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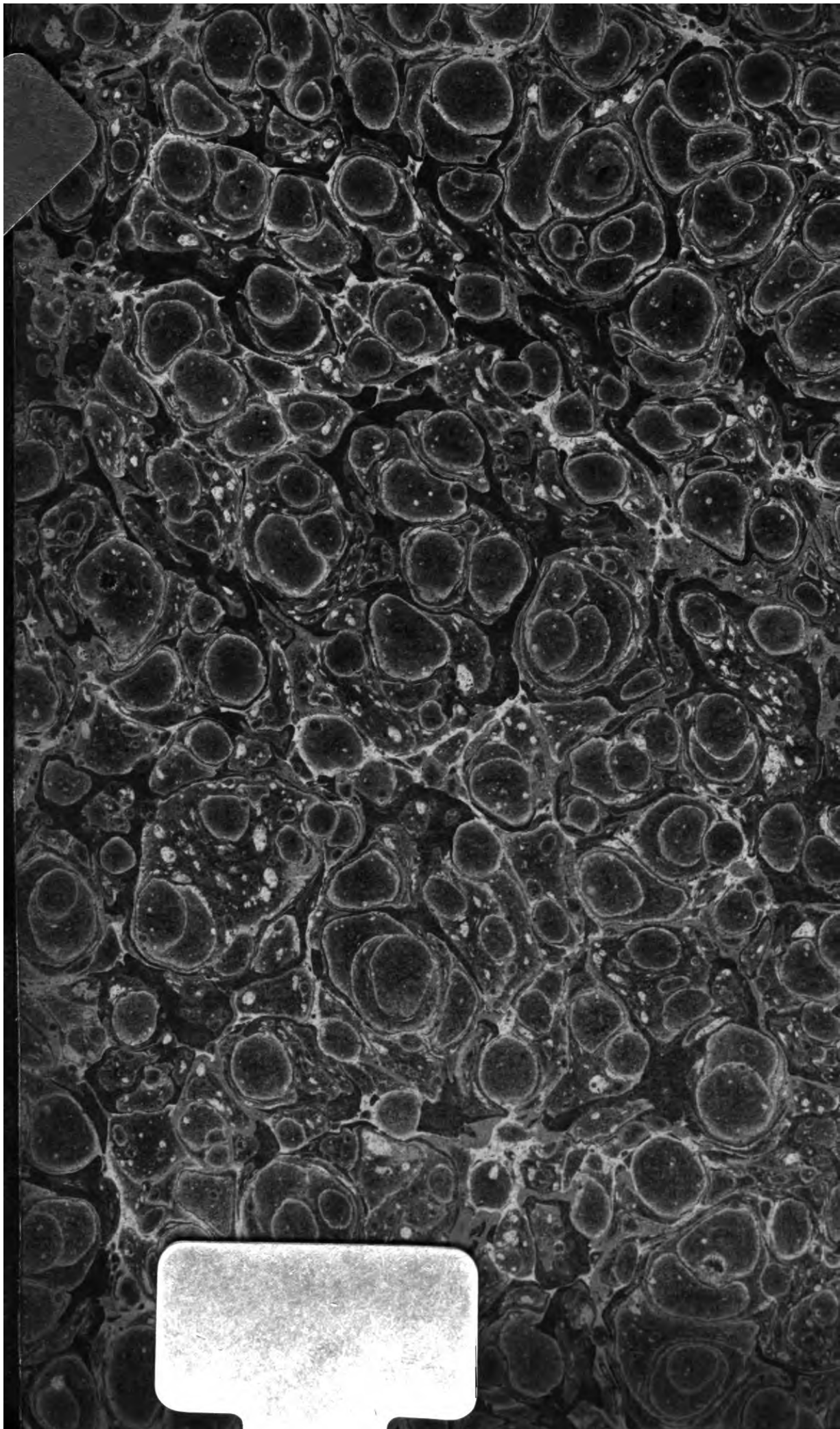
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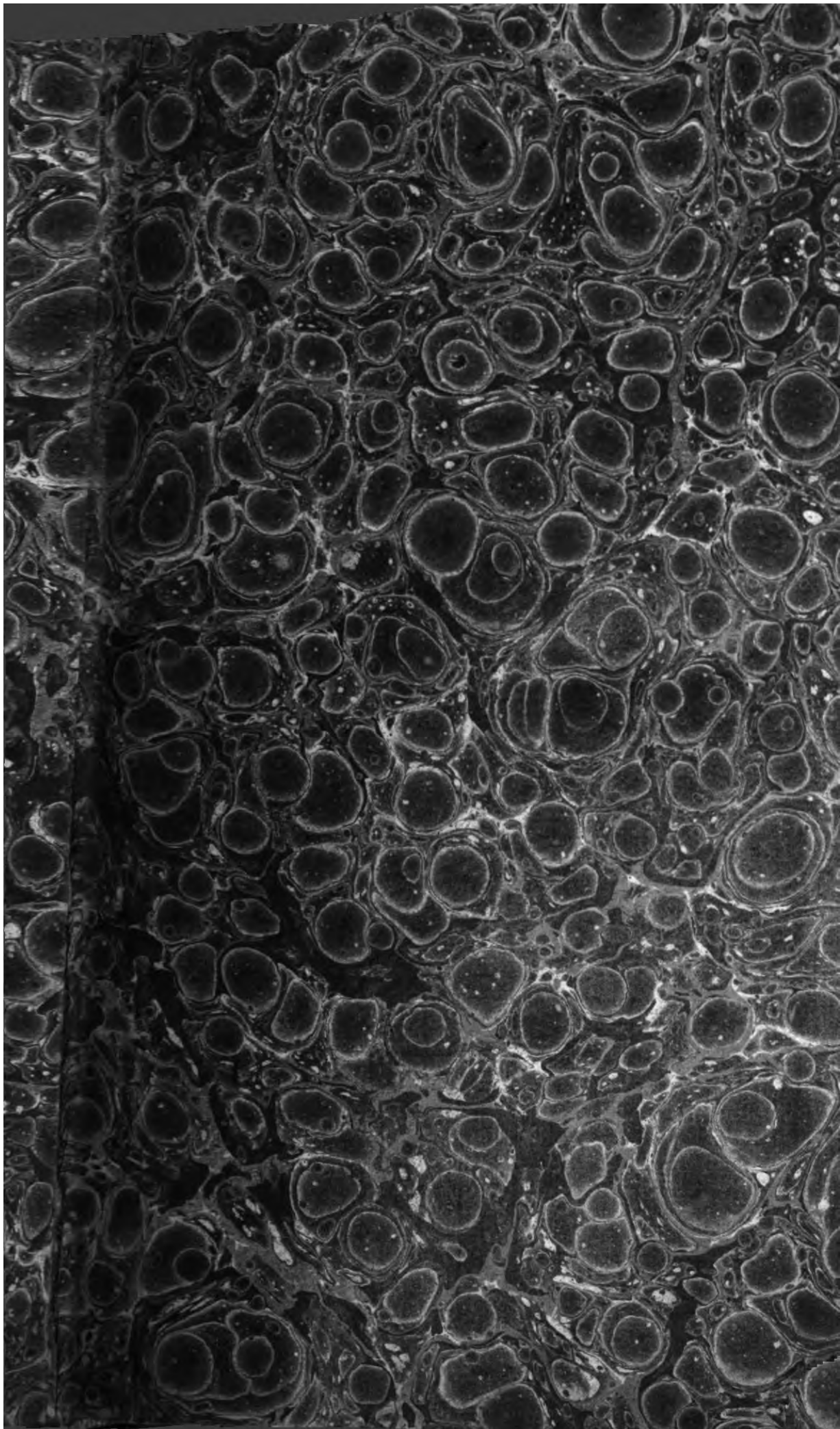
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M. G.





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Le cerf Sc.

"Oh rise, rise, my beloved father!"
Cried I, attempting to assist him.

EVELINA:
OR
THE HISTORY
OF
A YOUNG LADY'S ENTRANCE
INTO THE WORLD.

A NEW EDITION IN THREE VOLUMES WITH PLATES.

VOL. III.

PARIS.

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M DCCC VIII.



EVELINA.



LETTER I.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Bristol Hotwells, Sept. 12th.

THE first fortnight that I passed here, was so quiet, so serene, that it gave me reason to expect a settled calm during my stay; but, if I may now judge of the time to come, by the present state of my mind, the calm will be succeeded by a storm, of which I dread the violence!

This morning, in my way to the pump-room, with Mrs. Selwyn, we were both very much incommoded by three gentlemen, who were sauntering by the side of the Avon, laughing, and talking very loud, and lounging so disagreeably, that we knew not how to pass them. They all three fixed their eyes very boldly upon me; alternately looking under my hat, and whispering one another. Mrs. Selwyn assumed an air of uncommon sternness, and said, "You will please,

Gentlemen, either to proceed yourselves, or to suffer us."

"Oh! Ma'am," cried one of them. "we will suffer *you*, with the greatest pleasure in life."

"You will suffer us *both*," answered she, "or I am much mistaken; you had better, therefore, make way quietly, for I should be sorry to give my servant the trouble of teaching you better manners."

Her commanding air struck them, yet they all chose to laugh, and one of them wished the fellow would begin his lesson, that he might have the pleasure of rolling him into the Avon; while another advancing to me with a freedom which made me start, said, "By my soul, I did not know you!—but I am sure I cannot be mistaken;—had not I the honor of seeing you, once, at the Pantheon?"

I then recollected the nobleman who, at that place, had so much embarrassed me. I curtsied without speaking. They all bowed, and making, though in a very easy manner, an apology to Mrs. Selwyn, they suffered us to pass on, but chose to accompany us.

"And where," continued this Lord, "can you so long have hid yourself? do you know I have been in search of you this age? I could neither find you out, nor hear of you: not a creature could inform me what was become of you. I cannot

Imagine where you could be immured. I was at two or three public places every night, in hopes of meeting you. Pray did you leave town?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"So early in the season!—what could possibly induce you to go before the birth-day?"

"I had nothing, my Lord, to do with the birth-day."

"By my soul! all the women who *had*, may rejoice you were away. Have you been here any time?"

"Not above a fortnight, my Lord."

"A fortnight!—how unlucky that I did not meet you sooner! but I have had a run of ill luck ever since I came. How long shall you stay?"

"Indeed, my Lord, I don't know."

"Six weeks, I hope; for I shall wish the place at the devil when you go."

"Do you, then, flatter yourself, my Lord," said Mrs. Selwyn, who had hitherto listened in silent contempt, "that you shall see such a beautiful spot as this, when you visit the dominions of the devil?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Faith, my Lord!" said one of his companions, who still walked with us, though the other had taken leave; "the Lady is rather hard upon you."

“Not at all,” answered Mrs. Selwyn; “for, as I cannot doubt but his Lordship’s rank and interest will secure him a place there, it would be reflecting on his understanding to suppose he should not wish to enlarge and beautify his dwelling.”

Much as I was disgusted with this Lord, I must own Mrs. Selwyn’s severity rather surprised me: but you, who have so often observed it, will not wonder she took so fair an opportunity of indulging her humor.

“As to *places*,” returned he, totally unmoved, “I am so indifferent to them, that, the devil take me, if I care which way I go! *objects*, indeed, I am not so easy about; and therefore I expect that those angels, with whose beauty I am so much enraptured in this world, will have the goodness to afford me some little consolation in the other.”

“What, my Lord!” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “would you wish to degrade the habitation of your friend, by admitting into it the insipid company of the upper regions?”

“What do you do with yourself this evening?” said his Lordship, turning to me.

“I shall be at home, my Lord.”

“Oh, *à-propos*!—where are you?”

“Young ladies, my Lord,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “are *nowhere*.”

“Pr’ythee,” whispered his Lordship, “is that queer woman your mother?”

Good heavens, Sir, what words for such a question!

“No, my Lord.”

“Your maiden aunt, then?”

“No.”

“Whoever she is, I wish she would mind her own affairs: I don’t know what the devil a woman lives for after thirty: she is only in other folks way. Shall you be at the assembly?”

“I believe not, my Lord.”

“No!—why then how in the world can you contrive to pass your time?”

“In a manner which your Lordship will think very extraordinary,” cried Mrs. Selwyn; “for the young Lady *reads*.”

“Ha, ha, ha! Egad, my Lord!” cried the facetious companion, “you are got into bad hands.”

“You had better, Ma’am,” answered he, “attack Jack Coverley, here; for you will make nothing of me.”

“Of *you*, my Lord!” cried she; “Heaven forbid I should ever entertain so idle an expectation! I only talk, like a silly woman, for the sake of talking; but I have by no means so low an opinion of your Lordship, as to suppose you vulnerable to censure.”

“Do, pray, Ma’am,” cried he, “turn to Jack Coverley; he’s the very man for you;—he’d be a wit himself, if he was not too modest.”

“Pr’ythee, my Lord, be quiet,” returned the other; “if the lady is contented to bestow all her favors upon *you*, why should you make such a point of my going snacks?”

“Don’t be apprehensive, gentlemen,” said Mrs. Selwyn, drily, “I am not romantic,—I have not the least design of doing good to either of you.”

“Have not you been ill since I saw you?” said his Lordship, again addressing himself to me.

“Yes, my Lord.”

“I thought so; you are paler than you was, and I suppose that’s the reason I did not recollect you sooner.”

“Has not your Lordship too much gallantry,” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “to discover a young lady’s illness by her looks?”

“The devil a word can I speak for that woman,” said he, in a low voice; “do, pr’ythee, Jack! take her in hand.”

“Excuse me, my Lord!” answered Mr. Coverley.

“When shall I see you again?” continued his Lordship; “do you go to the pump-room every morning?”

“No, my Lord.”

“Do you ride out?”

“No, my Lord.”

Just then we arrived at the pump-room, and an end was put to our conversation,—if it is not an abuse of words to give such a term to a string of rude questions and free compliments.

He had not opportunity to say much more to me, as Mrs. Selwyn joined a large party, and I walked home between two ladies: he had, however, the curiosity to see us to the door.

Mrs. Selwyn was very eager to know how I had made acquaintance with this nobleman, whose manners so evidently announced the character of a confirmed libertine: I could give her very little satisfaction, as I was ignorant even of his name:—but, in the afternoon, Mr. Ridgeway, the apothecary, gave us very ample information.

As his person was easily described, for he is remarkably tall, Mr. Ridgeway told us he was Lord Merton, a nobleman who is but lately come to his title, though he has already dissipated more than half his fortune: a professed admirer of beauty, but a man of most licentious character: that, among men, his companions consisted chiefly of gamblers and jockies; and, among women, he was rarely admitted.

“Well, Miss Anville!” said Mrs. Selwyn, “I am

glad I was not more civil to him. You may depend upon *me* for keeping him at a distance."

"Oh, Madam!" said Mr. Ridgeway, "he may now be admitted any where, for he is going to *reform*."

"Has he, under that notion, persuaded any fool to marry him?"

"Not yet, Madam!, but a marriage is expected to take place shortly: it has been sometime in agitation, but the friends of the Lady have obliged her to wait till she is of age: however, her brother, who has chiefly opposed the match, now that she is near being at her own disposal, is tolerably quiet. She is very pretty, and will have a large fortune. We expect her at the Wells every day."

"What is her name?" said Mrs. Selwyn.

"Larpen," answered he, "Lady Louisa Larpen, sister of Lord Orville."

"Lord Orville!" repeated I, all amazement.

"Yes, Ma'am; his Lordship is coming with her. I have had certain information. They are to be at the Honorable Mrs. Beaumont's. She is a relation of my Lord's, and has a very fine house upon Clifton Hill."

His Lordship is coming with her!—Good God! what an emotion did those words give me! How strange, my dear Sir, that, just at this time, he should visit Bristol! It will be impossible for me

to avoid seeing him, as Mrs. Selwyn is very well acquainted with Mrs. Beaumont. Indeed, I have had an escape in not being under the same roof with him, for Mrs. Beaumont invited us to her house immediately upon our arrival; but the inconveniency of being so distant from the pump-room made Mrs. Selwyn decline her civility.

Oh, that the first meeting was over!—or that I could quit Bristol without seeing him!—inexpressibly do I dread an interview: should the same impertinent freedom be expressed by his looks, which dictated his cruel letter, I shall not know how to endure either him or myself. Had I but returned it, I should be easier, because my sentiments of it would then be known to him; but now, he can only gather them from my behaviour, and I tremble lest he should mistake my indignation for confusion!—lest he should misconstrue my reserve into embarrassment!—for how, my dearest Sir! how shall I be able totally to divest myself of the respect with which I have been used to think of him?—the pleasure with which I have been used to see him?”

Surely he, as well as I, must recollect the letter at the moment of our meeting, and he will, probably, mean to gather my thoughts of it from my looks;—oh, that they could but convey to him my real detestation of impertinence and vanity! then

would he see how much he had mistaken my disposition, when he imagined them my due.

There was a time when the very idea that such a man as Lord Merton should ever be connected with Lord Orville would have both surprised and shocked me, and even yet I am pleased to hear of his repugnance to the marriage.

But how strange, that a man of so abandoned a character should be the choice of a sister of Lord Orville! and how strange, that, almost at the moment of the union, he should be so importunate in gallantry to another woman!—What a world is this we live in! how corrupt! how degenerate! well might I be contented to see no more of it! If I find that the *eyes* of Lord Orville agree with his pen,—I shall then think, that of all mankind, the only virtuous individual resides at Berry Hill.

LETTER II.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Bristol Hotwells, Sept. 16th.

OH, Sir! Lord Orville is still himself!—still what, from the moment I beheld, I believed him to be—all that is amiable in man! and your happy Evelina, restored at once to spirits and tranquillity, is no longer sunk in her own opinion, nor discontented with the world;—no longer, with dejected eyes, sees the prospect of passing her future days in sadness, doubt, and suspicion!—with revived courage she now looks forward, and expects to meet with goodness, even among mankind:—though still she feels, as strongly as ever, the folly of hoping, in any *second* instance, to meet with *perfection*.

Your conjecture was certainly right; Lord Orville, when he wrote that letter, could not be in his senses. Oh, that intemperance should have power to degrade so low, a man so noble!

This morning I accompanied Mrs. Selwyn to

Clifton Hill, where, beautifully situated, is the house of Mrs. Beaumont. Most uncomfortable were my feelings during our walk, which was very slow, for the agitation of my mind made me more than usually sensible how weak I still continue. As we entered the house, I summoned all my resolution to my aid, determined rather to die than give Lord Orville reason to attribute my weakness to a wrong cause. I was happily relieved from my perturbation, when I saw Mrs. Beaumont was alone. We sat with her for, I believe, an hour without interruption, and then we saw a phaeton drive up to the gate, and a lady and gentleman alight from it.

They entered the parlour with the ease of people who were at home. The gentleman, I soon saw, was Lord Merton; he came shuffling into the room with his boots on, and his whip in his hand; and, having made something like a bow to Mrs. Beaumont, he turned towards me. His surprise was very evident, but he took no manner of notice of me. He waited, I believe, to discover, first, what chance had brought me to that house, where he did not look much rejoiced at meeting me. He seated himself very quietly at the window, without speaking to any body.

Mean time, the lady, who seemed very young, hobbling rather than walking into the room,

made a passing curtsy to Mrs. Beaumont, saying, "How are you, Ma'am?" and then, without noticing any body else, with an air of languor she flung herself upon a sofa, protesting, in a most affected voice, and speaking so softly she could hardly be heard, that she was fatigued to death. "Really, Ma'am, the roads are so monstrous dusty,—you can't imagine how troublesome the dust is to one's eyes!—and the sun, too, is monstrous disagreeable!—I dare say, I shall be so tanned, I sha'n't be fit to be seen this age. Indeed, my Lord, I won't go out with you any more, for you don't care where you take one."

"Upon my honor," said Lord Merton, "I took you the pleasantest ride in England; the fault was in the sun, not me."

"Your Lordship is in the right," said Mrs. Selwyn, "to transfer the fault to the *sun*, because it has so many excellencies to counterbalance partial inconveniencies, that a *little* blame will not injure *that* in our estimation."

Lord Merton looked by no means delighted at this attack; which I believe she would not so readily have made, but to revenge his neglect of us.

"Did you meet your brother, Lady Louisa?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

"No, Ma'am. Is he rode out this morning?"

I then found, what I had before suspected, that this lady was Lord Orville's sister. How strange, that such near relations should be so different to each other! There is, indeed, some resemblance in their features; but, in their manners, not the least.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Beaumont, "and, I believe, he wished to see you."

"My Lord drove so monstrous fast," said Lady Louisa, "that perhaps we passed him. He frightened me out of my senses; I declare my head is quite giddy. Do you know, Ma'am, we have done nothing but quarrel all the morning? — You can't think how I've scolded; — have not I, my Lord?" and she smiled expressively at Lord Merton.

"You have been, as you always are," said he, twisting his whip with his fingers, "all sweetness."

"O fie, my Lord!" cried she, "I know you don't think so; I know you think me very ill-natured; — don't you, my Lord?"

"No, upon my honor; — how can your Ladyship ask such a question? — Pray how goes time? my watch stands."

"It is almost three," answered Mrs. Beaumont.

"Lord, Ma'am, you frighten me!" cried Lady Louisa; and then, turning to Lord Merton, "why

NOW, you wicked creature, you! did not you tell me it was but one?"

Mrs. Selwyn then rose to take leave; but Mrs. Beaumont asked if she would look at the shrubbery. "I should like it much," answered she, "but that I fear to fatigue Miss Anville."

Lady Louisa then, raising her head from her hand on which it had leaned, turned round to look at me, and, having fully satisfied her curiosity, without any regard to the confusion it gave me, turned about, and, again leaning on her hand, took no further notice of me.

I declared myself very able to walk, and begged that I might accompany them. "What say *you*, Lady Louisa," cried Mrs Beaumont, "to a stroll in the garden?"

"Me, Ma'am! — I declare I can't stir a step; the heat is so excessive, it would kill me. I'm half dead with it already; besides, I shall have no time to dress! Will any body be here to day, Ma'am?"

"I believe not, unless Lord Merton will favor us with his company."

"With great pleasure, Madam."

"Well, I declare you don't deserve to be asked," cried Lady Louisa, "you wicked creature, you! — I *must* tell you one thing, Ma'am, — you can't think how abominable he was! do

you know, we met Mr. Lovel in his new phaeton, and my Lord was so cruel as to drive against it? — we really flew. I declare I could not breathe. Upon my word, my Lord, I'll never trust myself with you again, — I won't indeed!"

We then went into the garden, leaving them to discuss the point at their leisure.

Do you remember a *pretty but affected young lady* I mentioned to have seen, in Lord Orville's party, at the Pantheon? How little did I then imagine her to be his sister! yet Lady Louisa Larpent is the very person. I can now account for the piqued manner of her speaking to Lord Merton that evening, and I can now account for the air of displeasure with which Lord Orville marked the undue attention of his future brother-in-law to me.

We had not walked long, ere, at a distance, I perceived Lord Orville, who seemed just dismounted from his horse, enter the garden. All my perturbation returned at the sight of him?—yet I endeavoured to repress every feeling but resentment. As he approached us, he bowed to the whole party; but I turned away my head to avoid taking any share in his civility. Addressing himself immediately to Mrs. Beaumont, he was beginning to inquire after his sister, but upon seeing my face, he suddenly exclaimed "Miss Anville!—" and then

he advanced, and made his compliments to me, —not with an air of vanity or impertinence, nor yet with a look of consciousness or shame, but with a countenance open, manly, and charming!—with a smile that indicated pleasure, and eyes that sparkled with delight!—on *my* side was all the consciousness; for by him, I really believe, the letter was, at that moment, entirely forgotten.

With what politeness did he address me! with what sweetness did he look at me! the very tone of his voice seemed flattering! he congratulated himself upon his good fortune in meeting with me,—hoped I should spend some time at Bristol; and inquired, even with anxiety inquired, if my health was the cause of my journey; in which case his satisfaction would be converted into apprehension.

Yet, struck as I was with his manner, and charmed to find him such as he was wont to be, imagine not, my dear Sir, that I forgot the resentment I owe him, or the cause he has given me of displeasure; no, my behaviour was such as, I hope, had you seen, you would not have disapproved: I was grave and distant, I scarce looked at him when he spoke or answered him when he was silent.

As he must certainly observe this alteration in my conduct, I think it could not fail making

him both recollect and repent the provocation he had so causelessly given me: for surely he was not so wholly lost to reason, as to be now ignorant he had ever offended me.

The moment that, without absolute rudeness, I was able, I turned entirely from him, and asked Mrs. Selwyn if we should not be late home? How Lord Orville looked I know not, for I avoided meeting his eyes; but he did not speak another word as we proceeded to the garden-gate. Indeed I believe my abruptness surprised him, for he did not seem to expect I had so much spirit: and to own the truth, convinced as I was of the propriety, nay, necessity of showing my displeasure, I yet almost hated myself for receiving his politeness so ungraciously.

When we were taking leave, my eyes accidentally meeting his, I could not but observe that his gravity equalled my own, for it had entirely taken place of the smiles and good-humor with which he had met me.

“I am afraid this young lady,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “is too weak for another long walk till she is again rested.”

“If the ladies will trust to my driving,” said Lord Orville, “and are not afraid of a phaeton, mine shall be ready in a moment.”

“You are very good, my Lord,” said Mrs. Sel-

wyn, "but my will is yet unsigned, and I don't choose to venture in a phaeton with a young man while that is the case."

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Beaumont, "you need not be afraid of my Lord Orville, for he is remarkably careful."

"Well, Miss Anville!" answered she, "what say you?"

"Indeed," cried I, "I had much rather walk.—" But then, looking at Lord Orville, I perceived in his face a surprise so serious at my abrupt refusal, that I could not forbear adding, "for I should be sorry to occasion so much trouble."

Lord Orville, brightening at these words, came forward, and pressed his offer in a manner not to be denied;—so the phaeton was ordered: And indeed, my dear Sir!—I know not how it was,—but, from that moment, my coldness and reserve insensibly wore away. You must not be angry,—it was my intention, nay, my endeavour, to support them with firmness; but when I formed the plan, I thought only of the letter,—not of Lord Orville!—and how is it possible for resentment to subsist without provocation? yet, believe me, my dearest Sir, had he sustained the part he began to act when he wrote the ever-to-be-regretted letter, your Evelina would not have forfeited her title to your

esteem, by contentedly submitting to be treated with indignity.

We continued in the garden till the phaeton was ready. When we parted from Mrs. Beaumont, she repeated her invitation to Mrs. Selwyn to accept an apartment in her house; but the reason I have already mentioned made it be again declined.

Lord Orville drove very slow, and so cautiously, that, notwithstanding the height of the phaeton, fear would have been ridiculous. I supported no part in the conversation, but Mrs. Selwyn extremely well supplied the place of two. Lord Orville himself did not speak much, but the excellent sense and refined good-breeding which accompany every word he utters, give value and weight to whatever he says.

“ I suppose, my Lord,” said Mrs. Selwyn, when we stopped at our lodgings, “ you would have been extremely confused, had we met any gentlemen who have the honor of knowing you.”

“ If I had,” answered he, gallantly, “ it would have been from mere compassion at their envy.”

“ No, my Lord!” answered she, “ it would have been from mere shame, that, in an age so daring, you alone should be such a coward as to forbear to frighten women.”

“ Oh!” cried he, laughing, “ when a man is in a fright for himself, the ladies cannot but be

in security; for you have not had half the apprehension for the safety of your persons that I have for that of my heart." He then alighted, handed us out, took leave, and, again mounting the phaeton, was out of sight in a minute.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Selwyn, when he was gone, "there must have been some mistake in the birth of that young man; he was, undoubtedly, designed for the last age; for he is really polite!"

And now, my dear Sir, do not you think, according to the present situation of affairs, I may give up my resentment, without imprudence or impropriety? I hope you will not blame me: indeed, had you, like me, seen his respectful behaviour, you would have been convinced of the impracticability of supporting any further indignation.

LETTER III.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Bristol Hotwells, Sept. 19th.

YESTERDAY morning Mrs. Selwyn received a card from Mrs. Beaumont, to ask her to dine with her to-day; and another, to the same purpose, came to me. The invitation was accepted, and we are but just arrived from Clifton-Hill.

We found Mrs. Beaumont alone in the parlor. I will write you the character of that lady, in the words of our satirical friend, Mrs. Selwyn.

“ She is an absolute *Court-Calendar* bigot; for, chancing herself to be born of a noble and ancient family, she thinks proper to be of opinion that *birth* and *virtue* are one and the same thing. She has some good qualities, but they rather originate from pride than principle, as she piques herself upon being too high born to be capable of an unworthy action, and thinks it incumbent upon her to support the dignity of her ancestry. Fortunately for the world in general, she has taken it into her head, that

condescension is the most distinguishing virtue of high life; so that the same pride of family, which renders others imperious, is with her the motive of affability. But her civility is too formal to be comfortable, and too mechanical to be flattering. That she does *me* the honor of so much notice, is merely owing to an accident, which, I am sure, is very painful to her remembrance; for it so happened that I once did her some service, in regard to an apartment at Southampton; and I have since been informed, that, at the time she accepted my assistance, she thought I was a woman of quality: and I make no doubt but she was miserable when she discovered me to be a mere country gentlewoman: however, her nice notions of decorum have made her load me with favors ever since. But I am not much flattered by her civilities, as I am convinced I owe them neither to attachment nor gratitude; but solely to a desire of cancelling an obligation which she cannot brook being under to one whose name is no where to be found in the Court Calendar."

You well know, my dear Sir! the delight this lady takes in giving way to her satirical humor.

Mrs. Beaumont received us very graciously, though she somewhat distressed me by the questions she asked concerning my family,—such as,

Whether I was related to the Anvilles in the North?—whether some of my name did not live in Lincolnshire? and many other inquiries which much embarrassed me.

The conversation, next, turned upon the intended marriage in her family. She treated the subject with reserve, but it was evident she disapproved Lady Louisa's choice. She spoke in terms of the highest esteem of Lord Orville calling him, in Marmontel's words, *Un jeune homme comme il y en a peu.*

I did not think this conversation very agreeably interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Lovel: indeed, I am heartily sorry he is now at the Hotwells. He made his compliments with the most obsequious respect to Mrs. Beaumont, but took no sort of notice of any other person.

In a few minutes, Lady Louisa Larpent made her appearance. The same manners prevailed; for curtsying, with, "I hope you are well, Ma'am," to Mrs. Beaumont, she passed straight forward to her seat on the sofa, where, leaning her head on her hand, she cast her languishing eyes round the room with a vacant stare, as if determined, though she looked, not to see who was in it.

Mr. Lovel, presently approaching her with reverence the most profound, hoped her Ladyship was not indisposed.

“Mr. Lovel!” cried she, raising her head, “I declare I did not see you; have you been here long?”

“By my *watch*, Madam,” said he, “only five minutes,—but by your Ladyship’s absence, as many hours.”

“Oh! now I think of it,” cried she, “I am very angry with you,—so go along, do! for I sha’n’t speak to you all day.”

“Heaven forbid your La’ship’s displeasure should last so long! in such cruel circumstances, a day would seem an age. But in what have I been so unfortunate as to offend?”

“Oh, you half killed me, the other morning, with terror! I have not yet recovered from my fright. How could you be so cruel as to drive your phaeton against my Lord Merton’s?”

“’Pon honor, Ma’am, your La’ship does me wrong; it was all owing to the horses,—there was no curbing them. I protest I suffered more than your Ladyship, from the terror of alarming you.”

Just then entered Lord Merton; stalking up to Mrs. Beaumont, to whom alone he bowed, he hoped he had not made her wait; and then, advancing to Lady Louisa, said, in a careless manner, “How is your Ladyship this morning?”

“Not well at all,” answered she; “I have

been dying with the headach ever since I got up."

"Indeed!" cried he, with a countenance wholly unmoved, "I am very unhappy to hear it. But should not your Ladyship have some advice?"

"I am quite sick of advice," answered she; "Mr. Ridgeway has but just left me,—but he has done me no good. Nobody here knows what is the matter with me, yet they all see how indifferent I am."

"Your Ladyship's constitution," said Mr. Lovel, "is infinitely delicate."

"Indeed it is!" cried she, in a low voice, "I am *nerve* all over!"

"I am glad, however," said Lord Merton, "that you did not take the air this morning; for Coverley has been driving against me as if he was mad: he has got two of the finest spirited horses I ever saw."

"Pray, my Lord," cried she, "why did not you bring Mr. Coverley with you? he's a droll creature; I like him monstrously."

"Why, he promised to be here as soon as me: I suppose he'll come before dinner's over."

In the midst of this trifling conversation, Lord Orville made his appearance. Oh, how different was his address! how superior did he look and

move to all about him! Having paid his respects to Mrs. Beaumont, and then to Mrs. Selwyn, he came up to me, and said, "I hope Miss Anville has not suffered from the fatigue of Monday morning!" Then, turning to Lady Louisa, who seemed rather surprised at his speaking to me, he added, "Give me leave, sister, to introduce Miss Anville to you."

Lady Louisa, half-rising, said, very coldly, that she should be glad of the honor of knowing me; and then, abruptly turning to Lord Merton and Mr. Lovel, continued, in a half-whisper, her conversation.

For my part, I had risen and curtsied; and now, feeling very foolish, I seated myself again; first I blushed at the unexpected politeness of Lord Orville, and immediately afterwards at the contemptuous failure of it in his sister. How can that young lady see her brother so universally admired for his manners and deportment, and yet be so unamiably opposite to him in her's! But while *his* mind, enlarged and noble, rises superior to the little prejudices of rank, *her's*, feeble and unsteady, sinks beneath their influence.

Lord Orville, I am sure, was hurt and displeased: he bit his lips, and, turning from her, addressed himself wholly to me, till we were summoned to dinner. Do you think I was not

grateful for his attention? yes, indeed, and every angry idea I had entertained, was totally obliterated.

As we were seating ourselves at the table, Mr. Coverley came into the room: he made a thousand apologies in a breath for being so late, but said he had been retarded by a little accident, for that he had overturned his phaeton, and broke it all to pieces. Lady Louisa screamed at this intelligence, and looking at Lord Merton, declared she would never go into a phaeton again.

“ Oh,” cried he, “never mind Jack Coverley, for he does not know how to drive.”

“ My Lord!” cried Mr. Coverley, “ I’ll drive against *you* for a thousand pounds.”

“ Done!” returned the other; “ Name your day, and we’ll each choose a judge.”

“ The sooner the better,” cried Mr. Coverley; “ to-morrow, if the carriage can be repaired.”

“ These enterprises,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ are very proper for men of rank, since ’tis a million to one but both parties will be incapacitated for any better employment.”

“ For heaven’s sake!” cried Lady Louisa, changing color, “ don’t talk so shockingly! Pray, my Lord! pray, Mr. Coverley! don’t alarm me in this manner.”

“ Compose yourself, Lady Louisa,” said

Mrs. Beaumont; "the gentlemen will think better of the scheme; they are neither of them in earnest."

"The very mention of such a scheme," said Lady Louisa, taking out her salts, "makes me tremble all over! Indeed, my Lord, you have frightened me to death! I sha'n't eat a morsel of dinner."

"Permit me," said Lord Orville, "to propose some other subject for the present, and we will discuss this matter another time."

"Pray, brother, excuse me! my Lord must give me his word to drop this project,—for, I declare, it has made me sick as death."

"To compromise the matter," said Lord Orville, "suppose, if both parties are unwilling to give up the bet, that, to make the ladies easy, we change its object to something less dangerous?"

This proposal was so strongly seconded by all the party, that both Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley were obliged to comply with it; and it was then agreed that the affair should be finally settled in the afternoon."

"I shall now be entirely out of conceit with phaetons again," said Mrs. Selwyn, "though Lord Orville had almost reconciled me to them."

"My Lord Orville!" cried the witty Mr. Co-

verley, "why, my Lord Orville is as careful,—egad, as careful as an old woman! Why, I'd drive a one-horse cart against my Lord's phaeton for a hundred guineas!"

This sally occasioned much laughter; for Mr. Coverley, I find, is regarded as a man of infinite humor.

"Perhaps, Sir," said Mrs. Selwyn, "you have not discovered the *reason* my Lord Orville is so careful?"

"Why, no, Ma'am! I must own, I never heard any particular reason for it."

"Why then, Sir, I'll tell it you; and I believe you will confess it to be *very* particular;—his Lordship's friends are not yet tired of him."

Lord Orville laughed and bowed. Mr. Coverley, a little confused, turned to Lord Merton, and said, "No foul play, my Lord! I remember your Lordship recommended me to the notice of this lady the other morning; and, egad! I believe you have been doing me the same office to-day."

"Give you joy, Jack!" cried Lord Merton, with a loud laugh.

After this, the conversation turned wholly upon eating,—a subject which was discussed with the utmost delight; and, had I not known they were men of rank and fashion, I should have imagined that Lord Merton, Mr. Lovel, and

Mr. Coverley, had all been professed cooks; for they-displayed so much knowledge of sauces and made-dishes, and of the various methods of dressing the same things, that I am persuaded they must have given much time and much study to make themselves such adepts in this *art*. It would be very difficult to determine whether they were most to be distinguished as *gluttons* or *epicures*; for they were, at once, dainty and voracious, understood the right and the wrong of every dish, and alike emptied the one and the other. I should have been quite sick of their remarks, had I not been entertained by seeing that Lord Orville, who, I am sure, was equally disgusted, not only read my sentiments, but, by his countenance, communicated to me his own.

When dinner was over, Mrs. Beaumont recommended the gentlemen to the care of Lord Orville, and then attended the ladies to the drawing-room.

The conversation, till tea-time, was extremely insipid; Mrs. Selwyn reserved herself for the gentlemen, Mrs. Beaumont was grave, and Lady Louisa languid.

But, at tea, every body revived; we were joined by the gentlemen, and gaiety took place of dulness.

Since I, as Mr. Lovel says, am *Nobody*, * I seated myself quietly at a window, and not very near to any body: Lord Merton, Mr. Coverley, and Mr. Lovel, severally passed me without notice, and surrounded the chair of Lady Louisa Larpent. I must own, I was rather piqued at the behaviour of Mr. Lovel, as he had formerly known me. It is true, I most sincerely despise his foppery, yet I should be grieved to meet with *contempt* from any body. But I was by no means sorry to find, that Lord Merton was determined not to know me before Lady Louisa, as his neglect relieved me from much embarrassment. As to Mr. Coverley, his attention or disregard were equally indifferent to me. Yet, altogether, I felt extremely uncomfortable in finding myself considered in a light very inferior to the rest of the company.

But when Lord Orville appeared, the scene changed: he came up stairs last, and, seeing me sit alone, not only spoke to me directly, but drew a chair next mine, and honored me with his entire attention.

He inquired very particularly after my health, and hoped I had already found benefit from the Bristol air. "How little did I imagine," added he, "when I had last the pleasure of seeing

you in town, that ill health would, in so short a time, have brought you hither! I am ashamed of myself for the satisfaction I feel at seeing you, —yet, how can I help it!”

He then inquired after the Mirvan family, and spoke of Mrs. Mirvan in terms of most just praise. “She is gentle and amiable,” said he; “a true feminine character.”

“Yes, indeed!” answered I; “and her sweet daughter, to say every thing of her at once, is just the daughter such a mother deserves.”

“I am glad of it,” said he, “for both their sakes; as such near relations must always reflect credit or disgrace on each other.”

After this, he began to speak of the beauties of Clifton; but, in a few moments, he was interrupted by a call from the company to discuss the affair of the wager. Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley, though they had been discoursing upon the subject some time, could not fix upon the thing that satisfied them both.

When they asked the assistance of Lord Orville, he proposed that every body present should vote something, and that the two gentlemen should draw lots which, from the several votes, should decide the bet.

“We must then begin with the ladies,” said Lord Orville; and applied to Mrs. Selwyn.

“With all my heart,” answered she, with

her usual readiness; "and, since the gentlemen are not allowed to risk their *necks*, suppose we decide the bet by their *heads*?"

"By our heads? cried Mr. Coverley; "Egad! I don't understand you."

"I will then explain myself more fully. As I doubt not but you are both excellent classics, suppose, for the good of your own memories, and the entertainment and surprise of the company, the thousand pounds should fall to the share of him who can repeat by heart the longest ode of Horace?"

Nobody could help laughing, the two gentlemen applied to excepted; who seemed, each of them, rather at a loss in what manner to receive this unexpected proposal. At length Mr. Coverley, bowing low, said, "Will your Lordship please to begin?"

"Devil take me, if I do!" answered his Lordship, turning on his heel, and stalking to the window.

"Come, Gentlemen!" said Mrs. Selwyn, "why do you hesitate? I am sure you cannot be afraid of a weak *woman*? besides, if you should chance to be out, Mr. Lovel, I dare say, will have the goodness to assist you."

The laugh, now, turned against Mr. Lovel, whose change of countenance manifested no great pleasure at the transition.

“ Me, Madam !” said he, coloring : “ no, really I must beg to be excused.”

“ Why so, Sir ?”

“ Why so, Ma’am !—Why, really,—as to that;—’pon honor, Ma’am, you are rather—a little severe;—for how is it possible for a man, who is in the House, to study the classics? I assure you, Ma’am,” with an affected shrug, “ I find quite business enough for *my* poor head, in studying politics.”

“ But, did you study politics at school, and at the university ?”

“ At the university !” repeated he, with an embarrassed look; “ why, as to that, Ma’am,—no, I can’t say I did; but then, what with riding,—and—and—and so forth,—really one has not much time, even at the university, for mere reading.”

“ But, to be sure, Sir, you *have* read the classics ?”

“ O dear, yes, Ma’am !—very often,—but not very—not very lately.”

“ Which of the odes,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ do you recommend to these gentlemen to begin with ?”

“ Which of the odes !—Really, Ma’am, as to that, I have no very particular choice,—for, to own the truth, that Horace was never a very great favorite with me.”

“ In truth, I believe you!” said Mrs. Selwyn, very drily.

Lord Merton, again advancing into the circle, with a nod and a laugh, said, “ Give you joy, Lovel!”

Lord Orville next applied to Mrs. Beaumont for her vote.

“ It would very agreeably remind me of past times,” said she, “ when *bowing* was in fashion, if the bet was to depend upon the best-made bow.”

“ Egad, my Lord!” cried Mr. Coverley,— “ there I should beat you hollow; for your Lordship never bows at all.”

“ And, pray Sir, do *you*?” said Mrs. Selwyn.

“ Do I, Ma’am!” cried he: “ Why, only see!”

“ I protest,” cried she, “ I should have taken *that* for a *shrug*, if you had not told me ’twas a bow.”

“ My Lord!” cried Mr. Coverley, “ lets practise!” and then, most ridiculously, they pranced about the room, making bows.

“ We must now,” said Lord Orville, turning to me, “ call upon Miss Anville.”

“ Oh, no, my Lord!” cried I, “ indeed, I have nothing to propose.” He would not, however, be refused, but urged me so much to say *something*, that, at last, not to make him wait any

longer, I ventured to propose an extempore couplet upon some given subject.

Mr. Coverley instantly made me a bow, or, according to Mrs. Selwyn, a *shrug*; crying, "Thank you, Ma'am; egad, that's my *fort*! — Why, my Lord, the Fates seem against you."

Lady Louisa was then applied to; and every body seemed eager to hear her opinion. "I don't know what to say, I declare," cried she, affectedly; "can't you pass me?"

"By no means!" said Lord Merton.

"Is it possible your Ladyship can make so cruel a request?" said Mr. Lovel.

"Egad," cried Mr. Coverley, "if your Ladyship does not help us in this dilemma, we shall be forced to return to our phaetons."

"Oh," cried Lady Louisa, screaming, "you frightful creature, you! how can you be so abominable?"

I believe this trifling lasted near half an hour; when, at length, every body being tired, it was given up, and she said she would consider against another time.

Lord Orville now called upon Mr. Lovel, who, after about ten minutes deliberation, proposed, with a most important face, to determine the wager by who should draw the longest straw!

I had much difficulty to forbear laughing at

this unmeaning scheme; but saw, to my great surprise, not the least change of countenance in any other person: and, since we came home, Mrs. Selwyn has informed me, that to *draw straws* is a fashion of betting by no means uncommon!

Good God! my dear Sir, does it not seem as if money were of no value or service; since those who possess, squander it away in a manner so infinitely absurd!

It now only remained for Lord Orville to speak; and the attention of the company showed the expectations he had raised; yet, I believe, they by no means prevented his proposal from being heard with amazement; for it was no other than that the money should be his due, who, according to the opinion of two judges, should bring the worthiest object with whom to share it!

They all stared, without speaking. Indeed, I believe every one, for a moment at least, experienced something like shame, from having either proposed or countenanced an extravagance so useless and frivolous: for my part, I was so much struck and affected by a rebuke so noble to these spendthrifts, that I felt my eyes filled with tears.

The short silence and momentary reflection into which the company was surprised, Mr. Co-

verley was the first to dispel, by saying, "Egad, my Lord! your Lordship has a most remarkable odd way of taking things."

"Faith," said the incorrigible Lord Merton, "if this scheme takes, I shall fix upon my Swiss to share with me; for I don't know a worthier fellow breathing."

After a few more of these attempts at wit, the two gentlemen agreed that they would settle the affair the next morning.

The conversation then took a different turn, but I did not give it sufficient attention to write any account of it. Not long after, Lord Orville resuming his seat near mine, said, "Why is Miss Anville so thoughtful?"

"I am sorry, my Lord," said I; "to consider myself among those who have so justly incurred your censure."

"My censure! — you amaze me!"

"Indeed, my Lord, you have made me quite ashamed of myself, for having given my vote so foolishly, when an opportunity offered, if, like your Lordship, I had had the sense to use it, of showing some humanity."

"You treat this too seriously," said he, — smiling; "and I hardly know if you do not now mean a rebuke to *me*."

"To you, my Lord!"

"Nay, who are most deserving of it, those

who adapt the conversation to the company, or, those who affect to be superior to it?"

"Oh, my Lord! who else would do you so little justice?"

"I flatter myself," answered he, "that, in fact, your opinion and mine, in this point, are the same, though you condescended to comply with the humor of the company: it is for me, therefore, to apologise for so unseasonable a gravity, which, but for the particular interest that I now take in the affairs of Lord Merton, I should not have been so officious to display."

Such a compliment as this could not fail to reconcile me to myself; and, with revived spirits, I entered into a conversation, which he supported with me till Mrs. Selwyn's carriage was announced, and we returned home.

During our ride, Mrs. Selwyn very much surprised me, by asking if I thought my health would now permit me to give up my morning walks to the pump-room, for the purpose of spending a week at Clifton? "for this poor Mrs. Beaumont," added she, "is so eager to have a discharge in full of her debt to me, that, out of mere compassion, I am induced to listen to her: besides, she has always a house full of people; and though they are chiefly fools and coxcombs, yet there is some pleasure in cutting them up."

I begged I might not, by any means, prevent her following her inclination, as my health was now very well established. And so, my dear Sir! to-morrow we are to be, actually, the guests of Mrs. Beaumont.

I am not much delighted at this scheme; for, greatly as I am flattered by the attention of Lord Orville, it is not very comfortable to be neglected by everybody else: besides, as I am sure I owe the particularity of his civility to a generous feeling for my situation, I cannot expect him to support it so long as a week.

How often do I wish, since I am absent from you, that I was under the protection of Mrs. Mirvan! It is true, Mrs. Selwyn is very obliging, and, in every respect, treats me as an equal; but she is contented with behaving well herself, and does not, with a distinguishing politeness, raise and support me with others. Yet I mean not to blame her, for I know she is sincerely my friend; but the fact is, she is herself so much occupied in conversation, when in company, that she has neither leisure nor thought to attend to the silent.

Well, I must take my chance!—but I knew not, till now, how requisite are birth and fortune to the attainment of respect and civility.

LETTER IV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Clifton, Sept. 20th.

HERE I am, my dear Sir!—under the same roof, and inmate of the same house, as Lord Orville! Indeed, if this were not the case, my situation would be very disagreeable; as you will easily believe, when I tell you the light in which I am generally considered.

“ My dear,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ did you ever before meet with that egregious fop, Lovel?”

I very readily satisfied her as to my acquaintance with him.

“ Oh, then!” said she, “ I am the less surprised at his illnature; since he has already injured you.”

I begged her to explain herself; and then she told me, that while Lord Orville was speaking to me, Lady Louisa said to Mr. Lovel, “ do you know who that is?”

“ Why, Ma'am, no! 'pon honor!” answered he, “ I can't absolutely say I do; I only know

she is a kind of a toad-eater. She made her first appearance in that capacity last spring, when she attended Miss Mirvan, a young lady of Kent."

How cruel is it, my dear Sir! to be thus exposed to the impertinent suggestions of a man who is determined to do me ill offices! Lady Louisa may well despise a *toad-eater*; but, thank heaven! her brother has not heard, or does not credit, the mortifying appellation. Mrs. Selwyn said she would advise me to *pay my court* to this Mr. Lovel.

"For," said she, "though he is malicious, he is fashionable, and may do you some harm in the great world."

But I should disdain myself as much as I do him, were I capable of such duplicity as to flatter a man whom I scorn and despise.

We were received by Mrs. Beaumont with great civility, and by Lord Orville with something more: as to Lady Louisa, she scarcely perceived that we were in the room.

There has been company here all day; part of which I have spent most happily; for after tea, when the ladies played at cards, Lord Orville, who does not, and I, who cannot play, were consequently at our own disposal; and then his Lordship entered into a conversation with me, which lasted till supper-time.

Almost insensibly, I find the constraint—the reserve, I have been wont to feel in his presence, wear away; the politeness, the sweetness, with which he speaks to me, restore all my natural cheerfulness, and make me almost as easy as he is himself; and the more so, as, if I may judge by his looks, I am rather raised than sunk of late in his opinion.

I asked him how the bet was, at last, to be decided? He told me, that, to his great satisfaction, the parties had been prevailed upon to lower the sum from one thousand to one hundred pounds; and that they had agreed it should be determined by a race between two old women, one of which was to be chosen by each side, and both were to be proved more than eighty years of age, though, in other respects, strong and healthy as possible.

When I expressed my surprise at this extraordinary method of spending so much money, “I am charmed,” said he, “at the novelty of meeting with one so unhacknied in the world, as not to be yet influenced by custom to forget the use of reason: for certain it is, that the prevalence of fashion makes the greatest absurdities pass uncensured, and the mind naturally accommodates itself even to the most ridiculous improprieties, if they occur frequently.”

“I should have hoped,” said I, “that the

humane proposal, made yesterday by your Lordship, would have had more effect."

"Oh!" cried he, laughing, "I was so far from expecting any success, that I shall think myself very fortunate if I escape the wit of Mr. Coverley in a lampoon! yet I spoke openly, because I do not wish to conceal that I am no friend to gaming."

After this, he took up the New Bath Guide, and read it with me till supper-time. In our way down stairs, Lady Louisa said, "I thought, brother, you were engaged this evening?"

"Yes, sister," answered he, "and I *have* been engaged." And he bowed to me with an air of gallantry that rather confused me.

September 23d.

Almost insensibly have three days glided on since I wrote last, and so serenely, that, but for your absence, I could not have formed a wish. My residence here is much happier than I had dared expect. The attention with which Lord Orville honors me is as uniform as it is flattering, and seems to result from a benevolence of heart that proves him as much a stranger to caprice as to pride; for, as his particular civilities arose from a generous resentment at seeing me

neglected, so will they, I trust, continue, as long as I shall in any degree deserve them. I am now not merely easy, but even gay in his presence:—such is the effect of true politeness, that it banishes all restraint and embarrassment. When we walk out, he condescends to be my companion, and keeps by my side all the way we go; when we read, he marks the passages most worthy to be noticed, draws out my sentiments, and favors me with his own; at table, where he always sits next to me, he obliges me by a thousand nameless attentions; while the distinguishing goodbreeding, with which he treats me, prevents my repining at the visibly-felt superiority of the rest of the company. A thousand occasional meetings could not have brought us to that degree of social freedom, which four days spent under the same roof have insensibly been productive of: and, as my only friend in this house, Mrs. Selwyn, is too much engrossed in perpetual conversation to attend much to me, Lord Orville seems to regard me as a helpless stranger, and, as such, to think me entitled to his good offices and protection. Indeed, my dear Sir, I have reason to hope, that the depreciating opinion he formerly entertained of me is succeeded by one infinitely more partial.—It may be that I flatter myself; but yet his looks, his attentions, his desire of drawing me into

conversation, and his solicitude to oblige me,—
all conspire to make me hope I do not: in short,
my dearest Sir, these last four happy days would
repay me for months of sorrow and pain!

LETTER V.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Clifton, Sept. 24th.

THIS morning I came down stairs very early, and, supposing that the family would not assemble for some time, I strolled out, purposing to take a long walk, in the manner I was wont to do at Berry Hill, before breakfast. But I had scarce shut the garden-gate, before I was met by a gentleman, who, immediately bowing to me, I recollected to be the unhappy Mr. Maccartney. Very much surprised, I curtsied, and stopped till he came up to me. He was still in mourning, but looked better than when I saw him last, though he had the same air of melancholy which so much struck me at first sight of him.

Addressing me with the utmost respect, "I am happy, Madam," said he, "to have met with you so soon. I came to Bristol but yesterday, and have had no small difficulty in tracing you to Clifton.

“ Did you know, then, of my being here?”

“ I did, Madam; the sole motive of my journey was to see you. I have been to Berry Hill, and there I had my intelligence, and, at the same time, the unwelcome information of your ill health.

“ Good God! Sir,—and can you possibly have taken so much trouble?”

“ Trouble! Oh, Madam, could there be any, to return you, the moment I had the power, my personal acknowledgements for your goodness?”

I then inquired after Madame Duval, and the Snow-hill family. He told me, they were all well, and that Madame Duval proposed soon returning to Paris. When I congratulated him upon looking better, “ It is *yourself*, Madam,” said he, “ you should congratulate; for to your humanity alone it may now be owing that I exist at all.” He then told me that his affairs were now in a less desperate situation, and that he hoped, by the assistance of time and reason, to accommodate his mind to a more cheerful submission to his fate. “ The interest you so generously took in my affliction,” added he, “ assures me you will not be displeased to hear of my better fortune; I was therefore eager to acquaint you with it.” He then told me, that his friend, the moment he had received his

letter, quitted Paris, and flew to give him his personal assistance and consolation. With a heavy heart he acknowledged, he accepted it; "but yet," he added, "I *have* accepted it, and therefore, as bound equally by duty and honor, my first step was to hasten to the benefactress of my distress, and to return," presenting me something in a paper, "the only part of my obligations that *can* be returned;—for the rest, I have nothing but my gratitude to offer, and must always be contented to consider myself her debtor."

I congratulated him most sincerely upon his dawning prosperity, but begged he would not deprive me of the pleasure of being his friend, and declined receiving the money till his affairs were more settled.

While this point was in agitation, I heard Lord Orville's voice inquiring of the gardener if he had seen me? I immediately opened the garden-gate, and his Lordship, advancing to me with quickness, said, "Good God, Miss Anville! have you been out alone? Breakfast has been ready some time, and I have been round the garden in search of you."

"Your Lordship has been very good," said I; "but I hope you have not waited."

"Not waited!" repeated he, smiling, "Do you think we could sit down quietly to break-

fast, with the idea that you had run away from us? But come," offering to hand me, "if we do not return, they will suppose *I* am run away too; and they very naturally may, as they know the attraction of the magnet that draws me."

"I will come, my Lord," said I, rather embarrassed, "in two minutes." Then, turning to Mr. Macartney, with yet more embarrassment, I wished him good morning.

He advanced towards the garden, with the paper still in his hand.

"No, no," cried I, "some other time."

"May I then, Madam, have the honor of seeing you again!"

I did not dare take the liberty of inviting any body to the house of Mrs. Beaumont, nor yet had I the presence of mind to make an excuse; and, therefore, not knowing how to refuse him, I said, "Perhaps you may be this way again to-morrow morning,—and I believe I shall walk out before breakfast."

He bowed, and went away; while I, turning again to Lord Orville, saw his countenance so much altered, that I was frightened at what I had so hastily said. He did not again offer me his hand, but walked, silent and slow, by my side. Good heaven! thought I, what may be not suppose from this adventure? May he not,

by my desire of meeting Mr. Macartney to-morrow, imagine it was by design I walked out to meet him to-day? Tormented by this apprehension, I determined to avail myself of the freedom which his behaviour since I came hither has encouraged; and, since he would not ask any questions, begin an explanation myself. I therefore slackened my pace, to gain time, and then said, "Was not your Lordship surprised to see me speaking with a stranger?"

"A stranger!" repeated he; "is it possible that gentleman can be a stranger to you?"

"No, my Lord,"—said I, stammering, "not to *me!*—but only it might look—he might seem—"

"No, believe me!" said he, with a forced smile, "I could never suppose Miss Anville would make an appointment with a stranger."

"An appointment, my Lord!" repeated I, coloring violently.

"Pardon me, Madam!" answered he, "but I thought I had heard one."

I was so much confounded, that I could not speak; yet, finding he walked quietly on, I could not endure he should make his own interpretation of my silence; and therefore, as soon as I recovered from my surprise, I said, "Indeed, my Lord! you are much mistaken,—Mr. Macartney had particular business with me — and I could

not,—I knew not how to refuse seeing him,—but, indeed, my Lord—I had not,—he had not,—I stammered so terribly that I could not go on.

“I am very sorry,” said he, gravely, “that I have been so unfortunate as to distress you; but I should not have followed you, had I not imagined you were merely walked out for the air.”

“And so I was!” cried I eagerly, “indeed, my Lord, I was! My meeting with Mr. Macartney was quite accidental; and if your Lordship thinks there is any impropriety in my seeing him to-morrow, I am ready to give up that intention.”

“If I think!” said he, in a tone of surprise; “surely Miss Anville must best judge for herself! surely she cannot leave the arbitration of a point so delicate, to one who is ignorant of all the circumstances which attend it?”

“If,” said I, “it was worth your Lordship’s time to hear them,—you should *not* be ignorant of the circumstances which attend it.”

“The sweetness of Miss Anville’s disposition,” said he, in a softened voice, “I have long admired, and the offer of a communication which does me so much honor, is too grateful to me not to be eagerly caught at.”

Just then, Mrs. Selwyn opened the parlour

window, and our conversation ended. I was rallied upon my passion for solitary walking, but no questions were asked me.

When breakfast was over, I hoped to have had some opportunity of speaking with Lord Orville; but Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley came in, and insisted upon his opinion of the spot they had fixed upon for the old women's race. The ladies declared they would be of the party, and, accordingly, we all went.

The race is to be run in Mrs. Beaumont's garden; the two gentlemen are as anxious as if their joint lives depended upon it. They have, at length, fixed upon objects, but have found great difficulty in persuading them to practise running, in order to try their strength. This grand affair is to be decided next Thursday.

When we returned to the house, the entrance of more company still prevented my having any conversation with Lord Orville. I was very much chagrined, as I knew he was engaged at the Hotwells in the afternoon. Seeing, therefore, no probability of speaking to him before the time of my meeting Mr. Macartney arrived, I determined that, rather than risk his ill opinion, I would leave Mr. Macartney to his own suggestions.

Yet, when I reflected upon his peculiar situation, his poverty, his sadness, and, more than

all the rest, the idea I knew he entertained of what he calls his obligations to me, I could not resolve upon a breach of promise, which might be attributed to causes of all others the most offensive to one whom misfortune has made extremely suspicious of slights and contempt.

After the most uneasy consideration, I at length determined upon writing an excuse, which would, at once, save me from either meeting or affronting him: I therefore begged Mrs. Selwyn's leave to send her man to the Hotwells, which she instantly granted; and then I wrote the following note.

TO MR. MACARTNEY.

SIR,

As it will not be in my power to walk out to-morrow morning, I would by no means give you the trouble of coming to Clifton. I hope, however, to have the pleasure of seeing you before you quit Bristol. I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

EVELINA ANVILLE.

I desired the servant to inquire at the pump-room where Mr. Macartney lived, and returned to the parlour.

As soon as the company dispersed, the ladies retired to dress. I then, unexpectedly, found myself alone with Lord Orville; who, the moment I rose to follow Mrs. Selwyn, advanced to me, and said, "Will Miss Anville pardon my impatience, if I remind her of the promise she was so good as to make me this-morning?"

I stopped, and would have returned to my seat, but, before I had time, the servants came to lay the cloth. He retreated, and went towards the window; and while I was considering in what manner to begin, I could not help asking myself what *right* I had to communicate the affairs of Mr. Macartney; and I doubted whether, to clear myself from one act of imprudence, I had not committed another.

Distressed by this reflection, I thought it best to quit the room, and give myself some time for consideration before I spoke; and therefore, only saying I must hasten to dress, I ran up stairs;—rather abruptly, I own; and so, I fear, Lord Orville must think; yet what could I do? unused to the situations in which I find myself, and embarrassed by the slightest difficulties, I seldom, till too late, discover how I ought to act.

Just as we were all assembled to dinner, Mrs. Selwyn's man, coming into the parlour, presented to me a letter, and said, "I can't find out Mr. Macartney, Madam; but the post-

office people will let you know if they hear of him."

I was extremely ashamed of this public message; and, meeting the eyes of Lord Orville, which were earnestly fixed on me, my confusion redoubled, and I knew not which way to look. All dinner time, he was as silent as myself, and the moment it was in my power, I left the table, and went to my own room. Mrs. Selwyn presently followed me, and her questions obliged me to own almost all the particulars of my acquaintance with Mr. Macartney, in order to excuse my writing to him. She said it was a most romantic affair, and spoke her sentiments with great severity, declaring that she had no doubt but he was an adventurer and an impostor.

And now, my dear Sir, I am totally at a loss what I ought to do: the more I reflect, the more sensible I am of the utter impropriety, nay, treachery, of revealing the story, and publishing the misfortunes and poverty of Mr. Macartney; who has an undoubted right to my secrecy and discretion, and whose letter charges me to regard his communication as sacred:—and yet, the appearance of mystery,—perhaps something worse,—which this affair must have to Lord Orville, his seriousness, and the promise I have made him, are inducements scarce to be resisted

for trusting him, with the openness he has reason to expect from me.

I am equally distressed, too, whether or not I should see Mr. Macartney to-morrow morning.

Oh, Sir, could I now be enlightened by your counsel, from what anxiety and perplexity should I be relieved!

But no,—I ought not to betray Mr. Macartney; and I will not forfeit a confidence, which would never have been reposed in me, but from a reliance upon my honor which I should blush to find myself unworthy of. Desirous as I am of the good opinion of Lord Orville, I will endeavour to act as if I was guided by your advice, and, making it my sole aim to *deserve* it, leave to time and to fate my success or disappointment.

Since I have formed this resolution, my mind is more at ease; but I will not finish my letter till the affair is decided.

Sept. 25th.

I rose very early this morning, and, after a thousand different plans, not being able to resolve upon giving poor Mr. Macartney leave to suppose I neglected him, I thought it incumbent upon me to keep my word, since he had not received my letter; I therefore determined to

make my own apologies, not to stay with him two minutes, and to excuse myself from meeting him any more.

Yet, uncertain whether I was wrong or right, it was with fear and trembling that I opened the garden-gate,—judge, then, of my feelings, when the first object I saw was Lord Orville!—he, too, looked extremely disconcerted, and said, in a hesitating manner, “ Pardon me, Madam!—I did not intend,—I did not imagine you would have been here so soon—or,—or—I would not have come.”—And then, with a hasty bow, he passed me, and proceeded to the garden.

I was scarce able to stand, so greatly did I feel myself shocked; but, upon my saying, almost involuntarily, “ Oh, my Lord!”—he turned back, and, after a short pause, said, “ Did you speak to *me*, Madam?”

I could not immediately answer; I seemed *choked*, and was even forced to support myself by the garden-gate.

Lord Orville, soon recovering his dignity, said, “ I know not how to apologise for being, just now, at this place;—and I cannot immediately,—if *ever*,—clear myself from the imputation of impertinent curiosity, to which I fear you will attribute it: however, at present, I will only intreat your pardon, without detaining

you any longer." Again he bowed, and left me—For some moments, I remained fixed to the same spot, and in the same position, immoveably as if I had been transformed to stone. My first impulse was to call him back, and instantly tell him the whole affair; but I checked this desire, though I would have given the world to have indulged it; something like pride aided what I thought due to Mr. Macartney, and I determined not only to keep his secret, but to delay any sort of explanation, till Lord Orville should condescend to request it.

Slowly he walked, and before he entered the house, he looked back, but hastily withdrew his eyes, upon finding I observed him.

Indeed, my dear Sir! you cannot easily imagine a situation more uncomfortable than mine was at that time; to be suspected by Lord Orville of any clandestine actions wounded my soul; I was too much discomposed to wait for Mr. Macartney; nor, in truth, could I endure to have the design of my staying so well known. Yet I was so extremely agitated, that I could hardly move; and, I have reason to believe, Lord Orville, from the parlour-window, saw me tottering along; for, before I had taken five steps, he came out, and, hastening to meet me, said, "I fear you are not well; pray, allow me," offering his arm, "to assist you."

“No, my Lord!” said I, with all the resolution I could assume; yet I was affected by an attention at that time so little expected, and forced to turn away my head to conceal my emotion.

“You *must!*” said he, with earnestness, “indeed, you must!—I am sure you are not well;—refuse me not the honor of assisting you!” and, almost forcibly, he took my hand, and drawing it under his arm, obliged me to lean upon him. That I submitted was partly the effect of surprise at an earnestness so uncommon in Lord Orville, and partly that I did not, just then, dare trust my voice to make any objection.

When we came to the house, he led me into the parlour, and to a chair, and begged to know if I would not have a glass of water.

“No, my Lord! I thank you,” said I; “I am perfectly recovered;” and, rising, I walked to the window, where, for some time, I pretended to be occupied in looking at the garden.

Determined as was I to act honorably by Mr. Macartney, I yet most anxiously wished to be restored to the good opinion of Lord Orville; but his silence, and the thoughtfulness of his air, discouraged me from speaking.

My situation soon grew disagreeable and embarrassing, and I resolved to return to my cham-

her till breakfast was ready. To remain longer, I feared, might seem *asking* for his inquiries; and I was sure it would ill become me to be more eager to speak, than he was to hear.

Just as I reached the door, turning to me hastily, he said, "Are you going, Miss Anville?"

"I am, my Lord," answered I; yet I stopped.

"Perhaps to return to—but I beg your pardon!" He spoke with a degree of agitation that made me readily comprehend he meant to *the garden*, and I instantly said, "To my own room, my Lord!" And again I would have gone; but, convinced by my answer that I understood him, I believe he was sorry for the insinuation; he approached me with a very serious air, though, at the same time he forced a smile, and said, "I know not what evil genius pursues me this morning, but I seem destined to do or to say something I ought not: I am so much ashamed of myself, that I can scarce solicit your forgiveness."

"My forgiveness! my Lord?" cried I, abashed, rather than elated by his condescension, "surely you cannot—you are not serious!"

"Indeed, never more so! yet, if I may be my own interpreter, Miss Anville's countenance pronounces my pardon."

"I know not, my Lord, how any one can *par-don*, who has never been offended."

“ You are very good; yet I could expect no less from a sweetness of disposition which baffles all comparison: will you not think I am an incroacher, and that I take advantage of your goodness, should I once more remind you of the promise you vouchsafed me yesterday?”

“ No, indeed! on the contrary, I shall be very happy to acquit myself in your Lordship’s opinion.”

“ Acquittal you need not,” said he, leading me again to the window; “ yet I own my curiosity is strongly excited.”

When I was seated, I found myself much at a loss what to say; yet, after a short silence, assuming all the courage in my power, “ Will you not, my Lord,” said I, “ think me trifling and capricious, should I own I have repented the promise I made, and should I intreat your Lordship not to insist upon my strict performance of it?—I spoke so hastily, that I did not, at the time, consider the impropriety of what I said.”

As he was entirely silent, and profoundly attentive, I continued to speak without interruption.

“ If your Lordship, by any other means, knew the circumstances attending my acquaintance with Mr. Macartney, I am most sure you would yourself disapprove my relating them. He is a gentleman, and has been very unfortunate,—but

I am not,—I think,—at liberty to say more; yet I am sure, if he knew your Lordship wished to hear any particulars of his affairs, he would readily consent to my acknowledging them;—shall I, my Lord, ask his permission?”

“*His* affairs!” repeated Lord Orville; “by no means; I have not the least curiosity about them.”

“I beg your Lordship’s pardon,—but, indeed, I had understood the contrary.”

“Is it possible, Madam, you could suppose the affairs of an utter stranger can excite my curiosity?”

The gravity and coldness with which he asked this question, very much abashed me; but Lord Orville is the most delicate of men, and, presently recollecting himself, he added, “I mean not to speak with indifference of any friend of your’s,—far from it; any such will always command my good wishes: yet I own I am rather disappointed; and, though I doubt not the justice of your reason, to which I implicitly submit, you must not wonder, that, when upon the point of being honored with your confidence, I should feel the greatest regret at finding it withdrawn.”

Do you think, my dear Sir, I did not, at that moment, require all my resolution to guard me from frankly telling him whatever he wished to hear? yet I rejoice that I did not; for,

added to the actual wrong I should have done; Lord Orville himself, when he had heard, would, I am sure, have blamed me. Fortunately, this thought occurred to me, and I said, "Your Lordship shall yourself be my judge; the promise I made, though voluntary, was rash and inconsiderate; yet, had it concerned myself, I would not have hesitated in fulfilling it; but the gentleman, whose affairs I should be obliged to relate—"

"Pardon me," cried he, "for interrupting you; yet allow me to assure you, I have not the slightest desire to be acquainted with his affairs, further than what belongs to the motives which induced you yesterday morning—." He stopped; but there was no occasion to say more.

"That, my Lord," cried I, "I will tell you honestly. Mr. Macartney had particular business with me, and I could not take the liberty to ask him hither."

"And why not?—Mrs. Beaumont, I am sure,—"

"I could not, my Lord, think of intruding upon Mrs. Beaumont's complaisance; and so, with the same hasty folly I promised your Lordship, I much *more* rashly promised to meet him."

"And did you?"

"No, my Lord!" said I, coloring; "I returned before he came."

Again, for some time, we were both silent; yet, unwilling to leave him to reflections which could not but be to my disadvantage, I summoned sufficient courage to say, "There is no young creature, my Lord! who so greatly wants, or so earnestly wishes for, the advice and assistance of her friends, as I do; I am new to the world, and unused to acting for myself,—my intentions are never wilfully blameable, yet I err perpetually!—I have, hitherto, been blessed with the most affectionate of friends, and, indeed, the ablest of men, to guide and instruct me upon every occasion;—but he is too distant, now, to be applied to at the moment I want his aid;—and *here*,—there is not a human being whose counsel I can ask."

"Would to heaven!" cried he, with a countenance from which all coldness and gravity were banished, and succeeded by the mildest benevolence, "that *I* were worthy—and capable—of supplying the place of such a friend to Miss Anville!"

"You do me but too much honor," said I; "yet I hope your Lordship's candor,—perhaps I ought to say indulgence,—will make some allowance, on account of my inexperience, for behaviour so inconsiderate.—May I, my Lord, hope that you will?"

"May *I*," cried he, "hope that you will

pardon the ill-grace with which I have submitted to my disappointment? and that you will permit me," kissing my hand, "thus to seal my peace?"

"*Our* peace, my Lord!" said I, with revived spirits.

"This, then," said he, again pressing it to his lips, "for *our* peace! and now,—are we not friends?"

Just then the door opened, and I had only time to withdraw my hand before the ladies came in to breakfast.

I have been, all day, the happiest of human beings!—to be thus reconciled to Lord Orville, and yet to adhere to my resolution,—what could I wish for more?—he, too, has been very cheerful, and more attentive, more obliging to me than ever. Yet heaven forbid I should again be in a similar situation! for I cannot express how much uneasiness I have suffered from the fear of incurring his ill opinion.

But what will poor Mr. Macartney think of me? happy as I am, I much regret the necessity I have been under of disappointing him.

Adieu, my dearest Sir.

LETTER VI.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry-Hill, Sept. 28.

DEAD to the world, and equally insensible to its pleasures or its pains, I long since bid adieu to all joy, and defiance to all sorrow, but what should spring from my Evelina,—sole source, to me, of all earthly felicity! How strange, then, is it, that the letter, in which she tells me she is the *happiest of human beings*, should give me the most mortal inquietude!

Alas, my child!—that innocence, the first, best gift of heaven, should, of all others, be the blindest to its own danger,—the most exposed to treachery,—and the least able to defend itself, in a world where it is little known, less valued, and perpetually deceived!

Would to heaven you were here!—then, by degrees, and with gentleness, I might enter upon a subject too delicate for distant discussion. Yet is it too interesting, and the situation too critical, to allow of delay.—Oh, my Evelina, your

situation is critical indeed!—your peace of mind is at stake, and every chance for your future happiness may depend upon the conduct of the present moment.

Hitherto I have forbore to speak with you upon the most important of all concerns, the state of your heart:—alas, I need no information! I have been silent, indeed, but I have not been blind.

Long, and with the deepest regret, have I perceived the ascendancy which Lord Orville has gained upon your mind.—You will start at the mention of his name,—you will tremble every word you read;—I grieve to give pain to my gentle Evelina, but I dare not any longer spare her.

Your first meeting with Lord Orville was decisive. Lively, fearless, free from all other impressions, such a man as you describe him could not fail exciting your admiration, and the more dangerously, because he seemed as unconscious of his power as you of your weakness; and therefore you had no alarm, either from *his* vanity or *your own* prudence.

Young, animated, entirely off your guard, and thoughtless of consequences, *Imagination* took the reins, and *Reason*, slow-paced, though sure-footed, was unequal to a race with so eccentric and flighty a companion. How rapid

was then my Evelina's progress through those regions of fancy and passion whither her new guide conducted her!—She saw Lord Orville at a ball,—and he was *the most amiable of men!*—she met him again at another,—and *he had every virtue under heaven!*

I mean not to depreciate the merit of Lord Orville, who, one mysterious instance alone excepted, seems to have deserved the idea you formed of his character; but it was not time, it was not the knowledge of his worth, obtained your regard; your new comrade had not patience to wait any trial; her glowing pencil, dipt in the vivid colors of her creative ideas, painted to you, at the moment of your first acquaintance, all the excellencies, all the good and rare qualities, which a great length of time and intimacy could alone have really discovered.

You flattered yourself that your partiality was the effect of esteem, founded upon a general love of merit and a principle of justice: and your heart, which fell the sacrifice of your error, was totally gone ere you suspected it was in danger.

A thousand times have I been upon the point of showing you the perils of your situation; but the same inexperience which occasioned your mistake, I hoped, with the assistance of time and absence, would effect a cure: I was, indeed,

most unwilling to destroy your illusion, while I dared hope it might itself contribute to the restoration of your tranquillity; since your ignorance of the danger and force of your attachment might possibly prevent that despondency with which young people, in similar circumstances, are apt to persuade themselves that what is only difficult is absolutely impossible.

But now, since you have again met, and are become more intimate than ever, all my hope from silence and seeming ignorance is at an end.

Awake, then, my dear, my deluded child! awake to the sense of your danger, and exert yourself to avoid the evils with which it threatens you, — evils which, to a mind like yours, are most to be dreaded—secret repining, and concealed yet consuming regret! Make a noble effort for the recovery of your peace, which now, with sorrow I see it, depends wholly upon the presence of Lord Orville. This effort, may, indeed, be painful; but trust to my experience, when I assure you it is requisite.

You must quit him! — his sight is baneful to your repose, his society is death to your future tranquillity! Believe me, my beloved child, my heart aches for your suffering, while it dictates its necessity.

Could I flatter myself that Lord Orville would, indeed, be sensible of your worth, and act with a nobleness of mind which should prove it congenial to his own, then would I leave my Evelina to the unmolested enjoyment of the cheerful society and increasing regard of a man she so greatly admires: but this is not an age in which we may trust to appearances, and imprudence is much sooner regretted than repaired. Your health, you tell me, is much mended; — can you then consent to leave Bristol? — not abruptly; that I do not desire; but in a few days from the time you receive this? I will write to Mrs. Selwyn, and tell her how much I wish your return; and Mrs. Clinton can take sufficient care of you.

I have meditated upon every possible expedient that might tend to your happiness, ere I fixed upon exacting from you a compliance which I am convinced will be most painful to you; — but I can satisfy myself in none. This will, at least, be safe; and as to success, — we must leave it to time.

I am very glad to hear of Mr. Macartney's welfare.

Adieu, my dearest child! Heaven preserve and strengthen you!

A. V.

LETTER VII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Clifton, Sept. 28th.

SWEETLY, most sweetly, have two days more passed since I wrote; but I have been too much engaged to be exact in my journal.

To day has been less tranquil. It was destined for the decision of the important bet, and has been productive of general confusion throughout the house. It was settled that the race should be run at five o'clock in the afternoon. Lord Merton breakfasted here, and staid till noon. He wanted to engage the Ladies to *bet on his side*, in the true spirit of gaming, without seeing the racers; but he could only prevail on Lady Louisa, as Mrs. Selwyn said she never laid a wager against her own wishes, and Mrs. Beaumont would not *take sides*. As for *me*, I was not applied to: it is impossible for negligence to be more pointed, than that of Lord Merton to me, in the presence of Lady Louisa.

But, just before dinner, I happened to be alone

in the drawing-room, when his Lordship suddenly returned ; and, coming in with his usual familiarity, he was beginning, “ You see, Lady Louisa, —” but stopping short, “ Pray, where’s every body gone ?”

“ Indeed, I don’t know, my Lord.”

He then shut the door, and, with a great alteration in his face and manner, advanced eagerly towards me, and said, “ How glad I am, my sweet girl ! to meet you at last alone. By my soul ! I began to think there was a plot against me, for I’ve never been able to have you a minute to myself.” And, very freely, he seized my hand.

I was so much surprised at this address, after having been so long totally neglected, that I could make no other answer than staring at him with unfeigned astonishment.

“ Why, now,” continued he, “ if you was not the cruellest little angel in the world, you would have helped me to some expedient : for you see how I am watched here ; Lady Louisa’s eyes are never off me. She gives me a charming foretaste of the pleasures of a wife !—however, it won’t last long.”

Disgusted to the greatest degree, I attempted to draw away my hand, but I believe I should not have succeeded, if Mrs. Beaumont had not made her appearance. He turned from me with

the greatest assurance, and said, “[How are you, Ma’am?—how is Lady Louisa?—you see I can’t live a moment out of the house.”

Could you, my dearest Sir, have believed it possible for such effrontery to be in man?

Before dinner, came Mr. Coverley, and, before five o’clock, Mr. Lovel and some other company. The place marked out for the race, was a gravel-walk in Mrs. Beaumont’s garden, and the length of the ground twenty yards. When we were summoned to the *course*, the two poor old women made their appearance; though they seemed very healthy for their time of life, they yet looked so weak, so infirm, so feeble, that I could feel no sensation but that of pity at the sight: however, this was not the general sense of the company, for they no sooner came forward, than they were greeted with a laugh from every beholder, Lord Orville excepted, who looked very grave during the whole transaction. Doubtless he must be greatly discontented at the dissipated conduct and extravagance of a man, with whom he is soon to be so nearly connected.

For some time, the scene was truly ridiculous; the agitation of the parties concerned, and the bets that were laid upon the old women, were absurd beyond measure. *Who are you for?* and *Whose side are you of?* was echoed from

mouth to mouth by the whole company. Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley were both so excessively gay and noisy, that I soon found they had been too free in drinking to their success. They handed with loud shouts the old women to the race-ground, and encouraged them by liberal promises to exert themselves.

When the signal was given for them to set off, the poor creatures, feeble and frightened, ran against each other; and, neither of them able to support the shock, they both fell on the ground.

Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley flew to their assistance. Seats were brought for them, and they each drank a glass of wine. They complained of being much bruised; for, heavy and helpless, they had not been able to save themselves, but fell with their whole weight upon the gravel; however, as they seemed equal sufferers, both parties were too eager to have the affair deferred.

Again, therefore, they set off; and hobbled along, nearly even with each other, for some time, yet frequently, and to the inexpressible diversion of the company, they stumbled and tottered; and the confused hallooing of "*Now Coverley!*"—" *Now Merton!*" rung from side to side during the whole affair.

Not long after, a foot of one of the poor

women slipped, and with great force she came again to the ground: involuntarily, I sprung forward to assist her, but Lord Merton, to whom she did not belong, stopped me, calling out "No foul play! no foul play!"

Mr. Coverley then, repeating the same words, went himself to help her, and insisted that the other should stop. A debate ensued; but the poor creature was too much hurt to move, and declared her utter inability to make another attempt. Mr. Coverley was quite brutal; he swore at her with unmanly rage, and seemed scarce able to refrain even from striking her.

Lord Merton then, in great rapture, said it was a *hollow thing*; but Mr. Coverley contended that the fall was accidental, and time should be allowed for the woman to recover: however, all the company being against him, he was pronounced the loser.

We then went to the drawing-room, to tea; after which, the evening being remarkably warm, we all walked in the garden. Lord Merton was quite riotous, and Lady Louisa in high spirits; but Mr. Coverley endeavoured in vain to conceal his chagrin.

As Lord Orville was thoughtful and walked by himself, I expected that, as usual, I should pass unnoticed, and be left to my own meditations; but this was not the case, for Lord

Merton, entirely off his guard, giddy equally from wine and success, was very troublesome to me; and, regardless of the presence of Lady Louisa, which hitherto has restrained him even from common civility, he attached himself to me, during the walk, with a freedom of gallantry that put me extremely out of countenance. He paid me the most high-flown compliments, and frequently and forcibly seized my hand, though I repeatedly and with undissembled anger drew it back. Lord Orville, I saw, watched us with earnestness, and Lady Louisa's smiles were converted into looks of disdain.

I could not bear to be thus situated; and, complaining I was tired, I quickened my pace, with intention to return to the house; but Lord Merton, hastily following, caught my hand, and saying the *day was his own*, vowed he would not let me go.

"You *must*, my Lord!" cried I, extremely flurried.

"You are the most charming girl in the world," said he, "and never looked better than at this moment."

"My Lord," cried Mrs. Selwyn, advancing to us, "you don't consider, that, the better Miss Anville looks, the more striking is the contrast with your Lordship; therefore, for your own sake, I would advise you not to hold her."

“Egad, my Lord!” cried Mr. Coverley, “I don’t see what right you have to the best *old* and the best *young* woman too, in the same day.”

“*Best young woman!*” repeated Mr. Lovel; “’pon honor, Jack! you have made a most unfortunate speech; however, if Lady Louisa can pardon you,—and her Ladyship is all goodness, I am sure nobody else can; for you have committed an outrageous solecism in good manners.”

“And pray, Sir!” said Mrs. Selwyn, “under what denomination may your own speech pass?”

Mr. Lovel, turning another way, affected not to hear her: and Mr. Coverley, bowing to Lady Louisa, said; “Her Ladyship is well acquainted with my devotion,—but, egad! I don’t know how it is,—I had always an unlucky turn at an epigram, and never could resist a smart play upon words in my life.”

“Pray, my Lord,” cried “let go my hand! pray, Mrs. Selwyn, speak for me.”

“My Lord,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “in detaining Miss Anville any longer, you only lose time; for we are already as well convinced of your valor and your strength, as if you were to hold her an age.”

“My Lord,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “I must beg leave to interfere; I know not if Lady Louisa can pardon you; but, as this young lady is at

my house, I do not choose to have her made uneasy."

"I pardon him!" cried Lady Louisa, "I declare I am monstrous glad to get rid of him?"

"Egad, my Lord!" cried Mr. Coverley, "while you are grasping at a shadow, you'll lose a substance; you'd best make your peace while you can."

"Pray, Mr. Coverley, be quiet!" said Lady Louisa, peevishly; "for I declare I won't speak to him. Brother," taking hold of Lord Orville's arm, "will you walk in with me?"

"Would to heaven!" cried I, frightened to see how much Lord Merton was in liquor, "that I, too, had a brother!—and then I should not be exposed to such treatment!"

Lord Orville, instantly quitting Lady Louisa, said, "Will Miss Anville allow *me* the honor of taking that title?" and then, without waiting for any answer, he disengaged me from Lord Merton, and, handing me to Lady Louisa, "Let me," added he, "take equal care of *both* my sisters;" and then, desiring her to take hold of one arm, and begging me to make use of the other, we reached the house in a moment. Lord Merton, disordered as he was, attempted not to stop us.

As soon as we entered the house I withdrew my arm and curtsied my thanks, for my heart

was too full for speech. Lady Louisa, evidently hurt at her brother's condescension, and piqued extremely by Lord Merton's behaviour, silently drew away her's, and, biting her lips, with a look of infinite vexation, walked sullenly up the hall.

Lord Orville asked her if she would not go into the parlour?

"No!" answered she, haughtily, "I leave you and your new sister together:" and then she walked up stairs.

I was quite confounded at the pride and rudeness of this speech. Lord Orville himself seemed thunderstruck; I turned from him, and went into the parlour; he followed me, saying, "Must I, now, apologise to Miss Anville for the liberty of my interference? — or ought I to apologise that I did not, as I wished, interfere sooner?"

"Oh, my Lord!" cried I, with an emotion I could not repress, "it is from you alone I meet with any respect,—all others treat me with impertinence or contempt!"

I am sorry I had not more command of myself; as he had reason, just then, to suppose I particularly meant his sister; which, I am sure, must very much hurt him.

"Good heaven!" cried he, "that so much sweetness and merit can fail to excite the love

and admiration so justly their due! I cannot—I dare not express to you half the indignation I feel at this moment!”

“I am sorry, my Lord,” said I, more calmly, “to have raised it; but yet,—in a situation that calls for protection, to meet only with mortifications,—indeed, I am but ill formed to bear them!”

“My *dear* Miss Anville!” cried he warmly, “allow *me* to be your friend; think of me as if I were indeed your brother; and let me intreat you to accept my best services, if there is any thing in which I can be so happy as to show my regard,—my respect for you!”

Before I had time to speak, the rest of the party entered the parlour, and, as I did not wish to see any thing more of Lord Merton, at least before he had slept, I determined to leave it. Lord Orville, seeing my design, said, as I passed him, “Will you go?”—“Had not I best, my Lord?” said I. “I am afraid,” said he, smiling, “since I must now speak as your *brother*, I am afraid you *had*;—you see you may trust me, since I can advise against my own interest.”

I then left the room, and have been writing ever since. And methinks I can never lament the rudeness of Lord Merton, as it has more than ever confirmed to me the esteem of Lord Orville.

LETTER VIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Sept. 30th.

OH Sir! what a strange incident have I to recite!—what a field of conjecture to open!

Yesterday evening, we all went to an assembly; Lord Orville presented tickets to the whole family, and did me the honor, to the no small surprise of all here, I believe, to dance with me. But every day abounds in fresh instances of his condescending politeness, and he now takes every opportunity of calling me his *friend* and his *sister*.

Lord Merton offered a ticket to Lady Louisa; but she was so much incensed against him, that she refused it with the utmost disdain; neither could he prevail upon her to dance with him; she sat still the whole evening, and deigned not to look at or speak to him. To me, her behaviour is almost the same; for she is cold, distant, and haughty, and her eyes express the

greatest contempt. But for Lord Orville, how miserable would my residence here make me!

We were joined, in the ball-room, by Mr. Coverley, Mr. Lovel, and Lord Merton, who looked as if he was doing penance, and sat all the evening next to Lady Louisa, vainly endeavouring to appease her anger.

Lord Orville began the minuets; he danced with a young lady who seemed to engage the general attention, as she had not been seen here before. She is pretty, and looks mild and good-humored.

“ Pray, Mr. Lovel,” said Lady Louisa, “ who is that?”

“ Miss Belmont,” answered he, “ the young heiress; she came to the Wells yesterday.”

Struck with the name, I involuntarily repeated it, but nobody heard me.

“ What is her family?” said Mrs. Beaumont.

“ Have you not heard of her, Ma'am?” cried he; “ she is only daughter and heiress of Sir John Belmont.”

Good heaven, how did I start! the name struck my ear like a thunder-bolt. Mrs. Selwyn, who immediately looked at me, said, “ Be calm, my dear! and we will learn the truth of all this.”

Till then, I had never imagined her to be acquainted with my story; but she has since

told me that she knew my unhappy mother, and was well informed of the whole affair.

She asked Mr. Lovel a multitude of questions; and I gathered, from his answers, that this young lady was just come from abroad with Sir John Belmont, who was now in London; that she was under the care of his sister, Mrs. Paterson; and that she would inherit a considerable estate.

I cannot express the strange feelings with which I was agitated during this recital. What, my dearest Sir, can it possibly mean? Did you ever hear of any after-marriage?—or must I suppose, that, while the lawful child is rejected, another is adopted?—I know not what to think! I am bewildered with a contrariety of ideas!

When we came home, Mrs. Selwyn passed more than an hour in my room, conversing upon this subject. She says that I ought instantly to go to town, find out my father, and have the affair cleared up. She assures me I have too strong a resemblance to my dear though unknown mother, to allow of the least hesitation in my being owned, when once I am seen. For my part, I have no wish but to act by your direction.

I cannot give any account of the evening; so disturbed,—so occupied am I by this subject, that I can think of no other. I have intreated Mrs. Selwyn to observe the strictest secrecy, and

she has promised that she will: indeed, she has too much sense to be idly communicative.

Lord Orville took notice of my being absent and silent, but I ventured not to entrust him with the cause. Fortunately, he was not of the party at the time Mr. Lovel made the discovery.

Mrs. Selwyn says, that, if you approve my going to town, she will herself accompany me. I had a thousand times rather ask the protection of Mrs. Mirvan; but, after this offer, that will not be possible.

Adieu, my dearest Sir! I am sure you will write immediately, and I shall be all impatience till your letter arrives.

LETTER IX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Oct. 1st.

GOOD God, my dear Sir! what a wonderful tale have I again to relate!—even yet, I am not recovered from my extreme surprise.

Yesterday morning, as soon as I had finished my hasty letter, I was summoned to attend a walking party to the Hotwells. It consisted only of Mrs. Selwyn and Lord Orville: the latter walked by my side all the way; and his conversation dissipated my uneasiness and insensibly restored my serenity.

At the pump-room, I saw Mr. Macartney; I curtsied to him twice ere he would speak to me. When he did, I began to apologise for having disappointed him; but I did not find it very easy to excuse myself, as Lord Orville's eyes, with an expression of anxiety that distressed me, turned from him to me and me to him every word I spoke. Convinced, however, that I had really trifled with Mr. Macartney,

I scrupled not to beg his pardon. He was then not merely appeased, but even grateful.

He requested me to see him to-morrow : but I had not the folly to be again guilty of an indiscretion which had, already, caused me so much uneasiness; and therefore I told him, frankly, that it was not in my power, at present, to see him but by accident; and, to prevent his being offended, I hinted to him the reason I could not receive him as I wished to do.

When I had satisfied both him and myself upon this subject, I turned to Lord Orville, and saw with concern the gravity of his countenance; I would have spoken to him, but knew not how: I believe, however, he read my thoughts; for in a little time, with a sort of serious smile, he said, "Does not Mr. Macartney complain of his disappointment?"

"Not much, my Lord."

"And how have you appeased him?" Finding I hesitated what to answer, "Am I not your brother?" continued he, "and must I not inquire into your affairs?"

"Certainly, my Lord!" said I, laughing, "I only wish it were better worth your Lordship's while."

"Let me, then, make immediate use of my privilege.—When shall you see Mr. Macartney again?"

“ Indeed, my Lord, I can’t tell.”

“ But, — do you know that I shall not suffer *my sister* to make a private appointment?”

“ Pray, my Lord,” cried I, earnestly, “ use that word no more! Indeed you shock me extremely.”

“ That would I not do for the world,” cried he; “ yet you know not how warmly, how deeply I am interested, not only in all your concerns, but in all your actions.”

This speech, — the most particular one Lord Orville had ever made to me, ended our conversation at that time; for I was too much struck by it to make any answer.

Soon after, Mr. Macartney, in a low voice, intreated me not to deny him the gratification of returning the money. While he was speaking, the young lady I saw yesterday at the assembly with the large party, entered the pump-room. Mr. Macartney turned as pale as death, his voice faltered, and he seemed not to know what he said. I was myself almost equally disturbed, by the crowd of confused ideas that occurred to me. Good heaven! thought I, why should he be thus agitated? — is it possible this can be the young lady he loved?

In a few minutes, we quitted the pump-room, and though I twice wished Mr. Macartney good morning, he was so absent he did not hear me.

We did not immediately return to Clifton, as Mrs. Selwyn had business at a pamphlet-shop. While she was looking at some new poems, Lord Orville again asked me when I should see Mr. Macartney?

“Indeed, my Lord,” cried I, “I know not, but I would give the universe for a few moments conversation with him!” I spoke this with a simple sincerity, and was not aware of the force of my own words.

“The universe!” repeated he, “Good God, Miss Anville, do you say this to *me*?”

“I would say it,” returned I, “to any body, my Lord.”

“I beg your pardon,” said he, in a voice that showed him ill pleased; “I am answered!”

“My Lord,” cried I, “you must not judge hardly of me. I spoke inadvertently; but if you knew the painful suspense I suffer at this moment, you would not be surprised at what I have said.”

“And would a meeting with Mr. Macartney relieve you from that suspense?”

“Yes, my Lord, two words might be sufficient.”

“Would to heaven!” cried he, after a short pause, “that I were worthy to know their import!”

“Worthy, my Lord! — Oh, if that were all,

your Lordship could ask nothing I should not be ready to answer! If I were but at liberty to speak, I should be *proud* of your Lordship's inquiries; but indeed I am not, I have not any right to communicate the affairs of Mr. Maccartney,—your Lordship cannot suppose I have."

"I will own to you," answered he, "I know not *what* to suppose; yet there seems a frankness even in your mystery,—and such an air of openness in your countenance, that I am willing to hope—" He stopped a moment, and then added, "This meeting, you say, is essential to your repose?"

"I did not say *that*, my Lord; but yet I have the most important reasons for wishing to speak to him."

He paused a few minutes, and then said, with warmth, "Yes, you *shall* speak to him!—I will myself assist you!—Miss Anville, I am sure, cannot form a wish against propriety;—I will ask no questions, I will rely upon her own purity; and,—uninformed, blindfold as I am, I will serve her with all my power!"—and then he went into the shop, leaving me so strangely affected by his generous behaviour, that I almost wished to follow him with my thanks.

When Mrs. Selwyn had transacted her affairs, we returned home.

The moment dinner was over, Lord Orville

went out, and did not come back till just as we were summoned to supper. This is the longest time he has spent from the house since I have been at Clifton, and you cannot imagine, my dear Sir, how much I missed him. I scarce knew before, how infinitely I am indebted to him alone for the happiness I have enjoyed since I have been at Mrs. Beaumont's.

As I generally go down stairs last, he came to me the moment the ladies had passed by, and said, "Shall you be at home to-morrow morning?"

"I believe so, my Lord."

"And will you, then, receive a visitor for me?"

"For you, my Lord!"

"Yes; — I have made acquaintance with Mr. Macartney, and he has promised to call upon me to-morrow about three o'clock."

And then, taking my hand, he led me down stairs.

Oh, Sir! — was there ever such another man as Lord Orville? — Yes, *one* other now resides at Berry Hill!

This morning there has been a great deal of company here, but, at the time appointed by Lord Orville, doubtless with that consideration, the parlour is almost always empty, as every body is dressing.

Mrs. Beaumont, however, was not gone up stairs, when Mr. Macartney sent in his name.

Lord Orville immediately said, "Beg the favor of him to walk in. You see, Madam, that I consider myself as at home."

"I hope so," answered Mrs. Beaumont, "or I should be very uneasy."

Mr. Macartney then entered. I believe we both felt very conscious to whom the visit was paid, but Lord Orville received him as his own guest; and not merely entertained him as such while Mrs. Beaumont remained in the room, but for some time after she had left it;—a delicacy that saved me from the embarrassment I should have felt, had he immediately quitted us.

In a few minutes, however, he gave Mr. Macartney a book, —for I, too, by way of pretence for continuing in the room, pretended to be reading,—and begged he would be so good as to look it over, while he answered a note, which he would dispatch in a few minutes, and return to him.

When he was gone, we both parted with our books, and Mr. Macartney, again producing the paper with the money, besought me to accept it.

"Pray," said I, still declining it, "did you know the young lady who came into the pump-room yesterday morning?"

“ Know her!” repeated he, changing color,

“ Oh, but too well!”

“ Indeed!”

“ Why, Madam, do you ask?”

“ I must beseech you to satisfy me further upon this subject; pray tell me who she is.”

“ Inviolably as I meant to keep my secret, I can refuse you, Madam, nothing;—that lady is the daughter of Sir John Belmont!—of my father!”

“ Gracious Heaven!” cried I, involuntarily laying my hand on his arm, “ you are then—” *my brother*, I would have said, but my voice failed me, and I burst into tears.

“ Oh, Madam!” cried he, “ what does this mean?—What can thus distress you?”

I could not answer, but held out my hand to him. He seemed greatly surprised, and talked in high terms of my condescension.

“ Spare yourself,” cried I, wiping my eyes, “ spare yourself this mistake,—you have a *right* to all I can do for you; the similarity of our circumstances—”

We were then interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Selwyn; and Mr. Macartney, finding no probability of our being left alone, was obliged to take leave, though, I believe, very reluctantly, while in such suspense.

Mrs. Selwyn then, by dint of interrogatories,

drew from me the state of this affair. She is so penetrating, that there is no possibility of evading to give her satisfaction.

Is not this a strange event? Good heaven! how little did I think that the visits I so unwillingly paid at Mr. Branghton's would have introduced me to so near a relation! I will never again regret the time I spent in town this summer;—a circumstance so fortunate will always make me think of it with pleasure.

* * * *

I have just received your letter,—and it has almost broken my heart!—Oh, Sir! the illusion is over indeed!—How vainly have I flattered, how miserably deceived myself! Long since, doubtful of the situation of my heart, I dreaded a scrutiny,—but now, now that I have so long escaped, I began, indeed, to think my safety insured, to hope that my fears were causeless, and to believe that my good opinion and esteem of Lord Orville might be owned without suspicion and felt without danger :—miserably deceived, indeed!

His sight is baneful to my repose,—his society is death to my future tranquillity!—Oh, Lord Orville! could I have believed that a friendship so grateful to my heart, so soothing to my dis-

tresses,—a friendship which, in every respect, did me so much honor, would only serve to embitter all my future moments!—What a strange, what an unhappy circumstance, that my gratitude, though so justly excited, should be so fatal to my peace!

Yes, Sir, I *will* quit him;—would to heaven I could at this moment! without seeing him again,—without trusting to my now conscious emotion!—Oh, Lord Orville! how little do you know the evils I owe to you! how little suppose that, when most dignified by your attention, I was most to be pitied,—and when most exalted by your notice, you were most my enemy!

You, Sir, relied upon my ignorance;—I, alas, upon your experience; and, whenever I doubted the weakness of my heart, the idea that *you* did not suspect it, reassured me,—restored my courage, and confirmed my error!—Yet am I most sensible of the kindness of your silence.—Oh, Sir! why have I ever quitted you? why been exposed to dangers to which I am so unequal?

But I will leave this place,—leave Lord Orville,—leave him, perhaps, for ever!—no matter; your counsel, your goodness, may teach me how to recover the peace and the serenity of which my unguarded folly has beguiled me. To you alone do I trust,—in you alone confide, for every future hope I may for m.

The more I consider of parting with Lord Orville, the less fortitude do I feel to bear the separation;—the friendship he has shown me,—his politeness,—his sweetness of manners,—his concern in my affairs,—his solicitude to oblige me,—all, all to be given up!

No! I cannot tell him I am going;—I dare not trust myself to take leave of him;—I will run away without seeing him:—implicitly will I follow your advice, avoid his sight, and shun his society!

To-morrow morning I will set off for Berry Hill. Mrs. Selwyn and Mrs. Beaumont shall alone know my intention;—and to-day, I will spend in my own room. The readiness of my obedience is the only atonement I can offer for the weakness which calls for its exertion.

Can you, will you,—most honored, most dear Sir!—sole prop by which the poor Evelina is supported,—can you, without reproach, without displeasure, receive the child you have so carefully reared; from whose education better fruit might have been expected; and who, blushing for her unworthiness, fears to meet the eye by which she has been cherished?—Oh, yes, I am sure you will! Your Evelina's errors are those of the judgment,—and you, I well know, pardon all but those of the heart!

LETTER X.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Clifton, October 1st.

I HAVE only time, my dearest Sir, for three words, to overtake my last letter, and prevent your expecting me immediately; for, when I communicated my intention to Mrs. Selwyn, she would not hear of it, and declared it would be highly ridiculous for me to go, before I received an answer to my intelligence concerning the journey from Paris. She has, therefore, insisted upon my waiting till your next letter arrives. I hope you will not be displeased at my compliance, though it is rather against my own judgment; but Mrs. Selwyn quite overpowered me with the force of her arguments. I will, however, see very little of Lord Orville; I will never come down stairs before breakfast, give up all my walks in the garden, seat myself next to Mrs. Selwyn, and not merely avoid his conversation but shun his presence. I will exert all the prudence and all the resolution in my

power, to prevent this short delay from giving you any further uneasiness.

Adieu, my dearest Sir! I shall not now leave Clifton till I have your directions.

LETTER XI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Oct. 2.

YESTERDAY, from the time I received your kind though heart-piercing letter, I kept my room,—for I was equally unable and unwilling to see Lord Orville: but this morning, finding I seemed destined to pass a few days longer here, I endeavoured to calm my spirits, and to appear as usual; though I determined to avoid him to the utmost of my power. Indeed, as I entered the parlour, when called to breakfast, my thoughts were so much occupied with your letter, that I felt as much confusion at his sight, as if he had himself been informed of its contents.

Mrs. Beaumont made me a slight compliment upon my recovery, for I had pleaded illness to excuse keeping my room: Lady Louisa spoke not a word: but Lord Orville, little imagining himself the cause of my indisposition, inquired concerning my health with the most distinguishing politeness. I hardly made any answer,

and, for the first time since I have been here, contrived to sit at some distance from him.

I could not help observing that my reserve surprised him; yet he persisted in his civilities, and seemed to wish to remove it. But I paid him very little attention; and the moment breakfast was over, instead of taking a book or walking in the garden, I retired to my own room.

Soon after, Mrs. Selwyn came to tell me that Lord Orville had been proposing I should take an airing, and persuading her to let him drive us both in his phaeton. She delivered the message with an archness that made me blush; and added, that an airing, in *my Lord Orville's carriage*, could not fail to revive my spirits. There is no possibility of escaping her discernment; she has frequently rallied me upon his Lordship's attention, and, alas!—upon the pleasure with which I have received it! however, I absolutely refused the offer.

“Well,” said she, laughing, “I cannot just now indulge you with any solicitation; for, to tell you the truth, I have business to transact at the Wells, and am glad to be excused myself. I would ask you to walk with *me*,—but, since *Lord Orville* is refused, I have not the presumption to hope for success.”

“Indeed,” cried I, “you are mistaken; I will attend you with pleasure.”

“ Oh, rare coquetry!” cried she; “ surely it must be inherent in our sex, or it could not have been imbibed at Berry Hill.”

I had not spirits to answer her, and therefore put on my hat and cloke in silence.

“ I presume,” continued she, drily, “ his Lordship may walk with us?”

“ If so, Madam!” said I, “ you will have a companion, and I will stay at home.”

“ My dear child!” cried she, “ did you bring the certificate of your birth with you?”

“ Dear Madam, no!”

“ Why, then, we shall never be known again at Berry Hill.”

I felt too conscious to enjoy her pleasantry; but I believe she was determined to torment me; for she asked if she should inform Lord Orville that I desired him not to be of the party?”

“ By no means, Madam; but, indeed, I had rather not walk myself.”

“ My dear!” cried she, “ I really do not know you this morning;—you have certainly been taking a lesson of Lady Louisa.”

She then went down stairs; but presently returning, told me she had acquainted Lord Orville that I did not choose to go out in the *phaeton*, but preferred a walk, *tête-à-tête*, with her, by way of *variety*.

I said nothing, but was really vexed. She bade me go down stairs, and said she would follow immediately.

Lord Orville met me in the hall. "I fear," said he, "Miss Anville is not yet quite well?" and he would have taken my hand, but I turned from him, and, curtsying slightly, went into the parlour.

Mrs. Beaumont and Lady Louisa were at work; Lord Merton was talking with the latter; for he has now made his peace, and is again received into favor.

I seated myself, as usual, by the window. Lord Orville, in a few minutes, came to me, and said, "Why is Miss Anville so grave?"

"Not grave, my Lord," said I, "only stupid;" and I took up a book.

"You will go," said he, after a short pause, "to the assembly to-night?"

"No, my Lord, certainly not!"

"Neither then will I; for I should be sorry to sully the remembrance I have of the happiness I enjoyed at the last."

Mrs. Selwyn then coming in, general inquiries were made, to all but me, of who would go to the assembly. Lord Orville instantly declared he had letters to write at home; but every one else settled to go.

I then hastened Mrs. Selwyn away, though not before she had said to Lord Orville, "Pray, has your Lordship obtained Miss Anville's leave to favor us with your company?"

"I have not, Madam," answered he, "had the vanity to ask it."

During our walk. Mrs. Selwyn tormented me unmercifully. She told me, that, since I declined any addition to our party, I must, doubtless, be conscious of my own powers of entertainment; and begged me, therefore, to exert them freely. I repented a thousand times having consented to walk alone with her: for though I made the most painful efforts to appear in spirits, her raillery quite overpowered me.

We went first to the pump-room.—It was full of company; and the moment we entered, I heard a murmuring of, "*That's she?*" and, to my great confusion, I saw every eye turned towards me. I pulled my hat over my face, and, by the assistance of Mrs. Selwyn, endeavoured to screen myself from observation: nevertheless, I found I was so much the object of general attention, that I intreated her to hasten away. But unfortunately, she had entered into conversation, very earnestly, with a gentleman of her acquaintance, and would not listen to me, but said, that, if I was tired of waiting, I might walk on to the milliner's with the Miss Watkins, two

young ladies I had seen at Mrs. Beaumont's, who were going thither.

I accepted the offer very readily, and away we went. But we had not gone three yards, before we were followed by a party of young men, who took every possible opportunity of looking at us, and, as they walked behind, talked aloud, in a manner at once unintelligible and absurd.

"Yes," cried one, "'tis certainly she!—mark but her *blushing cheek!*"

"And then her *eye* — her *downcast eye!*" — cried another.

"True! oh, most true!" said a third, "*every beauty is her own!*"

"But then," said the first, "her *mind*,—now the difficulty is, to find out the truth of *that*; for she will not say a word."

"She is *timid*," answered another; "mark but her *timid air!*"

During this conversation, we walked on silent and quick: as we knew not to whom it was particularly addressed: we were all equally ashamed, and equally desirous to avoid such unaccountable observations.

Soon after, we were caught in a shower of rain. We hurried on, and these gentlemen, following us, offered their services in the most pressing manner, begging us to make use of their

arms; and while I almost ran in order to avoid their impertinence, I was suddenly met by Sir Clement Willoughby!

We both started; "Good God!" he exclaimed, "Miss Anville!" and then, regarding my tormentors with an air of displeasure, he earnestly inquired if any thing had alarmed me?

"No, no!" cried I, for I found no difficulty, now, to disengage myself from these youths; who, probably concluding from the commanding air of Sir Clement that he had a right to protect me, quietly gave way to him and entirely quitted us.

With his usual impetuosity, he then began a thousand inquiries, accompanied with as many compliments; and he told me that he arrived at Bristol but this morning, which he had entirely devoted to endeavours to discover where I lodged.

"Did you know, then," said I, "that I was at Bristol?"

"Would to heaven!" cried he, "that I *could* remain in ignorance of your proceedings with the same contentment you do of mine! then should I not for ever journey upon the wings of hope to meet my own despair! *You* cannot even judge of the cruelty of my fate; for the ease and serenity of your mind incapacitates you from feeling for the agitation of mine!"

The ease and serenity of *my* mind!—alas, how little do I merit those words!

“But,” added he, “had *accident* brought me hither,—had I not known of your journey, the voice of fame would have proclaimed it to me instantly upon my arrival.”

“The voice of fame!” repeated I.

“Yes! for your’s was the first name I heard at the pump-room. But had I *not* heard your name, such a description could have painted no one else.”

“Indeed!” said I, “I do not understand you.” But, just then arriving at the milliner’s, our conversation ended; for Miss Watkins called me to look at caps and ribbons.

Sir Clement, however, has the art of being always *at home*; he was very soon engaged, as busily as ourselves, in looking at lace ruffles. Yet he took an opportunity of saying to me, in a low voice, “How charmed I am to see you look so well! I was told you were ill,—but I never saw you in better health,—never more infinitely lovely!”

I turned away, to examine the ribbons; and soon after Mrs. Selwyn made her appearance. I found that she was acquainted with Sir Clement, and her manner of speaking to him convinced me that he was a favorite with her.

When their mutual compliments were over,

she turned to me, and said, "Pray, Miss Anville, how long can you live without nourishment?"

"Indeed, Ma'am," said I, laughing, "I have never tried."

"Because so long, and no longer," answered she, "you may remain at Bristol."

"Why, what is the matter, Ma'am?"

"The matter!—why, all the ladies are at open war with you,—the whole pump-room is in confusion; and you, innocent as you pretend to look, are the cause. However, if you take my advice, you will be very careful how you eat and drink during your stay."

I begged her to explain herself; and she then told me that a copy of verses had been dropped in the pump-room, and read there aloud: "The Beauties of the Wells," said she, "are all mentioned, but *you* are the Venus to whom the prize is given."

"Is it then possible," cried Sir Clement, "that you have not seen these verses?"

"I hardly know," answered I, "whether *any* body has."

"I assure you," said Mrs. Selwyn, "if you give *me* the invention of them, you do me an honor I by no means deserve."

"I wrote down in my tablets," said Sir Clement, "the stanzas which concern Miss Anville

this morning at the pump-room; and I will do myself the honor of copying them for her this evening."

"But why the part that concerns *Miss Anville*?" said Mrs Selwyn; "Did you ever see her before this morning?"

"O yes!" answered he, "I have had that happiness frequently at Captain Mirvan's;—too, too frequently!" added he, in a low voice, as Mrs. Selwyn turned to the milliner: and, as soon as she was occupied in examining some trimmings; he came to me, and—almost whether I would or not—entered into conversation with me.

"I have a thousand things," cried he, "to say to you. Pray where are you?"

"With Mrs. Selwyn, Sir."

"Indeed!" replied Sir Clement; "then, for once, chance is my friend.—And how long have you been here?"

"About three weeks."

"Good heaven! what an anxious search have I had, to discover your abode, since you so suddenly left town! The termagant, Madame Duval, refused me all intelligence. Oh, Miss Anville! did you know what I have endured!—the sleepless, restless state of suspense I have been tortured with, you could not, all cruel as you are, you could not have received me with such frigid indifference!"

“ *Received* you, Sir!”

“ Why, is not my visit to *you*? Do you think I should have made this journey, but for the happiness of again seeing you?”

“ Indeed it is possible I might,—since so many others do.—”

“ Cruel, cruel girl! you *know* that I adore you!—you *know* you are the mistress of my soul, and arbitress of my fate!”

Mrs. Selwyn then advancing to us, he assumed a more disengaged air, and asked if he should not have the pleasure of seeing her in the evening, at the assembly?

“ Oh, yes!” cried she, “ we shall certainly be there; so you may bring the verses with you, if Miss Anville can wait for them so long.”

“ I hope then,” returned he, “ that you will do me the honor to dance with me?”

I thanked him, but said I should not be at the assembly.

“ Not be at the assembly!” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “ Why, have *you*, too, letters to write?”

She looked at me with a significant archness that made me color; and I hastily answered, “ Not indeed, Ma’am!”

“ You have not!” cried she, yet more drily, “ then pray, my dear! do you stay at home to *help*,—or to *hinder* others?”

“ To do neither, Ma’am,” answered I, in much

confusion; “so, if you please, I will *not* stay at home.”

“You allow me, then,” said Sir Clement, “to hope for the honor of your hand?”

I only bowed,—for the dread of Mrs. Selwyn’s raillery made me not dare refuse him.

Soon after this we walked home; Sir Clement accompanied us, and the conversation that passed between Mrs. Selwyn and him was supported in so lively a manner that I should have been much entertained, had my mind been more at ease: but alas! I could think of nothing but the capricious, the unmeaning appearance which the alteration in my conduct must make in the eyes of Lord Orville? and, much as I wish to avoid him—greatly as I desire to save myself from having my weakness known to him,—yet I cannot endure to incur his ill opinion; and, unacquainted as he is with the reasons by which I am actuated, how can he fail contemning a change to him so unaccountable?

As we entered the garden, he was the first object we saw: he advanced to meet us, and I could not help observing, that, at sight of each other, both he and Sir Clement changed color.

We went into the parlour, where we found the same party we had left. Mrs. Selwyn presented Sir Clement to Mrs. Beaumont; Lady

Louisa and Lord Merton, he seemed well acquainted with already.

The conversation was upon the general subjects, of the weather, the company at the Wells, and the news of the day; but Sir Clement, drawing his chair next to mine, took every opportunity of addressing himself to me in particular.

I could not but remark the striking difference of *his* attention, and that of Lord Orville: the latter has such gentleness of manners, such delicacy of conduct, and an air so respectful, that, when he flatters most, he never distresses; and, when he most confers honor, he appears to receive it! The former *obtrudes* his attention, and *forces* mine; it is so pointed that it always confuses me, and so public that it attracts general notice: indeed I have sometimes thought that he would rather *wish* than dislike to have his partiality for me known, as he takes great care to prevent my being spoken to by any body but himself.

When, at length, he went away, Lord Orville took his seat, and said with a half smile, " Shall I call Sir Clement—or will *you* call me an usurper, for taking this place?—You make me no answer?—Must I then suppose that Sir Clement—."

" It is little worth your Lordship's while,"

said I, "to suppose any thing upon so insignificant an occasion."

"Pardon me!" cried he;—"to *me* nothing is insignificant in which you are concerned."

To this I made no answer, neither did he say any thing more, till the ladies retired to dress; and then, when I would have followed them, he stopped me, saying, "One moment, I intreat you!"

I turned back, and he went on. "I greatly fear that I have been so unfortunate as to offend you; yet so repugnant to my very soul is the idea, that I know not how to suppose it possible I can unwittingly have done the thing in the world that, designedly, I would most wish to avoid"

"No, indeed, my Lord! you have not," said I.

"You sigh!" cried he, taking my hand, "would to heaven I were the sharer of your uneasiness! whencesoever it springs, with what earnestness would I not struggle to alleviate it!—Tell me, my dear Miss Anville, — my new-adopted sister, my sweet and most amiable friend!—tell me, I beseech you, if I can afford you any assistance?"

"None, none, my Lord!" cried I, withdrawing my hand, and moving towards the door.

"Is it, then, impossible I can serve you?—perhaps you wish to see Mr. Macartney again?"

“No, my Lord!” and I held the door open.”

“I am not, I own, sorry for that. Yet, oh, Miss Anville! there *is* a question,—there is a conjecture,—I know not how to mention, because I dread the result!—But I see you are in haste;—perhaps in the evening I may have the honor of a longer conversation; yet one thing will you have the goodness to allow me to ask?—Did you, this morning, when you went to the Wells,—did you *know* who you should meet there?”

“Who, my Lord?”

“I beg your pardon a thousand times for a curiosity so unlicensed,—but I will say no more at present.”

He bowed, expecting me to go,—and then, with quick steps, but a heavy heart, I came to my own room. His question, I am sure, meant Sir Clement Willoughby; and, had I not imposed upon myself the severe task of avoiding, flying Lord Orville with all my power, I would instantly have satisfied him of my ignorance of Sir Clement’s journey: and yet more did I long to say something of the assembly, since I found he depended upon my spending the evening at home.

I did not go down stairs again till the family was assembled to dinner. My dress, I saw, struck Lord Orville with astonishment; and I was

myself so much ashamed of appearing whimsical and unsteady, that I could not look up.

“ I understood,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “ that Miss Anville did not go out this evening ?”

“ Her intention in the morning,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ was to stay at home; but there is a fascinating power in an *assembly*, which, upon second thoughts, is not to be resisted.”

“ The assembly !” cried Lord Orville, “ are you then going to the assembly ?”

I made no answer; and we all took our places at table.

It was not without difficulty that I contrived to give up my usual seat; but I was determined to adhere to the promise in my yesterday's letter, though I saw that Lord Orville seemed quite confounded at my visible endeavours to avoid him.

After dinner, we all went into the drawing-room together, as there were no gentlemen to detain his Lordship; and then, before I could place myself out of his way, he said, “ You are, then, really going to the assembly ?—May I ask if you shall dance ?”

“ I believe not,—my Lord.”

“ If I did not fear,” continued he, “ that you would be tired of the same partner at two following assemblies, I would give up my letter-writing till to-morrow, and solicit the honor of your hand.”

“ If I *do* dance,” said I, in great confusion,
“ I believe I am engaged.”

“ Engaged !” cried he, with earnestness, “ May I ask to whom ?”

“ To—Sir Clement Willoughby, my Lord.”

He said nothing, but looked very little pleased, and did not address himself to me any more all the afternoon. Oh, Sir!—thus situated, how comfortless were the feelings of your Evelina!

Early in the evening, with his accustomed assiduity, Sir Clement came to conduct us to the assembly. He soon contrived to seat himself next to me, and, in a low voice, paid me so many compliments, that I knew not which way to look.

Lord Orville hardly spoke a word, and his countenance was grave and thoughtful; yet whenever I raised my eyes, his, I perceived, were directed towards me, though instantly, upon meeting mine, he looked another way.

In a short time, Sir Clement, taking from his pocket a folded paper, said, almost in a whisper, “ Here, loveliest of women, you will see a faint, an unsuccessful attempt to paint the object of all my adoration! yet, weak as are the lines for the purpose, I envy beyond expression the happy mortal who has dared make the effort.”

“ I will look at them,” said I, “ some other,

time." For, conscious that I was observed by Lord Orville, I could not bear he should see me take a written paper, so privately offered, from Sir Clement. But Sir Clement is an impracticable man, and I never yet succeeded in any attempt to frustrate whatever he had planned.

"No," said he, still in a whisper, "you must take them now, while Lady Louisa is away;" for she and Mrs. Selwyn were gone up stairs to finish their dress; "as she must by no means see them."

"Indeed," said I, "I have no intention to show them."

"But the only way," answered he, "to avoid suspicion, is to take them in her absence. I would have read them aloud myself, but that they are not proper to be seen by any body in this house, yourself and Mrs. Selwyn excepted."

Then again he presented me the paper, which I now was obliged to take, as I found declining it was vain: but I was sorry that this action should be seen, and the whispering remarked, though the purport of the conversation was left to conjecture.

As I held it in my hand, Sir Clement teased me to look at it immediately; and told me, that the reason he could not produce the lines publicly, was, that among the ladies who were

mentioned, and supposed to be rejected, was Lady Louisa Larpent. I am much concerned at this circumstance, as I cannot doubt but that it will render me more disagreeable to her than ever, if she should hear of it.

I will now copy the verses, which Sir Clement would not let me rest till I had read.

SEE last advance, with bashful grace,
Downcast eye, and blushing cheek,
Timid air, and beauteous face,
Anville,—whom the Graces seek.

Though ev'ry beauty is her own,
And though her mind each virtue fills,
Anville,—to her power unknown,—
Artless strikes,—unconscious kills!

I am sure, my dear Sir, you will not wonder that a panegyric such as this should, in reading, give me the greatest confusion; and, unfortunately, before I had finished it, the ladies returned.

“What have you there, my dear?” said Mrs. Selwyn.

“Nothing, Ma'am,” said I, hastily folding and putting it in my pocket.

“And has *nothing*,” cried she, “the power of *rouge*?”

I made no answer; a deep sigh which escaped Lord Orville at that moment, reached my ears, and gave me sensations—which I dare not mention!

Lord Merton then handed Lady Louisa and Mrs. Beaumont to the latter's carriage. Mrs. Selwyn led the way to Sir Clement's, who handed me in after her.

During the ride, I did not once speak; but when I came to the assembly-room, Sir Clement took care that I should not preserve my silence. He asked me immediately to dance; I begged him to excuse me, and seek some other partner: but on the contrary, he told me he was very glad I would sit still, as he had a million of things to say to me.

He then began to tell me how much he had suffered from my absence; how greatly he was alarmed when he heard I had left town; and how cruelly difficult he had found it to trace me; which, at last, he could only do by sacrificing another week to Captain Mirvan.

“And Howard Grove,” continued he, “which, at my first visit, I thought the most delightful spot upon earth, now appeared to me the most dismal: the face of the country seemed altered: the walks, which I had thought most pleasant, were now most stupid: Lady Howard, who had appeared a cheerful and respectable old lady,

now seemed in the common John-Trot style of other aged dames: Mrs. Mirvan, whom I had esteemed as an amiable piece of still-life, now became so insipid, that I could hardly keep awake in her company: the daughter too, whom I had regarded as a good-humored, pretty sort of girl, now seemed too insignificant for notice: and as to the Captain, I had always thought him a booby,—but now he appeared a savage !”

“ Indeed, Sir Clement,” cried I, angrily, “ I will not hear you talk thus of my best friends.”

“ I beg your pardon,” said he; “ but the contrast of my two visits was too striking not to be mentioned.”

He then asked what I thought of the verses?

“ Either,” said I, “ that they are written ironically, or by some madman.”

Such a profusion of compliments ensued, that I was obliged to propose dancing, in my own defence. When we stood up, “ I intended,” said he, “ to have discovered the author by his looks; but I find you so much the general loadstone of attention, that my suspicions change their object every moment. Surely you must yourself have some knowledge who he is?”

I told him, no! Yet, my dear Sir, I must own to you, I have no doubt but that Mr. Macartney must be the author: no one else would

speak of me so partially; and, indeed, his poetical turn puts it, with me, beyond dispute.

He asked me a thousand questions concerning Lord Orville; how long he had been at Bristol?—what time I had spent at Clifton?—whether he rode out every morning?—whether I ever trusted myself in a phaeton? and a multitude of other inquiries, all tending to discover if I was honored with much of his Lordship's attention, and all made with his usual freedom and impetuosity.

Fortunately, as I much wished to retire early, Lady Louisa makes a point of being among the first who quit the rooms, and therefore we got home in very tolerable time.

Lord Orville's reception of us was grave and cold: far from distinguishing me, as usual, by particular civilities, Lady Louisa herself could not have seen me enter the room with more frigid unconcern, nor have more scrupulously avoided honoring me with any notice. But chiefly I was struck to see that he suffered Sir Clement, who staid supper, to sit between us, without any effort to prevent him; though, till then, he had seemed to be even tenacious of a seat next mine.

This little circumstance affected me more than I can express: yet I endeavoured to *rejoice* at it; since neglect and indifference, from him, may

be my best friends. — But, alas!—so suddenly, so abruptly to forfeit his attention!—to lose his friendship! — Oh, Sir, these thoughts pierced my soul!—scarce could I keep my seat; for not all my efforts could restrain the tears from trickling down my cheeks: however, as Lord Orville saw them not, for Sir Clement's head was constantly between us, I tried to collect my spirits, and succeeded so far as to keep my place with decency, till Sir Clement took leave; and then, not daring to trust my eyes to meet those of Lord Orville, I retired.

I have been writing ever since; for, certain that I could not sleep, I would not go to bed. Tell me, my dearest Sir, if you possibly can,—tell me that you approve my change of conduct,—tell me that my altered behaviour to Lord Orville is right, — that my flying his society and avoiding his civilities are actions which *you* would have dictated!—tell me this, and the sacrifices I have made will comfort me in the midst of my regret,—for never, never can I cease to regret that I have lost the friendship of Lord Orville!—Oh, Sir! I have slighted—have rejected—have thrown it away!—No matter: it was an honor I merited not to preserve; and I now see that my mind was unequal to sustaining it without danger.

Yet so strong is the desire you have implanted

in me to act with uprightness and propriety, that, however the weakness of my heart may distress and afflict me, it will never, I humbly trust, render me wilfully culpable:—the wish of doing well governs every other, as far as concerns my conduct,—for am I not *your* child?—the creature of your own forming?—Yet, oh, Sir! friend, parent of my heart!—my feelings are all at war with my duties; and, while I most struggle to acquire self-approbation, my peace, my happiness, my hopes, are lost!

'Tis you alone can compose a mind so cruelly agitated: you, I well know, can feel pity for the weakness to which you are a stranger, and, though you blame the affliction, soothe and comfort the afflicted.

LETTER XII.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry Hill, Oct. 5.

YOUR last communication, my dearest child, is indeed astonishing!—that an acknowledged daughter and heiress of Sir John Belmont should be at Bristol, and still my Evelina bear the name of Anville, is to me inexplicable! yet the mystery of the letter to Lady Howard prepared me to expect something extraordinary upon Sir John Belmont's return to England.

Whoever this young lady may be, it is certain she now takes a place to which you have a right indisputable. An *after-marriage* I never heard of; yet, supposing such a one to have happened, Miss Evelyn was certainly the first wife, and therefore her daughter must, at least, be entitled to the name of Belmont.

Either there are circumstances in this affair at present utterly incomprehensible, or else some strange and most atrocious fraud has been

practised; which of these two is the case, it now behoves us to inquire.

My reluctance to this step gives way to my conviction of its propriety; since the reputation of your dear and much-injured mother must now either be fully cleared from blemish, or receive its final and indelible wound.

The public appearance of a daughter of Sir John Belmont will revive the remembrance of Miss Evelyn's story in all who have heard it,—who the *mother* was, will be universally demanded,—and if any other Lady Belmont should be named, the birth of my Evelina will receive a stigma, against which honor, truth, and innocence may appeal in vain!—a stigma which will eternally blast the fair fame of her virtuous mother, and cast upon her blameless self the odium of a title, which not all her purity can rescue from established shame and dishonor!

No, my dear child! no! I will not quietly suffer the ashes of your mother to be treated with ignominy!—her spotless character shall be justified to the world, her marriage shall be acknowledged, and her child shall bear the name to which she is lawfully entitled.

It is true, that Mrs. Mirvan would conduct this affair with more delicacy than Mrs. Selwyn; yet, perhaps, to save time is, of all considerations, the most important, since the longer this

mystery is suffered to continue, the more difficult may be rendered its explanation: the sooner, therefore, you can set out for town, the less formidable will be your task.

Let not your timidity, my dear love! depress your spirits: I shall, indeed, tremble for you at a meeting so singular and so affecting; yet there can be no doubt of the success of your application: I inclose a letter from your unhappy mother, written and reserved purposely for this occasion: Mrs. Clinton, too, who attended her in her last illness, must accompany you to town.—But, without any other certificate of your birth, that which you carry in your countenance, as it could not be effected by artifice, so it cannot admit of a doubt.

And now, my Evelina! committed, at length, to the care of your real parent, receive the fervent prayers, wishes, and blessings, of him who so fondly adopted you!

May'st thou, oh, child of my bosom! may'st thou, in this change of situation, experience no change of disposition! but receive with humility and support with meekness the elevation to which thou art rising!—may thy manners, language, and deportment, all evince that modest equanimity and cheerful gratitude which not merely deserve but dignify prosperity!—may'st thou, to the last moments of an unblemished

life, retain thy genuine simplicity, thy singleness of heart, thy guileless sincerity!—and may'st thou, stranger to ostentation and superior to insolence, with true greatness of soul, shine forth conspicuous only in beneficence!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XIII.

LADY BELMONT TO SIR JOHN BELMONT.—INCLOSED
IN THE PRECEDING LETTER.

IN the firm hope that the moment of anguish which approaches will prove the period of my sufferings, once more I address myself to Sir John Belmont in behalf of the child, who, if it survives its mother, will hereafter be the bearer of this letter.

Yet in what terms,—oh, most cruel of men!—can the lost Caroline address you, and not address you in vain?—Oh, deaf to the voice of compassion—deaf to the sting of truth—deaf to every tie of honor—say, in what terms may the lost Caroline address you, and not address you in vain?

Shall I call you by the loved, the respected title of husband?—no, you disclaim it!—the father of my infant?—no, you doom it to infamy!—the lover who rescued me from a forced marriage?—no, you have yourself betrayed me!—the friend from whom I hoped succor and

protection?—no, you have consigned me to misery and destruction!

Oh, hardened against every plea of justice, remorse, or pity! how, and in what manner, may I hope to move thee? Is there one method I have left untried?—remains there one resource unessayed? No! I have exhausted all the bitterness of reproach, and drained every sluice of compassion!

Hopeless, and almost desperate, twenty times have I flung away my pen; but the feelings of a mother—a mother agonizing for the fate of her child—again animating my courage, as often I have resumed it.

Perhaps, when I am no more;—when the measure of my woes is completed; and the still, silent, unrepublishing dust has received my sad remains;—then, perhaps, when accusation is no longer to be feared nor detection to be dreaded, the voice of equity and the cry of nature may be heard!

Listen, O Belmont, to their dictates! Reprobate not your child, though you have reprobated its mother! The evils that are past, perhaps, when too late, you may wish to recal;—the young creature you have persecuted, perhaps, when too late, you may regret that you have destroyed;—you may think with horror of the deceptions you have practised, and the pangs of

remorse may follow me to the tomb!—Oh, Belmont, all my resentment softens into pity at the thought!—what will become of thee, good heaven! when, with the eye of penitence, thou reviewest thy past conduct!

Hear, then, the solemn, the last address with which the unhappy Caroline will importune thee?

If, when the time of thy contrition arrives,—for arrive it must!—when the sense of thy treachery shall rob thee of almost every other; if then thy tortured heart shall sigh to expiate thy guilt,—mark the conditions upon which I leave thee my forgiveness.

Thou knowest I am thy wife!—clear, then, to the world the reputation thou hast sullied, and receive, as thy lawful successor, the child who will present thee this my dying request!

The worthiest, the most benevolent, the best of men, to whose consoling kindness I owe the little tranquillity I have been able to preserve, has plighted me his faith that, upon no other conditions, he will part with his helpless charge.

Shouldst thou, in the features of this deserted innocent, trace the resemblance of the wretched Caroline,—should its face bear the marks of its birth, and revive in thy memory the image of its mother; wilt thou not, Belmont! wilt thou not therefore renounce it?—Oh, babe of my

fondest affection! — for whom already I experience all the tenderness of maternal pity! — look not like thy unfortunate mother, — lest the parent, whom the hand of death may spare, shall be snatched from thee by the more cruel means of unnatural antipathy!

I can write no more! — The small share of serenity I have painfully acquired will not bear the shock of the dreadful ideas that crowd upon me.

Adieu, — for ever!

Yet oh! — shall I not, in this last farewell, which thou wilt not read till every stormy passion is extinct, and the kind grave has embosomed all my sorrows, — shall I not offer to the man, once so dear to me, a ray of consolation to those afflictions he has in reserve? Suffer me, then, to tell thee, that my pity far exceeds my indignation, — that I will pray for thee in my last moments, — and that the recollection of the love I once bore thee shall swallow up every other!

Once more, adieu!

CAROLINE BELMONT.

LETTER XIV.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Clifton, Oct. 3d.

THIS morning I saw from my window that Lord Orville was walking in the garden—but I would not go down stairs till breakfast was ready; and then, he paid me his compliments almost as coldly as Lady Louisa paid hers.

I took my usual place; and Mrs. Beaumont, Lady Louisa, and Mrs. Selwyn, entered into their usual conversation.—Not so your Evelina: disregarded, silent, and melancholy, she sat like a cipher, whom, to nobody belonging, by nobody was noticed.

Ill brooking such a situation, and unable to support the neglect of Lord Orville, the moment breakfast was over, I left the room and was going up stairs, when, very unpleasantly, I was stopped by Sir Clement Willoughby, who, flying into the hall, prevented my proceeding.

He inquired very particularly after my health, and intreated me to return into the parlour.

Unwillingly I consented, but thought any thing preferable to continuing alone with him; and he would neither leave me nor suffer me to pass on: yet, in returning, I felt not a little ashamed of appearing thus to take the visit of Sir Clement to myself; and, indeed, he endeavoured, by his manner of addressing me, to give it that air.

He staid, I believe, an hour; nor would he, perhaps, even then have gone, had not Mrs. Beaumont broken up the party, by proposing an airing in her coach. Lady Louisa consented to accompany her: but Mrs. Selwyn, when applied to, said, "If my Lord, or Sir Clement, will join us, I shall be happy to make one;—but really a trio of females will be nervous to the last degree."

Sir Clement readily agreed to attend them; indeed, he makes it his evident study to court the favor of Mrs. Beaumont; Lord Orville excused himself from going out; and I retired to my own room: what he did with himself I know not, for I would not go down stairs till dinner was ready; his coldness, though my own change of behaviour has occasioned it, so cruelly depresses my spirits, that I know not how to support myself in his presence.

At dinner, I found Sir Clement again of the party. Indeed he manages every thing his own

way; for Mrs. Beaumont, though by no means easy to please, seems quite at his disposal.

The dinner, the afternoon, and the evening, were to me the most irksome imaginable: I was tormented by the assiduity of Sir Clement, who not only *took*, but *made* opportunities of speaking to me; and I was hurt,—oh, how inexpressibly hurt!—that Lord Orville not only forbore, as hitherto, *seeking*,—he even *neglected* all occasions of talking with me!

I begin to think, my dear Sir! that the sudden alteration in my behaviour was illjudged and improper; for, as I had received no offence,—as the cause of the change was upon *my* account, not *his*,—I should not have assumed, so abruptly, a reserve for which I dared assign no reason, nor have shunned his presence so obviously, without considering the strange appearance of such a conduct.

Alas, my dearest Sir! that my reflections should always be too late to serve me! dearly, indeed, do I purchase experience! and much I fear I shall suffer yet more severely from the heedless indiscretion of my temper, ere I attain that prudence and consideration, which, by foreseeing distant consequences, may rule and direct in present exigencies.

Oct. 4th.

Yesterday morning every body rode out except Mrs. Selwyn and myself: and we two sat for some time together in her room; but, as soon as I could, I quitted her, to saunter in the garden; for she diverts herself so unmercifully with rallying me, either upon my gravity or concerning Lord Orville, that I dread having any conversation with her.

Here I believe I spent an hour by myself; when, hearing the garden-gate open, I went into an arbor at the end of a long walk, where, ruminating very unpleasantly upon my future prospects, I remained quietly seated but a few minutes, before I was interrupted by the appearance of Sir Clement Willoughby.

I started, and would have left the arbor, but he prevented me. Indeed I am almost certain he had heard in the house where I was; as it is not otherwise probable he would have strolled down the garden alone.

“Stop, stop!” cried he, “loveliest and most beloved of women! stop, and hear me!”

Then, making me keep my place, he sat down by me, and would have taken my hand; but I drew it back, and said I could not stay.

“Can you, then,” cried he, “refuse me even

the smallest gratification, though but yesterday I almost suffered martyrdom for the pleasure of seeing you?"

"Martyrdom! Sir Clement."

"Yes, beauteous insensible! *martyrdom!* for did I not compel myself to be immured in a carriage, the tedious length of a whole morning, with the three most fatiguing women in England?"

"Upon my word, the ladies are extremely obliged to you."

"Oh!" returned he, "they have, every one of them, so copious a share of their own personal esteem, that they have no right to repine at the failure of it in the world; and, indeed, they will themselves be the last to discover it."

"How little," cried I, "are those ladies aware of such severity from *you!*"

"They are guarded," answered he, "so happily and so securely by their own conceit, that they are not aware of it from any. Oh, Miss Anville! to be torn away from *you*, in order to be shut up with *them*,—is there a human being, except your cruel self, could forbear to pity me?"

"I believe, Sir Clement, however hardly you may choose to judge of them, your situation, by the world in general, would rather have been envied than pitied."

“The world in general,” answered he, “has the same opinion of them that I have myself: Mrs. Beaumont is every where laughed at, Lady Louisa ridiculed, and Mrs. Selwyn hated.”

“Good God, Sir Clement, what cruel strength of words do you use!”

“It is you, my angel! are to blame; since your perfections have rendered their faults so glaring. I protest to you, during our whole ride, I thought the carriage drawn by snails. The absurd pride of Mrs. Beaumont, and the respect she exacts, are at once insufferable and stupefying; had I never before been in her company, I should have concluded that this had been her first airing from the herald’s-office,—and wished her nothing worse than that it might also be the last. I assure you, that, but for gaining the freedom of her house, I would fly her as I would plague, pestilence, and famine. Mrs. Selwyn, indeed, afforded some relief from this formality; but the unbounded licence of her tongue—”

“Oh, Sir Clement! do *you* object to that?”

“Yes, my sweet reproacher, in a *woman*, I do; in a *woman* I think it intolerable. She has wit, I acknowledge, and more understanding than half her sex put together; but she keeps alive a perpetual expectation of satire, that spreads a general uneasiness among all who are in her presence; and she talks so much, that

even the best things she says weary the attention. As to the little Louisa, 'tis such a pretty piece of languor, that 'tis almost cruel to speak rationally about her;—else I should say, she is a mere compound of affectation, impertinence, and airs.”

“ I am quite amazed,” said I, “ that, with such opinions, you can behave to them all with so much attention and civility.”

“ Civility, my angel!—why, I could worship, could adore them, only to procure myself a moment of your conversation! Have you not seen me pay my court to the gross Captain Mirvan, and the virago Madame Duval? Were it possible that a creature so horrid could be formed, as to partake of the worst qualities of all these characters,—a creature who should have the haughtiness of Mrs. Beaumont, the brutality of Captain Mirvan, the self-conceit of Mrs. Selwyn, the affectation of Lady Louisa, and the vulgarity of Madame Duval,—even to such a monster as that, I would pay homage and pour forth adulation, only to obtain one word, one look, from my adored Miss Anville!”

“ Sir Clement,” said I, “ you are greatly mistaken if you suppose such duplicity of character recommends you to my good opinion: but I must take this opportunity of begging you never more to talk to me in this strain.”

“Oh, Miss Anville, your reproofs, your coldness, pierce me to the soul! look upon me with less rigor, and make me what you please;—you shall govern and direct all my actions,—you shall new-form, new-model me:—I will not have even a wish but of your suggestion; only deign to look upon me with pity,—if not with favor!”

“Suffer me, Sir,” said I very gravely, “to make use of this occasion, to put a final conclusion to such expressions: I intreat you never again to address me in a language so flighty and so unwelcome. You have already given me great uneasiness; and I must frankly assure you, that if you do not desire to banish me from wherever you are, you will adopt a very different style and conduct in future.”

I then rose, and was going, but he flung himself at my feet to prevent me, exclaiming, in a most passionate manner, “Good God! Miss Anville, what do you say?—is it, can it be possible, that so unmoved,—that, with such petrifying indifference, you can tear from me even the remotest hope!”

“I know not, Sir!” said I, endeavouring to disengage myself from him, “what hope you mean; but I am sure that I never intended to give you any.”

“You distract me!” cried he; “I cannot endure such scorn;—I beseech you to have some

moderation in your cruelty, lest you make me desperate:—say, then, that you pity me,—oh, fairest inexorable! loveliest tyrant!—say, tell me, at least, that you pity me!”

Just then, who should come in sight, as if intending to pass by the arbor, but Lord Orville! Good heaven! how did I start! and he, the moment he saw me, turned pale and was hastily retiring;—but I called out “ Lord Orville! —Sir Clement, release me,—let go my hand!”

Sir Clement, in some confusion, suddenly rose, but still grasped my hand. Lord Orville, who had turned back, was again walking away; but, still struggling to disengage myself, I called out, “ Pray, pray, my Lord, don’t go!—Sir Clement, I *insist* upon your releasing me!”

Lord Orville then, hastily approaching us, said, with great spirit, “ Sir Clement, you cannot wish to detain Miss Anville by force!”

“ Neither, my Lord,” cried Sir Clement, proudly, “ do I request the honor of your Lordship’s interference.”

However, he let go my hand, and I immediately ran into the house.

I was now frightened to death lest Sir Clement’s mortified pride should provoke him to affront Lord Orville: I therefore ran hastily to Mrs. Selwyn, and intreated her, in a manner hardly to be understood, to walk towards the

arbor. She asked no questions, for she is quick as lightning in taking a hint, but instantly hastened into the garden.

Imagine, my dear Sir, how wretched I must be till I saw her return! scarce could I restrain myself from running back: however, I checked my impatience, and waited, though in agonies, till she came.

And, now, my dear Sir, I have a conversation to write, the most interesting to me, that I ever heard. The comments and questions with which Mrs. Selwyn interrupted her account, I shall not mention; for they are such as you may very easily suppose.

Lord Orville and Sir Clement were both seated very quietly in the arbor: and Mrs. Selwyn, standing still, as soon as she was within a few yards of them, heard Sir Clement say, "Your question, my Lord, alarms me, and I can by no means answer it, unless you will allow me to propose another?"

"Undoubtedly, Sir."

"You ask me, my Lord, what are my intentions?—I should be very happy to be satisfied as to your Lordship's."

"I have never, Sir," replied Lord Orville, "professed *any*."

Here they were both, for a few moments, silent; and then Sir Clement said, "To what, my Lord,

must I, then, impute your desire of knowing mine?"

"To an unaffected interest in Miss Anville's welfare."

"Such an interest," said Sir Clement, drily, "is, indeed very generous: but, except in a father,—a brother,—or a lover—"

"Sir Clement," interrupted his Lordship, "I know your inference, and I acknowledge I have not the right of inquiry which any of those three titles bestow; and yet I confess the warmest wishes to serve her, and to see her happy. Will you, then, excuse me, if I take the liberty to repeat my question?"

"Yes, if your Lordship will excuse my repeating that I think it a rather extraordinary one."

"It may be so," said Lord Orville; "but this young lady seems to be peculiarly situated; she is very young, very inexperienced, yet appears to be left totally to her own direction. She does not, I believe, see the dangers to which she is exposed; and I will own to you, I feel a strong desire to point them out."

"I don't rightly understand your Lordship,—but I think you cannot mean to prejudise her against me?"

"Her sentiments of *you*, Sir, are as much unknown to me as your intentions towards *her*:"

—perhaps, were I acquainted with either, my officiousness might be at an end; but I presume not to ask upon what terms—”

Here he stopped; and Sir Clement said, “ You know, my Lord, I am not given to despair; I am by no means such a puppy as to tell you I am upon *sure ground*: however, perseverance—”

“ You are, then, determined to persevere?”

“ I am, my Lord!”

“ Pardon me, then, Sir Clement, if I speak to you with freedom. This young lady, though she seems alone, and, in some measure, unprotected, is not entirely without friends; she has been extremely well educated, and accustomed to good company; she has a natural love of virtue, and a mind that might adorn *any* station, however exalted: is such a young lady, Sir Clement, a proper object to trifle with?—for your principles,—excuse me, Sir!—are well known.”

“ As to that, my Lord, let Miss Anville look to herself; she has an excellent understanding, and needs no counsellor.”

“ Her understanding is, indeed, excellent; but she is too young for suspicion, and has an artlessness of disposition that I never saw equalled.”

“ My Lord,” cried Sir Clement, warmly, “ your praises make me doubt your disinterested—

ness; and there exists not the man who I would so unwillingly have for a rival as yourself: but you must give me leave to say, you have greatly deceived me in regard to this affair."

"How so, Sir?" cried Lord Orville, with equal warmth.

"You were pleased, my Lord," answered Sir Clement, "upon our first conversation concerning this young lady, to speak of her in terms by no means suited to your present encomiums; you said she was a *poor, weak, ignorant girl*; and I had great reason to believe you had a most contemptuous opinion of her."

"It is very true," said Lord Orville, "that I did not, at our first acquaintance, do justice to the merit of Miss Anville; but I knew not, then, how new she was to the world; at present, however, I am convinced that whatever might appear strange in her behaviour was simply the effect of inexperience, timidity, and a retired education; for I find her informed, sensible, and intelligent. She is not, indeed, like most modern young ladies, to be known in half an hour; her modest worth and fearful excellence require both time and encouragement to show themselves.—She does not, beautiful as she is, seize the soul by surprise, but, with more dangerous fascination, she steals it almost imperceptibly."

"Enough, my Lord!" cried Sir Clement;

“your solicitude for her welfare is now sufficiently explained.”

“My friendship and esteem,” returned Lord Orville, “I do not wish to disguise; but assure yourself, Sir Clement, I should not have troubled *you* upon this subject, had Miss Anville and I ever conversed but as friends: however, since you do not choose to avow your intentions, we must drop the subject.”

“My intentions,” cried he, “I will frankly own, are hardly known to myself. I think Miss Anville the loveliest of her sex, and, were I a *marrying man*, she, of all the women I have seen, I would fix upon for a wife: but I believe that not even the philosophy of your Lordship would recommend to me a connexion of that sort with a girl of obscure birth, whose only dowry is her beauty, and who is evidently in a state of dependency.”

“Sir Clement,” cried Lord Orville, with some heat, “we will discuss this point no further; we are both free-agents, and must act for ourselves.”

Here Mrs. Selwyn, fearing a surprise, and finding my apprehensions of danger were groundless, retired hastily into another walk, and soon after came to give me this account.

Good heaven! what a man is this Sir Clement! so designing, though so easy; so deliberately

artful, though so flighty! Greatly, however, is he mistaken, all confident as he seems; for the girl obscure, poor, dependent as she is, far from wishing the honor of his alliance, would not only *now* but *always* have rejected it.

As to Lord Orville — but I will not trust my pen to mention him; — tell me, my dear Sir, what *you* think of him?—tell me if he is not the noblest of men?—and if you can either wonder at, or blame my admiration?

The idea of being seen by either party, immediately after so singular a conversation, was both awkward and distressing to me; but I was obliged to appear at dinner. Sir Clement, I saw, was absent and uneasy; he watched me, he watched Lord Orville, and was evidently disturbed in his mind. Whenever he spoke to me, I turned from him with undisguised disdain; for I am too much irritated against him, to bear with his illmeant assiduities any longer.

But, not once — not a moment did I dare meet the eyes of Lord Orville!—all consciousness myself, I dreaded his penetration, and directed mine every way but towards his. The rest of the day I never quitted Mrs. Selwyn.

Adieu, my dear Sir! to-morrow I expect your directions whether I am to return to Berry Hill, or once more to visit London.

LETTER XV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Oct. 6th.

AND now, my dearest Sir! if the perturbation of my spirits will allow me, I will finish my last letter from Clifton Hill.

This morning, though I did not go down stairs early, Lord Orville was the only person in the parlour when I entered it:—I felt no small confusion at seeing him alone, after having so long and successfully avoided such a meeting.—As soon as the usual compliments were over, I would have left the room, but he stopped me by saying, “If I disturb you, Miss Anville, I am gone.”

“My Lord,” said I, rather embarrassed, “I did not mean to stay.”

“I flattered myself,” cried he, “I should have had a moment’s conversation with you.”

I then turned back; and he seemed himself in some perplexity: but after a short pause, “You are very good,” said he, “to indulge my request.

I have, indeed, for some time past, most ardently desired an opportunity of speaking to you."

Again he paused; but I said nothing: so he went on,

" You allowed me, Madam, a few days since, you allowed me to lay claim to your friendship, — to interest myself in your affairs, — to call you by the affectionate title of sister;—and the honor you did me, no man could have been more sensible of: I am ignorant, therefore, how I have been so unfortunate as to forfeit it:—but, at present, all is changed! you fly me,—your averted eye shuns to meet mine, and you sedulously avoid my conversation."

{I was extremely disconcerted at this grave and but too just accusation, and I am sure I must look very simple;—but I made no answer.

" You will not, I hope," continued he, " condemn me unheard; if there is any thing I have done, or any thing I have neglected,—tell me, I beseech you, *what*; and it shall be the whole study of my thoughts how to deserve your pardon."

" Oh, my Lord!" cried I, penetrated at once with shame and gratitude, " your too, too great politeness oppresses me! — you have done nothing,—I have never dreamt of offence;—if there is any pardon to be asked, it is rather for *me* than for *you* to ask it."

“ You are all sweetness and condescension!” cried he; “ and I flatter myself you will again allow me to claim those titles which I find myself so unable to forego. Yet, occupied as I am with an idea which gives me the severest uneasiness, I hope you will not think me impertinent if I still solicit,—still intreat, nay, implore you to tell me, to what cause your late sudden—and to me most painful reserve was owing?”

“ Indeed, my Lord!” said I, stammering, “ I don’t,—I can’t!—indeed, my Lord!—”

“ I am sorry to distress you,” said he, “ and ashamed to be so urgent;—yet I know not how to be satisfied while in ignorance,—and the *time* when the change happened makes me apprehend—may I, Miss Anville, tell you *what* it makes me apprehend?”

“ Certainly, my Lord!”

“ Tell me, then—and pardon a question most essentially important to me;—had, or had not, Sir Clement Willoughby any share in causing your inquietude?”

“ No, my Lord!” answered I, with firmness, “ none in the world.”

“ A thousand thousand thanks!” cried he: “ you have relieved me from a weight of conjecture which I supported very painfully: but one thing more; is it, in any measure, to Sir Clement that I may attribute the alteration in

your behaviour to myself, which, I could not but observe, began the very day of his arrival at the Hotwells?"

"To Sir Clement, my Lord!" said I, "attribute nothing. He is the last man in the world who would have any influence over my conduct."

"And will you, then, restore to me that share of confidence and favor with which you honored me before he came?"

Just then, to my great relief,—for I knew not what to say,—Mrs. Beaumont opened the door, and in a few minutes we went to breakfast.

Lord Orville was all gaiety; never did I see him more lively or more agreeable. Very soon after, Sir Clement Willoughby called, to pay his respects, he said, to Mrs. Beaumont. I then came to my own room, where, indulging my reflections, which now soothed and now alarmed me, I remained very quietly, till I received your most kind letter.

Oh, Sir! how sweet are the prayers you offer for your Evelina! how grateful to her are the blessings you pour upon her head!—You *commit me to my real parent!*—Ah! guardian, friend, protector of my youth!—by whom my helpless infancy was cherished, my mind formed, my very life preserved,—*you* are the parent my heart acknowledges; and to you do I vow eternal duty, gratitude, and affection!

I look forward to the approaching interview with more fear than hope; but, important as is this subject, I am just now wholly engrossed with another, which I must hasten to communicate.

I immediately acquainted Mrs. Selwyn with the purport of your letter. She was charmed to find your opinion agreed with her own, and settled that we should go to town to-morrow morning; and a chaise is actually ordered to be here by one o'clock.

She then desired me to pack up my clothes; and said she must go, herself, to *make speeches* and *tell lies* to Mrs. Beaumont.

When I went down stairs to dinner, Lord Orville, who was still in excellent spirits, reproached me for secluding myself so much from the company. He sat next me—he *would* sit next me—at table; and he might, I am sure, repeat what he once said of me before, *that he almost exhausted himself in fruitless endeavours to entertain me*;—for, indeed, I was not to be entertained: I was totally spiritless and dejected; the idea of the approaching meeting,—and oh, Sir! the idea of the approaching parting,—gave a heaviness to my heart that I could neither conquer nor repress. I even regretted the half-explanation that had passed,

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and wished Lord Orville had supported his own reserve, and suffered me to support mine.

However, when, during dinner, Mrs. Beaumont spoke of our journey, my gravity was no longer singular; a cloud instantly overspread the countenance of Lord Orville, and he became nearly as thoughtful and as silent as myself.

We all went together to the drawing-room. After a short and unentertaining conversation, Mrs Selwyn said she must prepare for her journey, and begged me to see for some books she had left in the parlour.

And here, while I was looking for them, I was followed by Lord Orville. He shut the door after he came in, and approaching me with a look of great anxiety, said, "Is this true, Miss Anville! are you going?"

"I believe so, my Lord," said I, still looking for the books.

"So suddenly, so unexpectedly must I lose you?"

"No great loss, my Lord," cried I, endeavouring to speak cheerfully.

"Is it possible," said he, gravely, "Miss Anville can doubt my sincerity?"

"I can't imagine," cried I, "what Mrs. Selwyn has done with these books."

"Would to heaven!" continued he, "I

might flatter myself you would allow me to prove it!"

"I must run up stairs," cried I, greatly confused, "and ask what she has done with them."

"You are going, then," cried he, taking my hand, "and you give me not the smallest hope of your return!—Will you not, then, my too lovely friend!—will you not, at least, teach me, with fortitude like your own, to support your absence?"

"My Lord," cried I, endeavouring to disengage my hand, "pray let me go!"

"I will," cried he, to my inexpressible confusion, dropping on one knee, "if you wish to leave me!"

"Oh, my Lord!" exclaimed I, "rise, I beseech you, rise!—such a posture to me!—surely your Lordship is not so cruel as to mock me!"

"Mock you!" repeated he earnestly, "no, I revere you! I esteem and I admire you above all human beings! you are the friend to whom my soul is attached as to its better half! you are the most amiable, the most perfect of women! and you are dearer to me than language has the power of telling!"

I attempt not to describe my sensations at that moment; I scarce breathed; I doubted

if I existed;—the blood forsook my cheeks, and my feet refused to sustain me: Lord Orville, hastily rising, supported me to a chair, upon which I sunk, almost lifeless.

For a few minutes, we neither of us spoke; and then, seeing me recover, Lord Orville, though in terms hardly articulate, intreated my pardon for his abruptness. The moment my strength returned, I attempted to rise, but he would not permit me.

I cannot write the scene that followed, though every word is engraven on my heart: but his protestations, his expressions, were too flattering for repetition: nor would he, in spite of my repeated efforts to leave him, suffer me to escape; in short, my dear Sir, I was not proof against his solicitations—and he drew from me the most sacred secret of my heart!

I know not how long we were together; but Lord Orville was upon his knees, when the door was opened by Mrs. Selwyn!—To tell you, Sir, the shame with which I was overwhelmed, would be impossible;—I snatched my hand from Lord Orville,—he, too, started and rose; and Mrs. Selwyn, for some instants, stood facing us both in silence.

At last, “My Lord!” said she, sarcastically, “have you been so good as to help Miss Anville to look for my books?”

“Yes, Madam!” answered he, attempting to rally, “and I hope we shall soon be able to find them.”

“Your Lordship is extremely kind,” said she, drily, “but I can by no means consent to take up any more of your time.” Then, looking on the window-seat, she presently found the books, and added, “Come, here are just three, and so, like the servants in the Drummer, this important affair may give employment to us all.” She then presented one of them to Lord Orville, another to me, and, taking a third herself, with a most provoking look she left the room.

I would instantly have followed her; but Lord Orville, who could not help laughing, begged me to stay a minute, as he had many important matters to discuss.

“No, indeed, my Lord! I cannot;—perhaps I have already staid too long.”

“Does Miss Anville so soon repent her goodness?”

“I scarce know what I do, my Lord,—I am quite bewildered!”

“One hour’s conversation,” cried he, “will I hope compose your spirits and confirm my happiness. When, then, may I hope to see you alone?—shall you walk in the garden to-morrow before breakfast?”

“No, no, my Lord! you must not, a second

time, reproach me with making an *appointment*."

"Do you then," said he, laughing, "reserve that honor only for Mr. Macartney?"

"Mr. Macartney," said I, "is poor, and thinks himself obliged to me; otherwise—"

"Poverty," cried he, "I will not plead; but if being *obliged* to you has any weight, who shall dispute *my* title to an appointment?"

"My Lord, I can stay no longer;—Mrs. Selwyn will lose all patience."

"Deprive her not of the pleasure of her *conjectures*;—but, tell me, are you under Mrs. Selwyn's care?"

"Only for the present, my Lord."

"Not a few are the questions I have to ask Miss Anville: among them, the most important is, whether she depends wholly on herself, or whether there is any other person for whose interest I must solicit?"

"I hardly know, my Lord! I hardly know myself to whom I most belong."

"Suffer,—suffer me, then," cried he, with warmth, "to hasten the time when that shall no longer admit a doubt!—when your grateful Orville may call you all his own!"

At length, but with difficulty, I broke from him. I went, however, to my own room; for I was too much agitated to follow Mrs. Selwyn.

Good God, my dear Sir, what a scene!—surely the meeting for which I shall prepare to-morrow, cannot so greatly affect me! To be loved by Lord Orville,—to be the honored choice of his noble heart,—my happiness seemed too infinite to be borne; and I wept, even bitterly I wept, from the excess of joy which overpowered me.

In this state of almost painful felicity, I continued till I was summoned to tea. When I reentered the drawing-room, I rejoiced much to find it full of company; as the confusion with which I met Lord Orville was rendered the less observable.

Immediately after tea, most of the company played at cards; and then, and till supper-time, Lord Orville devoted himself wholly to me.

He saw that my eyes were red, and would not let me rest till he had made me confess the cause; and when, though most reluctantly, I had acknowledged my weakness, I could with difficulty refrain from weeping again at the gratitude he expressed.

He earnestly desired to know if my journey could not be postponed; and, when I said no, intreated permission to attend me to town.

“Oh, my Lord!” cried I, “what a request!”

“The sooner,” answered he, “I make my devotion to you public, the sooner I may expect,

from your delicacy, you will convince the world you encourage no mere *danglers*."

"You teach me, then, my Lord! the inference I might expect, if I complied."

"And can you wonder I should seek to hasten the happy time, when no scruples, no discretion will demand our separation? and when the most punctilious delicacy will rather promote, than oppose, my happiness in attending you?"

To this I was silent, and he reurged his request.

"My Lord!" said I, "you ask what I have no power to grant. This journey will deprive me of all right to act for myself."

"What does Miss Anville mean?"

"I cannot now explain myself; indeed, if I could, the task would be both painful and tedious."

"Oh, Miss Anville!" cried he, "when may I hope to date the period of this mystery?—when flatter myself that my promised friend will indeed honor me with her confidence?"

"My Lord," said I, "I mean not to affect any mystery,—but my affairs are so circumstanced, that a long and most unhappy story can alone explain them: however, if a short suspense will give your Lordship any uneasiness—"

"My beloved Miss Anville!" cried he, eagerly,

“pardon my impatience!—You shall tell me nothing you would wish to conceal,—I will wait your own time for information, and trust to your goodness for its speed.”

“There is *nothing*, my Lord, I wish to conceal,—to *postpone* an explanation is all I desire.”

He then requested, that, since I would not allow him to accompany me to town, I would permit him to write to me, and promise to answer his letters.

A sudden recollection of the two letters which had already passed between us occurring to me, I hastily answered, “No, indeed, my Lord!”

“I am extremely sorry,” said he, gravely, “that you think me too presumptuous. I must own I had flattered myself, that to soften the inquietude of an absence, which seems attended by so many inexplicable circumstances, would not have been to incur your displeasure.”

This seriousness hurt me; and I could not forbear saying, “Can you indeed desire, my Lord, that I should, a second time, expose myself, by an unguarded readiness to write to you?”

“A *second time! unguarded readiness!*” repeated he; “you amaze me!”

“Has your Lordship, then, quite forgot the foolish letter I was so imprudent as to send you when in town?”

“ I have not the least idea,” cried he, “ of what you mean.”

“ Why then, my Lord!” said I, “ we had better let the subject drop.”

“ Impossible!” cried he, “ I cannot rest without an explanation!”

And then, he obliged me to speak very openly of both the letters; but, my dear Sir! imagine my surprise, when he assured me, in the most solemn manner, that, far from having ever written me a single line, he had never received, seen, or heard of my letter!

This subject, which caused mutual astonishment and perplexity to us both, entirely engrossed us for the rest of the evening; and he made me promise to show him the letter I had received in his name to-morrow morning, that he might endeavour to discover the author.

After supper, the conversation became general.

And now, my dearest Sir! may I not call for your congratulations upon the events of this day?—a day never to be recollected by me, but with the most grateful joy! I know how much you are inclined to think well of Lord Orville; I cannot, therefore, apprehend that my frankness to him will displease you. Perhaps the time is not very distant when your Evelina’s choice may receive the sanction of her best

friend's judgment and approbation,—which seems now all she has to wish!

In regard to the change in my situation which must first take place, surely I cannot be blamed for what has passed! the partiality of Lord Orville must not only reflect honor upon me, but upon all to whom I do or may belong.

Adieu, most dear Sir! I will write again when I arrive at London.

LETTER XVI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Clifton, Oct. 7th.

YOU will see, my dear Sir! that I was mistaken in supposing I should write no more from this place, where my residence, now, seems more uncertain than ever.

This morning, during breakfast, Lord Orville took an opportunity to beg me, in a low voice, to allow him a moment's conversation before I left Clifton; "May I hope," added he, "that you will stroll into the garden after breakfast?"

I made no answer, but I believe my looks gave no denial; for, indeed, I much wished to be satisfied concerning the letter. The moment, therefore, that I could quit the parlour, I ran up stairs for my calash; but before I reached my room, Mrs. Selwyn called after me, "If you are going to walk, Miss Anville, be so good as to bid Jenny bring down my hat, and I'll accompany you."

Very much disconcerted, I turned into the

drawing-room, without making any answer, and there I hoped to wait unseen, till she had otherwise disposed of herself. But, in a few minutes, the door opened, and Sir Clement Willoughby entered.

Starting at the sight of him, in rising hastily, I let drop the letter which I had brought for Lord Orville's inspection, and, before I could recover it, Sir Clement, springing forward, had it in his hand. He was just presenting it to me, and, at the same time, inquiring after my health, when the signature caught his eye, and he read aloud "Orville."

I endeavoured, eagerly, to snatch it from him, but he would not permit me, and, holding it fast, in a passionate manner exclaimed, "Good God, Miss Anville! is it possible you can value such a letter as this?"

The question surprised and confounded me, and I was too much ashamed to answer him; but finding he made an attempt to secure it, I prevented him, and vehemently demanded him to return it.

"Tell me first," said he, holding it above my reach, "tell me if you have, since, received any more letters from the same person?"

"No, indeed," cried I, "never!"

"And will you also, sweetest of women! promise that you never *will* receive any more?"

Say that, and you will make me the happiest of men."

"Sir Clement," cried I, greatly confused, "pray give me the letter!"

"And will you not first satisfy my doubts?—will you not relieve me from the torture of the most distracting suspense?—tell me but that the detested Orville has written to you no more!"

"Sir Clement," cried I, angrily, "you have no right to make any conditions!—so, pray give me the letter directly."

"Why such solicitude about this hateful letter? can it possibly deserve your eagerness? Tell me with truth, with sincerity tell me—does it really merit the least anxiety?"

"No matter, Sir!" cried I, in great perplexity; "the letter is mine, and therefore—"

"I must conclude, then," said he, "that the letter deserves your utmost contempt,—but that the name of Orville is sufficient to make you prize it."

"Sir Clement!" cried I, coloring, "you are quite—you are very much—the letter is not—"

"O Miss Anville!" cried he, "you blush!—you stammer!—Great heaven! it is, then, all as I feared!"

"I know not," cried I, half frightened, "what you mean; but I beseech you to give me the letter and to compose yourself."

“The letter,” cried he, gnashing his teeth, ‘you shall never see more! You ought to have burned it the moment you had read it!’ and in an instant, he tore it into a thousand pieces.

Alarmed at a fury so indecently outrageous, I would have run out of the room; but he caught hold of my gown, and cried, “Not yet,—not yet must you go! I am but half-mad yet, and you must stay to finish your work. Tell me, therefore, does Orville know your fatal partiality?—Say *yes*,” added he, trembling with passion, “and I will fly you for ever!”

“For heaven’s sake, Sir Clement!” cried I, “release me!—if you do not, you will force me to call for help.”

“Call, then,” cried he, “inexorable and most unfeeling girl! call, if you please, and bid all the world witness your triumph;—but could ten worlds obey your call, I would not part from you till you had answered me. Tell me, then, does Orville know you love him?”

At any other time, an inquiry so gross would have given me inexpressible confusion; but now, the wildness of his manner terrified me, and I only said, “Whatever you wish to know, Sir Clement, I will tell you another time; but for the present, I intreat you to let me go!”

“Enough!” cried he, “I understand you!—the art of Orville has prevailed;—cold, inanimate, phlegmatic, as he is, you have rendered him the most envied of men!—One thing more, and I have done:—Will he marry you?”

What a question! my cheeks glowed with indignation, and I felt too proud to make any answer.

“I see, I see how it is,” cried he, after a short pause, “and I find I am undone for ever!” Then, letting loose my gown, he put his hand to his forehead, and walked up and down the room in a hasty and agitated manner.

Though now at liberty to go, I had not the courage to leave him; for his evident distress excited all my compassion: and this was our situation, when Lady Louisa, Mr. Coverley, and Mrs. Beaumont entered the room.

“Sir Clement Willoughby,” said the latter, “I beg pardon for making you wait so long, but—”

She had not time for another word; Sir Clement, too much disordered to know or care what he did, snatched up his hat, and, brushing hastily past her, flew down stairs and out of the house.

And with him went my sincerest pity, though I earnestly hope I shall see him no more: but

what, my dear Sir! am I to conclude from his strange speeches concerning the letter? does it not seem as if he was himself the author of it? how else should he be so well acquainted with the contempt it merits? neither do I know another human being who could serve any interest by such a deception. I remember, too, that just as I had given my own letter to the maid, Sir Clement came into the shop;—probably he prevailed upon her, by some bribery, to give it to him, and afterwards, by the same means, to deliver to me an answer of his own writing: indeed I can in no other manner account for this affair. Oh, Sir Clement! were you not yourself unhappy, I know not how I could pardon an artifice that has caused me so much uneasiness!

His abrupt departure occasioned a kind of general consternation.

“Very extraordinary behaviour this!” cried Mrs. Beaumont.

“Egad!” said Mr. Coverley, “the Baronet has a mind to tip us a touch of the heroics this morning!”

“I declare,” cried Lady Louisa, “I never saw any thing so monstrous in my life! it’s quite abominable,—I fancy the man’s mad;—I’m sure he has given me a shocking fright!”

Soon after, Mrs. Selwyn came up stairs with

Lord Merton. The former, advancing hastily to me, said, "Miss Anville, have you an almanack?"

"Me!—no, Madam."

"Who has one, then?"

"Egad!" cried Mr. Coverley, "I never bought one in my life; it would make me quite melancholy to have such a timekeeper in my pocket: I would as soon walk all day before an hour-glass."

"You are in the right," said Mrs. Selwyn, "not to *watch* time; lest you should be betrayed, unawares, into reflecting how you employ it."

"Egad, Ma'am!" cried he, "if *time* thought no more of me than I do of *time*, I believe I should bid defiance, for one while, to old age and wrinkles,—for, deuce take me! if ever I think about it at all."

"Pray, Mr. Coverley," said Mrs. Selwyn, "why do you think it necessary to tell me this so often?"

"Often!" repeated he, "Egad, Madam! I don't know why I said it now,—but I'm sure I can't recollect that ever I owned as much before."

"Owned it before!" cried she, "why, my dear Sir! you own it all day long; for every word, every look, every action proclaims it."

I know not if he understood the full severity

of her satire, but he only turned off with a laugh: and she then applied to Mr. Lovel, and asked if *he* had an almanack?

Mr. Lovel, who always looks alarmed when she addresses him, with some hesitation answered, "I assure you, Ma'am, I have no manner of antipathy to an almanack,—none in the least,—I assure you;—I dare say I have four or five."

"Four or five!—pray may I ask what use you make of so many?"

"Use!—really, Ma'am, as to that,—I don't make any particular use of them,—but one must have them, to tell one the day of the month, I'm sure;—else, I should never keep it in my head."

"And does your time pass so smoothly unmarked, that, without an almanack, you could not distinguish one day from another?"

"Really, Ma'am," cried he, coloring, "I don't see any thing so very particular in having a few almanacks; other people have them, I believe, as well as me."

"Don't be offended!" cried she, "I have but made a little digression. All I want to know is the state of the moon,—for if it is at the *full* I shall be saved a world of conjectures, and know at once to what cause to attribute the inconsistencies I have witnessed this morning. In the first place, I heard Lord Orville excuse

himself from going out, because he had business of importance to transact at home,—yet have I seen him sauntering alone in the garden this half-hour. Miss Anville, on the other hand, I invited to walk out with me; and after seeking her every where round the house, I find her quietly seated in the drawing-room: and but a few minutes since, Sir Clement Willoughby, with even more than his usual politeness, told me he was come to spend the morning here,—when, just now, I met him flying down stairs, as if pursued by the furies; and, far from repeating his compliments or making any excuse, he did not even answer a question I asked him, but rushed past me with the rapidity of a thief from a bailiff!”

“I protest,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “I can’t think what he meant; such rudeness from a man of any family is quite incomprehensible.”

“My Lord!” cried Lady Louisa to Lord Merton, “do you know he did the same by *me*?—I was just going to ask him what was the matter; but he ran past me so quick, that I declare he quite dazzled my eyes. You can’t think, my Lord, how he frightened me; I dare say I look as pale—don’t I look very pale, my Lord?”

“Your Ladyship,” said Mr. Lovel, “so well becomes the lilies, that the roses might blush to see themselves so excelled.”

“ Pray, Mr. Lovel,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ if the roses should blush, how would you find it out ?”

“ Egad !” cried Mr. Coverley, “ I suppose they must blush, as the saying is, like a blue dog, — for they are *red* already.”

“ Prithee, Jack !” said Lord Merton, “ don’t you pretend to talk about blushes, that never knew what they were in your life.”

“ My Lord,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ if experience alone can justify mentioning them, what an admirable treatise upon the subject may we not expect from your Lordship !”

“ Oh, pray, Ma’am !” answered he, “ stick to Jack Coverley, — he’s your only man ; for my part, I confess I have a mortal aversion to arguments.”

“ Oh, fie, my Lord !” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “ a senator of the nation ! a member of the noblest parliament in the world ! — and yet neglect the art of oratory ?”

“ Why, faith, my Lord !” said Mr. Lovel, — “ I think, in general, your House is not much addicted to study ; we of the lower House have indubitably most application ; and, if I did not speak before a superior power,” bowing low to Lord Merton, “ I should presume to add, we have likewise the most able speakers.”

“ Mr. Lovel,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ you de-

serve immortality for that discovery! But for this observation, and the confession of Lord Merton, I protest I should have supposed that a peer of the realm and an able logician were synonymous terms."

Lord Merton, turning upon his heel, asked Lady Louisa if she should *take the air* before dinner?

"Really," answered she, "I don't know; — I'm afraid it's monstrous hot; besides," putting her hand to her forehead, "I a'n't half well; it's quite horrid to have such weak nerves! — the least thing in the world discomposes me: I declare, that man's oddness has given me such a shock, — I don't know when I shall recover from it. But I'm a sad weak creature! — don't you think I am, my Lord?"

"Oh, by no means!" answered he, "your Ladyship is merely delicate, — and, devil take me! if ever I had the least passion for an Amazon."

"I have the honor to be quite of your Lordship's opinion," said Mr. Lovel, looking maliciously at Mrs. Selwyn; "for I have an insuperable aversion to strength, either of body or mind, in a female."

"Faith! and so have I," said Mr. Coverley; "for, egad! I'd as soon see a woman chop wood, as hear her chop logic."

“So would every man in his senses!” said Lord Merton; “for a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good-nature; in every thing else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For my part, deuce take me! if ever I wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live!”

“It has always been agreed,” said Mrs. Selwyn, looking round her with the utmost contempt, “that no man ought to be connected with a woman whose understanding is superior to his own. Now I very much fear, that, to accommodate all this good company, according to such a rule, would be utterly impracticable; unless we should choose subjects from Swift’s hospital of idiots.”

How many enemies, my dear Sir, does this unbounded severity excite! Lord Merton, however, only whistled; Mr. Coverley sang; and Mr. Lovel, after biting his lips some time, said, “’Pon honor, that lady — if she was *not* a lady, — I should be half tempted to observe, — that there is something, — in such severity, — that is rather, I must say, — rather — *oddish*.”

Just then, a servant brought Lady Louisa a note upon a *waiter*, which is a ceremony always used to her Ladyship; and I took the opportunity of this interruption to the conversation to steal out of the room.

I went immediately to the parlour, which I found quite empty; for I did not dare walk in the garden, after what Mrs. Selwyn had said.

In a few minutes, a servant announced Mr. Macartney, saying, as he entered the room, that he would acquaint Lord Orville he was there.

Mr. Macartney rejoiced much at finding me alone. He told me he had taken the liberty to inquire for Lord Orville, by way of pretext for coming to the house.

I then very eagerly inquired if he had seen his father.

“I have, Madam,” said he; “and the generous compassion you have shown made me hasten to acquaint you, that, upon reading my unhappy mother’s letter, he did not hesitate to acknowledge me.”

“Good God!” cried I, with no little emotion, “how similar are our circumstances! And did he receive you kindly?”

“I could not, Madam, expect that he would: the cruel transaction which obliged me to fly Paris was too recent in his memory.”

“And—have you seen the young lady?”

“No, Madam!” said he mournfully, “I was forbidden her sight.”

“Forbidden her sight!—and why?”

“Partly, perhaps, from prudence,—and partly

from the remains of a resentment which will not easily subside. I only requested leave to acquaint her with my relationship, and be allowed to call her sister; — but it was denied me! — *You have no sister*, said Sir John; *you must forget her existence!* Hard and vain command!”

“ You have—you have a sister !” cried I, from an impulse of pity which I could not repress, “ a sister, who is most warmly interested in your welfare, and who only wants opportunity to manifest her friendship and regard.”

“ Gracious heaven!” cried he, “ what does Miss Anville mean ?”

“ Anville,” said I, “ is not my real name ; Sir John Belmont is my father,— he is yours,— and I am your sister!—You see, therefore, the claim we mutually have to each other’s regard ; we are not merely bound by the ties of friendship, but by those of blood. I feel for you, already, all the affection of a sister;— I felt it, indeed, before I knew I was one. — Why, my dear brother, do you not speak?—do you hesitate to acknowledge me ?”

“ I am so lost in astonishment,” cried he, “ that I know not if I hear right !” —

“ I have then found a brother,” cried I, holding out my hand, “ and he will not own me !”

“ Own you ! — Oh, Madam !” cried he, ac-

cepting my offered hand, "is it, indeed, possible *you* can own *me*?— a poor, wretched adventurer! who so lately had no support but from your generosity? — whom your benevolence snatched from utter destruction? — Can *you*, — oh, Madam! can you indeed, and without a blush, condescend to own such an outcast for a brother?"

"Oh, forbear, forbear!" cried I, "is this language proper for a sister? are we not reciprocally bound to each other?— will you not suffer me to expect from *you* all the good offices in your power? — But, tell me, where is our father at present?"

"At the Hotwells, Madam; he arrived there yesterday morning."

I would have proceeded with further questions, but the entrance of Lord Orville prevented me. The moment he saw us, he started, and would have retreated; but, drawing my hand from Mr. Macartney's, I begged him to come in.

For a few moments we were all silent, and, I believe, all in equal confusion: — Mr. Macartney, however, recollecting himself, said, "I hope your Lordship will forgive the liberty I have taken in making use of your name?"

Lord Orville, rather coldly, bowed, but said nothing.

Again we were all silent, and then Mr. Macartney took leave.

“I fancy,” said Lord Orville, when he was gone, “I have shortened Mr. Macartney’s visit?”

“No, my Lord, not at all.”

“I had presumed,” said he, with some hesitation, “I should have seen Miss Anville in the garden;—but I knew not she was so much better engaged.”

Before I could answer, a servant came to tell me the chaise was ready, and that Mrs. Selwyn was inquiring for me.

“I will wait on her immediately,” cried I, and away I was running; but Lord Orville, stopping me, said, with great emotion, “Is it thus, Miss Anville! you leave me?”

“My Lord,” cried I, “how can I help it?—perhaps, soon, some better opportunity may offer—”

“Good heaven!” cried he, “do you indeed take me for a Stoic?—What better opportunity may I hope for?—is not the chaise come?—are you not going? have you even deigned to tell me whither?”

“My journey, my Lord!” replied I, “will now be deferred. Mr. Macartney has brought me intelligence which renders it, at present, unnecessary.”

“Mr. Macartney,” said he, gravely, “seems

to have great influence,—yet he is a very young counsellor.”

“Is it possible, my Lord! Mr. Macartney can give you the least uneasiness?”

“My dearest Miss Anville,” said he, taking my hand, “I see and I adore the purity of your mind, superior as it is to all little arts, and all apprehensions of suspicion; and I should do myself, as well as you, injustice, if I were capable of harbouring the smallest doubts of that goodness which makes you mine for ever: nevertheless, pardon me, if I own myself surprised,—nay, alarmed, at these frequent meetings with so young a man as Mr. Macartney.”

“My Lord,” cried I, eager to clear myself, “Mr. Macartney is my brother!”

“Your brother! you amaze me! — What strange mystery, then, makes his relationship a secret?”

Just then, Mrs. Selwyn opened the door.

“Oh, you are here!” cried she; “Pray is my Lord so kind as to assist you in *preparing* for your journey,—or in *retarding* it?”

“I should be most happy,” said Lord Orville, smiling, “if it were in my power to do the *latter*.”

I then acquainted her with Mr. Macartney’s communication.

She immediately ordered the chaise away, and

then took me into her own room, to consider what should be done.

A few minutes sufficed to determine her, and she wrote the following note.

TO SIR JOHN BELMONT, BART.

“ MRS. SELWYN presents her compliments to Sir John Belmont, and, if he is at leisure, will be glad to wait on him this morning upon business of importance.”

She then ordered her man to inquire at the pump-room for a direction; and went herself to Mrs. Beaumont to apologise for deferring her journey.

An answer was presently returned that he would be glad to see her.

She would have had me immediately accompany her to the Hotwells; but I intreated her to spare me the distress of so abrupt an introduction, and to pave the way for my reception. She consented rather reluctantly, and, attended only by her servant, walked to the Wells.

She was not absent two hours;—yet, so miserably did time seem to linger, that I thought a thousand accidents had happened, and feared she would never return. I passed the whole

time in my own room; for I was too much agitated even to converse with Lord Orville.

The instant that, from my window, I saw her returning, I flew down stairs and met her in the garden.

We both walked to the arbor.

Her looks, in which disappointment and anger were expressed, presently announced to me the failure of her embassy. Finding that she did not speak, I asked her, in a faltering voice, Whether or not I had a father?

“You have *not*, my dear!” said she, abruptly.

“Very well, Madam!” said I, with tolerable calmness, “let the chaise, then, be ordered again;—I will go to Berry Hill;—and there, I trust, I shall still find one!”

It was some time ere she could give, or I could hear, the account of her visit; and then she related it in a hasty manner; yet I believe I can recollect every word.

“I found Sir John alone. He received me with the utmost politeness. I did not keep him a moment in suspense as to the purport of my visit. But I had no sooner made it known, than, with a supercilious smile, he said, ‘And have you, Madam, been prevailed upon to revive that ridiculous old story?’ Ridiculous, I told him, was a term which he would find no one else do him the favor to make use of, in speaking

of the horrible actions belonging to the *old story* he made so light of; 'actions,' continued I, 'which would dye still deeper the black annals of Nero or Caligula.' He attempted in vain to rally, for I pursued him with all the severity in my power, and ceased not painting the enormity of his crime, till I stung him to the quick, and in a voice of passion and impatience, he said, 'No more, Madam!—this is not a subject upon which I need a monitor.'

"Make then," cried I, 'the only reparation in your power.—Your daughter is now at Clifton; send for her hither, and, in the face of the world, proclaim the legitimacy of her birth, and clear the reputation of your injured wife.'

"Madam," said he, 'you are much mistaken, if you suppose I waited for the honor of this visit, before I did what little justice now depends upon me to the memory of that unfortunate woman: her daughter has been my care from her infancy; I have taken her into my house; she bears my name, and she will be my sole heiress.' For some time, this assertion appeared so absurd that I only laughed at it; but at last, he assured me I had myself been imposed upon; for that the very woman, who attended Lady Belmont in her last illness, conveyed the child to him while he was in London, before she was a year old. 'Unwilling,' he added, 'at that

time to confirm the rumor of my being married, I sent the woman with the child to France; as soon as she was old enough, I put her into a convent, where she has been properly educated; and now I have taken her home. I have acknowledged her for my lawful child, and paid, at length, to the memory of her unhappy mother, a tribute of fame, which has made me wish to hide myself hereafter from all the world.'—This whole story sounded so improbable, that I did not scruple to tell him I discredited every word. He then rung his bell, and inquiring if his hairdresser was come, said he was sorry to leave me, but that, if I would favor him with my company to-morrow, he would do himself the honor of introducing Miss Belmont to *me*, instead of troubling me to introduce her to *him*. I rose in great indignation, and, assuring him I would make his conduct as public as it was infamous, I left the house."

Good heaven, how strange the recital! how incomprehensible an affair! The Miss Belmont, then, who is actually at Bristol, passes for the daughter of my unhappy mother!—passes, in short, for your Evelina! Who she can be, or what this tale can mean, I have not any idea.

Mrs. Selwyn soon after left me to my own reflections. Indeed they were not very pleasant. Quietly as I had borne her relation, the mo-

ment I was alone, I felt most bitterly both the disgrace and the sorrow of a rejection so cruelly inexplicable.

I know not how long I might have continued in this situation, had I not been awakened from my melancholy reverie by the voice of Lord Orville. "May I come in," cried he, "or shall I interrupt you?"

I was silent, and he seated himself next me. "I fear," he continued, "Miss Anville will think I persecute her; yet so much as I have to say, and so much as I wish to hear, with so few opportunities for either, she cannot wonder—and I hope she will not be offended—that I seize with such avidity every moment in my power to converse with her. You are grave," added he, taking my hand; "I hope you do not regret the delay of your journey?—I hope the pleasure it gives to *me* will not be a subject of pain to *you*?—You are silent!—Something, I am sure, has afflicted you:—Would to heaven I were able to console you!—would to heaven I were worthy to participate in your sorrows!"

My heart was too full to bear this kindness, and I could only answer by my tears. "Good heaven!" cried he, "how you alarm me!—My love—my sweet Miss Anville! deny me no longer to be the sharer of your griefs!—tell me,

at least, that you have not withdrawn your esteem!—that you do not repent the goodness you have shown me!—that you still think me the same grateful Orville whose heart you have deigned to accept!”

“ Oh, my Lord!” cried I, “ your generosity overpowers me!”—and I wept like an infant. For now that all my hopes of being acknowledged seemed finally crushed, I felt the nobleness of his disinterested regard so forcibly, that I could scarce breathe under the weight of gratitude which oppressed me.

He seemed greatly shocked, and, in terms the most flattering, the most respectfully tender, he at once soothed my distress and urged me to tell him its cause.

“ My Lord!” said I, when I was able to speak, “ you little know what an outcast you have honored with your choice!—a child of bounty,—an orphan from infancy,—dependent, even for subsistence, dependent upon the kindness of compassion!—rejected by my natural friends,—disowned for ever by my nearest relation!—Oh, my Lord! so circumstanced, can I deserve the distinction with which you honor me? No, no! I feel the inequality too painfully;—you must leave me, my Lord, you must suffer me to return to obscurity,—and there, in the bosom of my first, best, my only friend,—I will

pour forth all the grief of my heart!—while you, my Lord, must seek elsewhere—”

I could not proceed; my whole soul recoiled against the charge I would have given, and my voice refused to utter it.

“ Never!” cried he, warmly; “ my heart is yours, and I swear to you an attachment eternal! —You prepare me, indeed, for a tale of horror, and I am almost breathless with expectation,—but so firm is my conviction, that, whatever are your misfortunes, to have merited them is not of the number, that I feel myself more strongly, more invincibly devoted to you than ever! — Tell me but where I may find this noble friend, whose virtues you have already taught me to reverence,—and I will fly to obtain his consent and intercession, that henceforward our fates may be indissolubly united,—and then shall it be the sole study of my life to endeavour to soften your past, and guard you from future misfortunes!”

I had just raised my eyes, to answer this most generous of men, when the first object they met was Mrs. Selwyn!

“ So, my dear!” cried she, “ what, still courting the rural shades!—I thought ere now you would have been satiated with this retired seat, and I have been seeking you all over the house. But I find the only way to meet with you,—”

is to inquire for *Lord Orville*. However, don't let me disturb your meditations; you are possibly planning some pastoral dialogue."

And, with this provoking speech, she walked on.

In the greatest confusion, I was quitting the arbor, when Lord Orville said, "Permit *me* to follow Mrs. Selwyn,—it is time to put an end to all impertinent conjectures; will you allow me to speak to her openly?"

I assented in silence, and he left me.

I then went to my own room, where I continued till I was summoned to dinner; after which, Mrs. Selwyn invited me to hers.

The moment she had shut the door, "Your Ladyship," said she, "will, I hope, be seated."

"Ma'am!" cried I, staring.

"Oh, the sweet innocent! So you don't know what I mean?—but, my dear, my sole view is to accustom you a little to your dignity-elect, lest, when you are addressed by your title, you should look another way, from an apprehension of listening to a discourse not meant for you to hear."

Having, in this manner, diverted herself with my confusion, till her raillery was almost exhausted, she congratulated me very seriously upon the partiality of Lord Orville, and painted to me, in the strongest terms, his disinterested

desire of being married to me immediately. She had told him, she said, my whole story; and yet he was willing, nay eager, that our union should take place of any further application to my family. "Now, my dear," continued she, "I advise you by all means to marry him directly; nothing can be more precarious than our success with Sir John; and the young men of this age are not to be trusted with too much time for deliberation, where their interests are concerned."

"Good God, Madam!" cried I, "do you think I would *hurry* Lord Orville?"

"Well, do as you will!" said she; "luckily you have an excellent subject for Quixotism;—otherwise this delay might prove your ruin: but Lord Orville is almost as romantic as if he had been born and bred at Berry Hill."

She then proposed, as no better expedient seemed likely to be suggested, that I should accompany her at once on her visit to the Hotwells to-morrow morning.

The very idea made me tremble; yet she represented so strongly the necessity of pursuing this unhappy affair with spirit, or giving it totally up, that, wanting her force of argument, I was almost obliged to yield to her proposal.

In the evening, we all walked in the garden: and Lord Orville, who never quitted my side,

told me he had been listening to a tale, which, though it had removed the perplexities that had so long tormented him, had penetrated him with sorrow and compassion. I acquainted him with Mrs. Selwyn's plan for to-morrow, and confessed the extreme terror it gave me. He then, in a manner almost unanswerable, besought me to leave to him the conduct of the affair, by consenting to be his before an interview took place.

I could not but acknowledge my sense of his generosity; but I told him I was wholly dependent upon you, and that I was certain your opinion would be the same as mine, which was, that it would be highly improper I should dispose of myself for ever, so very near the time which must finally decide by whose authority I ought to be guided. The subject of this dreaded meeting, with the thousand conjectures and apprehensions to which it gives birth, employed all our conversation then, as it has all my thoughts since.

Heaven only knows how I shall support myself, when the long-expected,—the wished yet terrible moment arrives, that will prostrate me at the feet of the nearest, the most revered of all relations, whom my heart yearns to know and longs to love!

LETTER XVII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Oct. 9th.

I COULD not write yesterday, so violent was the agitation of my mind, — but I will not, now, lose a moment till I have hastened to my best friend an account of the transactions of a day I can never recollect without emotion.

Mrs. Selwyn determined upon sending no message, “Lest,” said she, “Sir John, fatigued with the very idea of my reproaches, should endeavour to avoid a meeting: all we have to do, is to take him by surprise. He cannot but see who you are, whether he will do you justice or not.”

We went early, and in Mrs. Beaumont’s chariot; into which, Lord Orville, uttering words of the kindest encouragement, handed us both.

My uneasiness, during the ride, was excessive; but, when we stopped at the door, I was almost senseless with terror! the meeting, at last, was not so dreadful as that moment! I believe I was

carried into the house; but I scarce recollect what was done with me: however, I know we remained some time in the parlour, before Mrs. Selwyn could send any message up stairs.

When I was somewhat recovered, I intreated her to let me return home, assuring her I felt myself quite unequal to supporting the interview.

“No,” said she, “you must stay now; your fears will but gain strength by delay, and we must not have such a shock as this repeated.” Then, turning to the servant, she sent up her name.

An answer was brought, that he was going out in great haste, but would attend her immediately. I turned so sick, that Mrs. Selwyn was apprehensive I should have fainted; and opening a door which led to an inner apartment, she begged me to wait there till I was somewhat composed, and till she had prepared for my reception.

Glad of every moment's reprieve, I willingly agreed to the proposal, and Mrs. Selwyn had but just time to shut me in, before her presence was necessary.

The voice of a *father*,—oh, dear and revered name!—which then, for the first time, struck my ears, affected me in a manner I cannot

describe, though it was only employed in giving orders to a servant as he came down stairs.

Then, entering the parlour, I heard him say, —“ I am sorry, Madam! I made you wait; but I have an engagement which now calls me away: however, if you have any commands for me, I shall be glad of the honor of your company some other time.”

“ I am come, Sir!” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ to introduce your daughter to you.”

“ I am infinitely obliged to you,” answered he, “ but I have just had the satisfaction of breakfasting with her. Ma’am, your most obedient.”

“ You refuse, then, to see her?”

“ I am much indebted to you, Madam, for this desire of increasing my family; but you must excuse me if I decline taking advantage of it. I have already a daughter, to whom I owe every thing; and it is not three days since, that I had the pleasure of discovering a son: how many more sons and daughters may be brought to me I am yet to learn, but I am already perfectly satisfied with the size of my family,”

“ Had you a thousand children, Sir John!” said Mrs. Selwyn, warmly, “ this only one, of which Lady Belmont was the mother, ought to be most distinguished; and, far from avoiding her

sight, you should thank your stars, in humble gratitude, that there yet remains in your power the smallest opportunity of doing the injured wife you have destroyed, the poor justice of acknowledging her child!"

"I am very unwilling, Madam," answered he, "to enter into any discussion of this point; but you are determined to compel me to speak. There lives not, at this time, the human being who should talk to *me* of the regret due to the memory of that ill-fated woman; no one can feel it so severely as myself: but let me, nevertheless, assure you, I have already done all that remained in my power to prove the respect she merited from me; her child I have educated and owned for my lawful heiress,—if, Madam, you can suggest to me any other means by which I may more fully do her justice, and more clearly manifest her innocence, name them to me, and, though they should wound my character still deeper, I will perform them readily."

"All this sounds vastly well," returned Mrs. Selwyn; "but I must own it is rather too enigmatical for *my* faculties of comprehension. You can, however, have no objection to seeing this young lady?"

"None in the world."

"Come forth, then, my dear!" cried she, opening the door, "come forth, and see your

father!" Then, taking my trembling hand, she led me forward. I would have withdrawn it and retreated; but, as he advanced instantly towards me, I found myself already before him.

What a moment for your Evelina!—an involuntary scream escaped me; and, covering my face with my hands, I sunk on the floor.

He had, however, seen me first; for, in a voice scarce articulate, he exclaimed, "My God! does Caroline Evelyn still live!"

Mrs. Selwyn said something, but I could not listen to her; and, in a few minutes, he added, "Lift up thy head,—if my sight has not blasted thee,—lift up thy head, thou image of my long-lost Caroline!"

Affected beyond measure, I half arose, and embraced his knees while yet on my own.

"Yes, yes!" cried he, looking earnestly in my face, "I see, I see thou art her child! she lives—she breathes—she is present to my view!—O God, that she indeed lived!—Go, child, go!" added he, wildly starting, and pushing me from him, "take her away, Madam!—I cannot bear to look at her!" and then, breaking hastily from me, he rushed out of the room.

Speechless, motionless myself, I attempted not to stop him: but Mrs. Selwyn, hastening after him, caught hold of his arm.—"Leave me,

Madam!" cried he, with quickness, "and take care of the poor child;—bid her not think me unkind; tell her I would at this moment plunge a dagger in my heart to serve her,—but she has set my brain on fire, and I can see her no more!" Then, with a violence almost frantic, he ran up stairs.

Oh, Sir! had I not indeed cause to dread this interview?—an interview so unspeakably painful and afflicting to us both! Mrs. Selwyn would have immediately returned to Clifton; but I intreated her to wait sometime, in the hope that my unhappy father, when his first emotion was over, would again bear me in his sight: however, he soon after sent his servant to inquire how I did, and to tell Mrs. Selwyn he was much indisposed, but would hope for the honor of seeing her to-morrow, at any time she would please to appoint.

She fixed upon ten o'clock in the morning; and then, with a heavy heart, I got into the chariot. Those afflicting words, *I can see her no more*, were never a moment absent from my mind.

Yet the sight of Lord Orville, who handed us from the carriage, gave some relief to the sadness of my thoughts: I could not, however, enter upon the painful subject, but, begging Mrs. Selwyn to satisfy him, I went to my own room.

As soon as I communicated to the good Mrs. Clinton the present situation of my affairs, an idea occurred to her, which seemed to clear up all the mystery of my having been so long disowned.

The woman, she says, who attended my ever-to-be-regretted mother in her last illness, and who nursed me the first four months of my life, soon after being discharged from your house, left Berry Hill entirely, with her baby, who was but six weeks older than myself. Mrs. Clinton remembers that her quitting the place appeared, at the time, very extraordinary to the neighbours; but, as she was never heard of afterwards, she was by degrees quite forgotten.

The moment this was mentioned, it struck Mrs. Selwyn, as well as Mrs. Clinton herself, that my father had been imposed upon, and that the nurse, who said she had brought his child to him, had, in fact, carried her own.

The name by which I was known, the secrecy observed in regard to my family, and the retirement in which I lived, all conspired to render this scheme, however daring and fraudulent, by no means impracticable; and, in short, the idea was no sooner started, than conviction seemed to follow it.

Mrs. Selwyn determined immediately to discover the truth or mistake of this conjecture;

therefore, the moment she had dined, she walked to the Hotwells, attended by Mrs. Clinton.

I waited in my room till her return, and then heard the following account of her visit:

She found my poor father in great agitation. She immediately informed him of the occasion of her so speedy return, and of her suspicions of the woman who had pretended to convey to him his child. Interrupting her with quickness, he said he had just sent her from his presence;—that the certainty I carried in my countenance of my real birth made him, the moment he had recovered from a surprise which had almost deprived him of reason, suspect, himself, the imposition she mentioned:—he had, therefore, sent for the woman, and questioned her with the utmost austerity: she turned pale, and was extremely embarrassed, but still she persisted in affirming that she had really brought him the daughter of Lady Belmont. His perplexity, he said, almost distracted him; he had *always* observed that his daughter bore no resemblance to either of her parents; but, as he had never doubted the veracity of the nurse, this circumstance did not give birth to any suspicion.

At Mrs. Selwyn's desire, the woman was again called, and interrogated with equal art and severity; her confusion was evident, and her answers often contradictory; yet she still declared

she was no impostor. "We will see that in a minute," said Mrs. Selwyn, and then desired Mrs. Clinton might be called up stairs. The poor wretch, changing color, would have escaped out of the room, but, being prevented, dropped on her knees and implored forgiveness. A confession of the whole affair was then extorted from her.

Doubtless, my dear Sir, you must remember *Dame Green*, who was my first nurse. The deceit she has practised was suggested, she says, by a conversation she overheard, in which my unhappy mother besought you, that, if her child survived her, you would take the sole care of its education; and, in particular, if it should be a female, you would by no means part with her in early life. You not only consented, she says, but assured her you would even retire abroad with me yourself, if my father should importunately demand me. Her own child, she said, was then in her arms, and she could not forbear wishing it were possible to give *her* the fortune which seemed so little valued for me. This wish, once raised, was not easily suppressed; on the contrary, what at first appeared a mere idle desire, in a short time, seemed a feasible scheme. Her husband was dead, and she had little regard for any body but her child; and in short, having saved money for the journey,

she contrived to inquire a direction to my father, and, telling her neighbours she was going to settle in Devonshire, she set out on her expedition.

When Mrs. Selwyn asked her how she dared perpetrate such a fraud, she protested she had no ill designs; but that, as *Miss* would be never the worse for it, she thought it pity *nobody* should be the better.

Her success we are already acquainted with. Indeed every thing seemed to contribute towards it; my father had no correspondent at Berry Hill; the child was instantly sent to France, where, being brought up in as much retirement as myself, nothing but accident could discover the fraud.

And here, let me indulge myself in observing, and rejoicing to observe, that the total neglect I thought I met with was not the effect of insensibility or unkindness, but of imposition and error; and that, at the very time we concluded I was unnaturally rejected, my deluded father meant to show me most favor and protection.

He acknowledges that Lady Howard's letter flung him into some perplexity: he immediately communicated it to Dame Green, who confessed it was the greatest shock she had ever received in her life: yet she had the art and boldness to assert that Lady Howard must herself have

been deceived: and as she had, from the beginning of her enterprise, declared she had stolen away the child without your knowledge, he concluded that some deceit was *then* intended him; and this thought occasioned his abrupt answer.

Dame Green owned, that from the moment the journey to England was settled, she gave herself up for lost. All her hope was to have had her daughter married before it took place, for which reason she had so much promoted Mr. Macartney's addresses: for, though such a match was inadequate to the pretensions of *Miss Belmont*, she well knew it was far superior to those *her daughter* could form, after the discovery of her birth.

My first inquiry was, if this innocent daughter was yet acquainted with the affair? No, Mrs. Selwyn said, nor was any plan settled how to divulge it to her. Poor unfortunate girl!—how hard is her fate! She is entitled to my kindest offices, and I shall always consider her as my sister.

I then asked whether my father would again allow me to see him?

“Why, no, my dear, not yet,” answered she; “he declares the sight of you is too much for him: however, we are to settle every thing

concerning you to-morrow, for this woman took up all our time to-day."

This morning, therefore, she is again gone to the Hotwells. I am waiting in all impatience for her return; but as I know you will be anxious for the account this letter contains, I will not delay sending it.



LETTER XVIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Oct. 9th.

HOW agitated, my dear Sir, is the present life of your Evelina! every day seems important, and one event only a prelude to another.

Mrs. Selwyn, upon her return this morning from the Hotwells, entering my room very abruptly, said, "Oh my dear, I have terrible news for you!"

"For me, Ma'am!—Good God! what now?"

"Arm yourself," cried she, "with all your Berry-Hill philosophy;—con over every lesson of fortitude or resignation you ever learned in your life;—for know, you are next week to be married to Lord Orville!"

Doubt, astonishment, and a kind of perturbation I cannot describe, made this abrupt communication alarm me extremely, and, almost breathless, I could only exclaim, "Good God! Madam, what do you tell me?"

"You may well be frightened, my dear!" said

she, ironically, "for really there is something mighty terrific in becoming, at once, the wife of the man you adore,—and a Countess!"

I intreated her to spare her raillery, and tell me her real meaning. She could not prevail with herself to grant the *first* request, though she readily complied with the second.

My poor father, she said, was still in the utmost uneasiness. He entered upon his affairs with great openness, and told her he was equally disturbed how to dispose either of the daughter he had discovered, or the daughter he was now to give up; the former he dreaded to trust himself with again beholding, and the latter he knew not how to shock with the intelligence of her disgrace. Mrs. Selwyn then acquainted him with my situation in regard to Lord Orville; this delighted him extremely, and, when he heard of his Lordship's eagerness, he said he was himself of opinion the sooner the union took place the better: and, in return he informed her of the affair of Mr. Macartney. "And, after a very long conversation," continued Mrs. Selwyn, "we agreed, that the most eligible scheme for all parties would be to have both the real and the fictitious daughter married without delay. Therefore, if either of you have any inclination to pul caps for the title of Miss Belmont, you must do

it with all speed, as next week will take from both of you all pretensions to it."

"Next week!—dear Madam, what a strange plan!—without my being consulted—without applying to Mr. Villars,—without even the concurrence of Lord Orville!"

"As to consulting *you*, my dear, it was out of all question; because, you know, young ladies' hearts and hands are always to be given with reluctance;—as to Mr. Villars, it is sufficient we know him for your friend;—and as for Lord Orville, he is a party concerned."

"A party concerned!—you amaze me!"

"Why, yes; for, as I found our consultation likely to redound to his advantage, I persuaded Sir John to send for him."

"Send for him!—Good God!"

"Yes, and Sir John agreed. I told the servant, that if he could not hear of his Lordship in the house, he might be pretty certain of encountering him in the arbor.—Why do you color, my dear?—Well, he was with us in a moment; I introduced him to Sir John, and we proceeded to business."

"I am very, very sorry for it!—Lord Orville must, himself, think this conduct strangely precipitate."

"No, my dear, you are mistaken! Lord Orville has too much good sense. Every thing was

then discussed in a rational manner. You are to be married privately, though not secretly, and then go to one of his Lordship's country seats; and poor little Miss Green and your brother, who have no house of their own, must go to one of Sir John's."

"But why, my dear Madam! why all this haste? why may we not be allowed a little longer time?"

"I could give you a thousand reasons,"—answered she, "but that I am tolerably certain *two* or *three* will be more than you can controvert, even with all the logic of genuine coquetry. In the first place, you doubtless wish to quit the house of Mrs. Beaumont,—to whose, then, can you with such propriety remove, as to Lord Orville's?"

"Surely, Madam!" cried I, "I am not more destitute now, than when I thought myself an orphan?"

"Your father! my dear," answered she, "is willing to save the little impostor as much of the mortification of her disgrace as is in his power: now if you immediately take her place, according to your right, as Miss Belmont, why not all that either of you can do for her, will prevent her being eternally stigmatised, as the bantling of Dame Green, wash-woman and wet nurse of Berry Hill, Dorsetshire. Now such a genealogy

will not be very flattering, even to Mr. Macartney, who, all-dismal as he is, you will find by no means wanting in pride and self-consequence."

"For the universe," interrupted I, "I would not be accessory to the degradation you mention; but surely, Madam, I may return to Berry Hill?"

"By no means," said she; "for though compassion may make us wish to save the poor girl the confusion of an immediate and public fall, yet justice demands you should appear, henceforward, in no other light than that of Sir John Belmont's daughter. Besides, between friends, I, who know the world, can see that half this prodigious delicacy for the little usurper, is the mere result of self-interest; for, while *her* affairs are hushed up, Sir John's, you know, are kept from being brought further to light. Now the double marriage we have projected obviates all rational objections: Sir John will give you, immediately, thirty thousand pounds; all settlements, and so forth, will be made for you in the name of Evelina Belmont;—Mr. Macartney will, at the same time, take poor Polly Green; and yet, at first, it will only be generally known that *a daughter of Sir John Belmont's* is married."

In this manner, though she did not convince me, yet the quickness of her arguments silenced and perplexed me.—I inquired, however, if

I might not be permitted to again see my father, or whether I must regard myself as banished his presence for ever?

“ My dear,” said she, “ he does not know you; he concludes that you have been brought up to detest him, and therefore he is rather prepared to dread than to love you.”

This answer made me very unhappy; I wished most impatiently to remove his prejudice, and endeavour by dutiful assiduity to engage his kindness, yet knew not how to propose seeing him, while conscious he wished to avoid me.

This evening, as soon as the company was engaged with cards, Lord Orville exerted his utmost eloquence to reconcile me to this hasty plan: but how was I startled, when he told me that next *Tuesday* was the day appointed by my father to be the most important of my life!

“ Next Tuesday!” repeated I, quite out of breath, “ Oh, my Lord!—”

“ My sweet Evelina!” said he, “ the day which will make me the happiest of mortals would probably appear awful to you, were it to be deferred a twelvemonth: Mrs. Selwyn has, doubtless, acquainted you with the many motives which, independent of my eagerness, require it to be speedy; suffer, therefore, its acceleration, and generously complete my felicity by endeavouring to suffer it without repugnance.”

“ Indeed, my Lord! I would not wilfully raise objections, nor do I desire to appear insensible of the honor of your good opinion;— but there is something in this plan, so very hasty, — so unreasonably precipitate;— besides, I shall have no time to hear from Berry Hill,— and believe me, my Lord, I should be for ever miserable, were I, in an affair so important, to act without the sanction of Mr. Villars’ advice.”

He offered to wait on you himself; but I told him I had rather write to you: and then he proposed, that, instead of my immediately accompanying him to Lincolnshire, we should first pass a month *at my native Berry Hill*.

This was, indeed, a grateful proposal to me; and I listened to it with undisguised pleasure: and,—in short, I was obliged to consent to a compromise, in merely deferring the day till Thursday! He readily undertook to engage my father’s concurrence in this little delay, and I besought him, at the same time, to make use of his influence to obtain me a second interview, and to represent the deep concern I felt in being thus banished his sight.

He would then have spoken of *settlements*, but I assured him I was almost ignorant even of the word.

And now, my dearest Sir! what is your opinion of these hasty proceedings? Believe me,

I half regret the simple facility with which I have suffered myself to be hurried into compliance, and, should you start but the smallest objection, I will yet insist upon being allowed more time.

I must now write a concise account of the state of my affairs to Howard Grove and to Madame Duval.

Adieu, dearest and most honored Sir! every thing, at present, depends upon your single decision; to which, though I yield in trembling, I yield implicitly.

LETTER XIX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Oct. 11th.

YESTERDAY morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Lord Orville went to the Hotwells, to wait upon my father with my double petition.

Mrs. Beaumont then, in general terms, proposed a walk in the garden; Mrs. Selwyn said she had letters to write, but Lady Louisa arose to accompany her.

I had had some reason to imagine, from the notice with which her Ladyship had honored me during breakfast, that her brother had acquainted her with my present situation; and her behaviour now confirmed my conjecture: for, when I would have gone up stairs, instead of suffering me, as usual, to pass disregarded, she called after me with an affected surprise, — “Miss Anville, don't you walk with us?”

There seemed something so little-minded in this sudden change of conduct, that, from an

involuntary motion of contempt, I thanked her with a coldness like her own, and declined her offer. Yet, observing that she blushed extremely at my refusal, and recollecting she was sister to Lord Orville, my indignation subsided, and, upon Mrs. Beaumont's repeating the invitation, I accepted it.

Our walk proved extremely dull; Mrs. Beaumont, who never says much, was more silent than usual; Lady Louisa strove in vain to lay aside the restraint and distance she has hitherto preserved; and as to me, I was too conscious of the circumstances to which I owed their attention, to feel either pride or pleasure from receiving it.

Lord Orville was not long absent; he joined us in the garden with a look of gaiety and good-humor that revived us all. "You are just the party," said he, "I wished to see together. Will you, Madam," taking my hand, "allow me the honor of introducing you, by your real name, to two of my nearest relations? Mrs. Beaumont, give me leave to present to you the daughter of Sir John Belmont; a young lady who, I am sure, must long since have engaged your esteem and admiration, though you were a stranger to her birth."

"My Lord," said Mrs. Beaumont, graciously saluting me, "the young lady's rank in life,

your Lordship's recommendation, or her own merit, would any one of them have been sufficient to have entitled her to my regard; and I hope she has always met with that respect in my house which is so much her due; though, had I been sooner made acquainted with her family, I should, doubtless, have better known how to have secured it."

"Miss Belmont," said Lord Orville, "can receive no lustre from family, whatever she may give to it.—Louisa, you will, I am sure, be happy to make yourself an interest in the friendship of Miss Belmont, whom I hope shortly," kissing my hand, and joining it with her Ladyship's, "to have the happiness of presenting to you by yet another name, and by the most endearing of all titles."

I believe it would be difficult to say whose cheeks were, at that moment, of the deepest dye, —Lady Louisa's or my own; for the conscious pride, with which she has hitherto slighted me, gave to her an embarrassment which equalled the confusion that an introduction so unexpected gave to me. She saluted me, however, and, with a faint smile, said, "I shall esteem myself very happy to profit by the honor of Miss Belmont's acquaintance."

I only curtsied, and we walked on; but it was evident, from the little surprise they ex-

pressed, that they had been already informed of the state of the affair.

We were, soon after, joined by more company: and Lord Orville then, in a low voice, took an opportunity to tell me the success of his visit. In the first place, Thursday was agreed to; and, in the second, my father, he said, was much concerned to hear of my uneasiness, sent me his blessing, and complied with my request of seeing him with the same readiness he should agree to any other I could make. Lord Orville, therefore, settled that I should wait upon him in the evening; and, at his particular request, unaccompanied by Mrs. Selwyn.

This kind message, and the prospect of so soon seeing him, gave me sensations of mixed pleasure and pain, which wholly occupied my mind till the time of my going to the Hotwells.

Mrs. Beaumont lent me her chariot, and Lord Orville absolutely insisted upon attending me. "If you go alone," said he, "Mrs. Selwyn will certainly be offended; but, if you allow me to conduct you, though she may give the freer scope to her raillery, she cannot possibly be affronted; and we had much better suffer her laughter than provoke her satire."

Indeed, I must own I had no reason to regret being so accompanied; for his conversation supported my spirits from drooping, and made the

ride seem so short, that we actually stopped at my father's door before I knew we had proceeded ten yards.

He handed me from the carriage, and conducted me to the parlour, at the door of which I was met by Mr. Macartney. "Ah, my dear brother!" cried I, "how happy am I to see you here!"

He bowed and thanked me. Lord Orville then, holding out his hand, said, "Mr. Macartney, I hope we shall be better acquainted!—I promise myself much pleasure from cultivating your friendship."

"Your Lordship does me but too much honor," answered Mr. Macartney.

"But where," cried I, "is my sister? for so I must already call and always consider her:—I am afraid she avoids me;—you must endeavour, my dear brother, to prepossess her in my favor, and reconcile her to owning me."

"Oh, Madam!" cried he, "you are all goodness and benevolence! but at present I hope you will excuse her, for I fear she has hardly fortitude sufficient to see you: in a short time, perhaps—"

"In a *very* short time, then," said Lord Orville, "I hope you will yourself introduce her, and that we shall have the pleasure of wishing you both joy: allow me, my Evelina, to say *we*,

and permit me, in your name as well as my own, to intreat that the first guests we shall have the happiness of receiving may be Mr. and Mrs. Macartney."

A servant then came to beg I would walk up stairs.

I besought Lord Orville to accompany me ; but he feared the displeasure of Sir John, who had desired to see me alone. He led me, however, to the foot of the stairs, and made the kindest efforts to give me courage ; but indeed he did not succeed, for the interview appeared to me in all its terrors, and left me no feeling but apprehension.

The moment I reached the landing-place, the drawing-room door was opened, and my father, with a voice of kindness, called out, " My child, is it you ? "

" Yes, Sir ! " cried I, springing forward, and kneeling at his feet, " it is your child, if you will own her ! "

He knelt by my side, and folding me in his arms, " Own thee ! " repeated he, " yes, my poor girl, and heaven knows with what bitter contrition ! " Then raising both himself and me, he brought me into the drawing-room, shut the door, and took me to the window, where, looking at me with great earnestness, " Poor unhappy Caroline ! " cried he, and, to my inexpressible

concern, he burst into tears. Need I tell you, my dear Sir, how mine flowed at the sight?

I would again have embraced his knees; but, hurrying from me, he flung himself upon a sofa, and, leaning his face on his arms, seemed, for some time, absorbed in bitterness of grief.

I ventured not to interrupt a sorrow I so much respected, but waited in silence, and at a distance, till he recovered from its violence: but then it seemed, in a moment, to give way to a kind of frantic fury; for, starting suddenly, with a sternness which at once surprised and frightened me. "Child!" cried he, "hast thou yet sufficiently humbled thy father?—if thou hast, be contented with this proof of my weakness, and no longer force thyself into my presence!"

Thunderstruck by a command so unexpected, I stood still and speechless, and doubted whether my own ears did not deceive me.

"Oh, go, go!" cried he, passionately, "in pity—in compassion!—if thou valuest my senses, leave me,—and for ever!"

"I will, I will!" cried I, greatly terrified; and I moved hastily towards the door: yet stopping when I reached it, and, almost involuntarily, dropping on my knees, "Vouchsafe," cried I, "oh, Sir! vouchsafe but once to bless your

daughter, and her sight shall never more offend you !”

“ Alas !” cried he, in a softened voice, “ I am not worthy to bless thee !—I am not worthy to call thee daughter !—I am not worthy that the fair light of heaven should visit my eyes !—Oh, God ! that I could but call back the time ere thou wast born, — or else bury its remembrance in eternal oblivion !”

“ Would to heaven,” cried I, “ that the sight of me were less terrible to you ! that, instead of irritating, I could soothe your sorrows !—Oh, Sir ! how thankfully would I then prove my duty, even at the hazard of my life !”

“ Are you so kind ?” cried he, gently ; “ come hither, child !—rise, Evelina !—alas, it is for *me* to kneel, not you !—and I *would* kneel—I would crawl upon the earth—I would kiss the dust—could I, by such submission, obtain the forgiveness of the representative of the most injured of women !”

“ Oh, Sir !” exclaimed I, “ that you could but read my heart !—that you could but see the filial tenderness and concern with which it overflows !—you would not then talk thus—you would not then banish me your presence, and exclude me from your affection !”

“ Good God !” cried he, “ is it, then, possible that you do not hate me ?—Can the child of the

wronged Caroline look at,—and not execrate me? —Wast thou not born to *abhor* and bred to *curse* me? did not thy mother bequeath thee her blessing on condition that thou shouldst detest and avoid me!”

“Oh, no—no—no!” cried I, “think not so unkindly of *her*, nor so hardly of *me*.” I then took from my pocket-book her last letter, and, pressing it to my lips, with a trembling hand, and still upon my knees, I held out it to him.

Hastily snatching it from me, “Great heaven!” cried he, “’tis her writing! — Whence comes this? who gave it you? why had I not it sooner?”

I made no answer; his vehemence intimidated me, and I ventured not to move from the suppliant posture in which I had put myself.

He went from me to the window, where his eyes were for some time rivetted upon the direction of the letter, though his hand shook so violently he could hardly hold it. Then, bringing it to me, “Open it,” — cried he, — “for I cannot!”

I had, myself, hardly strength to obey him; but, when I had, he took it back, and walked hastily up and down the room, as if dreading to read it: at length, turning to me, “Do you know,” cried he, “its contents?”

“No, Sir!” answered I, “it has never been unsealed.”

He then again went to the window, and began reading. Having hastily run it over, he cast up his eyes with a look of desperation; the letter fell from his hand, and he exclaimed, "Yes! thou art sainted! — thou art blessed! — and I am cursed for ever!" He continued some time fixed in this melancholy position; after which, casting himself with violence upon the ground, "Oh, wretch!" cried he, "unworthy life and light, in what dungeon canst thou hide thy head?"

I could restrain myself no longer! I rose and went to him; I did not dare speak, but, with pity and concern unutterable, I wept and hung over him.

Soon after, starting up, he again seized the letter, exclaiming, "Acknowledge thee, Caroline! — yes, with my heart's best blood would I acknowledge thee! — Oh, that thou couldst witness the agony of my soul! — Ten thousand daggers could not have wounded me like this letter!"

Then, after again reading it, "Evelina!" he cried, "she charges me to receive thee; — wilt thou, in obedience to her will, own for thy father the destroyer of thy mother?"

What a dreadful question! — I shuddered, but could not speak.

"To clear her fame, and receive her child,"

continued he, looking stedfastly at the letter, "are the conditions upon which she leaves me her forgiveness: her fame, I have already cleared;—and oh, how willingly would I take her child to my bosom,—fold her to my heart,—call upon her to mitigate my anguish, and pour the balm of comfort on my wounds; were I not conscious I deserve not to receive it, and that all my affliction is the result of my own guilt!"

It was in vain I attempted to speak;—horror and grief took from me all power of utterance.

He then read aloud from the letter, "*Look not like thy unfortunate mother!*—Sweet soul! with what bitterness of spirit hast thou written!—Come hither, Evelina!—Gracious heaven!" looking earnestly at me, "never was likeness more striking!—the eye—the face—the form!—Oh, my child, my child!" Imagine, Sir,—for I can never describe my feelings, when I saw him sink upon his knees before me!—"Oh, dear resemblance of thy murdered mother!—oh, all that remains of the most injured of women! behold thy father at thy feet!—bending thus lowly to implore you would not hate him;—oh, then, thou representative of my departed wife, speak to me in her name, and say that the remorse which tears my soul tortures me not in vain!"

“ Oh, rise, rise, my beloved father!” cried I, attempting to assist him, “ I cannot bear to see you thus;—reverse not the law of nature; rise yourself, and bless your kneeling daughter!”

“ May heaven bless thee, my child!—” cried he, “ for *I* dare not.” He then rose, and embracing me most affectionately, added, “ I see, I see that thou art all kindness, softness, and tenderness; I need not have feared thee; thou art all the fondest father could wish, and I will try to frame my mind to less painful sensations at thy sight. Perhaps the time may come when I may know the comfort of such a daughter,—at present, I am only fit to be alone: dreadful as are my reflections, they ought merely to torment myself.—Adieu, my child!—be not angry,—I cannot stay with thee!—Oh Evelina! thy countenance is a dagger to my heart!—just so thy mother looked,—just so—”

Tears and sighs seemed to choke him!—and waving his hand, he would have left me,—but, clinging to him, “ Oh, Sir!” cried I, “ will you so soon abandon me?—am I again an orphan?—oh, my dear, my long-lost father, leave me not, I beseech you! take pity on your child, and rob her not of the parent she so fondly hoped would cherish her!”

“ You know not what you ask,” cried he; “ the emotions which now rend my soul are

more than my reason can endure: suffer me, then, to leave you,—impute it not to unkindness, but think of me as well as thou canst.—Lord Orville has behaved nobly;—I believe he will make thee happy.” Then again embracing me, “God bless thee, my dear child!” cried he, “God bless thee, my Evelina!—endeavour to love—at least not to hate me,—and to make me an interest in thy filial bosom by thinking of me as thy father.”

I could not speak; I kissed his hands on my knees; and then, with yet more emotion, he again blessed me, and hurried out of the room, —leaving me almost drowned in tears.

Oh, Sir! all goodness as you are, how much will you feel for your Evelina, during a scene of such agitation! I pray heaven to accept the tribute of his remorse, and restore him to tranquillity!

When I was sufficiently composed to return to the parlour, I found Lord Orville waiting for me with the utmost anxiety:—and then a new scene of emotion, though of a far different nature, awaited me; for I learned, by Mr. Martney, that this noblest of men had insisted the so long-supposed Miss Belmont should be considered *indeed* as my sister, and as the co-heiress of my father!—though not in *law*, in *justice*,

he says, she ought ever to be treated as the daughter of Sir John Belmont.

Oh, Lord Orville!—it shall be the sole study of my happy life to express, better than by words, the sense I have of your exalted benevolence and greatness of mind!

LETTER XX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Clifton, Oct. 12th.

THIS morning, early, I received the following letter from Sir Clement Willoughby.

TO MISS ANVILLE.

“ I HAVE this moment received intelligence that preparations are actually making for your marriage with Lord Orville.

“ Imagine not that I write with the imbecile idea of rendering those preparations abortive: no, I am not so mad. My sole view is to explain the motive of my conduct in a particular instance, and to obviate the accusation of treachery which may be laid to my charge.

“ My unguarded behaviour when I last saw you has, probably, already acquainted you that the letter I then saw you reading was written

by myself: for your further satisfaction, let me have the honor of informing you that the letter you had designed for Lord Orville had fallen into my hands.

“ However I may have been urged on by a passion the most violent that ever warmed the heart of man, I can by no means calmly submit to be stigmatised for an action seemingly so dishonorable; and it is for this reason that I trouble you with my justification.

“ Lord Orville—the happy Orville, whom you are so ready to bless—had made me believe he loved you not;—nay, that he held you in contempt.

“ Such were my thoughts of his sentiments of you, when I got possession of the letter you meant to send him; I pretend not to vindicate either the means I used to obtain it, or the action of breaking the seal;—but I was impelled by an impetuous curiosity to discover the terms upon which you wrote to him.

“ The letter, however, was wholly unintelligible to me, and the perusal of it only added to my perplexity.

“ A tame suspense I was not born to endure, and I determined to clear my doubts at all hazards and events;—I answered it, therefore, in Orville’s name.

“ The views, which I am now going to

acknowledge, must infallibly incur your displeasure;—yet I scorn all palliation.

“ Briefly, then,—I concealed your letter to prevent a discovery of your capacity;—and I wrote you an answer which I hoped would prevent your wishing for any other.

“ I am well aware of every thing which can be said upon this subject. Lord Orville will possibly think himself ill used;—but I am extremely indifferent as to his opinion; nor do I now write by way of offering any apology to him, but merely to make known to yourself the reasons by which I have been governed.

“ I intend to set off next week for the Continent. Should his Lordship have any commands for me in the mean time, I shall be glad to receive them. I say not this by way of defiance,—I should blush to be suspected of so doing through an indirect channel,—but simply that, if you show him this letter, he may know I dare defend as well as excuse my conduct.

“ CLEMENT WILLOUGHBY.”

What a strange letter!—how proud and how piqued does its writer appear! To what alternate *meanness* and *rashness* do the passions lead, when reason and self-denial do not oppose them!

Sir Clement is conscious he has acted dishonorably; yet the same unbridled vehemence, which urged him to gratify a blameable curiosity, will sooner prompt him to risk his life than confess his misconduct. The rudeness of his manner of writing to me springs from the same cause: the proof he has received of my indifference to him has stung him to the soul, and he has neither the delicacy nor forbearance to disguise his displeasure.

I determined not to show this letter to Lord Orville, and thought it most prudent to let Sir Clement know I should not. I therefore wrote the following note.

TO SIR CLEMENT WILLOUGHBY.

“ SIR,

“ THE letter you have been pleased to address to me is so little calculated to afford Lord Orville any satisfaction, that you may depend upon my carefully keeping it from his sight. I will bear you no resentment for what is past; but I most earnestly intreat, nay implore, that you will not write again, while in your present frame of mind, by *any* channel, direct or indirect.

“ I hope you will have much pleasure in your

proposed expedition, and I beg leave to assure you of my good wishes."

Not knowing by what name to sign, I was obliged to send it without any.

The *preparations*, which Sir Clement mentions, go on just as if your consent were arrived:—it is in vain that I expostulate; Lord Orville says, should any objections be raised, all shall be given up; but that, as his hopes forbid him to expect any, he must proceed as if already assured of your concurrence.

We have had, this afternoon, a most interesting conversation, in which we have traced our sentiments of each other from our first acquaintance. I have made him confess how ill he thought of me, upon my foolish giddiness at Mrs. Stanley's ball; but he flatters me with assurances, that, every succeeding time he saw me, I appeared something less and less to disadvantage.

When I expressed my amazement that he could honor with his choice a girl who seemed so infinitely, in every respect, beneath his alliance,—he frankly owned, that he had fully intended making more minute inquiries into my family and connexions, and particularly concerning those people he saw me with at Marybone, before he acknowledged his prepossession in my

favor: but the suddenness of my intended journey, and the uncertainty of seeing me again, put him quite off his guard, and, "divesting him of prudence, left him nothing but love." —These were his words; and yet he has repeatedly assured me that his partiality has known no bounds, from the time of my residing at Clifton.

* * * * *

Mr. Macartney has just been with me, on an embassy from my father: he has sent me his kindest love and assurances of favor, and desired to know if I am happy in the prospect of changing my situation, and if there is any thing I can name which he can do for me; and, at the same time, Mr. Macartney delivered to me a draught on my father's banker for a thousand pounds, which he insisted that I should receive entirely for my own use, and expend in equipping myself properly for the new rank of life to which I seem destined.

I am sure I need not say how much I was penetrated by this goodness; I wrote my thanks, and acknowledged frankly, that, if I could see him restored to tranquillity, my heart would be without a wish.

LETTER XXI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Clifton, Oct. 13th.

THE time approaches now, when I hope we shall meet,—yet I cannot sleep,—great joy is as restless as sorrow,—and therefore I will continue my journal.

As I had never had an opportunity of seeing Bath, a party was formed last night for showing me that celebrated city; and this morning, after breakfast, we set out in three phaetons. Lady Louisa and Mrs. Beaumont with Lord Merton; Mr. Coverley with Mr. Lovel; and Mrs. Selwyn and myself with Lord Orville.

We had hardly proceeded half a mile, when a gentleman from a postchaise, which came galloping after us, called out to the servants,—“Holla, my lads!—pray is one Miss Arville in any of them thing’embobs?”

I immediately recollected the voice of Captain Mirvan, and Lord Orville stopped the phaeton: he was out of the chaise and with us in a moment.

“So, Miss Anville,” cried he, “how do you do; so I hear you’re Miss Belmont now;—pray how does old Madame French do?”

“Madame Duval,” said I, “is, I believe, very well.”

“I hope she is in *good case*,” said he, winking significantly, “and won’t flinch at seeing service; she has laid-by long enough to refit and be made tight. And pray how does poor *Monseer Doleful* do? is he as lank-jawed as ever?”

“They are neither of them,” said I, “in Bristol.”

“No!” cried he, with a look of disappointment, “but surely the old dowager intends coming to the wedding! ’twill be a most excellent opportunity to show off her best Lyons silk;—besides, I purpose to dance a new-fashioned jig with her. Don’t you know when she’ll come?”

“I have no reason to expect her at all.”

“No!—’Fore George! this here’s the worst news I’d wish to hear!—why I’ve thought of nothing all the way but what trick I should serve her!”

“You have been very obliging!” said I, laughing.

“Oh, I promise you,” cried he, “our Moll would never have wheedled me into this jaunt, if I’d known she was not here; for, to let you into the secret, I fully intended to have treated the old buck with another frolic.”

“ Did Miss Mirvan, then, persuade you to this journey?”

“ Yes, and we’ve been travelling all night.”

“ We!” cried I: “ Is Miss Mirvan, then, with you?”

“ What, Molly? — yes! she’s in that there chaise.”

“ Good God, Sir! why did not you tell me sooner?” cried I, and immediately, with Lord Orville’s assistance, I jumped out of the phaeton, and ran to the dear girl. Lord Orville opened the chaise-door, and I am sure I need not tell you what unfeigned joy accompanied our meeting.

We both begged we might not be parted during the ride, and Lord Orville was so good as to invite Captain Mirvan into his phaeton.

I think I was hardly ever more rejoiced than at this so seasonable visit from my dear Maria; who had no sooner heard the situation of my affairs, than with the assistance of Lady Howard and her kind mother, she besought her father with such earnestness to consent to the journey, that he had not been able to withstand their united intreaties; though she owned that, had he not expected to have met with Madame Duval, she believes he would not so readily have yielded. They arrived at Mrs. Beaumont’s but a few minutes after we were out of sight, and overtook us without much difficulty.

I say nothing of our conversation, because you may so well suppose both the subjects we chose and our manner of discussing them.

We all stopped at a great hotel, where we were obliged to inquire for a room, as Lady Louisa, *fatigued to death*, desired to *take something* before we began our rambles.

As soon as the party was assembled, the Captain, abruptly saluting me, said, "So, Miss Belmont, I wish you joy! so I hear you've quarrelled with your new name already?"

"Me!—no, indeed, Sir!"

"Then please for to tell me the reason you're in such a hurry to change it."

"Miss Belmont!" cried Mr. Lovel, looking around him with the utmost astonishment, "I beg pardon,—but, if it is not impertinent,—I must beg leave to say, I always understood that lady's name was Anville."

"'Fore George!" cried the Captain, "it runs in my head I've seen you somewhere before!—and now I think on't, pray a'n't you the person I saw at the play one night, and who didn't know, all the time, whether it was a tragedy, or a comedy, or a concert of fiddlers?"

"I believe, Sir," said Mr. Lovel, stammering, "I had once,—I think—the pleasure of seeing you last spring."

"Aye!—and if I live an hundred springs,"

answered he, "I shall never forget it; by Jingo! it has served me for a most excellent good joke ever since. Well, howsomever, I'm glad to see you still in the land of the living," shaking him roughly by the hand; "pray, if a body may be so bold, how much a night may you give at present to keep the undertakers aloof?"

"Me, Sir!" said Mr. Lovel, very much discomposed; "I protest I never thought myself in such imminent danger as to—really, Sir, I don't understand you."

"Oh, you don't!—why then I'll make free for to explain myself. Gentlemen and ladies, I'll tell you what; do you know this here gentleman, simple as he sits there, pays five shillings a night to let his friends know he's alive!"

"And very cheap, too," said Mrs. Selwyn, "if we consider the value of the intelligence."

Lady Louisa being now refreshed, we proceeded upon our expedition.

The charming city of Bath answered all my expectations. The Crescent, the prospect from it, and the elegant symmetry of the Circus, delighted me. The Parades, I own, rather disappointed me; one of them is scarce preferable to some of the best paved streets in London; and the other, though it affords a beautiful prospect, a charming view of Prior Park and of the Avon, yet wanted something in *itself* of

more striking elegance than a mere broad pavement, to satisfy the ideas I had formed of it.

At the pump-room, I was amazed at the public exhibition of the ladies in the bath: it is true, their heads are covered with bonnets; but the very idea of being seen, in such a situation, by whoever pleases to look, is indelicate.

“ ’Fore George!” said the Captain, looking into the bath, “ this would be a most excellent place for old Madame French to dance a fandango in! By Jingo! I wouldn’t wish for better sport than to swing her round this here pond!”

“ She would be very much obliged to you,” said Lord Orville, “ for so extraordinary a mark of your favor.”

“ Why, to let you know,” answered the Captain, “ she hit my fancy mightily; I never took so much to an old tabby before.”

“ Really, now,” cried Mr. Lovel, looking also into the bath, “ I must confess it is, to me, very incomprehensible why the ladies choose that frightful unbecoming dress to bathe in! I have often pondered very seriously upon the subject, but could never hit upon the reason.”

“ Well, I declare,” said Lady Louisa, “ I should like of all things to set something new a going! I always hated bathing, because one can get no pretty dress for it; now do, there’s a good creature! try to help me to something.”

“ Who? me! — Oh, dear Ma’am,” said he, simpering, “ I can’t pretend to assist a person of your Ladyship’s taste; besides, I have not the least head for fashions.—I really don’t think I ever invented above three in my life!—but I never had the least turn for dress,—never any notion of fancy or elegance.”

“ O fie, Mr. Lovel! how can you talk so?—don’t we all know that you lead the *ton* in the *beau monde*? I declare, I think you dress better than any body!”

“ Oh, dear Ma’am! you confuse me to the last degree! *I* dress well! — I protest I don’t think I’m ever fit to be seen! — I’m often shocked to death to think what a figure I go. If your Ladyship will believe me, I was full half an hour this morning thinking what I should put on!”

“ Odds my life!” cried the Captain, “ I wish I’d been near you! I warrant I’d have quickened your motions a little! Half an hour thinking what you’d put on! and who the deuce, do you think, cares the snuff of a candle whether you’ve any thing on or not?”

“ Oh, pray, Captain!” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “ don’t be angry with the gentleman for *thinking*, whatever be the cause; for I assure you he makes no common practice of offending in that way.”

“ Really, Ma’am, you’re prodigiously kind!” said Mr. Lovel, angrily.

“ Pray, now,” said the Captain, “ did you ever get a ducking in that there place yourself?”

“ A ducking, Sir!” repeated Mr. Lovel; “ I protest I think that’s rather an odd term!—but if you mean a *bathing*, it is an honor I have had many times.”

“ And pray, if a body may be so bold, what do you do with that frizzle-frize top of your own? Why, I’ll lay you what you will, there is fat and grease enough on your crown to buoy you up, if you were to go in head downwards.”

“ And I don’t know,” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “ but that might be the easiest way; for I’m sure it would be the lightest.”

“ For the matter of that there,” said the Captain, “ you must make him a soldier, before you can tell which is lightest, head or heels. Howsoever, I’d lay ten pounds to a shilling, I could whisk him so dexterously over into the pool, that he should light plump upon his foretop, and turn round like a tetotum.”

“ Done!” cried Lord Merton; “ I take your odds!”

“ Will you?” returned he; “ why then, ’fore George! I’d do it as soon as say Jack Robinson.”

“ He, he!” faintly laughed Mr. Lovel, as he

moved abruptly from the window, "'pon honor, this is pleasant enough! but I don't see what right any body has to lay wagers about one, without one's consent."

"There, Lovel, you are out!" cried Mr. Coverley; "any man may lay what wager about you he will; your consent is nothing to the purpose: he may lay that your nose is a sky-blue, if he pleases."

"Aye," said Mrs. Selwyn, "or that your mind is more adorned than your person;—or any absurdity whatsoever."

"I protest," said Mr. Lovel, "I think it's a very disagreeable privilege; and I must beg that nobody may take such a liberty with *me*."

"Like enough you may!" cried the Captain; "but what's that to the purpose? Suppose I've a mind to lay that you've never a tooth in your head;—pray, how will you hinder me?"

"You'll allow me, at least, Sir, to take the liberty of asking how you'll *prove* it?"

"How?—why, by knocking them all down your throat."

"Knocking them all down my throat, Sir!" repeated Mr. Lovel, with a look of horror, "I protest I never heard any thing so shocking in my life; and I must beg leave to observe, that no wager, in my opinion, could justify such a barbarous action."

Here Lord Orville interfered, and hurried us to our carriages.

We returned in the same order we came. Mrs. Beaumont invited all the party to dinner, and has been so obliging as to beg Miss Mirvan may continue at her house during her stay. The Captain will lodge at the Wells.

The first half-hour after our return was devoted to hearing Mr. Lovel's apologies for dining in his riding-dress.

Mrs. Beaumont then, addressing herself to Miss Mirvan and me, inquired how we liked Bath?

"I hope," said Mr. Lovel, "the ladies do not call this *seeing Bath*."

"No?—what should ail 'em?" cried the Captain; "do you suppose they put their eyes in their pockets?"

"No, Sir; but I fancy you will find no person,—that is, no person of any condition,—call going about a few places in a morning *seeing Bath*."

"Mayhap, then," said the literal Captain, "you think we should see it better by going about at midnight?"

"No, Sir, no!" said Mr. Lovel, with a supercilious smile, "I perceive you don't understand me:—*we* should never call it *seeing Bath*, without going at the right season."

“Why, what a plague, then!” demanded he, “can you only see at one season of the year?”

Mr. Lovel again smiled; but seemed superior to making any answer.

“The Bath amusements,” said Lord Orville, “have a sameness in them, which, after a short time, renders them rather insipid: but the greatest objection that can be made to the place, is the encouragement it gives to gamesters.”

“Why, I hope, my Lord! you would not think of abolishing *gaming*,” cried Lord Merton; “’tis the very *zest* of life! Devil take me, if I could live without it!”

“I am sorry for it!”—said Lord Orville, gravely, and looking at Lady Louisa.

“Your Lordship is no judge of this subject,” continued the other;—“but if once we could get you to a gaming-table, you’d never be happy away from it.”

“I hope, my Lord,” cried Lady Louisa, “that nobody *here* ever occasions your quitting it.”

“Your Ladyship,” said Lord Merton, recollecting himself, “has power to make me quit any thing.”

“Except *herself*!” said Mr. Coverley. “Egad! my Lord, I think I’ve helped you out there.”

“You men of wit, Jack,” answered his Lord-

ship, "are always ready;—for my part, I don't pretend to any talents that way."

"Really, my Lord?" asked the sarcastic Mrs. Selwyn; "well, that is wonderful! considering success would be so much in your power."

"Pray, Ma'am," said Mr. Lovel to Lady Louisa, "has your Ladyship heard the news?"

"News!—what news?"

"Why, the report circulating at the Wells, concerning a certain person?"

"Oh, Lord! no; pray tell me what it is!"

"Oh, no, Ma'am! I beg your La'ship will excuse me; 'tis a profound secret, and I would not have mentioned it if I had not thought you knew it."

"Lord, now, how can you be so monstrous?—I declare, now, you're a provoking creature! But come, I know you'll tell me;—won't you, now?"

"Your La'ship knows I am but too happy to obey you; but 'pon honor I can't speak a word, if you won't all promise me the most inviolable secrecy."

"I wish you'd wait for that from me," said the Captain, "and I'll give you my word you'd be dumb for one while. Secresy, quoth-a!—'Fore George! I wonder you a'n't ashamed to mention such a word, when you talk of telling

it to a woman. Though, for the matter of that, I'd as lief blab it to the whole sex at once, as to go for to tell it to such a thing as you."

"Such a thing as me, 'Sir!" said Mr. Lovel, letting fall his knife and fork, and looking very important: "I really have not the honor to understand your expression."

"It's all one for that!" said the Captain; "you may have it explained whenever you like it."

"'Pon honor, Sir," returned Mr. Lovel, "I must take the liberty to tell you, that I should be extremely offended, but that I suppose it to be some sea-phrase; and therefore I'll let it pass without further notice."

Lord Orville, then, to change the discourse, asked Miss Mirvan if she should spend the ensuing winter in London?

"No, to be sure!" said the Captain, "what should she for? she saw all that was to be seen before."

"Is London, then," said Mr. Lovel, smiling at Lady Louisa, "only to be regarded as a *sight*?"

"Why, pray, Mr. Wiseacre, how are you pleased for to regard it yourself?—answer me to that."

"Oh, Sir! *my* opinion, I fancy, you would hardly find intelligible: I don't understand *sea-phrases* enough to define it to your satisfaction."

hension. Doesn't your La'ship think the task would be rather difficult?"

"O Lard, yes!" cried Lady Louisa; "I declare I'd as soon teach my parrot to talk Welch."

"Ha! ha! ha! admirable!—'Pon honor, your La'ship's quite in luck to-day;—but that, indeed, your La'ship is every day. Though, to be sure, it is but candid to acknowledge that the gentlemen of the ocean have a set of ideas, as well as a dialect, so opposite to *ours*, that it is by no means surprising *they* should regard London as a mere *show*, that may be seen by being *looked at*. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha!" echoed Lady Louisa: — "Well, I declare you are the drollest creature!"

"He! he! 'pon honor, I can't help laughing at the conceit of *seeing London* in a few weeks!"

"And what a plague should hinder you!" cried the Captain; "do you want to spend a day in every street?"

Here again Lady Louisa and Mr. Lovel interchanged smiles.

"Why, I warrant you, if I had the showing it, I'd haul you from St. James's to Wapping the very first morning."

The smiles were now with added contempt repeated; which the Captain observing, he looked very fiercely at Mr. Lovel, and said, "Hark'ee, my spark, none of your grinning!—'tis a lingo

I don't understand; and if you give me any more of it, I shall go near to lend you a box o' the ear."

"I protest, Sir!" said Mr. Lovel, turning extremely pale, "I think it's taking a very particular liberty with a person, to talk to one in such a style as this!"

"It's like you may," returned the Captain; "but give a good gulp, and I'll warrant you'll swallow it." Then, calling for a glass of ale, with a very provoking and significant nod, he drank to his easy digestion.

Mr. Lovel made no answer, but he looked extremely sullen: and soon after we left the gentlemen to themselves.

I had then two letters delivered to me; one from Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan, which contained the kindest congratulations; and the other from Madame Duval; but not a word from *you*—to my no small surprise and concern.

Madame Duval seems greatly rejoiced at my late intelligence: a violent cold, she says, prevents her coming to Bristol. The Branghtons, she tells me, are all well; Miss Polly is soon to be married to Mr. Brown, but Mr. Smith has changed his lodgings, "which," she adds, "has made the house extremely dull. However, that's not the worst news; *pardie*, I wish it was! but I've been used like nobody,--for M. Du Bois

has had the baseness to go back to France without me." In conclusion, she assures me, as you prognosticated she would, that I shall be sole heiress of all she is worth, when Lady Orville.

At tea time we were joined by all the gentlemen but Captain Mirvan, who went to the hotel where he was to sleep, and made his daughter accompany him, to separate her *trumpery*, as he called it, from his clothes.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Lovel, who still appeared extremely sulky, said, "I protest, I never saw such a vulgar, abusive fellow in my life, as that Captain: 'pon honor, I believe he came here for no purpose in the world but to pick a quarrel; however, for my part, I vow I won't humor him."

"I declare," cried Lady Louisa, "he put me in a monstrous fright,—I never heard any body talk so shocking in my life!"

"I think," said Mrs. Selwyn, with great solemnity, "he threatened to box your ears, Mr. Lovel,—did not he?"

"Really, Ma'am!" said Mr. Lovel, coloring, "if one was to mind every thing those low kind of people say, one should never be at rest for one impertinence or other,—so I think the best way is to be above taking any notice of them."

"What!" said Mrs. Selwyn, with the same gravity, "and so receive the blow in silence?"

During this discourse, I heard the Captain's chaise stop at the door, and ran down stairs to meet Maria. She was alone, and told me that her father, who, she was sure, had some scheme in agitation against Mr. Lovel, had sent her on before him. We continued in the parlour till his return, and were joined by Lord Orville, who begged me not to insist on a patience so unnatural as submitting to be excluded our society. And let me, my dear Sir!—with a grateful heart let me own, I never before passed half an hour in such perfect felicity.

I believe we were all sorry when the Captain returned; yet his inward satisfaction, from however different a cause, did not seem inferior to what ours had been. He chucked Maria under the chin, rubbed his hands, and was scarce able to contain the fulness of his glee. We all attended him to the drawing-room, where, having composed his countenance, without any previous attention to Mrs. Beaumont, he marched up to Mr. Lovel, and abruptly said, "Pray have you e'er a brother in these here parts?"

"Me, Sir?—no, thank heaven! I'm free from all incumbrances of that sort."

"Well!" cried the Captain, "I met a person just now, so like you, I could have sworn he had been your twin-brother."

"It would have been a most singular pleasure

to me," said Mr. Lovel, "if I also could have seen him; for, really, I have not the least notion what sort of a person I am, and I have a prodigious curiosity to know."

Just then, the Captain's servant opening the door, said, "A little gentleman below desires to see one Mr. Lovel."

"Beg him to walk up stairs," said Mrs. Beaumont. "But pray what is the reason William is out of the way?"

The man shut the door without any answer.

"I can't imagine who it is," said Mr. Lovel; "I recollect no little gentleman of my acquaintance now at Bristol,—except, indeed, the Marquis of Charlton,—but I don't much fancy it can be him. Let me see! who else is there so very little?"—

A confused noise among the servants now drew all eyes towards the door; the impatient Captain hastened to open it, and then, clapping his hands, call'd out, "'Fore George! 'tis the same person I took for your relation!"

And then, to the utter astonishment of every body but himself, he hauled into the room a monkey! full dressed, and extravagantly *à-la-mode!*

The dismay of the company was almost general. Poor Mr. Lovel seemed thunderstruck with indignation and surprise; Lady Louisa began a scream, which for some time was incessant;

Miss Mirvan and I jumped involuntarily upon the seats of our chairs; Mrs. Beaumont herself followed our example; Lord Orville placed himself before me as a guard; and Mrs. Selwyn, Lord Merton, and Mr. Coverley, burst into a loud, immoderate, ungovernable fit of laughter; in which they were joined by the Captain, till, unable to support himself, he rolled on the floor.

The first voice which made it's way through this general noise, was that of Lady Louisa, which her fright and screaming rendered extremely shrill. "Take it away!" cried she, "take the monster away!—I shall faint, I shall faint, if you don't!"

Mr. Lovel, irritated beyond endurance, angrily demanded of the Captain what he meant?

"Mean!" cried the Captain, as soon as he was able to speak, "why only to show you in your proper colors." Then rising, and pointing to the monkey, "Why now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'll be judged by you all!—Did you ever see any thing more like? Odds my life! if it wasn't for this here tail, you wouldn't know one from t'other."

"Sir," cried Mr. Lovel, stamping, "I shall take a time to make you feel my wrath."

"Come, now," continued the regardless Captain, "just for the fun's sake, doff your coat and waistcoat, and swop with Monsieur *Grin-*

again here, and I'll warrant you'll not know yourself which is which."

"Not know myself from a monkey!—I assure you, Sir, I'm not to be used in this manner; and I won't bear it,—curse me, if I will!"

"Why, heiday!" cried the Captain, "what is Master in a passion?—well, don't be angry!—come, he sha'n't hurt you!—here, shake a paw with him!—why, he'll do you no harm, man!—come, kiss and friends!"

"Who! I?" cried Mr. Lovel, almost mad with vexation, "as I'm a living creature, I would not touch him for a thousand worlds!"

"Send him a challenge," cried Mr. Coverley, "and I'll be your second."

"Ay, do," said the Captain, "and I'll be second to my friend Monsieur Clapperclaw here. Come, to it at once!—tooth and nail!"

"God forbid!" cried Mr. Lovel, retreating, "I would sooner trust my person with a mad bull!"

"I don't like the looks of him myself," said Lord Merton, "for he grins most horribly."

"Oh, I'm frightened out of my senses!" cried Lady Louisa, "take him away, or I shall die!"

"Captain," said Lord Orville, "the ladies are alarmed, and I must beg you would send the monkey away."

"Why, where can be the mighty harm of

one monkey more than another?" answered the Captain; "howsomever, if it's agreeable to the ladies, suppose we turn them out together?"

"What do you mean by that, Sir?" cried Mr. Lovel, lifting up his cane.

"What do you mean!" cried the Captain, fiercely: "be so good as to down with your cane."

Poor Mr. Lovel, too much intimidated to stand his ground, yet too much enraged to submit, turned hastily round, and, forgetful of consequences, vented his passion by giving a furious blow to the monkey.

The creature, darting forwards, sprang instantly upon him, and, clinging round his neck, fastened his teeth to one of his ears.

I was really sorry for the poor man, who, though an egregious fop, had committed no offence that merited such chastisement.

It was impossible now to distinguish whose screams were loudest, those of Mr. Lovel, or of the terrified Lady Louisa, who, I believe, thought her own turn was approaching: but the unrelenting Captain roared with joy.

Not so Lord Orville: ever humane, generous, and benevolent, he quitted his charge, who he saw was wholly out of danger, and, seizing the monkey by the collar, made him loosen the ear,

and then, with a sudden swing, flung him out of the room and shut the door.

Poor Mr. Lovel, almost fainting with terror, sunk upon the floor, crying out, "Oh, I shall die, I shall die!—Oh, I'm bit to death!"

"Captain Mirvan," said Mrs. Beaumont, with no little indignation, "I must own I don't perceive the wit of this action; and I am sorry to have such cruelty practised in my house."

"Why, Lord! Ma'am," said the Captain, when his rapture abated sufficiently for speech, "how could I tell they'd fall out so?—by Jingo! I brought him to be a messmate for t'other."

"Egad!" said Mr. Coverley, "I would not have been served so for a thousand pounds!"

"Why, then, there's the odds of it," said the Captain, "for you see he is served so for nothing. But come," turning to Mr. Lovel, "be of good heart, all may end well yet; and you and *Monseer* Longtail be as good friends as ever."

"I'm surprised, Mrs. Beaumont," cried Mr. Lovel, starting up, "that you can suffer a person under your roof to be treated so inhumanly."

"What argufies so many words?" said the unfeeling Captain, "it is but a slit of the ear; it only looks as if you had been in the pillory."

"Very true!" added Mrs. Selwyn, "and who

knows but it may acquire you the credit of being an anti-ministerial writer?"

"I protest," cried Mr. Lovel, looking ruefully at his dress, "my new riding-suit's all over blood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the Captain; "see what comes of studying for an hour what you shall put on."

Mr. Lovel then walked to the glass, and looking at the place, exclaimed, "Oh, heaven! what a monstrous wound! my ear will never be fit to be seen again!"

"Why, then," said the Captain, "you must hide it;—'tis but wearing a wig!"

"A wig!" repeated the affrighted Mr. Lovel, "I wear a wig!—no, not if you would give me a thousand pounds an hour!"

"I declare," said Lady Louisa, "I never heard such a shocking proposal in my life!"

Lord Orville then, seeing no prospect that the altercation would cease, proposed to the Captain to walk. He assented; and having given Mr. Lovel a nod of exultation, accompanied his Lordship down stairs.

"'Pon honor," said Mr. Lovel, the moment the door was shut, "that fellow is the greatest brute in nature! he ought not to be admitted into a civilised society."

"Lovel," said Mr. Coverley, affecting to whis-

per, "you must certainly pink him: you must not put up with such an affront."

"Sir," said Mr. Lovel, "with any common person, I should not deliberate an instant; but, really, with a fellow who has done nothing but fight all his life,—'pon honor, Sir, I can't think of it!"

"Lovel," said Lord Merton, in the same voice, "you must call him to account."

"Every man," said he, pettishly, "is the best judge of his own affairs, and I don't ask the honor of any person's advice."

"Egad, Lovel!" said Mr. Coverley, "you're in for it!—you can't possibly be off!"

"Sir," cried he, very impatiently, "upon any proper occasion, I should be as ready to show my courage as any body;—but as to fighting for such a trifle as this,—I protest I should blush to think of it!"

"A trifle!" cried Mrs. Selwyn; "good heaven! and have you made this astonishing riot about a trifle?"

"Ma'am," answered the poor wretch, in great confusion, "I did not know, at first, but that my cheek might have been bit:—but, as 'tis no worse, why it does not a great deal signify.—Mrs. Beaumont, I have the honor to wish you good evening! I'm sure my carriage must be waiting." And then, very abruptly, he left the room.

What a commotion has this mischief-loving Captain raised! Were I to remain here long, even the society of my dear Maria could scarce compensate for the disturbances which he excites.

When he returned, and heard of the quiet exit of Mr. Lovel, his triumph was intolerable. "I think, I think," cried he, "I have peppered him well! I'll warrant he won't give an hour to-morrow morning to settling what he shall put on! Why, his coat," turning to me, "would be a most excellent match for old Madame Fur-below's best Lyons silk!—'Fore George! I'd desire no better sport, than to have that there old cat here, to go her snacks!"

All the company then, Lord Orville, Miss Mirvan, and myself excepted, played at cards; and we—oh, how much better did we pass our time!

While we were engaged in a most delightful conversation, a servant brought me a letter, which he told me had by some accident been mislaid. Judge of my feelings, when I saw, my dearest Sir, your revered hand-writing! My emotion soon betrayed to Lord Orville whom the letter was from; the importance of the contents he well knew, and assuring me I should not be seen by the card-players, he besought me to open it without delay.

Open it, indeed, I did,—but read it I could not;—the willing, yet awful consent you have granted,—the tenderness of your expressions,—the certainty that no obstacle remained to my eternal union with the loved owner of my heart, gave me sensations too various, and, though joyful, too little placid for observation. Finding myself unable to proceed, and blinded by the tears of gratitude and delight which started into my eyes, I gave over the attempt of reading till I retired to my own room; and, having no voice to answer the inquiries of Lord Orville, I put the letter into his hands, and left it to speak both for me and itself.

Lord Orville was himself affected by your kindness; he kissed the letter as he returned it, and, pressing my hand affectionately to his heart, “You are now,” said he, in a low voice, “all my own! Oh, my Evelina! how will my soul find room for its happiness?—it seems already bursting!” I could make no reply; indeed, I hardly spoke another word the rest of the evening;—so little talkative is the fulness of contentment.

Oh, my dearest Sir! the thankfulness of my heart I must pour forth at our meeting, when, at your feet, my happiness receives its confirmation from your blessing, and when my noble-minded, my beloved Lord Orville presents

to you the highly-honored and thrice-happy Evelina.

A few lines I will endeavour to write on Thursday, which shall be sent off express, to give you, should nothing intervene, yet more certain assurance of our meeting.

Now then, therefore, for the first—and probably the last time I shall ever own the name, permit me to sign myself,

Most dear Sir,

Your gratefully affectionate,

EVELINA BELMONT.

Lady Louisa, at her own particular desire, will be present at the ceremony, as well as Miss Mirvan and Mrs. Selwyn: Mr. Macartney will, the same morning, be united to my foster-sister, and my father himself will give us both away.

LETTER XXII.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

EVERY wish of my soul is now fulfilled— for the felicity of my Evelina is equal to her worthiness!

Yes, my child! thy happiness is engraven in golden characters upon the tablets of my heart!—and their impression is indelible! for, should the rude and deep-searching hand of misfortune attempt to pluck them from their repository, the fleeting fabric of life would give way, and, in tearing from my vitals the nourishment by which they are supported, she would but grasp at a shadow insensible to her touch.

Give thee my consent?—Oh, thou joy, comfort, and pride of my life, how cold is that word to express the fervency of my approbation! yes, I do indeed give thee my consent, — and so thankfully, that, with the humblest gratitude to Providence, I would seal it with the remnant of my days.

Hasten, then, my love! to bless me with thy

presence, and to receive the blessings with which my fond heart overflows!—And, oh, my Evelina! hear and assist in one only, humble, but ardent prayer, which yet animates my devotions;—that the height of bliss to which thou art rising may not render thee giddy, but that the purity of thy mind may form the brightest splendor of thy prosperity!—and that the weak and aged frame of thy almost idolizing parent, nearly worn out by time, past afflictions, and infirmities, may yet be able to sustain a meeting with all its better part holds dear; and then, that all the wounds, which the former severity of fortune inflicted, may be healed and purified by the ultimate consolation of pouring forth my dying words in blessings on my child!—closing these joy-streaming eyes in her presence, and breathing my last faint sighs in her loved arms!

Grieve not, oh, child of my care! grieve not at the inevitable moment; but may thy own end be equally propitious! Oh, may'st thou, when full of days and full of honor, sink down as gently to rest,—be loved as kindly, watched as tenderly, as thy happy father!—and may'st thou, when thy glass is run, be sweetly but not bitterly mourned by some remaining darling of thy affections,—some yet surviving Evelina!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXIII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

ALL is over, my dearest Sir, and the fate of your Evelina is decided! This morning, with fearful joy and trembling gratitude, she united herself for ever with the object of her dearest, her eternal affection.

I have time for no more; the chaise now waits which is to conduct me to dear Berry Hill, and to the arms of the best of men.

EVELINA.

FINIS.

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