than present; nay, I think that you must love me, for, in the sincerity of my heart let me say it, I believe I deserve your tenderness, because I am true, and have a degree of sensibility that you can see and relish.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER VII

Sunday Morning [December 29.]

You seem to have taken up your abode at H——. Pray sir! when do you think of coming home? or, to write very confidentially, when will business permit you? I shall expect (as the country people say in England) that you will make a *power* of money to indemnify me for your absence.

Well! but, my love, to the old story—am I to see you this week, or this month?—I do not know what you are about—for, as you did not tell me, I would not ask Mr. —, who is generally pretty communicative.

I long to see Mrs. —; not to hear from you, so do not give yourself airs, but to get a letter from Mr. —. And I am half angry with you for not informing me whether she had brought one with her or not.—On this score I will cork up some of the kind things that were ready to drop from my pen, which has never been dipt in gall when addressing you; or, will only suffer an exclamation—"The creature!" or a kind look, to escape me, when I pass the flippers—which I could not remove from my *falle* door, though they are not the handsomest of their kind.

Be not too anxious to get money!—for nothing worth having is to be purchased. God blefs you.

Yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER VIII

Monday Night [December 30.]

My best love, your letter to-night was particularly grateful to my heart, depressed by the letters I received by —, for he brought me several, and the parcel of books directed to Mr. — was for me. Mr. —'s letter was long and very affectionate; but the account he gives me of his own affairs, though he obviously makes the best of them, has vexed me.

A melancholy letter from my sister — has also harrassed my mind—that from my brother would have given me sincere pleasure; but for — —

There is a spirit of independence in his letter, that will please you; and you shall see it, when we are once more over the fire together.—I think that you would hail him as a brother, with one of your tender looks, when your heart not only gives a lustre to your eye, but a dance of playfulness, that he would meet with a glow half made up of bashfulness, and a desire to please the——where shall I find a word to express the relationship which subsists between us?—Shall I ask the little twitcher?—But I have dropt half the sentence that was to tell you how much he would be inclined to love the man loved by his sister. I have been fancying myself fitting between you, ever since I began to write, and my heart has leaped at the thought!—You see how I chat to you.

I did not receive your letter till I came home; and I did not expect it, for the post came in much later than usual. It was a cordial to me—and I wanted one.

Mr. —— tells me that he has written again and again.—Love him a little!—It would be a kind of separation, if you did not love those I love.

There was so much confederate tenderness in your epistle to-night, that, if it has not made you dearer to me, it has made me forcibly feel how very dear you are to me, by charming away half my cares.

Yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER IX

Tuesday Morning [December 31.]

THOUGH I have just sent a letter off, yet, as captain —— offers to take one, I am not willing to let him go

without a kind greeting, because trifles of this sort, without having any effect on my mind, damp my spirits:—and you, with all your struggles to be manly, have some of this same sensibility.—Do not bid it begone, for I love to see it striving to master your features; besides, these kind of sympathies are the life of affection: and why, in cultivating our understandings, should we try to dry up these springs of pleasure, which gush out to give a freshness to days browned by care!

The books sent to me are such as we may read together; so I shall not look into them till you return; when you shall read, whilst I mend my stockings.

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER X

Wednesday Night [January 1.]

As I have been, you tell me, three days without writing, I ought not to complain of two: yet, as I expected to receive a letter this afternoon, I am hurt; and why should I, by concealing it, affect the heroism I do not feel?

I hate commerce. How differently must ——'s head and heart be organized from mine! You will tell me, that exertions are necessary: I am weary of them! The face of things, public and private, vexes me. The "peace" and clemency which seemed to be dawning a few days ago, disappear again. "I am fallen," as Milton said, "on evil days;" for I really believe that Europe will be in a state of convulsion, during half a century at least. Life is but a labour of patience: it is always rolling a great stone up a hill; for, before a person can find a resting-place, imagining it is lodged, down it comes again, and all the work is to be done over anew!

Should I attempt to write any more, I could not change the strain. My head aches, and my heart is heavy. The world appears an "unweeded garden," where "things rank and vile" flourish best.

If you do not return soon—or, which is no such mighty matter, talk of it—I will throw your flippers out at window, and be off—nobody knows where.

* * * *

Finding that I was observed, I told the good women, the two Mrs. ——s, simply that I was with child: and let them stare! and ——, and ——, nay, all the world, may know it for aught I care!—Yet I wish to avoid ——'s coarse jokes.

Considering the care and anxiety a woman must have about a child before it comes into the world, it seems to me, by a *natural right*, to belong to her. When men get immersed in the world, they seem to lose all sensations, excepting those necessary to continue or produce life!—Are these the privileges of reason? Amongst the feathered race, whilst the hen keeps the young warm, her mate stays by to cheer her; but it is sufficient for man to condescend to get a child, in order to claim it.—A man is a tyrant!

You may now tell me, that, if it were not for me, you would be laughing away with some honest fellows in L—n. The casual exercise of social sympathy would not be sufficient for me—I should not think such a heartless life worth preserving.—It is necessary to be in good-humour with you, to be pleased with the

world.

Thursday Morning.

I WAS very low-spirited last night, ready to quarrel with your cheerful temper, which makes absence easy to you.—And, why should I mince the matter? I was offended at your not even mentioning it.—I do not want to be loved like a goddess; but I wish to be necessary to you. God bless you^[27-A]!

LETTER XI

Monday Night.

I HAVE just received your kind and rational letter, and would fain hide my face, glowing with shame for my folly.—I would hide it in your bosom, if you would again open it to me, and nestle closely till you bade my fluttering heart be still, by saying that you forgave me. With eyes overflowing with tears, and in the humblest attitude, I intreat you.—Do not turn from me, for indeed I love you fondly, and have been very wretched, since the night I was so cruelly hurt by thinking that you had no confidence in me——

It is time for me to grow more reasonable, a few more of these caprices of sensibility would destroy me. I have, in fact, been very much indisposed for a few days past, and the notion that I was tormenting, or perhaps killing, a poor little animal, about whom I am grown anxious and tender, now I feel it alive, made me worse. My bowels have been dreadfully disordered, and every thing I ate or drank disagreed with my stomach; still I feel intimations of its existence, though they have been fainter.

Do you think that the creature goes regularly to sleep? I am ready to ask as many questions as Voltaire's Man of Forty Crowns. Ah! do not continue to be angry with me! You perceive that I am already smiling through my tears—You have lightened my heart, and my frozen spirits are melting into playfulness.

Write the moment you receive this. I shall count the minutes. But drop not an angry word—I cannot now bear it. Yet, if you think I deserve a scolding (it does not admit of a question, I grant), wait till you come back—and then, if you are angry one day, I shall be sure of seeing you the next.

——— did not write to you, I suppose, because he talked of going to H——. Hearing that I was ill, he called very kindly on me, not dreaming that it was some words that he incautiously let fall, which rendered me so.

God bless you, my love; do not shut your heart against a return of tenderness; and, as I now in fancy cling to you, be more than ever my support.—Feel but as affectionate when you read this letter, as I did writing it, and you will make happy, your

* * * *

LETTER XII

Wednesday Morning.

I WILL never, if I am not entirely cured of quarrelling, begin to encourage "quick-coming fancies," when we are separated. Yesterday, my love, I could not open your letter for some time; and, though it was not

half as severe as I merited, it threw me into such a fit of trembling, as seriously alarmed me. I did not, as you may suppose, care for a little pain on my own account; but all the fears which I have had for a few days past, returned with fresh force. This morning I am better; will you not be glad to hear it? You perceive that sorrow has almost made a child of me, and that I want to be soothed to peace.

One thing you mistake in my character, and imagine that to be coldness which is just the contrary. For, when I am hurt by the person most dear to me, I must let out a whole torrent of emotions, in which tenderness would be uppermost, or stifle them altogether; and it appears to me almost a duty to stifle them, when I imagine *that I am treated with coldness*.

I am afraid that I have vexed you, my own ——. I know the quickness of your feelings—and let me, in the sincerity of my heart, assure you, there is nothing I would not suffer to make you happy. My own happiness wholly depends on you—and, knowing you, when my reason is not clouded, I look forward to a rational prospect of as much felicity as the earth affords—with a little dash of rapture into the bargain, if you will look at me, when we meet again, as you have sometimes greeted, your humbled, yet most affectionate

* * * *

LETTER XIII

Thursday Night.

I HAVE been wishing the time away, my kind love, unable to rest till I knew that my penitential letter had reached your hand—and this afternoon, when your tender epistle of Tuesday gave such exquisite pleasure to your poor sick girl, her heart smote her to think that you were still to receive another cold one.—Burn it also, my ——; yet do not forget that even those letters were full of love; and I shall ever recollect, that you did not wait to be mollified by my penitence, before you took me again to your heart.

I have been unwell, and would not, now I am recovering, take a journey, because I have been seriously alarmed and angry with myself, dreading continually the fatal consequence of my folly.—But, should you think it right to remain at H—, I shall find some opportunity, in the course of a fortnight, or less perhaps, to come to you, and before then I shall be strong again.—Yet do not be uneasy! I am really better, and never took such care of myself, as I have done since you restored my peace of mind. The girl is come to warm my bed—so I will tenderly say, good night! and write a line or two in the morning.

Morning.

I WISH you were here to walk with me this fine morning! yet your absence shall not prevent me. I have stayed at home too much; though, when I was so dreadfully out of spirits, I was careless of every thing.

I will now fall forth (you will go with me in my heart) and try whether this fine bracing air will not give the vigour to the poor babe, it had, before I so inconsiderately gave way to the grief that deranged my bowels, and gave a turn to my whole system.

Yours truly

* * * * *

LETTER XIV

Saturday Morning.

THE two or three letters, which I have written to you lately, my love, will serve as an answer to your explanatory one. I cannot but respect your motives and conduct. I always respected them; and was only hurt, by what seemed to me a want of confidence, and consequently affection.—I thought also, that if you were obliged to stay three months at H—, I might as well have been with you.—Well! well, what signifies what I brooded over—Let us now be friends!

I shall probably receive a letter from you to-day, seeking my pardon—and I will be careful not to torment you with my querulous humours, at least, till I see you again. Act as circumstances direct, and I will not enquire when they will permit you to return, convinced that you will hasten to your * * * *, when you have attained (or lost sight of) the object of your journey.

What a picture have you sketched of our fire-side! Yes, my love, my fancy was instantly at work, and I found my head on your shoulder, whilst my eyes were fixed on the little creatures that were clinging about your knees. I did not absolutely determine that there should be fix—if you have not set your heart on this round number.

I am going to dine with Mrs. ——. I have not been to visit her since the first day she came to Paris. I wish indeed to be out in the air as much as I can; for the exercise I have taken these two or three days past, has been of such service to me, that I hope shortly to tell you, that I am quite well. I have scarcely slept before last night, and then not much.—The two Mrs. ———s have been very anxious and tender.

Yours truly

* * * *

I need not desire you to give the colonel a good bottle of wine.

LETTER XV

Sunday Morning.

I WROTE to you yesterday, my ———; but, finding that the colonel is still detained (for his passport was forgotten at the office yesterday) I am not willing to let so many days elapse without your hearing from me, after having talked of illness and apprehensions.

I cannot boast of being quite recovered, yet I am (I must use my Yorkshire phrase; for, when my heart is warm, pop come the expressions of childhood into my head) so *lightsome*, that I think it will not *go badly with me*.—And nothing shall be wanting on my part, I assure you; for I am urged on, not only by an enlivened affection for you, but by a new-born tenderness that plays cheerly round my dilating heart.

I was therefore, in defiance of cold and dirt, out in the air the greater part of yesterday; and, if I get over this evening without a return of the fever that has tormented me, I shall talk no more of illness. I have promised the little creature, that its mother, who ought to cherish it, will not again plague it, and begged it to pardon me; and, since I could not hug either it or you to my breast, I have to my heart.—I am afraid to read over this prattle—but it is only for your eye.

I have been seriously vexed, to find that, whilst you were harassed by impediments in your undertakings, I was giving you additional uneasiness.—If you can make any of your plans answer—it is well, I do not

think a *little* money inconvenient; but, should they fail, we will struggle cheerfully together—drawn closer by the pinching blasts of poverty.

Adieu, my love! Write often to your poor girl, and write long letters; for I not only like them for being longer, but because more heart steals into them; and I am happy to catch your heart whenever I can.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER XVI

Tuesday Morning.

I SEIZE this opportunity to inform you, that I am to set out on Thursday with Mr. ———, and hope to tell you soon (on your lips) how glad I shall be to see you. I have just got my passport, so I do not foresee any impediment to my reaching H——, to bid you good-night next Friday in my new apartment—where I am to meet you and love, in spite of care, to smile me to sleep—for I have not caught much rest since we parted.

You have, by your tendernefs and worth, twifted yourself more artfully round my heart, than I supposed possible.—Let me indulge the thought, that I have thrown out some tendrils to cling to the elm by which I wish to be supported.—This is talking a new language for me!—But, knowing that I am not a parasite-plant, I am willing to receive the proofs of affection, that every pulse replies to, when I think of being once more in the same house with you.—God blefs you!

Yours truly

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LETTER XVII

Wednesday Morning.

I ONLY fend this as an *avant-coureur*, without jack-boots, to tell you, that I am again on the wing, and hope to be with you a few hours after you receive it. I shall find you well, and composed, I am sure; or, more properly speaking, cheerful.—What is the reason that my spirits are not as manageable as yours? Yet, now I think of it, I will not allow that your temper is even, though I have promised myself, in order to obtain my own forgiveness, that I will not ruffle it for a long, long time—I am afraid to say never.

Farewell for a moment!—Do not forget that I am driving towards you in person! My mind, unfettered, has flown to you long since, or rather has never left you.

I am well, and have no apprehension that I shall find the journey too fatiguing, when I follow the lead of my heart.—With my face turned to H— my spirits will not sink—and my mind has always hitherto enabled my body to do whatever I wished.

Yours affectionately

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LETTER XVIII

H—, Thursday Morning, March 12.

WE are such creatures of habit, my love, that, though I cannot say I was sorry, childishly so, for your going, when I knew that you were to stay such a short time, and I had a plan of employment; yet I could not sleep.—I turned to your side of the bed, and tried to make the most of the comfort of the pillow, which you used to tell me I was churlish about; but all would not do.—I took nevertheless my walk before breakfast, though the weather was not very inviting—and here I am, wishing you a finer day, and seeing you peep over my shoulder, as I write, with one of your kindest looks—when your eyes gladden, and a suffusion creeps over your relaxing features.

But I do not mean to dally with you this morning—So God bless you! Take care of yourself—and sometimes fold to your heart your affectionate

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LETTER XIX

DO not call me stupid, for leaving on the table the little bit of paper I was to inclose.—This comes of being in love at the fag-end of a letter of business.—You know, you say, they will not chime together.—I had got you by the fire-side, with the *gigot* smoking on the board, to lard your poor bare ribs—and behold, I closed my letter without taking the paper up, that was directly under my eyes!—What had I got in them to render me so blind?—I give you leave to answer the question, if you will not scold; for I am

Yours most affectionately

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LETTER XX

Sunday, August 17.

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— — — — —
— — — — —
— — — — —

I have promised ——— to go with him to his country-house, where he is now permitted to dine—I, and the little darling, to be sure^[47-A]—whom I cannot help kissing with more fondness, since you left us. I think I shall enjoy the fine prospect, and that it will rather enliven, than satiate my imagination.

I have called on Mrs. ———. She has the manners of a gentlewoman, with a dash of the easy French coquetry, which renders her *piquante*.—But *Monfieur* her husband, whom nature never dreamed of casting in either the mould of a gentleman or lover, makes but an awkward figure in the foreground of the

picture.

The H——s are very ugly, without doubt—and the house smelt of commerce from top to toe—so that his abortive attempt to display taste, only proved it to be one of the things not to be bought with gold. I was in a room a moment alone, and my attention was attracted by the *pendule*—A nymph was offering up her vows before a smoking altar, to a fat-bottomed Cupid (favouring your presence), who was kicking his heels in the air.—Ah! kick on, thought I; for the demon of traffic will ever fright away the loves and graces, that streak with the rosy beams of infant fancy the *sombre* day of life—while the imagination, not allowing us to see things as they are, enables us to catch a hasty draught of the running stream of delight, the thirst for which seems to be given only to tantalize us.

But I am philosophizing; nay, perhaps you will call me severe, and bid me let the square-headed money-getters alone.—Peace to them! though none of the social sprites (and there are not a few of different descriptions, who sport about the various inlets to my heart) gave me a twitch to restrain my pen.

I have been writing on, expecting poor ——— to come; for, when I began, I merely thought of business; and, as this is the idea that most naturally associates with your image, I wonder I stumbled on any other.

Yet, as common life, in my opinion, is scarcely worth having, even with a *gigot* every day, and a pudding added thereunto, I will allow you to cultivate my judgment, if you will permit me to keep alive the sentiments in your heart, which may be termed romantic, because, the offspring of the senses and the imagination, they resemble the mother more than the father^[50-A], when they produce the suffusion I admire.—In spite of icy age, I hope still to see it, if you have not determined only to eat and drink, and be stupidly useful to the stupid—

Yours

* * * *

LETTER XXI

H—, August 19, Tuesday.

I RECEIVED both your letters to-day—I had reckoned on hearing from you yesterday, therefore was disappointed, though I imputed your silence to the right cause. I intended answering your kind letter immediately, that you might have felt the pleasure it gave me; but ——— came in, and some other things interrupted me; so that the fine vapour has evaporated—yet, leaving a sweet scent behind, I have only to tell you, what is sufficiently obvious, that the earnest desire I have shown to keep my place, or gain more ground in your heart, is a sure proof how necessary your affection is to my happiness.—Still I do not think it false delicacy, or foolish pride, to wish that your attention to my happiness should arise *as much* from love, which is always rather a selfish passion, as reason—that is, I want you to promote my felicity, by seeking your own.—For, whatever pleasure it may give me to discover your generosity of soul, I would not be dependent for your affection on the very quality I most admire. No; there are qualities in your heart, which demand my affection; but, unless the attachment appears to me clearly mutual, I shall labour only to esteem your character, instead of cherishing a tenderness for your person.

I write in a hurry, because the little one, who has been sleeping a long time, begins to call for me. Poor thing! when I am sad, I lament that all my affections grow on me, till they become too strong for my peace, though they all afford me snatches of exquisite enjoyment—This for our little girl was at first very

reasonable—more the effect of reason, a sense of duty, than feeling—now, she has got into my heart and imagination, and when I walk out without her, her little figure is ever dancing before me.

You too have somehow clung round my heart—I found I could not eat my dinner in the great room—and, when I took up the large knife to carve for myself, tears rushed into my eyes.—Do not however suppose that I am melancholy—for, when you are from me, I not only wonder how I can find fault with you—but how I can doubt your affection.

I will not mix any comments on the inclosed (it roused my indignation) with the effusion of tenderness, with which I assure you, that you are the friend of my bosom, and the prop of my heart.

* * * *

LETTER XXII

H—, August 20.

I WANT to know what steps you have taken respecting ——. Knavery always rouses my indignation—I should be gratified to hear that the law had chastised ——— severely; but I do not wish you to see him, because the business does not now admit of peaceful discussion, and I do not exactly know how you would express your contempt.

Pray ask some questions about Tallien—I am still pleased with the dignity of his conduct.—The other day, in the cause of humanity, he made use of a degree of address, which I admire—and mean to point out to you, as one of the few instances of address which do credit to the abilities of the man, without taking away from that confidence in his openness of heart, which is the true basis of both public and private friendship.

Do not suppose that I mean to allude to a little reserve of temper in you, of which I have sometimes complained! You have been used to a cunning woman, and you almost look for cunning—Nay, in *managing* my happiness, you now and then wounded my sensibility, concealing yourself, till honest sympathy, giving you to me without disguise, lets me look into a heart, which my half-broken one wishes to creep into, to be revived and cherished.—You have frankness of heart, but not often exactly that overflowing (*épanchement de cœur*), which becoming almost childish, appears a weakness only to the weak.

But I have left poor Tallien. I wanted you to enquire likewise whether, as a member declared in the convention, Robespierre really maintained a *number* of mistresses.—Should it prove so, I suspect that they rather flattered his vanity than his senses.

Here is a chatting, desultory epistle! But do not suppose that I mean to close it without mentioning the little damsel—who has been almost springing out of my arm—she certainly looks very like you—but I do not love her the less for that, whether I am angry or pleased with you.—

Yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER XXIII^[58-A].

I HAVE juſt written two letters, that are going by other conveyances, and which I reckon on your receiving long before this. I therefore merely write, becauſe I know I ſhould be diſappointed at ſeeing any one who had left you, if you did not ſend a letter, were it ever ſo ſhort, to tell me why you did not write a longer—and you will want to be told, over and over again, that our little Hercules is quite recovered.

Befides looking at me, there are three other things, which delight her—to ride in a coach, to look at a ſcarlet waſtcoat, and hear loud muſic—yeſterday, at the *fête*, ſhe enjoyed the two latter; but, to honour J. J. Rouſſeau, I intend to give her a ſalf, the firſt ſhe has ever had round her—and why not?—for I have always been half in love with him.

Well, this you will ſay is trifling—ſhall I talk about alum or ſoap? There is nothing pictureſque in your preſent purſuits; my imagination then rather chuſes to ramble back to the barrier with you, or to ſee you coming to meet me, and my basket of grapes.—With what pleaſure do I recollect your looks and words, when I have been fitting on the window, regarding the waving corn!

Believe me, ſage ſir, you have not ſufficient reſpect for the imagination—I could prove to you in a trice that it is the mother of ſentiment, the great diſtinction of our nature, the only purifier of the paſſions—animals have a portion of reaſon, and equal, if not more exquisite, ſenſes; but no trace of imagination, or her offſpring taſte, appears in any of their actions. The impuſe of the ſenſes, paſſions, if you will, and the concluſions of reaſon, draw men together; but the imagination is the true fire, ſtolen from heaven, to animate this cold creature of clay, producing all thoſe fine ſympathies that lead to rapture, rendering men ſocial by expanding their hearts, inſtead of leaving them leiſure to calculate how many comforts ſociety affords.

If you call theſe obſervations romantic, a phraſe in this place which would be tantamount to nonſenſical, I ſhall be apt to retort, that you are embruted by trade, and the vulgar enjoyments of life—Bring me then back your barrier-face, or you ſhall have nothing to ſay to my barrier-girl; and I ſhall fly from you, to cheriſh the remembrances that will ever be dear to me; for I am yours truly

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LETTER XXIV

Evening, Sept. 23.

I HAVE been playing and laughing with the little girl ſo long, that I cannot take up my pen to addreſs you without emotion. Preſſing her to my boſom, ſhe looked ſo like you (*entre nous*, your beſt looks, for I do not admire your commercial face) every nerve ſeemed to vibrate to the touch, and I began to think that there was ſomething in the aſſertion of man and wife being one—for you ſeemed to pervade my whole frame, quickening the beat of my heart, and lending me the ſympathetic tears you excited.

Have I any thing more to ſay to you? No; not for the preſent—the reſt is all flown away; and, indulging tenderneſs for you, I cannot now complain of ſome people here, who have ruffled my temper for two or three days paſt.

Morning.

YESTERDAY B—— lent to me for my packet of letters. He called on me before; and I like him better than I did—that is, I have the same opinion of his understanding, but I think with you, he has more tenderness and real delicacy of feeling with respect to women, than are commonly to be met with. His manner too of speaking of his little girl, about the age of mine, interested me. I gave him a letter for my sister, and requested him to see her.

I have been interrupted. Mr. —— I suppose will write about business. Public affairs I do not descant on, except to tell you that they write now with great freedom and truth, and this liberty of the press will overthrow the Jacobins, I plainly perceive.

I hope you take care of your health. I have got a habit of restlessness at night, which arises, I believe, from activity of mind; for, when I am alone, that is, not near one to whom I can open my heart, I sink into reveries and trains of thinking, which agitate and fatigue me.

This is my third letter; when am I to hear from you? I need not tell you, I suppose, that I am now writing with somebody in the room with me, and —— is waiting to carry this to Mr. ——'s. I will then kiss the girl for you, and bid you adieu.

I desired you, in one of my other letters, to bring back to me your barrier-face—or that you should not be loved by my barrier-girl. I know that you will love her more and more, for she is a little affectionate, intelligent creature, with as much vivacity, I should think, as you could wish for.

I was going to tell you of two or three things which displease me here; but they are not of sufficient consequence to interrupt pleasing sensations. I have received a letter from Mr. —— . I want you to bring —— with you. Madame S—— is by me, reading a German translation of your letters—she desires me to give her love to you, on account of what you say of the negroes.

Yours most affectionately,

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LETTER XXV

Paris, Sept. 28.

I HAVE written to you three or four letters; but different causes have prevented my sending them by the persons who promised to take or forward them. The inclosed is one I wrote to go by B——; yet, finding that he will not arrive, before I hope, and believe, you will have set out on your return, I inclose it to you, and shall give it in charge to ——, as Mr. —— is detained, to whom I also gave a letter.

I cannot help being anxious to hear from you; but I shall not harass you with accounts of inquietudes, or of cares that arise from peculiar circumstances.—I have had so many little plagues here, that I have almost lamented that I left H——. ——, who is at best a most helpless creature, is now, on account of her pregnancy, more trouble than use to me, so that I still continue to be almost a slave to the child.—She indeed rewards me, for she is a sweet little creature; for, setting aside a mother's fondness (which, by the bye, is growing on me, her little intelligent smiles sinking into my heart), she has an astonishing degree of sensibility and observation. The other day by B——'s child, a fine one, she looked like a little sprite.—She is all life and motion, and her eyes are not the eyes of a fool—I will swear.

I slept at St. Germain's, in the very room (if you have not forgot) in which you pressed me very tenderly to

your heart.—I did not forget to fold my darling to mine, with sensations that are almost too sacred to be alluded to.

Adieu, my love! Take care of yourself, if you wish to be the protector of your child, and the comfort of her mother.

I have received, for you, letters from ————. I want to hear how that affair finishes, though I do not know whether I have most contempt for his folly or knavery.

Your own

* * * *

LETTER XXVI

October 1.

It is a heartless task to write letters, without knowing whether they will ever reach you.—I have given two to ———, who has been a-going, a-going, every day, for a week past; and three others, which were written in a low-spirited strain, a little querulous or so, I have not been able to forward by the opportunities that were mentioned to me. *Tant mieux!* you will say, and I will not say nay; for I should be sorry that the contents of a letter, when you are so far away, should damp the pleasure that the sight of it would afford—judging of your feelings by my own. I just now stumbled on one of the kind letters, which you wrote during your last absence. You are then a dear affectionate creature, and I will not plague you. The letter which you chance to receive, when the absence is so long, ought to bring only tears of tenderness, without any bitter alloy, into your eyes.

After your return I hope indeed, that you will not be so immersed in business, as during the last three or four months past—for even money, taking into the account all the future comforts it is to procure, may be gained at too dear a rate, if painful impressions are left on the mind.—These impressions were much more lively, soon after you went away, than at present—for a thousand tender recollections efface the melancholy traces they left on my mind—and every emotion is on the same side as my reason, which always was on yours.—Separated, it would be almost impious to dwell on real or imaginary imperfections of character.—I feel that I love you; and, if I cannot be happy with you, I will seek it no where else.

My little darling grows every day more dear to me—and she often has a kiss, when we are alone together, which I give her for you, with all my heart.

I have been interrupted—and must send off my letter. The liberty of the press will produce a great effect here—the *cry of blood will not be vain!*—Some more monsters will perish—and the Jacobins are conquered.—Yet I almost fear the last flap of the tail of the beast.

I have had several trifling teasing inconveniencies here, which I shall not now trouble you with a detail of.—I am sending ——— back; her pregnancy rendered her useless. The girl I have got has more vivacity, which is better for the child.

I long to hear from you.—Bring a copy of ——— and ——— with you.

——— is still here: he is a lost man.—He really loves his wife, and is anxious about his children; but his

indiscriminate hospitality and social feelings have given him an inveterate habit of drinking, that destroys his health, as well as renders his person disgusting.—If his wife had more sense, or delicacy, she might restrain him: as it is, nothing will save him.

Yours most truly and affectionately

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LETTER XXVII

October 26.

My dear love, I began to wish so earnestly to hear from you, that the sight of your letters occasioned such pleasurable emotions, I was obliged to throw them aside till the little girl and I were alone together; and this said little girl, our darling, is become a most intelligent little creature, and as gay as a lark, and that in the morning too, which I do not find quite so convenient. I once told you, that the sensations before she was born, and when she is sucking, were pleasant; but they do not deserve to be compared to the emotions I feel, when she stops to smile upon me, or laughs outright on meeting me unexpectedly in the street, or after a short absence. She has now the advantage of having two good nurses, and I am at present able to discharge my duty to her, without being the slave of it.

I have therefore employed and amused myself since I got rid of —, and am making a progress in the language amongst other things. I have also made some new acquaintance. I have almost *charmed* a judge of the tribunal, R—, who, though I should not have thought it possible, has humanity, if not *beaucoup d'esprit*. But let me tell you, if you do not make haste back, I shall be half in love with the author of the *Marfeillaise*, who is a handsome man, a little too broad-faced or so, and plays sweetly on the violin.

What do you say to this threat?—why, *entre nous*, I like to give way to a sprightly vein, when writing to you, that is, when I am pleased with you. "The devil," you know, is proverbially said to be "in a good humour, when he is pleased." Will you not then be a good boy, and come back quickly to play with your girls? but I shall not allow you to love the new-comer best.

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— — — — —

My heart longs for your return, my love, and only looks for, and seeks happiness with you; yet do not imagine that I childishly wish you to come back, before you have arranged things in such a manner, that it will not be necessary for you to leave us soon again; or to make exertions which injure your constitution.

Yours most truly and tenderly
* * * *

P.S. "You would oblige me by delivering the inclosed to Mr. —, and pray call for an answer.—It is for a person uncomfortably situated.

LETTER XXVIII

Dec. 26.

I HAVE been, my love, for some days tormented by fears, that I would not allow to assume a form—I had been expecting you daily—and I heard that many vessels had been driven on shore during the late gale.—Well, I now see your letter—and find that you are safe; I will not regret then that your exertions have hitherto been so unavailing.

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— — — — —
— — — — —

Be that as it may, return to me when you have arranged the other matters, which —— has been crowding on you. I want to be sure that you are safe—and not separated from me by a sea that must be passed. For, feeling that I am happier than I ever was, do you wonder at my sometimes dreading that fate has not done persecuting me? Come to me, my dearest friend, husband, father of my child!—All these fond ties glow at my heart at this moment, and dim my eyes.—With you an independence is desirable; and it is always within our reach, if affluence escapes us—without you the world again appears empty to me. But I am recurring to some of the melancholy thoughts that have flitted across my mind for some days past, and haunted my dreams.

My little darling is indeed a sweet child; and I am sorry that you are not here, to see her little mind unfold itself. You talk of "dalliance;" but certainly no lover was ever more attached to his mistress, than she is to me. Her eyes follow me every where, and by affection I have the most despotic power over her. She is all vivacity or softness—yes; I love her more than I thought I should. When I have been hurt at your stay, I have embraced her as my only comfort—when pleased with you, for looking and laughing like you; nay, I cannot, I find, long be angry with you, whilst I am kissing her for resembling you. But there would be no end to these details. Fold us both to your heart; for I am truly and affectionately

Yours

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LETTER XXIX

December 28.

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— — — — —
— — — — —

I do, my love, indeed sincerely sympathize with you in all your disappointments.—Yet, knowing that you are well, and think of me with affection, I only lament other disappointments, because I am sorry that you should thus exert yourself in vain, and that you are kept from me.

———, I know, urges you to stay, and is continually branching out into new projects, because he has the idle desire to amass a large fortune, rather an immense one, merely to have the credit of having made it. But we who are governed by other motives, ought not to be led on by him. When we meet, we will discuss this subject—You will listen to reason, and it has probably occurred to you, that it will be better, in future, to pursue some sober plan, which may demand more time, and still enable you to arrive at the same end. It appears to me absurd to waste life in preparing to live.

Would it not now be possible to arrange your business in such a manner as to avoid the inquietudes, of which I have had my share since your departure? Is it not possible to enter into business, as an employment necessary to keep the faculties awake, and (to sink a little in the expressions) the pot boiling, without suffering what must ever be considered as a secondary object, to engross the mind, and drive sentiment and affection out of the heart?

I am in a hurry to give this letter to the person who has promised to forward it with ——'s. I wish then to counteract, in some measure, what he has doubtless recommended most warmly.

Stay, my friend, whilst it is *absolutely* necessary.—I will give you no tenderer name, though it glows at my heart, unless you come the moment the settling the *present* objects permit.—*I do not consent* to your taking any other journey—or the little woman and I will be off, the Lord knows where. But, as I had rather owe every thing to your affection, and, I may add, to your reason, (for this immoderate desire of wealth, which makes —— so eager to have you remain, is contrary to your principles of action), I will not importune you.—I will only tell you, that I long to see you—and, being at peace with you, I shall be hurt, rather than made angry, by delays.—Having suffered so much in life, do not be surprised if I sometimes, when left to myself, grow gloomy, and suppose that it was all a dream, and that my happiness is not to last. I say happiness, because remembrance retrenches all the dark shades of the picture.

My little one begins to show her teeth, and use her legs—She wants you to bear your part in the nursing business, for I am fatigued with dancing her, and yet she is not satisfied—she wants you to thank her mother for taking such care of her, as you only can.

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER XXX

December 29.

THOUGH I suppose you have later intelligence, yet, as —— has just informed me that he has an opportunity of sending immediately to you, I take advantage of it to inclose you

How I hate this crooked business! This intercourse with the world, which obliges one to see the worst side of human nature! Why cannot you be content with the object you had first in view, when you entered into this wearisome labyrinth?—I know very well that you have imperceptibly been drawn on; yet why does one project, successful or abortive, only give place to two others? Is it not sufficient to avoid poverty?—I am contented to do my part; and, even here, sufficient to escape from wretchedness is not difficult to obtain. And, let me tell you, I have my project also—and, if you do not soon return, the little girl and I will take care of ourselves; we will not accept any of your cold kindness—your distant civilities—no; not we.

This is but half jesting, for I am really tormented by the desire which ——— manifests to have you remain where you are.—Yet why do I talk to you?—If he can persuade you—let him!—for, if you are not happier with me, and your own wishes do not make you throw aside these eternal projects, I am above using any arguments, though reason as well as affection seems to offer them—if our affection be mutual, they will occur to you—and you will act accordingly.

Since my arrival here, I have found the German lady, of whom you have heard me speak. Her first child died in the month; but she has another, about the age of my ———, a fine little creature. They are still but contriving to live——earning their daily bread—yet, though they are but just above poverty, I envy them.—She is a tender, affectionate mother—fatigued even by her attention.—However she has an affectionate husband in her turn, to render her care light, and to share her pleasure.

I will own to you that, feeling extreme tenderness for my little girl, I grow sad very often when I am playing with her, that you are not here, to observe with me how her mind unfolds, and her little heart becomes attached!—These appear to me to be true pleasures—and still you suffer them to escape you, in search of what we may never enjoy.—It is your own maxim to "live in the present moment."—*If you do*—stay, for God's sake; but tell me the truth—if not, tell me when I may expect to see you, and let me not be always vainly looking for you, till I grow sick at heart.

Adieu! I am a little hurt.—I must take my darling to my bosom to comfort me.

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LETTER XXXI

December 30.

SHOULD you receive three or four of the letters at once which I have written lately, do not think of Sir John Brute, for I do not mean to wife you. I only take advantage of every occasion, that one out of three of my epistles may reach your hands, and inform you that I am not of ———'s opinion, who talks till he makes me angry, of the necessity of your staying two or three months longer. I do not like this life of continual inquietude—and, *entre nous*, I am determined to try to earn some money here myself, in order to convince you that, if you chuse to run about the world to get a fortune, it is for yourself—for the little girl and I will live without your assistance, unless you are with us. I may be termed proud—Be it so—but I will never abandon certain principles of action.

The common run of men have such an ignoble way of thinking, that, if they debauch their hearts, and prostitute their persons, following perhaps a gust of inebriation, they suppose the wife, slave rather, whom they maintain, has no right to complain, and ought to receive the sultan, whenever he deigns to return, with open arms, though his have been polluted by half an hundred promiscuous amours during his absence.

I consider fidelity and constancy as two distinct things; yet the former is necessary, to give life to the other—and such a degree of respect do I think due to myself, that, if only probity, which is a good thing in its place, brings you back, never return!—for, if a wandering of the heart, or even a caprice of the imagination detains you—there is an end of all my hopes of happiness—I could not forgive it, if I would.

I have gotten into a melancholy mood, you perceive. You know my opinion of men in general; you know that I think them systematic tyrants, and that it is the rarest thing in the world, to meet with a man with sufficient delicacy of feeling to govern desire. When I am thus sad, I lament that my little darling, fondly as I dote on her, is a girl.—I am sorry to have a tie to a world that for me is ever sown with thorns.

You will call this an ill-humoured letter, when, in fact, it is the strongest proof of affection I can give, to dread to lose you. ——— has taken such pains to convince me that you must and ought to stay, that it has inconceivably depressed my spirits—You have always known my opinion—I have ever declared, that two people, who mean to live together, ought not to be long separated.—If certain things are more necessary to you than me—search for them—Say but one word, and you shall never hear of me more.—If not—for God's sake, let us struggle with poverty—with any evil, but these continual inquietudes of business, which I have been told were to last but a few months, though every day the end appears more distant! This is the first letter in this strain that I have determined to forward to you; the rest lie by, because I was unwilling to give you pain, and I should not now write, if I did not think that there would be no conclusion to the schemes, which demand, as I am told, your preference.

* * * *[91-A]

LETTER XXXII

January 9.

I JUST now received one of your hasty *notes*; for business so entirely occupies you, that you have not time, or sufficient command of thought, to write letters. Beware! you seem to be got into a whirl of projects and schemes, which are drawing you into a gulph, that, if it do not absorb your happiness, will infallibly destroy mine.

Fatigued during my youth by the most arduous struggles, not only to obtain independence, but to render myself useful, not merely pleasure, for which I had the most lively taste, I mean the simple pleasures that flow from passion and affection, escaped me, but the most melancholy views of life were impressed by a disappointed heart on my mind. Since I knew you, I have been endeavouring to go back to my former nature, and have allowed some time to glide away, winged with the delight which only spontaneous enjoyment can give.—Why have you so soon dissolved the charm?

I am really unable to bear the continual inquietude which your and ———'s never-ending plans produce. This you may term want of firmness—but you are mistaken—I have still sufficient firmness to pursue my principle of action. The present misery, I cannot find a softer word to do justice to my feelings, appears to me unnecessary—and therefore I have not firmness to support it as you may think I ought. I should have been content, and still wish, to retire with you to a farm—My God! any thing, but these continual anxieties—any thing but commerce, which debases the mind, and roots out affection from the heart.

I do not mean to complain of subordinate inconveniences—yet I will simply observe, that, led to expect you every week, I did not make the arrangements required by the present circumstances, to procure the

necessaries of life. In order to have them, a servant, for that purpose only, is indispensable—The want of wood, has made me catch the most violent cold I ever had; and my head is so disturbed by continual coughing, that I am unable to write without stopping frequently to recollect myself.—This however is one of the common evils which must be borne with——bodily pain does not touch the heart, though it fatigues the spirits.

Still as you talk of your return, even in February, doubtingly, I have determined, the moment the weather changes, to wean my child.—It is too soon for her to begin to divide sorrow!—And as one has well said, "despair is a freeman," we will go and seek our fortune together.

This is not a caprice of the moment—for your absence has given new weight to some conclusions, that I was very reluctantly forming before you left me.—I do not chuse to be a secondary object.—If your feelings were in unison with mine, you would not sacrifice so much to visionary prospects of future advantage.

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LETTER XXXIII

Jan. 15.

I WAS just going to begin my letter with the bag end of a song, which would only have told you, what I may as well say simply, that it is pleasant to forgive those we love. I have received your two letters, dated the 26th and 28th of December, and my anger died away. You can scarcely conceive the effect some of your letters have produced on me. After longing to hear from you during a tedious interval of suspense, I have seen a superscription written by you.—Promising myself pleasure, and feeling emotion, I have laid it by me, till the person who brought it, left the room—when, behold! on opening it, I have found only half a dozen hasty lines, that have damped all the rising affection of my soul.

Well, now for business—

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My animal is well; I have not yet taught her to eat, but nature is doing the business. I gave her a crust to assist the cutting of her teeth; and now she has two, she makes good use of them to gnaw a crust, biscuit, &c. You would laugh to see her; she is just like a little squirrel; she will guard a crust for two hours; and, after fixing her eye on an object for some time, dart on it with an aim as sure as a bird of prey—nothing can equal her life and spirits. I suffer from a cold; but it does not affect her. Adieu! do not forget to love us—and come soon to tell us that you do.

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LETTER XXXIV

Jan. 30.

FROM the purport of your laſt letters, I would ſuppoſe that this will ſcarcely reach you; and I have already written ſo many letters, that you have either not received, or neglected to acknowledge, I do not find it pleaſant, or rather I have no inclination, to go over the ſame ground again. If you have received them, and are ſtill detained by new projects, it is uſeleſs for me to ſay any more on the ſubject. I have done with it for ever—yet I ought to remind you that your pecuniary intereſt ſuffers by your abſence.

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For my part, my head is turned giddy, by only hearing of plans to make money, and my contemptuous feelings have ſometimes burſt out. I therefore was glad that a violent cold gave me a pretext to ſtay at home, leſt I ſhould have uttered unreaſonable truths.

My child is well, and the ſpring will perhaps reſtore me to myſelf.—I have endured many inconveniences this winter, which ſhould I be aſhamed to mention, if they had been unavoidable. "The ſecondary pleaſures of life," you ſay, "are very neceſſary to my comfort:" it may be ſo; but I have ever conſidered them as ſecondary. If therefore you accuſe me of wanting the reſolution neceſſary to bear the *common*^[100-A] evils of life; I ſhould anſwer, that I have not faſhioned my mind to ſuſtain them, becauſe I would avoid them, coſt what it would——

Adieu!

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LETTER XXXV

February 9.

THE melancholy preſentiment has for ſome time hung on my ſpirits, that we were parted for ever; and the letters I received this day, by Mr. —, convince me that it was not without foundation. You allude to ſome other letters, which I ſuppoſe have miſcarried; for moſt of thoſe I have got, were only a few haſty lines, calculated to wound the tenderneſs the ſight of the ſuſcriptions excited.

I mean not however to complain; yet ſo many feelings are ſtruggling for utterance, and agitating a heart almoſt burſting with anguiſh, that I find it very difficult to write with any degree of coherence.

You left me indiſpoſed, though you have taken no notice of it; and the moſt fatiguing journey I ever had, contributed to continue it. However, I recovered my health; but a neglected cold, and continual inquietude during the laſt two months, have reduced me to a ſtate of weakneſs I never before experienced. Thoſe who

did not know that the canker-worm was at work at the core, cautioned me about fuckling my child too long.—God preserve this poor child, and render her happier than her mother!

But I am wandering from my subject: indeed my head turns giddy, when I think that all the confidence I have had in the affection of others is come to this.

I did not expect this blow from you. I have done my duty to you and my child; and if I am not to have any return of affection to reward me, I have the sad consolation of knowing that I deserved a better fate. My soul is weary—I am sick at heart; and, but for this little darling, I would cease to care about a life, which is now stripped of every charm.

You see how stupid I am, uttering declamation, when I meant simply to tell you, that I consider your requesting me to come to you, as merely dictated by honour.—Indeed, I scarcely understand you.—You request me to come, and then tell me, that you have not given up all thoughts of returning to this place.

When I determined to live with you, I was only governed by affection.—I would share poverty with you, but I turn with affright from the sea of trouble on which you are entering.—I have certain principles of action: I know what I look for to found my happiness on.—It is not money.—With you I wished for sufficient to procure the comforts of life—as it is, less will do.—I can still exert myself to obtain the necessaries of life for my child, and she does not want more at present.—I have two or three plans in my head to earn our subsistence; for do not suppose that, neglected by you, I will lie under obligations of a pecuniary kind to you!—No; I would sooner submit to menial service.—I wanted the support of your affection—that gone, all is over!—I did not think, when I complained of ——'s contemptible avidity to accumulate money, that he would have dragged you into his schemes.

I cannot write.—I inclose a fragment of a letter, written soon after your departure, and another which tenderness made me keep back when it was written.—You will see then the sentiments of a calmer, though not a more determined, moment.—Do not insult me by saying, that "our being together is paramount to every other consideration!" Were it, you would not be running after a bubble, at the expence of my peace of mind.

Perhaps this is the last letter you will ever receive from me.

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LETTER XXXVI

Feb. 10.

You talk of "permanent views and future comfort"—not for me, for I am dead to hope. The inquietudes of the last winter have finished the business, and my heart is not only broken, but my constitution destroyed. I conceive myself in a galloping consumption, and the continual anxiety I feel at the thought of leaving my child, feeds the fever that nightly devours me. It is on her account that I again write to you, to conjure you, by all that you hold sacred, to leave her here with the German lady you may have heard me mention! She has a child of the same age, and they may be brought up together, as I wish her to be brought up. I shall write more fully on the subject. To facilitate this, I shall give up my present lodgings, and go into the same house. I can live much cheaper there, which is now become an object. I have had 3000 livres from ——, and I shall take one more, to pay my servant's wages, &c. and then I shall endeavour to procure what I want by my own exertions. I shall entirely give up the acquaintance of the Americans.

—— and I have not been on good terms a long time. Yesterday he very unmanly exulted over me, on account of your determination to stay. I had provoked it, it is true, by some asperities against commerce, which have dropped from me, when we have argued about the propriety of your remaining where you are; and it is no matter, I have drunk too deep of the bitter cup to care about trifles.

When you first entered into these plans, you bounded your views to the gaining of a thousand pounds. It was sufficient to have procured a farm in America, which would have been an independence. You find now that you did not know yourself, and that a certain situation in life is more necessary to you than you imagined—more necessary than an uncorrupted heart—For a year or two, you may procure yourself what you call pleasure; eating, drinking, and women; but, in the solitude of declining life, I shall be remembered with regret—I was going to say with remorse, but checked my pen.

As I have never concealed the nature of my connection with you, your reputation will not suffer. I shall never have a confidant: I am content with the approbation of my own mind; and, if there be a searcher of hearts, mine will not be despised. Reading what you have written relative to the desertion of women, I have often wondered how theory and practice could be so different, till I recollected, that the sentiments of passion, and the resolves of reason, are very distinct. As to my sisters, as you are so continually hurried with business, you need not write to them—I shall, when my mind is calmer. God bless you! Adieu!

* * * *

This has been such a period of barbarity and misery, I ought not to complain of having my share. I wish one moment that I had never heard of the cruelties that have been practised here, and the next envy the mothers who have been killed with their children. Surely I had suffered enough in life, not to be cursed with a fondness, that burns up the vital stream I am imparting. You will think me mad: I would I were so, that I could forget my misery—so that my head or heart would be still.——

LETTER XXXVII

Feb. 19.

WHEN I first received your letter, putting off your return to an indefinite time, I felt so hurt, that I know not what I wrote. I am now calmer, though it was not the kind of wound over which time has the quickest effect; on the contrary, the more I think, the sadder I grow. Society fatigues me inexpressibly—So much so, that finding fault with every one, I have only reason enough, to discover that the fault is in myself. My child alone interests me, and, but for her, I should not take any pains to recover my health.

As it is, I shall wean her, and try if by that step (to which I feel a repugnance, for it is my only solace) I can get rid of my cough. Physicians talk much of the danger attending any complaint on the lungs, after a woman has suckled for some months. They lay a stress also on the necessity of keeping the mind tranquil—and, my God! how has mine been harassed! But whilst the caprices of other women are gratified, "the wind of heaven not suffered to visit them too rudely," I have not found a guardian angel, in heaven or on earth, to ward off sorrow or care from my bosom.

What sacrifices have you not made for a woman you did not respect!—But I will not go over this ground—I want to tell you that I do not understand you. You say that you have not given up all thoughts of returning here—and I know that it will be necessary—nay, is. I cannot explain myself; but if you have not lost your memory, you will easily divine my meaning. What! is our life then only to be made up of

separations? and am I only to return to a country, that has not merely lost all charms for me, but for which I feel a repugnance that almost amounts to horror, only to be left there a prey to it!

Why is it so necessary that I should return?—brought up here, my girl would be freer. Indeed, expecting you to join us, I had formed some plans of usefulness that have now vanished with my hopes of happiness.

In the bitterness of my heart, I could complain with reason, that I am left here dependent on a man, whose avidity to acquire a fortune has rendered him callous to every sentiment connected with social or affectionate emotions.—With a brutal insensibility, he cannot help displaying the pleasure your determination to stay gives him, in spite of the effect it is visible it has had on me.

Till I can earn money, I shall endeavour to borrow some, for I want to avoid asking him continually for the sum necessary to maintain me.—Do not mistake me, I have never been refused.—Yet I have gone half a dozen times to the house to ask for it, and come away without speaking—you must guess why—Besides, I wish to avoid hearing of the eternal projects to which you have sacrificed my peace—not remembering—but I will be silent for ever.—

LETTER XXXVIII

April 7.

HERE I am at H——, on the wing towards you, and I write now, only to tell you, that you may expect me in the course of three or four days; for I shall not attempt to give vent to the different emotions which agitate my heart—You may term a feeling, which appears to me to be a degree of delicacy that naturally arises from sensibility, pride—Still I cannot indulge the very affectionate tenderness which glows in my bosom, without trembling, till I see, by your eyes, that it is mutual.

I sit, lost in thought, looking at the sea—and tears rush into my eyes, when I find that I am cherishing any fond expectations.—I have indeed been so unhappy this winter, I find it as difficult to acquire fresh hopes, as to regain tranquillity.—Enough of this—lie still, foolish heart!—But for the little girl, I could almost wish that it should cease to beat, to be no more alive to the anguish of disappointment.

Sweet little creature! I deprived myself of my only pleasure, when I weaned her, about ten days ago.—I am however glad I conquered my repugnance.—It was necessary it should be done soon, and I did not wish to embitter the renewal of your acquaintance with her, by putting it off till we met.—It was a painful exertion to me, and I thought it best to throw this inquietude with the rest, into the sack that I would fain throw over my shoulder.—I wished to endure it alone, in short—Yet, after sending her to sleep in the next room for three or four nights, you cannot think with what joy I took her back again to sleep in my bosom!

I suppose I shall find you, when I arrive, for I do not see any necessity for your coming to me.—Pray inform Mr. ———, that I have his little friend with me.—My wishing to oblige him, made me put myself to some inconvenience—and delay my departure; which was irksome to me, who have not quite as much philosophy, I would not for the world say indifference, as you. God bless you!

Yours truly,

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LETTER XXXIX

HERE we are, my love, and mean to set out early in the morning; and, if I can find you, I hope to dine with you to-morrow.—I shall drive to ——'s hotel, where —— tells me you have been—and, if you have left it, I hope you will take care to be there to receive us.

I have brought with me Mr. ——'s little friend, and a girl whom I like to take care of our little darling—not on the way, for that fell to my share.—But why do I write about trifles?—or any thing?—Are we not to meet soon?—What does your heart say!

Yours truly

* * * *

I have weaned my ——, and she is now eating away at the white bread.

LETTER XL

London, Friday, May 22.

I HAVE just received your affectionate letter, and am distressed to think that I have added to your embarrassments at this troublesome juncture, when the exertion of all the faculties of your mind appears to be necessary, to extricate you out of your pecuniary difficulties. I suppose it was something relative to the circumstance you have mentioned, which made —— request to see me to-day, to *confer about a matter of great importance*. Be that as it may, his letter (such is the state of my spirits) inconceivably alarmed me, and rendered the last night as distressing, as the two former had been.

I have laboured to calm my mind since you left me—Still I find that tranquillity is not to be obtained by exertion; it is a feeling so different from the resignation of despair!—I am however no longer angry with you—nor will I ever utter another complaint—there are arguments which convince the reason, whilst they carry death to the heart.—We have had too many cruel explanations, that not only cloud every future prospect; but embitter the remembrances which alone give life to affection.—Let the subject never be revived!

It seems to me that I have not only lost the hope, but the power of being happy.—Every emotion is now sharpened by anguish.—My soul has been shook, and my tone of feelings destroyed.—I have gone out—and sought for dissipation, if not amusement, merely to fatigue still more, I find, my irritable nerves——

My friend—my dear friend—examine yourself well—I am out of the question; for, alas! I am nothing—and discover what you wish to do—what will render you most comfortable—or, to be more explicit—whether you desire to live with me, or part for ever? When you can once ascertain it, tell me frankly, I conjure you!—for, believe me, I have very involuntarily interrupted your peace.

I shall expect you to dinner on Monday, and will endeavour to assume a cheerful face to greet you—at any rate I will avoid conversations, which only tend to harass your feelings, because I am most affectionately yours,

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LETTER XLI

Wednesday.

I INCLOSE you the letter, which you desired me to forward, and I am tempted very laconically to wish you a good morning—not because I am angry, or have nothing to say; but to keep down a wounded spirit.—I shall make every effort to calm my mind—yet a strong conviction seems to whirl round in the very centre of my brain, which, like the fiat of fate, emphatically assures me, that grief has a firm hold of my heart.

God bless you!

Yours sincerely

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LETTER XLII

—, Wednesday, Two o'Clock.

WE arrived here about an hour ago. I am extremely fatigued with the child, who would not rest quiet with any body but me, during the night—and now we are here in a comfortless, damp room, in a sort of a tomb-like house. This however I shall quickly remedy, for, when I have finished this letter, (which I must do immediately, because the post goes out early), I shall fall forth, and enquire about a vessel and an inn.

I will not distress you by talking of the depression of my spirits, or the struggle I had to keep alive my dying heart.—It is even now too full to allow me to write with composure.—*****,—dear *****, —am I always to be tossed about thus?—shall I never find an asylum to rest *contented* in? How can you love to fly about continually—dropping down, as it were, in a new world—cold and strange!—every other day? Why do you not attach those tender emotions round the idea of home, which even now dim my eyes?—This alone is affection—every thing else is only humanity, electrified by sympathy.

I will write to you again to-morrow, when I know how long I am to be detained—and hope to get a letter quickly from you, to cheer yours sincerely and affectionately

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——— is playing near me in high spirits. She was so pleased with the noise of the mail-horn, she has been continually imitating it.——Adieu!

LETTER XLIII

Thursday.

A LADY has just sent to offer to take me to ———. I have then only a moment to exclaim against the vague manner in which people give information

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But why talk of inconveniences, which are in fact trifling, when compared with the sinking of the heart I have felt! I did not intend to touch this painful string—God bless you!

Yours truly,

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LETTER XLIV

Friday, June 12.

I HAVE just received yours dated the 9th, which I suppose was a mistake, for it could scarcely have loitered so long on the road. The general observations which apply to the state of your own mind, appear to me just, as far as they go; and I shall always consider it as one of the most serious misfortunes of my life, that I did not meet you, before satiety had rendered your senses so fastidious, as almost to close up every tender avenue of sentiment and affection that leads to your sympathetic heart. You have a heart, my friend, yet, hurried away by the impetuosity of inferior feelings, you have sought in vulgar excesses, for that gratification which only the heart can bestow.

The common run of men, I know, with strong health and gross appetites, must have variety to banish *ennui*, because the imagination never lends its magic wand, to convert appetite into love, cemented by according reason.—Ah! my friend, you know not the ineffable delight, the exquisite pleasure, which arises from a union of affection and desire, when the whole soul and senses are abandoned to a lively imagination, that renders every emotion delicate and rapturous. Yes; these are emotions, over which satiety has no power, and the recollection of which, even disappointment cannot disenchant; but they do not exist without self-denial. These emotions, more or less strong, appear to me to be the distinctive characteristic of genius, the foundation of taste, and of that exquisite relish for the beauties of nature, of which the common herd of eaters and drinkers and *child-begeters*, certainly have no idea. You will smile at an observation that has just occurred to me:—I consider those minds as the most strong and original, whose imagination acts as the stimulus to their senses.

Well! you will ask, what is the result of all this reasoning? Why I cannot help thinking that it is possible for you, having great strength of mind, to return to nature, and regain a sanity of constitution, and purity of feeling—which would open your heart to me.—I would fain rest there!

Yet, convinced more than ever of the sincerity and tenderness of my attachment to you, the involuntary hopes, which a determination to live has revived, are not sufficiently strong to dissipate the cloud, that despair has spread over futurity. I have looked at the sea, and at my child, hardly daring to own to myself the secret wish, that it might become our tomb; and that the heart, still so alive to anguish, might there be quieted by death. At this moment ten thousand complicated sentiments press for utterance, weigh on my heart, and obscure my sight.

Are we ever to meet again? and will you endeavour to render that meeting happier than the last? Will you endeavour to restrain your caprices, in order to give vigour to affection, and to give play to the checked sentiments that nature intended should expand your heart? I cannot indeed, without agony, think of your bosom's being continually contaminated; and bitter are the tears which exhaust my eyes, when I recollect why my child and I are forced to stray from the asylum, in which, after so many storms, I had hoped to rest, smiling at angry fate.—These are not common sorrows; nor can you perhaps conceive, how much active fortitude it requires to labour perpetually to blunt the shafts of disappointment.

Examine now yourself, and ascertain whether you can live in something-like a settled stile. Let our confidence in future be unbounded; consider whether you find it necessary to sacrifice me to what you term "the zest of life;" and, when you have once a clear view of your own motives, of your own incentive to action, do not deceive me!

The train of thoughts which the writing of this epistle awoke, makes me so wretched, that I must take a walk, to rouse and calm my mind. But first, let me tell you, that, if you really wish to promote my happiness, you will endeavour to give me as much as you can of yourself. You have great mental energy; and your judgment seems to me so just, that it is only the dupe of your inclination in discussing one subject.

The post does not go out to-day. To-morrow I may write more tranquilly. I cannot yet say when the vessel will sail in which I have determined to depart.

Saturday Morning.

Your second letter reached me about an hour ago. You were certainly wrong, in supposing that I did not mention you with respect; though, without my being conscious of it, some sparks of repentment may have animated the gloom of despair—Yes; with less affection, I should have been more respectful. However the regard which I have for you, is so unequivocal to myself, I imagine that it must be sufficiently obvious to every body else. Besides, the only letter I intended for the public eye was to —, and that I destroyed from delicacy before you saw them, because it was only written (of course warmly in your praise) to prevent any odium being thrown on you^[133-A].

I am harassed by your embarrassments, and shall certainly use all my efforts, to make the business terminate to your satisfaction in which I am engaged.

My friend—my dearest friend—I feel my fate united to yours by the most sacred principles of my soul, and the yearns of—yes, I will say it—a true, unsophisticated heart.

Yours most truly

* * * *

If the wind be fair, the captain talks of sailing on Monday; but I am afraid I shall be detained some days longer. At any rate, continue to write, (I want this support) till you are sure I am where I cannot expect a letter; and, if any should arrive after my departure, a gentleman (not Mr. —'s friend, I promise you) from whom I have received great civilities, will send them after me.

Do write by every occasion! I am anxious to hear how your affairs go on; and, still more, to be convinced that you are not separating yourself from us. For my little darling is calling papa, and adding her parrot word—Come, Come! And will you not come, and let us exert ourselves?—I shall recover all my energy, when I am convinced that my exertions will draw us more closely together. One more adieu!

LETTER XLV

Sunday, June 14.

I RATHER expected to hear from you to-day—I wish you would not fail to write to me for a little time, because I am not quite well—Whether I have any good sleep or not, I wake in the morning in violent fits of trembling—and, in spite of all my efforts, the child—every thing—fatigues me, in which I seek for solace or amusement.

Mr. —— forced on me a letter to a physician of this place; it was fortunate, for I should otherwise have had some difficulty to obtain the necessary information. His wife is a pretty woman (I can admire, you know, a pretty woman, when I am alone) and he an intelligent and rather interesting man.—They have behaved to me with great hospitality; and poor —— was never so happy in her life, as amongst their young brood.

They took me in their carriage to ——, and I ran over my favourite walks, with a vivacity that would have astonished you.—The town did not please me quite so well as formerly—It appeared so diminutive; and, when I found that many of the inhabitants had lived in the same houses ever since I left it, I could not help wondering how they could thus have vegetated, whilst I was running over a world of sorrow, snatching at pleasure, and throwing off prejudices. The place where I at present am, is much improved; but it is astonishing what strides aristocracy and fanaticism have made, since I resided in this country.

The wind does not appear inclined to change, so I am still forced to linger—When do you think that you shall be able to set out for France? I do not entirely like the aspect of your affairs, and still less your connections on either side of the water. Often do I sigh, when I think of your entanglements in business, and your extreme restlessness of mind.—Even now I am almost afraid to ask you, whether the pleasure of being free, does not over-balance the pain you felt at parting with me? Sometimes I indulge the hope that you will feel me necessary to you—or why should we meet again?—but, the moment after, despair damps my rising spirits, aggravated by the emotions of tenderness, which ought to soften the cares of life.—God bless you!

Yours sincerely and affectionately

* * * *

LETTER XLVI

June 15.

I WANT to know how you have settled with respect to —— . In short, be very particular in your account of all your affairs—let our confidence, my dear, be unbounded.—The last time we were separated, was a separation indeed on your part—Now you have acted more ingenuously, let the most affectionate interchange of sentiments fill up the aching void of disappointment. I almost dread that your plans will prove abortive—yet should the most unlucky turn send you home to us, convinced that a true friend is a treasure, I should not much mind having to struggle with the world again. Accuse me not of pride—yet sometimes, when nature has opened my heart to its author, I have wondered that you did not set a higher value on my heart.

Receive a kiss from ——, I was going to add, if you will not take one from me, and believe me yours

Sincerely

* * * *

The wind still continues in the same quarter.

LETTER XLVII

Tuesday Morning.

THE captain has just sent to inform me, that I must be on board in the course of a few hours.—I wished to have stayed till to-morrow. It would have been a comfort to me to have received another letter from you—Should one arrive, it will be sent after me.

My spirits are agitated, I scarcely know why—The quitting England seems to be a fresh parting.—Surely you will not forget me.—A thousand weak forebodings assault my soul, and the state of my health renders me sensible to every thing. It is surprising that in London, in a continual conflict of mind, I was still growing better—whilst here, bowed down by the despotic hand of fate, forced into resignation by despair, I seem to be fading away—perishing beneath a cruel blight, that withers up all my faculties.

The child is perfectly well. My hand seems unwilling to add adieu! I know not why this inexpressible sadness has taken possession of me.—It is not a presentiment of ill. Yet, having been so perpetually the sport of disappointment,—having a heart that has been as it were a mark for misery, I dread to meet wretchedness in some new shape.—Well, let it come—I care not!—what have I to dread, who have so little to hope for! God bless you—I am most affectionately and sincerely yours

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LETTER XLVIII

Wednesday Morning.

I WAS hurried on board yesterday about three o'clock, the wind having changed. But before evening it veered round to the old point; and here we are, in the midst of mists and water, only taking advantage of the tide to advance a few miles.

You will scarcely suppose that I left the town with reluctance—yet it was even so—for I wished to receive another letter from you, and I felt pain at parting, for ever perhaps, from the amiable family, who had treated me with so much hospitality and kindness. They will probably send me your letter, if it arrives this morning; for here we are likely to remain, I am afraid to think how long.

The vessel is very commodious, and the captain a civil, open-hearted kind of man. There being no other passengers, I have the cabin to myself, which is pleasant; and I have brought a few books with me to beguile weariness; but I seem inclined, rather to employ the dead moments of suspense in writing some effusions, than in reading.

What are you about? How are your affairs going on? It may be a long time before you answer these questions. My dear friend, my heart sinks within me!—Why am I forced thus to struggle continually with my affections and feelings?—Ah! why are those affections and feelings the source of so much misery, when

they seem to have been given to vivify my heart, and extend my usefulness! But I must not dwell on this subject.—Will you not endeavour to cherish all the affection you can for me? What am I saying?—Rather forget me, if you can—if other gratifications are dearer to you.—How is every remembrance of mine embittered by disappointment? What a world is this!—They only seem happy, who never look beyond sensual or artificial enjoyments.—Adieu!

—— begins to play with the cabin-boy, and is as gay as a lark.—I will labour to be tranquil; and am in every mood,

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER XLIX

Thursday.

HERE I am still—and I have just received your letter of Monday by the pilot, who promised to bring it to me, if we were detained, as he expected, by the wind.—It is indeed wearisome to be thus tossed about without going forward.—I have a violent head-ache—yet I am obliged to take care of the child, who is a little tormented by her teeth, because —— is unable to do any thing, she is rendered so sick by the motion of the ship, as we ride at anchor.

These are however trifling inconveniences, compared with anguish of mind—compared with the sinking of a broken heart.—To tell you the truth, I never suffered in my life so much from depression of spirits—from despair.—I do not sleep—or, if I close my eyes, it is to have the most terrifying dreams, in which I often meet you with different casts of countenance.

I will not, my dear ——, torment you by dwelling on my sufferings—and will use all my efforts to calm my mind, instead of deadening it—at present it is most painfully active. I find I am not equal to these continual struggles—yet your letter this morning has afforded me some comfort—and I will try to revive hope. One thing let me tell you—when we meet again—surely we are to meet!—it must be to part no more. I mean not to have seas between us—it is more than I can support.

The pilot is hurrying me—God bless you.

In spite of the commodiousness of the vessel, every thing here would disgust my senses, had I nothing else to think of—"When the mind's free, the body's delicate;"—mine has been too much hurt to regard trifles.

Yours most truly

* * * *

LETTER L

Saturday.

THIS is the fifth dreary day I have been imprisoned by the wind, with every outward object to disgust the senses, and unable to banish the remembrances that sadden my heart.

How am I altered by disappointment!—When going to ——, ten years ago, the elasticity of my mind was sufficient to ward off weariness—and the imagination still could dip her brush in the rainbow of fancy, and sketch futurity in smiling colours. Now I am going towards the North in search of sunbeams!—Will any ever warm this desolated heart? All nature seems to frown—or rather mourn with me.—Every thing is cold—cold as my expectations! Before I left the shore, tormented, as I now am, by these North east *chillers*, I could not help exclaiming—Give me, gracious Heaven! at least, genial weather, if I am never to meet the genial affection that still warms this agitated bosom—compelling life to linger there.

I am now going on shore with the captain, though the weather be rough, to seek for milk, &c. at a little village, and to take a walk—after which I hope to sleep—for, confined here, surrounded by disagreeable smells, I have lost the little appetite I had; and I lie awake, till thinking almost drives me to the brink of madness—only to the brink, for I never forget, even in the feverish slumbers I sometimes fall into, the misery I am labouring to blunt the the sense of, by every exertion in my power.

Poor —— still continues sick, and —— grows weary when the weather will not allow her to remain on deck.

I hope this will be the last letter I shall write from England to you—are you not tired of this lingering adieu?

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER LI

Sunday Morning.

THE captain last night, after I had written my letter to you intended to be left at a little village, offered to go to —— to pass to-day. We had a troublesome fall—and now I must hurry on board again, for the wind has changed.

I half expected to find a letter from you here. Had you written one haphazard, it would have been kind and considerate—you might have known, had you thought, that the wind would not permit me to depart. These are attentions, more grateful to the heart than offers of service—But why do I foolishly continue to look for them?

Adieu! adieu! My friend—your friendship is very cold—you see I am hurt.—God bless you! I may perhaps be, some time or other, independent in every sense of the word—Ah! there is but one sense of it of consequence. I will break or bend this weak heart—yet even now it is full.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

The child is well; I did not leave her on board.

LETTER LII

June 27, Saturday.

I ARRIVED in —— this afternoon, after vainly attempting to land at —— . I have now but a moment, before the post goes out, to inform you we have got here; though not without considerable difficulty, for we were set ashore in a boat above twenty miles below.

What I suffered in the vessel I will not now descant upon—nor mention the pleasure I received from the sight of the rocky coast.—This morning however, walking to join the carriage that was to transport us to this place, I fell, without any previous warning, senseless on the rocks—and how I escaped with life I can scarcely guess. I was in a stupor for a quarter of an hour; the suffusion of blood at last restored me to my senses—the contusion is great, and my brain confused. The child is well.

Twenty miles ride in the rain, after my accident, has sufficiently deranged me—and here I could not get a fire to warm me, or any thing warm to eat; the inns are mere stables—I must nevertheless go to bed. For God's sake, let me hear from you immediately, my friend! I am not well and yet you see I cannot die.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER LIII

June 29.

I WROTE to you by the last post, to inform you of my arrival; and I believe I alluded to the extreme fatigue I endured on ship-board, owing to ——'s illness, and the roughness of the weather—I likewise mentioned to you my fall, the effects of which I still feel, though I do not think it will have any serious consequences.

—— will go with me, if I find it necessary to go to —— . The inns here are so bad, I was forced to accept of an apartment in his house. I am overwhelmed with civilities on all sides, and fatigued with the endeavours to amuse me, from which I cannot escape.

My friend—my friend, I am not well—a deadly weight of sorrow lies heavily on my heart. I am again

toiled on the troubled billows of life; and obliged to cope with difficulties, without being buoyed up by the hopes that alone render them bearable. "How flat, dull, and unprofitable," appears to me all the bustle into which I see people here so eagerly enter! I long every night to go to bed, to hide my melancholy face in my pillow; but there is a canker-worm in my bosom that never sleeps.

* * * *

LETTER LIV

July 1.

I LABOUR in vain to calm my mind—my soul has been overwhelmed by sorrow and disappointment. Every thing fatigues me—this is a life that cannot last long. It is you who must determine with respect to futurity—and, when you have, I will act accordingly—I mean, we must either resolve to live together, or part for ever, I cannot bear these continual struggles—But I wish you to examine carefully your own heart and mind; and, if you perceive the least chance of being happier without me than with me, or if your inclination leans capriciously to that side, do not dissemble; but tell me frankly that you will never see me more. I will then adopt the plan I mentioned to you—for we must either live together, or I will be entirely independent.

My heart is so oppressed, I cannot write with precision—You know however that what I so imperfectly express, are not the crude sentiments of the moment—You can only contribute to my comfort (it is the consolation I am in need of) by being with me—and, if the tenderest friendship is of any value, why will you not look to me for a degree of satisfaction that heartless affections cannot bestow?

Tell me then, will you determine to meet me at Basse?—I shall, I should imagine, be at ——— before the close of August; and, after you settle your affairs at Paris, could we not meet there?

God bless you!

Yours truly

* * * *

Poor ——— has suffered during the journey with her teeth.

LETTER LV

July 3.

THERE was a gloominess diffused through your last letter, the impression of which still rests on my mind—though, recollecting how quickly you throw off the forcible feelings of the moment, I flatter myself it has long since given place to your usual cheerfulness.

Believe me (and my eyes fill with tears of tenderness as I assure you) there is nothing I would not endure in the way of privation, rather than disturb your tranquillity.—If I am fated to be unhappy, I will labour to hide my sorrows in my own bosom; and you shall always find me a faithful, affectionate friend.

I grow more and more attached to my little girl—and I cherish this affection without fear, because it must

be a long time before it can become bitterness of soul.—She is an interesting creature.—On ship-board, how often as I gazed at the sea, have I longed to bury my troubled bosom in the left troubled deep; asserting with Brutus, "that the virtue I had followed too far, was merely an empty name!" and nothing but the sight of her—her playful smiles, which seemed to cling and twine round my heart—could have stopped me.

What peculiar misery has fallen to my share! To act up to my principles, I have laid the strictest restraint on my very thoughts—yes; not to fully the delicacy of my feelings, I have reined in my imagination; and started with affright from every sensation, (I allude to ——) that stealing with balmy sweetness into my soul, led me to scent from afar the fragrance of reviving nature.

My friend, I have dearly paid for one conviction.—Love, in some minds, is an affair of sentiment, arising from the same delicacy of perception (or taste) as renders them alive to the beauties of nature, poetry, &c., alive to the charms of those evanescent graces that are, as it were, impalpable—they must be felt, they cannot be described.

Love is a want of my heart. I have examined myself lately with more care than formerly, and find, that to deaden is not to calm the mind—Aiming at tranquillity, I have almost destroyed all the energy of my soul—almost rooted out what renders it estimable—Yes, I have damped that enthusiasm of character, which converts the grossest materials into a fuel, that imperceptibly feeds hopes, which aspire above common enjoyment. Despair, since the birth of my child, has rendered me stupid—soul and body seemed to be fading away before the withering touch of disappointment.

I am now endeavouring to recover myself—and such is the elasticity of my constitution, and the purity of the atmosphere here, that health unfought for, begins to reanimate my countenance.

I have the sincerest esteem and affection for you—but the desire of regaining peace, (do you understand me?) has made me forget the respect due to my own emotions—sacred emotions, that are the sure harbingers of the delights I was formed to enjoy—and shall enjoy, for nothing can extinguish the heavenly spark.

Still, when we meet again, I will not torment you, I promise you. I blush when I recollect my former conduct—and will not in future confound myself with the beings whom I feel to be my inferiors.—I will listen to delicacy, or pride.

LETTER LVI

July 4.

I HOPE to hear from you by to-morrow's mail. My dearest friend! I cannot tear my affections from you—and, though every remembrance stings me to the soul, I think of you, till I make allowance for the very defects of character, that have given such a cruel stab to my peace.

Still however I am more alive, than you have seen me for a long, long time. I have a degree of vivacity, even in my grief, which is preferable to the benumbing stupour that, for the last year, has frozen up all my faculties.—Perhaps this change is more owing to returning health, than to the vigour of my reason—for, in spite of sadness (and surely I have had my share), the purity of this air, and the being continually out in it, for I sleep in the country every night, has made an alteration in my appearance that really surprises me.—

The rofy fingers of health already ftreak my cheeks—and I have seen a *phyfical* life in my eyes, after I have been climbing the rocks, that refembled the fond, credulous hopes of youth.

With what a cruel figh have I recollected that I had forgotten to hope!—Reason, or rather experience, does not thus cruelly damp poor ——'s pleasures; fhe plays all day in the garden with ——'s children, and makes friends for herfelf.

Do not tell me, that you are happier without us—Will you not come to us in Switzerland? Ah, why do not you love us with more fentiment?—why are you a creature of fuch fymathy, that the warmth of your feelings, or rather quicknefs of your fenfes, hardens your heart? It is my miffortune, that my imagination is perpetually fhading your defects, and lending you charms, whilst the groffnefs of your fenfes makes you (call me not vain) overlook graces in me, that only dignity of mind, and the fenfibility of an expanded heart can give.—God blefs you! Adieu.

LETTER LVII

July 7.

I COULD not help feeling extremely mortified laft poft, at not receiving a letter from you. My being at —— was but a chance, and you might have hazarded it; and would a year ago.

I fhall not however complain—There are miffortunes fo great, as to filence the ufual expreffions of forrow—Believe me, there is fuch a thing as a broken heart! There are characters whole very energy preys upon them; and who, ever inclined to cherifh by reflection fome paffion, cannot ref tatisfied with the common comforts of life. I have endeavoured to fly from myfelf, and launched into all the diffipation poffible here, only to feel keener anguifh, when alone with my child.

Still, could any thing pleafe me—had not difappointment cut me off from life, this romantic country, thefe fine evenings, would intereft me.—My God! can any thing? and am I ever to feel alive only to painful fenfations?—But it cannot—it fhall not laft long.

The poft is again arrived; I have fent to feek for letters, only to be wounded to the foul by a negative.—My brain feems on fire, I muft go into the air.

* * * *

LETTER LVIII

July 14.

I AM now on my journey to —— . I felt more at leaving my child, than I thought I fhould—and, whilst at night I imagined every infant that I heard the half-formed founds of her voice,—I afked myfelf how I could think of parting with her for ever, of leaving her thus helpiefs?

Poor lamb! It may run very well in a tale, that "God will temper the winds to the fhorn lamb!" but how can I expect that fhe will be fhielded, when my naked bofom has had to brave continually the pitilefs ftorm? Yes; I could add, with poor Lear—What is the war of elements to the pangs of difappointed affection, and the horror arifing from a difcovery of a breach of confidence, that fnaps every focial tie!

All is not right fomewhere!—When you firft knew me, I was not thus loft. I could ftill confide—for I opened my heart to you—of this only comfort you have deprived me, whilft my happinefs, you tell me, was your firft object. Strange want of judgment!

I will not complain; but, from the foundnefs of your underftanding, I am convinced, if you give yourfelf leave to reflect, you will alfo feel, that your conduct to me, fo far from being generous, has not been juft.—I mean not to allude to factitious principles of morality; but to the fimple bafis of all rectitude.—However I did not intend to argue—Your not writing is cruel—and my reafon is perhaps difturbed by conftant wretchednefs.

Poor ——— would fain have accompanied me, out of tendernefs; for my fainting, or rather convulfion, when I landed, and my fudden changes of countenance fince, have alarmed her fo much, that fhe is perpetually afraid of fome accident—But it would have injured the child this warm feafon, as fhe is cutting her teeth.

I hear not of your having written to me at ———. Very well! Act as you pleafe—there is nothing I fear or care for! When I fee whether I can, or cannot obtain the money I am come here about, I will not trouble you with letters to which you do not reply.

LETTER LIX

July 18.

I AM here in ———, feparated from my child—and here I muft remain a month at leaft, or I might as well never have come.

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I have begun ——— which will, I hope, difcharge all my obligations of a pecuniary kind.—I am lowered in my own eyes, on account of my not having done it fooner.

I fhall make no further comments on your filence. God blefs you!

* * * *

LETTER LX

July 30.

I HAVE juſt received two of your letters, dated the 26th and 30th of June; and you muſt have received ſeveral from me, informing you of my detention, and how much I was hurt by your ſilence.

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Write to me then, my friend, and write explicitly. I have ſuffered, God knows, ſince I left you. Ah! you have never felt this kind of ſickneſs of heart!—My mind however is at preſent painfully active, and the ſympathy I feel almoſt riſes to agony. But this is not a ſubject of complaint, it has afforded me pleaſure,—and reflected pleaſure is all I have to hope for—if a ſpark of hope be yet alive in my forlorn boſom.

I will try to write with a degree of compoſure. I wiſh for us to live together, becauſe I want you to acquire an habitual tenderneſs for my poor girl. I cannot bear to think of leaving her alone in the world, or that ſhe ſhould only be protected by your ſenſe of duty. Next to preſerving her, my moſt earneſt wiſh is not to diſturb your peace. I have nothing to expect, and little to fear, in life—There are wounds that can never be healed—but they may be allowed to feſter in ſilence without wincing.

When we meet again, you ſhall be convinced that I have more reſolution than you give me credit for. I will not torment you. If I am deſtined always to be diſappointed and unhappy, I will conceal the anguiſh I cannot diſſipate; and the tightened cord of life or reaſon will at laſt ſnap, and ſet me free.

Yes; I ſhall be happy—This heart is worthy of the bliſs its feelings anticipate—and I cannot even perſuade myſelf, wretched as they have made me, that my principles and ſentiments are not founded in nature and truth. But to have done with theſe ſubjects.

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I have been ſeriouſly employed in this way ſince I came to ———; yet I never was ſo much in the air.—I walk, I ride on horſeback—row, bathe, and even ſleep in the fields; my health is conſequently improved. The child, ——— informs me, is well. I long to be with her.

Write to me immediately—were I only to think of myſelf, I could wiſh you to return to me, poor, with the ſimplicity of character, part of which you ſeem lately to have loſt, that firſt attached to you.

Yours moſt affectionately

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I have been subfcribing other letters—fo I mechanically did the fame to yours.

LETTER LXI

August 5.

EMPLOYMENT and exercife have been of great fervice to me; and I have entirely recovered the ftrength and activity I loft during the time of my nurfing. I have feldom been in better health; and my mind, though trembling to the touch of anguifh, is calmer—yet ftill the fame.—I have, it is true, enjoyed fome tranquillity, and more happinefs here, than for a long—long time paf. —(I fay happinefs, for I can give no other appellation to the exquisite delight this wild country and fine fummer have afforded me.)—Still, on examining my heart, I find that it is fo conftituted, I cannot live without fome particular affection—I am afraid not without a paffion—and I feel the want of it more in fociety, than in folitude—

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Writing to you, whenever an affectionate epithet occurs—my eyes fill with tears, and my trembling hand ftops—you may then depend on my refolution, when with you. If I am doomed to be unhappy, I will confine my anguifh in my own bofom—tendernefs, rather than paffion, has made me fometimes overlook delicacy—the fame tendernefs will in future refrain me. God blefs you!

LETTER LXII

August 7.

AIR, exercife, and bathing, have reftored me to health, braced my mufcles, and covered my ribs, even whilft I have recovered my former activity.—I cannot tell you that my mind is calm, though I have fnatched fome moments of exquisite delight, wandering through the woods, and refting on the rocks.

This ftate of fufpenfe, my friend, is intolerable; we muft determine on fomething—and foon;—we muft meet fhortly, or part for ever. I am fenfible that I acted foolifhly—but I was wretched—when we were together—Expecting too much, I let the pleasure I might have caught, flip from me. I cannot live with you—I ought not—if you form another attachment. But I promife you, mine fhall not be intruded on you. Little reafon have I to expect a fhadow of happinefs, after the cruel difappointments that have rent my heart; but that of my child feems to depend on our being together. Still I do not wifh you to facrifice a chance of enjoyment for an uncertain good. I feel a conviction, that I can provide for her, and it fhall be my object—if we are indeed to part to meet no more. Her affection muft not be divided. She muft be a comfort to me—if I am to have no other—and only know me as her fupport.—I feel that I cannot endure the anguifh of correfponding with you—if we are only to correfpond.—No; if you feek for happinefs elfewhere, my letters fhall not interrupt your repofe. I will be dead to you. I cannot exprefs to you what pain it gives me

to write about an eternal separation.—You must determine—examine yourself—But, for God's sake! spare me the anxiety of uncertainty!—I may sink under the trial; but I will not complain.

Adieu! If I had any thing more to say to you, it is all flown, and absorbed by the most tormenting apprehensions, yet I scarcely know what new form of misery I have to dread.

I ought to beg your pardon for having sometimes written peevishly; but you will impute it to affection, if you understand any thing of the heart of

Yours truly

* * * *

LETTER LXIII

August 9.

FIVE of your letters have been sent after me from ——. One, dated the 14th of July, was written in a style which I may have merited, but did not expect from you. However this is not a time to reply to it, except to assure you that you shall not be tormented with any more complaints. I am disgusted with myself for having so long importuned you with my affection.—

My child is very well. We shall soon meet, to part no more, I hope—I mean, I and my girl.—I shall wait with some degree of anxiety till I am informed how your affairs terminate.

Yours sincerely

* * * *

LETTER LXIV

August 26.

I ARRIVED here last night, and with the most exquisite delight, once more pressed my babe to my heart. We shall part no more. You perhaps cannot conceive the pleasure it gave me, to see her run about, and play alone. Her increasing intelligence attaches me more and more to her. I have promised her that I will fulfil my duty to her; and nothing in future shall make me forget it. I will also exert myself to obtain an independence for her; but I will not be too anxious on this head.

I have already told you, that I have recovered my health. Vigour, and even vivacity of mind, have returned with a renovated constitution. As for peace, we will not talk of it. I was not made, perhaps, to enjoy the calm contentment so termed.—

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You tell me that my letters torture you; I will not describe the effect yours have on me. I received three this morning, the last dated the 7th of this month. I mean not to give vent to the emotions they produced.—Certainly you are right; our minds are not congenial. I have lived in an ideal world, and fostered sentiments that you do not comprehend—or you would not treat me thus. I am not, I will not be, merely an object of compassion—a clog, however light, to teize you. Forget that I exist: I will never remind you. Something emphatical whispers me to put an end to these struggles. Be free—I will not torment, when I cannot please. I can take care of my child; you need not continually tell me that our fortune is inseparable, *that you will try to cherish tendernefs* for me. Do no violence to yourself! When we are separated, our interest, since you give so much weight to pecuniary considerations, will be entirely divided. I want not protection without affection; and support I need not, whilst my faculties are undisturbed. I had a dislike to living in England; but painful feelings must give way to superior considerations. I may not be able to acquire the sum necessary to maintain my child and self elsewhere. It is too late to go to Switzerland. I shall not remain at ——, living expensively. But be not alarmed! I shall not force myself on you any more.

Adieu! I am agitated—my whole frame is convulsed—my lips tremble, as if shook by cold, though fire seems to be circulating in my veins.

God blefs you.

* * * *

LETTER LXV

September 6.

I RECEIVED just now your letter of the 20th. I had written you a letter last night, into which imperceptibly flipt some of my bitternefs of soul. I will copy the part relative to business. I am not sufficiently vain to imagine that I can, for more than a moment, cloud your enjoyment of life—to prevent even that, you had better never hear from me—and repose on the idea that I am happy.

Gracious God! It is impossible for me to stifle something like repentment, when I receive fresh proofs of your indifference. What I have suffered this last year, is not to be forgotten! I have not that happy substitute for wisdom, insensibility—and the lively sympathies which bind me to my fellow-creatures, are all of a painful kind.—They are the agonies of a broken heart—pleasure and I have shaken hands.

I see here nothing but heaps of ruins, and only converse with people immersed in trade and sensuality.

I am weary of travelling—yet seem to have no home—no resting place to look to.—I am strangely cast off.—How often, passing through the rocks, I have thought, "But for this child, I would lay my head on one of them, and never open my eyes again!" With a heart feelingly alive to all the affections of my nature—I have never met with one, softer than the stone that I would fain take for my last pillow. I once thought I had, but it was all a delusion. I meet with families continually, who are bound together by affection or principle—and, when I am conscious that I have fulfilled the duties of my station, almost to a forgetfulness of myself, I am ready to demand, in a murmuring tone, of Heaven, "Why am I thus abandoned?"

You lay now — — —
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I do not understand you. It is necessary for you to write more explicitly—and determine on some mode of conduct.—I cannot endure this suspense—Decide—Do you fear to strike another blow? We live together, or eternally part!—I shall not write to you again, till I receive an answer to this. I must compose my tortured soul, before I write on indifferent subjects. — —

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I do not know whether I write intelligibly, for my head is disturbed.—But this you ought to pardon—for it is with difficulty frequently that I make out what you mean to say—You write, I suppose, at Mr. ——'s after dinner, when your head is not the clearest—and as for your heart, if you have one, I see nothing like the dictates of affection, unless a glimpse when you mention, the child.—Adieu!

LETTER LXVI

September 25.

I HAVE just finished a letter, to be given in charge to captain ——-. In that I complained of your silence, and expressed my surprise that three mails should have arrived without bringing a line for me. Since I closed it, I hear of another, and still no letter.—I am labouring to write calmly—this silence is a refinement on cruelty. Had captain ——- remained a few days longer, I would have returned with him to England. What have I to do here? I have repeatedly written to you fully. Do you do the same—and quickly. Do not leave me in suspense. I have not deserved this of you. I cannot write, my mind is so distressed. Adieu!

* * * *

END VOL. III.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[4-A\]](#) The child is in a subsequent letter called the "barrier girl," probably from a supposition that she owed her existence to this interview.

EDITOR.

[\[7-A\]](#) This and the thirteen following letters appear to have been written during a separation of several months; the date, Paris.

[\[27-A\]](#) Some further letters, written during the remainder of the week, in a similar strain to the preceding, appear to have been destroyed by the person to whom they were addressed.

[\[47-A\]](#) The child spoken of in some preceding letters, had now been born a considerable time.

[\[50-A\]](#) She means, "the latter more than the former."

EDITOR.

[\[58-A\]](#) This is the first of a series of letters written during a separation of many months, to which no cordial meeting ever succeeded. They were sent from Paris, and bear the address of London.

[\[91-A\]](#) The person to whom the letters are addressed, was about this time at Ramsgate, on his return, as he professed, to Paris, when he was recalled, as it should seem, to London, by the further pressure of business now accumulated upon him.

[\[100-A\]](#) This probably alludes to some expression of the person to whom the letters are addressed, in which he treated as common evils, things upon which the letter writer was disposed to bestow a different appellation.

EDITOR.

[\[133-A\]](#) This passage refers to letters written under a purpose of suicide, and not intended to be opened till after the catastrophe.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



VOL. II.



ERRATA.

Page 10, line 8, *for* I write you, *read* I write to you.

—— 20, — 9, *read* bring them to ——.

—— 146, — 2 from the bottom, after over, insert a comma.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Letters	1
Letter on the Present Character of the French Nation	39
Fragment of Letters on the Management of Infants	55
Letters to Mr. Johnson	61
Extract of the Cave of Fancy, a Tale	99
On Poetry and our Relish for the Beauties of Nature	159
Hints	179

LETTERS.

LETTER LXVII

September 27.

WHEN you receive this, I shall either have landed, or be hovering on the British coast—your letter of the 18th decided me.

By what criterion of principle or affection, you term my questions extraordinary and unnecessary, I cannot determine.—You desire me to decide—I had decided. You must have had long ago two letters of mine, from ———, to the same purport, to consider.—In these, God knows! there was but too much affection, and the agonies of a distracted mind were but too faithfully portrayed!—What more then had I to say?—The negative was to come from you.—You had perpetually recurred to your promise of meeting me in the autumn—Was it extraordinary that I should demand a yes, or no?—Your letter is written with extreme harshness, coldness I am accustomed to, in it I find not a trace of the tenderness of humanity, much less of friendship.—I only see a desire to heave a load off your shoulders.

I am above disputing about words.—It matters not in what terms you decide.

The tremendous power who formed this heart, must have foreseen that, in a world in which self-interest, in various shapes, is the principal mobile, I had little chance of escaping misery.—To the fiat of fate I submit.—I am content to be wretched; but I will not be contemptible.—Of me you have no cause to complain, but for having had too much regard for you—for having expected a degree of permanent happiness, when you only sought for a momentary gratification.

I am strangely deficient in sagacity.—Uniting myself to you, your tenderness seemed to make me amends for all my former misfortunes.—On this tenderness and affection with what confidence did I rest!—but I leaned on a spear, that has pierced me to the heart.—You have thrown off a faithful friend, to pursue the caprices of the moment.—We certainly are differently organized; for even now, when conviction has been stamped on my soul by sorrow, I can scarcely believe it possible. It depends at present on you, whether you will see me or not.—I shall take no step, till I see or hear from you.

Preparing myself for the worst—I have determined, if your next letter be like the last, to write to Mr. ——— to procure me an obscure lodging, and not to inform any body of my arrival.—There I will endeavour in a few months to obtain the sum necessary to take me to France—from you I will not receive any more.—I am not yet sufficiently humbled to depend on your beneficence.

Some people, whom my unhappiness has interested, though they know not the extent of it, will assist me to attain the object I have in view, the independence of my child. Should a peace take place, ready money will go a great way in France—and I will borrow a sum, which my industry *shall* enable me to pay at my leisure, to purchase a small estate for my girl.—The assistance I shall find necessary to complete her education, I can get at an easy rate at Paris—I can introduce her to such society as she will like—and thus, securing for her all the chance for happiness, which depends on me, I shall die in peace, persuaded that the felicity which has hitherto cheated my expectation, will not always elude my grasp. No poor

tempest-tossed mariner ever more earnestly longed to arrive at his port.

* * * *

I shall not come up in the vessel all the way, because I have no place to go to. Captain —— will inform you where I am. It is needless to add, that I am not in a state of mind to bear suspense—and that I wish to see you, though it be for the last time.

LETTER LXVIII

Sunday, October 4.

I WROTE to you by the packet, to inform you, that your letter of the 18th of last month, had determined me to set out with captain ——; but, as we sailed very quick, I take it for granted, that you have not yet received it.

You say, I must decide for myself.—I had decided, that it was most for the interest of my little girl, and for my own comfort, little as I expect, for us to live together; and I even thought that you would be glad, some years hence, when the tumult of business was over, to repose in the society of an affectionate friend, and mark the progress of our interesting child, whilst endeavouring to be of use in the circle you at last resolved to rest in; for you cannot run about for ever.

From the tenour of your last letter however, I am led to imagine, that you have formed some new attachment.—If it be so, let me earnestly request you to see me once more, and immediately. This is the only proof I require of the friendship you profess for me. I will then decide, since you boggle about a mere form.

I am labouring to write with calmness—but the extreme anguish I feel, at landing without having any friend to receive me, and even to be conscious that the friend whom I most wish to see, will feel a disagreeable sensation at being informed of my arrival, does not come under the description of common misery. Every emotion yields to an overwhelming flood of sorrow—and the playfulness of my child distresses me.—On her account, I wished to remain a few days here, comfortless as is my situation.—Besides, I did not wish to surprise you. You have told me, that you would make any sacrifice to promote my happiness—and, even in your last unkind letter, you talk of the ties which bind you to me and my child.—Tell me, that you wish it, and I will cut this Gordian knot.

I now most earnestly intreat you to write to me, without fail, by the return of the post. Direct your letter to be left at the post-office, and tell me whether you will come to me here, or where you will meet me. I can receive your letter on Wednesday morning.

Do not keep me in suspense.—I expect nothing from you, or any human being: my die is cast!—I have fortitude enough to determine to do my duty; yet I cannot raise my depressed spirits, or calm my trembling heart.—That being who moulded it thus, knows that I am unable to tear up by the roots the propensity to affection which has been the torment of my life—but life will have an end!

Should you come here (a few months ago I could not have doubted it) you will find me at —— . If you prefer meeting me on the road, tell me where.

Yours affectionately

LETTER LXIX

I WRITE you now on my knees; imploring you to send my child and the maid with ——, to Paris, to be consigned to the care of Madame ——, rue ——, section de ——. Should they be removed, —— can give their direction.

Let the maid have all my clothes, without distinction.

Pray pay the cook her wages, and do not mention the confession which I forced from her—a little sooner or later is of no consequence. Nothing but my extreme stupidity could have rendered me blind so long. Yet, whilst you assured me that you had no attachment, I thought we might still have lived together.

I shall make no comments on your conduct; or any appeal to the world. Let my wrongs sleep with me! Soon, very soon shall I be at peace. When you receive this, my burning head will be cold.

I would encounter a thousand deaths, rather than a night like the last. Your treatment has thrown my mind into a state of chaos; yet I am serene. I go to find comfort, and my only fear is, that my poor body will be insulted by an endeavour to recal my hated existence. But I shall plunge into the Thames where there is the least chance of my being snatched from the death I seek.

God bless you! May you never know by experience what you have made me endure. Should your sensibility ever awake, remorse will find its way to your heart; and, in the midst of business and sensual pleasure, I shall appear before you, the victim of your deviation from rectitude.

* * * *

LETTER LXX

Sunday Morning.

I HAVE only to lament, that, when the bitterness of death was past, I was inhumanly brought back to life and misery. But a fixed determination is not to be baffled by disappointment; nor will I allow that to be a frantic attempt, which was one of the calmest acts of reason. In this respect, I am only accountable to myself. Did I care for what is termed reputation, it is by other circumstances that I should be dishonoured.

You say, "that you know not how to extricate ourselves out of the wretchedness into which we have been plunged." You are extricated long since.—But I forbear to comment.—If I am condemned to live longer, it is a living death.

It appears to me, that you lay much more stress on delicacy, than on principle; for I am unable to discover what sentiment of delicacy would have been violated, by your visiting a wretched friend—if indeed you have any friendship for me.—But since your new attachment is the only thing sacred in your eyes, I am silent—Be happy! My complaints shall never more damp your enjoyment—perhaps I am mistaken in supposing that even my death could, for more than a moment.—This is what you call magnanimity—It is happy for yourself, that you possess this quality in the highest degree.

Your continually asserting, that you will do all in your power to contribute to my comfort (when you only allude to pecuniary assistance), appears to me a flagrant breach of delicacy.—I want not such vulgar comfort, nor will I accept it. I never wanted but your heart—That gone, you have nothing more to give. Had I only poverty to fear, I should not shrink from life.—Forgive me then, if I say, that I shall consider any direct or indirect attempt to supply my necessities, as an insult which I have not merited—and as rather done out of tenderness for your own reputation, than for me. Do not mistake me; I do not think that you value money (therefore I will not accept what you do not care for) though I do much less, because certain privations are not painful to me. When I am dead, respect for yourself will make you take care of the child.

I write with difficulty—probably I shall never write to you again.—Adieu!
God bless you!

* * * *



LETTER LXXI

Monday Morning.

I AM compelled at last to say that you treat me ungenerously. I agree with you, that

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But let the obliquity now fall on me.—I fear neither poverty nor infamy. I am unequal to the task of writing—and explanations are not necessary.

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My child may have to blush for her mother's want of prudence—and may lament that the rectitude of my heart made me above vulgar precautions; but she shall not despise me for meanness.—You are now

perfectly free.—God bless you.

* * * *

LETTER LXXIII

Saturday Night.

I HAVE been hurt by indirect enquiries, which appear to me not to be dictated by any tenderness to me.—You ask "If I am well or tranquil?"—They who think me so, must want a heart to estimate my feelings by.—I chuse then to be the organ of my own sentiments.

I must tell you, that I am very much mortified by your continually offering me pecuniary assistance—and, considering your going to the new house, as an open avowal that you abandon me, let me tell you that I will sooner perish than receive any thing from you—and I say this at the moment when I am disappointed in my first attempt to obtain a temporary supply. But this even pleases me; an accumulation of disappointments and misfortunes seems to suit the habit of my mind.—

Have but a little patience, and I will remove myself where it will not be necessary for you to talk—of course, not to think of me. But let me see, written by yourself—for I will not receive it through any other medium—that the affair is finished.—It is an insult to me to suppose, that I can be reconciled, or recover my spirits; but, if you hear nothing of me, it will be the same thing to you.

* * * *

Even your seeing me, has been to oblige other people, and not to sooth my distracted mind.

LETTER LXXIV

Thursday Afternoon.

MR. ——— having forgot to desire you to send the things of mine which were left at the house, I have to request you to let ——— bring them onto ———.

I shall go this evening to the lodging; so you need not be restrained from coming here to transact your business.—And, whatever I may think, and feel—you need not fear that I shall publicly complain—No! If I have any criterion to judge of right and wrong, I have been most ungenerously treated: but, wishing now only to hide myself, I shall be silent as the grave in which I long to forget myself. I shall protect and provide for my child.—I only mean by this to say, that you having nothing to fear from my desperation.

Farewel.

* * * *

LETTER LXXV

London, November 27.

THE letter, without an address, which you put up with the letters you returned, did not meet my eyes till just now.—I had thrown the letters aside—I did not wish to look over a register of sorrow.

My not having seen it, will account for my having written to you with anger—under the impression your departure, without even a line left for me, made on me, even after your late conduct, which could not lead me to expect much attention to my sufferings.

In fact, "the decided conduct, which appeared to me so unfeeling," has almost overturned my reason; my mind is injured—I scarcely know where I am, or what I do.—The grief I cannot conquer (for some cruel recollections never quit me, banishing almost every other) I labour to conceal in total solitude.—My life therefore is but an exercise of fortitude, continually on the stretch—and hope never gleams in this tomb, where I am buried alive.

But I meant to reason with you, and not to complain.—You tell me, "that I shall judge more coolly of your mode of acting, some time hence." But is it not possible that *passion* clouds your reason, as much as it does mine?—and ought you not to doubt, whether those principles are so "exalted," as you term them, which only lead to your own gratification? In other words, whether it be just to have no principle of action, but that of following your inclination, trampling on the affection you have fostered, and the expectations you have excited?

My affection for you is rooted in my heart.—I know you are not what you now seem—nor will you always act, or feel, as you now do, though I may never be comforted by the change.—Even at Paris, my image will haunt you.—You will see my pale face—and sometimes the tears of anguish will drop on your heart, which you have forced from mine.

I cannot write. I thought I could quickly have refuted all your *ingenious* arguments; but my head is confused.—Right or wrong, I am miserable!

It seems to me, that my conduct has always been governed by the strictest principles of justice and truth.—Yet, how wretched have my social feelings, and delicacy of sentiment rendered me!—I have loved with my whole soul, only to discover that I had no chance of a return—and that existence is a burthen without it.

I do not perfectly understand you.—If, by the offer of your friendship, you still only mean pecuniary support—I must again reject it.—Trifling are the ills of poverty in the scale of my misfortunes.—God bless you!

* * * *

I have been treated ungenerously—if I understand what is generosity.—You seem to me only to have been anxious to shake me off—regardless whether you dashed me to atoms by the fall.—In truth I have been rudely handled. *Do you judge coolly*, and I trust you will not continue to call those capricious feelings "the most refined," which would undermine not only the most sacred principles, but the affections which unite mankind.—You would render mothers unnatural—and there would be no such thing as a father!—If your theory of morals is the most "exalted," it is certainly the most easy.—It does not require much magnanimity, to determine to please ourselves for the moment, let others suffer what they will!

Excuse me for again tormenting you, my heart thirsts for justice from you—and whilst I recollect that you approved Miss ——'s conduct—I am convinced you will not always justify your own.

Beware of the deceptions of passion! It will not always banish from your mind, that you have acted

ignobly—and condescended to subterfuge to gloss over the conduct you could not excuse.—Do truth and principle require such sacrifices?

LETTER LXXVI

London, December 8.

HAVING just been informed that —— is to return immediately to Paris, I would not miss a sure opportunity of writing, because I am not certain that my last, by Dover has reached you.

Resentment, and even anger, are momentary emotions with me—and I wished to tell you so, that if you ever think of me, it may not be in the light of an enemy.

That I have not been used *well* I must ever feel; perhaps, not always with the keen anguish I do at present—for I began even now to write calmly, and I cannot restrain my tears.

I am stunned!—Your late conduct still appears to me a frightful dream.—Ah! ask yourself if you have not condescended to employ a little address, I could almost say cunning, unworthy of you?—Principles are sacred things—and we never play with truth, with impunity.

The expectation (I have too fondly nourished it) of regaining your affection, every day grows fainter and fainter.—Indeed, it seems to me, when I am more sad than usual, that I shall never see you more.—Yet you will not always forget me.—You will feel something like remorse, for having lived only for yourself—and sacrificed my peace to inferior gratifications. In a comfortless old age, you will remember that you had one disinterested friend, whose heart you wounded to the quick. The hour of recollection will come—and you will not be satisfied to act the part of a boy, till you fall into that of a dotard. I know that your mind, your heart, and your principles of action, are all superior to your present conduct. You do, you must, respect me—and you will be sorry to forfeit my esteem.

You know best whether I am still preserving the remembrance of an imaginary being.—I once thought that I knew you thoroughly—but now I am obliged to leave some doubts that involuntarily press on me, to be cleared up by time.

You may render me unhappy; but cannot make me contemptible in my own eyes.—I shall still be able to support my child, though I am disappointed in some other plans of usefulness, which I once believed would have afforded you equal pleasure.

Whilst I was with you, I restrained my natural generosity, because I thought your property in jeopardy.—When I went to ——, I requested you, *if you could conveniently*, not to forget my father, sisters, and some other people, whom I was interested about.—Money was lavished away, yet not only my requests were neglected, but some trifling debts were not discharged, that now come on me.—Was this friendship—or generosity? Will you not grant you have forgotten yourself? Still I have an affection for you.—God bless you.

* * * *

LETTER LXXVII

As the parting from you for ever is the most serious event of my life, I will once expostulate with you, and call not the language of truth and feeling ingenuity!

I know the soundness of your understanding—and know that it is impossible for you always to confound the caprices of every wayward inclination with the manly dictates of principle.

You tell me "that I torment you."—Why do I?—Because you cannot estrange your heart entirely from me—and you feel that justice is on my side. You urge, "that your conduct was unequivocal."—It was not.—When your coolness has hurt me, with what tenderness have you endeavoured to remove the impression!—and even before I returned to England, you took great pains to convince me, that all my uneasiness was occasioned by the effect of a worn-out constitution—and you concluded your letter with these words, "Business alone has kept me from you.—Come to any port, and I will fly down to my two dear girls with a heart all their own."

With these assurances, is it extraordinary that I should believe what I wished? I might—and did think that you had a struggle with old propensities; but I still thought that I and virtue should at last prevail. I still thought that you had a magnanimity of character, which would enable you to conquer yourself.

———, believe me, it is not romance, you have acknowledged to me feelings of this kind.—You could restore me to life and hope, and the satisfaction you would feel, would amply repay you.

In tearing myself from you, it is my own heart I pierce—and the time will come, when you will lament that you have thrown away a heart, that, even in the moment of passion, you cannot despise.—I would owe every thing to your generosity—but, for God's sake, keep me no longer in suspense!—Let me see you once more!—

LETTER LXXVIII

You must do as you please with respect to the child.—I could wish that it might be done soon, that my name may be no more mentioned to you. It is now finished.—Convinced that you have neither regard nor friendship, I disdain to utter a reproach, though I have had reason to think, that the "forbearance" talked of, has not been very delicate.—It is however of no consequence.—I am glad you are satisfied with your own conduct.

I now solemnly assure you, that this is an eternal farewell.—Yet I flinch not from the duties which tie me to life.

That there is "sophistry" on one side or other, is certain; but now it matters not on which. On my part it has not been a question of words. Yet your understanding or mine must be strangely warped—for what you term "delicacy," appears to me to be exactly the contrary. I have no criterion for morality, and have thought in vain, if the sensations which lead you to follow an angle or step, be the sacred foundation of principle and affection. Mine has been of a very different nature, or it would not have stood the brunt of your sarcasms.

The sentiment in me is still sacred. If there be any part of me that will survive the sense of my misfortunes, it is the purity of my affections. The impetuosity of your senses, may have led you to term mere animal desire, the source of principle; and it may give zest to some years to come.—Whether you will always think so, I shall never know.

It is strange that, in spite of all you do, something like conviction forces me to believe, that you are not what you appear to be.

I part with you in peace.

LETTER

ON THE

PRESENT CHARACTER
OF THE

FRENCH NATION.

LETTER

Introductory to a Series of Letters on the Present Character of the French Nation.

Paris, February 15, 1793.

My dear friend,

It is necessary perhaps for an observer of mankind, to guard as carefully the remembrance of the first impression made by a nation, as by a countenance; because we imperceptibly lose sight of the national character, when we become more intimate with individuals. It is not then useless or presumptuous to note, that, when I first entered Paris, the striking contrast of riches and poverty, elegance and slovenliness, urbanity and deceit, every where caught my eye, and saddened my soul; and these impressions are still the foundation of my remarks on the manners, which flatter the senses, more than they interest the heart, and yet excite more interest than esteem.

The whole mode of life here tends indeed to render the people frivolous, and, to borrow their favourite epithet, amiable. Ever on the wing, they are always sipping the sparkling joy on the brim of the cup, leaving satiety in the bottom for those who venture to drink deep. On all sides they trip along, buoyed up by animal spirits, and seemingly so void of care, that often, when I am walking on the *Boulevards*, it occurs to me, that they alone understand the full import of the term leisure; and they trifle their time away with such an air of contentment, I know not how to wish them wiser at the expence of their gaiety. They play before me like motes in a sunbeam, enjoying the passing ray; whilst an English head, searching for more solid happiness, loses, in the analysis of pleasure, the volatile sweets of the moment. Their chief enjoyment, it is true, rises from vanity: but it is not the vanity that engenders vexation of spirit; on the contrary, it lightens the heavy burthen of life, which reason too often weighs, merely to shift from one shoulder to the other.

Investigating the modification of the passion, as I would analyze the elements that give a form to dead matter, I shall attempt to trace to their source the causes which have combined to render this nation the most polished, in a physical sense, and probably the most superficial in the world; and I mean to follow the windings of the various streams that disembody into a terrific gulf, in which all the dignity of our nature is absorbed. For every thing has conspired to make the French the most sensual people in the world; and what can render the heart so hard, or so effectually stifle every moral emotion, as the refinements of sensuality?

The frequent repetition of the word French, appears invidious; let me then make a previous observation, which I beg you not to lose sight of, when I speak rather harshly of a land flowing with milk and honey.

Remember that it is not the morals of a particular people that I would decry; for are we not all of the same stock? But I wish calmly to consider the stage of civilization in which I find the French, and, giving a sketch of their character, and unfolding the circumstances which have produced its identity, I shall endeavour to throw some light on the history of man, and on the present important subjects of discussion.

I would I could first inform you that, out of the chaos of vices and follies, prejudices and virtues, rudely jumbled together, I saw the fair form of Liberty slowly rising, and Virtue expanding her wings to shelter all her children! I should then hear the account of the barbarities that have rent the bosom of France patiently, and bless the firm hand that lopt off the rotten limbs. But, if the aristocracy of birth is levelled with the ground, only to make room for that of riches, I am afraid that the morals of the people will not be much improved by the change, or the government rendered less venal. Still it is not just to dwell on the misery produced by the present struggle, without adverting to the standing evils of the old system. I am grieved—sorely grieved—when I think of the blood that has stained the cause of freedom at Paris; but I also hear the same live stream cry aloud from the highways, through which the retreating armies passed with famine and death in their rear, and I hide my face with awe before the inscrutable ways of providence, sweeping in such various directions the besom of destruction over the sons of men.

Before I came to France, I cherished, you know, an opinion, that strong virtues might exist with the polished manners produced by the progress of civilization; and I even anticipated the epoch, when, in the course of improvement, men would labour to become virtuous, without being goaded on by misery. But now, the perspective of the golden age, fading before the attentive eye of observation, almost eludes my sight; and, losing thus in part my theory of a more perfect state, start not, my friend, if I bring forward an opinion, which at the first glance seems to be levelled against the existence of God! I am not become an Atheist, I assure you, by residing at Paris: yet I begin to fear that vice, or, if you will, evil, is the grand mobile of action, and that, when the passions are justly poised, we become harmless, and in the same proportion useless.

The wants of reason are very few; and, were we to consider dispassionately the real value of most things, we should probably rest satisfied with the simple gratification of our physical necessities, and be content with negative goodness: for it is frequently, only that wanton, the Imagination, with her artful coquetry, who lures us forward, and makes us run over a rough road, pushing aside every obstacle merely to catch a disappointment.

The desire also of being useful to others, is continually damped by experience; and, if the exertions of humanity were not in some measure their own reward, who would endure misery, or struggle with care, to make some people ungrateful, and others idle?

You will call these melancholy effusions, and guess that, fatigued by the vivacity, which has all the bustling folly of childhood, without the innocence which renders ignorance charming, I am too severe in my strictures. It may be so; and I am aware that the good effects of the revolution will be last felt at Paris; where surely the soul of Epicurus has long been at work to root out the simple emotions of the heart, which, being natural, are always moral. Rendered cold and artificial by the selfish enjoyments of the senses, which the government fostered, is it surprising that simplicity of manners, and singleness of heart, rarely appear, to recreate me with the wild odour of nature, so passing sweet?

Seeing how deep the fibres of mischief have shot, I sometimes ask, with a doubting accent, Whether a nation can go back to the purity of manners which has hitherto been maintained unsullied only by the keen air of poverty, when, emasculated by pleasure, the luxuries of prosperity are become the wants of nature? I cannot yet give up the hope, that a fairer day is dawning on Europe, though I must hesitatingly observe,

that little is to be expected from the narrow principle of commerce which seems every where to be shoving aside *the point of honour* of the *noblesse*. I can look beyond the evils of the moment, and do not expect muddied water to become clear before it has had time to stand; yet, even for the moment, it is the most terrific of all sights, to see men vicious without warmth—to see the order that should be the superscription of virtue, cultivated to give security to crimes which only thoughtlessness could palliate. Disorder is, in fact, the very essence of vice, though with the wild wishes of a corrupt fancy humane emotions often kindly mix to soften their atrocity. Thus humanity, generosity, and even self-denial, sometimes render a character grand, and even useful, when hurried away by lawless passions; but what can equal the turpitude of a cold calculator who lives for himself alone, and considering his fellow-creatures merely as machines of pleasure, never forgets that honesty is the best policy? Keeping ever within the pale of the law, he crushes his thousands with impunity; but it is with that degree of management, which makes him, to borrow a significant vulgarism, a villain *in grain*. The very excess of his depravation preserves him, whilst the more respectable beast of prey, who prowls about like the lion, and roars to announce his approach, falls into a snare.

You may think it too soon to form an opinion of the future government, yet it is impossible to avoid hazarding some conjectures, when every thing whispers me, that names, not principles, are changed, and when I see that the turn of the tide has left the dregs of the old system to corrupt the new. For the same pride of office, the same desire of power are still visible; with this aggravation, that, fearing to return to obscurity after having but just acquired a relish for distinction, each hero, or philosopher, for all are dubbed with these new titles, endeavours to make hay while the sun shines; and every petty municipal officer, become the idol, or rather the tyrant of the day, stalks like a cock on a dunghil.

I shall now conclude this desultory letter; which however will enable you to foresee that I shall treat more of morals than manners.

Yours —————

FRAGMENT

OF

LETTERS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

CONTENTS.

Introductory Letter.

LETTER II. Management of the Mother during pregnancy: bathing.

LETTER III. Lying-in.

LETTER IV. The first month: diet: clothing.

LETTER V. The three following months.

LETTER VI. The remainder of the first year.

LETTER VII. The second year, &c: conclusion.

LETTERS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

LETTER I

I OUGHT to apologize for not having written to you on the subject you mentioned; but, to tell you the truth, it grew upon me: and, instead of an answer, I have begun a series of letters on the management of children in their infancy. Replying then to your question, I have the public in my thoughts, and shall endeavour to show what modes appear to me necessary, to render the infancy of children more healthy and happy. I have long thought, that the cause which renders children as hard to rear as the most fragile plant, is our deviation from simplicity. I know that some able physicians have recommended the method I have pursued, and I mean to point out the good effects I have observed in practice. I am aware that many matrons will exclaim against me, and dwell on the number of children they have brought up, as their mothers did before them, without troubling themselves with new-fangled notions; yet, though, in my uncle Toby's words, they should attempt to silence me, by "wishing I had seen their large" families, I must suppose, while a third part of the human species, according to the most accurate calculation, die during their infancy, just at the threshold of life, that there is some error in the modes adopted by mothers and nurses, which counteracts their own endeavours. I may be mistaken in some particulars; for general rules, founded on the soundest reason, demand individual modification; but, if I can persuade any of the rising generation to exercise their reason on this head, I am content. My advice will probably be found most useful to mothers in the middle class; and it is from them that the lower imperceptibly gains improvement. Custom, produced by reason in one, may safely be the effect of imitation in the other.

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LETTERS

TO

Mr. JOHNSON,
BOOKSELLER,
IN
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

LETTERS

TO

Mr. JOHNSON.

LETTER I

Dublin, April 14, [1787.]

Dear sir,

I AM still an invalid—and begin to believe that I ought never to expect to enjoy health. My mind preys on my body—and, when I endeavour to be useful, I grow too much interested for my own peace. Confined almost entirely to the society of children, I am anxiously solicitous for their future welfare, and mortified beyond measure, when counteracted in my endeavours to improve them.—I feel all a mother's fears for the swarm of little ones which surround me, and observe disorders, without having power to apply the proper remedies. How can I be reconciled to life, when it is always a painful warfare, and when I am deprived of all the pleasures I relish?—I allude to rational conversations, and domestic affections. Here, alone, a poor solitary individual in a strange land, tied to one spot, and subject to the caprice of another, can I be contented? I am desirous to convince you that I have *some* cause for sorrow—and am not without reason detached from life. I shall hope to hear that you are well, and am yours sincerely

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER II

Henley, Thursday, Sept 13.

My dear sir,

SINCE I saw you, I have, literally speaking, *enjoyed* solitude. My sister could not accompany me in my rambles; I therefore wandered alone, by the side of the Thames, and in the neighbouring beautiful fields and pleasure grounds: the prospects were of such a placid kind, I *caught* tranquillity while I surveyed them—my mind was *still*, though active. Were I to give you an account how I have spent my time, you would smile.—I found an old French bible here, and amused myself with comparing it with our English translation; then I would listen to the falling leaves, or observe the various tints the autumn gave to them—At other times, the singing of a robin, or the noise of a water-mill, engaged my attention—partial attention—, for I was, at the same time perhaps discussing some knotty point, or straying from this *tiny* world to new systems. After these excursions, I returned to the family meals, told the children stories (they think me *vastly* agreeable), and my sister was amused.—Well, will you allow me to call this way of passing my days pleasant?

I was just going to mend my pen; but I believe it will enable me to say all I have to add to this epistle. Have you yet heard of an habitation for me? I often think of my new plan of life; and, lest my sister should try to prevail on me to alter it, I have avoided mentioning it to her. I am determined!—Your sex generally laugh at female determinations; but let me tell you, I never yet resolved to do, any thing of consequence, that I did not adhere resolutely to it, till I had accomplished my purpose, improbable as it might have

appeared to a more timid mind. In the course of near nine-and-twenty years, I have gathered some experience, and felt many *severe* disappointments—and what is the amount? I long for a little peace and *independence*! Every obligation we receive from our fellow-creatures is a new shackle, takes from our native freedom, and debases the mind, makes us mere earthworms—I am not fond of grovelling!

I am, sir, yours, &c.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER III

Market Harborough, Sept. 20.

My dear sir,

YOU left me with three opulent tradesmen; their conversation was not calculated to beguile the way, when the sable curtain concealed the beauties of nature. I listened to the tricks of trade—and shrunk away, without wishing to grow rich; even the novelty of the subjects did not render them pleasing; fond as I am of tracing the passions in all their different forms—I was not surprised by any glimpse of the sublime, or beautiful—though one of them imagined I would be a useful partner in a good *firm*. I was very much fatigued, and have scarcely recovered myself. I do not expect to enjoy the same tranquil pleasures Henley afforded: I meet with new objects to employ my mind; but many painful emotions are complicated with the reflections they give rise to.

I do not intend to enter on the *old* topic, yet hope to hear from you—and am yours, &c.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER IV

Friday Night.

My dear sir,

THOUGH your remarks are generally judicious—I cannot *now* concur with you, I mean with respect to the preface^[67-A], and have not altered it. I hate the usual smooth way of exhibiting proud humility. A general rule *only* extends to the majority—and, believe me, the few judicious parents who may peruse my book, will not feel themselves hurt—and the weak are too vain to mind what is said in a book intended for children.

I return you the Italian MS.—but do not hastily imagine that I am indolent. I would not spare any labour to do my duty—and, after the most laborious day, that single thought would solace me more than any pleasures the senses could enjoy. I find I could not translate the MS. well. If it was not a MS, I should not be so easily intimidated; but the hand, and errors in orthography, or abbreviations, are a stumbling-block at the first setting out.—I cannot bear to do any thing I cannot do well—and I should lose time in the vain attempt.

I had, the other day, the satisfaction of again receiving a letter from my poor, dear Margaret^[69-A].—With all a mother's fondness I could transcribe a part of it—She says, every day her affection to me, and

dependence on heaven increase, &c.—I miss her innocent caresses—and sometimes indulge a pleasing hope, that she may be allowed to cheer my childless age—if I am to live to be old.—At any rate, I may hear of the virtues I may not contemplate—and my reason may permit me to love a female.—I now allude to ———. I have received another letter from her, and her childish complaints vex me—indeed they do—As usual, good-night.

MARY.

If parents attended to their children, I would not have written the stories; for, what are books—compared to conversations which affection inforces!—

LETTER V

My dear sir,

REMEMBER you are to settle *my account*, as I want to know how much I am in your debt—but do not suppose that I feel any uneasiness on that score. The generality of people in trade would not be much obliged to me for a like civility, *but you were a man* before you were a bookseller—so I am your sincere friend,

MARY.

LETTER VI

Friday Morning.

I AM sick with vexation—and wish I could knock my foolish head against the wall, that bodily pain might make me feel less anguish from self-reproach! To say the truth, I was never more displeased with myself, and I will tell you the cause.—You may recollect that I did not mention to you the circumstance of ——— having a fortune left to him; nor did a hint of it drop from me when I conversed with my sister; because I knew he had a sufficient motive for concealing it. Last Sunday, when his character was aspersed, as I thought, unjustly, in the heat of vindication I informed ***** that he was now independent; but, at the same time, desired him not to repeat my information to B——; yet, last Tuesday, he told him all—and the boy at B——'s gave Mrs. ——— an account of it. As Mr. ——— knew he had only made a confidant of me (I blush to think of it!) he guessed the channel of intelligence, and this morning came (not to reproach me, I wish he had!) but to point out the injury I have done him.—Let what will be the consequence, I will reimburse him, if I deny myself the necessaries of life—and even then my folly will sting me.—Perhaps you can scarcely conceive the misery I at this moment endure—that I, whose power of doing good is so limited, should do harm, galls my very soul. ***** may laugh at these qualms—but, supposing Mr. ——— to be unworthy, I am not the less to blame. Surely it is hell to despise one's self!—I did not want this additional vexation—at this time I have many that hang heavily on my spirits. I shall not call on you this month—nor stir out.—My stomach has been so suddenly and violently affected, I am unable to lean over the desk.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER VII

As I am become a reviewer, I think it right, in the way of business, to consider the subject. You have alarmed the editor of the *Critical*, as the advertisement prefixed to the Appendix plainly shows. The *Critical* appears to me to be a timid, mean production, and its success is a reflection on the taste and judgment of the public; but, as a body, who ever gave it credit for much? The voice of the people is only the voice of truth, when some man of abilities has had time to get fast hold of the GREAT NOSE of the monster. Of course, local fame is generally a clamour, and dies away. The Appendix to the Monthly afforded me more amusement, though every article almost wants energy and a *cant* of virtue and liberality is strewed over it; always tame, and eager to pay court to established fame. The account of Necker is one unvaried tone of admiration. Surely men were born only to provide for the sustenance of the body by enfeebling the mind!

MARY.

LETTER VIII

YOU made me very low-spirited last night, by your manner of talking.—You are my only friend—the only person I am *intimate* with.—I never had a father, or a brother—you have been both to me, ever since I knew you—yet I have sometimes been very petulant.—I have been thinking of those instances of ill-humour and quickness, and they appeared like crimes.

Yours sincerely

MARY.

LETTER IX

Saturday Night.

I AM a mere animal, and instinctive emotions too often silence the suggestions of reason. Your note—I can scarcely tell why, hurt me—and produced a kind of winterly smile, which diffuses a beam of despondent tranquillity over the features. I have been very ill—Heaven knows it was more than fancy—After some sleepless, wearisome nights, towards the morning I have grown delirious.—Last Thursday, in particular, I imagined —— was thrown into great distress by his folly; and I, unable to assist him, was in an agony. My nerves were in such a painful state of irritation—I suffered more than I can express—Society was necessary—and might have diverted me till I gained more strength; but I blushed when I recollected how often I had teased you with childish complaints, and the reveries of a disordered imagination. I even *imagined* that I intruded on you, because you never called on me—though you perceived that I was not well.—I have nourished a sickly kind of delicacy, which gives me many unnecessary pangs.—I acknowledge that life is but a jest—and often a frightful dream—yet catch myself every day searching for something serious—and feel real misery from the disappointment. I am a strange compound of weakness and resolution! However, if I must suffer, I will endeavour to suffer in silence. There is certainly a great defect in my mind—my wayward heart creates its own misery—Why I am made thus I cannot tell; and, till I can form some idea of the whole of my existence, I must be content to weep and dance like a child—long for a toy, and be tired of it as soon as I get it.

We must each of us wear a fool's cap; but mine, alas! has lost its bells, and is grown so heavy, I find it intolerably troublesome.—Good-night! I have been pursuing a number of strange thoughts since I began to write, and have actually both wept and laughed immoderately—Surely I am a fool—

MARY W.

LETTER X

Monday Morning.

I REALLY want a German grammar, as I intend to attempt to learn that language—and I will tell you the reason why.—While I live, I am persuaded, I must exert my understanding to procure an independence, and render myself useful. To make the task easier, I ought to store my mind with knowledge—The seed time is passing away. I see the necessity of labouring now—and of that necessity I do not complain; on the contrary, I am thankful that I have more than common incentives to pursue knowledge, and draw my pleasures from the employments that are within my reach. You perceive this is not a gloomy day—I feel at this moment particularly grateful to you—without your humane and *delicate* assistance, how many obstacles should I not have had to encounter—too often should I have been out of patience with my fellow-creatures, whom I wish to love!—Allow me to love you, my dear sir, and call friend a being I respect.—Adieu!

MARY W.

LETTER XI

I THOUGHT you *very* unkind, nay, very unfeeling, last night. My cares and vexations—I will say what I allow myself to think—do me honour, as they arise from my disinterestedness and *unbending* principles; nor can that mode of conduct be a reflection on my understanding, which enables me to bear misery, rather than selfishly live for myself alone. I am not the only character deserving of respect, that has had to struggle with various sorrows—while inferior minds have enjoyed local fame and present comfort.—Dr. Johnson's cares almost drove him mad—but, I suppose, you would quietly have told him, he was a fool for not being calm, and that wise men striving against the stream, can yet be in good humour. I have done with insensible human wisdom,—"indifference cold in wisdom's guise,"—and turn to the source of perfection—who perhaps never disregarded an almost broken heart, especially when a respect, a practical respect, for virtue, sharpened the wounds of adversity. I am ill—I stayed in bed this morning till eleven o'clock, only thinking of getting money to extricate myself out of some of my difficulties—The struggle is now over. I will condescend to try to obtain some in a disagreeable way.

Mr. ——— called on me just now—pray did you know his motive for calling^[82-A]?—I think him impertinently officious.—He had left the house before it occurred to me in the strong light it does now, or I should have told him so—My poverty makes me proud—I will not be insulted by a superficial puppy.—His intimacy with Miss ——— gave him a privilege, which he should not have assumed with me—a proposal might be made to his cousin, a milliner's girl, which should not have been mentioned to me. Pray tell him that I am offended—and do not wish to see him again!—When I meet him at your house, I shall leave the room, since I cannot pull him by the nose. I can force my spirit to leave my body—but it shall never bend to support that body—God of heaven, save thy child from this living death!—I scarcely know

what I write. My hand trembles—I am very sick—sick at heart.—

MARY.

LETTER XII

Tuesday Evening.

Sir,

WHEN you left me this morning, and I reflected a moment—your *officious* message, which at first appeared to me a joke—looked so very like an insult—I cannot forget it—To prevent then the necessity of forcing a smile—when I chance to meet you—I take the earliest opportunity of informing you of my real sentiments.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER XIII

Wednesday, 3 o'clock.

Sir,

It is inexpressibly disagreeable to me to be obliged to enter again on a subject, that has already raised a tumult of *indignant* emotions in my bosom, which I was labouring to suppress when I received your letter. I shall now *condescend* to answer your epistle; but let me first tell you, that, in my *unprotected* situation, I make a point of never forgiving a *deliberate insult*—and in that light I consider your late officious conduct. It is not according to my nature to mince matters—I will then tell you in plain terms, what I think. I have ever considered you in the light of a *civil* acquaintance—on the word friend I lay a peculiar emphasis—and, as a mere acquaintance, you were rude and *cruel*, to step forward to insult a woman, whose conduct and misfortunes demand respect. If my friend, Mr. Johnson, had made the proposal—I should have been severely hurt—have thought him unkind and unfeeling, but not *impertinent*.—The privilege of intimacy you had no claim to—and should have referred the man to myself—if you had not sufficient discernment to quash it at once. I am, sir, poor and destitute.—Yet I have a spirit that will never bend, or take indirect methods, to obtain the consequence I despise; nay, if to support life it was necessary to act contrary to my principles, the struggle would soon be over. I can bear any thing but my own contempt.

In a few words, what I call an insult, is the bare supposition that I could for a moment think of *prostituting* my person for a maintenance; for in that point of view does such a marriage appear to me, who consider right and wrong in the abstract, and never by words and local opinions shield myself from the reproaches of my own heart and understanding.

It is needless to say more—Only you must excuse me when I add, that I wish never to see, but as a perfect stranger, a person who could so grossly mistake my character. An apology is not necessary—if you were inclined to make one—nor any further expostulations.—I again repeat, I cannot overlook an affront; few indeed have sufficient delicacy to respect poverty, even where it gives lustre to a character—and I tell you sir, I am POOR—yet can live without your benevolent exertions.

LETTER XIV

I SEND you *all* the books I had to review except Dr. J—'s Sermons, which I have begun. If you wish me to look over any more trash this month—you must send it directly. I have been so low-spirited since I saw you—I was quite glad, last night, to feel myself affected by some passages in Dr. J—'s sermon on the death of his wife—I seemed (suddenly) to *find* my soul again—It has been for some time I cannot tell where. Send me the Speaker—and *Mary*, I want one—and I shall soon want some paper—you may as well send it at the same time—for I am trying to brace my nerves that I may be industrious.—I am afraid reason is not a good bracer—for I have been reasoning a long time with my untoward spirits—and yet my hand trembles.—I could finish a period very *prettily* now, by saying that it ought to be steady when I add that I am yours sincerely,

MARY.

If you do not like the manner in which I reviewed Dr. J—'s s—— on his wife, be it known unto you—I *will* not do it any other way—I felt some pleasure in paying a just tribute of respect to the memory of a man—who, spite of his faults, I have an affection for—I say *have*, for I believe he is somewhere—*where* my soul has been gadding perhaps;—but *you* do not live on conjectures.

LETTER XV

My dear sir, I send you a chapter which I am pleased with, now I see it in one point of view—and, as I have made free with the author, I hope you will not have often to say—what does this mean?

You forgot you were to make out my account—I am, of course, over head and ears in debt; but I have not that kind of pride, which makes some dislike to be obliged to those they respect.—On the contrary, when I involuntarily lament that I have not a father or brother, I thankfully recollect that I have received unexpected kindness from you and a few others.—So reason allows, what nature impels me to—for I cannot live without loving my fellow-creatures—nor can I love them, without discovering some virtue.

MARY.

LETTER XVI

Paris, December 26, 1792.

I SHOULD immediately on the receipt of your letter, my dear friend, have thanked you for your punctuality, for it highly gratified me, had I not wished to wait till I could tell you that this day was not stained with blood. Indeed the prudent precautions taken by the National Convention to prevent a tumult, made me suppose that the dogs of faction would not dare to bark, much less to bite, however true to their scent; and I was not mistaken; for the citizens, who were all called out, are returning home with composed countenances, shouldering their arms. About nine o'clock this morning, the king passed by my window, moving silently along (excepting now and then a few strokes on the drum, which rendered the stillness more awful) through empty streets, surrounded by the national guards, who, clustering round the carriage,

seemed to deserve their name. The inhabitants flocked to their windows, but the casements were all shut, not a voice was heard, nor did I see any thing like an insulting gesture.—For the first time since I entered France, I bowed to the majesty of the people, and respected the propriety of behaviour so perfectly in unison with my own feelings. I can scarcely tell you why, but an association of ideas made the tears flow insensibly from my eyes, when I saw Louis sitting, with more dignity than I expected from his character, in a hackney coach, going to meet death, where so many of his race have triumphed. My fancy instantly brought Louis XIV before me, entering the capital with all his pomp, after one of the victories most flattering to his pride, only to see the sunshine of prosperity overshadowed by the sublime gloom of misery. I have been alone ever since; and, though my mind is calm, I cannot dismiss the lively images that have filled my imagination all the day.—Nay, do not smile, but pity me; for, once or twice, lifting my eyes from the paper, I have seen eyes glare through a glass-door opposite my chair and bloody hands shook at me. Not the distant sound of a footstep can I hear.—My apartments are remote from those of the servants, the only persons who sleep with me in an immense hotel, one folding door opening after another.—I wish I had even kept the cat with me!—I want to see something alive; death in so many frightful shapes has taken hold of my fancy.—I am going to bed—and, for the first time in my life, I cannot put out the candle.

M. W.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[67-A\]](#) To Original Stories.

[\[69-A\]](#) Countess Mount Cashel.

[\[82-A\]](#) This alludes to a foolish proposal of marriage for mercenary considerations, which the gentleman here mentioned thought proper to recommend to her. The two letters which immediately follow, are addressed to the gentleman himself.

EXTRACT

OF THE

CAVE OF FANCY.

A TALE.



[Begun to be written in the year 1787, but never completed]



CAVE OF FANCY.



CHAP. I.

YE who expect constancy where every thing is changing, and peace in the midst of tumult, attend to the voice of experience, and mark in time the footsteps of disappointment, or life will be lost in desultory wishes, and death arrive before the dawn of wisdom.

In a sequestered valley, surrounded by rocky mountains that intercepted many of the passing clouds, though sunbeams variegated their ample sides, lived a sage, to whom nature had unlocked her most hidden secrets. His hollow eyes, sunk in their orbits, retired from the view of vulgar objects, and turned inwards, overleaped the boundary prescribed to human knowledge. Intense thinking during fourscore and ten years, had whitened the scattered locks on his head, which, like the summit of the distant mountain, appeared to be bound by an eternal frost.

On the sandy waste behind the mountains, the track of ferocious beasts might be traced, and sometimes the mangled limbs which they left, attracted a hovering flight of birds of prey. An extensive wood the sage had forced to rear its head in a soil by no means congenial, and the firm trunks of the trees seemed to frown with defiance on time; though the spoils of innumerable summers covered the roots, which resembled fangs; so closely did they cling to the unfriendly sand, where serpents hissed, and snakes, rolling out their vast folds, inhaled the noxious vapours. The ravens and owls who inhabited the solitude, gave also a thicker gloom to the everlasting twilight, and the croaking of the former a monotony, in unison with the gloom; whilst lions and tygers, shunning even this faint semblance of day, sought the dark caverns, and at night, when they shook off sleep, their roaring would make the whole valley resound, confounded with the screechings of the bird of night.

One mountain rose sublime, towering above all, on the craggy sides of which a few sea-weeds grew, washed by the ocean, that with tumultuous roar rushed to assault, and even undermine, the huge barrier that stopped its progress; and ever and anon a ponderous mass, loosened from the cliff, to which it scarcely seemed to adhere, always threatening to fall, fell into the flood, rebounding as it fell, and the sound was re-echoed from rock to rock. Look where you would, all was without form, as if nature, suddenly stopping her hand, had left chaos a retreat.

Close to the most remote side of it was the sage's abode. It was a rude hut, formed of stumps of trees and matted twigs, to secure him from the inclemency of the weather; only through small apertures crossed with rushes, the wind entered in wild murmurs, modulated by these obstructions. A clear spring broke out of the middle of the adjacent rock, which, dropping slowly into a cavity it had hollowed, soon overflowed, and then ran, struggling to free itself from the cumbrous fragments, till, become a deep, silent stream, it escaped through reeds, and roots of trees, whose blasted tops overhung and darkened the current.

One side of the hut was supported by the rock, and at midnight, when the sage struck the inclosed part, it yawned wide, and admitted him into a cavern in the very bowels of the earth, where never human foot before had trod; and the various spirits, which inhabit the different regions of nature, were here obedient to his potent word. The cavern had been formed by the great inundation of waters, when the approach of a comet forced them from their source; then, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, a stream rushed out of the centre of the earth, where the spirits, who have lived on it, are confined to purify themselves from the dross contracted in their first stage of existence; and it flowed in black waves, for ever bubbling along the cave, the extent of which had never been explored. From the sides and top, water

distilled, and, petrifying as it fell, took fantastic shapes, that soon divided it into apartments, if so they might be called. In the foam, a wearied spirit would sometimes rise, to catch the most distant glimpse of light, or taste the vagrant breeze, which the yawning of the rock admitted, when Sagestus, for that was the name of the hoary sage, entered. Some, who were refined and almost cleared from vicious spots, he would allow to leave, for a limited time, their dark prison-house; and, flying on the winds across the bleak northern ocean, or rising in an exhalation till they reached a sun-beam, they thus re-visited the haunts of men. These were the guardian angels, who in soft whispers restrain the vicious, and animate the wavering wretch who stands suspended between virtue and vice.

Sagestus had spent a night in the cavern, as he often did, and he left the silent vestibule of the grave, just as the sun, emerging from the ocean, dispersed the clouds, which were not half so dense as those he had left. All that was human in him rejoiced at the sight of reviving life, and he viewed with pleasure the mounting sap rising to expand the herbs, which grew spontaneously in this wild—when, turning his eyes towards the sea, he found that death had been at work during his absence, and terrific marks of a furious storm still spread horror around. Though the day was serene, and threw bright rays on eyes for ever shut, it dawned not for the wretches who hung pendent on the craggy rocks, or were stretched lifeless on the sand. Some, struggling, had dug themselves a grave; others had resigned their breath before the impetuous surge whirled them on shore. A few, in whom the vital spark was not so soon dislodged, had clung to loose fragments; it was the grasp of death; embracing the stone, they stiffened; and the head, no longer erect, rested on the mass which the arms encircled. It felt not the agonizing gripe, nor heard the sigh that broke the heart in twain.

Resting his chin on an oaken club, the sage looked on every side, to see if he could discern any who yet breathed. He drew nearer, and thought he saw, at the first glance, the unclosed eyes glare; but soon perceived that they were a mere glassy substance, mute as the tongue; the jaws were fallen, and, in some of the tangled locks, hands were clinched; nay, even the nails had entered sharpened by despair. The blood flew rapidly to his heart; it was flesh; he felt he was still a man, and the big tear paced down his iron cheeks, whose muscles had not for a long time been relaxed by such humane emotions. A moment he breathed quick, then heaved a sigh, and his wonted calm returned with an unaccustomed glow of tenderness; for the ways of heaven were not hid from him; he lifted up his eyes to the common Father of nature, and all was as still in his bosom, as the smooth deep, after having closed over the huge vessel from which the wretches had fled.

Turning round a part of the rock that jutted out, meditating on the ways of Providence, a weak infantine voice reached his ears; it was lisping out the name of mother. He looked, and beheld a blooming child leaning over, and kissing with eager fondness, lips that were insensible to the warm pressure. Starting at the sight of the sage, she fixed her eyes on him, "Wake her, ah! wake her," she cried, "or the sea will catch us." Again he felt compassion, for he saw that the mother slept the sleep of death. He stretched out his hand, and, smoothing his brow, invited her to approach; but she still intreated him to wake her mother, whom she continued to call, with an impatient tremulous voice. To detach her from the body by persuasion would not have been very easy. Sagestus had a quicker method to effect his purpose; he took out a box which contained a soporific powder, and as soon as the fumes reached her brain, the powers of life were suspended.

He carried her directly to his hut, and left her sleeping profoundly on his rushy couch.

CHAP. II.

AGAIN Sagestus approached the dead, to view them with a more scrutinizing eye. He was perfectly acquainted with the construction of the human body, knew the traces that virtue or vice leaves on the whole frame; they were now indelibly fixed by death; nay more, he knew by the shape of the solid structure, how far the spirit could range, and saw the barrier beyond which it could not pass: the mazes of fancy he explored, measured the stretch of thought, and, weighing all in an even balance, could tell whom nature had stamped an hero, a poet, or philosopher.

By their appearance, at a transient glance, he knew that the vessel must have contained many passengers, and that some of them were above the vulgar, with respect to fortune and education; he then walked leisurely among the dead, and narrowly observed their pallid features.

His eye first rested on a form in which proportion reigned, and, stroking back the hair, a spacious forehead met his view; warm fancy had revelled there, and her airy dance had left vestiges, scarcely visible to a mortal eye. Some perpendicular lines pointed out that melancholy had predominated in his constitution; yet the straggling hairs of his eye-brows showed that anger had often shook his frame; indeed, the four temperatures, like the four elements, had resided in this little world, and produced harmony. The whole visage was bony, and an energetic frown had knit the flexible skin of his brow; the kingdom within had been extensive; and the wild creations of fancy had there "a local habitation and a name." So exquisite was his sensibility, so quick his comprehension, that he perceived various combinations in an instant; he caught truth as she darted towards him, saw all her fair proportion at a glance, and the flash of his eye spoke the quick senses which conveyed intelligence to his mind; the sensorium indeed was capacious, and the sage imagined he saw the lucid beam, sparkling with love or ambition, in characters of fire, which a graceful curve of the upper eyelid shaded. The lips were a little deranged by contempt; and a mixture of vanity and self-complacency formed a few irregular lines round them. The chin had suffered from sensuality, yet there were still great marks of vigour in it, as if advanced with stern dignity. The hand accustomed to command, and even tyrannize, was unnerved; but its appearance convinced Sagestus, that he had oftener wielded a thought than a weapon; and that he had silenced, by irresistible conviction, the superficial disputant, and the being, who doubted because he had not strength to believe, who, wavering between different borrowed opinions, first caught at one straw, then at another, unable to settle into any consistency of character. After gazing a few moments, Sagestus turned away exclaiming, How are the stately oaks torn up by a tempest, and the bow unstrung, that could force the arrow beyond the ken of the eye!

What a different face next met his view! The forehead was short, yet well set together; the nose small, but a little turned up at the end; and a draw-down at the sides of his mouth, proved that he had been a humourist, who minded the main chance, and could joke with his acquaintance, while he eagerly devoured a dainty which he was not to pay for. His lips shut like a box whose hinges had often been mended; and the muscles, which display the soft emotion of the heart on the cheeks, were grown quite rigid, so that, the vessels that should have moistened them not having much communication with the grand source of passions, the fine volatile fluid had evaporated, and they became mere dry fibres, which might be pulled by any misfortune that threatened himself, but were not sufficiently elastic to be moved by the miseries of others. His joints were inserted compactly, and with celerity they had performed all the animal functions, without any of the grace which results from the imagination mixing with the senses.

A huge form was stretched near him, that exhibited marks of overgrown infancy; every part was relaxed; all appeared imperfect. Yet, some undulating lines on the puffed-out cheeks, displayed signs of timid, servile good nature; and the skin of the forehead had been so often drawn up by wonder, that the few hairs of the eyebrows were fixed in a sharp arch, whilst an ample chin rested in lobes of flesh on his protuberant breast.

By his side was a body that had scarcely ever much life in it—sympathy seemed to have drawn them together—every feature and limb was round and fleshy, and, if a kind of brutal cunning had not marked the face, it might have been mistaken for an automaton, so unmixed was the phlegmatic fluid. The vital spark was buried deep in a soft mass of matter, resembling the pith in young elder, which, when found, is so equivocal, that it only appears a moister part of the same body.

Another part of the beach was covered with sailors, whose bodies exhibited marks of strength and brutal courage.—Their characters were all different, though of the same class; Sagestus did not stay to discriminate them, satisfied with a rough sketch. He saw indolence roused by a love of humour, or rather bodily fun; sensuality and prodigality with a vein of generosity running through it; a contempt of danger with gross superstition; supine senses, only to be kept alive by noisy, tumultuous pleasures, or that kind of novelty which borders on absurdity: this formed the common outline, and the rest were rather dabs than shades.

Sagestus paused, and remembered it had been said by an earthly wit, that "many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air." How little, he exclaimed, did that poet know of the ways of heaven! And yet, in this respect, they are direct; the hands before me, were designed to pull a rope, knock down a sheep, or perform the servile offices of life; no "mute, inglorious poet" rests amongst them, and he who is superior to his fellow, does not rise above mediocrity. The genius that sprouts from a dunghil soon shakes off the heterogenous mass; those only grovel, who have not power to fly.

He turned his step towards the mother of the orphan: another female was at some distance; and a man who, by his garb, might have been the husband, or brother, of the former, was not far off.

Him the sage surveyed with an attentive eye, and bowed with respect to the inanimate clay, that lately had been the dwelling of a most benevolent spirit. The head was square, though the features were not very prominent; but there was a great harmony in every part, and the turn of the nostrils and lips evinced, that the soul must have had taste, to which they had served as organs. Penetration and judgment were seated on the brows that overhung the eye. Fixed as it was, Sagestus quickly discerned the expression it must have had; dark and pensive, rather from slowness of comprehension than melancholy, it seemed to absorb the light of knowledge, to drink it in ray by ray; nay, a new one was not allowed to enter his head till the last was arranged: an opinion was thus cautiously received, and maturely weighed, before it was added to the general stock. As nature led him to mount from a part to the whole, he was most conversant with the beautiful, and rarely comprehended the sublime; yet, said Sagestus, with a softened tone, he was all heart, full of forbearance, and desirous to please every fellow-creature; but from a nobler motive than a love of admiration; the fumes of vanity never mounted to cloud his brain, or tarnish his beneficence. The fluid in which those placid eyes swam, is now congealed; how often has tenderness given them the finest water! Some torn parts of the child's dress hung round his arm, which led the sage to conclude, that he had saved the child; every line in his face confirmed the conjecture; benevolence indeed strung the nerves that naturally were not very firm; it was the great knot that tied together the scattered qualities, and gave the distinct stamp to the character.

The female whom he next approached, and supposed to be an attendant on the other, was below the

middle size, and her legs were so disproportionably short, that, when she moved, she must have waddled along; her elbows were drawn in to touch her long taper, waist, and the air of her whole body was an affectation of gentility. Death could not alter the rigid hang of her limbs, or efface the simper that had stretched her mouth; the lips were thin, as if nature intended she should mince her words; her nose was small, and sharp at the end; and the forehead, unmarked by eyebrows, was wrinkled by the discontent that had sunk her cheeks, on which Sagestus still discerned faint traces of tenderness; and fierce good-nature, he perceived had sometimes animated the little spark of an eye that anger had oftener lighted. The same thought occurred to him that the sight of the sailors had suggested, Men and women are all in their proper places—this female was intended to fold up linen and nurse the sick.

Anxious to observe the mother of his charge, he turned to the lily that had been so rudely snapped, and, carefully observing it, traced every fine line to its source. There was a delicacy in her form, so truly feminine, that an involuntary desire to cherish such a being, made the sage again feel the almost forgotten sensations of his nature. On observing her more closely, he discovered that her natural delicacy had been increased by an improper education, to a degree that took away all vigour from her faculties. And its baneful influence had had such an effect on her mind, that few traces of the exertions of it appeared on her face, though the fine finish of her features, and particularly the form of the forehead, convinced the sage that her understanding might have risen considerably above mediocrity, had the wheels ever been put in motion; but, clogged by prejudices, they never turned quite round, and, whenever she considered a subject, she stopped before she came to a conclusion. Assuming a mask of propriety, she had banished nature; yet its tendency was only to be diverted, not stifled. Some lines, which took from the symmetry of the mouth, not very obvious to a superficial observer, struck Sagestus, and they appeared to him characters of indolent obstinacy. Not having courage to form an opinion of her own, she adhered, with blind partiality, to those she adopted, which she received in the lump, and, as they always remained unopened, of course she only saw the even gloss on the outside. Vestiges of anger were visible on her brow, and the sage concluded, that she had often been offended with, and indeed would scarcely make any allowance for, those who did not coincide with her in opinion, as things always appear self-evident that have never been examined; yet her very weakness gave a charming timidity to her countenance; goodness and tenderness pervaded every lineament, and melted in her dark blue eyes. The compassion that wanted activity, was sincere, though it only embellished her face, or produced casual acts of charity when a moderate alms could relieve present distress. Unacquainted with life, fictitious, unnatural distress drew the tears that were not shed for real misery. In its own shape, human wretchedness excites a little disgust in the mind that has indulged sickly refinement. Perhaps the sage gave way to a little conjecture in drawing the last conclusion; but his conjectures generally arose from distinct ideas, and a dawn of light allowed him to see a great way farther than common mortals.

He was now convinced that the orphan was not very unfortunate in having lost such a mother. The parent that inspires fond affection without respect, is seldom an useful one; and they only are respectable, who consider right and wrong abstracted from local forms and accidental modifications.

Determined to adopt the child, he named it after himself, Sagesta, and retired to the hut where the innocent slept, to think of the best method of educating this child, whom the angry deep had spared.

[The last branch of the education of Sagesta, consisted of a variety of characters and stories presented to her in the Cave of Fancy, of which the following is a specimen.]

CHAP.

A FORM now approached that particularly struck and interested Sagesta. The sage, observing what passed in her mind, bade her ever trust to the first impression. In life, he continued, try to remember the effect the first appearance of a stranger has on your mind; and, in proportion to your sensibility, you may decide on the character. Intelligence glances from eyes that have the same pursuits, and a benevolent heart soon traces the marks of benevolence on the countenance of an unknown fellow-creature; and not only the countenance, but the gestures, the voice, loudly speak truth to the unprejudiced mind.

Whenever a stranger advances towards you with a tripping step, receives you with broad smiles, and a profusion of compliments, and yet you find yourself embarrassed and unable to return the salutation with equal cordiality, be assured that such a person is affected, and endeavours to maintain a very good character in the eyes of the world, without really practising the social virtues which dress the face in looks of unfeigned complacency. Kindred minds are drawn to each other by expressions which elude description; and, like the calm breeze that plays on a smooth lake, they are rather felt than seen. Beware of a man who always appears in good humour; a selfish design too frequently lurks in the smiles the heart never curved; or there is an affectation of candour that destroys all strength of character, by blending truth and falshood into an unmeaning mass. The mouth, in fact, seems to be the feature where you may trace every kind of dissimulation, from the simper of vanity, to the fixed smile of the designing villain. Perhaps, the modulations of the voice will still more quickly give a key to the character than even the turns of the mouth, or the words that issue from it; often do the tones of unpractised dissemblers give the lie to their assertions. Many people never speak in an unnatural voice, but when they are insincere: the phrases not corresponding with the dictates of the heart, have nothing to keep them in tune. In the course of an argument however, you may easily discover whether vanity or conviction stimulates the disputant, though his inflated countenance may be turned from you, and you may not see the gestures which mark self-sufficiency. He stopped, and the spirit began.

I have wandered through the cave; and, as soon as I have taught you a useful lesson, I shall take my flight where my tears will cease to flow, and where mine eyes will no more be shocked with the sight of guilt and sorrow. Before many moons have changed, thou wilt enter, O mortal! into that world I have lately left. Listen to my warning voice, and trust not too much to the goodness which I perceive resides in thy breast. Let it be reined in by principles, lest thy very virtue sharpen the sting of remorse, which as naturally follows disorder in the moral world, as pain attends on intemperance in the physical. But my history will afford you more instruction than mere advice. Sagestus concurred in opinion with her, observing that the senses of children should be the first object of improvement; then their passions worked on; and judgment the fruit, must be the acquirement of the being itself, when out of leading-strings. The spirit bowed assent, and, without any further prelude, entered on her history.

My mother was a most respectable character, but she was yoked to a man whose follies and vices made her ever feel the weight of her chains. The first sensation I recollect, was pity; for I have seen her weep over me and the rest of her babes, lamenting that the extravagance of a father would throw us destitute on the world. But, though my father was extravagant, and seldom thought of any thing but his own pleasures, our education was not neglected. In solitude, this employment was my mother's only solace; and my father's pride made him procure us masters; nay, sometimes he was so gratified by our improvement, that he would embrace us with tenderness, and intreat my mother to forgive him, with marks of real contrition.

But the affection his penitence gave rise to, only served to expose her to continual disappointments, and keep hope alive merely to torment her. After a violent debauch he would let his beard grow, and the sadness that reigned in the house I shall never forget; he was ashamed to meet even the eyes of his children. This is so contrary to the nature of things, it gave me exquisite pain; I used, at those times, to show him extreme respect. I could not bear to see my parent humble himself before me. However neither his constitution, nor fortune could long bear the constant waste. He had, I have observed, a childish affection for his children, which was displayed in caresses that gratified him for the moment, yet never restrained the headlong fury of his appetites; his momentary repentance wrung his heart, without influencing his conduct; and he died, leaving an encumbered wreck of a good estate.

As we had always lived in splendid poverty, rather than in affluence, the shock was not so great; and my mother repressed her anguish, and concealed some circumstances, that she might not shed a destructive mildew over the gaiety of youth.

So fondly did I doat on this dear parent, that she engrossed all my tenderness; her sorrows had knit me firmly to her, and my chief care was to give her proofs of affection. The gallantry that afforded my companions, the few young people my mother forced me to mix with, so much pleasure, I despised; I wished more to be loved than admired, for I could love. I adored virtue; and my imagination, chasing a chimerical object, overlooked the common pleasures of life; they were not sufficient for my happiness. A latent fire made me burn to rise superior to my contemporaries in wisdom and virtue; and tears of joy and emulation filled my eyes when I read an account of a great action—I felt admiration, not astonishment.

My mother had two particular friends, who endeavoured to settle her affairs; one was a middle-aged man, a merchant; the human breast never enshrined a more benevolent heart. His manners were rather rough, and he bluntly spoke his thoughts without observing the pain it gave; yet he possessed extreme tenderness, as far as his discernment went. Men do not make sufficient distinction, said she, digressing from her story to address Sagestus, between tenderness and sensibility.

To give the shortest definition of sensibility, replied the sage, I should say that it is the result of acute senses, finely fashioned nerves, which vibrate at the slightest touch, and convey such clear intelligence to the brain, that it does not require to be arranged by the judgment. Such persons instantly enter into the characters of others, and instinctively discern what will give pain to every human being; their own feelings are so varied that they seem to contain in themselves, not only all the passions of the species, but their various modifications. Exquisite pain and pleasure is their portion; nature wears for them a different aspect than is displayed to common mortals. One moment it is a paradise; all is beautiful: a cloud arises, an emotion receives a sudden damp; darkness invades the sky, and the world is an unweeded garden;—but go on with your narrative, said Sagestus, recollecting himself.

She proceeded. The man I am describing was humanity itself; but frequently he did not understand me; many of my feelings were not to be analyzed by his common sense. His friendships, for he had many friends, gave him pleasure unmixed with pain; his religion was coldly reasonable, because he wanted fancy, and he did not feel the necessity of finding, or creating, a perfect object, to answer the one engraved on his heart: the sketch there was faint. He went with the stream, and rather caught a character from the society he lived in, than spread one around him. In my mind many opinions were graven with a pen of brass, which he thought chimerical: but time could not erase them, and I now recognize them as the seeds of eternal happiness: they will soon expand in those realms where I shall enjoy the bliss adapted to my nature; this is all we need ask of the Supreme Being; happiness must follow the completion of his designs. He however could live quietly, without giving a preponderancy to many important opinions that continually obtruded on my mind; not having an enthusiastic affection for his fellow creatures, he did them

good, without suffering from their follies. He was particularly attached to me, and I felt for him all the affection of a daughter; often, when he had been interesting himself to promote my welfare, have I lamented that he was not my father; lamented that the vices of mine had dried up one source of pure affection.

The other friend I have already alluded to, was of a very different character; greatness of mind, and those combinations of feeling which are so difficult to describe, raised him above the throng, that bustle their hour out, lie down to sleep, and are forgotten. But I shall soon see him, she exclaimed, as much superior to his former self, as he then rose in my eyes above his fellow creatures! As she spoke, a glow of delight animated each feature; her countenance appeared transparent; and she silently anticipated the happiness she should enjoy, when she entered those mansions, where death-divided friends should meet, to part no more; where human weakness could not damp their bliss, or poison the cup of joy that, on earth, drops from the lips as soon as tasted, or, if some daring mortal snatches a hasty draught, what was sweet to the taste becomes a root of bitterness.

He was unfortunate, had many cares to struggle with, and I marked on his cheeks traces of the same sorrows that sunk my own. He was unhappy I say, and perhaps pity might first have awoke my tenderness; for, early in life, an artful woman worked on his compassionate soul, and he united his fate to a being made up of such jarring elements, that he was still alone. The discovery did not extinguish that propensity to love, a high sense of virtue fed. I saw him sick and unhappy, without a friend to sooth the hours languor made heavy; often did I sit a long winter's evening by his side, railing at the swift wings of time, and terming my love, humanity.

Two years passed in this manner, silently rooting my affection; and it might have continued calm, if a fever had not brought him to the very verge of the grave. Though still deceived, I was miserable that the customs of the world did not allow me to watch by him; when sleep forsook his pillow, my wearied eyes were not closed, and my anxious spirit hovered round his bed. I saw him, before he had recovered his strength; and, when his hand touched mine, life almost retired, or flew to meet the touch. The first look found a ready way to my heart, and thrilled through every vein. We were left alone, and insensibly began to talk of the immortality of the soul; I declared that I could not live without this conviction. In the ardour of conversation he pressed my hand to his heart; it rested there a moment, and my emotions gave weight to my opinion, for the affection we felt was not of a perishable nature.—A silence ensued, I know not how long; he then threw my hand from him, as if it had been a serpent; formally complained of the weather, and adverted to twenty other uninteresting subjects. Vain efforts! Our hearts had already spoken to each other.

Feebly did I afterwards combat an affection, which seemed twisted in every fibre of my heart. The world stood still when I thought of him; it moved heavily at best, with one whose very constitution seemed to mark her out for misery. But I will not dwell on the passion I too fondly nursed. One only refuge had I on earth; I could not resolutely desolate the scene my fancy flew to, when worldly cares, when a knowledge of mankind, which my circumstances forced on me, rendered every other insipid. I was afraid of the unmarked vacuity of common life; yet, though I supinely indulged myself in fairy-land, when I ought to have been more actively employed, virtue was still the first mover of my actions; she dressed my love in such enchanting colours, and spread the net I could never break. Our corresponding feelings confounded our very souls; and in many conversations we almost intuitively discerned each other's sentiments; the heart opened itself, not chilled by reserve, nor afraid of misconstruction. But, if virtue inspired love, love gave new energy to virtue, and absorbed every selfish passion. Never did even a wish escape me, that my lover should not fulfil the hard duties which fate had imposed on him. I only dissembled with him in one particular; I endeavoured to soften his wife's too conspicuous follies, and extenuated her failings in an

indirect manner. To this I was prompted by a loftiness of spirit; I should have broken the band of life, had I ceased to respect myself. But I will hasten to an important change in my circumstances.

My mother, who had concealed the real state of her affairs from me, was now impelled to make me her confident, that I might assist to discharge her mighty debt of gratitude. The merchant, my more than father, had privately assisted her: but a fatal civil-war reduced his large property to a bare competency; and an inflammation in his eyes, that arose from a cold he had caught at a wreck, which he watched during a stormy night to keep off the lawless colliers, almost deprived him of sight. His life had been spent in society, and he scarcely knew how to fill the void; for his spirit would not allow him to mix with his former equals as an humble companion; he who had been treated with uncommon respect, could not brook their insulting pity. From the resource of solitude, reading, the complaint in his eyes cut him off, and he became our constant visitor.

Actuated by the sincerest affection, I used to read to him, and he mistook my tenderness for love. How could I undeceive him, when every circumstance frowned on him! Too soon I found that I was his only comfort; I, who rejected his hand when fortune smiled, could not now second her blow; and, in a moment of enthusiastic gratitude and tender compassion, I offered him my hand.—It was received with pleasure; transport was not made for his soul; nor did he discover that nature had separated us, by making me alive to such different sensations. My mother was to live with us, and I dwelt on this circumstance to banish cruel recollections, when the bent bow returned to its former state.

With a bursting heart and a firm voice, I named the day when I was to seal my promise. It came, in spite of my regret; I had been previously preparing myself for the awful ceremony, and answered the solemn question with a resolute tone, that would silence the dictates of my heart; it was a forced, unvaried one; had nature modulated it, my secret would have escaped. My active spirit was painfully on the watch to repress every tender emotion. The joy in my venerable parent's countenance, the tenderness of my husband, as he conducted me home, for I really had a sincere affection for him, the gratulations of my mind, when I thought that this sacrifice was heroic, all tended to deceive me; but the joy of victory over the resigned, pallid look of my lover, haunted my imagination, and fixed itself in the centre of my brain.—Still I imagined, that his spirit was near me, that he only felt sorrow for my loss, and without complaint resigned me to my duty.

I was left alone a moment; my two elbows rested on a table to support my chin. Ten thousand thoughts darted with astonishing velocity through my mind. My eyes were dry; I was on the brink of madness. At this moment a strange association was made by my imagination; I thought of Gallileo, who when he left the inquisition, looked upwards, and cried out, "Yet it moves." A shower of tears, like the refreshing drops of heaven, relieved my parched sockets; they fell disregarded on the table; and, stamping with my foot, in an agony I exclaimed, "Yet I love." My husband entered before I had calmed these tumultuous emotions, and tenderly took my hand. I snatched it from him; grief and surprise were marked on his countenance; I hastily stretched it out again. My heart smote me, and I removed the transient mist by an unfeigned endeavour to please him.

A few months after, my mind grew calmer; and, if a treacherous imagination, if feelings many accidents revived, sometimes plunged me into melancholy, I often repeated with steady conviction, that virtue was not an empty name, and that, in following the dictates of duty, I had not bidden adieu to content.

In the course of a few years, the dear object of my fondest affection, said farewell, in dying accents. Thus left alone, my grief became dear; and I did not feel solitary, because I thought I might, without a crime, indulge a passion, that grew more ardent than ever when my imagination only presented him to my view,

and restored my former activity of soul which the late calm had rendered torpid. I seemed to find myself again, to find the eccentric warmth that gave me identity of character. Reason had governed my conduct, but could not change my nature; this voluptuous sorrow was superior to every gratification of sense, and death more firmly united our hearts.

Alive to every human affection, I smoothed my mothers passage to eternity, and so often gave my husband sincere proofs of affection, he never supposed that I was actuated by a more fervent attachment. My melancholy, my uneven spirits, he attributed to my extreme sensibility, and loved me the better for possessing qualities he could not comprehend.

At the close of a summer's day, some years after, I wandered with careless steps over a pathless common; various anxieties had rendered the hours which the sun had enlightened heavy; sober evening came on; I wished to still "my mind, and woo lone quiet in her silent walk." The scene accorded with my feelings; it was wild and grand; and the spreading twilight had almost confounded the distant sea with the barren, blue hills that melted from my sight. I sat down on a rising ground; the rays of the departing sun illumined the horizon, but so indistinctly, that I anticipated their total extinction. The death of Nature led me to a still more interesting subject, that came home to my bosom, the death of him I loved. A village-bell was tolling; I listened, and thought of the moment when I heard his interrupted breath, and felt the agonizing fear, that the same sound would never more reach my ears, and that the intelligence glanced from my eyes, would no more be felt. The spoiler had seized his prey; the sun was fled, what was this world to me! I wandered to another, where death and darkness could not enter; I pursued the sun beyond the mountains, and the soul escaped from this vale of tears. My reflections were tinged with melancholy, but they were sublime.—I grasped a mighty whole, and smiled on the king of terrors; the tie which bound me to my friends he could not break; the same mysterious knot united me to the source of all goodness and happiness. I had seen the divinity reflected in a face I loved; I had read immortal characters displayed on a human countenance, and forgot myself whilst I gazed. I could not think of immortality, without recollecting the ecstasy I felt, when my heart first whispered to me that I was beloved; and again did I feel the sacred tie of mutual affection; fervently I prayed to the father of mercies; and rejoiced that he could see every turn of a heart, whose movements I could not perfectly understand. My passion seemed a pledge of immortality; I did not wish to hide it from the all-searching eye of heaven. Where indeed could I go from his presence? and, whilst it was dear to me, though darkness might reign during the night of life, joy would come when I awoke to life everlasting.

I now turned my step towards home, when the appearance of a girl, who stood weeping on the common, attracted my attention. I accosted her, and soon heard her simple tale; that her father was gone to sea, and her mother sick in bed. I followed her to their little dwelling, and relieved the sick wretch. I then again sought my own abode; but death did not now haunt my fancy. Contriving to give the poor creature I had left more effectual relief, I reached my own garden-gate very weary, and rested on it.—Recollecting the turns of my mind during the walk, I exclaimed, Surely life may thus be enlivened by active benevolence, and the sleep of death, like that I am now disposed to fall into, may be sweet!

My life was now unmarked by any extraordinary change, and a few days ago I entered this cavern; for through it every mortal must pass; and here I have discovered, that I neglected many opportunities of being useful, whilst I fostered a devouring flame. Remorse has not reached me, because I firmly adhered to my principles, and I have also discovered that I saw through a false medium. Worthy as the mortal was I adored, I should not long have loved him with the ardour I did, had fate united us, and broken the delusion the imagination so artfully wove. His virtues, as they now do, would have extorted my esteem; but he who formed the human soul, only can fill it, and the chief happiness of an immortal being must arise from the

same source as its existence. Earthly love leads to heavenly, and prepares us for a more exalted state; if it does not change its nature, and destroy itself, by trampling on the virtue, that constitutes its essence, and allies us to the Deity.



ON

POETRY,
AND
OUR RELISH FOR THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

ON

POETRY, &c.

A TASTE for rural scenes, in the present state of society, appears to be very often an artificial sentiment, rather inspired by poetry and romances, than a real perception of the beauties of nature. But, as it is reckoned a proof of refined taste to praise the calm pleasures which the country affords, the theme is never exhausted. Yet it may be made a question, whether this romantic kind of declamation, has much effect on the conduct of those, who leave, for a season, the crowded cities in which they were bred.

I have been led to these reflections, by observing, when I have resided for any length of time in the country, how few people seem to contemplate nature with their own eyes. I have "brushed the dew away" in the morning; but, pacing over the printless grass, I have wondered that, in such delightful situations, the sun was allowed to rise in solitary majesty, whilst my eyes alone hailed its beautifying beams. The webs of the evening have still been spread across the hedged path, unless some labouring man, trudging to work, disturbed the fairy structure; yet, in spite of this supineness, when I joined the social circle, every tongue rang changes on the pleasures of the country.

Having frequently had occasion to make the same observation, I was led to endeavour, in one of my solitary rambles, to trace the cause, and likewise to enquire why the poetry written in the infancy of society, is most natural: which, strictly speaking (for *natural* is a very indefinite expression) is merely to say, that it is the transcript of immediate sensations, in all their native wildness and simplicity, when fancy, awakened by the sight of interesting objects, was most actively at work. At such moments, sensibility quickly furnishes similes, and the sublimated spirits combine images, which rising spontaneously, it is not necessary coldly to ransack the understanding or memory, till the laborious efforts of judgment exclude present sensations, and damp the fire of enthusiasm.

The effusions of a vigorous mind, will ever tell us how far the understanding has been enlarged by thought, and stored with knowledge. The richness of the soil even appears on the surface; and the result of profound thinking, often mixing, with playful grace, in the reveries of the poet, smoothly incorporates with the ebullitions of animal spirits, when the finely fashioned nerve vibrates acutely with rapture, or when, relaxed by soft melancholy, a pleasing languor prompts the long-drawn sigh, and feeds the slowly falling tear.

The poet, the man of strong feelings, gives us only an image of his mind, when he was actually alone, conversing with himself, and marking the impression which nature had made on his own heart.—If, at this sacred moment, the idea of some departed friend, some tender recollection when the soul was most alive to tenderness, intruded unawares into his thoughts, the sorrow which it produced is artlessly, yet poetically expressed—and who can avoid sympathizing?

Love to man leads to devotion—grand and sublime images strike the imagination—God is seen in every floating cloud, and comes from the misty mountain to receive the noblest homage of an intelligent creature—praise. How solemn is the moment, when all affections and remembrances fade before the sublime admiration which the wisdom and goodness of God inspires, when he is worshipped in a *temple not made with hands*, and the world seems to contain only the mind that formed, and the mind that contemplates it! These are not the weak responses of ceremonial devotion; nor, to express them, would the poet need another poet's aid: his heart burns within him, and he speaks the language of truth and nature

with resistless energy.

Inequalities, of course, are observable in his effusions; and a less vigorous fancy, with more taste, would have produced more elegance and uniformity; but, as passages are softened or expunged during the cooler moments of reflection, the understanding is gratified at the expence of those involuntary sensations, which, like the beauteous tints of an evening sky, are so evanescent, that they melt into new forms before they can be analyzed. For however eloquently we may boast of our reason, man must often be delighted he cannot tell why, or his blunt feelings are not made to relish the beauties which nature, poetry, or any of the imitative arts, afford.

The imagery of the ancients seems naturally to have been borrowed from surrounding objects and their mythology. When a hero is to be transported from one place to another, across pathless wastes, is any vehicle so natural, as one of the fleecy clouds on which the poet has often gazed, scarcely conscious that he wished to make it his chariot? Again, when nature seems to present obstacles to his progress at almost every step, when the tangled forest and steep mountain stand as barriers, to pass over which the mind longs for supernatural aid; an interposing deity, who walks on the waves, and rules the storm, severely felt in the first attempts to cultivate a country, will receive from the impassioned fancy "a local habitation and a name."

It would be a philosophical enquiry, and throw some light on the history of the human mind, to trace, as far as our information will allow us to trace, the spontaneous feelings and ideas which have produced the images that now frequently appear unnatural, because they are remote; and disgusting, because they have been servilely copied by poets, whose habits of thinking, and views of nature must have been different; for, though the understanding seldom disturbs the current of our present feelings, without dissipating the gay clouds which fancy has been embracing, yet it silently gives the colour to the whole tenour of them, and the dream is over, when truth is grossly violated, or images introduced, selected from books, and not from local manners or popular prejudices.

In a more advanced state of civilization, a poet is rather the creature of art, than of nature. The books that he reads in his youth, become a hot-bed in which artificial fruits are produced, beautiful to the common eye, though they want the true hue and flavour. His images do not arise from sensations; they are copies; and, like the works of the painters who copy ancient statues when they draw men and women of their own times, we acknowledge that the features are fine, and the proportions just; yet they are men of stone; insipid figures, that never convey to the mind the idea of a portrait taken from life, where the soul gives spirit and homogeneity to the whole. The silken wings of fancy are shrivelled by rules; and a desire of attaining elegance of diction, occasions an attention to words, incompatible with sublime, impassioned thoughts.

A boy of abilities, who has been taught the structure of verse at school, and been roused by emulation to compose rhymes whilst he was reading works of genius, may, by practice, produce pretty verses, and even become what is often termed an elegant poet: yet his readers, without knowing what to find fault with, do not find themselves warmly interested. In the works of the poets who fasten on their affections, they see grosser faults, and the very images which shock their taste in the modern; still they do not appear as puerile or extrinsic in one as the other.—Why?—because they did not appear so to the author.

It may sound paradoxical, after observing that those productions want vigour, that are merely the work of imitation, in which the understanding has violently directed, if not extinguished, the blaze of fancy, to assert, that, though genius be only another word for exquisite sensibility, the first observers of nature, the true poets, exercised their understanding much more than their imitators. But they exercised it to

discriminate things, whilst their followers were busy to borrow sentiments and arrange words.

Boys who have received a classical education, load their memory with words, and the correspondent ideas are perhaps never distinctly comprehended. As a proof of this assertion, I must observe, that I have known many young people who could write tolerably smooth verses, and string epithets prettily together, when their prose themes showed the barrenness of their minds, and how superficial the cultivation must have been, which their understanding had received.

Dr. Johnson, I know, has given a definition of genius, which would overturn my reasoning, if I were to admit it.—He imagines, that *a strong mind, accidentally led to some particular study* in which it excels, is a genius.—Not to stop to investigate the causes which produced this happy *strength* of mind, experience seems to prove, that those minds have appeared most vigorous, that have pursued a study, after nature had discovered a bent; for it would be absurd to suppose, that a slight impression made on the weak faculties of a boy, is the fiat of fate, and not to be effaced by any succeeding impression, or unexpected difficulty. Dr. Johnson in fact, appears sometimes to be of the same opinion (how consistently I shall not now enquire), especially when he observes, "that Thomson looked on nature with the eye which she only gives to a poet."

But, though it should be allowed that books may produce some poets, I fear they will never be the poets who charm our cares to sleep, or extort admiration. They may diffuse taste, and polish the language; but I am inclined to conclude that they will seldom rouse the passions, or amend the heart.

And, to return to the first subject of discussion, the reason why most people are more interested by a scene described by a poet, than by a view of nature, probably arises from the want of a lively imagination. The poet contracts the prospect, and, selecting the most picturesque part in his *camera*, the judgment is directed, and the whole force of the languid faculty turned towards the objects which excited the most forcible emotions in the poet's heart; the reader consequently feels the enlivened description, though he was not able to receive a first impression from the operations of his own mind.

Besides, it may be further observed, that gross minds are only to be moved by forcible representations. To rouse the thoughtless, objects must be presented, calculated to produce tumultuous emotions; the unsubstantial, picturesque forms which a contemplative man gazes on, and often follows with ardour till he is mocked by a glimpse of unattainable excellence, appear to them the light vapours of a dreaming enthusiast, who gives up the substance for the shadow. It is not within that they seek amusement; their eyes are seldom turned on themselves; consequently their emotions, though sometimes fervid, are always transient, and the nicer perceptions which distinguish the man of genuine taste, are not felt, or make such a slight impression as scarcely to excite any pleasurable sensations. Is it surprising then that they are often overlooked, even by those who are delighted by the same images concentrated by the poet?

But even this numerous class is exceeded, by witlings, who, anxious to appear to have wit and taste, do not allow their understandings or feelings any liberty; for, instead of cultivating their faculties and reflecting on their operations, they are busy collecting prejudices; and are predetermined to admire what the suffrage of time announces as excellent, not to store up a fund of amusement for themselves, but to enable them to talk.

These hints will assist the reader to trace some of the causes why the beauties of nature are not forcibly felt, when civilization, or rather luxury, has made considerable advances—those calm sensations are not sufficiently lively to serve as a relaxation to the voluptuary, or even to the moderate pursuer of artificial pleasures. In the present state of society, the understanding must bring back the feelings to nature, or the

sensibility must have such native strength, as rather to be whetted than destroyed by the strong exercises of passion.

That the most valuable things are liable to the greatest perversion, is however as trite as true:—for the same sensibility, or quickness of senses, which makes a man relish the tranquil scenes of nature, when sensation, rather than reason, imparts delight, frequently makes a libertine of him, by leading him to prefer the sensual tumult of love a little refined by sentiment, to the calm pleasures of affectionate friendship, in whose sober satisfactions, reason, mixing her tranquillizing convictions, whispers, that content, not happiness, is the reward of virtue in this world.

HINTS.

***[Chiefly designed to have been incorporated
in the Second Part of the Vindication
of the Rights of Woman.]***

HINTS.

1.

INDOLENCE is the source of nervous complaints, and a whole host of cares. This devil might say that his name was legion.

2.

It should be one of the employments of women of fortune, to visit hospitals, and superintend the conduct of inferiors.

3.

It is generally supposed, that the imagination of women is particularly active, and leads them astray. Why then do we seek by education only to exercise their imagination and feeling, till the understanding, grown rigid by disuse, is unable to exercise itself—and the superfluous nourishment the imagination and feeling have received, renders the former romantic, and the latter weak?

4.

Few men have risen to any great eminence in learning, who have not received something like a regular education. Why are women expected to surmount difficulties that men are not equal to?

5.

Nothing can be more absurd than the ridicule of the critic, that the heroine of his mock-tragedy was in love with the very man whom she ought least to have loved; he could not have given a better reason. How can passion gain strength any other way? In Otaheite, love cannot be known, where the obstacles to irritate an indiscriminate appetite, and sublimate the simple sensations of desire till they mount to passion, are never known. There a man or woman cannot love the very person they ought not to have loved—nor does jealousy ever fan the flame.

6.

It has frequently been observed, that, when women have an object in view, they pursue it with more steadiness than men, particularly love. This is not a compliment. Passion pursues with more heat than reason, and with most ardour during the absence of reason.

7.

Men are more subject to the physical love than women. The confined education of women makes them more subject to jealousy.

8.

Simplicity seems, in general, the consequence of ignorance, as I have observed in the characters of women and sailors—the being confined to one track of impressions.

9.

I know of no other way of preserving the chastity of mankind, than that of rendering women rather objects of love than desire. The difference is great. Yet, while women are encouraged to ornament their persons at the expence of their minds, while indolence renders them helpless and lascivious (for what other name can be given to the common intercourse between the sexes?) they will be, generally speaking, only objects of desire; and, to such women, men cannot be constant. Men, accustomed only to have their senses moved, merely seek for a selfish gratification in the society of women, and their sexual instinct, being neither supported by the understanding nor the heart, must be excited by variety.

10.

We ought to respect old opinions; though prejudices, blindly adopted, lead to error, and preclude all exercise of the reason.

The emulation which often makes a boy mischievous, is a generous spur; and the old remark, that unlucky, turbulent boys, make the wisest and best men, is true, spite of Mr. Knox's arguments. It has been observed, that the most adventurous horses, when tamed or domesticated, are the most mild and tractable.

11.

The children who start up suddenly at twelve or fourteen, and fall into decays, in consequence, as it is termed, of outgrowing their strength, are in general, I believe, those children, who have been bred up with mistaken tenderness, and not allowed to sport and take exercise in the open air. This is analogous to plants: for it is found that they run up sickly, long stalks, when confined.

12.

Children should be taught to feel deference, not to practise submission.

13.

It is always a proof of false refinement, when a fastidious taste overpowers sympathy.

14.

Lust appears to be the most natural companion of wild ambition; and love of human praise, of that dominion erected by cunning.

15.

"Genius decays as judgment increases." Of course, those who have the least genius, have the earliest appearance of wisdom.

16.

A knowledge of the fine arts, is seldom subservient to the promotion of either religion or virtue. Elegance is often indecency; witness our prints.

17.

There does not appear to be any evil in the world, but what is necessary. The doctrine of rewards and punishments, not considered as a means of reformation, appears to me an infamous libel on divine

goodness.

18.

Whether virtue is founded on reason or revelation, virtue is wisdom, and vice is folly. Why are positive punishments?

19.

Few can walk alone. The staff of Christianity is the necessary support of human weakness. But an acquaintance with the nature of man and virtue, with just sentiments on the attributes, would be sufficient, without a voice from heaven, to lead some to virtue, but not the mob.

20.

I only expect the natural reward of virtue, whatever it may be. I rely not on a positive reward.

The justice of God can be vindicated by a belief in a future state—but a continuation of being vindicates it as clearly, as the positive system of rewards and punishments—by evil educating good for the individual, and not for an imaginary whole. The happiness of the whole must arise from the happiness of the constituent parts, or this world is not a state of trial, but a school.

21.

The vices acquired by Augustus to retain his power, must have tainted his soul, and prevented that increase of happiness a good man expects in the next stage of existence. This was a natural punishment.

22.

The lover is ever most deeply enamoured, when it is with he knows not what—and the devotion of a mystic has a rude Gothic grandeur in it, which the respectful adoration of a philosopher will never reach. I may be thought fanciful; but it has continually occurred to me, that, though, I allow, reason in this world is the mother of wisdom—yet some flights of the imagination seem to reach what wisdom cannot teach—and, while they delude us here, afford a glorious hope, if not a foretaste, of what we may expect hereafter. He that created us, did not mean to mark us with ideal images of grandeur, the *baseless fabric of a vision*—No—that perfection we follow with hopeless ardour when the whisperings of reason are heard, may be found, when not incompatible with our state, in the round of eternity. Perfection indeed must, even then, be a comparative idea—but the wisdom, the happiness of a superior state, has been supposed to be intuitive, and the happiest effusions of human genius have seemed like inspiration—the deductions of reason destroy sublimity.

23.

I am more and more convinced, that poetry is the first effervescence of the imagination, and the forerunner of civilization.

24.

When the Arabs had no trace of literature or science, they composed beautiful verses on the subjects of love and war. The flights of the imagination, and the laboured deductions of reason, appear almost incompatible.

25.

Poetry certainly flourishes most in the first rude state of society. The passions speak most eloquently, when they are not shackled by reason. The sublime expression, which has been so often quoted, [Genesis, ch. 1, ver. 3.] is perhaps a barbarous flight; or rather the grand conception of an uncultivated mind; for it is contrary to nature and experience, to suppose that this account is founded on facts—It is doubtless a sublime allegory. But a cultivated mind would not thus have described the creation—for, arguing from analogy, it appears that creation must have been a comprehensive plan, and that the Supreme Being always uses second causes, slowly and silently to fulfil his purpose. This is, in reality, a more sublime view of that power which wisdom supports: but it is not the sublimity that would strike the impassioned mind, in which the imagination took place of intellect. Tell a being, whose affections and passions have been more exercised than his reason, that God said, *Let there be light! and there was light*; and he would prostrate himself before the Being who could thus call things out of nothing, as if they were: but a man in whom reason had taken place of passion, would not adore, till wisdom was conspicuous as well as power, for his admiration must be founded on principle.

26.

Individuality is ever conspicuous in those enthusiastic flights of fancy, in which reason is left behind, without being lost sight of.

27.

The mind has been too often brought to the test of enquiries which only reach to matter—put into the crucible, though the magnetic and electric fluid escapes from the experimental philosopher.

28.

Mr. Kant has observed, that the understanding is sublime, the imagination beautiful—yet it is evident, that poets, and men who undoubtedly possess the liveliest imagination, are most touched by the sublime, while men who have cold, enquiring minds, have not this exquisite feeling in any great degree, and indeed seem to lose it as they cultivate their reason.

29.

The Grecian buildings are graceful—they fill the mind with all those pleasing emotions, which elegance and beauty never fail to excite in a cultivated mind—utility and grace strike us in unison—the mind is satisfied—things appear just what they ought to be: a calm satisfaction is felt, but the imagination has nothing to do—no obscurity darkens the gloom—like reasonable content, we can say why we are pleased—and this kind of pleasure may be lasting, but it is never great.

30.

When we say that a person is an original, it is only to say in other words that he thinks. "The less a man has cultivated his rational faculties, the more powerful is the principle of imitation, over his actions, and his habits of thinking. Most women, of course, are more influenced by the behaviour, the fashions, and the opinions of those with whom they associate, than men." (Smellie.)

When we read a book which supports our favourite opinions, how eagerly do we suck in the doctrines, and suffer our minds placidly to reflect the images which illustrate the tenets we have embraced? We indolently or quietly acquiesce in the conclusion, and our spirit animates and connects the various

subjects. But, on the contrary, when we peruse a skilful writer, who does not coincide in opinion with us, how is the mind on the watch to detect fallacy? And this coolness often prevents our being carried away by a stream of eloquence, which the prejudiced mind terms declamation—a pomp of words.—We never allow ourselves to be warmed; and, after contending with the writer, are more confirmed in our own opinion, as much perhaps from a spirit of contradiction as from reason.—Such is the strength of man!

31.

It is the individual manner of seeing and feeling, portrayed by a strong imagination in bold images that have struck the senses, which creates all the charms of poetry. A great reader is always quoting the description of another's emotions; a strong imagination delights to paint its own. A writer of genius makes us feel; an inferior author reason.

32.

Some principle prior to self-love must have existed: the feeling which produced the pleasure, must have existed before the experience.

THE END.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD; AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1798.

LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



VOL. II.



ERRATA.

Page 10, line 8, *for* I write you, *read* I write to you.

—— 20, — 9, *read* bring them to ——.

—— 146, — 2 from the bottom, after over, infert a comma.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Letters	1
Letter on the Present Character of the French Nation	39
Fragment of Letters on the Management of Infants	55
Letters to Mr. Johnson	61
Extract of the Cave of Fancy, a Tale	99
On Poetry and our Relish for the Beauties of Nature	159
Hints	179

LETTERS.

LETTER LXVII

September 27.

WHEN you receive this, I shall either have landed, or be hovering on the British coast—your letter of the 18th decided me.

By what criterion of principle or affection, you term my questions extraordinary and unnecessary, I cannot determine.—You desire me to decide—I had decided. You must have had long ago two letters of mine, from ———, to the same purport, to consider.—In these, God knows! there was but too much affection, and the agonies of a distracted mind were but too faithfully portrayed!—What more then had I to say?—The negative was to come from you.—You had perpetually recurred to your promise of meeting me in the autumn—Was it extraordinary that I should demand a yes, or no?—Your letter is written with extreme harshness, coldness I am accustomed to, in it I find not a trace of the tenderness of humanity, much less of friendship.—I only see a desire to heave a load off your shoulders.

I am above disputing about words.—It matters not in what terms you decide.

The tremendous power who formed this heart, must have foreseen that, in a world in which self-interest, in various shapes, is the principal mobile, I had little chance of escaping misery.—To the fiat of fate I submit.—I am content to be wretched; but I will not be contemptible.—Of me you have no cause to complain, but for having had too much regard for you—for having expected a degree of permanent happiness, when you only fought for a momentary gratification.

I am strangely deficient in sagacity.—Uniting myself to you, your tenderness seemed to make me amends for all my former misfortunes.—On this tenderness and affection with what confidence did I rest!—but I leaned on a spear, that has pierced me to the heart.—You have thrown off a faithful friend, to pursue the caprices of the moment.—We certainly are differently organized; for even now, when conviction has been stamped on my soul by sorrow, I can scarcely believe it possible. It depends at present on you, whether you will see me or not.—I shall take no step, till I see or hear from you.

Preparing myself for the worst—I have determined, if your next letter be like the last, to write to Mr. ——— to procure me an obscure lodging, and not to inform any body of my arrival.—There I will endeavour in a few months to obtain the sum necessary to take me to France—from you I will not receive any more.—I am not yet sufficiently humbled to depend on your beneficence.

Some people, whom my unhappiness has interested, though they know not the extent of it, will assist me to attain the object I have in view, the independence of my child. Should a peace take place, ready money will go a great way in France—and I will borrow a sum, which my industry *shall* enable me to pay at my leisure, to purchase a small estate for my girl.—The assistance I shall find necessary to complete her education, I can get at an easy rate at Paris—I can introduce her to such society as she will like—and thus, securing for her all the chance for happiness, which depends on me, I shall die in peace, persuaded that the felicity which has hitherto cheated my expectation, will not always elude my grasp. No poor tempest-

toffed mariner ever more earnestly longed to arrive at his port.

* * * *

I shall not come up in the vessel all the way, because I have no place to go to. Captain —— will inform you where I am. It is needless to add, that I am not in a state of mind to bear suspense—and that I wish to see you, though it be for the last time.

LETTER LXVIII

Sunday, October 4.

I WROTE to you by the packet, to inform you, that your letter of the 18th of last month, had determined me to set out with captain ——; but, as we sailed very quick, I take it for granted, that you have not yet received it.

You say, I must decide for myself.—I had decided, that it was most for the interest of my little girl, and for my own comfort, little as I expect, for us to live together; and I even thought that you would be glad, some years hence, when the tumult of business was over, to repose in the society of an affectionate friend, and mark the progress of our interesting child, whilst endeavouring to be of use in the circle you at last resolved to rest in; for you cannot run about for ever.

From the tenour of your last letter however, I am led to imagine, that you have formed some new attachment.—If it be so, let me earnestly request you to see me once more, and immediately. This is the only proof I require of the friendship you profess for me. I will then decide, since you boggle about a mere form.

I am labouring to write with calmness—but the extreme anguish I feel, at landing without having any friend to receive me, and even to be conscious that the friend whom I most wish to see, will feel a disagreeable sensation at being informed of my arrival, does not come under the description of common misery. Every emotion yields to an overwhelming flood of sorrow—and the playfulness of my child distresses me.—On her account, I wished to remain a few days here, comfortless as is my situation.—Besides, I did not wish to surprise you. You have told me, that you would make any sacrifice to promote my happiness—and, even in your last unkind letter, you talk of the ties which bind you to me and my child.—Tell me, that you wish it, and I will cut this Gordian knot.

I now most earnestly intreat you to write to me, without fail, by the return of the post. Direct your letter to be left at the post-office, and tell me whether you will come to me here, or where you will meet me. I can receive your letter on Wednesday morning.

Do not keep me in suspense.—I expect nothing from you, or any human being: my die is cast!—I have fortitude enough to determine to do my duty; yet I cannot raise my depressed spirits, or calm my trembling heart.—That being who moulded it thus, knows that I am unable to tear up by the roots the propensity to affection which has been the torment of my life—but life will have an end!

Should you come here (a few months ago I could not have doubted it) you will find me at ——-. If you prefer meeting me on the road, tell me where.

Yours affectionately

LETTER LXIX

I WRITE you now on my knees; imploring you to send my child and the maid with ——, to Paris, to be confined to the care of Madame ——, rue ——, section de ——. Should they be removed, —— can give their direction.

Let the maid have all my clothes, without distinction.

Pray pay the cook her wages, and do not mention the confession which I forced from her—a little sooner or later is of no consequence. Nothing but my extreme stupidity could have rendered me blind so long. Yet, whilst you assured me that you had no attachment, I thought we might still have lived together.

I shall make no comments on your conduct; or any appeal to the world. Let my wrongs sleep with me! Soon, very soon shall I be at peace. When you receive this, my burning head will be cold.

I would encounter a thousand deaths, rather than a night like the last. Your treatment has thrown my mind into a state of chaos; yet I am serene. I go to find comfort, and my only fear is, that my poor body will be insulted by an endeavour to recall my hated existence. But I shall plunge into the Thames where there is the least chance of my being snatched from the death I seek.

God bless you! May you never know by experience what you have made me endure. Should your sensibility ever awake, remorse will find its way to your heart; and, in the midst of business and sensual pleasure, I shall appear before you, the victim of your deviation from rectitude.

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LETTER LXX

Sunday Morning.

I HAVE only to lament, that, when the bitterness of death was past, I was inhumanly brought back to life and misery. But a fixed determination is not to be baffled by disappointment; nor will I allow that to be a frantic attempt, which was one of the calmest acts of reason. In this respect, I am only accountable to myself. Did I care for what is termed reputation, it is by other circumstances that I should be dishonoured.

You say, "that you know not how to extricate ourselves out of the wretchedness into which we have been plunged." You are extricated long since.—But I forbear to comment.—If I am condemned to live longer, it is a living death.

It appears to me, that you lay much more stress on delicacy, than on principle; for I am unable to discover what sentiment of delicacy would have been violated, by your visiting a wretched friend—if indeed you have any friendship for me.—But since your new attachment is the only thing sacred in your eyes, I am silent—Be happy! My complaints shall never more damp your enjoyment—perhaps I am mistaken in supposing that even my death could, for more than a moment.—This is what you call magnanimity—It is happy for yourself, that you possess this quality in the highest degree.

Your continually asserting, that you will do all in your power to contribute to my comfort (when you only allude to pecuniary assistance), appears to me a flagrant breach of delicacy.—I want not such vulgar comfort, nor will I accept it. I never wanted but your heart—That gone, you have nothing more to give. Had I only poverty to fear, I should not shrink from life.—Forgive me then, if I say, that I shall consider any direct or indirect attempt to supply my necessities, as an insult which I have not merited—and as rather done out of tenderness for your own reputation, than for me. Do not mistake me; I do not think that you value money (therefore I will not accept what you do not care for) though I do much less, because certain privations are not painful to me. When I am dead, respect for yourself will make you take care of the child.

I write with difficulty—probably I shall never write to you again.—Adieu!

God bless you!

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LETTER LXXI

Monday Morning.

I AM compelled at last to say that you treat me ungenerously. I agree with you, that

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But let the obliquity now fall on me.—I fear neither poverty nor infamy. I am unequal to the task of writing—and explanations are not necessary.

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My child may have to blush for her mother's want of prudence—and may lament that the rectitude of my heart made me above vulgar precautions; but she shall not despise me for meanness.—You are now perfectly free.—God bless you.

LETTER LXXIII

Saturday Night.

I HAVE been hurt by indirect enquiries, which appear to me not to be dictated by any tendernefs to me.—You ask "If I am well or tranquil?"—They who think me fo, muft want a heart to eftimate my feelings by.—I chufe then to be the organ of my own fentiments.

I muft tell you, that I am very much mortified by your continually offering me pecuniary affiftance—and, confidering your going to the new houfe, as an open avowal that you abandon me, let me tell you that I will fooner perifh than receive any thing from you—and I fay this at the moment when I am difappointed in my firft attempt to obtain a temporary fupply. But this even pleafes me; an accumulation of difappointments and miffortunes feems to fuit the habit of my mind.—

Have but a little patience, and I will remove myfelf where it will not be neceffary for you to talk—of courfe, not to think of me. But let me fee, written by yourfelf—for I will not receive it through any other medium—that the affair is finifhed.—It is an infult to me to fuppofe, that I can be reconciled, or recover my fpirits; but, if you hear nothing of me, it will be the fame thing to you.

* * * *

Even your feeing me, has been to oblige other people, and not to footh my diftracted mind.

LETTER LXXIV

Thurfday Afternoon.

MR. ——— having forgot to defire you to fend the things of mine which were left at the houfe, I have to request you to let ——— bring them onto ———.

I fhall go this evening to the lodging; fo you need not be reftained from coming here to tranfact your bufinefs.—And, whatever I may think, and feel—you need not fear that I fhall publicly complain—No! If I have any criterion to judge of right and wrong, I have been moft ungeneroufly treated: but, wifhing now only to hide myfelf, I fhall be filent as the grave in which I long to forget myfelf. I fhall protect and provide for my child.—I only mean by this to fay, that you having nothing to fear from my defperation.

Farewel.

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LETTER LXXV

London, November 27.

THE letter, without an addrefs, which you put up with the letters you returned, did not meet my eyes till juft now.—I had thrown the letters afide—I did not wifh to look over a register of forrow.

My not having seen it, will account for my having written to you with anger—under the impression your departure, without even a line left for me, made on me, even after your late conduct, which could not lead me to expect much attention to my sufferings.

In fact, "the decided conduct, which appeared to me so unfeeling," has almost overturned my reason; my mind is injured—I scarcely know where I am, or what I do.—The grief I cannot conquer (for some cruel recollections never quit me, banishing almost every other) I labour to conceal in total solitude.—My life therefore is but an exercise of fortitude, continually on the stretch—and hope never gleams in this tomb, where I am buried alive.

But I meant to reason with you, and not to complain.—You tell me, "that I shall judge more coolly of your mode of acting, some time hence." But is it not possible that *passion* clouds your reason, as much as it does mine?—and ought you not to doubt, whether those principles are so "exalted," as you term them, which only lead to your own gratification? In other words, whether it be just to have no principle of action, but that of following your inclination, trampling on the affection you have fostered, and the expectations you have excited?

My affection for you is rooted in my heart.—I know you are not what you now seem—nor will you always act, or feel, as you now do, though I may never be comforted by the change.—Even at Paris, my image will haunt you.—You will see my pale face—and sometimes the tears of anguish will drop on your heart, which you have forced from mine.

I cannot write. I thought I could quickly have refuted all your *ingenious* arguments; but my head is confused.—Right or wrong, I am miserable!

It seems to me, that my conduct has always been governed by the strictest principles of justice and truth.—Yet, how wretched have my social feelings, and delicacy of sentiment rendered me!—I have loved with my whole soul, only to discover that I had no chance of a return—and that existence is a burthen without it.

I do not perfectly understand you.—If, by the offer of your friendship, you still only mean pecuniary support—I must again reject it.—Trifling are the ills of poverty in the scale of my misfortunes.—God bless you!

* * * *

I have been treated ungenerously—if I understand what is generosity.—You seem to me only to have been anxious to shake me off—regardless whether you dashed me to atoms by the fall.—In truth I have been rudely handled. *Do you judge coolly*, and I trust you will not continue to call those capricious feelings "the most refined," which would undermine not only the most sacred principles, but the affections which unite mankind.—You would render mothers unnatural—and there would be no such thing as a father!—If your theory of morals is the most "exalted," it is certainly the most easy.—It does not require much magnanimity, to determine to please ourselves for the moment, let others suffer what they will!

Excuse me for again tormenting you, my heart thirsts for justice from you—and whilst I recollect that you approved Miss ——'s conduct—I am convinced you will not always justify your own.

Beware of the deceptions of passion! It will not always banish from your mind, that you have acted ignobly—and condescended to subterfuge to gloss over the conduct you could not excuse.—Do truth and principle require such sacrifices?

LETTER LXXVI

London, December 8.

HAVING juſt been informed that —— is to return immediately to Paris, I would not miſs a ſure opportunity of writing, becauſe I am not certain that my laſt, by Dover has reached you.

Repentment, and even anger, are momentary emotions with me—and I wiſhed to tell you ſo, that if you ever think of me, it may not be in the light of an enemy.

That I have not been uſed *well* I muſt ever feel; perhaps, not always with the keen anguiſh I do at preſent—for I began even now to write calmly, and I cannot refrain my tears.

I am ſtunned!—Your late conduct ſtill appears to me a frightful dream.—Ah! aſk yourſelf if you have not condeſcended to employ a little addreſs, I could almoſt ſay cunning, unworthy of you?—Principles are ſacred things—and we never play with truth, with impunity.

The expectation (I have too fondly nourished it) of regaining your affection, every day grows fainter and fainter.—Indeed, it ſeems to me, when I am more ſad than uſual, that I ſhall never ſee you more.—Yet you will not always forget me.—You will feel ſomething like remorse, for having lived only for yourſelf—and ſacrificed my peace to inferior gratifications. In a comfortleſs old age, you will remember that you had one diſintereſted friend, whoſe heart you wounded to the quick. The hour of recollection will come—and you will not be ſatiſfied to act the part of a boy, till you fall into that of a dotard. I know that your mind, your heart, and your principles of action, are all ſuperior to your preſent conduct. You do, you muſt, reſpect me—and you will be ſorry to forfeit my eſteem.

You know beſt whether I am ſtill preſerving the remembrance of an imaginary being.—I once thought that I knew you thoroughly—but now I am obliged to leave ſome doubts that involuntarily preſs on me, to be cleared up by time.

You may render me unhappy; but cannot make me contemptible in my own eyes.—I ſhall ſtill be able to ſupport my child, though I am diſappointed in ſome other plans of uſefulneſs, which I once believed would have afforded you equal pleaſure.

Whilſt I was with you, I reſtrained my natural generoſity, becauſe I thought your property in jeopardy.—When I went to ——, I requeſted you, *if you could conveniently*, not to forget my father, ſiſters, and ſome other people, whom I was intereſted about.—Money was lavished away, yet not only my requeſts were neglected, but ſome trifling debts were not diſcharged, that now come on me.—Was this friendſhip—or generoſity? Will you not grant you have forgotten yourſelf? Still I have an affection for you.—God bleſs you.

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LETTER LXXVII

As the parting from you for ever is the moſt ſerious event of my life, I will once expoſtulate with you, and call not the language of truth and feeling ingenuity!

I know the ſoundneſs of your underſtanding—and know that it is impoſſible for you always to confound the

caprices of every wayward inclination with the manly dictates of principle.

You tell me "that I torment you."—Why do I?—Because you cannot estrange your heart entirely from me—and you feel that justice is on my side. You urge, "that your conduct was unequivocal."—It was not.—When your coolness has hurt me, with what tenderness have you endeavoured to remove the impression!—and even before I returned to England, you took great pains to convince me, that all my uneasiness was occasioned by the effect of a worn-out constitution—and you concluded your letter with these words, "Business alone has kept me from you.—Come to any port, and I will fly down to my two dear girls with a heart all their own."

With these assurances, is it extraordinary that I should believe what I wished? I might—and did think that you had a struggle with old propensities; but I still thought that I and virtue should at last prevail. I still thought that you had a magnanimity of character, which would enable you to conquer yourself.

———, believe me, it is not romance, you have acknowledged to me feelings of this kind.—You could restore me to life and hope, and the satisfaction you would feel, would amply repay you.

In tearing myself from you, it is my own heart I pierce—and the time will come, when you will lament that you have thrown away a heart, that, even in the moment of passion, you cannot despise.—I would owe every thing to your generosity—but, for God's sake, keep me no longer in suspense!—Let me see you once more!—

LETTER LXXVIII

You must do as you please with respect to the child.—I could wish that it might be done soon, that my name may be no more mentioned to you. It is now finished.—Convinced that you have neither regard nor friendship, I disdain to utter a reproach, though I have had reason to think, that the "forbearance" talked of, has not been very delicate.—It is however of no consequence.—I am glad you are satisfied with your own conduct.

I now solemnly assure you, that this is an eternal farewell.—Yet I flinch not from the duties which tie me to life.

That there is "sophistry" on one side or other, is certain; but now it matters not on which. On my part it has not been a question of words. Yet your understanding or mine must be strangely warped—for what you term "delicacy," appears to me to be exactly the contrary. I have no criterion for morality, and have thought in vain, if the sensations which lead you to follow an angle or step, be the sacred foundation of principle and affection. Mine has been of a very different nature, or it would not have stood the brunt of your sarcasms.

The sentiment in me is still sacred. If there be any part of me that will survive the sense of my misfortunes, it is the purity of my affections. The impetuosity of your senses, may have led you to term mere animal desire, the source of principle; and it may give zest to some years to come.—Whether you will always think so, I shall never know.

It is strange that, in spite of all you do, something like conviction forces me to believe, that you are not what you appear to be.

I part with you in peace.

LETTER

ON THE

PRESENT CHARACTER
OF THE

FRENCH NATION.

LETTER

Introductory to a Series of Letters on the Present Character of the French Nation.

Paris, February 15, 1793.

My dear friend,

It is necessary perhaps for an observer of mankind, to guard as carefully the remembrance of the first impression made by a nation, as by a countenance; because we imperceptibly lose sight of the national character, when we become more intimate with individuals. It is not then useless or presumptuous to note, that, when I first entered Paris, the striking contrast of riches and poverty, elegance and slovenliness, urbanity and deceit, every where caught my eye, and saddened my soul; and these impressions are still the foundation of my remarks on the manners, which flatter the senses, more than they interest the heart, and yet excite more interest than esteem.

The whole mode of life here tends indeed to render the people frivolous, and, to borrow their favourite epithet, amiable. Ever on the wing, they are always tipping the sparkling joy on the brim of the cup, leaving satiety in the bottom for those who venture to drink deep. On all sides they trip along, buoyed up by animal spirits, and seemingly so void of care, that often, when I am walking on the *Boulevards*, it occurs to me, that they alone understand the full import of the term leisure; and they trifle their time away with such an air of contentment, I know not how to wish them wiser at the expence of their gaiety. They play before me like motes in a sunbeam, enjoying the passing ray; whilst an English head, searching for more solid happiness, loses, in the analysis of pleasure, the volatile sweets of the moment. Their chief enjoyment, it is true, rises from vanity: but it is not the vanity that engenders vexation of spirit; on the contrary, it lightens the heavy burthen of life, which reason too often weighs, merely to shift from one shoulder to the other.

Investigating the modification of the passion, as I would analyze the elements that give a form to dead matter, I shall attempt to trace to their source the causes which have combined to render this nation the most polished, in a physical sense, and probably the most superficial in the world; and I mean to follow the windings of the various streams that disembogue into a terrific gulf, in which all the dignity of our nature is absorbed. For every thing has conspired to make the French the most sensual people in the world; and what can render the heart so hard, or so effectually stifle every moral emotion, as the refinements of sensuality?

The frequent repetition of the word French, appears invidious; let me then make a previous observation, which I beg you not to lose sight of, when I speak rather harshly of a land flowing with milk and honey.

Remember that it is not the morals of a particular people that I would decry; for are we not all of the same stock? But I wish calmly to consider the stage of civilization in which I find the French, and, giving a sketch of their character, and unfolding the circumstances which have produced its identity, I shall endeavour to throw some light on the history of man, and on the present important subjects of discussion.

I would I could first inform you that, out of the chaos of vices and follies, prejudices and virtues, rudely jumbled together, I saw the fair form of Liberty slowly rising, and Virtue expanding her wings to shelter all her children! I should then hear the account of the barbarities that have rent the bosom of France patiently, and bless the firm hand that lopt off the rotten limbs. But, if the aristocracy of birth is levelled with the ground, only to make room for that of riches, I am afraid that the morals of the people will not be much improved by the change, or the government rendered less venal. Still it is not just to dwell on the misery produced by the present struggle, without adverting to the standing evils of the old system. I am grieved—forever grieved—when I think of the blood that has stained the cause of freedom at Paris; but I also hear the same live stream cry aloud from the highways, through which the retreating armies passed with famine and death in their rear, and I hide my face with awe before the inscrutable ways of providence, sweeping in such various directions the bosom of destruction over the sons of men.

Before I came to France, I cherished, you know, an opinion, that strong virtues might exist with the polished manners produced by the progress of civilization; and I even anticipated the epoch, when, in the course of improvement, men would labour to become virtuous, without being goaded on by misery. But now, the perspective of the golden age, fading before the attentive eye of observation, almost eludes my sight; and, losing thus in part my theory of a more perfect state, start not, my friend, if I bring forward an opinion, which at the first glance seems to be levelled against the existence of God! I am not become an Atheist, I assure you, by residing at Paris: yet I begin to fear that vice, or, if you will, evil, is the grand mobile of action, and that, when the passions are justly poised, we become harmless, and in the same proportion useless.

The wants of reason are very few; and, were we to consider dispassionately the real value of most things, we should probably rest satisfied with the simple gratification of our physical necessities, and be content with negative goodness: for it is frequently, only that wanton, the Imagination, with her artful coquetry, who lures us forward, and makes us run over a rough road, pushing aside every obstacle merely to catch a disappointment.

The desire also of being useful to others, is continually damped by experience; and, if the exertions of humanity were not in some measure their own reward, who would endure misery, or struggle with care, to make some people ungrateful, and others idle?

You will call these melancholy effusions, and guess that, fatigued by the vivacity, which has all the bustling folly of childhood, without the innocence which renders ignorance charming, I am too severe in my strictures. It may be so; and I am aware that the good effects of the revolution will be last felt at Paris; where surely the soul of Epicurus has long been at work to root out the simple emotions of the heart, which, being natural, are always moral. Rendered cold and artificial by the selfish enjoyments of the senses, which the government fostered, is it surprising that simplicity of manners, and singleness of heart, rarely appear, to recreate me with the wild odour of nature, so passing sweet?

Seeing how deep the fibres of mischief have shot, I sometimes ask, with a doubting accent, Whether a nation can go back to the purity of manners which has hitherto been maintained un sullied only by the keen air of poverty, when, emasculated by pleasure, the luxuries of prosperity are become the wants of nature? I cannot yet give up the hope, that a fairer day is dawning on Europe, though I must hesitatingly observe, that

little is to be expected from the narrow principle of commerce which seems every where to be shoving aside *the point of honour* of the *nobleſſe*. I can look beyond the evils of the moment, and do not expect muddied water to become clear before it has had time to ſtand; yet, even for the moment, it is the moſt terrific of all ſights, to ſee men vicious without warmth—to ſee the order that ſhould be the ſuperſcription of virtue, cultivated to give ſecurity to crimes which only thoughtleſſneſs could palliate. Diſorder is, in fact, the very eſſence of vice, though with the wild wiſhes of a corrupt fancy humane emotions often kindly mix to ſoften their atrocity. Thus humanity, generoſity, and even ſelf-denial, ſometimes render a character grand, and even uſeful, when hurried away by lawleſs paſſions; but what can equal the turpitude of a cold calculator who lives for himſelf alone, and conſidering his fellow-creatures merely as machines of pleaſure, never forgets that honeſty is the beſt policy? Keeping ever within the pale of the law, he cruſhes his thouſands with impunity; but it is with that degree of management, which makes him, to borrow a ſignificant vulgariſm, a villain *in grain*. The very exceſs of his depravation preſerves him, whilſt the more reſpectable beaſt of prey, who prowls about like the lion, and roars to announce his approach, falls into a ſnare.

You may think it too ſoon to form an opinion of the future government, yet it is impoſſible to avoid hazarding ſome conjectures, when every thing whiſpers me, that names, not principles, are changed, and when I ſee that the turn of the tide has left the dregs of the old ſyſtem to corrupt the new. For the ſame pride of office, the ſame deſire of power are ſtill viſible; with this aggravation, that, fearing to return to obſcurity after having but juſt acquired a reliſh for diſtinction, each hero, or philoſopher, for all are dubbed with theſe new titles, endeavours to make hay while the ſun ſhines; and every petty municipal officer, become the idol, or rather the tyrant of the day, ſtalks like a cock on a dunghil.

I ſhall now conclude this deſultory letter; which however will enable you to foreſee that I ſhall treat more of morals than manners.

Yours ———

FRAGMENT

OF

LETTERS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

CONTENTS.

Introductory Letter.

LETTER II. Management of the Mother during pregnancy: bathing.

LETTER III. Lying-in.

LETTER IV. The first month: diet: clothing.

LETTER V. The three following months.

LETTER VI. The remainder of the first year.

LETTER VII. The second year, &c: conclusion.

LETTERS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

LETTER I

I OUGHT to apologize for not having written to you on the subject you mentioned; but, to tell you the truth, it grew upon me: and, instead of an answer, I have begun a series of letters on the management of children in their infancy. Replying then to your question, I have the public in my thoughts, and shall endeavour to show what modes appear to me necessary, to render the infancy of children more healthy and happy. I have long thought, that the cause which renders children as hard to rear as the most fragile plant, is our deviation from simplicity. I know that some able physicians have recommended the method I have pursued, and I mean to point out the good effects I have observed in practice. I am aware that many matrons will exclaim against me, and dwell on the number of children they have brought up, as their mothers did before them, without troubling themselves with new-fangled notions; yet, though, in my uncle Toby's words, they should attempt to silence me, by "wishing I had seen their large" families, I must suppose, while a third part of the human species, according to the most accurate calculation, die during their infancy, just at the threshold of life, that there is some error in the modes adopted by mothers and nurses, which counteracts their own endeavours. I may be mistaken in some particulars; for general rules, founded on the soundest reason, demand individual modification; but, if I can persuade any of the rising generation to exercise their reason on this head, I am content. My advice will probably be found most useful to mothers in the middle class; and it is from them that the lower imperceptibly gains improvement. Custom, produced by reason in one, may safely be the effect of imitation in the other.

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LETTERS

TO

Mr. JOHNSON,
BOOKSELLER,
IN
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

LETTERS

TO

Mr. JOHNSON.

LETTER I

Dublin, April 14, [1787.]

Dear sir,

I AM still an invalid—and begin to believe that I ought never to expect to enjoy health. My mind preys on my body—and, when I endeavour to be useful, I grow too much interested for my own peace. Confined almost entirely to the society of children, I am anxiously solicitous for their future welfare, and mortified beyond measure, when counteracted in my endeavours to improve them.—I feel all a mother's fears for the swarm of little ones which surround me, and observe disorders, without having power to apply the proper remedies. How can I be reconciled to life, when it is always a painful warfare, and when I am deprived of all the pleasures I relish?—I allude to rational conversations, and domestic affections. Here, alone, a poor solitary individual in a strange land, tied to one spot, and subject to the caprice of another, can I be contented? I am desirous to convince you that I have *some* cause for sorrow—and am not without reason detached from life. I shall hope to hear that you are well, and am yours sincerely

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER II

Henley, Thursday, Sept 13.

My dear sir,

SINCE I saw you, I have, literally speaking, *enjoyed* solitude. My sister could not accompany me in my rambles; I therefore wandered alone, by the side of the Thames, and in the neighbouring beautiful fields and pleasure grounds: the prospects were of such a placid kind, I *caught* tranquillity while I surveyed them—my mind was *still*, though active. Were I to give you an account how I have spent my time, you would smile.—I found an old French bible here, and amused myself with comparing it with our English translation; then I would listen to the falling leaves, or observe the various tints the autumn gave to them—At other times, the singing of a robin, or the noise of a water-mill, engaged my attention—partial attention—, for I was, at the same time perhaps discussing some knotty point, or straying from this *tiny* world to new systems. After these excursions, I returned to the family meals, told the children stories (they think me *vastly* agreeable), and my sister was amused.—Well, will you allow me to call this way of passing my days pleasant?

I was just going to mend my pen; but I believe it will enable me to say all I have to add to this epistle. Have you yet heard of an habitation for me? I often think of my new plan of life; and, lest my sister should try to prevail on me to alter it, I have avoided mentioning it to her. I am determined!—Your sex generally laugh at female determinations; but let me tell you, I never yet resolved to do, any thing of consequence, that I did not adhere resolutely to it, till I had accomplished my purpose, improbable as it might have

appeared to a more timid mind. In the course of near nine-and-twenty years, I have gathered some experience, and felt many *severe* disappointments—and what is the amount? I long for a little peace and *independence*! Every obligation we receive from our fellow-creatures is a new shackle, takes from our native freedom, and debases the mind, makes us mere earthworms—I am not fond of grovelling!

I am, fir, yours, &c.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER III

Market Harborough, Sept. 20.

My dear fir,

YOU left me with three opulent tradesmen; their conversation was not calculated to beguile the way, when the fable curtain concealed the beauties of nature. I listened to the tricks of trade—and shrunk away, without wishing to grow rich; even the novelty of the subjects did not render them pleasing; fond as I am of tracing the passions in all their different forms—I was not surprised by any glimpse of the sublime, or beautiful—though one of them imagined I would be a useful partner in a good *firm*. I was very much fatigued, and have scarcely recovered myself. I do not expect to enjoy the same tranquil pleasures Henley afforded: I meet with new objects to employ my mind; but many painful emotions are complicated with the reflections they give rise to.

I do not intend to enter on the *old* topic, yet hope to hear from you—and am yours, &c.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER IV

Friday Night.

My dear fir,

THOUGH your remarks are generally judicious—I cannot *now* concur with you, I mean with respect to the preface^[67-A], and have not altered it. I hate the usual smooth way of exhibiting proud humility. A general rule *only* extends to the majority—and, believe me, the few judicious parents who may peruse my book, will not feel themselves hurt—and the weak are too vain to mind what is said in a book intended for children.

I return you the Italian MS.—but do not hastily imagine that I am indolent. I would not spare any labour to do my duty—and, after the most laborious day, that single thought would solace me more than any pleasures the senses could enjoy. I find I could not translate the MS. well. If it was not a MS, I should not be so easily intimidated; but the hand, and errors in orthography, or abbreviations, are a stumbling-block at the first setting out.—I cannot bear to do any thing I cannot do well—and I should lose time in the vain attempt.

I had, the other day, the satisfaction of again receiving a letter from my poor, dear Margaret^[69-A].—With all a mother's fondness I could transcribe a part of it—She says, every day her affection to me, and

dependence on heaven increafe, &c.—I mifs her innocent careffes—and fometimes indulge a pleafing hope, that fhe may be allowed to cheer my childlefs age—if I am to live to be old.—At any rate, I may hear of the virtues I may not contemplate—and my reafon may permit me to love a female.—I now allude to ———. I have received another letter from her, and her childifh complaints vex me—indeed they do—As ufual, good-night.

MARY.

If parents attended to their children, I would not have written the ftores; for, what are books—compared to converfations which affection inforces!—

LETTER V

My dear fir,

REMEMBER you are to fettle *my account*, as I want to know how much I am in your debt—but do not fuppose that I feel any uneafinefs on that fcore. The generality of people in trade would not be much obliged to me for a like civility, *but you were a man* before you were a bookfeller—fo I am your fincere friend,

MARY.

LETTER VI

Friday Morning.

I AM fick with vexation—and wifh I could knock my foolifh head againft the wall, that bodily pain might make me feel lefs anguifh from felf-reproach! To fay the truth, I was never more difpleafed with myfelf, and I will tell you the caufe.—You may recollect that I did not mention to you the circumftance of ——— having a fortune left to him; nor did a hint of it drop from me when I converfed with my fifter; becaufe I knew he had a fufficient motive for concealing it. Laft Sunday, when his character was afperfed, as I thought, unjuftly, in the heat of vindication I informed ***** that he was now independent; but, at the fame time, defired him not to repeat my information to B——; yet, laft Tuefday, he told him all—and the boy at B——'s gave Mrs. ——— an account of it. As Mr. ——— knew he had only made a confident of me (I blufh to think of it!) he gueffed the channel of intelligence, and this morning came (not to reproach me, I wifh he had!) but to point out the injury I have done him.—Let what will be the confequence, I will reimburse him, if I deny myfelf the neceffaries of life—and even then my folly will fting me.—Perhaps you can fcarcely conceive the mifery I at this moment endure—that I, whose power of doing good is fo limited, fould do harm, galls my very foul. ***** may laugh at thefe qualms—but, fuppoing Mr. ——— to be unworthy, I am not the lefs to blame. Surely it is hell to defpife one's felf!—I did not want this additional vexation—at this time I have many that hang heavily on my fpirits. I fhall not call on you this month—nor ftir out.—My ftomach has been fo fuddenly and violently affected, I am unable to lean over the defk.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER VII

As I am become a reviewer, I think it right, in the way of business, to consider the subject. You have alarmed the editor of the *Critical*, as the advertisement prefixed to the Appendix plainly shows. The *Critical* appears to me to be a timid, mean production, and its success is a reflection on the taste and judgment of the public; but, as a body, who ever gave it credit for much? The voice of the people is only the voice of truth, when some man of abilities has had time to get fast hold of the GREAT NOSE of the monster. Of course, local fame is generally a clamour, and dies away. The Appendix to the *Monthly* afforded me more amusement, though every article almost wants energy and a *cant* of virtue and liberality is strewed over it; always tame, and eager to pay court to established fame. The account of Necker is one unvaried tone of admiration. Surely men were born only to provide for the sustenance of the body by enfeebling the mind!

MARY.

LETTER VIII

YOU made me very low-spirited last night, by your manner of talking.—You are my only friend—the only person I am *intimate* with.—I never had a father, or a brother—you have been both to me, ever since I knew you—yet I have sometimes been very petulant.—I have been thinking of those instances of ill-humour and quickness, and they appeared like crimes.

Yours sincerely

MARY.

LETTER IX

Saturday Night.

I AM a mere animal, and instinctive emotions too often silence the suggestions of reason. Your note—I can scarcely tell why, hurt me—and produced a kind of winterly smile, which diffuses a beam of despondent tranquillity over the features. I have been very ill—Heaven knows it was more than fancy—After some sleepless, wearisome nights, towards the morning I have grown delirious.—Last Thursday, in particular, I imagined —— was thrown into great distress by his folly; and I, unable to assist him, was in an agony. My nerves were in such a painful state of irritation—I suffered more than I can express—Society was necessary—and might have diverted me till I gained more strength; but I blushed when I recollected how often I had teased you with childish complaints, and the reveries of a disordered imagination. I even *imagined* that I intruded on you, because you never called on me—though you perceived that I was not well.—I have nourished a sickly kind of delicacy, which gives me many unnecessary pangs.—I acknowledge that life is but a jest—and often a frightful dream—yet catch myself every day searching for something serious—and feel real misery from the disappointment. I am a strange compound of weakness and resolution! However, if I must suffer, I will endeavour to suffer in silence. There is certainly a great defect in my mind—my wayward heart creates its own misery—Why I am made thus I cannot tell; and, till I can form some idea of the whole of my existence, I must be content to weep and dance like a child—long for a toy, and be tired of it as soon as I get it.

We must each of us wear a fool's cap; but mine, alas! has lost its bells, and is grown so heavy, I find it intolerably troublesome.——Good-night! I have been pursuing a number of strange thoughts since I began to write, and have actually both wept and laughed immoderately—Surely I am a fool—

MARY W.

LETTER X

Monday Morning.

I REALLY want a German grammar, as I intend to attempt to learn that language—and I will tell you the reason why.—While I live, I am persuaded, I must exert my understanding to procure an independence, and render myself useful. To make the task easier, I ought to store my mind with knowledge—The best time is passing away. I see the necessity of labouring now—and of that necessity I do not complain; on the contrary, I am thankful that I have more than common incentives to pursue knowledge, and draw my pleasures from the employments that are within my reach. You perceive this is not a gloomy day—I feel at this moment particularly grateful to you—without your humane and *delicate* assistance, how many obstacles should I not have had to encounter—too often should I have been out of patience with my fellow-creatures, whom I wish to love!—Allow me to love you, my dear sir, and call friend a being I respect.—Adieu!

LETTER XI

I THOUGHT you *very* unkind, nay, very unfeeling, laſt night. My cares and vexations—I will ſay what I allow myſelf to think—do me honour, as they ariſe from my diſintereſtedneſs and *unbending* principles; nor can that mode of conduct be a reflection on my underſtanding, which enables me to bear miſery, rather than ſelfiſhly live for myſelf alone. I am not the only character deſerving of reſpect, that has had to ſtruggle with various ſorrows—while inferior minds have enjoyed local fame and preſent comfort.—Dr. Johnſon's cares almoſt drove him mad—but, I ſuppoſe, you would quietly have told him, he was a fool for not being calm, and that wiſe men ſtriving againſt the ſtream, can yet be in good humour. I have done with inſenſible human wiſdom,—“indifference cold in wiſdom's guiſe,”—and turn to the ſource of perfection—who perhaps never diſregarded an almoſt broken heart, eſpecially when a reſpect, a practical reſpect, for virtue, ſharpened the wounds of adverſity. I am ill—I ſtayed in bed this morning till eleven o'clock, only thinking of getting money to extricate myſelf out of ſome of my difficulties—The ſtruggle is now over. I will condeſcend to try to obtain ſome in a diſagreeable way.

Mr. ——— called on me juſt now—pray did you know his motive for calling^[82-A]?—I think him impertinently officious.—He had left the houſe before it occurred to me in the ſtrong light it does now, or I ſhould have told him ſo—My poverty makes me proud—I will not be inſulted by a ſuperficial puppy.—His intimacy with Miſs ——— gave him a privilege, which he ſhould not have aſſumed with me—a propoſal might be made to his couſin, a milliner's girl, which ſhould not have been mentioned to me. Pray tell him that I am offended—and do not wiſh to ſee him again!—When I meet him at your houſe, I ſhall leave the room, ſince I cannot pull him by the noſe. I can force my ſpirit to leave my body—but it ſhall never bend to ſupport that body—God of heaven, ſave thy child from this living death!—I ſcarcely know what I write. My hand trembles—I am very ſick—ſick at heart.——

MARY.

LETTER XII

Tueſday Evening.

Sir,

WHEN you left me this morning, and I reflected a moment—your *officious* meſſage, which at firſt appeared to me a joke—looked ſo very like an inſult—I cannot forget it—To prevent then the neceſſity of forcing a ſmile—when I chance to meet you—I take the earlieſt opportunity of informing you of my real ſentiments.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER XIII

Wedneſday, 3 o'clock.

Sir,

It is inexpressibly disagreeable to me to be obliged to enter again on a subject, that has already raised a tumult of *indignant* emotions in my bosom, which I was labouring to suppress when I received your letter. I shall now *condescend* to answer your epistle; but let me first tell you, that, in my *unprotected* situation, I make a point of never forgiving a *deliberate insult*—and in that light I consider your late officious conduct. It is not according to my nature to mince matters—I will then tell you in plain terms, what I think. I have ever considered you in the light of a *civil* acquaintance—on the word friend I lay a peculiar emphasis—and, as a mere acquaintance, you were rude and *cruel*, to step forward to insult a woman, whose conduct and misfortunes demand respect. If my friend, Mr. Johnson, had made the proposal—I should have been severely hurt—have thought him unkind and unfeeling, but not *impertinent*.—The privilege of intimacy you had no claim to—and should have referred the man to myself—if you had not sufficient discernment to quash it at once. I am, sir, poor and destitute.—Yet I have a spirit that will never bend, or take indirect methods, to obtain the consequence I despise; nay, if to support life it was necessary to act contrary to my principles, the struggle would soon be over. I can bear any thing but my own contempt.

In a few words, what I call an insult, is the bare supposition that I could for a moment think of *prostituting* my person for a maintenance; for in that point of view does such a marriage appear to me, who consider right and wrong in the abstract, and never by words and local opinions shield myself from the reproaches of my own heart and understanding.

It is needless to say more—Only you must excuse me when I add, that I wish never to see, but as a perfect stranger, a person who could so grossly mistake my character. An apology is not necessary—if you were inclined to make one—nor any further expostulations.—I again repeat, I cannot overlook an affront; few indeed have sufficient delicacy to respect poverty, even where it gives lustre to a character—and I tell you sir, I am POOR—yet can live without your benevolent exertions.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER XIV

I SEND you *all* the books I had to review except Dr. J—'s Sermons, which I have begun. If you wish me to look over any more trash this month—you must send it directly. I have been so low-spirited since I saw you—I was quite glad, last night, to feel myself affected by some passages in Dr. J—'s sermon on the death of his wife—I seemed (suddenly) to *find my soul* again—It has been for some time I cannot tell where. Send me the Speaker—and *Mary*, I want one—and I shall soon want some paper—you may as well send it at the same time—for I am trying to brace my nerves that I may be industrious.—I am afraid reason is not a good bracer—for I have been reasoning a long time with my untoward spirits—and yet my hand trembles.—I could finish a period very *prettily* now, by saying that it ought to be steady when I add that I am yours sincerely,

MARY.

If you do not like the manner in which I reviewed Dr. J—'s f—— on his wife, be it known unto you—I *will* not do it any other way—I felt some pleasure in paying a just tribute of respect to the memory of a man—who, spite of his faults, I have an affection for—I say *have*, for I believe he is somewhere—*where* my soul has been gadding perhaps;—but *you* do not live on conjectures.

LETTER XV

My dear fir, I fend you a chapter which I am pleased with, now I see it in one point of view—and, as I have made free with the author, I hope you will not have often to say—what does this mean?

You forgot you were to make out my account—I am, of course, over head and ears in debt; but I have not that kind of pride, which makes some dislike to be obliged to those they respect.—On the contrary, when I involuntarily lament that I have not a father or brother, I thankfully recollect that I have received unexpected kindness from you and a few others.—So reason allows, what nature impels me to—for I cannot live without loving my fellow-creatures—nor can I love them, without discovering some virtue.

MARY.

LETTER XVI

Paris, December 26, 1792.

I SHOULD immediately on the receipt of your letter, my dear friend, have thanked you for your punctuality, for it highly gratified me, had I not wished to wait till I could tell you that this day was not stained with blood. Indeed the prudent precautions taken by the National Convention to prevent a tumult, made me suppose that the dogs of faction would not dare to bark, much less to bite, however true to their scent; and I was not mistaken; for the citizens, who were all called out, are returning home with composed countenances, shouldering their arms. About nine o'clock this morning, the king passed by my window, moving silently along (excepting now and then a few strokes on the drum, which rendered the stillness more awful) through empty streets, surrounded by the national guards, who, clustering round the carriage, seemed to deserve their name. The inhabitants flocked to their windows, but the casements were all shut, not a voice was heard, nor did I see any thing like an insulting gesture.—For the first time since I entered France, I bowed to the majesty of the people, and respected the propriety of behaviour so perfectly in unison with my own feelings. I can scarcely tell you why, but an association of ideas made the tears flow insensibly from my eyes, when I saw Louis sitting, with more dignity than I expected from his character, in a hackney coach, going to meet death, where so many of his race have triumphed. My fancy instantly brought Louis XIV before me, entering the capital with all his pomp, after one of the victories most flattering to his pride, only to see the sunshine of prosperity overshadowed by the sublime gloom of misery. I have been alone ever since; and, though my mind is calm, I cannot dismiss the lively images that have filled my imagination all the day.—Nay, do not smile, but pity me; for, once or twice, lifting my eyes from the paper, I have seen eyes glare through a glass-door opposite my chair and bloody hands shook at me. Not the distant sound of a footstep can I hear.—My apartments are remote from those of the servants, the only persons who sleep with me in an immense hotel, one folding door opening after another.—I wish I had even kept the cat with me!—I want to see something alive; death in so many frightful shapes has taken hold of my fancy.—I am going to bed—and, for the first time in my life, I cannot put out the candle.

M. W.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[67-A\]](#) To Original Stories.

[\[69-A\]](#) Countess Mount Cashel.

[\[82-A\]](#) This alludes to a foolish proposal of marriage for mercenary considerations, which the gentleman here mentioned thought proper to recommend to her. The two letters which immediately follow, are addressed to the gentleman himself.

EXTRACT

OF THE

CAVE OF FANCY.

A TALE.



[Begun to be written in the year 1787, but never completed]



CAVE OF FANCY.



CHAP. I.

YE who expect constancy where every thing is changing, and peace in the midst of tumult, attend to the voice of experience, and mark in time the footsteps of disappointment, or life will be lost in desultory wishes, and death arrive before the dawn of wisdom.

In a sequestered valley, surrounded by rocky mountains that intercepted many of the passing clouds, though sunbeams variegated their ample sides, lived a sage, to whom nature had unlocked her most hidden secrets. His hollow eyes, sunk in their orbits, retired from the view of vulgar objects, and turned inwards, overleaped the boundary prescribed to human knowledge. Intense thinking during fourscore and ten years, had whitened the scattered locks on his head, which, like the summit of the distant mountain, appeared to be bound by an eternal frost.

On the sandy waste behind the mountains, the track of ferocious beasts might be traced, and sometimes the mangled limbs which they left, attracted a hovering flight of birds of prey. An extensive wood the sage had forced to rear its head in a soil by no means congenial, and the firm trunks of the trees seemed to frown with defiance on time; though the spoils of innumerable summers covered the roots, which resembled fangs; so closely did they cling to the unfriendly land, where serpents hissed, and snakes, rolling out their vast folds, inhaled the noxious vapours. The ravens and owls who inhabited the solitude, gave also a thicker gloom to the everlasting twilight, and the croaking of the former a monotony, in unison with the gloom; whilst lions and tigers, shunning even this faint semblance of day, sought the dark caverns, and at night, when they shook off sleep, their roaring would make the whole valley resound, confounded with the screechings of the bird of night.

One mountain rose sublime, towering above all, on the craggy sides of which a few sea-weeds grew, washed by the ocean, that with tumultuous roar rushed to assault, and even undermine, the huge barrier that stopped its progress; and ever and anon a ponderous mass, loosened from the cliff, to which it scarcely seemed to adhere, always threatening to fall, fell into the flood, rebounding as it fell, and the sound was re-echoed from rock to rock. Look where you would, all was without form, as if nature, suddenly stopping her hand, had left chaos a retreat.

Close to the most remote side of it was the sage's abode. It was a rude hut, formed of stumps of trees and matted twigs, to secure him from the inclemency of the weather; only through small apertures crossed with rushes, the wind entered in wild murmurs, modulated by these obstructions. A clear spring broke out of the middle of the adjacent rock, which, dropping slowly into a cavity it had hollowed, soon overflowed, and then ran, struggling to free itself from the cumbrous fragments, till, become a deep, silent stream, it escaped through reeds, and roots of trees, whose blasted tops overhung and darkened the current.

One side of the hut was supported by the rock, and at midnight, when the sage struck the inclosed part, it yawned wide, and admitted him into a cavern in the very bowels of the earth, where never human foot before had trod; and the various spirits, which inhabit the different regions of nature, were here obedient to his potent word. The cavern had been formed by the great inundation of waters, when the approach of a comet forced them from their source; then, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, a stream rushed out of the centre of the earth, where the spirits, who have lived on it, are confined to purify themselves from the dross contracted in their first stage of existence; and it flowed in black waves, for ever bubbling along the cave, the extent of which had never been explored. From the sides and top, water

distilled, and, petrifying as it fell, took fantastic shapes, that soon divided it into apartments, if so they might be called. In the foam, a wearied spirit would sometimes rise, to catch the most distant glimpse of light, or taste the vagrant breeze, which the yawning of the rock admitted, when Sagestus, for that was the name of the hoary sage, entered. Some, who were refined and almost cleared from vicious spots, he would allow to leave, for a limited time, their dark prison-house; and, flying on the winds across the bleak northern ocean, or rising in an exhalation till they reached a sun-beam, they thus re-visited the haunts of men. These were the guardian angels, who in soft whispers restrain the vicious, and animate the wavering wretch who stands suspended between virtue and vice.

Sagestus had spent a night in the cavern, as he often did, and he left the silent vestibule of the grave, just as the sun, emerging from the ocean, dispersed the clouds, which were not half so dense as those he had left. All that was human in him rejoiced at the sight of reviving life, and he viewed with pleasure the mounting sap rising to expand the herbs, which grew spontaneously in this wild—when, turning his eyes towards the sea, he found that death had been at work during his absence, and terrific marks of a furious storm still spread horror around. Though the day was serene, and threw bright rays on eyes for ever shut, it dawned not for the wretches who hung pendent on the craggy rocks, or were stretched lifeless on the sand. Some, struggling, had dug themselves a grave; others had resigned their breath before the impetuous surge whirled them on shore. A few, in whom the vital spark was not so soon dislodged, had clung to loose fragments; it was the grasp of death; embracing the stone, they stiffened; and the head, no longer erect, rested on the mass which the arms encircled. It felt not the agonizing gripe, nor heard the sigh that broke the heart in twain.

Resting his chin on an oaken club, the sage looked on every side, to see if he could discern any who yet breathed. He drew nearer, and thought he saw, at the first glance, the unclosed eyes glare; but soon perceived that they were a mere glassy substance, mute as the tongue; the jaws were fallen, and, in some of the tangled locks, hands were clinched; nay, even the nails had entered sharpened by despair. The blood flew rapidly to his heart; it was flesh; he felt he was still a man, and the big tear paced down his iron cheeks, whose muscles had not for a long time been relaxed by such humane emotions. A moment he breathed quick, then heaved a sigh, and his wonted calm returned with an unaccustomed glow of tenderness; for the ways of heaven were not hid from him; he lifted up his eyes to the common Father of nature, and all was as still in his bosom, as the smooth deep, after having closed over the huge vessel from which the wretches had fled.

Turning round a part of the rock that jutted out, meditating on the ways of Providence, a weak infantine voice reached his ears; it was lisping out the name of mother. He looked, and beheld a blooming child leaning over, and kissing with eager fondness, lips that were insensible to the warm pressure. Starting at the sight of the sage, she fixed her eyes on him, "Wake her, ah! wake her," she cried, "or the sea will catch us." Again he felt compassion, for he saw that the mother slept the sleep of death. He stretched out his hand, and, smoothing his brow, invited her to approach; but she still intreated him to wake her mother, whom she continued to call, with an impatient tremulous voice. To detach her from the body by persuasion would not have been very easy. Sagestus had a quicker method to effect his purpose; he took out a box which contained a soporific powder, and as soon as the fumes reached her brain, the powers of life were suspended.

He carried her directly to his hut, and left her sleeping profoundly on his rufhy couch.

CHAP. II.

AGAIN Sageftus approached the dead, to view them with a more scrutinizing eye. He was perfectly acquainted with the construction of the human body, knew the traces that virtue or vice leaves on the whole frame; they were now indelibly fixed by death; nay more, he knew by the shape of the solid structure, how far the spirit could range, and saw the barrier beyond which it could not pass: the mazes of fancy he explored, measured the stretch of thought, and, weighing all in an even balance, could tell whom nature had stamped an hero, a poet, or philosopher.

By their appearance, at a transient glance, he knew that the vessel must have contained many passengers, and that some of them were above the vulgar, with respect to fortune and education; he then walked leisurely among the dead, and narrowly observed their pallid features.

His eye first rested on a form in which proportion reigned, and, stroking back the hair, a spacious forehead met his view; warm fancy had revelled there, and her airy dance had left vestiges, scarcely visible to a mortal eye. Some perpendicular lines pointed out that melancholy had predominated in his constitution; yet the straggling hairs of his eye-brows showed that anger had often shook his frame; indeed, the four temperaments, like the four elements, had resided in this little world, and produced harmony. The whole visage was bony, and an energetic frown had knit the flexible skin of his brow; the kingdom within had been extensive; and the wild creations of fancy had there "a local habitation and a name." So exquisite was his sensibility, so quick his comprehension, that he perceived various combinations in an instant; he caught truth as she darted towards him, saw all her fair proportion at a glance, and the flash of his eye spoke the quick senses which conveyed intelligence to his mind; the sensorium indeed was capacious, and the sage imagined he saw the lucid beam, sparkling with love or ambition, in characters of fire, which a graceful curve of the upper eyelid shaded. The lips were a little deranged by contempt; and a mixture of vanity and self-complacency formed a few irregular lines round them. The chin had suffered from sensuality, yet there were still great marks of vigour in it, as if advanced with stern dignity. The hand accustomed to command, and even tyrannize, was unnerved; but its appearance convinced Sageftus, that he had oftener wielded a thought than a weapon; and that he had silenced, by irresistible conviction, the superficial disputant, and the being, who doubted because he had not strength to believe, who, wavering between different borrowed opinions, first caught at one straw, then at another, unable to settle into any consistency of character. After gazing a few moments, Sageftus turned away exclaiming, How are the stately oaks torn up by a tempest, and the bow unstrung, that could force the arrow beyond the ken of the eye!

What a different face next met his view! The forehead was short, yet well set together; the nose small, but a little turned up at the end; and a draw-down at the sides of his mouth, proved that he had been a humourist, who minded the main chance, and could joke with his acquaintance, while he eagerly devoured a dainty which he was not to pay for. His lips shut like a box whose hinges had often been mended; and the muscles, which display the soft emotion of the heart on the cheeks, were grown quite rigid, so that, the vessels that should have moistened them not having much communication with the grand source of passions, the fine volatile fluid had evaporated, and they became mere dry fibres, which might be pulled by any misfortune that threatened himself, but were not sufficiently elastic to be moved by the miseries of others. His joints were inserted compactly, and with celerity they had performed all the animal functions, without any of the grace which results from the imagination mixing with the senses.

A huge form was stretched near him, that exhibited marks of overgrown infancy; every part was relaxed; all appeared imperfect. Yet, some undulating lines on the puffed-out cheeks, displayed signs of timid, servile good nature; and the skin of the forehead had been so often drawn up by wonder, that the few hairs of the eyebrows were fixed in a sharp arch, whilst an ample chin rested in lobes of flesh on his protuberant breast.

By his side was a body that had scarcely ever much life in it—sympathy seemed to have drawn them together—every feature and limb was round and fleshy, and, if a kind of brutal cunning had not marked the face, it might have been mistaken for an automaton, so unmixed was the phlegmatic fluid. The vital spark was buried deep in a soft mass of matter, resembling the pith in young elder, which, when found, is so equivocal, that it only appears a moist part of the same body.

Another part of the beach was covered with sailors, whose bodies exhibited marks of strength and brutal courage.—Their characters were all different, though of the same class; Sagestus did not stay to discriminate them, satisfied with a rough sketch. He saw indolence roused by a love of humour, or rather bodily fun; sensuality and prodigality with a vein of generosity running through it; a contempt of danger with gross superstition; lupine senses, only to be kept alive by noisy, tumultuous pleasures, or that kind of novelty which borders on absurdity: this formed the common outline, and the rest were rather dabs than shades.

Sagestus paused, and remembered it had been said by an earthly wit, that "many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air." How little, he exclaimed, did that poet know of the ways of heaven! And yet, in this respect, they are direct; the hands before me, were designed to pull a rope, knock down a sheep, or perform the servile offices of life; no "mute, inglorious poet" rests amongst them, and he who is superior to his fellow, does not rise above mediocrity. The genius that sprouts from a dunghill soon shakes off the heterogeneous mass; those only grovel, who have not power to fly.

He turned his step towards the mother of the orphan: another female was at some distance; and a man who, by his garb, might have been the husband, or brother, of the former, was not far off.

Him the sage surveyed with an attentive eye, and bowed with respect to the inanimate clay, that lately had been the dwelling of a most benevolent spirit. The head was square, though the features were not very prominent; but there was a great harmony in every part, and the turn of the nostrils and lips evinced, that the soul must have had taste, to which they had served as organs. Penetration and judgment were seated on the brows that overhung the eye. Fixed as it was, Sagestus quickly discerned the expression it must have had; dark and pensive, rather from slowness of comprehension than melancholy, it seemed to absorb the light of knowledge, to drink it in ray by ray; nay, a new one was not allowed to enter his head till the last was arranged: an opinion was thus cautiously received, and maturely weighed, before it was added to the general stock. As nature led him to mount from a part to the whole, he was most conversant with the beautiful, and rarely comprehended the sublime; yet, said Sagestus, with a softened tone, he was all heart, full of forbearance, and desirous to please every fellow-creature; but from a nobler motive than a love of admiration; the fumes of vanity never mounted to cloud his brain, or tarnish his beneficence. The fluid in which those placid eyes swam, is now congealed; how often has tenderness given them the finest water! Some torn parts of the child's dress hung round his arm, which led the sage to conclude, that he had saved the child; every line in his face confirmed the conjecture; benevolence indeed strung the nerves that naturally were not very firm; it was the great knot that tied together the scattered qualities, and gave the distinct stamp to the character.

The female whom he next approached, and supposed to be an attendant on the other, was below the middle

size, and her legs were so disproportionably short, that, when she moved, she must have waddled along; her elbows were drawn in to touch her long taper, waist, and the air of her whole body was an affectation of gentility. Death could not alter the rigid hang of her limbs, or efface the limper that had stretched her mouth; the lips were thin, as if nature intended she should mince her words; her nose was small, and sharp at the end; and the forehead, unmarked by eyebrows, was wrinkled by the discontent that had sunk her cheeks, on which Sagestus still discerned faint traces of tenderness; and fierce good-nature, he perceived had sometimes animated the little spark of an eye that anger had oftener lighted. The same thought occurred to him that the fight of the sailors had suggested, Men and women are all in their proper places—this female was intended to fold up linen and nurse the sick.

Anxious to observe the mother of his charge, he turned to the lily that had been so rudely snapped, and, carefully observing it, traced every fine line to its source. There was a delicacy in her form, so truly feminine, that an involuntary desire to cherish such a being, made the sage again feel the almost forgotten sensations of his nature. On observing her more closely, he discovered that her natural delicacy had been increased by an improper education, to a degree that took away all vigour from her faculties. And its baneful influence had had such an effect on her mind, that few traces of the exertions of it appeared on her face, though the fine finish of her features, and particularly the form of the forehead, convinced the sage that her understanding might have risen considerably above mediocrity, had the wheels ever been put in motion; but, clogged by prejudices, they never turned quite round, and, whenever she considered a subject, she stopped before she came to a conclusion. Assuming a mask of propriety, she had banished nature; yet its tendency was only to be diverted, not stifled. Some lines, which took from the symmetry of the mouth, not very obvious to a superficial observer, struck Sagestus, and they appeared to him characters of indolent obstinacy. Not having courage to form an opinion of her own, she adhered, with blind partiality, to those she adopted, which she received in the lump, and, as they always remained unopened, of course she only saw the even gloss on the outside. Vestiges of anger were visible on her brow, and the sage concluded, that she had often been offended with, and indeed would scarcely make any allowance for, those who did not coincide with her in opinion, as things always appear self-evident that have never been examined; yet her very weakness gave a charming timidity to her countenance; goodness and tenderness pervaded every lineament, and melted in her dark blue eyes. The compassion that wanted activity, was sincere, though it only embellished her face, or produced casual acts of charity when a moderate alms could relieve present distress. Unacquainted with life, fictitious, unnatural distress drew the tears that were not shed for real misery. In its own shape, human wretchedness excites a little disgust in the mind that has indulged sickly refinement. Perhaps the sage gave way to a little conjecture in drawing the last conclusion; but his conjectures generally arose from distinct ideas, and a dawn of light allowed him to see a great way farther than common mortals.

He was now convinced that the orphan was not very unfortunate in having lost such a mother. The parent that inspires fond affection without respect, is seldom an useful one; and they only are respectable, who consider right and wrong abstracted from local forms and accidental modifications.

Determined to adopt the child, he named it after himself, Sagesta, and retired to the hut where the innocent slept, to think of the best method of educating this child, whom the angry deep had spared.

[The last branch of the education of Sagesta, consisted of a variety of characters and stories presented to her in the Cave of Fancy, of which the following is a specimen.]

CHAP.

A FORM now approached that particularly struck and interested Sagesta. The sage, observing what passed in her mind, bade her ever trust to the first impression. In life, he continued, try to remember the effect the first appearance of a stranger has on your mind; and, in proportion to your sensibility, you may decide on the character. Intelligence glances from eyes that have the same pursuits, and a benevolent heart soon traces the marks of benevolence on the countenance of an unknown fellow-creature; and not only the countenance, but the gestures, the voice, loudly speak truth to the unprejudiced mind.

Whenever a stranger advances towards you with a tripping step, receives you with broad smiles, and a profusion of compliments, and yet you find yourself embarrassed and unable to return the salutation with equal cordiality, be assured that such a person is affected, and endeavours to maintain a very good character in the eyes of the world, without really practising the social virtues which dress the face in looks of unfeigned complacency. Kindred minds are drawn to each other by expressions which elude description; and, like the calm breeze that plays on a smooth lake, they are rather felt than seen. Beware of a man who always appears in good humour; a selfish design too frequently lurks in the smiles the heart never curved; or there is an affectation of candour that destroys all strength of character, by blending truth and falsehood into an unmeaning mass. The mouth, in fact, seems to be the feature where you may trace every kind of dissimulation, from the simper of vanity, to the fixed smile of the designing villain. Perhaps, the modulations of the voice will still more quickly give a key to the character than even the turns of the mouth, or the words that issue from it; often do the tones of unpractised dissemblers give the lie to their assertions. Many people never speak in an unnatural voice, but when they are insincere: the phrases not corresponding with the dictates of the heart, have nothing to keep them in tune. In the course of an argument however, you may easily discover whether vanity or conviction stimulates the disputant, though his inflated countenance may be turned from you, and you may not see the gestures which mark self-sufficiency. He stopped, and the spirit began.

I have wandered through the cave; and, as soon as I have taught you a useful lesson, I shall take my flight where my tears will cease to flow, and where mine eyes will no more be shocked with the sight of guilt and sorrow. Before many moons have changed, thou wilt enter, O mortal! into that world I have lately left. Listen to my warning voice, and trust not too much to the goodness which I perceive resides in thy breast. Let it be reined in by principles, lest thy very virtue sharpen the sting of remorse, which as naturally follows disorder in the moral world, as pain attends on intemperance in the physical. But my history will afford you more instruction than mere advice. Sagesta concurred in opinion with her, observing that the senses of children should be the first object of improvement; then their passions worked on; and judgment the fruit, must be the acquirement of the being itself, when out of leading-strings. The spirit bowed assent, and, without any further prelude, entered on her history.

My mother was a most respectable character, but she was yoked to a man whose follies and vices made her ever feel the weight of her chains. The first sensation I recollect, was pity; for I have seen her weep over me and the rest of her babes, lamenting that the extravagance of a father would throw us destitute on the world. But, though my father was extravagant, and seldom thought of any thing but his own pleasures, our education was not neglected. In solitude, this employment was my mother's only solace; and my father's pride made him procure us masters; nay, sometimes he was so gratified by our improvement, that he would embrace us with tenderness, and intreat my mother to forgive him, with marks of real contrition.

But the affection his penitence gave rise to, only served to expose her to continual disappointments, and keep hope alive merely to torment her. After a violent debauch he would let his beard grow, and the sadness that reigned in the house I shall never forget; he was ashamed to meet even the eyes of his children. This is so contrary to the nature of things, it gave me exquisite pain; I used, at those times, to show him extreme respect. I could not bear to see my parent humble himself before me. However neither his constitution, nor fortune could long bear the constant waste. He had, I have observed, a childish affection for his children, which was displayed in caresses that gratified him for the moment, yet never restrained the headlong fury of his appetites; his momentary repentance wrung his heart, without influencing his conduct; and he died, leaving an encumbered wreck of a good estate.

As we had always lived in splendid poverty, rather than in affluence, the shock was not so great; and my mother repressed her anguish, and concealed some circumstances, that she might not shed a destructive mildew over the gaiety of youth.

So fondly did I doat on this dear parent, that she engrossed all my tenderness; her sorrows had knit me firmly to her, and my chief care was to give her proofs of affection. The gallantry that afforded my companions, the few young people my mother forced me to mix with, so much pleasure, I despised; I wished more to be loved than admired, for I could love. I adored virtue; and my imagination, chafing a chimerical object, overlooked the common pleasures of life; they were not sufficient for my happiness. A latent fire made me burn to rise superior to my contemporaries in wisdom and virtue; and tears of joy and emulation filled my eyes when I read an account of a great action—I felt admiration, not astonishment.

My mother had two particular friends, who endeavoured to settle her affairs; one was a middle-aged man, a merchant; the human breast never enshrined a more benevolent heart. His manners were rather rough, and he bluntly spoke his thoughts without observing the pain it gave; yet he possessed extreme tenderness, as far as his discernment went. Men do not make sufficient distinction, said she, digressing from her story to address Sagestus, between tenderness and sensibility.

To give the shortest definition of sensibility, replied the sage, I should say that it is the result of acute senses, finely fashioned nerves, which vibrate at the slightest touch, and convey such clear intelligence to the brain, that it does not require to be arranged by the judgment. Such persons instantly enter into the characters of others, and instinctively discern what will give pain to every human being; their own feelings are so varied that they seem to contain in themselves, not only all the passions of the species, but their various modifications. Exquisite pain and pleasure is their portion; nature wears for them a different aspect than is displayed to common mortals. One moment it is a paradise; all is beautiful: a cloud arises, an emotion receives a sudden damp; darkness invades the sky, and the world is an unweeded garden;—but go on with your narrative, said Sagestus, recollecting himself.

She proceeded. The man I am describing was humanity itself; but frequently he did not understand me; many of my feelings were not to be analyzed by his common sense. His friendships, for he had many friends, gave him pleasure unmixed with pain; his religion was coldly reasonable, because he wanted fancy, and he did not feel the necessity of finding, or creating, a perfect object, to answer the one engraved on his heart: the sketch there was faint. He went with the stream, and rather caught a character from the society he lived in, than spread one around him. In my mind many opinions were graven with a pen of brass, which he thought chimerical: but time could not erase them, and I now recognize them as the seeds of eternal happiness: they will soon expand in those realms where I shall enjoy the bliss adapted to my nature; this is all we need ask of the Supreme Being; happiness must follow the completion of his designs. He however could live quietly, without giving a preponderancy to many important opinions that continually obtruded on my mind; not having an enthusiastic affection for his fellow creatures, he did them

good, without suffering from their follies. He was particularly attached to me, and I felt for him all the affection of a daughter; often, when he had been interesting himself to promote my welfare, have I lamented that he was not my father; lamented that the vices of mine had dried up one source of pure affection.

The other friend I have already alluded to, was of a very different character; greatness of mind, and those combinations of feeling which are so difficult to describe, raised him above the throng, that bustle their hour out, lie down to sleep, and are forgotten. But I shall soon see him, she exclaimed, as much superior to his former self, as he then rose in my eyes above his fellow creatures! As she spoke, a glow of delight animated each feature; her countenance appeared transparent; and she silently anticipated the happiness she should enjoy, when she entered those mansions, where death-divided friends should meet, to part no more; where human weakness could not damp their bliss, or poison the cup of joy that, on earth, drops from the lips as soon as tasted, or, if some daring mortal snatches a hasty draught, what was sweet to the taste becomes a root of bitterness.

He was unfortunate, had many cares to struggle with, and I marked on his cheeks traces of the same sorrows that sunk my own. He was unhappy I say, and perhaps pity might first have awoke my tenderness; for, early in life, an artful woman worked on his compassionate soul, and he united his fate to a being made up of such jarring elements, that he was still alone. The discovery did not extinguish that propensity to love, a high sense of virtue fed. I saw him sick and unhappy, without a friend to soothe the hours languor made heavy; often did I sit a long winter's evening by his side, railing at the swift wings of time, and terming my love, humanity.

Two years passed in this manner, silently rooting my affection; and it might have continued calm, if a fever had not brought him to the very verge of the grave. Though still deceived, I was miserable that the customs of the world did not allow me to watch by him; when sleep forsook his pillow, my wearied eyes were not closed, and my anxious spirit hovered round his bed. I saw him, before he had recovered his strength; and, when his hand touched mine, life almost retired, or flew to meet the touch. The first look found a ready way to my heart, and thrilled through every vein. We were left alone, and insensibly began to talk of the immortality of the soul; I declared that I could not live without this conviction. In the ardour of conversation he pressed my hand to his heart; it rested there a moment, and my emotions gave weight to my opinion, for the affection we felt was not of a perishable nature.—A silence ensued, I know not how long; he then threw my hand from him, as if it had been a serpent; formally complained of the weather, and adverted to twenty other uninteresting subjects. Vain efforts! Our hearts had already spoken to each other.

Feebly did I afterwards combat an affection, which seemed twisted in every fibre of my heart. The world stood still when I thought of him; it moved heavily at best, with one whose very constitution seemed to mark her out for misery. But I will not dwell on the passion I too fondly nursed. One only refuge had I on earth; I could not resolutely desolate the scene my fancy flew to, when worldly cares, when a knowledge of mankind, which my circumstances forced on me, rendered every other insipid. I was afraid of the unmarked vacuity of common life; yet, though I supinely indulged myself in fairy-land, when I ought to have been more actively employed, virtue was still the first mover of my actions; she dressed my love in such enchanting colours, and spread the net I could never break. Our corresponding feelings confounded our very souls; and in many conversations we almost intuitively discerned each other's sentiments; the heart opened itself, not chilled by reserve, nor afraid of misconstruction. But, if virtue inspired love, love gave new energy to virtue, and absorbed every selfish passion. Never did even a wish escape me, that my lover should not fulfil the hard duties which fate had imposed on him. I only dissimulated with him in one particular; I endeavoured to soften his wife's too conspicuous follies, and extenuated her failings in an

indirect manner. To this I was prompted by a loftiness of spirit; I should have broken the band of life, had I ceased to respect myself. But I will hasten to an important change in my circumstances.

My mother, who had concealed the real state of her affairs from me, was now impelled to make me her confidant, that I might assist to discharge her mighty debt of gratitude. The merchant, my more than father, had privately assisted her: but a fatal civil-war reduced his large property to a bare competency; and an inflammation in his eyes, that arose from a cold he had caught at a wreck, which he watched during a stormy night to keep off the lawless colliers, almost deprived him of sight. His life had been spent in society, and he scarcely knew how to fill the void; for his spirit would not allow him to mix with his former equals as an humble companion; he who had been treated with uncommon respect, could not brook their insulting pity. From the resource of solitude, reading, the complaint in his eyes cut him off, and he became our constant visitor.

Actuated by the sincerest affection, I used to read to him, and he mistook my tenderness for love. How could I deceive him, when every circumstance frowned on him! Too soon I found that I was his only comfort; I, who rejected his hand when fortune smiled, could not now second her blow; and, in a moment of enthusiastic gratitude and tender compassion, I offered him my hand.—It was received with pleasure; transport was not made for his soul; nor did he discover that nature had separated us, by making me alive to such different sensations. My mother was to live with us, and I dwelt on this circumstance to banish cruel recollections, when the bent bow returned to its former state.

With a bursting heart and a firm voice, I named the day when I was to seal my promise. It came, in spite of my regret; I had been previously preparing myself for the awful ceremony, and answered the solemn question with a resolute tone, that would silence the dictates of my heart; it was a forced, unvaried one; had nature modulated it, my secret would have escaped. My active spirit was painfully on the watch to repress every tender emotion. The joy in my venerable parent's countenance, the tenderness of my husband, as he conducted me home, for I really had a sincere affection for him, the gratulations of my mind, when I thought that this sacrifice was heroic, all tended to deceive me; but the joy of victory over the resigned, pallid look of my lover, haunted my imagination, and fixed itself in the centre of my brain.—Still I imagined, that his spirit was near me, that he only felt sorrow for my loss, and without complaint resigned me to my duty.

I was left alone a moment; my two elbows rested on a table to support my chin. Ten thousand thoughts darted with astonishing velocity through my mind. My eyes were dry; I was on the brink of madness. At this moment a strange association was made by my imagination; I thought of Gallileo, who when he left the inquisition, looked upwards, and cried out, "Yet it moves." A shower of tears, like the refreshing drops of heaven, relieved my parched sockets; they fell disregarded on the table; and, stamping with my foot, in an agony I exclaimed, "Yet I love." My husband entered before I had calmed these tumultuous emotions, and tenderly took my hand. I snatched it from him; grief and surprise were marked on his countenance; I hastily stretched it out again. My heart smote me, and I removed the transient mist by an unfeigned endeavour to please him.

A few months after, my mind grew calmer; and, if a treacherous imagination, if feelings many accidents revived, sometimes plunged me into melancholy, I often repeated with steady conviction, that virtue was not an empty name, and that, in following the dictates of duty, I had not bidden adieu to content.

In the course of a few years, the dear object of my fondest affection, said farewell, in dying accents. Thus left alone, my grief became dear; and I did not feel solitary, because I thought I might, without a crime, indulge a passion, that grew more ardent than ever when my imagination only presented him to my view,

and restored my former activity of soul which the late calm had rendered torpid. I seemed to find myself again, to find the eccentric warmth that gave me identity of character. Reason had governed my conduct, but could not change my nature; this voluptuous sorrow was superior to every gratification of sense, and death more firmly united our hearts.

Alive to every human affection, I smoothed my mother's passage to eternity, and so often gave my husband sincere proofs of affection, he never supposed that I was actuated by a more fervent attachment. My melancholy, my uneven spirits, he attributed to my extreme sensibility, and loved me the better for possessing qualities he could not comprehend.

At the close of a summer's day, some years after, I wandered with careless steps over a pathless common; various anxieties had rendered the hours which the sun had enlightened heavy; sober evening came on; I wished to still "my mind, and woo lone quiet in her silent walk." The scene accorded with my feelings; it was wild and grand; and the spreading twilight had almost confounded the distant sea with the barren, blue hills that melted from my sight. I sat down on a rising ground; the rays of the departing sun illumined the horizon, but so indistinctly, that I anticipated their total extinction. The death of Nature led me to a still more interesting subject, that came home to my bosom, the death of him I loved. A village-bell was tolling; I listened, and thought of the moment when I heard his interrupted breath, and felt the agonizing fear, that the same sound would never more reach my ears, and that the intelligence glanced from my eyes, would no more be felt. The spoiler had seized his prey; the sun was fled, what was this world to me! I wandered to another, where death and darkness could not enter; I pursued the sun beyond the mountains, and the soul escaped from this vale of tears. My reflections were tinged with melancholy, but they were sublime.—I grasped a mighty whole, and smiled on the king of terrors; the tie which bound me to my friends he could not break; the same mysterious knot united me to the source of all goodness and happiness. I had seen the divinity reflected in a face I loved; I had read immortal characters displayed on a human countenance, and forgot myself whilst I gazed. I could not think of immortality, without recollecting the ecstasy I felt, when my heart first whispered to me that I was beloved; and again did I feel the sacred tie of mutual affection; fervently I prayed to the father of mercies; and rejoiced that he could see every turn of a heart, whose movements I could not perfectly understand. My passion seemed a pledge of immortality; I did not wish to hide it from the all-searching eye of heaven. Where indeed could I go from his presence? and, whilst it was dear to me, though darkness might reign during the night of life, joy would come when I awoke to life everlasting.

I now turned my step towards home, when the appearance of a girl, who stood weeping on the common, attracted my attention. I accosted her, and soon heard her simple tale; that her father was gone to sea, and her mother sick in bed. I followed her to their little dwelling, and relieved the sick wretch. I then again sought my own abode; but death did not now haunt my fancy. Contriving to give the poor creature I had left more effectual relief, I reached my own garden-gate very weary, and rested on it.—Recollecting the turns of my mind during the walk, I exclaimed, Surely life may thus be enlivened by active benevolence, and the sleep of death, like that I am now disposed to fall into, may be sweet!

My life was now unmarked by any extraordinary change, and a few days ago I entered this cavern; for through it every mortal must pass; and here I have discovered, that I neglected many opportunities of being useful, whilst I fostered a devouring flame. Remorse has not reached me, because I firmly adhered to my principles, and I have also discovered that I saw through a false medium. Worthy as the mortal was I adored, I should not long have loved him with the ardour I did, had fate united us, and broken the delusion the imagination so artfully wove. His virtues, as they now do, would have extorted my esteem; but he who formed the human soul, only can fill it, and the chief happiness of an immortal being must arise from the

same source as its existence. Earthly love leads to heavenly, and prepares us for a more exalted state; if it does not change its nature, and destroy itself, by trampling on the virtue, that constitutes its essence, and allies us to the Deity.



ON

POETRY,
AND
OUR RELISH FOR THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

ON

POETRY, &c.

A TASTE for rural scenes, in the present state of society, appears to be very often an artificial sentiment, rather inspired by poetry and romances, than a real perception of the beauties of nature. But, as it is reckoned a proof of refined taste to praise the calm pleasures which the country affords, the theme is never exhausted. Yet it may be made a question, whether this romantic kind of declamation, has much effect on the conduct of those, who leave, for a season, the crowded cities in which they were bred.

I have been led to these reflections, by observing, when I have resided for any length of time in the country, how few people seem to contemplate nature with their own eyes. I have "brushed the dew away" in the morning; but, pacing over the printless grass, I have wondered that, in such delightful situations, the sun was allowed to rise in solitary majesty, whilst my eyes alone hailed its beautifying beams. The webs of the evening have still been spread across the hedged path, unless some labouring man, trudging to work, disturbed the fairy structure; yet, in spite of this supineness, when I joined the social circle, every tongue rang changes on the pleasures of the country.

Having frequently had occasion to make the same observation, I was led to endeavour, in one of my solitary rambles, to trace the cause, and likewise to enquire why the poetry written in the infancy of society, is most natural: which, strictly speaking (for *natural* is a very indefinite expression) is merely to say, that it is the transcript of immediate sensations, in all their native wildness and simplicity, when fancy, awakened by the sight of interesting objects, was most actively at work. At such moments, sensibility quickly furnishes similes, and the sublimated spirits combine images, which rising spontaneously, it is not necessary coldly to ransack the understanding or memory, till the laborious efforts of judgment exclude present sensations, and damp the fire of enthusiasm.

The effusions of a vigorous mind, will ever tell us how far the understanding has been enlarged by thought, and stored with knowledge. The richness of the soil even appears on the surface; and the result of profound thinking, often mixing, with playful grace, in the reveries of the poet, smoothly incorporates with the ebullitions of animal spirits, when the finely fashioned nerve vibrates acutely with rapture, or when, relaxed by soft melancholy, a pleasing languor prompts the long-drawn sigh, and feeds the slowly falling tear.

The poet, the man of strong feelings, gives us only an image of his mind, when he was actually alone, conversing with himself, and marking the impression which nature had made on his own heart.—If, at this sacred moment, the idea of some departed friend, some tender recollection when the soul was most alive to tenderness, intruded unawares into his thoughts, the sorrow which it produced is artlessly, yet poetically expressed—and who can avoid sympathizing?

Love to man leads to devotion—grand and sublime images strike the imagination—God is seen in every floating cloud, and comes from the misty mountain to receive the noblest homage of an intelligent creature—praise. How solemn is the moment, when all affections and remembrances fade before the sublime admiration which the wisdom and goodness of God inspires, when he is worshipped in a *temple not made with hands*, and the world seems to contain only the mind that formed, and the mind that contemplates it! These are not the weak responses of ceremonial devotion; nor, to express them, would the poet need another poet's aid: his heart burns within him, and he speaks the language of truth and nature with resistless

energy.

Inequalities, of course, are observable in his effusions; and a less vigorous fancy, with more taste, would have produced more elegance and uniformity; but, as passages are softened or expunged during the cooler moments of reflection, the understanding is gratified at the expence of those involuntary sensations, which, like the beautiful tints of an evening sky, are so evanescent, that they melt into new forms before they can be analyzed. For however eloquently we may boast of our reason, man must often be delighted he cannot tell why, or his blunt feelings are not made to relish the beauties which nature, poetry, or any of the imitative arts, afford.

The imagery of the ancients seems naturally to have been borrowed from surrounding objects and their mythology. When a hero is to be transported from one place to another, across pathless wastes, is any vehicle so natural, as one of the fleecy clouds on which the poet has often gazed, scarcely conscious that he wished to make it his chariot? Again, when nature seems to present obstacles to his progress at almost every step, when the tangled forest and steep mountain stand as barriers, to pass over which the mind longs for supernatural aid; an interposing deity, who walks on the waves, and rules the storm, severely felt in the first attempts to cultivate a country, will receive from the impassioned fancy "a local habitation and a name."

It would be a philosophical enquiry, and throw some light on the history of the human mind, to trace, as far as our information will allow us to trace, the spontaneous feelings and ideas which have produced the images that now frequently appear unnatural, because they are remote; and disgusting, because they have been servilely copied by poets, whose habits of thinking, and views of nature must have been different; for, though the understanding seldom disturbs the current of our present feelings, without dissipating the gay clouds which fancy has been embracing, yet it silently gives the colour to the whole tenour of them, and the dream is over, when truth is grossly violated, or images introduced, selected from books, and not from local manners or popular prejudices.

In a more advanced state of civilization, a poet is rather the creature of art, than of nature. The books that he reads in his youth, become a hot-bed in which artificial fruits are produced, beautiful to the common eye, though they want the true hue and flavour. His images do not arise from sensations; they are copies; and, like the works of the painters who copy ancient statues when they draw men and women of their own times, we acknowledge that the features are fine, and the proportions just; yet they are men of stone; insipid figures, that never convey to the mind the idea of a portrait taken from life, where the soul gives spirit and homogeneity to the whole. The filken wings of fancy are shrivelled by rules; and a desire of attaining elegance of diction, occasions an attention to words, incompatible with sublime, impassioned thoughts.

A boy of abilities, who has been taught the structure of verse at school, and been roused by emulation to compose rhymes whilst he was reading works of genius, may, by practice, produce pretty verses, and even become what is often termed an elegant poet: yet his readers, without knowing what to find fault with, do not find themselves warmly interested. In the works of the poets who fasten on their affections, they see grosser faults, and the very images which shock their taste in the modern; still they do not appear as puerile or extrinsic in one as the other.—Why?—because they did not appear so to the author.

It may sound paradoxical, after observing that those productions want vigour, that are merely the work of imitation, in which the understanding has violently directed, if not extinguished, the blaze of fancy, to assert, that, though genius be only another word for exquisite sensibility, the first observers of nature, the true poets, exercised their understanding much more than their imitators. But they exercised it to

discriminate things, whilst their followers were busy to borrow sentiments and arrange words.

Boys who have received a classical education, load their memory with words, and the correspondent ideas are perhaps never distinctly comprehended. As a proof of this assertion, I must observe, that I have known many young people who could write tolerably smooth verses, and string epithets prettily together, when their prose themes showed the barrenness of their minds, and how superficial the cultivation must have been, which their understanding had received.

Dr. Johnson, I know, has given a definition of genius, which would overturn my reasoning, if I were to admit it.—He imagines, that *a strong mind, accidentally led to some particular study* in which it excels, is a genius.—Not to stop to investigate the causes which produced this happy *strength* of mind, experience seems to prove, that those minds have appeared most vigorous, that have pursued a study, after nature had discovered a bent; for it would be absurd to suppose, that a slight impression made on the weak faculties of a boy, is the fiat of fate, and not to be effaced by any succeeding impression, or unexpected difficulty. Dr. Johnson in fact, appears sometimes to be of the same opinion (how consistently I shall not now enquire), especially when he observes, "that Thomson looked on nature with the eye which she only gives to a poet."

But, though it should be allowed that books may produce some poets, I fear they will never be the poets who charm our cares to sleep, or extort admiration. They may diffuse taste, and polish the language; but I am inclined to conclude that they will seldom rouse the passions, or amend the heart.

And, to return to the first subject of discussion, the reason why most people are more interested by a scene described by a poet, than by a view of nature, probably arises from the want of a lively imagination. The poet contracts the prospect, and, selecting the most picturesque part in his *camera*, the judgment is directed, and the whole force of the languid faculty turned towards the objects which excited the most forcible emotions in the poet's heart; the reader consequently feels the enlivened description, though he was not able to receive a first impression from the operations of his own mind.

Besides, it may be further observed, that gross minds are only to be moved by forcible representations. To rouse the thoughtless, objects must be presented, calculated to produce tumultuous emotions; the unsubstantial, picturesque forms which a contemplative man gazes on, and often follows with ardour till he is mocked by a glimpse of unattainable excellence, appear to them the light vapours of a dreaming enthusiast, who gives up the substance for the shadow. It is not within that they seek amusement; their eyes are seldom turned on themselves; consequently their emotions, though sometimes fervid, are always transient, and the nicer perceptions which distinguish the man of genuine taste, are not felt, or make such a slight impression as scarcely to excite any pleasurable sensations. Is it surprising then that they are often overlooked, even by those who are delighted by the same images concentrated by the poet?

But even this numerous class is exceeded, by wits, who, anxious to appear to have wit and taste, do not allow their understandings or feelings any liberty; for, instead of cultivating their faculties and reflecting on their operations, they are busy collecting prejudices; and are predetermined to admire what the suffrage of time announces as excellent, not to store up a fund of amusement for themselves, but to enable them to talk.

These hints will assist the reader to trace some of the causes why the beauties of nature are not forcibly felt, when civilization, or rather luxury, has made considerable advances—those calm sensations are not sufficiently lively to serve as a relaxation to the voluptuary, or even to the moderate pursuer of artificial pleasures. In the present state of society, the understanding must bring back the feelings to nature, or the sensibility must have such native strength, as rather to be whetted than destroyed by the strong exercises of

passion.

That the most valuable things are liable to the greatest perversion, is however as trite as true:—for the same sensibility, or quickness of senses, which makes a man relish the tranquil scenes of nature, when sensation, rather than reason, imparts delight, frequently makes a libertine of him, by leading him to prefer the sensual tumult of love a little refined by sentiment, to the calm pleasures of affectionate friendship, in whose sober satisfactions, reason, mixing her tranquillizing convictions, whispers, that content, not happiness, is the reward of virtue in this world.

HINTS.

***[Chiefly designed to have been incorporated
in the Second Part of the Vindication
of the Rights of Woman.]***

HINTS.

1.

INDOLENCE is the source of nervous complaints, and a whole host of cares. This devil might say that his name was legion.

2.

It should be one of the employments of women of fortune, to visit hospitals, and superintend the conduct of inferiors.

3.

It is generally supposed, that the imagination of women is particularly active, and leads them astray. Why then do we seek by education only to exercise their imagination and feeling, till the understanding, grown rigid by disuse, is unable to exercise itself—and the superfluous nourishment the imagination and feeling have received, renders the former romantic, and the latter weak?

4.

Few men have risen to any great eminence in learning, who have not received something like a regular education. Why are women expected to surmount difficulties that men are not equal to?

5.

Nothing can be more absurd than the ridicule of the critic, that the heroine of his mock-tragedy was in love with the very man whom she ought least to have loved; he could not have given a better reason. How can passion gain strength any other way? In Otaheite, love cannot be known, where the obstacles to irritate an indiscriminate appetite, and sublimates the simple sensations of desire till they mount to passion, are never known. There a man or woman cannot love the very person they ought not to have loved—nor does jealousy ever fan the flame.

6.

It has frequently been observed, that, when women have an object in view, they pursue it with more steadiness than men, particularly love. This is not a compliment. Passion pursues with more heat than reason, and with most ardour during the absence of reason.

7.

Men are more subject to the physical love than women. The confined education of women makes them more subject to jealousy.

8.

Simplicity seems, in general, the consequence of ignorance, as I have observed in the characters of women and sailors—the being confined to one track of impressions.

9.

I know of no other way of preserving the chastity of mankind, than that of rendering women rather objects of love than desire. The difference is great. Yet, while women are encouraged to ornament their persons at the expence of their minds, while indolence renders them helpless and lascivious (for what other name can be given to the common intercourse between the sexes?) they will be, generally speaking, only objects of desire; and, to such women, men cannot be constant. Men, accustomed only to have their senses moved, merely seek for a selfish gratification in the society of women, and their sexual instinct, being neither supported by the understanding nor the heart, must be excited by variety.

10.

We ought to respect old opinions; though prejudices, blindly adopted, lead to error, and preclude all exercise of the reason.

The emulation which often makes a boy mischievous, is a generous spur; and the old remark, that unlucky, turbulent boys, make the wisest and best men, is true, spite of Mr. Knox's arguments. It has been observed, that the most adventurous horses, when tamed or domesticated, are the most mild and tractable.

11.

The children who start up suddenly at twelve or fourteen, and fall into decays, in consequence, as it is termed, of outgrowing their strength, are in general, I believe, those children, who have been bred up with mistaken tendernefs, and not allowed to sport and take exercise in the open air. This is analogous to plants: for it is found that they run up sickly, long stalks, when confined.

12.

Children should be taught to feel deference, not to practise submission.

13.

It is always a proof of false refinement, when a fastidious taste overpowers sympathy.

14.

Luft appears to be the most natural companion of wild ambition; and love of human praise, of that dominion erected by cunning.

15.

"Genius decays as judgment increaseth." Of course, those who have the least genius, have the earliest appearance of wisdom.

16.

A knowledge of the fine arts, is seldom subservient to the promotion of either religion or virtue. Elegance is often indecency; witness our prints.

17.

There does not appear to be any evil in the world, but what is necessary. The doctrine of rewards and punishments, not considered as a means of reformation, appears to me an infamous libel on divine

goodness.

18.

Whether virtue is founded on reason or revelation, virtue is wisdom, and vice is folly. Why are positive punishments?

19.

Few can walk alone. The staff of Christianity is the necessary support of human weakness. But an acquaintance with the nature of man and virtue, with just sentiments on the attributes, would be sufficient, without a voice from heaven, to lead some to virtue, but not the mob.

20.

I only expect the natural reward of virtue, whatever it may be. I rely not on a positive reward.

The justice of God can be vindicated by a belief in a future state—but a continuation of being vindicates it as clearly, as the positive system of rewards and punishments—by evil educating good for the individual, and not for an imaginary whole. The happiness of the whole must arise from the happiness of the constituent parts, or this world is not a state of trial, but a school.

21.

The vices acquired by Augustus to retain his power, must have tainted his soul, and prevented that increase of happiness a good man expects in the next stage of existence. This was a natural punishment.

22.

The lover is ever most deeply enamoured, when it is with he knows not what—and the devotion of a mystic has a rude Gothic grandeur in it, which the respectful adoration of a philosopher will never reach. I may be thought fanciful; but it has continually occurred to me, that, though, I allow, reason in this world is the mother of wisdom—yet some flights of the imagination seem to reach what wisdom cannot teach—and, while they delude us here, afford a glorious hope, if not a foretaste, of what we may expect hereafter. He that created us, did not mean to mark us with ideal images of grandeur, the *baseless fabric of a vision*—No—that perfection we follow with hopeless ardour when the whisperings of reason are heard, may be found, when not incompatible with our state, in the round of eternity. Perfection indeed must, even then, be a comparative idea—but the wisdom, the happiness of a superior state, has been supposed to be intuitive, and the happiest effusions of human genius have seemed like inspiration—the deductions of reason destroy sublimity.

23.

I am more and more convinced, that poetry is the first effervescence of the imagination, and the forerunner of civilization.

24.

When the Arabs had no trace of literature or science, they composed beautiful verses on the subjects of love and war. The flights of the imagination, and the laboured deductions of reason, appear almost incompatible.

25.

Poetry certainly flourishes most in the first rude state of society. The passions speak most eloquently, when they are not shackled by reason. The sublime expression, which has been so often quoted, [Genesis, ch. 1, ver. 3.] is perhaps a barbarous flight; or rather the grand conception of an uncultivated mind; for it is contrary to nature and experience, to suppose that this account is founded on facts—It is doubtless a sublime allegory. But a cultivated mind would not thus have described the creation—for, arguing from analogy, it appears that creation must have been a comprehensive plan, and that the Supreme Being always uses second causes, slowly and silently to fulfil his purpose. This is, in reality, a more sublime view of that power which wisdom supports: but it is not the sublimity that would strike the impassioned mind, in which the imagination took place of intellect. Tell a being, whose affections and passions have been more exercised than his reason, that God said, *Let there be light! and there was light*; and he would prostrate himself before the Being who could thus call things out of nothing, as if they were: but a man in whom reason had taken place of passion, would not adore, till wisdom was conspicuous as well as power, for his admiration must be founded on principle.

26.

Individuality is ever conspicuous in those enthusiastic flights of fancy, in which reason is left behind, without being lost sight of.

27.

The mind has been too often brought to the test of enquiries which only reach to matter—put into the crucible, though the magnetic and electric fluid escapes from the experimental philosopher.

28.

Mr. Kant has observed, that the understanding is sublime, the imagination beautiful—yet it is evident, that poets, and men who undoubtedly possess the liveliest imagination, are most touched by the sublime, while men who have cold, enquiring minds, have not this exquisite feeling in any great degree, and indeed seem to lose it as they cultivate their reason.

29.

The Grecian buildings are graceful—they fill the mind with all those pleasing emotions, which elegance and beauty never fail to excite in a cultivated mind—utility and grace strike us in unison—the mind is satisfied—things appear just what they ought to be: a calm satisfaction is felt, but the imagination has nothing to do—no obscurity darkens the gloom—like reasonable content, we can say why we are pleased—and this kind of pleasure may be lasting, but it is never great.

30.

When we say that a person is an original, it is only to say in other words that he thinks. "The less a man has cultivated his rational faculties, the more powerful is the principle of imitation, over his actions, and his habits of thinking. Most women, of course, are more influenced by the behaviour, the fashions, and the opinions of those with whom they associate, than men." (Smellie.)

When we read a book which supports our favourite opinions, how eagerly do we suck in the doctrines, and suffer our minds placidly to reflect the images which illustrate the tenets we have embraced? We indolently or quietly acquiesce in the conclusion, and our spirit animates and connects the various subjects.

But, on the contrary, when we peruse a skilful writer, who does not coincide in opinion with us, how is the mind on the watch to detect fallacy? And this coolness often prevents our being carried away by a stream of eloquence, which the prejudiced mind terms declamation—a pomp of words.—We never allow ourselves to be warmed; and, after contending with the writer, are more confirmed in our own opinion, as much perhaps from a spirit of contradiction as from reason.—Such is the strength of man!

31.

It is the individual manner of seeing and feeling, portrayed by a strong imagination in bold images that have struck the senses, which creates all the charms of poetry. A great reader is always quoting the description of another's emotions; a strong imagination delights to paint its own. A writer of genius makes us feel; an inferior author reason.

32.

Some principle prior to self-love must have existed: the feeling which produced the pleasure, must have existed before the experience.

THE END.

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