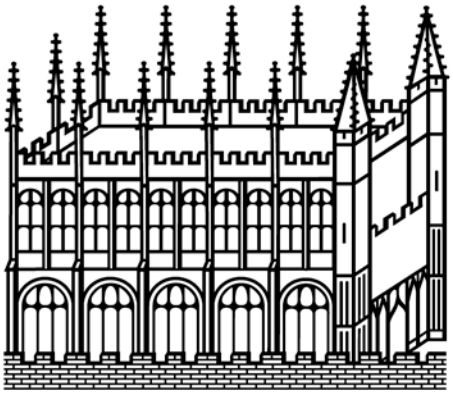

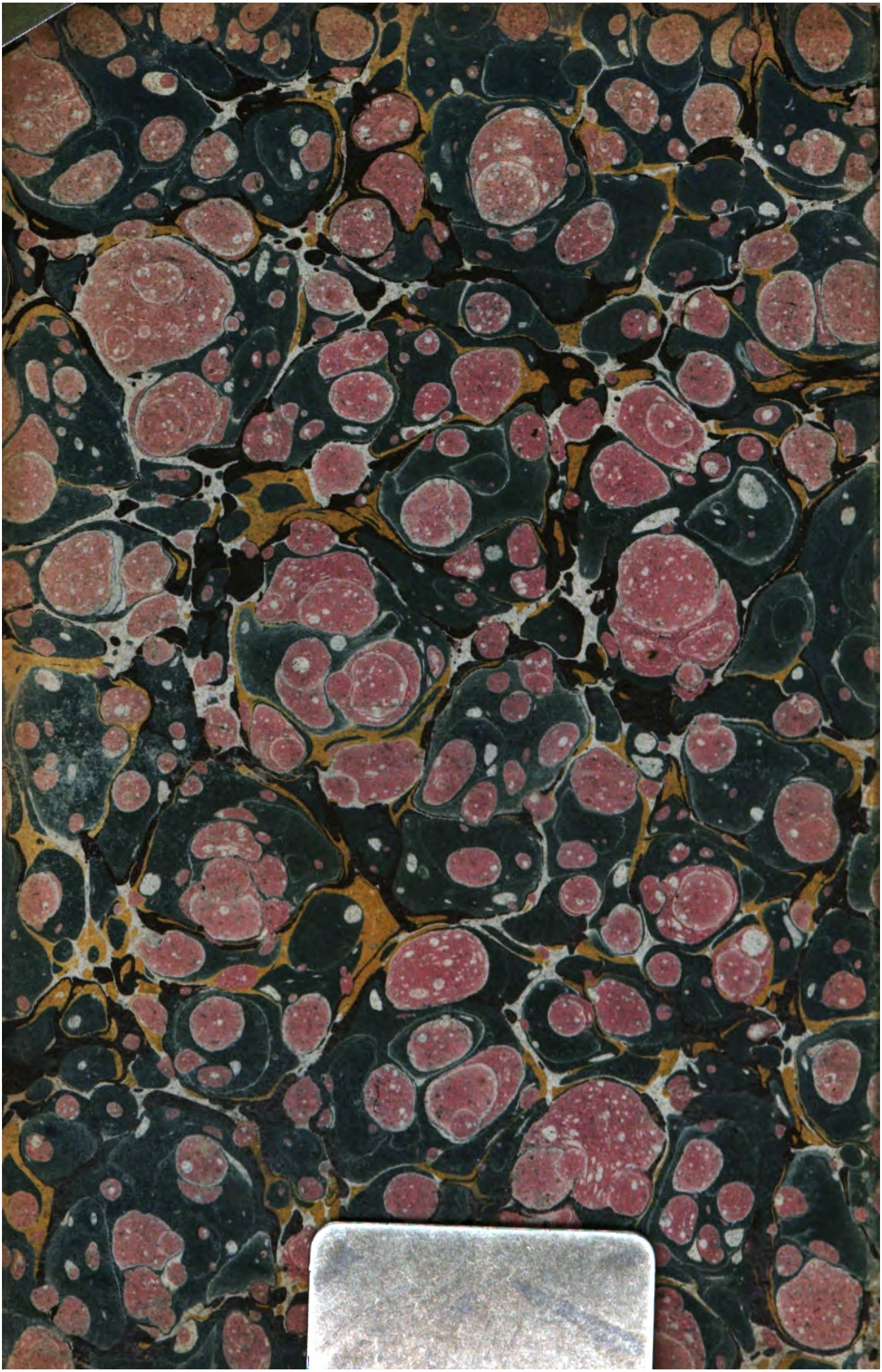

THE

BRITISH NOVELISTS;

WITH AN

ESSAY, AND PREFACES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY

MRS. BARBAULD.

A New Edition.

VOL. XXXVIII.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; W. LOWNDES; SCATCHERD AND LETTERMAN; J. NUNN; J. CUTHELL; JEFFERY AND SON; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME AND CO.; T. WILKIE; CADELL AND DAVIES; J. AND W. T. CLARKE; J. OTRIDGE; LACKINGTON AND CO.; S. BAGSTER; J. MURRAY; J. BOOKER; J. BLACK; BLACK AND CO.; J. RICHARDSON; J. M. RICHARDSON; R. SCHOLEY; J. MAWMAN; R. H. EVANS; A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.; J. ASPERNE; J. CARPENTER; J. BOOTH; W. GINGER; BALDWIN, CRADOCK AND JOY; T. HODGSON; J. BOHN; J. EBERS; SHERWOOD, NEELY AND JONES; G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER; SETCHELL AND SON; WHITMORE AND FENN; R. HUNTER; G COWIE AND CO.; R. SAUNDERS; T. AND J. ALLMAN; T. BOONE; C. BROWN; J. BRUMBY; EDWARDS AND CO.; T. HAMILTON; J. LEPARD; G. MACKIE; W. MASON; J. MILLER; OGLE, DUNCAN AND CO.; RODWELL AND MARTIN; HURST ROBINSON AND CO.; WILSON AND SONS, YORK; STERLING AND SLADE; AND FAIRBAIRN AND ANDERSON, EDINBURGH.

1820.

Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe Lane, London.

EVELINA;

OR

THE HISTORY

OF

A YOUNG LADY'S

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE WORLD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

MISS BURNEY.

SCARCELY any name, if any, stands higher in the list of novel-writers than that of Miss BURNEY, now Mrs. D'ARBLAY, daughter of the ingenious Dr. Burney. She has given to the world three productions of this kind: *Evelina*, in three vols.; *Cecilia*, in five vols.; and, after a long interval, in which, however honourable her employment might be deemed, she was completely lost to the literary world, *Camilla*, also in five vols. This latter was published by subscription in 1796.

It is necessary to speak of living authors with that temperance of praise which may not offend their delicacy; and though this lady by marriage with a foreigner, and her residence abroad, is in a manner lost to this her native country, the writer of these remarks does not feel herself at liberty to search for anecdotes which might gratify curiosity, or endeavour to detail the events of a life which every admirer of genius will wish prolonged to many succeeding years. One anecdote, however, may be mentioned, which is current, and she believes has never been contradicted. Miss Burney composed her *Evelina*

when she was in the early bloom of youth, about seventeen. She wrote it without the knowledge of any of her friends. With the modesty of a young woman, and the diffidence of a young author, she contrived to throw it into the press anonymously, and, when published, laid the volumes in the way of her friends, whose impartial plaudits soon encouraged her to confess to whom they were obliged for their entertainment. There is perhaps no purer or higher pleasure than the young mind enjoys in the first burst of praise and admiration which attends a successful performance. To be lifted up at once into the favourite of the public; to be sensible that the name, hitherto pronounced only in the circle of family connexions, is become familiar to all that read, through every province of a large kingdom; to feel in the glow of genius and freshness of invention powers to continue that admiration to future years;—to feel all this, and at the same time to be happily ignorant of all the chills and mortifications, the impossibility not to flag in a long work, the ridicule and censure which fasten on vulnerable parts, and the apathy or diffidence which generally seizes an author before his literary race is run;—this is happiness for youth, and youth alone.

Evelina became at once a fashionable novel: there are even those who still prefer it to *Cecilia*, though that preference is probably owing to the partiality inspired by a first performance. Evelina is a young lady, amiable and inexperienced, who is continually getting into difficulties from not knowing or not observing the established

etiquettes of society, and from being unluckily connected with a number of vulgar characters, by whom she is involved in a series of adventures both ludicrous and mortifying. Some of these are certainly carried to a very extravagant excess, particularly the tricks played upon the poor Frenchwoman; but the fondness for humour, and low humour, which Miss Burney discovered in this piece, runs through all her subsequent works, and strongly characterizes, sometimes perhaps blemishes, her genius. Lord Orville is a generous and pleasing lover; and the conclusion is so wrought, as to leave upon the mind that glow of happiness which is not found in her subsequent works. The meeting between Evelina and her father is pathetic. The agonizing remorse and perturbation of the man who is about to see, for the first time, his child whom he had deserted, and whose mother had fallen a sacrifice to his unkindness; the struggles between the affection which impels him towards her, and the dread he feels of seeing in her the image of his injured wife; are described with many touches of nature and strong effect.—Other characters in the piece are, Mrs. Selwyn, a wit and an oddity; a gay insolent baronet; a group of vulgar cits; a number of young bucks, whose coldness, carelessness, rudeness, and impertinent gallantry, serve as a foil to the delicate attentions of Lord Orville.

Upon the whole, *Evelina* greatly pleased; and the interest the public took in the young writer was rewarded with fresh pleasure by the publication of *Cecilia*, than which it would be diffi-

cult to find a novel with more various and striking beauties. Among these may be reckoned the style, which is so varied, according to the characters introduced, that, without any information from the names, the reader would readily distinguish the witty loquacity of Lady Honoria Pemberton, the unmeaning volubility of Miss Larolles, the jargon of the Captain, the affected indifference of Meadows, the stiff pomposity of Delvile senior, the flighty heroics of Albany, the innocent simplicity of Miss Belfield, the coarse vulgarity of her mother, the familiar address and low comic of Briggs, and the cool finesse of the artful attorney, with many others, —all expressed in language appropriate to the character, and all pointedly distinguished from the elegant and dignified style of the author herself. The character of the miser Briggs is pushed, perhaps, to a degree of extravagance, though certainly not more so than Moliere's Harpagon; but it is highly comic, and it is not the common idea of a miser half-starved, sullen and morose; an originality is given to it by making him jocose, good-humoured, and not averse to enjoyment when he can have it for nothing. All the characters are well discriminated, from the skipping Morrice, to the artful Monckton, and the high-toned feeling of Mrs. Delvile. The least natural character is Albany. An idea prevailed at the time, but probably without the least foundation, that Dr. Johnson had supplied the part.

Cecilia herself is an amiable and dignified character. She is brought into situations di-

stressful and humiliating, by the peculiarity of her circumstances, and a flexibility and easiness readily pardoned in a young female. The restriction she is laid under of not marrying any one who will not submit to assume her name is a new circumstance, and forms, very happily, the plot of the piece. Love appears with dignity in Cecilia; with fervour, but strongly combated by pride as well as duty, in young Delvile; with all the helplessness of unrestrained affection in Miss Belfield, whose character of simplicity and tenderness much resembles that of Emily in *Sir Charles Grandison*. If resemblances are sought for, it may also be observed that the situation of Cecilia with Mrs. Delvile is similar to that of Marivaux's Marianne with the mother of Valville.

Miss Burney possesses equal powers of pathos and of humour. The terrifying voice of the unknown person who forbids the banns has an electrifying effect upon the reader; and the distress of Cecilia seeking her husband about the streets, in agony for his life, till her reason suddenly fails, is almost too much to bear. Indeed we lay down the volumes with rather a melancholy impression upon our minds; there has been so much of distress that the heart feels exhausted, and there are so many deductions from the happiness of the lovers, that the reader is scarcely able to say whether the story ends happily or unhappily. It is true that in human life things are generally so balanced; but in fictitious writings it is more agreeable, if they are not

meant to end tragically, to leave on the mind the rainbow colours of delight in their full glow and beauty.

But the finest part of these volumes is the very moral and instructive story of the *Harrels*. It is the high praise of Miss Burney, that she has not contented herself with fostering the delicacies of sentiment, and painting in vivid colours those passions which nature has made sufficiently strong. She has shown the value of economy, the hard-heartedness of gaiety, the mean rapacity of the fashionable spendthrift. She has exhibited a couple, not naturally bad, with no other inlet to vice, that appears on the face of the story, than the inordinate desire of show and splendour, withholding his hard-earned pittance from the poor labourer, and lavishing it on every expensive trifle. She has shown the wife trifling and helpless, vain, incapable of serious thought or strong feeling; and has beautifully delineated the gradual extinction of an early friendship between two young women whom youth and cheerfulness alone had assimilated, as the two characters diverged in after-life,—a circumstance that frequently happens. She has shown the husband fleecing his guest and his ward by working on the virtuous feelings of a young mind, and has conducted him by natural steps to the awful catastrophe. The last scene at Vauxhall is uncommonly animated; every thing seems to pass before the reader's eyes. The forced gaiety, the starts of remorse, the despair, the bustle and glare of the place, the situation

of the unprotected females in such a scene of horror, are all most forcibly described. We almost hear and feel the report of the pistol.—In the uncommon variety of characters which this novel affords, there are many others deserving of notice; that, for instance, of the high-minded romantic Belfield may give a salutary lesson to many a youth who fancies his part in life *ill cast*, who wastes life in projects, and does nothing because he thinks every thing beneath his ambition and his talents.

Such are the various merits of *Cecilia*, through the whole of which it is evident that the author draws from life, and exhibits not only the passions of human nature, but the manners of the age and the affectation of the day.

The celebrity which Miss Burney had now attained awakened the idea of extending that patronage to her which, in most countries, it has been usual in one way or other to hold out to literary merit; and it was thought, we must presume, the most appropriate reward of her exertions, and the happiest method of fostering her genius, that she was made *dresser* to Her Majesty. She held this post for several years, during which the duties of her situation seem to have engrossed her whole time. Her state of health at length obliged her to resign it, and she was soon after married to M. D'Arblay, a French emigrant.

She now again resumed her pen, and gave to the world her third publication, entitled *Camilla*. This work is somewhat too much protracted,

and is inferior to *Cecilia* as a whole, but it certainly exhibits beauties of as high an order. The character of Sir Hugh is new and striking. There is such an unconscious shrewdness in his remarks, that they have all the effect of the sharpest satire without his intending any malice; while, at the same time, his complaints are so meek, his self-humiliation so touching, his benevolence so genuine and overflowing, that the reader must have a bad heart who does not love while he laughs at him. The incidents of the piece show much invention, particularly that which induces Sir Hugh to adopt Eugenia instead of his favourite. How charmingly is Camilla described! "Every look was a smile, every step was a spring, every thought was a hope, and the early felicity of her mind was without alloy."

Camilla, in the course of the work, falls, like Cecilia, into pecuniary difficulties. They are brought on partly by milliners' bills, which unawares and through the persuasion of others she has suffered to run up, but chiefly from being drawn in to assist an extravagant and unprincipled brother. The character of the brother, Lionel, is drawn with great truth and spirit, and presents but too just a picture of the manner in which many deserving females have been sacrificed to the worthless part of the family. The author appears to have viewed with a very discerning eye the manners of those young men who aspire to lead the fashion; and in all three of her novels has bestowed a good deal of her

satire upon the affected apathy, studied negligence, coarse slang, avowed selfishness, or mischievous frolic, by which they often distinguish themselves, and through which they contrive to be vulgar with the advantages of rank, mean with those of fortune, and disagreeable with those of youth.

A very original character in this work is that of Eugenia. Her surprise and sorrow when, at the age of fifteen, she first discovers her deformity, and her deep, gentle, dignified sorrow for the irremediable misfortune, it is impossible to peruse without sympathy; and in the incident which follows, when her father, after a discourse the most rational and soothing, brings her to the sight of a beautiful idiot, the scene is one of the most striking and sublimely moral any where to be met with.

As well as great beauties there are great faults in *Camilla*. It is blemished by the propensity which the author has shown in all her novels, betrayed into it by her love of humour, to involve her heroines not only in difficult but in degrading adventures. The mind may recover from distress, but not from disgrace; and the situations Camilla is continually placed in with the Dubsters and Mrs. Mittin are of a nature to degrade. Still more, the overwhelming circumstance of her father's being sent to prison for her debts, seems to preclude the possibility of her ever raising her head again. It conveys a striking lesson; and no doubt Mrs. D'Arblay, in her large acquaintance with life, must have often

seen the necessity of inculcating, even upon *young* ladies, the danger of running up bills on credit; but the distress becomes too deep, too humiliating, to admit of a happy conclusion. The mind has been harassed and worn with excess of painful feeling. At the conclusion of *Clarissa*, we are dismissed in calm and not unpleasing sorrow; but on the winding up of *Cecilia* and *Camilla* we are somewhat tantalized with imperfect happiness. It must be added, that the interest is more divided in *Camilla* than in the author's former work, and the adventures of Eugenia become at length too improbable.

Among the new characters in this piece is Mrs. Arlberry, a woman of fashion, with good sense and taste, but fond of frivolity through *désœuvrement*, and amusing herself with a little court about her of fashionable young men, whom she at the same time entertains and despises.

In short, Mrs. D'Arblay has observed human nature, both in high and low life, with the quick and penetrating eye of genius. Equally happy in seizing the ridiculous, and in entering into the finer feelings, her pictures of manners are just and interesting, and the highest value is given to them by the moral feelings they exercise, and the excellent principles they inculcate.

Mrs. D'Arblay lived some years after her marriage at a sweet retirement in the shade of Norbury park, in a house built under Mr. D'Arblay's direction, which went by the name of Camilla Lodge; but at the time when the greatest part of

the emigrants returned to their native country, she followed her husband to France, in which country she now resides.

A writer who has published three novels of so much merit may be allowed to repose her pen; yet the English public cannot but regret an expatriation which so much lessens the chance of their being again entertained by her.

TO

---- -----

Oh, Author of my being!—far more dear
To me than light, than nourishment, or rest,
Hygeia's blessings, Rapture's burning tear,
Or the life-blood that mantles in my breast!

If in my heart the love of Virtue glows,
'Twas planted there by an unerring rule;
From thy example the pure flame arose,
Thy life, my precept,—thy good works, my school.

Could my weak pow'rs thy num'rous virtues trace,
By filial love each fear should be repress'd;
The blush of Incapacity I'd chace,
And stand, Recorder of thy worth, confess'd:

But since my niggard stars that gift refuse,
Concealment is the only boon I claim;
Obscure be still the unsuccessful Muse,
Who cannot raise, but would not sink, thy fame.

Oh! of my life at once the source and joy!
If e'er thy eyes these feeble lines survey,
Let not their folly their intent destroy;
Accept the tribute—but forget the lay.

TO THE

AUTHORS

OF THE

MONTHLY AND CRITICAL REVIEWS.

GENTLEMEN,

THE liberty which I take in addressing to you the trifling production of a few idle hours, will doubtless move your wonder, and probably your contempt. I will not, however, with the futility of apologies, intrude upon your time, but briefly acknowledge the motives of my temerity; lest, by a premature exercise of that patience which I hope will befriend me, I should lessen its benevolence, and be accessary to my own condemnation.

Without name, without recommendation, and unknown alike to success and disgrace, to whom can I so properly apply for patronage, as to those who publicly profess themselves Inspectors of all literary performances?

The extensive plan of your critical observations, —which, not confined to works of utility or ingenuity, is equally open to those of frivolous amusement, —and, yet worse than frivolous, dullness—encourages me to seek for your protection, since,—perhaps for my sins!—it intitles me to your annotations. To resent, therefore, this offering, however insignificant, would ill become the universality of your undertaking; though not to despise it may, alas! be out of your power.

The language of adulation, and the incense of flattery, though the natural inheritance, and constant resource, from time immemorial, of the Dedicator, to me offer nothing but the wistful regret that I dare not invoke their aid. Sinister views would be imputed to all I could say; since, thus situated, to extol your judgment, would seem the effect of art, and to celebrate your impartiality, be attributed to suspecting it.

As Magistrates of the press, and Censors for the public,—to which you are bound by the sacred ties of integrity to exert the most spirited impartiality, and to which your suffrages should carry the marks of pure, dauntless, irrefragable truth—to appeal for your MERCY, were to solicit your dishonour; and therefore,—though 'tis sweeter than frankincense,—more grateful to the senses than all the odorous perfumes of Arabia,—and though—

It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath,——

I court it not! to your justice alone I am intitled, and by that I must abide. Your engagements are not to the supplicating authors; but to the candid public, which will not fail to crave

The penalty and forfeit of your bond.

No hackneyed writer, inured to abuse, and callous to criticism, here braves your severity;—neither does a half-starved garretteer,

Oblig'd by hunger—and request of friends,—

implore your lenity: your examination will be alike unbiassed by partiality and prejudice!—no refractory murmuring will follow your censure, no private interest be gratified by your praise.

Let not the anxious solicitude with which I recommend myself to your notice, expose me to your derision. Remember, Gentlemen, you were all young writers once, and the most experienced veteran of your corps may, by recollecting his first publication, renovate his first terrors, and learn to allow for mine. For though Courage is one of the noblest virtues of this nether sphere; and though scarcely more requisite in the field of battle, to guard the fighting hero from disgrace, than in the private commerce of the world, to ward off that littleness of soul, which leads, by steps imperceptible, to all the base train of the inferior passions, and by which the too timid mind is betrayed into a servility derogatory to the dignity

of human nature; yet is it a virtue of no necessity in a situation such as mine; a situation which removes even from cowardice itself, the sting of ignominy;—for surely that courage may easily be dispensed with, which would rather excite disgust than admiration! Indeed, it is the peculiar privilege of an author, to rob terror of contempt, and pusillanimity of reproach.

Here let me rest—and snatch myself, while I yet am able, from the fascination of EGOTISM:—a monster who has more votaries than ever did homage to the most popular deity of antiquity; and whose singular quality is, that while he excites a blind and involuntary adoration in almost every individual, his influence is universally disallowed, his power universally contemned, and his worship, even by his followers, never mentioned but with abhorrence.

In addressing you jointly, I mean but to mark the generous sentiments by which liberal criticism, to the utter annihilation of envy, jealousy, and all selfish views, ought to be distinguished.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

*** ****.

PREFACE.

In the republic of letters there is no member of such inferior rank, or who is so much disdained by his brethren of the quill, as the humble Novelist; nor is his fate less hard in the world at large, since, among the whole class of writers, perhaps not one can be named of which the votaries are more numerous but less respectable.

Yet, while in the annals of those few of our predecessors, to whom this species of writing is indebted for being saved from contempt, and rescued from depravity, we can trace such names as Rousseau, Johnson*, Marivaux, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, no man need blush at starting from the same post, though many, nay, most men, may sigh at finding themselves distanced.

The following letters are presented to the Public —for such by novel writers, novel readers will be called,—with a very singular mixture of timidity and confidence, resulting from the peculiar situation of

* However superior the capacities in which these great writers deserve to be considered, they must pardon me that, for the dignity of my subject, I here rank the authors of Rasselas and Eloise as Novelists.

the editor; who, though trembling for their success from a consciousness of their imperfections, yet fears not being involved in their disgrace, while happily wrapped up in a mantle of impenetrable obscurity.

To draw characters from nature, though not from life, and to mark the manners of the times, is the attempted plan of the following letters. For this purpose, a young female, educated in the most secluded retirement, makes, at the age of seventeen, her first appearance upon the great and busy stage of life; with a virtuous mind, a cultivated understanding, and a feeling heart, her ignorance of the forms, and inexperience in the manners of the world, occasion all the little incidents which these volumes record, and which form the natural progression of the life of a young woman of obscure birth, but conspicuous beauty, for the six months after her *Entrance into the world.*

Perhaps, were it possible to effect the total extirpation of novels, our young ladies in general, and boarding-school damsels in particular, might profit from their annihilation; but since the distemper they have spread seems incurable, since their contagion bids defiance to the medicine of advice or reprehension, and since they are found to baffle all the mental art of physic, save what is prescribed by the slow regimen of Time, and bitter diet of Experience; surely all attempts to contribute to the number of

those which may be read, if not with advantage, at least without injury, ought rather to be encouraged than contemned.

Let me, therefore, prepare for disappointment those who in the perusal of these sheets entertain the gentle expectation of being transported to the fantastic regions of Romance, where Fiction is coloured by all the gay tints of luxurious Imagination, where Reason is an outcast, and where the sublimity of the *Marvellous* rejects all aid from sober Probability. The heroine of these memoirs, young, artless, and inexperienced, is

> No faultless monster that the world ne'er saw;

but the offspring of Nature, and of Nature in her simplest attire.

In all the Arts, the value of copies can only be proportioned to the scarcity of originals: among sculptors and painters, a fine statue, or a beautiful picture, of some great master, may deservedly employ the imitative talents of young and inferior artists, that their appropriation to one spot may not wholly prevent the more general expansion of their excellence: but among authors, the reverse is the case, since the noblest productions of literature are almost equally attainable with the meanest. In books, therefore, imitation cannot be shunned too sedulously; for the very perfection of a model which is frequently seen, serves but more forcibly to mark the inferiority of a copy.

To avoid what is common, without adopting what is unnatural, must limit the ambition of the vulgar herd of authors: however zealous, therefore, my veneration of the great writers I have mentioned, however I may feel myself enlightened by the knowledge of Johnson, charmed with the eloquence of Rousseau, softened by the pathetic powers of Richardson, and exhilarated by the wit of Fielding and humour of Smollett; I yet presume not to attempt pursuing the same ground which they have tracked; whence, though they may have cleared the weeds, they have also culled the flowers; and, though they have rendered the path plain, they have left it barren.

The candour of my readers I have not the impertinence to doubt, and to their indulgence I am sensible I have no claim; I have, therefore, only to intreat, that my own words may not pronounce my condemnation; and that what I have here ventured to say in regard to imitation, may be understood as it is meant, in a general sense, and not to be imputed to an opinion of my own originality, which I have not the vanity, the folly, or the blindness, to entertain.

Whatever may be the fate of these letters, the editor is satisfied they will meet with justice; and commits them to the press, though hopeless of fame, yet not regardless of censure.

EVELINA.

LETTER I.

LADY HOWARD TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, Kent.

CAN any thing, my good Sir, be more painful to a friendly mind, than a necessity of communicating disagreeable intelligence? Indeed it is sometimes difficult to determine, whether the relator or the receiver of evil tidings is most to be pitied.

I have just had a letter from Madame Duval; she is totally at a loss in what manner to behave; she seems desirous to repair the wrongs she has done, yet wishes the world to believe her blameless. She would fain cast upon another the odium of those misfortunes for which she alone is answerable. Her letter is violent, sometimes abusive, and that of *you!* —*you*, to whom she is under obligations which are greater even than her faults, but to whose advice she wickedly imputes all the sufferings of her much injured daughter, the late Lady Belmont. The chief purport of her writing I will acquaint you with; the letter itself is not worthy your notice.

She tells me that she has, for many years past, been in continual expectation of making a journey to England, which prevented her writing for information concerning this melancholy subject, by giving her hopes of making personal inquiries; but family occurrences have still detained her in France,

which country she now sees no prospect of quitting. She has, therefore, lately used her utmost endeavours to obtain a faithful account of whatever related to her *ill-advised* daughter; the result of which giving her *some reason* to apprehend, that, upon her death-bed, she bequeathed an infant orphan to the world, she most graciously says, that if *you*, with whom *she understands* the child is placed, will procure authentic proofs of its relationship to her, you may send it to Paris, where she will properly provide for it.

This woman is undoubtedly, at length, self-convicted of her most unnatural behaviour: it is evident from her writing, that she is still as vulgar and illiterate as when her first husband, Mr. Evelyn, had the weakness to marry her; nor does she at all apologize for addressing herself to me, though I was only once in her company.

Her letter has excited in my daughter Mirvan, a strong desire to be informed of the motives which induced Madame Duval to abandon the unfortunate Lady Belmont, at a time when a mother's protection was peculiarly necessary for her peace and her reputation. Notwithstanding I was personally acquainted with all the parties concerned in that affair, the subject always appeared of too delicate a nature to be spoken of with the principals; I cannot, therefore, satisfy Mrs. Mirvan otherwise than by applying to you.

By saying that you *may* send the child, Madame Duval aims at *conferring*, where she most *owes* obligation. I pretend not to give you advice; you, to whose generous protection this helpless orphan is indebted for every thing, are the best and only judge of what she ought to do; but I am much concerned at the trouble and uneasiness which this unworthy woman may occasion you.

My daughter and my grandchild join with me

in desiring to be most kindly remembered to the amiable girl, and they bid me remind you, that the annual visit to Howard Grove, which we were formerly promised, has been discontinued for more than four years.

I am, dear Sir, with great regard,
Your most obedient friend and servant,
M. HOWARD.

LETTER II.

MR. VILLARS TO LADY HOWARD.

Berry Hill, Dorsetshire.

YOUR Ladyship did but too well foresee the perplexity and uneasiness of which Madame Duval's letter has been productive. However, I ought rather to be thankful that I have so many years remained unmolested, than repine at my present embarrassment, since it proves, at least, that this wretched woman is at length awakened to remorse.

In regard to my answer, I must humbly request your Ladyship to write to this effect: that I would not upon any account, intentionally offend Madame Duval; but that I have weighty, nay unanswerable reasons for detaining her grand-daughter at present in England; the principal of which is, that it was the earnest desire of one to whose will she owes implicit duty. Madame Duval may be assured, that she meets with the utmost attention and tenderness; that her education, however short of my wishes, almost exceeds my abilities: and I flatter myself, when the time arrives that she shall pay her duty to her grand-mother, Madame Duval will find no reason to be dissatisfied with what has been done for her.

Your Ladyship will not, I am sure, be surprised

at this answer. Madame Duval is by no means a proper companion or guardian for a young woman: she is at once uneducated and unprincipled; ungentle in temper, and unamiable in her manners. I have long known that she has persuaded herself to harbour an aversion for me—Unhappy woman! I can only regard her as an object of pity!

I dare not hesitate at a request from Mrs. Mirvan; yet, in complying with it, I shall, for her own sake, be as concise as I possibly can; since the cruel transactions which preceded the birth of my ward, can afford no entertainment to a mind so humane as hers.

Your Ladyship may probably have heard, that I had the honour to accompany Mr. Evelyn, the grandfather of my young charge, when upon his travels, in the capacity of a tutor. His unhappy marriage, immediately upon his return to England, with Madame Duval, then a waiting-girl at a tavern, contrary to the advice and entreaties of all his friends, among whom I was myself the most urgent, induced him to abandon his native land, and fix his abode in France. Thither he was followed by shame and repentance: feelings which his heart was not framed to support; for, notwithstanding he had been too weak to resist the allurements of beauty, which nature, though a niggard to her of every other boon, had with a lavish hand bestowed on his wife; yet he was a young man of excellent character, and, till thus unaccountably infatuated, of unblemished conduct. He survived this ill-judged marriage but two years. Upon his death-bed, with an unsteady hand, he wrote me the following note:

"My friend, forget your resentment, in favour o your humanity;—a father, trembling for the welfare of his child, bequeaths her to your care.—O Villars! hear! pity! and relieve me!"

Had my circumstances permitted me, I should

have answered these words by an immediate journey to Paris; but I was obliged to act by the agency of a friend, who was upon the spot, and present at the opening of the will.

Mr. Evelyn left to me a legacy of a thousand pounds, and the sole guardianship of his daughter's person till her eighteenth year, conjuring me, in the most affecting terms, to take the charge of her education till she was able to act with propriety for herself; but, in regard to fortune, he left her wholly dependent on her mother, to whose tenderness he earnestly recommended her.

Thus, though he would not, to a woman low bred and illiberal as Mrs. Evelyn, trust the conduct and morals of his daughter, he nevertheless thought proper to secure to her the respect and duty which, from her own child, were certainly her due; but, unhappily, it never occurred to him that the mother, on her part, could fail in affection or justice.

Miss Evelyn, Madam, from the second to the eighteenth year of her life, was brought up under my care, and, except when at school, under my roof. I need not speak to your Ladyship of the virtues of that excellent young creature. She loved me as her father; nor was Mrs. Villars less valued by her; while to me she became so dear, that her loss was little less afflicting than that which I have since sustained of Mrs. Villars herself.

At that period of her life we parted; her mother, then married to Monsieur Duval, sent for her to Paris. How often have I since regretted that I did not accompany her thither! Protected and supported by me, the misery and disgrace which awaited her might perhaps have been avoided. But, to be brief—Madame Duval, at the instigation of her husband, earnestly, or rather tyrannically, endeavoured to effect

an union between Miss Evelyn and one of his nephews. And when she found her power inadequate to her attempt, enraged at her non-compliance, she treated her with the grossest unkindness, and threatened her with poverty and ruin.

Miss Evelyn, to whom wrath and violence had hitherto been strangers, soon grew weary of such usage, and rashly, and without a witness, consented to a private marriage with Sir John Belmont, a very profligate young man, who had but too successfully found means to insinuate himself into her favour. He promised to conduct her to England—he did.—O, Madam, you know the rest!—Disappointed of the fortune he expected, by the inexorable rancour of the Duvals, he infamously burnt the certificate of their marriage, and denied that they had ever been united.

She flew to me for protection. With what mixed transports of joy and anguish did I again see her! By my advice, she endeavoured to procure proofs of her marriage—but in vain; her credulity had been no match for his art.

Every body believed her innocent, from the guiltless tenor of her unspotted youth, and from the known libertinism of her barbarous betrayer. Yet her sufferings were too acute for her tender frame; and the same moment that gave birth to her infant, put an end at once to the sorrows and the life of its mother.

The rage of Madame Duval at her elopement, abated not while this injured victim of cruelty yet drew breath. She probably intended in time, to have pardoned her: but time was not allowed. When she was informed of her death, I have been told that the agonies of grief and remorse, with which she was seized, occasioned her a severe fit of illness. But

from the time of her recovery to the date of her letter to your Ladyship, I had never heard that she manifested any desire to be made acquainted with the circumstances which attended the death of Lady Belmont, and the birth of her helpless child.

That child, Madam, shall never, while life is lent me, know the loss she has sustained. I have cherished, succoured, and supported her, from her earliest infancy to her sixteenth year; and so amply has she repaid my care and affection, that my fondest wish is now circumscribed by the desire of bestowing her on one who may be sensible of her worth, and then sinking to eternal rest in her arms.

Thus it has happened, that the education of the father, daughter, and grand-daughter, has devolved on me! What infinite misery have the two first caused me! Should the fate of the dear survivor be equally adverse, how wretched will be the end of my cares —the end of my days!

Even had Madame Duval merited the charge she claims, I fear my fortitude would have been unequal to such a parting; but, being such as she is, not only my affection, but my humanity, recoils at the barbarous idea of deserting the sacred trust reposed in me. Indeed, I could but ill support her former yearly visits to the respectable mansion at Howard Grove: pardon me, dear Madam, and do not think me insensible of the honour which your Ladyship's condescension confers upon us both; but so deep is the impression which the misfortunes of her mother have made on my heart, that she does not, even for a moment, quit my sight, without exciting apprehensions and terrors which almost overpower me. Such, Madam, is my tenderness, and such my weakness! —But she is the only tie I have upon earth, and I trust to your Ladyship's goodness not to judge of my feelings with severity.

I beg leave to present my humble respects to Mrs. and Miss Mirvan; and have the honour to be,

Madam, your Ladyship's most obedient
and most humble servant,
ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER III.

[Written some months after the last.]

LADY HOWARD TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

DEAR AND REV. SIR, Howard Grove, March 8.

YOUR last letter gave me infinite pleasure: after so long and tedious an illness, how grateful to yourself and to your friends must be your returning health! You have the hearty wishes of every individual of this place for its continuance and increase.

Will you not think I take advantage of your acknowledged recovery, if I once more venture to mention your pupil and Howard Grove together? Yet you must remember the patience with which we submitted to your desire of not parting with her during the bad state of your health, tho' it was with much reluctance we forbore to solicit her company. My grand-daughter, in particular, has scarce been able to repress her eagerness to meet again the friend of her infancy; and, for my own part, it is very strongly my wish to manifest the regard I had for the unfortunate Lady Belmont, by proving serviceable to her child; which seems to me the best respect that can be paid to her memory. Permit me, therefore, to lay before you a plan which Mrs. Mirvan and I have formed, in consequence of your restoration to health.

I would not frighten you;—but do you think you could bear to part with your young companion for

two or three months? Mrs. Mirvan proposes to spend the ensuing spring in London, whither, for the first time, my grand-child will accompany her. Now, my good friend, it is very earnestly their wish to enlarge and enliven their party by the addition of your amiable ward, who would share, equally with her own daughter, the care and attention of Mrs. Mirvan. Do not start at this proposal: it is time that she should see something of the world. When young people are too rigidly sequestered from it, their lively and romantic imaginations paint it to them as a paradise of which they have been beguiled; but when they are shown it properly, and in due time, they see it such as it really is, equally shared by pain and pleasure, hope and disappointment.

You have nothing to apprehend from her meeting with Sir John Belmont, as that abandoned man is now abroad, and not expected home this year.

Well, my good Sir, what say you to our scheme? I hope it will meet with your approbation; but if it should not, be assured I can never object to any decision of one who is so much respected and esteemed as Mr. Villars, by

His most faithful, humble servant,
M. HOWARD.

LETTER IV.

MR. VILLARS TO LADY HOWARD.

Berry Hill, March 12.

I AM grieved, Madam, to appear obstinate, and I blush to incur the imputation of selfishness. In detaining my young charge thus long with myself in the country, I consulted not solely my own inclina-

tion. Destined, in all probability, to possess a very moderate fortune, I wished to contract her views to something within it. The mind is but too naturally prone to pleasure, but too easily yielded to dissipation: it has been my study to guard her against their delusions, by preparing her to expect—and to despise them. But the time draws on for experience and observation to take place of instruction: If I have, in some measure, rendered her capable of using one with discretion, and making the other with improvement, I shall rejoice myself with the assurance of having largely contributed to her welfare. She is now of an age that happiness is eager to attend,—let her then enjoy it! I commit her to the protection of your Ladyship, and only hope she may be found worthy half the goodness I am satisfied she will meet with at your hospitable mansion.

Thus far, Madam, I cheerfully submit to your desire. In confiding my ward to the care of Lady Howard, I can feel no uneasiness from her absence, but what will arise from the loss of her company, since I shall be as well convinced of her safety as if she were under my own roof.—But can your Ladyship be serious in proposing to introduce her to the gaieties of a London life? Permit me to ask, for what end, or for what purpose? A youthful mind is seldom totally free from ambition; to curb that, is the first step to contentment, since to diminish expectation is to increase enjoyment. I apprehend nothing more than too much raising her hopes and her views, which the natural vivacity of her disposition would render but too easy to effect. The town-acquaintance of Mrs. Mirvan are all in the circle of high life; this artless young creature, with too much beauty to escape notice, has too much sensibility to be indifferent to it; but she has too little wealth to be sought with propriety by men of the fashionable world.

Consider, Madam, the peculiar cruelty of her situation. Only child of a wealthy baronet, whose person she has never seen, whose character she has reason to abhor, and whose name she is forbidden to claim; entitled as she is to lawfully inherit his fortune and estate, is there any probability that he will *properly* own her? And while he continues to persevere in disavowing his marriage with Miss Evelyn, she shall never, at the expense of her mother's honour, receive a part of her right as the donation of his bounty.

And as to Mr. Evelyn's estate, I have no doubt but that Madame Duval and her relations will dispose of it among themselves.

It seems, therefore, as if this deserted child, though legally heiress of two large fortunes, must owe all her rational expectations to adoption and friendship. Yet her income will be such as may make her happy, if she is disposed to be so in private life; though it will by no means allow her to enjoy the luxury of a London fine lady.

Let Miss Mirvan, then, Madam, shine in all the splendour of high life; but suffer my child still to enjoy the pleasures of humble retirement, with a mind to which greater views are unknown.

I hope this reasoning will be honoured with your approbation; and I have yet another motive which has some weight with me: I would not willingly give offence to any human being; and surely Madame Duval might accuse me of injustice, if, while I refuse to let her grand-daughter wait upon her, I consent that she should join a party of pleasure to London.

In sending her to Howard Grove, not one of these scruples arises; and therefore Mrs. Clinton, a most worthy woman, formerly her nurse, and now my housekeeper, shall attend her thither next week.

Though I have always called her by the name of

Anville, and reported in this neighbourhood that her father, my intimate friend, left her to my guardianship; yet I have thought it necessary she should herself be acquainted with the melancholy circumstances attending her birth: for though I am very desirous of guarding her from curiosity and impertinence, by concealing her name, family, and story, yet I would not leave it in the power of chance to shock her gentle nature with a tale of so much sorrow.

You must not, Madam, expect too much from my pupil; she is quite a little rustic, and knows nothing of the world; and though her education has been the best I could bestow in this retired place, to which Dorchester, the nearest town, is seven miles distant, yet I shall not be surprised if you should discover in her a thousand deficiencies of which I have never dreamt. She must be very much altered since she was last at Howard Grove.—But I will say nothing of her; I leave her to your Ladyship's own observations, of which I beg a faithful relation; and am,

Dear Madam,
with great respect,
Your obedient and most humble servant,
ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER V.

MR. VILLARS TO LADY HOWARD.

DEAR MADAM, March 18.

THIS letter will be delivered to you by my child,—the child of my adoption,—my affection! Unblest with one natural friend, she merits a thousand. I send her to you innocent as an angel, and artless as

purity itself; and I send you with her the heart of your friend, the only hope he has on earth, the subject of his tenderest thoughts, and the object of his latest cares. She is one, Madam, for whom alone I have lately wished to live; and she is one whom to serve I would with transport die! Restore her but to me all innocence as you receive her, and the fondest hope of my heart will be amply gratified.

A. VILLARS.

LETTER VI.

LADY HOWARD TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

DEAR AND REV. SIR, Howard Grove

THE solemn manner in which you have committed your child to my care, has in some measure damped the pleasure which I receive from the trust, as it makes me fear that you suffer from your compliance, in which case I shall very sincerely blame myself for the earnestness with which I have requested this favour: but remember, my good Sir, she is within a few days summons; and be assured, I will not detain her a moment longer than you wish.

You desire my opinion of her.

She is a little angel! I cannot wonder that you sought to monopolize her: neither ought you, at finding it impossible.

Her face and person answer my most refined ideas of complete beauty: and this, though a subject of praise less important to you or to me than any other, is yet so striking, it is not possible to pass it unnoticed. Had I not known from whom she received her education, I should, at first sight of so perfect a face, have been in pain for her understanding: since

it has been long and justly remarked, that folly has ever sought alliance with beauty.

She has the same gentleness in her manners, the same natural graces in her motions, that I formerly so much admired in her mother. Her character seems truly ingenuous and simple; and at the same time that nature has blessed her with an excellent understanding and great quickness of parts, she has a certain air of inexperience and innocency that is extremely interesting.

You have no reason to regret the retirement in which she has lived; since that politeness which is acquired by an acquaintance with high-life, is in her so well supplied by a natural desire of obliging, joined to a deportment infinitely engaging.

I observe, with great satisfaction, a growing affection between this amiable girl and my grand-daughter, whose heart is as free from selfishness or conceit, as that of her young friend is from all guile. Their regard may be mutually useful, since much is to be expected from emulation where nothing is to be feared from envy. I would have them love each other as sisters, and reciprocally supply the place of that tender and happy relationship to which neither of them has a natural claim.

Be satisfied, my good Sir, that your child shall meet with the same attention as our own. We all join in most hearty wishes for your health and happiness, and in returning our sincere thanks for the favour you have conferred on us.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most faithful servant,

M. HOWARD.

LETTER VII.

LADY HOWARD TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, March 26.

BE not alarmed, my worthy friend, at my so speedily troubling you again; I seldom use the ceremony of waiting for answers, or writing with any regularity, and I have at present immediate occasion for begging your patience.

Mrs. Mirvan has just received a letter from her long absent husband, containing the welcome news of his hoping to reach London by the beginning of next week. My daughter and the captain have been separated almost seven years, and it would therefore be needless to say what joy, surprise, and consequently confusion, his at present unexpected return has caused at Howard Grove. Mrs. Mirvan, you cannot doubt, will go instantly to town to meet him; her daughter is under a thousand obligations to attend her; I grieve that her mother cannot.

And now, my good Sir, I almost blush to proceed; —but, tell me, may I ask—will you permit—that your child may accompany them? Do not think us unreasonable, but consider the many inducements which conspire to make London the happiest place at present she can be in. The joyful occasion of the journey; the gaiety of the whole party, opposed to the dull life she must lead, if left here with a solitary old woman for her sole companion, while she so well knows the cheerfulness and felicity enjoyed by the rest of the family,—are circumstances that seem to merit your consideration. Mrs. Mirvan desires me to assure you, that one week is all she asks, as she is certain that the Captain, who hates London, will be eager to revisit Howard Grove; and Maria is so very earnest in wishing to have the company of her

friend, that, if you are inexorable, she will be deprived of half the pleasure she otherwise hopes to receive.

However, I will not, my good Sir, deceive you into an opinion that they intend to live in a retired manner, as that cannot be fairly expected. But you have no reason to be uneasy concerning Madame Duval; she has not any correspondent in England, and obtains no intelligence but by common report. She must be a stranger to the name your child bears; and, even should she hear of this excursion, so short a time as a week or less spent in town upon so particular an occasion, though previous to their meeting, cannot be construed into disrespect to herself.

Mrs. Mirvan desires me to assure you, that if you will oblige her, her *two* children shall equally share her time and her attention. She has sent a commission to a friend in town to take a house for her: and while she waits for an answer concerning it, I shall for one from you to our petition. However, your child is writing herself; and that, I doubt not, will more avail than all we can possibly urge.

My daughter desires her best compliments to you *if*, she says, you will grant her request, but *not else*.

Adieu, my dear Sir, we all hope every thing from your goodness.

M. HOWARD.

LETTER VIII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, March 26.

THIS house seems to be the house of joy; every face wears a smile, and a laugh is at every body's service. It is quite amusing to walk about and see the gene-

ral confusion. A room leading to the garden is fitting up for Captain Mirvan's study, Lady Howard does not sit a moment in a place, Miss Mirvan is making caps; every body so busy!—such flying from room to room!—so many orders given and retracted, and given again, nothing but hurry and perturbation.

Well but, my dear Sir, I am desired to make a request to you. I hope you will not think me an encroacher; Lady Howard insists upon my writing!—yet I hardly know how to go on; a petition implies a want,—and have you left me one? No, indeed.

I am half ashamed of myself for beginning this letter. But these dear ladies are so pressing—I cannot, for my life, resist wishing for the pleasures they offer me,—provided you do not disapprove them.

They are to make a very short stay in town. The Captain will meet them in a day or two. Mrs. Mirvan and her sweet daughter both go; what a happy party! Yet I am not *very* eager to accompany them: at least I shall be contented to remain where I am, if you desire that I should.

Assured, my dearest Sir, of your goodness, your bounty and your indulgent kindness, ought I to form a wish that has not your sanction? Decide for me, therefore, without the least apprehension that I shall be uneasy or discontented. While I am yet in suspense, perhaps I may *hope*; but I am most certain, that when you have once determined I shall not repine.

They tell me that London is now in full spendour. Two play-houses are open,—the Opera-house,—Ranelagh,—and the Pantheon.—You see I have learned all their names. However, pray don't suppose that I make any point of going, for I shall hardly sigh, to see them depart without me, though I shall

probably never meet with such another opportunity. And, indeed, their domestic happiness will be so great,—it is natural to wish to partake of it.

I believe I am bewitched! I made a resolution, when I began, that I would not be urgent; but my pen—or rather my thoughts, will not suffer me to keep it—for I acknowledge, I must acknowledge, I cannot help wishing for your permission.

I almost repent already that I have made this confession; pray forget that you have read it, if this journey is displeasing to you. But I will not write any longer; for the more I think of this affair, the less indifferent to it I find myself.

Adieu, my most honoured, most reverenced, most beloved father! for by what other name can I call you? I have no happiness or sorrow, no hope or fear, but what your kindness bestows, or your displeasure may cause. You will not, I am sure, send a refusal without reasons unanswerable, and therefore I shall cheerfully acquiesce. Yet I hope—I hope you will be able to permit me to go!

I am, with the utmost affection,
Gratitude and duty, your
EVELINA——.

I cannot to *you* sign ANVILLE, and what other name may I claim?

LETTER IX.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Bery Hill, March 28.

To resist the urgency of intreaty, is a power which I have not yet acquired: I aim not at an authority which deprives you of liberty, yet I would fain guide

myself by a prudence which should save me the pangs of repentance. Your impatience to fly to a place which your imagination has painted to you in colours so attractive, surprises me not; I have only to hope, that the liveliness of your fancy may not deceive you: to refuse, would be raising it still higher. To see my Evelina happy, is to see myself without a wish: go then, my child; and may that Heaven which alone can direct, preserve and strengthen you! To that, my love, will I daily offer prayers for your felicity. O may it guard, watch over you, defend you from danger, save you from distress, and keep vice as distant from your person as from your heart! And to me may it grant, the ultimate blessing of closing these aged eyes in the arms of one so dear—so deservedly beloved!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER X.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Queen-Ann Street, London, Saturday, April 2.

THIS moment arrived. Just going to Drury-Lane Theatre. The celebrated Mr. Garrick performs Ranger. I am quite in ecstasy. So is Miss Mirvan. How fortunate that he should happen to play! We would not let Mrs. Mirvan rest till she consented to go. Her chief objection was to our dress, for we have had no time to *Londonize* ourselves; but we teased her into compliance, and so we are to sit in some obscure place that she may not be seen. As to me, I should be alike unknown in the most conspicuous or most private part of the house.

I can write no more now. I have hardly time to

breathe—only just this, the houses and streets are not quite so superb as I expected. However, I have seen nothing yet, so I ought not to judge.

Well; adieu, my dearest Sir, for the present; I could not forbear writing a few words instantly on my arrival, though I suppose my letter of thanks for your consent is still on the road.

Saturday Night.

O, my dear Sir, in what raptures am I returned! Well may Mr. Garrick be so celebrated, so universally admired—I had not any idea of so great a performer.

Such ease! such vivacity in his manner! such grace in his motions! such fire and meaning in his eyes!—I could hardly believe he had studied a written part, for every word seemed to be uttered from the impulse of the moment.

His action—at once so graceful and so free!—his voice—so clear, so melodious, yet so wonderfully various in its tones!—Such animation!—every look *speaks!*

I would have given the world to have had the whole play acted over again. And when he danced—O, how I envied Clarinda! I almost wished to have jumped on the stage, and joined them.

I am afraid you will think me mad, so I won't say any more; yet, I really believe Mr. Garrick would make you mad too if you could see him. I intend to ask Mrs. Mirvan to go to the play every night while we stay in town. She is extremely kind to me; and Maria, her charming daughter, is the sweetest girl in the world.

I shall write to you every evening all that passes in the day, and that in the same manner as, if I could see, I should tell you.

Sunday.

This morning we went to Portland chapel; and

afterwards we walked in the Mall of St. James's Park, which by no means answered my expectations: it is a long straight walk of dirty gravel, very uneasy to the feet; and at each end, instead of an open prospect, nothing is to be seen but houses built of brick. When Mrs. Mirvan pointed out the *Palace* to me—I think I was never much more surprised.

However, the walk was very agreeable to us; every body looked gay, and seemed pleased; and the ladies were so much dressed, that Miss Mirvan and I could do nothing but look at them. Mrs. Mirvan met several of her friends. No wonder, for I never saw so many people assembled together before. I looked about for some of *my* acquaintance, but in vain; for I saw not one person that I knew, which is very odd, for all the world seemed there.

Mrs. Mirvan says we are not to walk in the Park again next Sunday, even if we should be in town, because there is better company in Kensington Gardens; but really, if you had seen how much every body was dressed, you would not think that possible.

Monday.

We are to go this evening to a private ball, given by Mrs. Stanley, a very fashionable lady of Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance.

We have been *a-shopping* as Mrs. Mirvan calls it, all this morning, to buy silks, caps, gauzes, and so forth.

The shops are really very entertalning, especially the mercers; there seem to be six or seven men belonging to each shop; and every one took care by bowing and smirking, to be noticed. We were conducted from one to another, and carried from

room to room with so much ceremony, that at first I was almost afraid to go on.

I thought I should never have chosen a silk: for they produced so many, I knew not which to fix upon; and they recommended them all so strongly, that I fancy they thought I only wanted persuasion to buy every thing they showed me. And indeed they took so much trouble, that I was almost ashamed I could not.

At the milliners, the ladies we met were so much dressed, that I should rather have imagined they were making visits than purchases. But what most diverted me was, that we were more frequently served by men than by women; and such men! so finical, so affected! they seemed to understand every part of a woman's dress better than we do ourselves; and they recommended caps and ribbands with an air of so much importance, that I wished to ask them how long they had left off wearing them.

The dispatch with which they work in these great shops is amazing, for they have promised me a complete suit of linen against the evening.

I have just had my hair dressed. You can't think how oddly my head feels: full of powder and black pins, and a great cushion on the top of it. I believe you would hardly know me, for my face looks quite different to what it did before my hair was dressed. When I shall be able to make use of a comb for myself I cannot tell; for my hair is so much entangled, *frizzled* they call it, that I fear it will be very difficult.

I am half afraid of this ball to-night; for, you know, I have never danced but at school: however, Miss Mirvan says there is nothing in it. Yet I wish it was over.

Adieu, my dear Sir; pray excuse the wretched stuff I write; perhaps I may improve by being in this town, and then my letters will be less unworthy your reading. Mean time, I am,

Your dutiful and affectionate,
though unpolished,
EVELINA.

Poor Miss Mirvan cannot wear one of the caps she made, because they dress her hair too large for them.

LETTER XI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Queen-Ann-Street, April 5, Tuesday Morning.

I HAVE a vast deal to say, and shall give all this morning to my pen. As to my plan of writing every evening the adventures of the day, I find it impracticable; for the diversions here are so very late, that if I began my letters after them, I could not go to bed at all.

We passed a most extraordinary evening. A *private* ball this was called, so I expected to have seen about four or five couple; but Lord! my dear Sir, I believe I saw half the world! Two very large rooms were full of company; in one were cards for the elderly ladies, and in the other were the dancers. My mamma Mirvan, for she always calls me her child, said she would sit with Maria and me till we were provided with partners, and then join the card-players.

The gentlemen, as they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands; and they sauntered about, in a careless

indolent manner, as if with a view to keep us in suspense. I don't speak of this in regard to Miss Mirvan and myself only, but to the ladies in general: and I thought it so provoking, that I determined in my own mind that, far from humouring such airs, I would rather not dance at all, than with any one who should seem to think me ready to accept the first partner who would condescend to take me.

Not long after, a young man, who had for some time looked at us with a kind of negligent impertinence, advanced on tiptoe towards me; he had a set smile on his face, and his dress was so foppish, that I really believe he even wished to be stared at; and yet he was very ugly.

Bowing almost to the ground with a sort of swing, and waving his hand with the greatest conceit, after a short and silly pause, he said, Madam—may I presume?—and stopt, offering to take my hand. I drew it back, but could scarce forbear laughing. Allow me, Madam, continued he, affectedly breaking off every half moment, the honour and happiness —if I am not so unhappy as to address you too late —to have the happiness and honour—

Again he would have taken my hand; but bowing my head, I begged to be excused, and turned to Miss Mirvan to conceal my laughter. He then desired to know if I had already engaged myself to some more fortunate man? I said No, and that I believed I should not dance at all. He would keep himself, he told me, disengaged, in hopes I should relent; and then, uttering some ridiculous speeches of sorrow and disappointment, though his face still wore the same invariable smile, he retreated.

It so happened, as we have since recollected, that during this little dialogue Mrs. Mirvan was conversing with the lady of the house. And very soon

after, another gentleman, who seemed about six-and-twenty years old, gaily but not foppishly dressed, and indeed extremely handsome, with an air of mixed politeness and gallantry, desired to know if I was engaged, or would honour him with my hand. So he was pleased to say, though I am sure I know not what honour he could receive from me; but these sort of expressions, I find, are used as words of course, without any distinction of persons, or study of propriety.

Well, I bowed, and I am sure I coloured; for indeed I was frightened at the thoughts of dancing before so many people, all strangers, and, which was worse, *with* a stranger: however, that was unavoidable; for, though I looked round the room several times, I could not see one person that I knew. And so he took my hand, and led me to join in the dance.

The minuets were over before we arrived, for we were kept late by the milliners making us wait for our things.

He seemed very desirous of entering into conversation with me; but I was seized with such a panic, that I could hardly speak a word, and nothing but the shame of so soon changing my mind prevented my returning to my seat, and declining to dance at all.

He appeared to be surprised at my terror, which I believe was but too apparent: however, he asked no questions, though I fear he must think it very strange, for I did not choose to tell him it was owing to my never before dancing but with a school-girl.

His conversation was sensible and spirited; his air and address were open and noble; his manners gentle, attentive, and infinitely engaging; his person is all elegance, and his countenance the most animated and expressive I have ever seen.

In a short time we were joined by Miss Mirvan, who stood next couple to us. But how was I startled when she whispered me that my partner was a nobleman! This gave me a new alarm: how will he be provoked, thought I, when he finds what a simple rustic he has honoured with his choice! one whose ignorance of the world makes her perpetually fear doing something wrong!

That he should be so much my superior every way, quite disconcerted me; and you will suppose my spirits were not much raised, when I heard a lady, in passing us, say, This is the most difficult dance I ever saw.

O dear, then, cried Maria to her partner, with your leave, I'll sit down till the next.

So will I too, then, cried I, for I am sure I can hardly stand.

But you must speak to your partner first, answered she; for he had turned aside to talk with some gentlemen. However, I had not sufficient courage to address him; and so away we all three tript, and seated ourselves at another end of the room.

But, unfortunately for me, Miss Mirvan soon after suffered herself to be prevailed upon to attempt the dance; and just as she rose to go, she cried, My dear, yonder is your partner, Lord Orville, walking about the room in search of you.

Don't leave me then, dear girl! cried I; but she was obliged to go. And now I was more uneasy than ever; I would have given the world to have seen Mrs. Mirvan, and begged of her to make my apologies; for what, thought I, can I possibly say to him in excuse for running away? he must either conclude me a fool, or half mad; for any one brought up in the great world, and accustomed to its ways, can have no idea of such sort of fears as mine.

My confusion increased when I observed that he was every where seeking me, with apparent perplexity and surprise; but when, at last, I saw him move towards the place where I sat, I was ready to sink with shame and distress. I found it absolutely impossible to keep my seat, because I could not think of a word to say for myself; and so I rose, and walked hastily towards the card-room, resolving to stay with Mrs. Mirvan the rest of the evening, and not to dance at all. But before I could find her, Lord Orville saw and approached me.

He begged to know if I was not well? You may easily imagine how much I was embarrassed. I made no answer; but hung my head like a fool, and looked on my fan.

He then, with an air the most respectfully serious, asked if he had been so unhappy as to offend me?

No, indeed! cried I; and, in hopes of changing the discourse, and preventing his further inquiries, I desired to know if he had seen the young lady who had been conversing with me?

No;—but would I honour him with any commands to her?

O, by no means!

Was there any other person with whom I wished to speak?

I said *no*, before I knew I had answered at all.

Should he have the pleasure of bringing me any refreshment?

I bowed, almost involuntarily. And away he flew.

I was quite ashamed of being so troublesome, and so much *above* myself as these seeming airs made me appear; but indeed I was too much confused to think or act with any consistency.

If he had not been as swift as lightning, I don't know whether I should not have stolen away again;

but he returned in a moment. When I had drank a glass of lemonade, he hoped, he said, that I would again honour him with my hand, as a new dance was just begun. I had not the presence of mind to say a single word, and so I let him once more lead me to the place I had left.

Shocked to find how silly, how childish a part I had acted, my former fears of dancing before such a company, and with such a partner, returned more forcibly than ever. I suppose he perceived my uneasiness; for he intreated me to sit down again if dancing was disagreeable to me. But I was quite satisfied with the folly I had already shewn; and therefore declined his offer, though I was really scarce able to stand.

Under such conscious disadvantages, you may easily imagine, my dear Sir, how ill I acquitted myself. But though I both expected and deserved to find him very much mortified and displeased at his ill fortune in the choice he had made; yet to my very great relief, he appeared to be even contented, and very much assisted and encouraged me. These people in high life have too much presence of mind, I believe, to *seem* disconcerted, or out of humour, however they may feel; for had I been the person of the most consequence in the room, I could not have met with more attention and respect.

When the dance was over, seeing me still very much flurried, he led me to a seat, saying that he would not suffer me to fatigue myself from politeness.

And then, if my capacity, or even if my spirits had been better, in how animated a conversation might I have been engaged! it was then I saw that the rank of Lord Orville was his least recommendation, his understanding and his manners being far more distinguished. His remarks upon the com-

pany in general were so apt, so just, so lively, I am almost surprised myself that they did not reanimate me; but indeed I was too well convinced of the ridiculous part I had myself played before so nice an observer, to be able to enjoy his pleasantry: so self-compassion gave me feeling for others. Yet I had not the courage to attempt either to defend them, or to rally in my turn; but listened to him in silent embarrassment.

When he found this, he changed the subject, and talked of public places, and public performers; but he soon discovered that I was totally ignorant of them.

He then, very ingeniously, turned the discourse to the amusements and occupations of the country.

It now struck me, that he was resolved to try whether or not I was capable of talking upon *any* subject. This put so great a constraint upon my thoughts, that I was unable to go further than a monosyllable, and not even so far when I could possibly avoid it.

We were sitting in this manner, he conversing with all gaiety, I looking down with all foolishness, when that fop who had first asked me to dance, with a most ridiculous solemnity approached, after a profound bow or two, said, I humbly beg pardon, Madam,—and of you too, my Lord,—for breaking in upon such agreeable conversation—which must, doubtless, be more delectable—than what I have the honour to offer—but—

I interrupted him—I blush for my folly,—with laughing; yet I could not help it; for, added to the man's stately foppishness, (and he actually took snuff between every three words,) when I looked round at Lord Orville, I saw such extreme surprise in his face,—the cause of which appeared so absurd, that I could not for my life preserve my gravity.

I had not laughed before from the time I had left Miss Mirvan, and I had much better have cried then; Lord Orville actually stared at me: the beau, I know not his name, looked quite enraged. Refrain, Madam, said he, with an important air, a few moments refrain! - I have but a sentence to trouble you with May I know to what accident I must attribute not having the honour of your hand?

Accident, Sir! repeated I, much astonished.

Yes, accident, Madam;—for surely—I must take the liberty to observe—pardon me, Madam—it ought to be no common one—that should tempt a lady—so young a one too,—to be guilty of ill-manners.

A confused idea now for the first time entered my head, of something I had heard of the rules of an assembly; but I was never at one before,—I have only danced at school,—and so giddy and heedless I was, that I had not once considered the impropriety of refusing one partner, and afterwards accepting another. I was thunderstruck at the recollection: but while these thoughts were rushing into my head, Lord Orville, with some warmth, said, This Lady, Sir, is incapable of meriting such an accusation!

The creature—for I am very angry with him—made a low bow, and with a grin the most malicious I ever saw, My Lord, said he, far be it from me to *accuse* the lady, for having the discernment to distinguish and prefer—the superior attractions of your Lordship

Again he bowed, and walked off.

Was ever any thing so provoking? I was ready to die with shame. What a coxcomb! exclaimed Lord Orville: while I, without knowing what I did, rose hastily, and moving off, I can't imagine, cried I, where Mrs. Mirvan has hid herself!

Give me leave to see, answered he. I bowed and sat down, not daring to meet his eyes; for what must he think of me, between my blunder, and the supposed preference?

He returned in a moment, and told me that Mrs. Mirvan was at cards, but would be glad to see me; and I went immediately. There was but one chair vacant; so, to my great relief, Lord Orville presently left us. I then told Mrs. Mirvan my disasters; and she good-naturedly blamed herself for not having better instructed me; but said, she had taken it for granted that I must know such common customs. However, the man may, I think, be satisfied with his pretty speech, and carry his resentment no farther.

In a short time Lord Orville returned. I consented, with the best grace I could, to go down another dance, for I had had time to recollect myself; and therefore resolved to use some exertion, and, if possible, appear less a fool than I had hitherto done; for it occurred to me, that, insignificant as I was, compared to a man of his rank and figure; yet since he had been so unfortunate as to make choice of me for a partner, why I should endeavour to make the best of it.

The dance, however, was short, and he spoke very little; so I had no opportunity of putting my resolution in practice. He was satisfied, I suppose, with his former successless efforts to draw me out: or, rather, I fancied, he had been inquiring *who I was.* This again disconcerted me; and the spirits I had determined to exert again failed me. Tired, ashamed, and mortified, I begged to sit down till we returned home, which I did soon after. Lord Orville did me the honour to hand me to the coach, talking all the way of the honour I had done *him!* O these fashionable people!

Well, my dear Sir, was it not a strange evening? I could not help being thus particular, because, to me, every thing is so new. But it is now time to conclude. I am, with all love and duty, your

EVELINA.

LETTER XII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Tuesday, April 5.

THERE is to be no end to the troubles of last night. I have this moment, between persuasion and laughter, gathered from Maria the most curious dialogue that ever I heard. You will at first be startled at my vanity; but, my dear Sir, have patience!

It must have passed while I was sitting with Mrs. Mirvan in the card-room. Maria was taking some refreshment, and saw Lord Orville advancing for the same purpose himself; but he did not know her, though she immediately recollected him. Presently after, a very gay-looking man, stepping hastily up to him, cried, Why, my Lord, what have you done with your lovely partner?

Nothing! answered Lord Orville with a smile and a shrug

By Jove, cried the man, she is the most beautiful creature I ever saw in my life!

Lord Orville, as he well might, laughed; but answered, Yes, a pretty modest-looking girl.

O my Lord, cried the madman, she is an angel.

A *silent* one, returned he.

Why ay, my Lord, how stands she as to that? She looks all intelligence and expression.

A poor weak girl! answered Lord Orville, shaking his head,

By Jove, cried the other, I am glad to hear it!

At that moment, the same odious creature who had been my former tormentor, joined them. Addressing Lord Orville with great respect, he said, I beg pardon, my Lord,—if I was—as I fear might be the case—rather too severe in my censure of the lady who is honoured with your protection—but, my Lord, ill-breeding is apt to provoke a man.

Ill-breeding! cried my unknown champion, impossible! that elegant face can never be so vile a mask!

O Sir, as to that, answered he, you must allow *me* to judge; for though I pay all deference to your opinion—in other things,—yet I hope you will grant—and I appeal to your Lordship also—that I am not totally despicable as a judge of good or ill manners.

I was so wholly ignorant, said Lord Orville gravely, of the provocation you might have had, that I could not but be surprised at your singular resentment.

It was far from my intention, answered he, to offend your lordship; but really for a person who is nobody, to give herself such airs,—I own I could not command my passions. For, my Lord, though I have made diligent inquiry—I cannot learn who she is.

By what I can make out, cried my defender, she must be a country parson's daughter.

He! he! he! very good, 'pon honour; cried the fop;—well, so I could have sworn by her manners.

And then, delighted at his own wit, he laughed, and went away, as I suppose, to repeat it.

But what the deuce is all this? demanded the other.

Why a very foolish affair, answered Lord Orville;

your Helen first refused this coxcomb, and then—danced with me. This is all I can gather of it.

O, Orville, returned he, you are a happy man!—But *ill-bred?*—I can never believe it! And she looks too sensible to be *ignorant.*

Whether ignorant or mischievous, I will not pretend to determine; but certain it is she attended to all I could say to her, though I have really fatigued myself with fruitless endeavours to entertain her, with the most immoveable gravity; but no sooner did Lovel begin his complaint, than she was seized with a fit of laughing, first affronting the poor beau, and then enjoying his mortification.

Ha! ha! ha! why there is some *genius* in that, my Lord, though perhaps rather—*rustic.*

Here Maria was called to dance, and so heard no more.

Now, tell me, my dear Sir, did you ever know any thing more provoking? *A poor weak girl! ignorant or mischievous!* What mortifying words! I am resolved, however, that I will never again be tempted to go to an assembly. I wish I had been in Dorsetshire.

Well, after this, you will not be surprised that Lord Orville contented himself with an enquiry after our healths this morning, by his servant, without troubling himself to call, as Miss Mirvan had told me he would; but perhaps it may be only a country custom.

I would not live here for the world. I care not how soon we leave town. London soon grows tiresome. I wish the Captain would come. Mrs. Mirvan talks of the Opera for this evening; however, I am very indifferent about it.

Wednesday morning.

Well, my dear Sir, I have been pleased against my will, I could almost say: for I must own I went out

in very ill humour, which I think you cannot wonder at: but the music and the singing were charming; they soothed me into a pleasure the most grateful, the best suited to my present disposition in the world. I hope to persuade Mrs. Mirvan to go again on Saturday. I wish the opera was every night. It is of all entertainments the sweetest and most delightful. Some of the songs seemed to melt my very soul. It was what they call a *serious* opera, as the *comic* first singer was ill.

To-night we go to Ranelagh. If any of those three gentlemen who conversed so freely about me should be there—but I won't think of it.

Thursday morning.

Well, my dear Sir, we went to Ranelagh. It is a charming place; and the brilliancy of the lights, on my first entrance, made me almost think I was in some enchanted castle or fairy palace, for all looked like magic to me.

The very first person I saw was Lord Orville. I felt so confused!—but he did not see me. After tea, Mrs. Mirvan being tired, Maria and I walked round the room alone. Then again we saw him, standing by the orchestra. We, too, stopt to hear a singer. He bowed to me; I curtsied, and I am sure I coloured. We soon walked on, not liking our situation; however, he did not follow us; and when we passed by the orchestra again, he was gone. Afterwards, in the course of the evening, we met him several times; but he was always with some party, and never spoke to us, though whenever he chanced to meet my eyes, he condescended to bow.

I cannot be but hurt at the opinion he entertains of me. It is true my own behaviour incurred it—yet he is himself the most agreeable, and, seemingly, the most amiable man in the world, and

therefore it is that I am grieved to be thought ill of by him; for of whose esteem ought we to be ambitious, if not of those who most merit our own?—But it is too late to reflect upon this now. Well, I can't help it.—However, I think I have done with assemblies.

This morning was destined for *seeing sights*, auctions, curious shops, and so forth; but my head ached, and I was not in a humour to be amused, and so I made them go without me, though very unwillingly. They are all kindness.

And now I am sorry I did not accompany them, for I know not what to do with myself. I had resolved not to go to the play to-night; but I believe I shall. In short, I hardly care whether I do or not.

* * * * * *

I thought I had done wrong! Mrs. Mirvan and Maria have been half the town over, and so entertained!—while I, like a fool, staid at home to do nothing. And, at an auction in Pall-mall, who should they meet but Lord Orville! He sat next to Mrs. Mirvan, and they talked a great deal together; but she gave me no account of the conversation.

I may never have such another opportunity of seeing London; I am quite sorry that I was not of the party; but I deserve this mortification, for having indulged my ill humour.

Thursday night.

We are just returned from the play, which was King Lear, and has made me very sad. We did not see any body we knew.

Well, adieu, it is too late to write more.

Friday.

Captain Mirvan is arrived. I have not spirits to give an account of his introduction, for he has really shocked me. I do not like him. He seems to be surly, vulgar, and disagreeable.

Almost the same moment that Maria was presented to him, he began some rude jests upon the bad shape of her nose, and called her a tall ill-formed thing. She bore it with the utmost good humour; but that kind and sweet-tempered woman, Mrs. Mirvan, deserved a better lot. I am amazed she would marry him.

For my own part, I have been so shy, that I have hardly spoken to him, or he to me. I cannot imagine why the family was so rejoiced at his return. If he had spent his whole life abroad, I should have supposed they might rather have been thankful than sorrowful. However, I hope they do not think so ill of him as I do. At least, I am sure they have too much prudence to make it known.

Saturday night.

We have been to the Opera, and I am still more pleased than I was on Tuesday. I could have thought myself in Paradise, but for the continual talking of the company around me. We sat in the pit, where every body was dressed in so high a style, that if I had been less delighted with the performance, my eyes would have found me sufficient entertainment from looking at the ladies.

I was very glad I did not sit next the Captain; for he could not bear the music or singers, and was extremely gross in his observations on both. When the opera was over, we went into a place called the coffee-room, where ladies, as well as gentlemen, assemble. There are all sorts of refreshments, and the company walk about, and *chat* with the same ease and freedom as in a private room.

On Monday we go to a ridotto, and on Wednesday we return to Howard Grove. The Captain says he won't stay here to be *smok:d with filth* any longer; but having been seven years *smoked with a burning sun*, he will retire to the country, and sink into a *fair weather chap*. Adieu, my dear Sir.

LETTER XIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

MY DEAR SIR, Tuesday, April 12.

We came home from the ridotto so late, or rather so early, that it was not possible for me to write. Indeed we did not *go*—you will be frightened to hear it—till past eleven o'clock: but nobody does. A terrible reverse of the order of nature! We sleep with the sun, and wake with the moon.

The room was very magnificent, the lights and decorations were brilliant, and the company gay and splendid. But I should have told you, that I made many objections to being of the party, according to the resolution I had formed. However, Maria laughed me out of my scruples, and so once again I went to an assembly.

Miss Mirvan danced a minuet; but I had not the courage to follow her example. In our walks I saw Lord Orville. He was quite alone, but did not observe us. Yet, as he seemed of no party, I thought it was not impossible that he might join us; and though I did not wish much to dance at all—yet, as I was more acquainted with him than with any other person in the room, I must own I could not help thinking it would be infinitely more desirable to dance again with him than with an entire stranger. To be sure, after all that had passed, it was very ridiculous to suppose it even probable that Lord Orville would again honour me with his choice; yet I am compelled to confess my absurdity, by way of explaining what follows.

Miss Mirvan was soon engaged; and presently after a very fashionable gay-looking man, who seemed about thirty years of age, addressed himself to me, and begged to have the honour of dancing with me. Now Maria's partner was a gentleman of

Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance; for she had told us it was highly improper for young women to dance with strangers at any public assembly. Indeed it was by no means my wish so to do: yet I did not like to confine myself from dancing at all; neither did I dare refuse this gentleman as I had done Mr. Lovel, and then, if any acquaintance should offer, accept him: and so, all these reasons combining, induced me to tell him—yet I blush to write it to you!—that I was *already engaged*; by which I meant to keep myself at liberty to dance, or not, as matters should fall out.

I suppose my consciousness betrayed my artifice, for he looked at me as if incredulous; and, instead of being satisfied with my answer and leaving me, according to my expectation, he walked at my side, and, with the greatest ease imaginable, began a conversation in the free style which only belongs to old and intimate acquaintance. But, what was most provoking, he asked me a thousand questions concerning *the partner to whom I was engaged.* And at last he said, Is it really possible that a man whom you have honoured with your acceptance can fail to be at hand to profit from your goodness?

I felt extremely foolish; and begged Mrs. Mirvan to lead to a seat; which she very obligingly did. The Captain sat next her; and to my great surprise, this gentleman thought proper to follow, and seat himself next to me.

What an insensible! continued he; why, Madam, you are missing the most delightful dance in the world!—the man must be either mad or a fool—Which do you incline to think him yourself?

Neither, Sir, answered I, in some confusion.

He begged my pardon for the freedom of his supposition, saying, I really was off my guard, from astonishment that any man can be so much and so

unaccountably his own enemy. But where, Madam, can he possibly be!—has he left the room!—or has not he been in it?

Indeed, Sir, said I peevishly, I know nothing of him.

I don't wonder that you are disconcerted, Madam; it is really very provoking. The best part of the evening will be absolutely lost. He deserves not that you should wait for him.

I do not, Sir, said I, and I beg you not to—

Mortifying, indeed, Madam, interrupted he,—a lady to wait for a gentleman!—O fie!—careless fellow!—What can detain him?—Will you give me leave to seek him?

If you please, Sir, answered I, quite terrified lest Mrs. Mirvan should attend to him; for she looked very much surprised at seeing me enter into conversation with a stranger.

With all my heart, cried he; pray, what coat has he on?

Indeed I never looked at it.

Out upon him! cried he: What! did he address you in a coat not worth looking at?—What a shabby wretch!

How ridiculous! I really could not help laughing, which I fear encouraged him, for he went on.

Charming creature!—and can you really bear ill usage with so much sweetness? Can you, *like patience on a monument*, smile in the midst of disappointment?—For my part, though I am not the offended person, my indignation is so great, that I long to kick the fellow round the room!—unless, indeed,—(hesitating and looking earnestly at me,) unless, indeed,—it is a partner of your own *creating*?

I was dreadfully abashed, and could not make any answer.

But no! cried he (again, and with warmth,) It

cannot be that you are so cruel! Softness itself is painted in your eyes.—You could not, surely, have the barbarity so wantonly to trifle with my misery.

I turned away from this nonsense with real disgust. Mrs. Mirvan saw my confusion, but was perplexed what to think of it, and I could not explain to her the cause, lest the Captain should hear me. I therefore proposed to walk; she consented, and we all rose; but, would you believe it? this man had the assurance to rise too, and walk close by my side, as if of my party!

Now, cried he, I hope we shall see this ingrate.—Is that he?—pointing to an old man who was lame,—or that? And in this manner he asked me of whoever was old or ugly in the room. I made no sort of answer: and when he found that I was resolutely silent, and walked on as much as I could without observing him, he suddenly stamped his foot, and cried out in a passion, Fool! idiot! booby!

I turned hastily toward him: O, Madam, continued he, forgive my vehemence; but I am distracted to think there should exist a wretch who can slight a blessing for which I would forfeit my life!—O that I could but meet him, I would soon—But I grow angry: pardon me, Madam, my passions are violent, and your injuries affect me!

I began to apprehend he was a madman, and stared at him with the utmost astonishment. I see you are moved, Madam, said he; generous creature!—but don't be alarmed, I am cool again, I am indeed,—upon my soul I am;—I intreat you, most lovely of mortals! I intreat you to be easy.

Indeed, Sir, said I very seriously, I must insist upon your leaving me; you are quite a stranger to me, and I am both unused, and averse to your language and your manners.

This seemed to have some effect on him. He made me a low bow, begged my pardon, and vowed he would not for the world offend me.

Then, Sir, you must leave me, cried I. I am gone, Madam, I am gone! with a most tragical air; and he marched away at a quick pace out of sight in a moment; but before I had time to congratulate myself, he was again at my elbow.

And could you really let me go, and not be sorry?—Can you see me suffer torments inexpressible, and yet retain all your favour for that miscreant who flies you?—Ungrateful puppy!—I could bastinado him!

For Heaven's sake, my dear, cried Mrs. Mirvan, who is he talking of?

Indeed—I do not know, Madam, said I; but I wish he would leave me.

What's all that there? cried the Captain.

The man made a low bow, and said, Only, Sir, a slight objection which this young lady makes to dancing with me, and which I am endeavouring to obviate. I shall think myself greatly honoured if you will intercede for me.

That lady, Sir, said the Captain coldly, is her own mistress. And he walked sullenly on.

You, Madam, said the man (who looked delighted, to Mrs. Mirvan,) you, I hope, will have the goodness to speak for me.

Sir, answered she gravely, I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you.

I hope when you have, Ma'am, cried he, undaunted, you will honour me with your approbation: but, while I am yet unknown to you, it would be truly generous in you to countenance me; and I flatter myself, Madam, that you will not have cause to repent it.

Mrs. Mirvan, with an embarrassed air, replied, I

do not at all mean, Sir, to doubt your being a gentleman,—but—

But *what*, Madam?—that doubt removed, why a *but?*

Well, Sir, said Mrs. Mirvan (with a good humoured smile), I will even treat you with your own plainness, and try what effect that will have on you: I must therefore tell you, once for all—

O pardon me, Madam! interrupted he eagerly, you must not proceed with those words *once for all*; no, if *I* have been too *plain*, and, though a *man*, deserve a rebuke, remember, dear ladies, that if you *copy*, you ought in justice to *excuse* me.

We both stared at the man's strange behaviour.

Be nobler than your sex, continued he, turning to me, honour me with one dance, and give up the ingrate who has merited so ill your patience.

Mrs. Mirvan looked with astonishment at us both.

Who does he speak of, my dear?—you never mentioned—

O, Madam! exclaimed he, he was not worth mentioning—it is pity he was ever thought of; but let us forget his existence. One dance is all I solicit. Permit me, Madam, the honour of this young lady's hand; it will be a favour I shall ever most gratefully acknowledge.

Sir, answered she, favours and strangers have with me no connection.

If you have hitherto, said he, confined your benevolence to your intimate friends, suffer me to be the first for whom your charity is enlarged.

Well, Sir, I know not what to say to you,—but—

He stopt her *but* with so many urgent intreaties, that she at last told me, I must either go down one dance, or avoid his importunities by returning home. I hesitated which alternative to choose;

but this impetuous man at length prevailed, and I was obliged to consent to dance with him.

And thus was my deviation from truth punished; and thus did this man's determined boldness conquer.

During the dance, before we were too much engaged in it for conversation, he was extremely provoking about *my partner*, and tried every means in his power to make me own that I had deceived him; which, though I would not so far humble myself as to acknowledge, was indeed but too obvious.

Lord Orville, I fancy, did not dance at all. He seemed to have a large acquaintance, and joined several different parties; but you will easily suppose, I was not much pleased to see him, in a few minutes after I was gone, walk towards the place I had just left, and bow to and join Mrs. Mirvan!

How unlucky I thought myself, that I had not longer withstood this stranger's importunities! The moment we had gone down the dance, I was hastening away from him; but he stopt me, and said, that I could by no means return to my party without giving offence, before we had *done our duty of walking up the dance.* As I know nothing at all of these rules and customs, I was obliged to submit to his directions; but I fancy I looked rather uneasy, for he took notice of my inattention, saying, in his free way, Whence that anxiety?—Why are those lovely eyes perpetually averted?

I wish you would say no more to me, Sir, cried I peevishly; you have already destroyed all my happiness for this evening.

Good Heaven! what is it I have done?—How have I merited this scorn?

You have tormented me to death; you have

forced me from my friends, and intruded yourself upon me, against my will, for a partner.

Surely, my dear Madam, we ought to be better friends, since there seems to be something of sympathy in the frankness of our dispositions.—And yet were you not an angel—how do you think I could brook such contempt?

If I have offended you, cried I, you have but to leave me—and O how I wish you would!

My dear creature, said he, half laughing, why where could you be educated?

Where I most sincerely wish I now was!

How conscious you must be, all beautiful that you are, that those charming airs serve only to heighten the bloom of your complexion!

Your freedom, Sir, where you are more acquainted, may perhaps be less disagreeable; but to *me*—

You do me justice, cried he, interrupting me, yes, I do indeed improve upon acquaintance; you will hereafter be quite charmed with me.

Hereafter, Sir, I hope I shall never—

O hush!—hush!—have you forgot the situation in which I found you?—Have you forgot, that when deserted, I pursued you,—when betrayed, I adored you?—but for me—

But for you, Sir, I might perhaps have been happy.

What then, am I to conclude that, *but for me*, your *partner* would have appeared?—poor fellow!—and did my presence awe him?

I wish *his* presence, Sir, could awe *you!*

His presence!—perhaps then you see him?

Perhaps, Sir, I do, cried I, quite wearied of his raillery.

Where? where?—for Heaven's sake shew me the wretch!

Wretch, Sir!

O, a very savage!—a sneaking, shame-faced, despicable puppy!

I know not what bewitched me—but my pride was hurt, and my spirits were tired, and—in short I had the folly, looking at Lord Orville, to repeat, *Despicable*, you think?

His eyes instantly followed mine: Why, is *that* the gentleman?

I made no answer; I could not affirm, and I would not deny:—for I hoped to be relieved from his teasing by his mistake.

The very moment we had done what he called our duty, I eagerly desired to return to Mrs. Mirvan.

To your *partner*, I presume, Madam? said he very gravely.

This quite confounded me. I dreaded lest this mischievous man, ignorant of his rank, should address himself to Lord Orville, and say something which might expose my artifice. Fool! to involve myself in such difficulties! I now feared what I had before wished; and therefore to avoid Lord Orville, I was obliged myself to *propose* going down another dance, though I was ready to sink with shame while I spoke.

But your *partner*, Ma'am? said he, affecting a very solemn air, perhaps he may resent my detaining you: if you will give me leave to ask his consent—

Not for the universe.

Who is he, Madam?

I wished myself a hundred miles off. He repeated his question, What is his name?

Nothing—nobody—I don't know—

He assumed a most important solemnity: How!—not know?—Give me leave, my dear Madam, to recommend this caution to you: Never dance in

public with a stranger,—with one whose name you are unacquainted with,—who may be a mere adventurer,—a man of no character; consider to what impertinence you may expose yourself.

Was ever any thing so ridiculous? I could not help laughing in spite of my vexation.

At this instant, Mrs. Mirvan, followed by Lord Orville, walked up to us. You will easily believe it was not difficult for me to recover my gravity; but what was my consternation, when this strange man, destined to be the scourge of my artifice, exclaimed, Ha! my Lord Orville!—I protest I did not know your Lordship. What can I say for my usurpation!—Yet, 'faith, my Lord, such a prize was not to be neglected.

My shame and confusion were unspeakable. Who could have supposed or foreseen that this man knew Lord Orville? But falsehood is not more unjustifiable than unsafe.

Lord Orville—well he might—looked all amazement.

The philosophic coldness of your Lordship, continued this odious creature, every man is not endowed with. I have used my utmost endeavours to entertain this lady, though I fear without success; and your Lordship will not be a little flattered, if acquainted with the difficulty which attended my procuring the honour of only one dance. Then, turning to me, who was sinking with shame, while Lord Orville stood motionless, and Mrs. Mirvan astonished—he suddenly seized my hand, saying, Think, my Lord, what must be my reluctance to resign this fair hand to your Lordship!

In the same instant, Lord Orville took it of him; I coloured violently, and made an effort to recover it. You do me too much honour, Sir, cried he, (with an air of gallantry, pressing it to his lips before he

let it go;) however, I shall be happy to profit by it, if this lady, turning to Mrs. Mirvan, will permit me to seek for her party.

To compel him thus to dance, I could not endure; and eagerly called out, By no means—not for the world!—I must beg—

Will you honour *me*, Madam, with your commands? cried my tormentor; may *I* seek the lady's party?

No, Sir, answered I, turning from him.

What *shall* be done, my dear? said Mrs. Mirvan.

Nothing, Ma'am; any thing, I mean——

But do you dance, or not? You see his Lordship waits.

I hope not—I beg that—I would not for the world—I am sure I ought to—to——

I could not speak; but that confident man, determining to discover whether or not I had deceived him, said to Lord Orville, who stood suspended, My Lord, this affair, which at present seems perplexed, I will briefly explain:—this lady proposed to me another dance,—nothing could have made me more happy,—I only wished for your Lordship's permission; which, if now granted, will, I am persuaded, set every thing right.

I glowed with indignation. No, Sir—it is your absence, and that alone, can set every thing right.

For Heaven's sake, my dear, cried Mrs. Mirvan, who could no longer contain her surprise, what does all this mean?—were you pre-engaged? had Lord Orville——

No, Madam, cried I, only—only I did not know that gentleman,—and so,—and so I thought—I intended—I——

Overpowered by all that had passed, I had not strength to make my mortifying explanation;—my spirits quite failed me, and I burst into tears.

They all seemed shocked and amazed.

What is the matter, my dearest love? cried Mrs. Mirvan, with the kindest concern.

What have I done! exclaimed my evil genius, and ran officiously for a glass of water.

However, a hint was sufficient for Lord Orville, who comprehended all I would have explained. He immediately led me to a seat, and said in a low voice, Be not distressed, I beseech you; I shall ever think my name honoured by your making use of it.

This politeness relieved me. A general murmur had alarmed Miss Mirvan, who flew instantly to me; while Lord Orville, the moment Mrs. Mirvan had taken the water, led my tormentor away.

For Heaven's sake, dear Madam, cried I, let me go home;——indeed I cannot stay here any longer.

Let us all go, cried my kind Maria.

But the Captain, what will he say?—I had better go home in a chair.

Mrs. Mirvan consented, and I rose to depart. Lord Orville and that man both came to me. The first, with an attention I but ill merited from him, led me to a chair; while the other followed, pestering me with apologies. I wished to have made mine to Lord Orville, but was too much ashamed.

It was about one o'clock. Mrs. Mirvan's servants saw me home.

And now,—what again shall ever tempt me to an assembly? I dread to hear what you will think of me, my most dear and honoured Sir: you will need your utmost partiality to receive me without displeasure.

This morning Lord Orville has sent to inquire after our health; and Sir Clement Willoughby (for that I find is the name of my persecutor) has called; but I would not go down stairs till he was gone.

And now, my dear Sir, I can somewhat account

for the strange, provoking, and ridiculous conduct of this Sir Clement last night; for Miss Mirvan says he is the very man with whom she heard Lord Orville conversing at Mrs. Stanley's, when I was spoken of in so mortifying a manner. He was pleased to say he was glad to hear I was a fool; and therefore, I suppose, he concluded he might talk as much nonsense as he pleased to me: however, I am very indifferent as to his opinion;—but for Lord Orville,—if then he thought me an idiot, now I am sure he must suppose me both bold and presuming. Make use of his name!—what impertinence!—he can never know how it happened,—he can only imagine it was from an excess of vanity:—Well, however, I shall leave this bad city to-morrow, and never again will I enter it.

The Captain intends to take us to-night to the Fantoccini. I cannot bear that Captain; I can give you no idea how gross he is. I heartily rejoice that he was not present at the disagreeable conclusion of yesterday's adventure, for I am sure he would have contributed to my confusion; which might perhaps have diverted him, as he seldom or never smiles but at some other person's expense.

And here I conclude my London letters,—and without any regret; for I am too inexperienced and ignorant to conduct myself with propriety in this town, where every thing is new to me, and many things are unaccountable and perplexing.

Adieu, my dear Sir; Heaven restore me safely to you! I wish I was to go immediately to Berry Hill; yet the wish is ungrateful to Mrs. Mirvan, and therefore I will repress it. I shall write an account of the Fantoccini from Howard Grove. We have not been to half the public places that are now open, though I dare say you will think we have been to all. But they are almost as innumerable as the persons who fill them.

LETTER XIV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Queen-Ann-Street, April 13.

How much will you be surprised, my dearest Sir, at receiving another letter, from London, of your Evelina's writing! But, believe me, it was not my fault, neither is it my happiness, that I am still here: our journey has been postponed by an accident equally unexpected and disagreeable.

We went last night to see the Fantoccini, where we had infinite entertainment from the performance of a little comedy in French and Italian, by puppets, so admirably managed, that they both astonished and diverted us all, except the Captain, who has a fixed and most prejudiced hatred of whatever is not English.

When it was over, while we waited for the coach, a tall elderly woman brushed quickly past us, calling out, My God! what shall I do?

Why, what *would* you do? cried the Captain.

Ma foi, Monsieur, answered she, I have lost my company, and in this place I don't know nobody.

There was something foreign in her accent, though it was difficult to discover whether she was an English or a French woman. She was very well dressed; and seemed so entirely at a loss what to do, that Mrs. Mirvan proposed to the Captain to assist her.

Assist her! cried he, ay, with all my heart;—let a link-boy call her a coach.

There was not one to be had, and it rained very fast.

Mon Dieu! exclaimed the stranger, what shall become of me? *Je suis au désespoir!*

Dear Sir, cried Miss Mirvan, pray let us take the

poor lady into our coach. She is quite alone, and a foreigner——

She's never the better for that, answered he: she may be a woman of the town, for any thing you know.

She does not appear such, said Mrs. Mirvan; and indeed she seems so much distressed, that we shall but follow the golden rule, if we carry her to her lodgings.

You are mighty fond of new acquaintance, returned he: but first let us know if she be going our way.

Upon enquiry, we found that she lived in Oxford Road; and, after some disputing, the captain, surlily and with a very bad grace, consented to admit her into his coach; though he soon convinced us that he was determined she should not be too much obliged to him, for he seemed absolutely bent upon quarrelling with her; for which strange inhospitality I can assign no other reason, than that she appeared to be a foreigner.

The conversation began by her telling us that she had been in England only two days; that the gentlemen belonging to her were Parisians, and had left her to see for a hackney coach, as her own carriage was abroad; and that she had waited for them till she was quite frightened, and concluded that they had lost themselves.

And pray, said the Captain, why did you go to a public place without an Englishman?

Ma foi, Sir, answered she, because none of my acquaintance is in town.

Why then, said he, I'll tell you what, your best way is to go out of it yourself.

Pardi, *Monsieur*, returned she, and so I shall; for, I promise you, I think the English a parcel of brutes: and I'll go back to France as fast as I can, for I would not live among none of you.

Who wants you? cried the Captain; do you suppose, Madam French, we have not enough of other nations to pick our pockets already? I'll warrant you, there's no need for you for to put in your oar.

Pick your pockets, Sir! I wish nobody wanted to pick your pockets no more than I do; and I'll promise you you'd be safe enough. But there's no nation under the sun can beat the English for ill-politeness: for my part, I hate the very sight of them; and so I shall only just visit a person of quality or two of my particular acquaintance, and then I shall go back again to France.

Ay, do, cried he; and then go to the devil together, for that's the fittest voyage for the French and the quality.

We'll take care however, cried the stranger with great vehemence, not to admit none of your vulgar unmannered English among us.

O never fear, returned he coolly, we shan't dispute the point with you; you and the quality may have the devil all to yourselves.

Desirous of changing the subject of a conversation which now became very alarming, Miss Mirvan called out, Lord, how slow the man drives!

Never mind, Moll, said her father, I'll warrant you he'll drive fast enough to-morrow, when you are going to Howard Grove.

To Howard Grove! exclaimed the stranger,—why, *Mon Dieu*, do you know Lady Howard?

Why, what if we do? answered he; that's nothing to you; she's none of *your* quality, I'll promise you.

Who told you that? cried she; you don't know nothing about the matter! besides, you're the ill-bredest person ever I see: and as to your knowing Lady Howard, I don't believe no such a thing; unless, indeed, you are her steward.

The Captain, swearing terribly, said, with great fury, *You* would much sooner be taken for her wash-woman.

Her wash-woman, indeed!—Ha, ha, ha! why you han't no eyes; did you ever see a wash-woman in such a gown as this?—Besides, I'm no such mean person, for I'm as good as Lady Howard, and as rich too, and besides, I'm now come to England to visit her.

You may spare yourself that there trouble, said the Captain, she has paupers enough about her already.

Paupers, Mister!—no more a pauper than yourself, nor so much neither;—but you are a low, dirty fellow! and I shan't stoop to take no more notice of you.

Dirty fellow! exclaimed the Captain, seizing both her wrists, hark you, Mrs. Frog, you'd best hold your tongue; for I must make bold to tell you, if you don't, that I shall make no ceremony of tripping you out of the window, and there you may lie in the mud till some of your *Monseers* come to help you out of it.

Their increasing passion quite terrified us; and Mrs. Mirvan was beginning to remonstrate with the Captain, when we were all silenced by what follows.

Let me go, villain that you are, let me go, or I'll promise you I'll get you put to prison for this usage. I'm no common person, I assure you; and, *ma foi*, I'll go to justice Fielding about you; for I'm a person of fashion, and I'll make you know it, or my name an't Duval.

I heard no more: amazed, frightened, and unspeakably shocked, an involuntary exclamation of *Gracious Heaven!* escaped me, and, more dead than alive, I sunk into Mrs. Mirvan's arms. But let me

draw a veil over a scene too cruel for a heart so compassionately tender as yours: it is sufficient that you know this supposed foreigner proved to be Madame Duval,—the grandmother of your Evelina!

O, Sir, to discover so near a relation in a woman, who had thus introduced herself!—what would become of me, were it not for you, my protector, my friend, and my refuge?

My extreme concern, and Mrs. Mirvan's surprise, immediately betrayed me. But I will not shock you with the manner of her acknowledging me, or the bitterness, the *grossness*—I cannot otherwise express myself,—with which she spoke of those unhappy past transactions you have so pathetically related to me. All the misery of a much injured parent, dear, though never seen; regretted, though never known, crowded so forcibly upon my memory, that they rendered this interview—one only excepted—the most afflicting I can ever know.

When we stopt at her lodgings she desired me to accompany her into the house, and said she could easily procure a room for me to sleep in. Alarmed and trembling, I turned to Mrs. Mirvan. My daughter, Madam, said that sweet woman, cannot so abruptly part with her young friend; you must allow a little time to wean them from each other.

Pardon me, Ma'am, answered Madame Duval, (who, from the time of her being known somewhat softened her manners,) Miss can't possibly be so nearly connected to this child as I am.

No matter for that, cried the Captain, (who espoused my cause to satisfy his own pique, though an awkward apology had passed between them) she was sent to us; and so, dy'e see, we don't choose for to part with her.

I promised to wait upon her at what time she pleased the next day; and, after a short debate, she

desired me to breakfast with her, and we proceeded to Queen-Ann-Street.

What an unfortunate adventure! I could not close my eyes the whole night. A thousand times I wished I had never left Berry-Hill: however, my return thither shall be accelerated to the utmost of my power; and, once more in that abode of tranquil happiness, I will suffer no temptation to allure me elsewhere.

Mrs. Mirvan was so kind as to accompany me to Madame Duval's house this morning. The Captain, too, offered his service; which I declined, from a fear she should suppose I meant to insult her.

She frowned most terribly upon Mrs. Mirvan; but she received me with as much tenderness as I believe she is capable of feeling. Indeed, our meeting seems really to have affected her; for when, overcome by the variety of emotions which the sight of her occasioned, I almost fainted in her arms, she burst into tears, and said, Let me not lose my poor daughter a second time! This unexpected humanity softened me extremely; but she very soon excited my warmest indignation, by the ungrateful mention she made of the best of men, my dear and most generous benefactor. However, grief and anger mutually gave way to terror, upon her avowing the intention of her visiting England was to make me return with her to France. This, she said, was a plan she had formed from the instant she had heard of my birth; which, she protested, did not reach her ears till I must have been twelve years of age; but Monsieur Duval, who she declared was the worst husband in the world, would not permit her to do any thing she wished: he had been dead but three months; which had been employed in arranging certain affairs, that were no sooner settled, than she set off for England.

She was already out of mourning, for she said nobody here could tell how long she had been a widow.

She must have been married very early in life: what her age is I do not know; but she really looks to be less than fifty. She dresses very gaily, paints very high, and the traces of former beauty are still very visible in her face.

I know not when, or how, this visit would have ended, had not the Captain called for Mrs. Mirvan, and absolutely insisted upon my attending her. He is become, very suddenly, so warmly my friend, that I quite dread his officiousness. Mrs. Mirvan, however, whose principal study seems to be healing those wounds which her husband inflicts, appeased Madame Duval's wrath, by a very polite invitation to drink tea, and spend the evening here. Not without great difficulty was the Captain prevailed upon to defer his journey some time longer; but what could be done? It would have been indecent for me to have quitted town the very instant I discovered that Madame Duval was in it; and to have staid here solely under her protection—Mrs. Mirvan, thank Heaven, was too kind for such a thought. That she should follow us to Howard Grove, I almost equally dreaded. It is therefore determined, that we remain in London for some days, or a week: though the Captain has declared that the *old French hag*, as he is pleased to call her, shall fare never the better for it.

My only hope is to get safe to Berry Hill; where counselled and sheltered by you, I shall have nothing more to fear. Adieu, my ever dear and most honoured Sir! I shall have no happiness till I am again with you.

LETTER XV.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry Hill, April 16.

In the belief and hope that my Evelina would, ere now, have bid adieu to London, I had intended to have deferred writing till I heard of her return to Howard Grove; but the letter I have this moment received, with intelligence of Madame Duval's arrival in England, demands an immediate answer.

Her journey hither equally grieves and alarms me. How much did I pity my child, when I read of a discovery at once so unexpected and unwished! I have long dreaded this meeting and its consequence; to claim you seems naturally to follow acknowledging you. I am well acquainted with her disposition, and have for many years foreseen the contest which now threatens us.

Cruel as are the circumstances of this affair, you must not, my love, suffer it to depress your spirits: remember, that while life is lent me, I will devote it to your service; and, for future time, I will make such provision as shall seem to me most conducive to your future happiness. Secure of my protection, and relying on my tenderness, let no apprehensions of Madame Duval disturb your peace: conduct yourself towards her with all the respect and deference due to so near a relation, remembering always, that the failure of duty on her part, can by no means justify any neglect on yours. Indeed, the more forcibly you are struck with improprieties and misconduct in another, the greater should be your observance and diligence to avoid even the shadow of similar errors. Be careful, therefore,

that no remissness of attention, no indifference of obliging, make known to her the independence I assure you of; but when she fixes the time for her leaving England, trust to me the task of refusing your attending her: disagreeable to myself, I own, it will be; yet to you it would be improper, if not impossible.

In regard to her opinion of me, I am more sorry than surprised at her determined blindness; the palliation which she feels the want of, for her own conduct, leads her to seek for failings in all who were concerned in those unhappy transactions which she has so much reason to lament. And this, as it is the cause, so we must in some measure consider it as the excuse of her inveteracy.

How grateful to me are your wishes to return to Berry Hill! Your lengthened stay in London, and the dissipation in which I find you are involved, fill me with uneasiness. I mean not, however, that I would have you sequester yourself from the party to which you belong, since Mrs. Mirvan might thence infer a reproof which your youth and her kindness would render inexcusable. I will not, therefore, enlarge upon this subject; but content myself with telling you, that I shall heartily rejoice when I hear of your safe arrival at Howard Grove, for which place I hope you will be preparing at the time you receive this letter.

I cannot too much thank you, my best Evelina, for the minuteness of your communications. Continue to me this indulgence, for I should be miserable if in ignorance of your proceedings.

How new to you is the scene of life in which you are engaged!—balls—plays—operas—ridottos!—Ah, my child! at your return hither, how will you bear the change? My heart trembles for your future tranquillity.—Yet I will hope every thing

from the unsullied whiteness of your soul, and the native liveliness of your disposition.

I am sure I need not say, how much more I was pleased with the mistakes of your inexperience at the private ball, than with the attempted adoption of more fashionable manners at the ridotto. But your confusion and mortifications were such as to entirely silence all reproofs on my part.

I hope you will see no more of Sir Clement Willoughby, whose conversation and boldness are extremely disgustful to me: I was gratified by the good nature of Lord Orville, upon your making use of his name; but I hope you will never again put it to such a trial.

Heaven bless thee, my dear child! and grant that neither misfortune nor vice may ever rob thee of that gaiety of heart, which, resulting from innocence, while it constitutes your own, contributes also to the felicity of all who know you!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XVI.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Queen-Ann-Street,
Thursday morning, April 14.

BEFORE our dinner was over yesterday, Madame Duval came to tea; though it will lessen your surprise, to hear that it was near five o'clock, for we never dine till the day is almost over. She was asked into another room while the table was cleared, and then was invited to partake of the dessert.

She was attended by a French gentleman, whom she introduced by the name of Monsieur Du Bois: Mrs. Mirvan received them both with her usual politeness; but the Captain looked very much dis-

pleased; and after a short silence, very sternly said to Madame Duval, Pray, who asked you to bring that there spark with you?

Oh, cried she, I never go no where without him.

Another short silence ensued, which was terminated by the Captain's turning roughly to the foreigner, and saying, Do you know, *Monseer*, that you are the first Frenchman I ever let come into my house?

Monsieur Du Bois made a profound bow. He speaks no English, and understands it so imperfectly, that he might possibly imagine he had received a compliment.

Mrs. Mirvan endeavoured to divert the Captain's ill-humour, by starting new subjects: but he left to her all the trouble of supporting them, and leaned back in his chair in gloomy silence, except when any opportunity offered of uttering some sarcasm upon the French. Finding her efforts to render the evening agreeable were fruitless, Mrs. Mirvan proposed a party to Ranelagh. Madame Duval joyfully consented to it; and the Captain, though he railed against the dissipation of the women, did not oppose it; and therefore Maria and I ran up stairs to dress ourselves.

Before we were ready, word was brought us, that Sir Clement Willoughby was in the drawing-room. He introduced himself under the pretence of enquiring after all our healths, and entered the room with the easy air of an old acquaintance; though Mrs. Mirvan confesses that he seemed embarrassed when he found how coldly he was received, not only by the Captain, but by herself.

I was extremely disconcerted at the thoughts of seeing this man again, and did not go down stairs till I was called to tea. He was then deeply engaged in a discourse upon French manners with Ma-

dame Duval and the Captain; and the subject seemed so entirely to engross him, that he did not, at first, observe my entrance into the room. Their conversation was supported with great vehemence; the Captain roughly maintaining the superiority of the English in every particular, and Madame Duval warmly refusing to allow of it in any: while Sir Clement exerted all his powers of argument and of ridicule, to second and strengthen whatever was advanced by the Captain: for he had the sagacity to discover, that he could take no method so effectual for making the master of the house his friend, as to make Madame Duval his enemy; and indeed, in a very short time, he had reason to congratulate himself upon his successful discernment.

As soon as he saw me, he made a most respectful bow, and hoped I had not suffered from the fatigue of the ridotto: I made no other answer than a slight inclination of the head, for I was very much ashamed of that whole affair. He then returned to the disputants; where he managed the argument so skilfully, at once provoking Madame Duval, and delighting the Captain, that I could not forbear admiring his address, though I condemned his subtlety. Mrs. Mirvan, dreading such violent antagonists, attempted frequently to change the subject; and she might have succeeded, but for the interposition of Sir Clement, who would not suffer it to be given up, and supported it with such humour and satire, that he seems to have won the Captain's heart; though their united forces so enraged and overpowered Madame Duval that she really trembled with passion.

I was very glad when Mrs. Mirvan said it was time to be gone. Sir Clement arose to take leave; but the Captain very cordially invited him to join

our party: he *had* an engagement, he said, but would give it up to have that pleasure.

Some little confusion ensued in regard to our manner of setting off. Mrs. Mirvan offered Madame Duval a place in her coach, and proposed that we four females should go all together; however, this she rejected, declaring she would by no means go so far without a gentleman, and wondering so polite a lady could make *so English* a proposal. Sir Clement Willoughby said, his chariot was waiting at the door, and begged to know if it could be of any use. It was at last decided, that a hackney-coach should be called for Monsieur Du Bois and Madame Duval, in which the Captain, and, at his request, Sir Clement, went also; Mrs. and Miss Mirvan and I had a peaceful and comfortable ride by ourselves.

I doubt not but they quarrelled all the way; for when we met at Ranelagh every one seemed out of humour; and though we joined parties, poor Madame Duval was avoided as much as possible by all but me.

The room was so very much crowded, that but for the uncommon assiduity of Sir Clement Willoughby, we should not have been able to procure a box (which is the name given to the arched recesses that are appropriated for tea-parties) till half the company had retired. As we were taking possession of our places, some ladies of Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance stopped to speak to her, and persuaded her to *take a round* with them. When she returned to us, what was my surprise, to see that Lord Orville had joined her party! The ladies walked on: Mrs. Mirvan seated herself, and made a slight, though respectful, invitation to Lord Orville to drink his tea with us; which, to my no small consternation, he accepted.

I felt a confusion unspeakable at again seeing him, from the recollection of the ridotto adventure: nor did my situation lessen it; for I was seated between Madame Duval and Sir Clement, who seemed as little as myself to desire Lord Orville's presence. Indeed, the continual wrangling and ill-breeding of Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval made me blush that I belonged to them. And poor Mrs. Mirvan and her amiable daughter had still less reason to be satisfied.

A general silence ensued after he was seated: his appearance, from different motives, gave an universal restraint to every body. What his own reasons were for honouring us with his company, I cannot imagine; unless, indeed, he had a curiosity to know whether I should invent any new impertinence concerning him.

The first speech was made by Madame Duval, who said, It's quite a shocking thing to see ladies come to so genteel a place as Ranelagh with hats on; it has a monstrous vulgar look: I can't think what they wear them for. There is no such a thing to be seen in Paris.

Indeed, cried Sir Clement, I must own myself no advocate for hats; I am sorry the ladies ever invented or adopted so tantalizing a fashion: for, where there is beauty, they only serve to shade it; and, where there is none, to excite a most unavailing curiosity. I fancy they were originally worn by some young and whimsical coquette.

More likely, answered the Captain, they were invented by some wrinkled old hag, who'd a mind for to keep the young fellows in chase, let them be never so weary.

I don't know what you may do in England, cried Madame Duval, but I know in Paris no woman needn't be at such a trouble as that to be taken very genteel notice of.

Why, will you pretend for to say, returned the Captain, that they don't distinguish the old from the young there as well as here?

They don't make no distinguishments at all, said she; they're vastly too polite.

More fools they! cried the Captain, sneeringly.

Would to Heaven, cried Sir Clement, that, for our own sakes, we Englishmen too were blest with so accommodating a blindness!

Why the devil do you make such a prayer as that? demanded the Captain: them are the first foolish words I've heard you speak; but I suppose you're not much used to that sort of work. Did you ever make a prayer before since you were a sniveler?

Ay, now, cried Madame Duval, that's another of the unpolitenesses of you English, to go to talking of such things as that: now in Paris nobody never says nothing about religion, no more than about politics.

Why then, answered he, it's a sign they take no more care of their souls than of their country, and so both one and t'other go to old Nick.

Well, if they do, said she, who's the worse, so long as they don't say nothing about it? it's the tiresomest thing in the world to be always talking of them sort of things, and nobody that's ever been abroad troubles their heads about them.

Pray then, cried the Captain, since you know so much of the matter, be so good as to tell us what they *do* trouble their heads about?—Hey, Sir Clement! han't we a right to know that much?

A very comprehensive question, said Sir Clement, and I expect much instruction from the lady's answer.

Come, Madam, continued the Captain, never flinch; speak at once; don't stop for thinking.

I assure you I am not going, answered she; for as to what they *do* do, why they've enough to do, I promise you, what with one thing or another.

But *what*, *what* do they do, these famous *Monseers?* demanded the Captain; can't you tell us? do they game?—or drink?—or fiddle?—or are they jockeys? —or do they spend all their time in flummering old women?

As to that, Sir—but indeed I shan't trouble myself to answer such a parcel of low questions, so don't ask me no more about it. And then, to my great vexation, turning to Lord Orville, she said, Pray, Sir, was you ever in Paris?

He only bowed.

And pray, Sir, how did you like it?

This *comprehensive* question, as Sir Clement would have called it, though it made him smile, also made him hesitate; however, his answer was expressive of his approbation.

I thought you would like it, Sir, because you look so like a gentleman. As to the Captain, and as to that other gentleman, why they may very well not like what they don't know: for I suppose, Sir, you was never abroad?

Only three years, Ma'am, answered Sir Clement, drily.

Well, that's very surprising! I should never have thought it: however, I dare say you only kept company with the English.

Why, pray, who *should* he keep company with? cried the Captain; what, I suppose you'd have him ashamed of his own nation, like some other people not a thousand miles off, on purpose to make his own nation ashamed of him?

I'm sure it would be a very good thing if you'd go abroad yourself.

How will you make out that, hey, Madam?

come, please to tell me, where would be the good of that?

Where! why a great deal. They'd make quite another person of you.

What, I suppose you'd have me to learn to cut capers?—and dress like a monkey?—and palaver in French gibberish?—hey, would you?—and powder, and daub, and make myself up, like some other folks?

I would have you to learn to be more *politer*, Sir, and not to talk to ladies in such a rude, old-fashion way as this. You, Sir, as have been in Paris, (again addressing herself to Lord Orville,) can tell this English gentleman how he'd be despised, if he was to talk in such an ungenteel manner as this before any foreigners. Why there isn't a hair-dresser, nor a shoemaker, nor nobody, that wouldn't blush to be in your company.

Why, look ye, Madam, answered the Captain, as to your hair-pinchers and shoe blacks, you may puff off their manners, and welcome; and I am heartily glad you like 'em so well: but as to me, since you must needs make so free of your advice, I must e'en tell you, I never kept company with any such gentry.

Come, ladies and gentlemen, said Mrs. Mirvan, as many of you as have done tea, I invite to walk with me. Maria and I started up instantly; Lord Orville followed; and I question whether we were not half round the room ere the angry disputants knew that we had left the box.

As the husband of Mrs. Mirvan had borne so large a share in this disagreeable altercation, Lord Orville forbore to make any comments upon it; so that the subject was immediately dropt, and the conversation became calmly sociable, and politely cheerful, and, to every body but me, must have

been highly agreeable:—but, as to myself, I was so eagerly desirous of making some apology to Lord Orville, for the impertinence of which he must have thought me guilty at the ridotto, and yet so utterly unable to assume sufficient courage to speak to him, concerning an affair in which I had so terribly exposed myself, that I hardly ventured to say a word all the time we were walking. Besides, the knowledge of his contemptuous opinion haunted and dispirited me, and made me fear he might possibly misconstrue whatever I should say. So that, far from enjoying a conversation which might, at any other time, have delighted me, I continued silent, uncomfortable, and ashamed. O, Sir, shall I ever again involve myself in so foolish an embarrassment? I am sure that, if I do, I shall deserve yet greater mortification.

We were not joined by the rest of the party till we had taken three or four turns round the room: and then they were so quarrelsome, that Mrs. Mirvan complained of being fatigued, and proposed going home. No one dissented. Lord Orville joined another party, having first made an offer of his services, which the gentlemen declined, and we proceeded to an outward room, where we waited for the carriages. It was settled that we should return to town in the same manner we came to Ranelagh; and, accordingly, Monsieur Du Bois handed Madame Duval into a hackney-coach, and was just preparing to follow her, when she screamed, and jumped hastily out, declaring she was wet through all her clothes. Indeed, upon examination the coach was found to be in a dismal condition; for the weather proved very bad, and the rain had, though I know not how, made its way into the carriage.

Mrs. and Miss Mirvan, and myself, were already disposed of as before; but no sooner did the Captain

hear this account, than, without any ceremony, he was so civil as to immediately take possession of the vacant seat in his own coach, leaving Madame Duval and Monsieur Du Bois to take care of themselves. As to Sir Clement Willoughby, his own chariot was in waiting.

I instantly begged permission to offer Madame Duval my own place, and made a motion to get out; but Mrs. Mirvan stopped me, saying, that I should then be obliged to return to town with only the foreigner, or Sir Clement.

O never mind the old beldame, cried the Captain, she's weather-proof, I'll answer for her; and besides, as we are all, I hope, *English*, why, she'll meet with no worse than she expects from us.

I do not mean to defend her, said Mrs. Mirvan; but indeed, as she belongs to our party, we cannot, with any decency, leave the place till she is, by some means, accommodated.

Lord, my dear, cried the Captain, whom the distress of Madame Duval had put into very good humour, why, she'll break her heart if she meets with any civility from a filthy Englishman.

Mrs. Mirvan, however, prevailed; and we all got out of the coach, to wait till Madame Duval could meet with some better carriage. We found her, attended by Monsieur Du Bois, standing amongst the servants, and very busy in wiping her negligee, and endeavouring to save it from being stained by the wet, as she said it was a new Lyons silk. Sir Clement Willoughby offered her the use of his chariot, but, she had been too much piqued by his raillery to accept it. We waited some time, but in vain; for no hackney-coach could be procured. The Captain, at last, was persuaded to accompany Sir Clement himself, and we four females were handed into Mrs. Mirvan's carriage, though not before Madame

Duval had insisted upon our making room for Monsieur Du Bois, to which the Captain only consented in preference to being incommoded by him in Sir Clement's chariot.

Our party drove off first. We were silent and unsociable; for the difficulties attending this arrangement had made every one languid and fatigued. Unsociable, I must own, we continued; but very short was the duration of our silence, as we had not proceeded thirty yards before every voice was heard at once—for the coach broke down! I suppose we concluded, of course, that we were all half-killed, by the violent shrieks that seemed to come from every mouth. The chariot was stopped, the servants came to our assistance, and we were taken out of the carriage, without having been at all hurt. The night was dark and wet; but I had scarce touched the ground when I was lifted suddenly from it by Sir Clement Willoughby, who begged permission to assist me, though he did not wait to have it granted; but carried me in his arms back to Ranelagh.

He enquired very earnestly if I was not hurt by the accident? I assured him I was perfectly safe, and free from injury; and desired he would leave me, and return to the rest of the party, for I was very uneasy to know whether they had been equally fortunate. He told me he was happy in being honoured with my commands, and would joyfully execute them; but insisted upon first conducting me to a warm room, as I had not wholly escaped being wet. He did not regard my objections; but made me follow him to an apartment, where we found an excellent fire, and some company waiting for carriages. I readily accepted a seat, and then begged he would go.

And go, indeed, he did; but he returned in a mo-

ment, telling me that the rain was more violent than ever, and that he had sent his servants to offer their assistance, and acquant *the Mirvans* of my situation. I was very mad that he would not go himself; but as my acquaintance with him was so very slight, I did not think proper to urge him contrary to his inclination.

Well, he drew a chair close to mine; and, after again enquiring how I did, said, in a low voice, You will pardon me, Miss Anville, if the eagerness I feel to vindicate myself, induces me to snatch this opportunity of making sincere acknowledgments for the impertinence with which I tormented you at the last ridotto. I can assure you, Madam, I have been a tru and sorrowful penitent ever since; but—shall I tell you honestly what encouraged me to——

He stopped, but I said nothing; for I thought instantly of the conversation Miss Mirvan had overheard, and supposed he was going to tell me himself what part Lord Orville had borne in it; and really I did not wish to hear it repeated. Indeed, the rest of his speech convinces me that such was his intention; with what view I know not, except to make a merit of his defending me.

And yet, he continued, my excuse may only expose my own credulity, and want of judgment and penetration. I will, therefore, merely beseech your pardon, and hope that some future time—

Just then the door was opened by Sir Clement's servant, and I had the pleasure of seeing the Captain, Mrs. and Miss Mirvan, enter the room.

O ho! cried the former, you have got a good warm birth here; but we shall beat up your quarters. Here, Lucy, Moll, come to the fire, and dry your trumpery. But, hey-day—why where's old Madame French?

Good God, cried I, is not Madame Duval then with you?

With me! No,—thank God.

I was very uneasy to know what might have become of her; and, if they would have suffered me, I should have gone out in search of her myself; but all the servants were dispatched to find her; and the Captain said, we might be very sure her *French beau* would take care of her.

We waited some time without any tidings, and were soon the only party in the room. My uneasiness increased so much that Sir Clement now made a voluntary offer of seeking her. However, the same moment that he opened the door with this design, she presented herself at it, attended by Monsieur du Bois.

I was this instant, Madam, said he, coming to see for you.

You are mighty good, truly, cried she, to come when all the mischief's over.

She then entered,—in such a condition!—entirely covered with mud, and in so great a rage, it was with difficulty she could speak. We all expressed our concern, and offered our assistance—except the Captain, who no sooner beheld her than he burst out into a loud laugh.

We endeavoured, by our enquiries and condolements, to prevent her attending to him; and she was for some time so wholly engrossed by her anger and her distress, that we succeeded without much trouble. We begged her to inform us how this accident had happened. How! repeated she,—why it was all along of your all going away,—and there poor Monsieur Du Bois—but it wasn't his fault,—for he's as bad off as me.

All eyes were then turned to Monsieur du Bois, whose clothes were in the same miserable plight

with those of Madame Duval, and who, wet, shivering, and disconsolate, had crept to the fire.

The Captain laughed yet more heartily; while Mrs. Mirvan, ashamed of his rudeness, repeated her enquiries to Madame Duval; who answered, Why, as we were a-coming along, all in the rain, Monsieur Du Bois was so obliging, though I'm sure it was an unlucky obligingness for me, as to lift me up in his arms to carry me over a place that was ankle-deep in mud; but instead of my being ever the better for it, just as we were in the worst part,—I'm sure I wish we had been fifty miles off,— for somehow or other his foot slipt,—at least, I suppose so,—though I can't think how it happened, for I'm no such great weight;—but, however that was, down we both came, together, all in the mud: and the more we tried to get up, the more deeper we got covered with the nastiness—and my new Lyons negligee, too, quite spoilt!—However, it's well we got up at all, for we might have laid there till now, for aught you all cared; nobody never came near us.

This recital put the Captain into an ecstasy; he went from the lady to the gentleman, and from the gentleman to the lady, to enjoy alternately the sight of their distress. He really shouted with pleasure; and, shaking Monsieur Du Bois strenuously by the hand, wished him joy of having *touched English ground;* and then he held the candle to Madame Duval, that he might have a more complete view of her disaster, declaring repeatedly, that he had never been better pleased in his life.

The rage of poor Madame Duval was unspeakable; she dashed the candle out of his hand, stamped upon the floor, and, at last, spit in his face.

This action seemed immediately to calm them both, as the joy of the Captain was converted into resentment, and the wrath of Madame Duval into fear:

for he put his hands upon her shoulders, and gave her so violent a shake, that she screamed out for help; assuring her, at the same time, that if she had been one ounce less old, or less ugly, she should have had it all returned in her own face.

Monsieur Du Bois, who had seated himself very quietly at the fire, approached them, and expostulated very warmly with the Captain; but he was neither understood nor regarded; and Madame Duval was not released till she quite sobbed with passion.

When they were parted, I entreated her to permit the woman who has the charge of the ladies' cloaks to assist in drying her clothes; she consented, and we did what was possible to save her from catching cold. We were obliged to wait in this disagreeable situation near an hour before a hackney-coach could be found; and then we were disposed in the same manner as before our accident.

I am going this morning to see poor Madame Duval, and to enquire after her health, which I think must have suffered by her last night's misfortunes; though, indeed, she seems to be naturally strong and hearty.

Adieu, my dear Sir, till to-morrow.

LETTER XVII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Friday Morning, April 15.

Sir Clement Willoughby called here yesterday at noon, and Captain Mirvan invited him to dinner. For my part I spent the day in a manner the most uncomfortable imaginable.

I found Madame Duval at breakfast in bed, though

Monsieur Du Bois was in the chamber; which so much astonished me, that I was, involuntarily, retiring, without considering how odd an appearance my retreat would have, when Madame Duval called me back, and laughed very heartily at my ignorance of foreign customs.

The conversation, however, very soon took a more serious turn; for she began with great bitterness, to inveigh against the *barbarous brutality of that fellow the Captain*, and the horrible ill-breeding of the English in general; declaring she should make her escape with all expedition from so *beastly a nation*. But nothing can be more strangely absurd, than to hear politeness recommended in language so repugnant to it as that of Madame Duval.

She lamented, very mournfully, the fate of her Lyons silk; and protested she had rather have parted with all the rest of her wardrobe, because it was the first gown she had bought to wear upon leaving off her weeds. She has a very bad cold, and Monsieur Du Bois is so hoarse, he can hardly speak.

She insisted upon my staying with her all day; as she intended, she said, to introduce me to some of my own relations. I would very fain have excused myself, but she did not allow me any choice.

Till the arrival of these relations, one continued series of questions on her side, and of answers on mine, filled up all the time we passed together. Her curiosity was insatiable; she enquired into every action of my life, and every particular that had fallen under my observation in the lives of all I knew. Again, she was so cruel as to avow the most inveterate rancour against the sole benefactor her deserted child and grand-child have met with; and such was the indignation her ingratitude raised, that I would actually have quitted her presence and house, had she not, in a manner the most peremptory, absolute-

ly forbad me. But what, good Heaven! can induce her to such shocking injustice? O, my friend and father! I have no command of myself when this subject is started.

She talked very much of taking me to Paris, and said I greatly wanted the polish of a French education. She lamented that I had been brought up in the country, which, she observed, had given me a very *bumpkinish air*. However, she bad me not despair, for she had known many girls much worse than me, who had become very fine ladies after a few years residence abroad; and she particularly instanced a Miss Polly Moore, daughter of a chandler's-shop woman, who, by an accident not worth relating, happened to be sent to Paris, where, from an awkward ill-bred girl, she so much improved, that she has since been taken for a woman of quality.

The relations to whom she was pleased to introduce me, consisted of a Mr. Branghton, who is her nephew, and three of his children, the eldest of whom is a son, and the two younger are daughters.

Mr. Branghton appears about forty years of age. He does not seem to want a common understanding, though he is very contracted and prejudiced; he has spent his whole time in the city, and I believe feels a great contempt for all who reside elsewhere.

His son seems weaker in his understanding, and more gay in his temper; but his gaiety is that of a foolish overgrown school-boy, whose mirth consists in noise and disturbance. He disdains his father for his close attention to business, and love of money; though he seems himself to have no talents, spirit, or generosity, to make him superior to either. His chief delight appears to be tormenting and ridiculing his sisters; who in return, most heartily despise him.

Miss Branghton, the eldest daughter, is by no means ugly; but looks proud, ill-tempered, and conceited. She hates the city, though without knowing why; for it is easy to discover she has lived no where else.

Miss Polly Branghton is rather pretty, very foolish, very ignorant, very giddy, and, I believe, very good-natured.

The first half-hour was allotted to *making themselves comfortable;* for they complained of having had a very dirty walk, as they came on foot from Snow-Hill, where Mr. Branghton keeps a silversmith's shop; and the young ladies had not only their coats to brush, and shoes to dry, but to adjust their head-dress, which their bonnets had totally discomposed.

The manner in which Madame Duval was pleased to introduce me to this family extremely shocked me. Here, my dears, said she, here's a relation you little thought of: but you must know my poor daughter Caroline had this child after she run away from me,—though I never knew nothing of it, not I, for a long while after; for they took care to keep it a secret from me, though the poor child has never a friend in the world besides.

Miss seems very tender-hearted, aunt, said Miss Polly; and to be sure she's not to blame for her mamma's undutifulness, for she couldn't help it.

Lord, no, answered she, and I never took no notice of it to her: for, indeed, as to that, my own poor daughter wasn't so much to blame as you may think; for she'd never have gone astray if it had not been for that meddling old parson I told you of.

If aunt pleases, said young Mr. Branghton, we'll talk o' somewhat else, for Miss looks very uneasy-like.

The next subject that was chosen was the age of the three young Branghtons and myself. The son is twenty; the daughters upon hearing that I was seventeen, said that was just the age of Miss Polly; but their brother, after a long dispute, proved that she was two years older, to the great anger of both sisters, who agreed that he was very ill-natured and spiteful.

When this point was settled, the question was put, Which was tallest?—We were desired to measure, as the Branghtons were all of different opinions. None of them, however, disputed my being the tallest in the company; but, in regard to one another, they were extremely quarrelsome; the brother insisted upon their measuring *fair*, and not with *heads* and *heels*; but they would by no means consent to lose those privileges of our sex; and therefore the young man was *cast*, as shortest; though he appealed to all present upon the injustice of the decree.

This ceremony over, the young ladies began, very freely, to examine my dress, and to interrogate me concerning it. This apron's your own work, I suppose, Miss? but these sprigs a'n't in fashion now. Pray, if it is not impertinent, what might you give a yard for this lutestring?—Do you make your own caps, Miss?—and many other questions equally interesting and well-bred.

They then asked me *how I liked London?* and whether I should not think the country a very *dull place*, when I returned thither? Miss must try if she can't get a good husband, said Mr. Branghton, and then she may stay and live here.

The next topic was public places, or rather the theatres, for they knew of no other; and the merits and defects of all the actors and actresses were discussed: the young man here took the lead, and seem-

ed to be very conversant on the subject. But during this time, what was my concern, and, suffer me to add, my indignation, when I found, by some words I occasionally heard, that Madame Duval was entertaining Mr. Branghton with all the most secret and cruel particulars of my situation! The eldest daughter was soon drawn to them by the recital; the youngest and the son still kept their places; intending, I believe, to divert me, though the conversation was all their own.

In a few minutes, Miss Branghton, coming suddenly up to her sister, exclaimed, Lord, Polly, only think! Miss never saw her papa!

Lord, how odd! cried the other; why then, Miss, I suppose you wouldn't know him?

This was quite too much for me; I rose hastily, and ran out of the room: but I soon regretted I had so little command of myself; for the two sisters both followed, and insisted upon comforting me, notwithstanding my earnest intreaties to be left alone.

As soon as I returned to the company, Madame Duval said, Why, my dear, what was the matter with you? why did you run away so?

This question almost made me run again, for I knew not how to answer it. But, is it not very extraordinary, that she can put me in situations so shocking, and then wonder to find me sensible of any concern?

Mr. Branghton junior now inquired of me, whether I had seen the Tower, or St. Paul's church? and upon my answering in the negative, they proposed making a party to shew them to me. Among other questions, they also asked, if I had ever seen *such a thing as an opera?* I told them I had. Well, said Mr. Branghton, I never saw one in my life, so long as I've lived in London; and I never desire to see one, if I live here as much longer.

Lord, papa, cried Miss Polly, why not? you might as well for once, for the curiosity of the thing: besides, Miss Pomfret saw one, and she says it was very pretty.

Miss will think us very vulgar, said Miss Branghton, to live in London, and never have been to an opera; but it's no fault of mine, I assure you, Miss, only papa don't like to go.

The result was, that a party was proposed, and agreed to, for some early opportunity. I did not dare contradict them; but I said that my time, while I remained in town, was at the disposal of Mrs. Mirvan. However, I am sure I will not attend them, if I can possibly avoid so doing.

When we parted, Madame Duval desired to see me the next day; and the Branghtons told me, that the first time I went towards Snow-Hill, they should be very glad if I would call upon them.

I wish we may not meet again till that time arrives.

I am sure I shall not be very ambitious of being known to any more of my relations, if they have any resemblance to those whose acquaintance I have been introduced to already.

LETTER XVIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

I HAD just finished my letter to you this morning, when a violent rapping at the door made me run down stairs; and who should I see in the drawing-room, but—Lord Orville!

He was quite alone, for the family had not assembled to breakfast. He inquired first of mine, then of the health of Mrs. and Miss Mirvan, with a

degree of concern that rather surprised me, till he said that he had just been informed of the accident we had met with at Ranelagh. He expressed his sorrow upon the occasion with the utmost politeness, and lamented that he had not been so fortunate as to hear of it in time to offer his services. But I think, he added, Sir Clement Willoughby had the honour of assisting you?

He was with Captain Mirvan, my Lord.

I had heard of his being of your party.

I hope that flighty man has not been telling Lord Orville he only assisted *me!* However, he did not pursue the subject; but said, This accident, though extremely unfortunate, will not, I hope, be the means of frightening you from gracing Ranelagh with your presence in future?

Our time, my Lord, for London, is almost expired already.

Indeed! do you leave town so very soon?

O yes, my Lord, our stay has already exceeded our intentions.

Are you, then, so particularly partial to the country?

We merely came to town, my Lord, to meet Captain Mirvan.

And does Miss Anville feel no concern at the idea of the many mourners her absence will occasion?

O my Lord,—I'm sure you don't think—I stopt there; for, indeed, I hardly knew what I was going to say. My foolish embarrassment, I suppose, was the cause of what followed; for he came to me, and took my hand, saying, I *do* think, that whoever has once seen Miss Anville, must receive an impression never to be forgotten.

This compliment,—from Lord Orville,—so surprised me, that I could not speak; but felt myself

change colour, and stood for some moments silent, and looking down: however, the instant I recollected my situation, I withdrew my hand, and told him that I would see if Mrs. Mirvan was not dressed. He did not oppose me—so away I went.

I met them all on the stairs, and returned with them to breakfast.

I have since been extremely angry with myself for neglecting so excellent an opportunity of apologizing for my behaviour at the ridotto: but, to own the truth, that affair never once occurred to me during the short *tête-à-tête* which we had together. But, if ever we should happen to be so situated again, I will certainly mention it; for I am inexpressibly concerned at the thought of his harbouring an opinion that I am bold or impertinent, and I could almost kill myself for having given him the shadow of a reason for so shocking an idea.

But was it not very odd that he should make me such a compliment? I expected it not from him;—but gallantry, I believe, is common to all men, whatever other qualities they may have in particular.

Our breakfast was the most agreeable meal, if it may be called a *meal*, that we have had since we came to town. Indeed, but for Madame Duval, I should like London extremely.

The conversation of Lord Orville is really delightful. His manners are so elegant, so gentle, so unassuming, that they at once engage esteem, and diffuse complacence. Far from being indolently satisfied with his own accomplishments, as I have already observed many men here are, though without any pretensions to his merit, he is most assiduously attentive to please and to serve all who are in his company; and though his success is invariable, he never manifests the smallest degree of consciousness.

I could wish that *you*, my dearest Sir, knew Lord

Orville, because I am sure you would love him; and I have felt that wish for no other person I have seen since I came to London. I sometimes imagine, that when his youth is flown, his vivacity abated, and his life is devoted to retirement, he will, perhaps, resemble him whom I most love and honour. His present sweetness, politeness, and diffidence, seem to promise in future the same benevolence, dignity, and goodness. But I must not expatiate upon this subject.

When Lord Orville was gone,—and he made but a very short visit,—I was preparing, most reluctantly, to wait upon Madame Duval; but Mrs Mirvan proposed to the Captain, that she should be invited to dinner in Queen-Ann-Street; and he readily consented, for he said he wished to ask after her Lyons negligee.

The invitation is accepted, and we expect her every moment. But to me, it is very strange, that a woman who is the uncontrolled mistress of her time, fortune, and actions, should choose to expose herself voluntarily to the rudeness of a man who is openly determined to make her his sport. But she has very few acquaintance; and, I fancy, scarce knows how to employ herself.

How great is my obligation to Mrs. Mirvan, for bestowing her time in a manner so disagreeable to herself, merely to promote my happiness! Every dispute in which her undeserving husband engages, is productive of pain and uneasiness to herself; of this I am so sensible, that I even besought her not to send to Madame Duval; but she declared she could not bear to have me pass all my time, while in town, with her only. Indeed she could not be more kind to me, were she your daughter.

LETTER XIX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Saturday Morning, April 16.

MADAME Duval was accompanied by Monsieur Du Bois. I am surprised that she should choose to introduce him where he is so unwelcome: and, indeed, it is strange that they should be so constantly together; though I believe I should not have taken notice of it, but that Captain Mirvan is perpetually rallying me upon my *grand-mama's beau.*

They were both received by Mrs. Mirvan with her usual good-breeding; but the Captain, most provokingly, attacked her immediately, saying, Now, Madam, you that have lived abroad, please to tell me this here: Which did you like best, the *warm room* at Ranelagh, or the *cold bath* you went into afterwards? though, I assure you, you look so well, that I should advise you to take another dip.

Ma foi, Sir, cried she, nobody asked for your advice, so you may as well keep it to yourself: besides, it's no such great joke, to be splashed, and to catch cold, and spoil all one's things, whatever you may think of it.

Splashed, quoth-a!—why I thought you were soused all over.—Come, come, don't mince the matter, never spoil a good story; you know you hadn't a dry thread about you—'Fore George, I shall never think on't without hallooing! such a poor forlorn draggletailed—*gentlewoman!* and poor *Monseer* French, here, like a drowned rat, by your side!—

Well, the worse pickle we was in, so much the worser in you not to help us; for you knowed where we were fast enough, because, while I laid in the mud, I'm pretty sure I heard you snigger: so

it's like enough you jostled us down yourself; for Monsieur Du Bois says, that he is sure he had a great jolt given him, or he shouldn't have fell.

The Captain laughed so immoderately, that he really gave me also a suspicion that he was not entirely innocent of the charge: however, he disclaimed it very peremptorily.

Why then, continued she, if you didn't do that, why didn't you come to help us?

Who, I?—what do you suppose I had forgot I was an *Englishman*, a filthy, beastly *Englishman?*

Very well, Sir, very well; but I was a fool to expect any better, for it's all of a piece with the rest; you know, you wanted to fling me out of the coach-window, the very first time ever I see you: but I'll never go to Ranelagh with you no more, that I'm resolved; for I dare say, if the horses had runn'd over me, as I laid in that nastiness, you'd never have stirred a step to save me.

Lord, no, to be sure, Ma'am, not for the world! I know your opinion of our nation too well, to affront you by supposing a *Frenchman* would want *my* assistance to protect you. Did you think that *Monseer* here, and I had changed characters, and that he should pop you into the mud, and I help you out of it? Ha, ha, ha!

O very well, Sir, laugh on, it's like your manners; however, if poor Monsieur Du Bois hadn't met with that unlucky accident himself I shouldn't have wanted nobody's help.

O, I promise you, Madam, you'd never have had mine; I knew my distance better: and as to your being a little ducked, or so, why, to be sure, *Monseer* and you settled that between yourselves, so it was no business of mine.

What, then, I suppose you want to make me believe as Monsieur Du Bois served me that trick o' purpose?

O' purpose! ay, certainly; who ever doubted that? Do you think a *Frenchman* ever made a blunder? If he had been some clumsy-footed *English* fellow, indeed, it might have been accidental: but what the devil signifies all your hopping and capering with your dancing-masters, if you can't balance yourselves upright?

In the midst of this dialogue, Sir Clement Willoughby made his appearance. He affects to enter the house with the freedom of an old acquaintance; and this very *easiness*, which, to me, is astonishing, is what most particularly recommends him to the Captain. Indeed, he seems very successfully to study all the humours of that gentleman.

After having heartily welcomed him, You are just come in time, my boy, said he, to settle a little matter of a dispute between this here gentlewoman and I;—do you know she has been trying to persuade me, that she did not above half like the ducking *Monseer* gave her t'other night?

I should have hoped, said Sir Clement with the utmost gravity, that the friendship subsisting between that lady and gentleman, would have guarded them against any actions professedly disagreeable to each other: but probably, they might not have discussed the matter previously; in which case the gentleman, I must own, seems to have been guilty of inattention, since in my humble opinion, it was his business first to have inquired whether the lady preferred soft or hard ground, before he dropt her.

O very fine, gentlemen, very fine, cried Madame Duval, you may try to set us together by the ears as much as you will; but I'm not such an ignorant person as to be made a fool of so easily; so you needn't talk no more about it, for I sees into your designs.

Monsieur Du Bois, who was just able to discover

the subject upon which the conversation turned, made his defence, in French, with great solemnity: he hoped, he said, that the company would at least acknowledge he did not come from a nation of brutes; and consequently, that to wilfully offend any lady was, to him, utterly impossible; but that, on the contrary, in endeavouring, as was his duty, to save and guard her, he had himself suffered, in a manner which he would forbear to relate, but which, he greatly apprehended, he should feel the ill effects of for many months: and then, with a countenance exceedingly lengthened, he added, that he hoped it would not be attributed to him as national prejudice, when he owned that he must, to the best of his memory, aver, that this unfortunate fall was owing to a sudden but violent push, which, he was shocked to say, some malevolent person, with a design to his injury, must certainly have given him; but whether with a view to mortify him, by making him let the lady fall, or whether merely to spoil his clothes, he could not pretend to determine.

This disputation was, at last, concluded by Mrs. Mirvan's proposing that we should all go to Cox's Museum. Nobody objected, and carriages were immediately ordered.

In our way down stairs, Madame Duval, in a very passionate manner, said *Ma foi*, if I wouldn't give fifty guineas only to know who gave us that shove!

This Museum is very astonishing, and very superb; yet it afforded me but little pleasure, for it is a mere show, though a wonderful one.

Sir Clement Willoughby, in our walk round the room, asked me what my opinion was of this brilliant *spectacle!*

It is very fine, and very ingenious, answered I; and yet—I don't know how it is—but I seem to *miss something.*

Excellently answered! cried he; you have exactly defined my own feelings, though in a manner I should never have arrived at. But I was certain your taste was too well formed, to be pleased at the expense of your understanding.

Pardi, cried Madame Duval, I hope you two is difficult enough! I'm sure if you don't like this you like nothing; for it's the grandest, prettiest, finest sight that ever I see in England.

What, cried the Captain with a sneer, I suppose this may be in your French taste? it's like enough, for it's all *kickshaw* work. But pr'ythee, friend, turning to the person who explained the devices, will you tell me the *use* of all this? for I'm not enough of a conjurer to find it out.

Use, indeed! repeated Madame Duval disdainfully; Lord, if every thing's to be useful!—

Why, Sir, as to that, said our conductor, the ingenuity of the mechanism—the beauty of the workmanship—the—undoubtedly, Sir, any person of taste may easily discern the utility of such extraordinary performances.

Why then, Sir, answered the Captain, your person of taste must be either a coxcomb, or a Frenchman; though, for the matter of that, 'tis the same thing.

Just then our attention was attracted by a pine-apple; which, suddenly opening, discovered a nest of birds, which immediately began to sing. Well, cried Madame Duval, this is prettier than all the rest! I declare in all my travels, I never see nothing eleganter.

Hark ye, friend, said the Captain, hast never another pine-apple?

Sir?——

Because if thou hast, pr'ythee give it us without the birds; for d'ye see, I am no Frenchman, and should relish something more substantial.

This entertainment concluded with a concert of mechanical music: I cannot explain how it was produced, but the effect was pleasing. Madame Duval was in ecstasies; and the Captain flung himself into so many ridiculous distortions, by way of mimicking her, that he engaged the attention of all the company; and, in the midst of the performance of the Coronation Anthem, while Madame Duval was affecting to beat time, and uttering many expressions of delight, he called suddenly for salts, which a lady, apprehending some distress, politely handed to him, and which instantly applying to the nostrils of poor Madame Duval, she involuntarily snuffed up such a quantity, that the pain and surprise made her scream aloud. When she recovered, she reproached him with her usual vehemence; but he protested he had taken that measure out of pure friendship, as he concluded, from her raptures, that she was going into hysterics. This excuse by no means appeased her, and they had a violent quarrel; but the only effect her anger had on the Captain was to increase his diversion. Indeed, he laughs and talks so terribly loud in public, that he frequently makes us ashamed of belonging to him.

Madame Duval, notwithstanding her wrath, made no scruple of returning to dine in Queen-Ann-Street. Mrs. Mirvan had secured places for the play at Drury-Lane Theatre, and, though ever uneasy in her company, she very politely invited Madame Duval to be of our party: however, she had a bad cold and chose to nurse it. I was sorry for her indisposition; but I knew not how to be sorry she did not accompany us, for she is—I must not say what, but very unlike other people.

LETTER XX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

OUR places were in the front row of a side-box. Sir Clement Willoughby, who knew our intention, was at the door of the theatre, and handed us from the carriage.

We had not been seated five minutes before Lord Orville, whom we saw in the stage-box, came to us; and he honoured us with his company all the evening; Miss Mirvan and I both rejoiced that Madame Duval was absent, as we hoped for the enjoyment of some conversation, uninterrupted by her quarrels with the Captain: but I soon found that her presence would have made very little alteration; for so far was I from daring to speak, that I knew not where even to look.

The play was Love for Love; and though it is fraught with wit and entertainment I hope I shall never see it represented again; for it is so extremely indelicate—to use the softest word I can—that Miss Mirvan and I were perpetually out of countenance, and could neither make any observations ourselves, nor venture to listen to those of others. This was the more provoking, as Lord Orville was in excellent spirits, and exceedingly entertaining.

When the play was over, I flattered myself I should be able to look about me with less restraint, as we intended to stay the farce; but the curtain had hardly dropped, when the box-door opened, and in came Mr. Lovel, the man by whose foppery and impertinence I was so much teased at the ball where I first saw Lord Orville.

I turned away my head, and began talking to Miss Mirvan; for I was desirous to avoid speaking to him—but in vain; for, as soon as he had made his com-

pliments to Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby, who returned them very coldly, he bent his head forward and said to me, I hope, Ma'am, you have enjoyed your health since I had the honour—I beg ten thousand pardons, but, I protest I was going to say the honour of *dancing* with you—however, I mean the honour of *seeing* you dance?

He spoke with a self-complacency that convinced me that he had studied this address, by way of making reprisals for my conduct at the ball; I therefore bowed slightly, but made no answer.

After a short silence he again called my attention, by saying, in an easy negligent way, I think, Ma'am, you was never in town before?—No, Sir.

So I did presume. Doubtless, Ma'am, every thing must be infinitely novel to you. Our customs, our manners, and *les étiquettes de nous autres* can have very little resemblance to those you have been used to. I imagine, Ma'am, your retirement is at no very small distance from the capital?

I was so much disconcerted at this sneering speech, that I said not a word; though I ever since thought my vexation both stimulated and delighted him.

The air we breathe here, however, Ma'am, continued he, very conceitedly, though foreign to that you have been accustomed to, has not, I hope, been at variance with your health?

Mr. Lovel, said Lord Orville, could not your *eye* have spared that question?

O, my Lord, answered he, if *health* were the only cause of a lady's bloom, my eye, I grant, had been infallible from the first glance; but—

Come, come, cried Mrs. Mirvan, I must beg no insinuations of that sort; Miss Anville's colour, as you have successfully tried, may, you see, be heightened; but, I assure you, it would be past your skill to lessen it.

'Pon honour, Madam, returned he, you wrong me; I presumed not to infer that *rouge* was the only succedaneum for health; but really I have known so many different causes for a lady's colour, such as flushing—anger—*mauvaise honte*—and so forth, that I never dare decide to which it may be owing.

As to such causes as them there, cried the Captain, they must belong to those that they keep company with.

Very true, Captain, said Sir Clement; the natural complexion has nothing to do with occasional sallies of the passions, or any accidental causes.

No, truly, returned the Captain: for now here's me, why I look like any other man, just now; and yet, if you were to put me in a passion, 'fore George, you'd soon see me have as fine a high colour as any painted Jezebel in all this place, be she never so bedaubed.

But, said Lord Orville, the difference of natural and of artificial colour seems to me very easily discerned; that of nature is mottled, and varying; that of art *set*, and *too* smooth; it wants that animation, that glow, that *indescribable something*, which even now that I see it, wholly surpasses all my powers of expression.

Your Lordship, said Sir Clement, is universally acknowledged to be a *connoisseur* in beauty.

And you, Sir Clement, returned he, an *enthusiast*.

I am proud to own it, cried Sir Clement; in such a cause, and before such objects, enthusiasm is simply the consequence of not being blind.

Pr'ythee, a truce with all this palavering, cried the Captain: the women are vain enough already; no need for to puff 'em up more.

We must all submit to the commanding officer, said Sir Clement: therefore, let us call another

subject. Pray, ladies, how have you been entertained with the play?

Want of entertainment, said Mrs. Mirvan, is its least fault; but I own there are objections to it, which I should be glad to see removed.

I could have ventured to answer for the ladies, said Lord Orville, since I am sure this is not a play that can be honoured with their approbation.

What, I suppose it is not sentimental enough! cried the Captain, or else it is too good for them; for I'll maintain it's one of the best comedies in our language, and has more wit in one scene than there is in all the new plays put together.

For my part, said Mr. Lovel, I confess I seldom listen to the players; one has so much to do, in looking about and finding out one's acquaintance, that really one has no time to mind the stage. Pray, most affectedly fixing his eyes upon a diamond ring on his little finger, pray,—what was the play to-night?

Why, what the D—l, cried the Captain, do you come to the play without knowing what it is?

O yes, Sir, yes, very frequently; I have no time to read play-bills; one merely comes to meet one's friends, and shew that one's alive.

Ha, ha, ha!—and so, cried the Captain, it costs you five-shillings a-night just to shew you're alive! Well, 'faith, my friends should all think me dead and under ground before I'd be at that expence for 'em. Howsomever,—this here you may take from me—they'll find you out fast enough if you have any thing to give 'em.—And so you've been here all this time, and don't know what the play was?

Why, really, Sir, a play requires so much attention,—it is scarce possible to keep awake if one listens;—for, indeed, by the time it is evening, one

has been so fatigued with dining,—or wine,—or the house,—or studying,—that it is—it is perfectly an impossibility. But, now I think of it, I believe I have a bill in my pocket; O, ay, here it is,—Love for Love, ay,—true, ha, ha!—how could I be so stupid!

O, easily enough, as to that, I warrant you, said the Captain; but, by my soul, this is one of the best jokes I ever heard! Come to a play, and not know what it is!—Why, I suppose you wouldn't have found it out, if they had *fob'd* you off with a scraping of fiddlers, or an opera?—Ha, ha, ha!—Why now I should have thought you might have taken some notice of one *Mr. Tattle* that is in this play?

The sarcasm, which caused a general smile, made him colour: but turning to the Captain with a look of conceit, which implied that he had a retort ready, he said, Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask—What do *you* think of *one Mr. Ben*, who is also in this play?

The Captain, regarding him with the utmost contempt, answered in a loud voice, Think of him!—why, I think he is a *man!* And then, staring full in his face, he struck his cane on the ground with a violence that made him start. He did not, however, choose to take any notice of this; but, having bit his nails some time in manifest confusion, he turned very quick to me, and in a sneering tone of voice, said, For my part, I was most struck with the *country* young lady, Miss Prue; pray what do *you* think of her, Ma'am?

Indeed, Sir, cried I, very much provoked, I think—that is, I do not think any thing about her.

Well, really, Ma'am, you prodigiously surprise me! *mais, apparemment ce n'est qu' une façon de parler?*—though I should beg your pardon, for probably you do not understand French?

I made no answer, for I thought his rudeness in-

tolerable; but Sir Clement, with great warmth, said, I am surprised that you can suppose such an object as Miss Prue would engage the attention of Miss Anville even for a moment.

O, Sir, returned this fop, 'tis the first character in the piece!—so well drawn!—so much the thing! —such true country breeding—such rural ignorance! ha, ha, ha!—'tis most admirably hit off 'pon honour!

I could almost have cried, that such impertinence should be levelled at me; and yet, chagrined as I was, I could never behold Lord Orville and this man at the same time, and feel any regret for the cause I had given of displeasure.

The only female in the play, said Lord Orville, worthy of being mentioned to these ladies is Angelica.

Angelica, cried Sir Clement, is a noble girl; she tries her lover severely, but she rewards him generously.

Yet, in a trial so long, said Mrs. Mirvan, there seems rather too much consciousness of her power.

Since my opinion has the sanction of Mrs. Mirvan's, added Lord Orville, I will venture to say, that Angelica bestows her hand rather with the air of a benefactress, than with the tenderness of a mistress. Generosity without delicacy, like wit without judgment, generally gives as much pain as pleasure. The uncertainty in which she keeps Valentine, and her manner of trifling with his temper, give no very favourable idea of her own.

Well, my Lord, said Mr. Lovel, it must, however, be owned, that uncertainty is not the *ton* among our ladies at present; nay, indeed, I think they say,—though 'faith, taking a pinch of snuff, I hope it is not true—but they say, that *we* now are most shy and backward.

The curtain then drew up, and our conversation ceased. Mr. Lovel, finding we chose to attend to the players, left the box. How strange it is, Sir, that this man, not contented with the large share of foppery and nonsense which he has from nature, should think proper to affect yet more! for what he said of Tattle and of Miss Prue, convinced me that he really had listened to the play, though he was so ridiculous and foolish as to pretend ignorance.

But how malicious and impertinent is this creature to talk to me in such a manner! I am sure I hope I shall never see him again. I should have despised him heartily as a fop, had he never spoken to me at all; but now, that he thinks proper to resent his supposed ill-usage, I am really quite afraid of him.

The entertainment was, The Deuce is in him; which Lord Orville observed to be the most finished and elegant *petite piece* that was ever written in English.

In our way home, Mrs. Mirvan put me into some consternation by saying, it was evident, from the resentment which this Mr. Lovel harbours of my conduct, that he would think it a provocation sufficiently important for a duel, if his courage equalled his wrath.

I am terrified at the very idea. Good Heaven! that a man so weak and frivolous should be so revengeful! However, if bravery would have excited him to affront Lord Orville, how much reason have I to rejoice that cowardice makes him contented with venting his spleen upon me! But we shall leave town soon, and, I hope, see him no more.

It was some consolation to me to hear from Miss Mirvan, that, while he was speaking to me so cavalierly, Lord Orville regarded him with great indignation.

But, really, I think there ought to be a book of the laws and customs *à-la-mode*, presented to all young people upon their first introduction into public company.

To-night we go to the Opera, where I expect very great pleasure. We shall have the same party as at the play; for Lord Orville said he should be there, and would look for us.

LETTER XXI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

I HAVE a volume to write of the adventures of yesterday.

In the afternoon,—at Berry Hill I should have said the *evening*, for it was almost six o'clock,—while Miss Mirvan and I were dressing for the Opera, and in high spirits from the expectation of great entertainment and pleasure, we heard a carriage stop at the door, and concluded that Sir Clement Willoughby, with his usual assiduity, was come to attend us to the Haymarket; but, in a few moments, what was our surprise to see our chamber door flung open, and the two Miss Branghtons enter the room! They advanced to me with great familiarity, saying, How do you do, Cousin?—so we've caught you at the glass! —well, I'm determined I'll tell my brother of that!

Miss Mirvan, who had never before seen them, and could not at first imagine who they were, looked so much astonished, that I was ready to laugh myself, till the eldest said, We're come to take you to the Opera, Miss; papa and my brother are below, and we are to call for your grand-mamma as we go along.

I am very sorry, answered I, that you should have taken so much trouble, as I am engaged already.

Engaged! Lord, Miss, never mind that, cried the youngest; this young lady will make your excuses, I dare say; it's only doing as one would be done by, you know.

Indeed, Ma'am, said Miss Mirvan, I shall myself be very sorry to be deprived of Miss Anville's company this evening.

Well, Miss, that is not so very good-natured in you, said Miss Branghton, considering we only come to give our cousin pleasure; it's no good to us; it's all upon her account; for we came I don't know how much round about to take her up.

I am extremely obliged to you, said I, and very sorry you have lost so much time: But I cannot possibly help it, for I engaged myself without knowing you would call.

Lord, what signifies that? said Miss Polly, you're no old maid, and so you needn't be so very formal: Besides, I dare say those you are engaged to a'n't half so near related to you as we are.

I must beg you not to press me any further, for I assure you it is not in my power to attend you.

Why, we came all out of the city on purpose: besides, your grand-mamma expects you;—and pray what are we to say to her?

Tell her, if you please, that I am much concerned, —but that I am pre-engaged.

And who to? demanded the abrupt Miss Branghton.

To Mrs. Mirvan,—and a large party.

And, pray, what are you all going to do, that it would be such a mighty matter for you to come along with us?

We are all going to—to the Opera.

O dear, if that be all, why can't we go all together?

I was extremely disconcerted at this forward and ignorant behaviour, and yet their rudeness very much lessened my concern at refusing them. Indeed, their dress was such as would have rendered their scheme of accompanying our party impracticable, even if I had desired it; and this, as they did not themselves find out, I was obliged, in terms the least mortifying I could think of, to tell them.

They were very much chagrined, and asked where I should sit.

In the pit, answered I.

In the pit! repeated Miss Branghton; well, really, I must own, I should never have supposed that my gown was not good enough for the pit: but come, Polly, let's go; if Miss does not think us fine enough for her, why to be sure she may choose.

Surprised at this ignorance, I would have explained to them, that the pit at the Opera required the same dress as the boxes; but they were so much affronted they would not hear me; and, in great displeasure, left the room, saying, they would not have troubled me, only they thought I should not be so proud with my own relations, and that they had at least as good a right to my company as strangers.

I endeavoured to apologize, and would have sent a long message to Madame Duval: but they hastened away without listening to me; and I could not follow them down stairs, because I was not dressed. The last words I heard them say were, Well, her grand-mamma will be in a fine passion, that's one good thing.

Though I was extremely mad at this visit, yet I so heartily rejoiced at their going, that I would not suffer myself to think gravely about it.

Soon after, Sir Clement actually came, and we all went down stairs. Mrs. Mirvan ordered tea: and we were engaged in a very lively conversation, when the servant announced Madame Duval, who instantly followed him into the room.

Her face was the colour of scarlet, and her eyes sparkled with fury. She came up to me with a hasty step, saying, So, Miss, you refuses to come to me, do you? And pray who are you, to dare to disobey me?

I was quite frightened;—I made no answer;—I even attempted to rise, and could not, but sat still, mute and motionless.

Every body but Miss Mirvan seemed in the utmost astonishment; and the Captain rising and approaching Madame Duval, with a voice of authority, said, Why, how now, Mrs. Turkey-cock, what's put you into this here fluster?

It's nothing to you, answered she, so you may as well hold your tongue; for I sha'n't be called to no account by you, I assure you.

There you're out, Madam Fury, returned he; for you must know, I never suffer any body to be in a passion in my house, but myself.

But you *shall*, cried she, in a great rage; for I'll be in as great a passion as ever I please, without asking your leave: so don't give yourself no more airs about it. And as for you, Miss, again advancing to me, I order you to follow me this moment, or else I'll make you repent it all your life. And, with these words, she flung out of the room.

I was in such extreme terror, at being addressed and threatened in a manner to which I am so wholly unused, that I almost thought I should have fainted.

Don't be alarmed, my love, cried Mrs. Mirvan, but stay where you are, and I will follow Madame Duval, and try to bring her to reason.

Miss Mirvan took my hand, and most kindly endeavoured to raise my spirits. Sir Clement, too, approached me, with an air so interested in my distress, that I could not but feel myself obliged to him; and, taking my other hand, said, For Heaven's sake, my dear Madam, compose yourself: surely the violence of such a wretch ought merely to move your contempt; she can have no right, I imagine, to lay her commands upon you, and I only wish that you would allow *me* to speak to her.

O no! not for the world!—indeed, I believe,—I am afraid—I had better follow her.

Follow her! Good God, my dear Miss Anville, would you trust yourself with a mad woman? for what else can you call a creature whose passions are so insolent? No, no; send her word at once to leave the house, and tell her you desire that she will never see you again.

O Sir! you don't know who you talk of!—it would ill become me to send Madame Duval such a message.

But *why*, cried he, (looking very inquisitive,) *why* should you scruple to treat her as she deserves?

I then found that his aim was to discover the nature of her connection with me; but I felt so much ashamed of my near relationship to her, that I could not persuade myself to answer him, and only intreated that he would leave her to Mrs. Mirvan, who just then entered the room.

Before she could speak to me, the Captain called out, Well, Goody, what have you done with Madame French? is she cooled a little? cause if she ben't

I've just thought of a most excellent device to bring her to.

My dear Evelina, said Mrs. Mirvan, I have been vainly endeavouring to appease her; I pleaded your engagement, and promised your future attendance: but I am sorry to say, my love, that I fear her rage will end in a total breach (which I think you had better avoid) if she is any further opposed.

Then I will go to her, Madam, cried I; and, indeed, it is now no matter, for I should not be able to recover my spirits sufficiently to enjoy much pleasure *any* where this evening.

Sir Clement began a very warm expostulation and intreaty, that I would not go; but I begged him to desist, and told him, very honestly, that, if my compliance were not indispensably necessary, I should require no persuasion to stay. He then took my hand, to lead me down stairs; but the Captain desired him to be quiet, saying he would 'squire me himself, because, he added, (exultingly rubbing his hands,) I have a wipe ready for the old lady, which may serve her to *chew* as she goes along.

We found her in the parlour. O, you're come at last, Miss, are you?—fine airs you give yourself, indeed! —*ma foi*, if you hadn't come, you might have staid, I assure you, and have been a beggar for your pains.

Heyday, Madame, cried the Captain, (prancing forward, with a look of great glee) what, a'n't you got out of that there passion yet? why then, I'll tell you what to do to cool yourself, call upon your old friend, *Monseer* Slippery, who was with you at Ranelagh, and give my service to him, and tell him, if he sets any store by your health, that I desire he'll give you such another souse as he did before: he'll know what I mean, and I'll warrant you he'll do't for my sake.

Let him if he dares! cried Madame Duval; but I sha'n't stay to answer you no more; you are a vulgar fellow;—and so, child, let us leave him to himself.

Hark ye, Madam, cried the Captain, you'd best not call names; because, d'ye see, if you do, I shall make bold to show you the door.

She changed colour, and saying, *Pardi*, I can show it myself, hurried out of the room, and I followed her into a hackney-coach. But before we drove off, the Captain, looking out of the parlour window, called out, D'ye hear, Madam, don't forget my message to *Monseer*.

You will believe our ride was not the most agreeable in the world; indeed, it would be difficult to say which was least pleased, Madame Duval or me, though the reasons of our discontent were so different: however, Madame Duval soon got the start of me; for we had hardly turned out of Queen-Ann-Street, when a man, running full speed, stopt the coach. He came up to the window, and I saw he was the Captain's servant. He had a broad grin on his face, and panted for breath. Madame Duval demanded his business: Madam, answered he, my master desires his compliments to you, and—and—and he says he wishes it well over with you. He! he! he!—

Madame Duval instantly darted forward, and gave him a violent blow on the face; Take that back for your answer, sirrah, cried she, and learn to grin at your betters another time. Coachman, drive on!

The servant was in a violent passion, and swore terribly; but we were soon out of hearing.

The rage of Madame Duval was greater than ever; and she inveighed against the Captain with such fury, that I was even apprehensive she would

have returned to his house, purposely to reproach him, which she repeatedly threatened to do; nor would she, I believe, have hesitated a moment, but that, notwithstanding her violence, he has really made her afraid of him.

When we came to her lodgings we found all the Branghtons in the passage, impatiently waiting for us with the door open.

Only see, here's Miss! cried the brother.

Well, I declare I thought as much! said the younger sister.

Why, Miss, said Mr. Branghton, I think you might as well have come with your cousins at once; it's throwing money in the dirt, to pay two coaches for one fare.

Lord, father, cried the son, make no words about that; for I'll pay for the coach that Miss had.

O, I know very well, answered Mr. Branghton, that you're always more ready to spend than to earn.

I then interfered, and begged that I might myself be allowed to pay the fare, as the expence was incurred upon my account: they all said *no*, and proposed that the same coach should carry us to the Opera.

While this passed, the Miss Branghtons were examining my dress, which, indeed, was very improper for my company; and as I was extremely unwilling to be so conspicuous amongst them, I requested Madame Duval to borrow a hat or bonnet for me of the people of the house. But she never wears either herself, and thinks them very *English* and barbarous; therefore she insisted that I should go full dressed, as I had prepared myself for the pit, though I made many objections.

We were then all crowded into the same carriage; but when we arrived at the opera-house, I contrived to pay the coachman. They made a

great many speeches; but Mr. Branghton's reflection had determined me not to be indebted to him.

If I had not been too much chagrined to laugh, I should have been extremely diverted at their ignorance of whatever belongs to an opera. In the first place they could not tell at what door we ought to enter, and we wandered about for some time, without knowing which way to turn: they did not choose to apply to me, though I was the only person of the party who had ever before been at an opera; because they were unwilling to suppose that their *country cousin*, as they were pleased to call me, should be better acquainted with any London public place than themselves. I was very indifferent and careless upon the subject; but not a little uneasy at finding that my dress, so different from that of the company to which I belonged, attracted general notice and observation.

In a short time, however, we arrived at one of the door-keeper's *bars*. Mr. Branghton demanded for what part of the house they took money? They answered, the pit; and regarded us all with great earnestness. The son then advancing, said, Sir, if you please, I beg that I may treat Miss.

We'll settle that another time, answered Mr. Branghton, and put down a guinea.

Two tickets of admission were given to him.

Mr. Branghton, in his turn, now stared at the door-keeper, and demanded what he meant by giving him only two tickets for a guinea.

Only two, Sir! said the man; why, don't you know that the tickets are half-a-guinea each?

Half-a-guinea each! repeated Mr. Branghton, why I never heard of such a thing in my life! And pray, Sir, how many will they admit?

Just as usual, Sir, one person each.

But one person for half-a-guinea!—why, I only want to sit in the pit, friend.

Had not the ladies better sit in the gallery, Sir; for they'll hardly choose to go into the pit with their hats on?

O, as to that, cried Miss Branghton, if our hats are too high, we'll take them off when we get in. I sha'n't mind it, for I did my hair on purpose.

Another party then approaching, the door-keeper could no longer attend to Mr. Branghton; who, taking up the guinea, told him it should be long enough before he'd see it again, and walked away.

The young ladies, in some confusion, expressed their surprise that their *papa* should not know the Opera prices, which, for their parts, they had read in the papers a thousand times.

The price of stocks, said he, is enough for me to see after; and I took it for granted it was the same thing here as at the play-house.

I knew well enough what the price was, said the son; but I would not speak, because I thought perhaps they'd take less, as we're such a large party.

The sisters both laughed very contemptuously at this idea, and asked him if he ever heard of *people's abating* any thing at a public place?

I don't know whether I have or no, answered he; but I am sure if they would, you'd like it so much the worse.

Very true, Tom, cried Mr. Branghton: tell a woman that any thing is reasonable, and she'll be sure to hate it.

Well, said Miss Polly, I hope that Aunt and Miss will be of our side, for papa always takes part with Tom.

Come, come, cried Madame Duval, if you stand talking here, we sha'n't get no place at all.

Mr. Branghton then inquired the way to the gallery; and when we came to the door-keeper, demanded what was to pay.

The usual price, Sir, said the man.

Then give me change, cried Mr. Branghton, again putting down his guinea.

For how many, Sir?

Why—let's see,——for six.

For, six, Sir? why you've given me but a guinea.

But a guinea! why, how much would you have? I suppose it i'n't half-a-guinea a piece here too?

No, Sir, only five shillings.

Mr. Branghton again took up his unfortunate guinea, and protested he would submit to no such imposition. I then proposed that we should return home, but Madame Duval would not consent; and we were conducted, by a woman who sells books of the opera, to another gallery-door, where after some disputing, Mr. Branghton at last paid, and we all went up stairs.

Madame Duval complained very much of the trouble of going so high; but Mr. Branghton desired her not to hold the place too cheap; for, whatever you think, cried he, I assure you I paid pit price; so don't suppose I come here to save my money.

Well, to be sure, said Miss Branghton, there's no judging of a place by the outside, else, I must needs say, there's nothing very extraordinary in the staircase.

But, when we entered the gallery, their amazement and disappointment became general. For a few instants they looked at one another without speaking, and then they all broke silence at once.

Lord, papa, exclaimed Miss Polly; why, you have brought us to the one-shilling gallery!

I'll be glad to give you two shillings, though, answered he, to pay. I was never so fooled out of my money before, since the hour of my birth.

Either the door-keeper's a knave, or this is the greatest imposition that ever was put upon the public.

Ma foi, cried Madame Duval, I never sat in such a mean place in all my life;—why, it's as high—we sha'n't see nothing.

I thought at the time, said Mr. Branghton, that three shillings was an exorbitant price for a place in the gallery; but as we'd been asked so much at the other doors, why I paid it without many words; but then, to be sure, thinks I, it can never be like any other gallery, we shall see some *crincum crankum* or other for our money; but I find it's as arrant a take-in as ever I met with.

Why, it's as like the twelve-penny gallery at Drury-Lane, cried the son, as two peas are to one another. I never knew father so bit before.

Lord, said Miss Branghton, I thought it would have been quite a fine place,—all over, I don't know what,—and done quite in taste.

In this manner they continued to express their dissatisfaction till the curtain drew up; after which their observations were very curious. They made no allowance for the customs, or even for the language, of another country; but formed all their remarks upon comparisons with the English theatre.

Notwithstanding my vexation at having been forced into a party so very disagreeable, and that too, from one so much—so very much the contrary—yet would they have suffered me to listen, I should have forgotten every thing unpleasant, and felt nothing but delight in hearing the sweet voice of Signor Millico, the first singer; but they tormented me with continual talking.

What a jabbering they make! cried Mr. Branghton, there's no knowing a word they say. Pray, what's the reason they can't as well sing in

English?—but I suppose the fine folks would not like it, if they could understand it.

How unnatural their action is! said the son; why, now, who ever saw an Englishman put himself in such out-of-the-way postures?

For my part, said Miss Polly, I think it's very pretty, only I don't know what it means.

Lord, what does that signify? cried her sister; mayn't one like a thing without being so very particular?—You may see that Miss likes it, and I don't suppose she knows more of the matter than we do.

A gentleman, soon after, was so obliging as to make room in the front row for Miss Branghton and me. We had no sooner seated ourselves, than Miss Branghton exclaimed, Good gracious! only see!—why, Polly, all the people in the pit are without hats, dressed like any thing!

Lord, so they are, cried Miss Polly; well, I never saw the like!—it's worth coming to the Opera, if one saw nothing else.

I was then able to distinguish the happy party I had left; and I saw that Lord Orville had seated himself next to Mrs. Mirvan. Sir Clement had his eyes perpetually cast towards the five-shilling gallery, where I suppose he concluded that we were seated: however, before the opera was over, I have reason to believe that he had discovered me, high and distant as I was from him. Probably he distinguished me by my head-dress.

At the end of the first act, as the green curtain dropped to prepare for the dance, they imagined that the opera was done; and Mr. Branghton expressed great indignation that he had been *tricked* out of his money with so little trouble. Now, if any Englishman was to do such an impudent thing as this, said he, why, he'd be pelted;—but here,

one of these outlandish gentry may do just what he pleases, and come on, and squeak out a song or two, and then pocket your money without further ceremony.

However, so determined he was to be dissatisfied, that before the conclusion of the third act he found still more fault with the opera for being too long; and wondered whether they thought their singing good enough to serve us for supper.

During the symphony of a song of Signor Millico's, in the second act, young Mr. Branghton said, It's my belief that that fellow's going to sing another song! why there's nothing but singing!—I wonder when they'll speak.

This song, which was slow and pathetic, caught all my attention, and I lean'd my head forward to avoid hearing their observations, that I might listen without interruption: but upon turning round, when the song was over, I found that I was the object of general diversion to the whole party; for the Miss Branghtons were tittering, and the two gentlemen making signs and faces at me, implying their contempt of my affectation.

This discovery determined me to appear as inattentive as themselves; but I was very much provoked at being thus prevented enjoying the only pleasure, which, in such a party, was within my power.

So, Miss, said Mr. Branghton, you're quite in the fashion, I see; so you like operas? well, I'm not so polite; I can't like nonsense, let it be never so much the taste.

But pray, Miss, said the son, what makes that fellow look so doleful while he is singing?

Probably because the character he performs is in distress.

Why, then, I think he might as well let alone

singing till he's in better cue: it's out of all nature for a man to be piping when he's in distress. For my part, I never sing but when I'm merry; yet I love a song as well as most people.

When the curtain dropt they all rejoiced.

How do *you* like it?—and how do *you* like it? passed from one to another with looks of the utmost contempt. As for me, said Mr. Branghton, they've caught me once; but if ever they do again I'll give 'em leave to sing me to Bedlam for my pains: for such a heap of stuff never did I hear: there isn't one ounce of sense in the whole opera, nothing but one continued squeaking and squalling from beginning to end.

If I had been in the pit, said Madame Duval, I should have liked it vastly, for music is my passion; but sitting in such a place as this, is quite unbearable.

Miss Branghton, looking at me, declared, that she was not *genteel* enough to admire it.

Miss Polly confessed, that, if they would but sing *English*, she would like it *very well.*

The brother wished he could raise a riot in the house, because then he might get his money again.

And finally, they all agreed that it was *monstrous dear.*

During the last dance I perceived standing near the gallery-door, Sir Clement Willoughby. I was extremely vexed, and would have given the world to have avoided being seen by him: my chief objection was, from the apprehension that he would hear Miss Branghton call me *cousin*—I fear you will think this London journey has made me grow very proud; but indeed this family is so low-bred and vulgar, that I should be equally ashamed of such a connection in the country, or any where. And really I had already been so much chagrined that Sir

Clement had been a witness of Madame Duval's power over me, that I could not bear to be exposed to any further mortification.

As the seats cleared, by parties going away, Sir Clement approached nearer to us. The Miss Branghtons observed with surprise, what a fine gentleman was come into the gallery; and they gave me great reason to expect, that they would endeavour to attract his notice, by familiarity with me, whenever he should join us; and so I formed a sort of plan to prevent any conversation. I'm afraid you will think it wrong; and so I do myself now;—but at the time, I only considered how I might avoid immediate humiliation.

As soon as he was within two seats of us, he spoke to me: I am very happy, Miss Anville, to have found you, for the Ladies below have each an humble attendant, and therefore I am come to offer my services here.

Why then, cried I (not without hesitating) if you please,—I will join them.

Will you allow me the honour of conducting you? cried he eagerly; and instantly taking my hand, he would have marched away with me: but I turned to Madame Duval, and said, As our party is so large, Madam, if you will give me leave, I will go down to Mrs. Mirvan, that I may not crowd you in the coach.

And then without waiting for an answer, I suffered Sir Clement to hand me out of the gallery.

Madame Duval, I doubt not, will be very angry; and so I am with myself now, and therefore I cannot be surprised: but Mr. Branghton, I am sure, will easily comfort himself, in having escaped the additional coach-expense of carrying me to Queen-Ann-Street: as to his daughters, they had no time to speak; but I saw they were in utter amazement.

My intention was to join Mrs. Mirvan, and accompany her home. Sir Clement was in high spirits and good humour; and all the way we went, I was fool enough to rejoice in secret at the success of my plan; nor was it till I got down stairs, and amidst the servants, that any difficulty occurred to me of meeting with my friends.

I then asked Sir Clement, how I should contrive to acquaint Mrs. Mirvan that I had left Madame Duval?

I fear it will be almost impossible to find her, answered he; but you have no objection to permitting me to see you safe home.

He then desired his servant, who was waiting, to order his chariot to draw up.

This quite startled me; I turned to him hastily, and said that I could not think of going away without Mrs. Mirvan.

But how can we meet with her? cried he; you will not choose to go into the pit yourself; I cannot send a servant there; and it is impossible for *me* to go and leave you alone.

The truth of this was indisputable, and totally silenced me. Yet, as soon as I could recollect myself, I determined not to go into his chariot, and told him I believed I had best return to my party up stairs.

He would not hear of this; and earnestly intreated me not to withdraw the trust I had reposed in him.

While he was speaking, I saw Lord Orville, with several ladies and gentlemen, coming from the pit passage: unfortunately he saw me too, and, leaving his company, advanced instantly towards me, and, with an air and voice of surprise, said, Good God, do I see Miss Anville!

I now most severely felt the folly of my plan, and the awkwardness of my situation: however, I has-

tened to tell him, though in a hesitating manner, that I was waiting for Mrs. Mirvan; but what was my disappointment, when he acquainted me that she was already gone home!

I was inexpressibly distressed; to suffer Lord Orville to think me satisfied with the single protection of Sir Clement Willoughby, I could not bear; yet I was more than ever averse to returning to a party which I dreaded his seeing. I stood some moments in suspense, and could not help exclaiming, Good Heaven, what can I do!

Why, my dear Madam, cried Sir Clement, should you be thus uneasy?—you will reach Queen-Ann-Street almost as soon as Mrs. Mirvan, and I am sure you cannot doubt being as safe.

I made no answer, and Lord Orville then said, My coach is here; and my servants are ready to take any commands Miss Anville will honour me with for them. I shall myself go home in a chair, and therefore——

How grateful did I feel for a proposal so considerate, and made with so much delicacy! I should gladly have accepted it, had I been permitted, but Sir Clement would not let him even finish his speech: he interrupted him with evident displeasure, and said, My Lord, my own chariot is now at the door.

And just then the servant came and told him the carriage was ready. He begged to have the honour of conducting me to it, and would have taken my hand; but I drew it back, saying, I can't—I can't indeed! pray, go by yourself—and as to me, let me have a chair.

Impossible, cried he with vehemence, I cannot think of trusting you with strange chairmen,—I cannot answer it to Mrs. Mirvan;—come, dear Madam, we shall be home in five minutes.

Again I stood suspended. With what joy would

I then have compromised with my pride, to have been once more with Madame Duval and the Branghtons, provided I had not met with Lord Orville! However, I flatter myself that he not only saw but pitied my embarrassment; for he said in a tone of voice unusually softened, To offer my services in the presence of Sir Clement Willoughby would be superfluous; but I hope I need not assure Miss Anville how happy it would make me to be of the least use to her.

I courtesied my thanks. Sir Clement, with great earnestness, pressed me to go; and while I was thus uneasily deliberating what to do, the dance, I suppose, finished, for the people crowded down stairs. Had Lord Orville then repeated his offer, I would have accepted it, notwithstanding Sir Clement's repugnance; but I fancy he thought it would be impertinent. In a very few minutes I heard Madame Duval's voice, as she descended from the gallery. Well, cried I hastily, if I must go——I stopt; but Sir Clement immediately handed me into his chariot, called out, Queen-Ann-Street, and then jumped in himself. Lord Orville, with a bow and a half smile, wished me good night.

My concern was so great at being seen and left by Lord Orville in so strange a situation, that I should have been best pleased to have remained wholly silent during our ride home; but Sir Clement took care to prevent that.

He began by making many complaints of my unwillingness to trust myself with him, and begged to know what could be the reason? This question so much embarrassed me, that I could not tell what to answer; but only said, that I was sorry to have taken up so much of his time.

O Miss Anville, cried he, taking my hand, if you knew with what transport I would dedicate to you

not only the present but all the future time allotted to me, you would not injure me by making such an apology.

I could not think of a word to say to this, nor to a great many other equally fine speeches with which he ran on; though I would fain have withdrawn my hand, and made almost continual attempts; but in vain, for he actually grasped it between both his, without any regard to my resistance.

Soon after, he said that he believed the coachman was going the wrong way; and he called to his servant, and gave him directions. Then again addressing himself to me, How often, how assiduously have I sought an opportunity of speaking to you, without the presence of that brute, Captain Mirvan! Fortune has now kindly favoured me with one; and permit me, again seizing my hand, permit me to use it in telling you that I adore you.

I was quite thunderstruck at this abrupt and unexpected declaration. For some moments I was silent; but when I recovered from my surprise, I said, Indeed, Sir, if you were determined to make me repent leaving my own party so foolishly, you have very well succeeded.

My dearest life, cried he, is it possible you can be so cruel? Can your nature and your countenance be so totally opposite? Can the sweet bloom upon those charming cheeks, which appears as much the result of good-humour as of beauty—

O, Sir, cried I, interrupting him, this is very fine, but I had hoped we had had enough of this sort of conversation at the Ridotto, and I did not expect you would so soon resume it.

What I then said, my sweet reproacher, was the effect of a mistaken, a profane idea, that your understanding held no competition with your beauty; but now, now that I find you equally incomparable in

both, all words, all powers of speech, are too feeble to express the admiration I feel of your excellences.

Indeed, cried I, if your thoughts had any connection with your language, you would never suppose that I could give credit to praise so very much above my desert.

This speech, which I made very gravely, occasioned still stronger protestations; which he continued to pour forth, and I continued to disclaim, till I began to wonder that we were not in Queen-Ann-Street, and begged he would desire the coachman to drive faster.

And does this little moment, cried he, which is the first of happiness I have ever known, does it already appear so very long to you?

I am afraid the man has mistaken the way, answered I, or else we should ere now have been at our journey's end. I must beg you will speak to him.

And can you think me so much my own enemy! —if my good genius has inspired the man with a desire of prolonging my happiness, can you expect that I should counteract its indulgence?

I now began to apprehend that he had himself ordered the man to go a wrong way; and I was so much alarmed at the idea, that, the very instant it occurred to me, I let down the glass, and made a sudden effort to open the chariot-door myself, with a view of jumping into the street; but he caught hold of me, exclaiming, For Heaven's sake, what is the matter?

I—I don't know, cried I (quite out of breath), but I am sure the man goes wrong; and if you will not speak to him, I am determined I will get out myself.

You amaze me, answered he (still holding me), I cannot imagine what you apprehend. Surely you can have no doubts of my honour?

He drew me towards him as he spoke. I was frightened dreadfully, and could hardly say, No, Sir, no,—none at all: only Mrs. Mirvan,—I think she will be uneasy.

Whence this alarm, my dearest angel?—what can you fear?—My life is at your devotion, and can you, then, doubt my protection?

And so saying, he passionately kissed my hand.

Never, in my whole life, have I been so terrified. I broke forcibly from him, and, putting my head out of the window, called aloud to the man to stop. Where we then were, I know not; but I saw not a human being, or I should have called for help.

Sir Clement, with great earnestness, endeavoured to appease and compose me: If you do not intend to murder me, cried I; for mercy's, for pity's sake, let me get out!

Compose your spirits, my dearest life, cried he, and I will do every thing you would have me. And then he called to the man himself, and bid him make haste to Queen-Ann-Street. This stupid fellow, continued he, has certainly mistaken my orders; but I hope you are now fully satisfied.

I made no answer, but kept my head at the window, watching which way he drove, but without any comfort to myself, as I was quite unacquainted with either the right or the wrong.

Sir Clement now poured forth abundant protestations of honour, and assurances of respect, intreating my pardon for having offended me, and beseeching my good opinion: but I was quite silent, having too much apprehension to make reproaches, and too much anger to speak without.

In this manner we went through several streets, till at last, to my great terror, he suddenly ordered the man to stop, and said, Miss Anville, we are now within twenty yards of your house; but I cannot

bear to part with you, till you generously forgive me for the offence you have taken, and promise not to make it known to the Mirvans.

I hesitated between fear and indignation.

Your reluctance to speak redoubles my contrition for having displeased you, since it shows the reliance I might have on a promise which you will not give without consideration.

I am very, very much distressed, cried I; you ask a promise which you must be sensible I ought not to grant, and yet dare not refuse.

Drive on! cried he to the coachman;——Miss Anville, I will not compel you; I will exact no promise, but trust wholly to your generosity.

This rather softened me; which advantage he no sooner perceived, than he determined to avail himself of; for he flung himself on his knees, and pleaded with so much submission, that I was really obliged to forgive him, because his humiliation made me quite ashamed: and, after that, he would not let me rest till I gave him my word that I would not complain of him to Mrs. Mirvan.

My own folly and pride, which had put me in his power, were pleas which I could not but attend to in his favour. However, I shall take very particular care never to be again alone with him.

When, at last, we arrived at our house, I was so overjoyed, that I should certainly have pardoned him then, if I had not before. As he handed me up stairs, he scolded his servant aloud, and very angrily, for having gone so much out of the way. Miss Mirvan ran out to meet me;——and who should I see behind her, but Lord Orville!

All my joy now vanished, and gave place to shame and confusion; for I could not endure that he should know how long a time Sir Clement and I had been

together, since I was not at liberty to assign any reason for it.

They all expressed great satisfaction at seeing me; and said they had been extremely uneasy and surprised that I was so long coming home, as they had heard from Lord Orville that I was not with Madame Duval. Sir Clement, in an affected passion, said, that his booby of a servant had misunderstood his orders, and was driving us to the upper end of Piccadilly. For my part, I only coloured; for though I would not forfeit my word, I yet disdained to confirm a tale in which I had myself no belief.

Lord Orville, with great politeness, congratulated me, that the troubles of the evening had so happily ended; and said, that he had found it impossible to return home, before he inquired after my safety.

In a very short time he took his leave, and Sir Clement followed him. As soon as they were gone, Mrs. Mirvan, though with great softness, blamed me for having quitted Madame Duval. I assured her, and with truth, that for the future I would be more prudent.

The adventures of the evening so much disconcerted me, that I could not sleep all night. I am under the most cruel apprehensions lest Lord Orville should suppose my being on the gallery-stairs with Sir Clement was a concerted scheme, and even that our continuing so long together in his chariot was with my approbation, since I did not say a word on the subject, nor express any dissatisfaction at the coachman's pretended blunder.

Yet his coming hither to wait our arrival, though it seems to imply some doubt, shows also some anxiety. Indeed, Miss Mirvan says, that he appeared *extremely* anxious, nay, uneasy and impatient

for my return. If I did not fear to flatter myself, I should think it not impossible but that he had a suspicion of Sir Clement's design, and was therefore concerned for my safety.

What a long letter is this! However, I shall not write many more from London; for the Captain said this morning, that he would leave town on Tuesday next. Madame Duval will dine here to-day, and then she is to be told his intention.

I am very much amazed that she accepted Mrs. Mirvan's invitation, as she was in such wrath yesterday. I fear that to-day I shall myself be the principal object of her displeasure; but I must submit patiently, for I cannot defend myself.

Adieu, my dearest Sir. Should this letter be productive of any uneasiness to you, more than ever shall I repent the heedless imprudence which it recites.

LETTER XXII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Monday Morning, April 18.

Mrs. Mirvan has just communicated to me an anecdote concerning Lord Orville, which has much surprised, half pleased, and half pained me.

While they were sitting together during the opera, he told her that he had been greatly concerned at the impertinence which the young lady under her protection had suffered from Mr. Lovel; but that he had the pleasure of assuring her, she had no future disturbance to apprehend from him.

Mrs. Mirvan, with great eagerness, begged he would explain himself; and said she hoped he had not thought so insignificant an affair worthy his serious attention.

There is nothing, answered he, which requires more immediate notice than impertinence, for it ever encroaches when it is tolerated. He then added, that he believed he ought to apologize for the liberty he had taken in interfering; but that, as he regarded himself in the light of a *party concerned*, from having had the honour of dancing with Miss Anville, he could not possibly reconcile to himself a patient neutrality.

He then proceeded to tell her, that he had waited upon Mr. Lovel the morning after the play; that the visit had proved an amicable one, but the particulars were neither entertaining nor necessary: he only assured her, Miss Anville might be perfectly easy, since Mr. Lovel had engaged his honour never more to mention, or even to hint at what had passed at Mrs. Stanley's assembly.

Mrs. Mirvan expressed her satisfaction at this conclusion, and thanked him for his polite attention to her young friend.

It would be needless, said he, to request that this affair may never transpire, since Mrs. Mirvan cannot but see the necessity of keeping it inviolably secret: but I thought it incumbent upon me, as the young lady is under your protection, to assure both you and her of Mr. Lovel's future respect.

Had I known of this visit previous to Lord Orville's making it, what dreadful uneasiness would it have cost me! Yet that he should so much interest himself in securing me from offence, gives me, I must own, an internal pleasure, greater than I can express; for I feared he had too contemptuous an opinion of me, to take any trouble upon my account. Though, after all, this interference might rather be to satisfy his own delicacy, than from thinking well of me.

But how cool, how quiet is true courage! Who,

from seeing Lord Orville at the play, would have imagined his resentment would have hazarded his life? yet his displeasure was evident, though his real bravery and his politeness equally guarded him from entering into any discussion in our presence.

Madame Duval, as I expected, was most terribly angry yesterday: she scolded me for I believe two hours, on account of having left her; and protested she had been so much surprised at my going without giving her time to answer, that she hardly knew whether she was awake or asleep. But she assured me that if ever I did so again, she would never more take me into public. And she expressed an equal degree of displeasure against Sir Clement, because he had not even spoken to her, and because he was always of the Captain's side in an argument. The Captain, as bound in honour, warmly defended him, and then followed a dispute in the usual style.

After dinner, Mrs. Mirvan introduced the subject of our leaving London. Madame Duval said she should stay a month or two longer. The Captain told her she was welcome, but that he and his family should go into the country on Tuesday morning.

A most disagreeable scene followed. Madame Duval insisted upon keeping me with her; but Mrs. Mirvan said, that as I was actually engaged on a visit to Lady Howard, who had only consented to my leaving her for a few days, she could not think of returning without me.

Perhaps, if the Captain had not interfered, the good-breeding and mildness of Mrs. Mirvan might have had some effect upon Madame Duval; but he passes no opportunity of provoking her; and therefore made so many gross and rude speeches, all of which she retorted, that, in conclusion, she vowed

she would sooner go to law in right of her relationship, than that I should be taken away from her.

I heard this account from Mrs. Mirvan, who was so kindly considerate as to give me a pretence for quitting the room as soon as this dispute began, lest Madame Duval should refer to me, and insist on my obedience.

The final result of the conversation was, that, to soften matters for the present, Madame Duval should make one in the party to Howard Grove, whither we are positively to go next Wednesday. And though we are none of us satisfied with this plan, we know not how to form a better.

Mrs. Mirvan is now writing to Lady Howard, to excuse bringing this unexpected guest, and prevent the disagreeable surprise which must otherwise attend her reception. This dear lady seems eternally studying my happiness and advantage.

To night we go to the Pantheon, which is the last diversion we shall partake of in London; for to-morrow———

* * * * * *

This moment, my dearest Sir, I have received your kind letter.

If you thought us too dissipated the first week, I almost fear to know what you will think of us this second: however, the Pantheon this evening will probably be the last public place which I shall ever see.

The assurance of your support and protection in regard to Madame Duval, though what I never doubted, excites my utmost gratitude. How, indeed, cherished under your roof, the happy object of your constant indulgence, how could I have borne to become the slave of her tyrannical humours?--Pardon me that I speak so hardly of her; but whenever the idea of passing my days with her

occurs to me, the comparison which naturally follows, takes from me all that forbearance which, I believe, I owe her.

You are already displeased with Sir Clement: to be sure, then, his behaviour after the opera will not make his peace with you. Indeed the more I reflect upon it, the more angry I am. I was entirely in his power, and it was cruel in him to cause me so much terror.

O, my dearest Sir, were I but worthy the prayers and the wishes you offer for me, the utmost ambition of my heart would be fully satisfied! but I greatly fear you will find me, now that I am out of the reach of your assisting prudence, more weak and imperfect than you could have expected.

I have not now time to write another word, for I must immediately hasten to dress for the evening.

LETTER XXIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Queen-Ann-Street, Tuesday, April 19.

THERE is something to me half melancholy in writing an account of our last adventures in London. However, as this day is merely appropriated to packing and preparations for our journey, and as I shall shortly have no more adventures to write, I think I may as well complete my town journal at once: and, when you have it all together, I hope, my dear Sir, you will send me your observations and thoughts upon it to Howard Grove.

About eight o'clock we went to the Pantheon. I was extremely struck with the beauty of the building, which greatly surpassed whatever I could

have expected or imagined. Yet it has more the appearance of a chapel than of a place of diversion; and, though I was quite charmed with the magnificence of the room, I felt that I could not be as gay and thoughtless there as at Ranelagh; for there is something in it which rather inspires awe and solemnity, than mirth and pleasure. However, perhaps it may only have this effect upon such a novice as myself.

I should have said, that our party consisted only of Captain, Mrs. and Miss Mirvan, as Madame Duval spent the day in the city;—which I own I could not lament.

There was a great deal of company; but the first person we saw was Sir Clement Willoughby. He addressed us with his usual ease, and joined us for the whole evening. I felt myself very uneasy in his presence; for I could not look at him, nor hear him speak, without recollecting the chariot adventure; but, to my great amazement, I observed that he looked at *me* without the least apparent discomposure, though, certainly, he ought not to think of his behaviour without blushing. I really wish I had not forgiven him, and then he could not have ventured to speak to me any more.

There was an exceeding good concert, but too much talking to hear it well. Indeed I am quite astonished to find how little music is attended to in silence; for though every body seems to admire, hardly any body listens.

We did not see Lord Orville till we went into the tea-room, which is large, low, and under ground, and serves merely as a foil to the apartments above; he then sat next to us. He seemed to belong to a large party, chiefly of ladies; but among the gentlemen attending them, I perceived Mr. Lovel.

I was extremely irresolute whether or not I ought

to make any acknowledgements to Lord Orville for his generous conduct in securing me from the future impertinence of that man; and I thought, that, as he had seemed to allow Mrs. Mirvan to acquaint me, though no one else, of the measures which he had taken, he might, perhaps, suppose me ungrateful if silent: however, I might have spared myself the trouble of deliberating, as I never once had the shadow of an opportunity of speaking unheard by Sir Clement. On the contrary, he was so exceedingly officious and forward, that I could not say a word to any body but instantly he bent his head forward, with an air of profound attention, as if I had addressed myself wholly to him; and yet I never once looked at him, and would not have spoken to him on any account.

Indeed, Mrs. Mirvan herself, though unacquainted with the behaviour of Sir Clement after the opera, says it is not right for a young woman to be seen so frequently in public with the same gentleman; and if our stay in town was to be lengthened, she would endeavour to represent to the Captain the impropriety of allowing his constant attendance; for Sir Clement, with all his *easiness*, could not be so eternally of our parties, if the Captain was less fond of his company.

At the same table with Lord Orville sat a gentleman,—I call him so only because he *was* at the same table,—who, almost from the moment I was seated, fixed his eyes steadfastly on my face, and never once removed them to any other object during tea-time, notwithstanding my dislike of his staring must, I am sure, have been very evident. I was quite surprised, that a man, whose boldness was so offensive, could have gained admission into a party of which Lord Orville made one; for I naturally concluded him to be some low-bred, uneducated man; and I

thought my idea was indubitably confirmed, when I heard him say to Sir Clement Willoughby, in an *audible whisper*,—which is a mode of speech very distressing and disagreeable to by-standers,—For Heaven's sake, Willoughby, who is that lovely creature?

But what was my amazement, when listening attentively for the answer, though my head was turned another way, I heard Sir Clement say, I am sorry I cannot inform your Lordship, but I am ignorant myself.

Lordship!—how extraordinary! that a *nobleman*, accustomed, in all probability, to the first rank of company in the kingdom, from his earliest infancy, can possibly be deficient in *good manners*, however faulty in morals and principles! Even Sir Clement Willoughby appeared modest in comparison with this person.

During tea, a conversation was commenced upon the times, fashions, and public places, in which the company of both tables joined. It began by Sir Clement's inquiring of Miss Mirvan and of me, if the Pantheon had answered our expectations.

We both readily agreed that it had greatly exceeded them.

Ay, to be sure, said the Captain, why you don't suppose they'd confess they didn't like it, do you? Whatever's the fashion they must like of course; —or else I'd be bound for it they'd own, that there never was such a dull place as this here invented.

And has, then, this building, said Lord Orville, no merit that may serve to lessen your censure? Will not your eye, Sir, speak something in its favour?

Eye! cried the Lord, (I don't know his name,) and is there any eye here, that can find pleasure

in looking at dead walls or statues, when such heavenly living objects as I now see demand all their admiration?

O, certainly, said Lord Orville, the lifeless symmetry of architecture, however beautiful the design and proportion, no man would be so mad as to put in competition with the animated charms of nature: but when, as to-night, the eye may be regaled at the same time, and in one view, with all the excellence of art, and all the perfection of nature, I cannot think that either suffer by being seen together.

I grant, my Lord, said Sir Clement, that the cool eye of unimpassioned philosophy may view both with equal attention, and equal safety; but where the heart is not so well guarded, it is apt to interfere, and render, even to the eye, all objects but one insipid and uninteresting.

Aye, aye, cried the Captain, you may talk what you will of your eye here, and your eye there, and, for the matter of that, to be sure you have two,—but we all know they both squint one way.

Far be it from me, said Lord Orville, to dispute the *magnetic* power of beauty, which irresistibly draws and attracts whatever has soul and sympathy: and I am happy to acknowledge, that though we have now no *gods* to occupy a mansion professedly built for them, yet we have secured their *better halves*, for we have *goddesses* to whom we all most willingly bow down. And then, with a very droll air, he made a profound reverence to the ladies.

They'd need to be goddesses with a vengeance, said the Captain, for they're mortal dear to look at. Howsomever, I should be glad to know what you can see in e'er a face among them that's worth half-a-guinea for a sight.

Half-a-guinea! exclaimed that same Lord, I would give half I am worth for a sight of only *one*, provided I make my own choice. And, prithee, how can money be better employed than in the service of fine women?

If the ladies of his own party can pardon the Captain's speech, said Sir Clement, I think he has a fair claim to the forgiveness of all.

Then you depend very much, as I doubt not but you may, said Lord Orville, upon the general sweetness of the sex;—but as to the ladies of the Captain's party, they may easily pardon, for they cannot be hurt.

But they must have a devilish good conceit of themselves, though, said the Captain, to believe all that. Howsomever, whether or no, I should be glad to be told by some of you, who seem to be knowing in them things, what kind of diversion can be found in such a place as this here, for one who has had long ago his full of face-hunting?

Every body laughed, but nobody spoke.

Why, look you there now, continued the Captain, you're all at a dead stand!—not a man among you can answer that there question. Why, then, I must make bold to conclude, that you all come here for no manner of purpose but to stare at one another's pretty faces:—though for the matter of that, half of 'em are plaguy ugly;—and, as to t'other half,—I believe it's none of God's manufactory.

What the ladies may come hither for, Sir, said Mr. Lovel, (stroking his ruffles, and looking down,) it would ill become *us* to determine; but as to we men, doubtless we can have no other view than to admire them.

If I ben't mistaken, cried the Captain, (looking earnestly in his face,) you are that same person we saw at Love for Love t'other night; ben't you?

Mr. Lovel bowed.

Why, then, Gentlemen, continued he, with a loud laugh, I must tell you a most excellent good joke; —when all was over, as sure as you're alive, he asked what the play was! Ha, ha, ha!

Sir, said Mr. Lovel, colouring, if you were as much used to a town life as I am,—which I presume is not precisely the case,—I fancy you would not find so much diversion from a circumstance so common.

Common! what, is it common? repeated the Captain; why then, 'fore George, such chaps are more fit to be sent to school, and well disciplined with a cat-o'-nine tails, than to poke their heads into a play-house. Why, a play is the only thing left now-a-days, that has a grain of sense in it; for as to all the rest of your public places, d'ye see, if they were all put together, I would n't give *that* for 'em! (snapping his fingers.) And now we're talking of them sort of things, there's your operas,—I should like to know, now, what any of you can find to say for them.

Lord Orville, who was most able to have answered, seemed by no means to think the Captain worthy an argument, upon a subject concerning which he had neither knowledge nor feeling: but, turning to us, he said; The ladies are silent, and we seem to have engrossed the conversation to ourselves, in which we are much more our own enemies than theirs. But, addressing himself to Miss Mirvan and me, I am most desirous to hear the opinions of these young ladies, to whom all public places must, as yet, be new.

We both, and with eagerness, declared that we had received as much, if not more pleasure, at the Opera than any where: but we had better have been silent; for the Captain, quite displeased, said,

What signifies asking them girls? Do you think they know their own minds yet? Ask 'em after any thing that's called diversion, and you're sure they'll say it's vastly fine—they are a set of parrots, and speak by rote, for they all say the same thing: but ask 'em how they like making puddings and pies, and I'll warrant you'll pose 'em. As to them operas, I desire I may hear no more of their liking such nonsense; and for you, Moll, (to his daughter,) I charge you as you value my favour, that you'll never again be so impertinent as to have a taste of your own before my face. There are fools enough in the world, without your adding to their number. I'll have no daughter of mine affect them sort of megrims. It is a shame they a'n't put down; and if I'd my will, there's not a magistrate in this town but should be knocked on the head for suffering them. If you've a mind to praise any thing, why you may praise a play, and welcome, for I like it myself.

This reproof effectually silenced us both for the rest of the evening. Nay, indeed, for some minutes it seemed to silence every body else; till Mr. Lovel, not willing to lose an opportunity of returning the Captain's sarcasm, said, Why really, Sir, it is but natural to be most pleased with what is most familiar; and, I think, of all our diversions, there is not one so much in common between us and the country as a play. Not a village but has its barns and comedians; and as for the stage business, why it may be pretty equally done any where; and even in regard to *us*, and the *canaille*, confined as we all are within the semi-circle of a theatre, there is no place where the distinction is less obvious.

While the Captain seemed considering for Mr. Lovel's meaning, Lord Orville, probably with a view to prevent his finding it, changed the subject to Cox's Museum, and asked what he thought of it?

Think!—said he, why I think as how it i'n't worth thinking about. I like no such *jemcracks*. It is only fit, in my mind, for monkeys:—though, for aught I know, they too might turn up their noses at it.

May we ask your Lordship's own opinion? said Mrs. Mirvan.

The mechanism, answered he, is wonderfully ingenious; I am sorry it is turned to no better account; but its purport is so frivolous, so very remote from all aim at instruction or utility, that the sight of so fine a show only leaves a regret on the mind, that so much work, and so much ingenuity, should not be better bestowed.

The truth is, said the Captain, that in all this huge town, so full as it is of folks of all sorts, there i'n't so much as one public place, besides the playhouse, where a man, that's to say a man who *is* a man, ought not to be ashamed to show his face. T'other day they got me to a ridotto; but I believe, it will be long enough before they get me to another. I knew no more what to do with myself, than if my ship's company had been metamorphosed into Frenchmen. Then, again, there's your famous Ranelagh, that you make such a fuss about;—why what a dull place is that!—it's the worst of all.

Ranelagh dull!—Ranelagh dull!—was echoed from mouth to mouth; and all the ladies, as if of one accord, regarded the Captain with looks of the most ironical contempt.

As to Ranelagh, said Mr. Lovel, most indubitably, though the price is plebeian, it is by no means adapted to the plebeian taste. It requires a certain acquaintance with high life, and—and—and something of—of—something *d'un vrai goût*, to be really sensible of its merit. Those whose—whose connections, and so forth, are not among *les gens comme*

il faut, can feel nothing but *ennui* at such a place as Ranelagh.

Ranelagh! cried Lord ——, O, 'tis the divinest place under heaven,——or, indeed,—for aught I know————

O you creature! cried a pretty, but affected young lady, patting him with her fan, you sha'n't talk so; I know what you are going to say; but positively, I won't sit by you if you're so wicked.

And how can one sit by you, and be good? said he, when only to look at you is enough to make one wicked—or wish to be so?

Fie, my Lord! returned she, you are really insufferable. I don't think I shall speak to you again these seven years.

What a metamorphosis, cried Lord Orville, should you make a patriarch of his Lordship.

Seven years! said he, dear Madam, be contented with telling me you will not speak to me *after* seven years, and I will endeavour to submit.

O, very well, my Lord, answered she, pray date the end of our speaking to each other as early as you please, I'll promise to agree to your time.

You know, dear Madam, said he, sipping his tea, you know I only live in your sight.

O yes, my Lord, I have long known that. But I begin to fear we shall be too late for Ranelagh this evening.

O no, Madam, said Mr. Lovel, looking at his watch, it is but just past ten.

No more! cried she, O then we shall do very well.

All the ladies now started up, and declared they had no time to lose.

Why, what the D——l, cried the Captain, leaning forward with both his arms on the table, are you going to Ranelagh at this time of night?

The ladies looked at one another, and smiled.

To Ranelagh? cried Lord ——. Yes, and I hope you are going too; for we cannot possibly excuse these ladies.

I go to Ranelagh?—if I do, I'll be ——

Every body now stood up, and the stranger lord coming round to me, said, *You* go, I hope?

No, my Lord, I believe not.

O you cannot, must not be so barbarous. And he took my hand, and ran on, saying such fine speeches and compliments, that I might almost have supposed myself a goddess, and him a pagan paying me adoration. As soon as I possibly could, I drew back my hand; but he frequently, in the course of conversation, contrived to take it again, though it was extremely disagreeable to me; and the more so, as I saw that Lord Orville had his eyes fixed upon us, with a gravity of attention that made me uneasy.

And, surely, my dear Sir, it was a great liberty in this lord, notwithstanding his rank, to treat me so freely. As to Sir Clement, he seemed in misery.

They all endeavoured to prevail with the Captain to join the Ranelagh party; and this lord told me in a low voice, that *it was tearing his heart out* to go without me.

During this conversation Mr. Lovel came forward, and assuming a look of surprise, made me a bow, and inquired how I did, protesting upon his honour, that he had not seen me before, or would sooner have paid his respects to me.

Though his politeness was evidently constrained, yet I was very glad to be thus assured of having nothing more to fear from him.

The Captain, far from listening to their persuasions of accompanying them to Ranelagh, was quite

in a passion at the proposal, and vowed he would sooner go to the *Black-hole in Calcutta.*

But, said Lord ——, if the *ladies* will take their tea at Ranelagh, you may depend upon our seeing them safe home; for we shall all be proud of the honour of attending them.

May be so, said the Captain; but I'll tell you what, if one of these places ben't enough for them to-night, why to-morrow they shall go to ne'er a one.

We instantly declared ourselves very ready to go home.

It is not for yourselves that we petition, said Lord ——, but for *us*; if you have any charity, you will not be so cruel as to deny us; we only beg you to prolong our happiness for a few minutes, —the favour is but a small one for you to grant, though so great a one for us to receive.

To tell you a piece of my mind, said the Captain, surlily, I think you might as well not give the girls so much of this palaver; they'll take it all for gospel. As to Moll, why she's well enough, but nothing extraordinary; though, perhaps, you may persuade her that her pug nose is all the fashion; and as to the other, why she's good white and red to be sure; but what of that?—I'll warrant she'll moulder away as fast as her neighbours.

Is there, cried Lord ——, another man in this place, who seeing such objects, could make such a speech?

As to that there, returned the Captain, I don't know whether there be or no, and, to make free, I don't care; for I sha'n't go for to model myself by any of these fair weather chaps, who dare not so much as say their souls are their own,—and, for aught I know, no more they ben't. I'm almost as much ashamed of my countrymen as if I was a

Frenchman, and I believe in my heart there i'n't a pin to choose between them; and, before long we shall hear the very sailors talking that lingo, and see never a swabber without a bag and a sword.

He, he, he!—well 'pon honour, cried Mr. Lovel, you gentlemen of the ocean have a most severe way of judging.

Severe! 'fore George, that is impossible; for, to cut the matter short, the men, as they call themselves, are no better than monkeys; and as to the women, why they are mere dolls. So now you've got my opinion of this subject; and so I wish you good night.

The ladies, who were very impatient to be gone, made their courtesies, and tripped away, followed by all the gentlemen of their party, except the lord before mentioned, and Lord Orville, who staid to make inquiries of Mrs. Mirvan concerning our leaving town; and then saying, with his usual politeness, something civil to each of us, with a very grave air he quitted us.

Lord —— remained some minutes longer, which he spent in making a profusion of compliments to me; by which he prevented my hearing distinctly what Lord Orville said, to my great vexation, especially as he looked—I thought so at least,—as if displeased at his particularity of behaviour to me.

In going to an outward room to wait for the carriage, I walked, and could not possibly avoid it, between this nobleman and Sir Clement Willoughby; and, when the servant said the coach stopped the way, though the latter offered me his hand, which I should much have preferred, this same lord, without any ceremony, took mine himself; and Sir Clement, with a look extremely provoked, conducted Mrs. Mirvan.

In all ranks and all stations of life, how strangely do characters and manners differ! Lord Orville, with a politeness which knows no intermission, and makes no distinction, is as unassuming and modest as if he had never mixed with the great, and was totally ignorant of every qualification he possesses; this other lord, though lavish of compliments and fine speeches, seems to me an entire stranger to real good-breeding: whoever strikes his fancy, engrosses his whole attention. He is forward and bold; has an air of haughtiness towards men, and a look of libertinism towards women; and his conscious quality seems to have given him a freedom in his way of speaking to either sex, that is very little short of rudeness.

When we returned home, we were all low spirited. The evening's entertainment had displeased the Captain; and his displeasure, I believe, disconcerted us all.

And here I thought to have concluded my letter; but, to my great surprise, just now we had a visit from Lord Orville. He called, he said, to pay his respects to us before we left town, and made many inquiries concerning our return; and when Mrs. Mirvan told him we were going into the country without any view of again quitting it, he expressed his concern in such terms—so polite, so flattering, so serious—that I could hardly forbear being sorry myself. Were I to go immediately to Berry Hill, I am sure I should feel nothing but joy;—but, now we are joined by this Captain and by Madame Duval, I must own I expect very little pleasure at Howard Grove.

Before Lord Orville went, Sir Clement Willoughby called. He was more grave than I had ever seen him; and made several attempts to speak to me in a low voice, and to assure me that his regret

upon the occasion of our journey was entirely upon my account. But I was not in spirits, and could not bear to be teased by him. However, he has so well paid his court to Captain Mirvan, that he gave him a very hearty invitation to the Grove. At this he brightened,—and just then Lord Orville took leave.

No doubt but he was disgusted at this ill-timed, ill-bred partiality; for surely it was very wrong to make an invitation before Lord Orville in which he was not included! I was so much chagrined, that, as soon as he went, I left the room; and I shall not go down stairs till Sir Clement is gone.

Lord Orville cannot but observe his assiduous endeavours to ingratiate himself into my favour; and does not this extravagant civility of Captain Mirvan give him reason to suppose that it meets with our general approbation? I cannot think upon this subject without inexpressible uneasiness; and yet I can think of nothing else.

Adieu, my dearest Sir. Pray write to me immediately. How many long letters has this one short fortnight produced! More than I may probably ever write again. I fear I shall have tired you with reading them: but you will now have time to rest, for I shall find but little to say in future.

And now, most honoured Sir, with all the follies and imperfections which I have thus faithfully recounted, can you, and with unabated kindness, suffer me to sign myself

Your dutiful and most affectionate

EVELINA?

LETTER XXIV.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry Hill, April 22.

How much do I rejoice that I can again address my letters to Howard Grove! My Evelina would have grieved had she known the anxiety of my mind during her residence in the great world. My apprehensions have been inexpressibly alarming; and your journal, at once exciting and relieving my fears, has almost wholly occupied me since the time of your dating it from London.

Sir Clement Willoughby must be an artful designing man; I am extremely irritated at his conduct. The passion he pretends for you has neither sincerity nor honour; the manner and the opportunities he has chosen to declare it, are bordering upon insult.

His unworthy behaviour after the opera, convinces me, that, had not your vehemence frightened him, Queen-Ann-Street would have been the last place whither he would have ordered his chariot. O, my child, how thankful am I for your escape! I need not now, I am sure, enlarge upon your indiscretion and want of thought, in so hastily trusting yourself with a man so little known to you, and whose gaiety and flightiness should have put you on your guard.

The nobleman you met at the Pantheon, bold and forward as you describe him to be, gives me no apprehension; a man who appears so openly licentious, and who makes his attack with so little regard to decorum, is one who, to a mind such as my Evelina's, can never be seen but with the disgust which his manners ought to excite.

But Sir Clement, though he seeks occasion to give real offence, contrives to avoid all appearance

of intentional evil. He is far more dangerous, because more artful: but I am happy to observe, that he seems to have made no impression upon your heart; and therefore a very little care and prudence may secure you from those designs which I fear he has formed.

Lord Orville appears to be of a better order of beings. His spirited conduct to the meanly impertinent Lovel, and his anxiety for you after the opera, prove him to be a man of sense and of feeling. Doubtless he thought there was much reason to tremble for your safety while exposed to the power of Sir Clement: and he acted with a regard to real honour, that will always incline me to think well of him, in so immediately acquainting the Mirvan family with your situation. Many men of this age, from a false and pretended delicacy to a friend, would have quietly pursued their own affairs, and thought it more honourable to leave an unsuspecting young creature to the mercy of a libertine, than to risk his displeasure by taking measures for her security.

Your evident concern at leaving London is very natural, and yet it afflicts me. I ever dreaded your being too much pleased with a life of dissipation, which youth and vivacity render but too alluring; and I almost regret the consent for your journey, which I had not the resolution to withhold.

Alas, my child, the artlessness of your nature, and the simplicity of your education, alike unfit you for the thorny paths of the great and busy world. The supposed obscurity of your birth and situation, makes you liable to a thousand disagreeable adventures. Not only my views, but my hopes for your future life, have ever centred in the country. Shall I own to you, that, however I may differ from Captain Mirvan in other respects, yet my opinion

of the town, its manners, inhabitants, and diversions, is much upon a level with his own? Indeed it is the general harbour of fraud and of folly, of duplicity and of impertinence; and I wish few things more fervently, than that you may have taken a lasting leave of it.

Remember, however, that I only speak in regard to a public and dissipated life; in private families we may doubtless find as much goodness, honesty, and virtue, in London as in the country.

If contented with a retired station, I still hope I shall live to see my Evelina the ornament of her neighbourhood, and the pride and delight of her family; giving and receiving joy from such society as may best deserve her affection, and employing herself in such useful and innocent occupations as may secure and merit the tenderest love of her friends, and the worthiest satisfaction of her own heart.

Such are my hopes, and such have been my expectations. Disappoint them not, my beloved child; but cheer me with a few lines, that may assure me, this one short fortnight spent in town has not undone the work of seventeen years spent in the country.

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXV.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, April 25.

No, my dear Sir, no; *the work of seventeen years* remains such as it was, ever unworthy your time and your labour; but not more so now—at least I hope not,—than before that fortnight which has so much alarmed you.

And yet I must confess, that I am not half so happy here at present as I was ere I went to town: but the change is in the place, not in me. Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval have ruined Howard Grove. The harmony that reigned here is disturbed, our schemes are broken, our way of life is altered, and our comfort is destroyed. But do not suppose *London* to be the source of these evils; for, had our excursion been any where else, so disagreeable an addition to our household must have caused the same change at our return.

I was sure you would be displeased with Sir Clement Willoughby, and therefore I am by no means surprised at what you say of him; but for Lord Orville—I must own I had greatly feared that my weak and imperfect account would not have procured him the good opinion which he so well deserves, and which I am delighted to find you seem to have of him. O, Sir, could I have done justice to the merit of which I believe him possessed;—could I have painted him to *you* such as he appeared to *me*;—then, indeed, you would have had some idea of the claim which he has to your approbation!

After the last letter which I wrote in town, nothing more passed previous to our journey hither, except a very violent quarrel between Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval. As the Captain intended to travel on horseback, he had settled that we four females should make use of his coach. Madame Duval did not come to Queen-Ann-Street till the carriage had waited some time at the door; and then, attended by Monsieur Du Bois, she made her appearance.

The Captain, impatient to be gone, would not suffer them to enter the house, but insisted that we should immediately get into the coach. We obeyed; but were no sooner seated, than Madame Du-

val said, Come, Monsieur Du Bois, these girls can make very good room for you: sit closer, children.

Mrs. Mirvan looked quite confounded; and M. Du Bois, after making some apologies about crowding us, actually got into the coach, on the side with Miss Mirvan and me. But no sooner was he seated, than the Captain, who had observed this transaction very quietly, walked up to the coach door, saying, What, neither with your leave, nor by your leave?

M. Du Bois seemed rather shocked, and began to make abundance of excuses: but the Captain neither understood nor regarded him, and, very roughly, said, Look'ee *Monseer*, this here may be a French fashion for aught I know,—but give and take is fair in all nations; and so now, d'ye see, I'll make bold to show you an English one.

And then, seizing his wrist, he made him jump out of the coach.

M. Du Bois instantly put his hand upon his sword, and threatened to resent this indignity. The Captain, holding up his stick, bad him draw at his peril. Mrs. Mirvan, greatly alarmed, got out of the coach, and, standing between them, intreated her husband to re-enter the house.

None of your clack! cried he, angrily; what the D—l, do you suppose I can't manage a Frenchman?

Mean time, Madame Duval called out to M. Du Bois, *Eh, laissez-le, mon ami, ne le corrigez pas; c'est un vilain bête qui n'en vaut pas la peine.*

Monsieur le Capitaine, cried M. Du Bois, *voulez-vous bien me demander pardon?*

O ho, you demand pardon, do you? said the Captain, I thought as much; I thought you'd come to;—so you have lost your relish for an English salutation, have you? strutting up to him with looks of defiance.

A crowd was now gathering, and Mrs. Mirvan again besought her husband to go into the house.

Why, what a plague is the woman afraid of?—Did you ever know a Frenchman that could not take an affront?—I warrant *Monseer* knows what he is about;—don't you, *Monseer?*

M. Du Bois, not understanding him, only said, *plait-il, Monsieur?*

No, nor *dish* me neither, answered the Captain; but, be that as it may, what signifies our parleying here? If you've any thing to propose, speak at once; if not, why let us go on our journey without more ado.

Parbleu, je n'entends rien, moi! cried M. Du Bois, shrugging up his shoulders, and looking very dismal.

Mrs. Mirvan then advanced to him, and said in French, that she was sure the Captain had not any intention to affront him, and begged he would desist from a dispute which could only be productive of mutual misunderstanding, as neither of them knew the language of the other.

This sensible remonstrance had the desired effect; and M. Du Bois, making a bow to every one except the Captain, very wisely gave up the point, and took leave.

We then hoped to proceed quietly on our journey; but the turbulent Captain would not yet permit us. He approached Madame Duval with an exulting air, and said, Why, how's this, Madam? what, has your champion deserted you? why I thought you told me, that you old gentlewomen had it all your own way among them French sparks.

As to that, Sir, answered she, it's not of no consequence what you thought; for a person who can behave in such a low way, may think what he pleases for me, for I sha'n't mind.

Why then, Mistress, since you must needs make

so free, cried he, please to tell me the reason why you took the liberty for to ask any of your followers into my coach without my leave? Answer me to that.

Why, then, pray, Sir, returned she, tell me the reason why you took the liberty to treat the gentleman in such an unpolite way, as to take and pull him neck and heels out? I'm sure he hadn't done nothing to affront you, nor nobody else; and I don't know what great hurt he would have done you, by just sitting still in the coach: he would not have eat it.

What, do you think, then, that my horses have nothing to do but to carry about your snivelling Frenchmen? If you do, Madam, I must make bold to tell you, you are out, for I'll see 'em hang'd first.

More brute you, then! for they've never carried nobody half so good.

Why, look'ee, Madam, if you must needs provoke me, I'll tell you a piece of my mind: you must know, I can see as far into a millstone as another man; and so, if you thought for to fob me off with one of your smirking French puppies for a son-in-law, why you'll find yourself in a hobble, that's all.

Sir, you're a——— but I won't say what;—but I protest I hadn't no such a thought, no more hadn't Monsieur Du Bois.

My dear, said Mrs. Mirvan, we shall be very late.

Well, well, answered he, get away then; off with you as fast as you can, it's high time. As to Molly, she's fine lady enough in all conscience; I want none of your French chaps to make her worse.

And so saying he mounted his horse and we drove off. And I could not but think, with regret, of the

different feelings we experienced upon leaving London, to what had belonged to our entering it.

During the journey Madame Duval was so very violent against the Captain, that she obliged Mrs. Mirvan to tell her, that, when in her presence, she must beg her to choose some other subject of discourse.

We had a most affectionate reception from Lady Howard, whose kindness and hospitality cannot fail of making every body happy who is disposed so to be.

Adieu, my dearest Sir. I hope, though I have hitherto neglected to mention it, that you have always remembered me to whoever has made any inquiry concerning me.

LETTER XXVI.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, April 27.

O, MY dear Sir, I now write in the greatest uneasiness! Madame Duval has made a proposal which terrifies me to death, and which was as unexpected as it is shocking.

She had been employed for some hours this afternoon in reading letters from London: and, just about tea-time, she sent for me into her room, and said, with a look of great satisfaction, Come here, child, I've got some very good news to tell you: something that will surprise you, I'll give you my word, for you ha'n't no notion of it.

I begged her to explain herself; and then, in terms which I cannot repeat, she said she had been considering what a shame it was to see me such a poor country, shame-faced thing, when I ought to

be a fine lady; and that she had long, and upon several occasions, blushed for me, though she must own the fault was none of mine: for nothing better could be expected from a girl who had been so immured. However, she assured me she had, at length, hit upon a plan, which would make quite another creature of me.

I waited, without much impatience, to hear what this preface led to; but I was soon awakened to more lively sensations, when she acquainted me, that her intention was to prove my birthright, and to claim, by law, the inheritance of my real family!

It would be impossible for me to express my extreme consternation when she thus unfolded her scheme. My surprise and terror were equally great; I could say nothing: I heard her with a silence which I had not the power to break.

She then expatiated very warmly upon the advantages I should reap from her plan; talked in a high style of my future grandeur; assured me how heartily I should despise almost every body and every thing I had hitherto seen; predicted my marrying into some family of the first rank in the kingdom; and, finally, said I should spend a few months in Paris, where my education and manners might receive their last polish.

She enlarged also upon the delight she should have, in common with myself, from mortifying the pride of certain people, and showing them that she was not to be slighted with impunity.

In the midst of this discourse, I was relieved by a summons to tea. Madame Duval was in great spirits; but my emotion was too painful for concealment, and every body inquired into the cause. I would fain have waved the subject, but Madame Duval was determined to make it public. She told them that she had it in her head to *make something* of

me, and that they should soon call me by another name than that of Anville; and yet that she was not going to have the child married neither.

I could not endure to hear her proceed, and was going to leave the room; which when Lady Howard perceived, she begged Madame Duval would defer her intelligence to some other opportunity: but she was so eager to communicate her scheme, that she could bear no delay; and therefore they suffered me to go without opposition. Indeed, whenever my situation or affairs are mentioned by Madame Duval, she speaks of them with such bluntness and severity, that I cannot be enjoined a task more cruel than to hear her.

I was afterwards acquainted with some particulars of the conversation by Miss Mirvan; who told me that Madame Duval informed them of her plan with the utmost complacency, and seemed to think herself very fortunate in having suggested it; but soon after, she accidentally betrayed, that she had been instigated to the scheme by her relations the Branghtons, whose letters, which she received today, first mentioned the proposal. She declared that she would have nothing to do with any *roundabout ways*, but go openly and instantly to law, in order to prove my birth, real name, and title to the estate of my ancestors.

How impertinent and officious, in these Branghtons, to interfere thus in my concerns! You can hardly imagine what a disturbance this plan has made in the family. The Captain, without inquiring into any particulars of the affair, has peremptorily declared himself against it, merely because it has been proposed by Madame Duval; and they have battled the point together with great violence. Mrs. Mirvan says, she will not even *think* till she hears your opinion. But Lady Howard, to my great surprise,

openly avows her approbation of Madame Duval's intention: however, she will write her reasons and sentiments upon the subject to you herself.

As to Miss Mirvan, she is my second self, and neither hopes nor fears but as I do. And as to *me*, —I know not what to say, nor even what to wish: I have often thought my fate peculiarly cruel, to have but one parent, and from that one to be banished for ever;—while, on the other side, I have but too well known and felt the propriety of the separation. And yet, you may much better imagine, than I can express, the internal anguish which sometimes oppresses my heart, when I reflect upon the strange indifference that must occasion a father never to make the least inquiry after the health, the welfare, or even the life of his child!

O Sir, to *me* the loss is nothing!—greatly, sweetly, and most benevolently have you guarded me from feeling it; but for *him*, I grieve indeed!—I must be divested, not merely of all filial piety, but of all humanity, could I ever think upon this subject, and not be wounded to the soul.

Again I must repeat, I know not what to *wish*: think for me, therefore, my dearest Sir, and suffer my doubting mind, that knows not which way to direct its hopes, to be guided by your wisdom and unerring counsel.

EVELINA.

LETTER XXVII.

LADY HOWARD TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

DEAR SIR, Howard Grove.

I CANNOT give a greater proof of the high opinion I have of your candour, than by the liberty I am now going to take, of presuming to offer you advice,

upon a subject concerning which you have so just a claim to act for yourself: but I know you have too unaffected a love of justice, to be partially tenacious of your own judgement.

Madame Duval has been proposing a scheme which has put us all in commotion, and against which, at first, in common with the rest of my family, I exclaimed: but, upon more mature consideration, I own my objections have almost wholly vanished.

This scheme is no other than to commence a lawsuit with Sir John Belmont, to prove the validity of his marriage with Miss Evelyn; the necessary consequence of which proof will be, securing his fortune and estate to his daughter.

And why, my dear Sir, should not this be? I know that, upon first hearing, such a plan conveys ideas that must shock you; but I know, too, that your mind is superior to being governed by prejudices, or to opposing any important cause on account of a few disagreeable attendant circumstances.

Your lovely charge, now first entering into life, has merit which ought not to be buried in obscurity. She seems born for an ornament to the world. Nature has been bountiful to her of whatever she had to bestow; and the peculiar attention you have given to her education, has formed her mind to a degree of excellence, that in one so young I have scarce ever seen equalled. Fortune alone has hitherto been sparing of her gifts; and she, too, now opens the way which leads to all that is left to wish for her.

What your reasons may have been, my good Sir, for so carefully concealing the birth, name, and pretensions of this amiable girl, and forbearing to make any claim upon Sir John Belmont, I am totally a stranger to; but, without knowing, I re-

spect them, from the high opinion that I have of your character and judgement: but I hope they are not insuperable; for I cannot but think, that it was never designed for one who seems meant to grace the world, to have her life devoted to retirement.

Surely Sir John Belmont, wretch as he has shown himself, could never see his accomplished daughter, and not be proud to own her, and eager to secure her the inheritance of his fortune. The admiration she met with in town, though merely the effect of her external attractions, was such, that Mrs. Mirvan assures me, she would have had the most splendid offers, had there not seemed to be some mystery in regard to her birth, which she was well informed was assiduously, though vainly, endeavoured to be discovered.

Can it be right, my dear Sir, that this promising young creature should be deprived of the fortune and rank of life to which she is lawfully entitled, and which you have prepared her to support and to use so nobly? To despise riches may, indeed, be philosophic; but to dispense them worthily must surely be more beneficial to mankind.

Perhaps a few years, or indeed a much shorter time may make this scheme impracticable: Sir John, tho' yet young, leads a life too dissipated for long duration; and when too late, we may regret that something was not sooner done; for it will be next to impossible, after he is gone, to settle or prove any thing with his heirs and executors.

Pardon the earnestness with which I write my sense of this affair; but your charming ward has made me so warmly her friend, that I cannot be indifferent upon a subject of such importance to her future life.

Adieu, my dear Sir;—send me speedily an answer to this remonstrance, and believe me to be, &c.

M. Howard.

LETTER XXVIII.

MR. VILLARS TO LADY HOWARD.

Berry Hill, May 2.

YOUR letter, Madam, has opened a source of anxiety, to which I look forward with dread, and which to see closed, I scarcely dare expect. I am unwilling to oppose my opinion to that of your ladyship; nor indeed, can I, but by arguments which I believe will rather rank me as an hermit, ignorant of the world, and fit only for my cell, than as a proper guardian, in an age such as this, for an accomplished young woman. Yet, thus called upon, it behoves me to explain, and endeavour to vindicate, the reasons by which I have been hitherto guided.

The mother of this dear child,—who was led to destruction by her own imprudence, the hardness of heart of Madame Duval, and the villany of Sir John Belmont,—was once what her daughter is now, the best beloved of my heart: and her memory, so long as my own holds, I shall love, mourn and honour! On the fatal day that her gentle soul left its mansion, and not many hours ere she ceased to breathe, I solemnly plighted my faith, *That her child, if it lived, should know no father but myself, or her acknowledged husband.*

You cannot, Madam, suppose that I found much difficulty in adhering to this promise, and forbearing to make any *claim* upon Sir John Belmont. Could I feel an affection the most paternal for this poor sufferer, and not abominate her destroyer? Could I wish to deliver to *him*, who had so basely betrayed the mother, the helpless and innocent offspring, who, born in so much sorrow, seemed entitled to all the compassionate tenderness of pity?

For many years, the *name* alone of that man, acci-

dentally spoken in my hearing, almost divested me of my Christianity, and scarce could I forbear to execrate him. Yet I sought not, neither did I desire, to deprive him of his child, had he with any appearance of contrition, or indeed of humanity, endeavoured to become less unworthy such a blessing:—but he is a stranger to all parental feelings, and has, with a savage insensibility, forborne to inquire even into the existence of this sweet orphan, though the situation of his injured wife was but too well known to him.

You wish to be acquainted with my intentions.—I must acknowledge they were such as I now perceive would not be honoured with your Ladyship's approbation; for though I have sometimes thought of presenting Evelina to her father, and demanding the justice which is her due, yet, at other times, I have both disdained and feared the application; disdained, lest it should be refused; and feared, lest it should be accepted!

Lady Belmont, who was firmly persuaded of her approaching dissolution, frequently and earnestly besought me, that if her infant was a female, I would not abandon her to the direction of a man so wholly unfit to take the charge of her education; but, should she be importunately demanded, that I would retire with her abroad, and carefully conceal her from Sir John, till some apparent change in his sentiments and conduct should announce him less improper for such a trust. And often would she say, Should the poor babe have any feelings correspondent with its mother's, it will have no want while under your protection. Alas! she had no sooner quitted it herself, than she was plunged into a gulf of misery, that swallowed up her peace, reputation, and life.

During the childhood of Evelina, I suggested a

thousand plans for the security of her birth-right;—but I as oftentimes rejected them. I was in a perpetual conflict, between the desire that she should have justice done her, and the apprehension that, while I improved her fortune, I should endanger her mind. However, as her character began to be formed, and her disposition to be displayed, my perplexity abated; the road before me seemed less thorny and intricate, and I thought I could perceive the right path from the wrong: for when I observed the artless openness, the ingenuous simplicity of her nature; when I saw that her guileless and innocent soul fancied all the world to be pure and disinterested as herself, and that her heart was open to every impression with which love, pity, or art might assail it;—then did I flatter myself, that to follow my own inclination, and to secure her welfare, was the same thing; since, to expose her to the snares and dangers inevitably encircling a house of which the master is dissipated and unprincipled, without the guidance of a mother, or any prudent and sensible female, seemed to me no less than suffering her to stumble into some dreadful pit, when the sun is in its meridian. My plan, therefore, was not merely to educate and to cherish her as my own, but to adopt her the heiress of my small fortune, and to bestow her upon some worthy man, with whom she might spend her days in tranquillity, cheerfulness, and good-humour, untainted by vice, folly, or ambition.

So much for the time past. Such have been the motives by which I have been governed; and I hope they will be allowed not merely to account for, but also to justify, the conduct which has resulted from them. It now remains to speak of the time to come.

And here, indeed, I am sensible of difficulties

which I almost despair of surmounting according to my wishes. I pay the highest deference to your Ladyship's opinion, which it is extremely painful to me not to concur with;—yet I am so well acquainted with your goodness, that I presume to hope it would not be absolutely impossible for me to offer such arguments as might lead you to think with me, that this young creature's chance of happiness seems less doubtful in retirement, than it would be in the gay and dissipated world. But why should I perplex your Ladyship with reasoning that can turn to so little account? for, alas! what arguments, what persuasions can I make use of, with any prospect of success, to such a woman as Madame Duval? Her character, and the violence of her disposition, intimidate me from making the attempt: she is too ignorant for instruction, too obstinate for entreaty, and too weak for reason.

I will not, therefore, enter into a contest from which I have nothing to expect but altercation and impertinence. As soon would I dicuss the effect of sound with the deaf, or the nature of colours with the blind, as aim at illuminating with conviction a mind so warped by prejudice, so much the slave of unruly and illiberal passions. Unused as she is to control, persuasion would but harden, and opposition incense her. I yield, therefore, to the necessity which compels my reluctant acquiescence; and shall now turn all my thoughts upon considering of such methods for the conducting this enterprise, as may be most conducive to the happiness of my child, and least liable to wound her sensibility.

The lawsuit, therefore, I wholly and absolutely disapprove.

Will you, my dear Madam, forgive the freedom of an old man, if I own myself greatly surprised, that you could, even for a moment, listen to a plan so

violent, so public, so totally repugnant to all female delicacy? I am satisfied your Ladyship has not weighed this project. There was a time, indeed, when to assert the innocence of Lady Belmont, and to blazon to the world the *wrongs*, not *guilt*, by which she suffered, I proposed, nay attempted, a similar plan: but then all assistance and encouragement was denied. How cruel to the remembrance I bear of her woes is this tardy resentment of Madame Duval! She was deaf to the voice of Nature, though she has hearkened to that of Ambition.

Never can I consent to have this dear and timid girl brought forward to the notice of the world by such a method; a method which will subject her to all the impertinence of curiosity, the sneers of conjecture, and the stings of ridicule. And for what?—the attainment of wealth which she does not want, and the gratification of vanity which she does not feel. A child to appear against a father!—no, Madam, old and infirm as I am, I would even yet sooner convey her myself to some remote part of the world, though I were sure of dying in the expedition.

Far different had been the motives which would have stimulated her unhappy mother to such a proceeding; all her felicity in this world was irretrievably lost; her life was become a burthen to her; and her fair fame, which she had early been taught to prize above all other things, had received a mortal wound: therefore, to clear her own honour and to secure from blemish the birth of her child, was all the good which fortune had reserved herself the power of bestowing. But even this last consolation was withheld from her!

Let milder measures be adopted: and—since it must be so—let application be made to Sir John Belmont: but as to a lawsuit, I hope, upon this subject, never more to hear it mentioned.

With Madame Duval, all pleas of delicacy would be ineffectual; her scheme must be opposed by arguments better suited to her understanding. I will not therefore talk of its impropriety, but endeavour to prove its inutility. Have the goodness, then, to tell her, that her own intentions would be frustrated by her plan; since should the lawsuit be commenced, and even should the cause be gained, Sir John Belmont would still have it in his power, and, if irritated, no doubt in his inclination, to cut off her grand-daughter with a shilling.

She cannot do better herself than to remain quiet and inactive in the affair: the long and mutual animosity between her and Sir John will make her interference merely productive of debates and ill-will. Neither would I have Evelina appear till summoned. And as to myself, I must wholly decline *acting*; though I will, with unwearied zeal, devote all my thoughts to giving counsel: but, in truth, I have neither inclination nor spirits adequate to engaging personally with this man.

My opinion is, that he would pay more respect to a letter from your Ladyship upon this subject, than from any other person. I therefore advise and hope that you will yourself take the trouble of writing to him, in order to open the affair. When he shall be inclined to see Evelina, I have for him a posthumous letter, which his much injured lady left to be presented to him, if ever such a meeting should take place.

The views of the Branghtons, in suggesting this scheme, are obviously interested. They hope, by securing to Evelina the fortune of her father, to induce Madame Duval to settle her own upon themselves. In this, however, they would probably be mistaken; for little minds have ever a propensity to bestow their wealth upon those who are already

in affluence; and, therefore, the less her grandchild requires her assistance, the more gladly she will give it.

I have but one thing more to add, from which, however, I can by no means recede: my word so solemnly given to Lady Belmont, that her child should never be owned but with herself, must be inviolably adhered to.

I am, dear Madam, with great respect,

Your Ladyship's most obedient servant,

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXIX.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry Hill, May 2.

How sincerely do I sympathize in the uneasiness and concern which my beloved Evelina has so much reason to feel! The cruel scheme in agitation is equally repugnant to my judgement and my inclination;—yet to oppose it seems impracticable. To follow the dictates of my own heart, I should instantly recall you to myself, and never more consent to your being separated from me; but the manners and opinion of the world demand a different conduct. Hope, however, for the best, and be satisfied you shall meet with no indignity: if you are not recived into your own family as you ought to be, and with the distinction that is your due, you shall leave it for ever; and once again restored to my protection, secure your own tranquillity, and make, as you have hitherto done, all the happiness of my life.

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXX.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, May 6.

THE die is thrown, and I attend the event in trembling! Lady Howard has written to Paris, and sent her letter to town, to be forwarded in the ambassador's packet; and in less than a fortnight, therefore, she expects an answer. O, Sir, with what anxious impatience shall I wait its arrival! upon it seems to depend the fate of my future life. My solicitude is so great, and my suspense so painful, that I cannot rest a moment in peace, or turn my thoughts into any other channel.

Deeply interested as I now am in the event, most sincerely do I regret that the plan was ever proposed. Methinks it *cannot* end to my satisfaction: for either I must be torn from the arms of my *more* than father,—or I must have the misery of being finally convinced, that I am cruelly rejected by him who has the natural claim to that dear title; a title, which to write, mention, or think of, fills my whole soul with filial tenderness.

The subject is discussed here eternally. Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval, as usual, quarrel whenever it is started: but I am so wholly engrossed by my own reflections, that I cannot even listen to them. My imagination changes the scene perpetually: one moment, I am embraced by a kind and relenting parent, who takes me to that heart from which I have hitherto been banished, and supplicates through me, peace and forgiveness from the ashes of my mother!—at another, he regards me with detestation, considers me as the living image of an injured saint, and repulses me with horror!—But I will not afflict you with the melancholy phantasms

of my brain; I will endeavour to compose my mind to a more tranquil state, and forbear to write again till I have in some measure succeeded.

May Heaven bless you, my dearest Sir! and long, long may it continue you on earth, to bless

Your grateful

EVELINA.

LETTER XXXI.

LADY HOWARD TO SIR JOHN BELMONT, BART.

SIR, Howard Grove, May 5.

You will doubtless be surprised at receiving a letter from one who had for so short a period the honour of your acquaintance, and that at so great a distance of time: but the motive which has induced me to take this liberty is of so delicate a nature, that were I to commence making apologies for my officiousness, I fear my letter would be too long for your patience.

You have, probably, already conjectured the subject upon which I mean to treat. My regard for Mr. Evelyn and his amiable daughter was well known to you: nor can I ever cease to be interested in whatever belongs to their memory or family.

I must own myself somewhat distressed in what manner to introduce the purport of my writing; yet as I think that, in affairs of this kind, frankness is the first requisite to a good understanding between the parties concerned, I will neither torment you nor myself with punctilious ceremonies, but proceed instantly and openly to the business which occasions my giving you this trouble.

I presume, Sir, it would be superfluous to tell you,

that your child resides still in Dorsetshire, and is still under the protection of the Reverend Mr. Villars, in whose house she was born: for, though no inquiries concerning her have reached his ears or mine, I can never suppose it possible you have forborne to make them. It only remains, therefore, to tell you, that your daughter is now grown up; that she has been educated with the utmost care, and the utmost success; and that she is now a most deserving, accomplished, and amiable young woman.

Whatever may be your view for her future destination in life, it seems time to declare it. She is greatly admired, and I doubt not will be very much sought after: it is proper, therefore, that her future expectations, and your pleasure concerning her, should be made known.

Believe me, Sir, she merits your utmost attention and regard. You could not see and know her, and remain unmoved by those sensations of affection which belong to so near and tender a relationship. She is the lovely resemblance of her lovely mother; —pardon, Sir, the liberty I take in mentioning that unfortunate lady; but I think it behoves me, upon this occasion, to show the esteem I felt for her: allow me, therefore, to say, and be not offended at my freedom, that the memory of that excellent lady has but too long remained under the aspersions of calumny; surely it is time to vindicate her fame;— and how can that be done in a manner more eligible, more grateful to her friends, or more honourable to yourself, than by openly receiving as your child, *the daughter of the late Lady Belmont?*

The venerable man who has had the care of her education deserves your warmest acknowledgements for the unremitting pains he has taken, and the attention he has shown in the discharge of his trust. Indeed she has been peculiarly fortunate in

meeting with such a friend and guardian; a more worthy man, or one whose character seems nearer to perfection, does not exist.

Permit me to assure you, Sir, she will amply repay whatever regard and favour you may hereafter show her, by the comfort and happiness you cannot fail to find in her affection and duty. To be owned *properly* by you is the first wish of her heart; and I am sure that to merit your approbation will be the first study of her life.

I fear that you will think this address impertinent; but I must rest upon the goodness of my intention to plead my excuse. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

M. HOWARD.

LETTER XXXII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, Kent, May 10.

OUR house has been enlivened to-day by the arrival of a London visitor; and the necessity I have been under of concealing the uneasiness of my mind, has made me exert myself so effectually, that I even think it is really diminished; or at least, my thoughts are not so totally, so very anxiously, occupied by one only subject as they lately were.

I was strolling this morning with Miss Mirvan, down a lane about a mile from the Grove, when we heard the trampling of horses; and fearing the narrowness of the passage, we were turning hastily back, but stopped upon hearing a voice call out, Pray, Ladies, don't be frightened, for I will walk my horse. We turned again, and then saw Sir Clement Willoughby. He dismounted; and ap-

proaching us with the reins in his hand, presently recollected us. Good Heaven, cried he, with his usual quickness, do I see Miss Anville?—and you too, Miss Mirvan?

He immediately ordered his servant to take charge of his horse; and then, advancing to us, took a hand of each, which he pressed to his lips, and said a thousand fine things concerning his good fortune, our improved looks, and the charms of the country, when inhabited by *such* rural deities. The town, Ladies, has languished since your absence;—or, at least, I have so much languished myself, as to be absolutely insensible to all it had to offer. One refreshing breeze, such as I now enjoy, awakens me to new vigour, life, and spirit. But I never before had the good luck to see the country in such perfection.

Has not almost every body left town, Sir? said Miss Mirvan.

I am ashamed to answer you, Madam—but indeed it is as full as ever, and will continue so till after the birth-day. However, you, ladies, were so little seen, that there are but few who know what it has lost. For my own part, I felt it too sensibly, to be able to endure the place any longer.

Is there any body remaining there, that we were acquainted with? cried I.

O yes, Ma'am. And then he named two or three persons we have seen when with him; but he did not mention Lord Orville, and I would not ask him, lest he should think me curious. Perhaps, if he stays here some time, he may speak of him by accident.

He was proceeding in this complimentary style, when we were met by the Captain; who no sooner perceived Sir Clement, than he hastened up to him, gave him a hearty shake of the hand, a cordial slap

on the back, and some other equally gentle tokens of satisfaction, assuring him of his great joy at his visit, and declaring he was as glad to see him as if he had been a messenger who brought news that a French ship was sunk. Sir Clement, on the other side, expressed himself with equal warmth; and protested he had been so eager to pay his respects to Captain Mirvan, that he had left London in its full lustre, and a thousand engagements unanswered, merely to give himself that pleasure.

We shall have rare sport, said the Captain; for do you know, the old French-woman is among us? 'Fore George, I have scarce made any use of her yet, by reason I have had nobody with me that could enjoy a joke: howsomever, it shall go hard, but we'll have some diversion now.

Sir Clement very much approved of the proposal; and we then went into the house, where he had a very grave reception from Mrs. Mirvan, who is by no means pleased with his visit, and a look of much discontent from Madame Duval, who said to me in a low voice, I'd as soon have seen Old Nick as that man, for he's the most impertinentest person in the world, and isn't never of my side.

The Captain is now actually occupied in contriving some scheme, which, he says, is *to play the old Dowager off*; and so eager and delighted is he at the idea, that he can scarcely restrain his raptures sufficiently to conceal his design even from herself. I wish, however, since I do not dare put Madame Duval upon her guard, that he had the delicacy not to acquaint me with his intention.

LETTER XXXIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

May 13th.

THE Captain's operations are begun,—and, I hope, ended; for, indeed, poor Madame Duval has already but too much reason to regret Sir Clement's visit to Howard Grove.

Yesterday morning, during breakfast, as the Captain was reading the newspaper, Sir Clement suddenly begged to look at it, saying, he wanted to know if there was any account of a transaction, at which he had been present the evening before his journey hither, concerning a poor Frenchman, who had got into a scrape which might cost him his life.

The Captain demanded particulars; and then Sir Clement told a long story of being with a party of country friends at the Tower, and hearing a man call out for mercy in French; and that, when he inquired into the occasion of his distress, he was informed that he had been taken up upon suspicion of treasonable practices against the government. The poor fellow, continued he, no sooner found that I spoke French, than he besought me to hear him, protesting that he had no evil designs; that he had been but a short time in England, and only waited the return of a lady from the country to quit it for ever.

Madame Duval changed colour, and listened with the utmost attention.

Now, though I by no means approve of so many foreigners continually flocking into our country, added he, addressing himself to the Captain, yet I could not help pitying the poor wretch, because he did not know enough of English to make his defence; however, I found it impossible to assist him;

for the mob would not suffer me to interfere. In truth, I am afraid he was but roughly handled.

Why, did they duck him? said the Captain.

Something of that sort, answered he.

So much the better! so much the better! cried the Captain, an impudent French puppy! I'll bet you what you will he was a rascal. I only wish all his countrymen were served the same.

I wish you had been in his place, with all my soul! cried Madame Duval, warmly:—but pray, Sir, didn't nobody know who this poor gentleman was?

Why I did hear his name, answered Sir Clement, but I cannot recollect it.

It wasn't—it wasn't—Du Bois? stammered out Madame Duval.

The very name! answered he: yes, Du Bois, I remember it now.

Madame Duval's cup fell from her hand, as she repeated Du Bois! Monsieur Du Bois, did you say?

Du Bois! why, that's *my* friend, cried the Captain, that's *Monseer Slippery*, i'n't it?—Why, he's plaguy fond of sousing work; howsomever, I'll be sworn they gave him his fill of it.

And I'll be sworn, cried Madame Duval, that you're a—but I don't believe nothing about it, so you needn't be so overjoyed, for I dare say it was no more Monsieur Du Bois than I am.

I thought at the time, said Sir Clement, very gravely, that I had seen the gentleman before! and now I recollect, I think it was in company with you, Madam.

With *me*, Sir? cried Madame Duval.

Say you so? said the Captain; why then it must be he, as sure as you're alive!——Well, but, my good friend, what will they do with poor *Monseer?*

It is difficult to say, answered Sir Clement, very thoughtfully; but I should suppose, that if he has not good friends to appear for him, he will be in a very unpleasant situation; for these are serious sort of affairs.

Why, do you think they'll hang him? demanded the Captain.

Sir Clement shook his head, but made no answer.

Madame Duval could no longer contain her agitation; she started from her chair, repeating, with a voice half-choaked, Hang him!—they can't,—they sha'n't—let them at their peril!—However, it's all false, and I won't believe a word of it;—but I'll go to town this very moment, and see M. Du Bois myself;—I won't wait for nothing.

Mrs. Mirvan begged her not to be alarmed; but she flew out of the room, and up stairs into her own apartment. Lady Howard blamed both the gentlemen for having been so abrupt, and followed her. I would have accompanied her, but the Captain stopped me; and, having first laughed very heartily, said he was going to read his commission to his ship's company.

Now, do you see, said he, as to Lady Howard, I sha'n't pretend for to enlist her into my service, and so I shall e'en leave her to make it out as well as she can; but as to all you, I expect obedience and submission to orders; I am now upon a hazardous expedition, having undertaken to convoy a crazy vessel to the shore of Mortification; so, d'ye see, if any of you have any thing to propose that will forward the enterprise,—why speak and welcome; but if any of you, that are of my chosen crew, capitulate, or enter into any treaty with the enemy,—I shall look upon you as mutinying, and turn you adrift.

Having finished this harangue, which was inter-

larded with many expressions, and sea-phrases, that I cannot recollect, he gave Sir Clement a wink of intelligence, and left us to ourselves.

Indeed, notwithstanding the attempts I so frequently make of writing some of the Captain's conversation, I can only give you a faint idea of his language; for almost every other word he utters is accompanied by an oath, which, I am sure, would be as unpleasant for you to read, as for me to write: and, besides, he makes use of a thousand sea-terms, which are to me quite unintelligible.

Poor Madame Duval sent to inquire at all probable places, whether she could be conveyed to town in any stage-coach: but the Captain's servant brought her for answer, that no London stage would pass near Howard Grove till to-day. She then sent to order a chaise; but was soon assured, that no horses could be procured. She was so much inflamed by these disappointments, that she threatened to set out for town on foot; and it was with difficulty that Lady Howard dissuaded her from this mad scheme.

The whole morning was filled up with these inquiries. But when we were all assembled to dinner, she endeavoured to appear perfectly unconcerned, and repeatedly protested that she gave not any credit to the report, as far as it regarded M. Du Bois, being very certain that he was not the person in question.

The Captain used the most provoking efforts to convince her that she deceived herself; while Sir Clement, with more art, though not less malice, affected to be of her opinion; but, at the same time that he pretended to relieve her uneasiness, by saying that he doubted not having mistaken the name, he took care to enlarge upon the danger to which the *unknown gentleman* was exposed, and expressed great concern at his perilous situation.

Dinner was hardly removed, when a letter was delivered to Madame Duval. The moment she had read it, she hastily demanded from whom it came? A country boy brought it, answered the servant, but he would not wait.

Run after him this instant! cried she, and be sure you bring him back. *Mon Dieu! quel avanture! que ferai-je?*

What's the matter? what's the matter? said the Captain.

Why nothing—nothing's the matter. *O mon Dieu!*

And she rose, and walked about the room.

Why, what,—has *Monseer* sent to you? continued the Captain: is that there letter from him?

No,—it i'n't;—besides, if it is, it's nothing to you.

O then, I'm sure it is! Pray now, Madame, don't be so close; come tell us all about it,—what does he say? how did he relish the horse-pond? which did he find best, sousing *single* or *double*? 'Fore George, 'twas plaguy unlucky you was not with him!

It's no such a thing, Sir, cried she, very angrily; and if you're so very fond of a horse-pond, I wish you'd put yourself into one, and not be always a-thinking about other people's being served so.

The man then came in to acquaint her they could not overtake the boy. She scolded violently, and was in such perturbation, that Lady Howard interfered, and begged to know the cause of her uneasiness, and whether she could assist her?

Madame Duval cast her eyes upon the Captain and Sir Clement, and said she should be glad to speak to her Ladyship, without so many witnesses.

Well, then, Miss Anville, said the Captain, turning to me, do you and Molly go into another room,

and stay there till Mrs. Duval has opened her mind to us.

So you may think, Sir, cried she, but who's fool then? no, no, you needn't trouble yourself to make a ninny of me neither, for I'm not so easily taken in, I'll assure you.

Lady Howard then invited her into the dressing-room, and I was desired to attend her.

As soon as we had shut the door, O my Lady, exclaimed Madame Duval, here's the most cruellest thing in the world has happened!—but that Captain is such a beast, I can't say nothing before him,—but it's all true! poor M. Du Bois is tooked up?

Lady Howard begged her to be comforted, saying that, as M. Du Bois was certainly innocent, there could be no doubt of his ability to clear himself.

To be sure, my Lady, answered she, I know he is innocent; and to be sure they'll never be so wicked as to hang him for nothing?

Certainly not, replied Lady Howard; you have no reason to be uneasy. This is not a country where punishment is inflicted without proof.

Very true, my Lady: but the worst thing is this; I cannot bear that that fellow the Captain should know about it; for if he does, I sha'n't never hear the last of it;—no more won't poor M. Du Bois.

Well, well, said Lady Howard, show me the letter, and I will endeavour to advise you.

The letter was then produced. It was signed by the clerk of a country justice; who acquainted her, that a prisoner, then upon trial for suspicion of treasonable practices against the government, was just upon the point of being committed to jail; but having declared that he was known to her, this clerk had been prevailed upon to write, in order to inquire if she really could speak to the character and

family of a Frenchman who called himself Pierre Du Bois.

When I heard the letter, I was quite amazed at its sucess. So improbable did it seem, that a foreigner should be taken before a *country* justice of peace, for a crime of so dangerous a nature, that I cannot imagine how Madame Duval could be alarmed, even for a moment. But, with all her violence of temper, I see that she is easily frightened, and in fact more cowardly than many who have not half her spirit; and so little does she reflect upon circumstances, or probability, that she is continually the dupe of her own—I ought not to say *ignorance*, but yet I can think of no other word.

I believe that Lady Howard, from the beginning of the transaction, suspected some contrivance of the Captain; and this letter, I am sure, must confirm her suspicion: however, though she is not at all pleased with his frolic, yet she would not hazard the consequence of discovering his designs: her looks, her manner, and her character, made me draw this conclusion from her apparent perplexity; for not a word did she say that implied any doubt of the authenticity of the letter. Indeed there seems to be a sort of tacit agreement between her and the Captain, that she should not appear to be acquainted with his schemes; by which means she at once avoids quarrels, and supports her dignity.

While she was considering what to propose, Madame Duval begged to have the use of her Ladyship's chariot, that she might go immediately to the assistance of her friend. Lady Howard politely assured her, that it should be extremely at her service; and then Madame Duval besought her not to own to the Captain what had happened, protesting that she could not endure he should know poor M. Du Bois had met with so unfortunate an accident.

Lady Howard could not help smiling, though she readily promised not to *inform* the Captain of the affair. As to me, she desired my attendance; which I was by no means rejoiced at, as I was certain that she was going upon a fruitless errand.

I was then commissioned to order the chariot.

At the foot of the stairs I met the Captain, who was most impatiently waiting the result of the conference. In an instant we were joined by Sir Clement. A thousand inquiries were then made concerning Madame Duval's opinion of the letter, and her intentions upon it: and when I would have left them, Sir Clement, pretending equal eagerness with the Captain, caught my hand, and repeatedly detained me to ask some frivolous question, to the answer of which he must be totally indifferent. At length, however, I broke from them; they retired into the parlour, and I executed my commission.

The carriage was soon ready; and Madame Duval, having begged Lady Howard to say she was not well, stole softly down stairs, desiring me to follow her. The chariot was ordered at the garden-door; and, when we were seated, she told the man, according to the clerk's directions, to drive to Mr. Justice Tyrell's, asking, at the same time, how many miles off he lived?

I expected he would have answered, that he knew of no such person; but, to my great surprise, he said, Why, 'Squire Tyrell lives about nine miles beyond the park.

Drive fast, then, cried she, and you sha'n't be no worse for it.

During our ride, which was extemely tedious, she tormented herself with a thousand fears for M. Du Bois's safety; and piqued herself very much upon having escaped unseen by the Captain, not only that she avoided his triumph, but because she

knew him to be so much M. Du Bois's enemy, that she was sure he would prejudice the justice against him, and endeavour to take away his life. For my part, I was quite ashamed of being engaged in so ridiculous an affair, and could only think of the absurd appearance we should make upon our arrival at Mr. Tyrell's.

When we had been out near two hours, and expected every moment to stop at the place of our destination, I observed that Lady Howard's servant, who attended us on horseback, rode on forward till he was out of sight: and soon after returning came up to the chariot window, and delivering a note to Madame Duval, said he had met a boy who was just coming with it to Howard Grove, from the clerk of Mr. Tyrell.

While she was reading it, he rode round to the other window, and making a sign for secresy, put into my hand a slip of paper, on which was written "Whatever happens, be not alarmed—for *you* are safe—though you endanger all mankind!"

I readily imagined that Sir Clement must be the author of this note, which prepared me to expect some disagreeable adventure: but I had no time to ponder upon it; for Madame Duval had no sooner read her own letter, than in an angry tone of voice, she exclaimed, Why, now what a thing is this! here we're come all this way for nothing!

She then gave me the note; which informed her, that she need not trouble herself to go to Mr. Tyrell's, as the prisoner had had the address to escape. I congratulated her upon this fortunate incident; but she was so much concerned at having rode so far in vain, that she seemed less pleased than provoked. However, she ordered the man to make what haste he could home, as she hoped, at least to return before the Captain should suspect what had passed.

The carriage turned about; and we journeyed so quietly for near an hour, that I began to flatter myself we should be suffered to proceed to Howard Grove without further molestation, when suddenly the footman called out, John, are we going right?

Why, I a'n't sure, said the coachman, but I'm afraid we turned wrong.

What do you mean by that, sirrah? said Madame Duval: why if you lose your way, we shall be all in the dark.

I think we should turn to the left, said the footman.

To the left! answered the other; No, no, I'm partly sure we should turn to the right.

You had better make some inquiry, said I.

Ma foi, cried Madame Duval, we're in a fine hole here!—they neither of them know no more than the post. However, I'll tell my Lady as sure as you're born, so you'd better find the way.

Let's try this lane, said the footman.

No, said the coachman, that's the road to Canterbury; we had best go straight on.

Why, that's the direct London road, returned the footman, and will lead us twenty miles about.

Pardi, cried Madame Duval; why, they won't go one way nor t'other! and now we're come all this jaunt for nothing, I suppose we sha'n't get home to-night!

Let's go back to the public-house, said the footman, and ask for a guide.

No, no, said the other, if we stay here a few minutes, somebody or other will pass by; and the horses are almost knocked up already.

Well, I protest, cried Madame Duval, I'd give a guinea to see them sots both horse-whipped! As sure as I'm alive they're drunk! Ten to one but they'll overturn us next!

After much debating, they at length agreed to

on till we came to some inn, or met with a passenger who could direct us. We soon arrived at a farm-house, and the footman alighted, and went into it.

In a few minutes he returned, and told us we might proceed, for that he had procured a direction: But, added he, it seems there are some thieves hereabouts; and so the best way will be for you to leave your watches and purses with the farmer, whom I know very well, and who is an honest man, and a tenant of my Lady's.

Thieves! cried Madame Duval, looking aghast: the Lord help us! I've no doubt but we shall be all murdered!

The farmer came up to us, and we gave him all we were worth, and the servants followed our example.

We then proceeded; and Madame Duval's anger so entirely subsided, that in the mildest manner imaginable she entreated them to make haste, and promised to tell their Lady how diligent and obliging they had been. She perpetually stopped them, to ask if they apprehended any danger; and was at length so much overpowered by her fears, that she made the footman fasten his horse to the back of the carriage, and then come and seat himself within it. My endeavours to encourage her were fruitless; she sat in the middle, held the man by the arm, and protested that if he did but save her life, she would make his fortune. Her uneasiness gave me much concern, and it was with the utmost difficulty I forbore to acquaint her that she was imposed upon; but the mutual fear of the Captain's resentment to me, and of her own to him, neither of which would have any moderation, deterred me. As to the footman, he was evidently in torture from restraining his laughter; and I observed that he was frequently obliged to make most horrid grimaces, from pretended fear, in order to conceal his risibility.

Very soon after, The robbers are coming! cried the coachman.

The footman opened the door, and jumped out of the chariot.

Madame Duval gave a loud scream.

I could no longer preserve my silence. For Heaven's sake, my dear Madam, said I, don't be alarmed,—you are in no danger,--you are quite safe, there is nothing but——

Here the chariot was stopped by two men in masks; who at each side put in their hands as if for our purses. Madame Duval sunk to the bottom of the chariot, and implored their mercy: I shrieked involuntarily, although prepared for the attack: one of them held me fast, while the other tore poor Madame Duval out of the carriage, in spite of her cries, threats, and resistance.

I was really frightened, and trembled exceedingly. My angel! cried the man who held me, you cannot surely be alarmed,—do you not know me?—I shall hold myself in eternal abhorrence, if I have really terrified you.

Indeed, Sir Clement, you have, cried I;—but, for Heaven's sake, where is Madame Duval?—why is she forced away?

She is perfectly safe; the Captain has her in charge: but suffer me now, my adored Miss Anville, to take the only opportunity that is allowed me, to speak upon another, a much dearer, much sweeter subject.

And then he hastily came into the chariot, and seated himself next to me. I would fain have disengaged myself from him, but he would not let me: Deny me not, most charming of women, cried he, deny me not this only moment that is lent me, to pour forth my soul into your gentle ears,—to tell you how much I suffer from your absence,

—how much I dread your displeasure,—and how cruelly I am affected by your coldness!

O, Sir, this is no time for such language;—pray leave me, pray go to the relief of Madame Duval, —I cannot bear that she should be treated with such indignity.

And will you,—can you command my absence? —When may I speak to you, if not now?—Does the Captain suffer me to breathe a moment out of his sight? and are not a thousand impertinent people for ever at your elbow?

Indeed, Sir Clement, you must change your style, or I will not hear you. The *impertinent people* you mean are among my best friends; and you would not, if you really wished me well, speak of them so disrespectfully.

Wish you well!—O Miss Anville, point but out to me how, in what manner, I may convince you of the fervour of my passion;—tell me but what services you will accept from me,—and you shall find my life, my fortune, my whole soul at your devotion.

I want *nothing*, Sir, that you can offer;—I beg you not to talk to me so—so strangely. Pray leave me; and pray assure yourself, you cannot take any method so successless to show any regard for me, as entering into schemes so frightful to Madame Duval, and so disagreeable to myself.

The scheme was the Captain's: I even opposed it: though, I own, I could not refuse myself the so long-wished-for happiness of speaking to you once more, without so many of—your *friends* to watch me. And I had flattered myself, that the note I charged the footman to give you, would have prevented the alarm you have received.

Well, Sir, you have now, I hope, said enough; and, if you will not go yourself to see for Madame

Duval, at least suffer *me* to inquire what is become of her.

And when may I speak to you again?

No matter when,—I don't know,—perhaps—

Perhaps what, my angel?

Perhaps *never*, Sir,——if you torment me thus.

Never! O, Miss Anville, how cruel, how piercing to my soul is that icy word!—Indeed I cannot endure such displeasure.

Then, Sir, you must not provoke it. Pray leave me directly.

I will, Madam; but let me, at least, make a merit of my obedience,—allow me to hope that you will, in future, be less averse to trusting yourself for a few moments alone with me.

I was surprised at the freedom of this request; but while I hesitated how to answer it, the other mask came up to the chariot-door, and, in a voice almost stifled with laughter, said, I've done for her!—the old buck is safe:—but we must sheer off directly, or we shall be all aground.

Sir Clement instantly left me, mounted his horse, and rode off. The Captain, having given some directions to the servants, followed him.

I was both uneasy and impatient to know the fate of Madame Duval, and immediately got out of the chariot to seek her. I desired the footman to show me which way she was gone; he pointed with his finger by way of answer, and I saw that he dared not trust his voice to make any other. I walked on a very quick pace, and soon, to my great consternation, perceived the poor Lady seated upright in a ditch. I flew to her with unfeigned concern at her situation. She was sobbing, nay, almost roaring, and in the utmost agony of rage and terror. As soon as she saw me, she redoubled her cries; but her voice was so broken, I could not understand a word she said. I was so much shocked, that it was

with difficulty I forbore exclaiming against the cruelty of the Captain for thus wantonly ill-treating her; and I could not forgive myself for having passively suffered the deception. I used my utmost endeavours to comfort her, assuring her of our present safety, and begging her to rise and return to the chariot.

Almost bursting with passion, she pointed to her feet, and with frightful violence she actually tore the ground with her hands.

I then saw that her feet were tied together with a strong rope, which was fastened to the upper branch of a tree, even with a hedge which ran along the ditch where she sat. I endeavoured to untie the knot; but soon found it was infinitely beyond my strength.

I was, therefore, obliged to apply to the footman; but being very unwilling to add to his mirth by the sight of Madame Duval's situation, I desired him to lend me a knife: I returned with it, and cut the rope. Her feet were soon disentangled; and then, though with great difficulty, I assisted her to rise. But what was my astonishment, when, the moment she was up, she hit me a violent slap on the face! I retreated from her with precipitation and dread; and she then loaded me with reproaches, which, though almost unintelligible, convinced me that she imagined I had voluntarily deserted her; but she seemed not to have the slightest suspicion that she had not been attacked by real robbers.

I was so much surprised and confounded at the blow, that for some time I suffered her to rave without making any answer; but her extreme agitation, and real suffering, soon dispelled my anger, which all turned into compassion. I then told her, that I had been forcibly detained from following her, and assured her of my real sorrow at her ill usage.

She began to be somewhat appeased; and I again

entreated her to return to the carriage, or give me leave to order that it should draw up to the place where we stood. She made no answer, till I told her, that the longer we remained still, the greater would be the danger of our ride home. Struck with this hint, she suddenly, and with hasty steps, moved forward.

Her dress was in such disorder, that I was quite sorry to have her figure exposed to the servants, who all of them, in imitation of their master, hold her in derision:—however, the disgrace was unavoidable.

The ditch, happily, was almost quite dry, or she must have suffered still more seriously; yet so forlorn, so miserable a figure, I never before saw. Her head-dress had fallen off, her linen was torn, her negligée had not a pin left in it, her petticoats she was obliged to hold on, and her shoes were perpetually slipping off. She was covered with dirt, weeds, and filth, and her face was really horrible; for the pomatum and powder from her head, and the dust from the road, were quite *pasted* on her skin by her tears, which, with her *rouge*, made so frightful a mixture, that she hardly looked human.

The servants were ready to die with laughter the moment they saw her: but not all my remonstrances could prevail upon her to get into the carriage, till she had most vehemently reproached them both for not rescuing her. The footman, fixing his eyes on the ground, as if fearful of again trusting himself to look at her, protested that the robbers had vowed they would shoot him if he moved an inch, and that one of them had staid to watch the chariot, while the other carried her off, adding, that the reason of their behaving so barbarously, was to revenge our having secured our purses. Notwithstanding her anger, she gave immediate credit to what he said;

and really imagined that her want of money had irritated the pretended robbers to treat her with such cruelty. I determined, therefore, to be carefully upon my guard not to betray the imposition, which could now answer no other purpose, than occasioning an irreparable breach between her and the Captain.

Just as we were seated in the chariot, she discovered the loss which her head had sustained, and called out, My God! what is become of my hair? —why, the villain has stole all my curls!

She then ordered the man to run and see if he could find any of them in the ditch. He went, and presently returning, produced a great quantity of hair, in such a nasty condition, that I was amazed she would take it; and the man, as he delivered it to her, found it impossible to keep his countenance; which she no sooner observed, than all her stormy passions were again raised. She flung the battered curls in his face, saying, Sirrah, what do you grin for? I wish you'd been served so yourself, and you wouldn't have found it no such joke: you are the impudentest fellow ever I see; and if I find you dare grin at me any more, I shall make no ceremony of boxing your ears.

Satisfied with the threat, the man hastily retired, and we drove on.

Her anger now subsiding into grief, she began most sorrowfully to lament her case. I believe, she cried, never nobody was so unlucky as I am! and so here, because I ha'n't had misfortunes enough already, that puppy has made me lose my curls!— Why, I can't see nobody without them:—only look at me,—I was never so bad off in my life before. *Pardi*, if I'd know'd as much, I'd have brought two or three sets with me: but I'd never a thought of such a thing as this.

Finding her now somewhat pacified, I ventured to ask an account of her adventure, which I will endeavour to write in her own words.

Why, child, all this misfortune comes of that puppy's making us leave our money behind us; for, as soon as the robber see I did put nothing in his hands, he lugged me out of the chariot by main force, and I verily thought he'd have murdered me. He was as strong as a lion; I was no more in his hands than a child. But I believe never nobody was so abused before; for he dragged me down the road, pulling and hauling me all the way, as if'd no more feeling than a horse. I'm sure I wish I could see that man cut up and quartered alive! however, he'll come to the gallows, that's one good thing. So soon as we'd got out of sight of the chariot, though he needn't have been afraid, for if he'd beat me to a mummy, those cowardly fellows wouldn't have said nothing to it—So, when I was got there, what does he do, but all of a sudden he takes me by both the shoulders, and he gives me such a shake! ——*Mon Dieu!* I shall never forget it, if I live to be an hundred. I'm sure I dare say I'm out of joint all over. And, though I made as much noise as ever I could, he took no more notice of it than nothing at all; but there he stood, shaking me in that manner, as if he was doing it for a wager. I'm determined, if it costs me all my fortune, I'll see that villain hanged. He shall be found out, if there's e'er a justice in England. So when he had shook me till he was tired, and I felt all over like a jelly, without saying never a word, he takes and pops me into the ditch! I'm sure I thought he'd have murdered me, as much as ever I thought any thing in my life; for he kept bumping me about, as if he thought nothing too bad for me. However, I'm resolved I'll never leave my purse behind me again,

the longest day I have to live. So when he couldn't stand over me no longer, he holds out his hands again for my money; but he was as cunning as could be, for he wouldn't speak a word, because I shouldn't swear to his voice: however, that sha'n't save him, for I'll swear to him any day in the year, if I can but catch him. So when I told him I had no money, he fell to jerking me again, just as if he had but that moment begun! And, after that, he got me close by a tree, and out of his pocket he pulls a great cord!—It's a wonder I did not swoon away; for as sure as you are alive, he was going to hang me to that tree. I screamed like any thing mad, and told him if he would but spare my life, I'd never prosecute him, nor tell nobody what he'd done to me: so he stood some time quite in a brown study, a-thinking what he should do. And so, after that, he forced me to sit down in the ditch, and he tied my feet together, just as you see them; and then, as if he had not done enough, he twitched off my cap, and, without saying nothing, got on his horse and left me in that condition; thinking, I suppose, that I might lie there and perish.

Though this narrative almost compelled me to laugh, yet I was really irritated with the Captain, for carrying his love of tormenting,—*sport*, he calls it,—to such barbarous and unjustifiable extremes. I consoled and soothed her, as well as I was able; and told her, that since M. Du Bois had escaped, I hoped, when she recovered from her fright, all would end well.

Fright, child! repeated she, why that's not half;—I promise you, I wish it was; but here I'm bruised from top to toe, and it's well if ever I have the right use of my limbs again. However, I'm glad the villain got nothing but his trouble for his pains. But here the worst is to come, for I can't

go out, because I've got no curls, and so he'll be escaped before I can get to the justice to stop him. I'm resolved I'll tell Lady Howard how her man served me; for if he hadn't made me fling 'em away, I dare say I could have pinned them up well enough for the country.

Perhaps Lady Howard may be able to lend you a cap that will wear without them.

Lady Howard, indeed! why, do you think I'd wear one of her dowdies? No, I'll promise you, I sha'n't put on no such disguisement. It's the unluckiest thing in the world that I did not make the man pick up the curls again; but he put me in such a passion, I could not think of nothing. I know I can't get none at Howard Grove for love nor money; for of all the stupid places ever I see, that Howard Grove is the worst; there's never no getting nothing one wants.

This sort of conversation lasted till we arrived at our journey's end; and then a new distress occurred: Madame Duval was eager to speak to Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan, and to relate her misfortunes; but she could not endure that Sir Clement or the Captain should see her in such disorder; for she said they were so ill-natured, that instead of pitying her they would only make a jest of her disasters. She therefore sent me first into the house, to wait for an opportunity of their being out of the way, that she might steal up stairs unobserved. In this I succeeded, as the gentlemen thought it most prudent not to seem watching for her; though they both contrived to divert themselves with peeping at her as she passed.

She went immediately to-bed, where she had her supper. Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan both of them very kindly sat with her, and listened to her tale with compassionate attention; while Miss Mir-

van and I retired to our own room, where I was very glad to end the troubles of the day in a comfortable conversation.

The Captain's raptures, during supper, at the success of his plan, were boundless. I spoke afterwards to Mrs. Mirvan with the openness which her kindness encourages, and begged her to remonstrate with him upon the cruelty of tormenting Madame Duval so causelessly. She promised to take the first opportunity of starting the subject; but said he was at present so much elated, that he would not listen to her with any patience. However, should he make any new efforts to molest her, I can by no means consent to be passive. Had I imagined he would have been so violent, I would have risked his anger in her defence much sooner.

She has kept her bed all day, and declares she is almost bruised to death.

Adieu, my dear Sir. What a long letter have I written! I could almost fancy I sent it you from London!

LETTER XXXIV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Howard Grove, May 15.

THIS insatiable Captain, if left to himself, would not, I believe, rest till he had tormented Madame Duval into a fever. He seems to have no delight but in terrifying or provoking her; and all his thoughts apparently turn upon inventing such methods as may do it most effectually.

She had her breakfast again in bed yesterday morning; but during ours, the Captain with a very significant look at Sir Clement gave us to under-

stand, that he thought she had now rested long enough to bear the hardships of a fresh campaign.

His meaning was obvious; and, therefore, I resolved to endeavour immediately to put a stop to his intended exploits. When breakfast was over, I followed Mrs. Mirvan out of the parlour, and begged her to lose no time in pleading the cause of Madame Duval with the Captain. My love, answered she, I have already expostulated with him; but all I can say is fruitless, while his favourite, Sir Clement, contrives to urge him on.

Then I will go and speak to Sir Clement, said I, for I know he will desist if I request him.

Have a care, my dear! said she, smiling; it is sometimes dangerous to make requests to men who are too desirous of receiving them.

Well then, my dear Madam, will you give me leave to speak myself to the Captain?

Willingly; nay, I will accompany you to him.

I thanked her, and we went to seek him. He was walking in the garden with Sir Clement. Mrs. Mirvan most obligingly made an opening for my purpose, by saying, Mr. Mirvan, I have brought a petitioner with me.

Why, what's the matter now? cried he.

I was fearful of making him angry, and stammered very much, when I told him, I hoped he had no new plan for alarming Madame Duval.

New plan! cried he; why, you don't suppose the *old* one would do again, do you? Not but what it was a very good one, only I doubt she wouldn't bite.

Indeed, Sir, said I, she has already suffered too much; and I hope you will pardon me, if I take the liberty of telling you, that I think it my duty to do all in my power to prevent her being again so much terrified.

A sullen gloominess instantly clouded his face, and, turning short from me, he said, I might do as I pleased, but that I should much sooner repent than repair my officiousness.

I was too much disconcerted at this rebuff to attempt making any answer; and finding that Sir Clement warmly espoused my cause, I walked away, and left them to discuss the point together.

Mrs. Mirvan, who never speaks to the Captain when he is out of humour, was glad to follow me, and with her usual sweetness made a thousand apologies for her husband's ill-manners.

When I left her, I went to Madame Duval, who was just risen, and employed in examining the clothes she had on the day of her ill usage.

Here's a sight! cried she. Come here, child—only look—*Pardi*, so long as I've lived, I never see so much before! Why, all my things are spoilt; and, what's worse, my sacque was as good as new. Here's the second negligee I've had used in this manner!—I'm sure I was a fool to put it on in such a lonesome place as this; however, if I stay here these ten years, I'll never put on another good gown, that I'm resolved.

Will you let the maid try if she can iron it out, or clean it, Ma'am?

No, she'll only make bad worse.—But look here, now, here's a cloak! *Mon Dieu!* why it looks like a dish-clout! Of all the unluckinesses that ever I met, this is the worst! for do you know, I bought it but the day before I left Paris?—Besides, into the bargain, my cap's quite gone: where the villain twitched it, I don't know; but I never see no more of it from that time to this. Now you must know this was the becomingest cap I had in the world, for I've never another with pink ribbon in it; and, to tell you the truth, if I hadn't thought to have

seen M. Du Bois, I'd no more have put it on than I'd have flown; for as to what one wears in such a stupid place as this, it signifies no more than nothing at all.

She then told me, that she had been thinking all night of a contrivance to hinder the Captain from finding out her loss of curls; which was, having a large gauze handkerchief pinned over her head as a hood, and saying she had the tooth-ach.

To tell you the truth, added she, I believe that Captain is one of the worst men in the world; he's always making a joke of me; and as to his being a gentleman, he has no more manners than a bear, for he's always upon the grin when one's in distress; and, I declare, I'd rather be done any thing to than laughed at, for, to my mind, it's one or other the disagreeablest thing in the world.

Mrs. Mirvan, I found, had been endeavouring to dissuade her from the design she had formed of having recourse to the law, in order to find out the supposed robbers; for she dreads a discovery of the Captain, during Madame Duval's stay at Howard Grove, as it could not fail being productive of infinite commotion. She has, therefore, taken great pains to show the inutility of applying to justice, unless she were more able to describe the offenders against whom she would appear; and has assured her, that as she neither heard their voices, nor saw their faces, she cannot possibly swear to their persons, or obtain any redress.

Madame Duval, in telling me this, extremely lamented her hard fate, that she was thus prevented from revenging her injuries; which, however, she vowed she would not be persuaded to *pocket tamely:* because, added she, if such villains as these are let to have their own way, and nobody takes no notice of their impudence, they'll make no more ado than

nothing at all of tying people in ditches, and such things as that: however, I shall consult with M. Du Bois, as soon as I can ferret out where he's hid himself. I'm sure I've a right to his advice, for it's all along of his gaping about at the Tower that I've met with these misfortunes.

M. Du Bois, said I, will, I am sure, be very sorry when he hears what has happened.

And what good will that do now?—that won't unspoil all my clothes; I can tell him, I a'n't much obliged to him, though it's no fault of his;—yet it i'n't the less provokinger for that. I'm sure, if he had been there, to have seen me served in that manner, and put neck and heels into a ditch, he'd no more have thought it was me than the Pope of Rome. I'll promise you, whatever you may think of it, I sha'n't have no rest, night nor day, till I find out that rogue.

I have no doubt, Madam, but you will soon discover him.

Pardi, if I do, I'll hang him, as sure as fate!—But what's the oddest, is, that he should take such a special spite against *me* above all the rest! it was as much for nothing as could be; for I don't know what I had done, so particular bad, to be used in that manner: I'm sure I hadn't given him no offence, as I know of, for I never see his face all the time; and as to screaming a little, I think it's very hard if one mustn't do such a thing as that, when one's put in fear of one's life.

During this conversation, she endeavoured to adjust her head-dress, but could not at all please herself. Indeed, had I not been present, I should have thought it impossible for a woman, at her time of life, to be so very difficult in regard to dress. What she may have in view, I cannot imagine; but the labour of the toilette seems the chief business of her life.

When I left her, in my way down stairs I met Sir Clement; who, with great earnestness, said he must not be denied the honour of a moment's conversation with me; and then, without waiting for an answer, he led me to the garden; at the door of which, however, I absolutely insisted upon stopping.

He seemed very serious, and said, in a grave tone of voice, At length, Miss Anville, I flatter myself I have hit upon an expedient that will oblige you; and therefore, though it is death to myself, I will put it in practice.

I begged him to explain himself.

I saw your desire of saving Madame Duval, and scarce could I refrain giving the brutal Captain my real opinion of his savage conduct; but I am unwilling to quarrel with him, lest I should be denied entrance into a house which you inhabit: I have been endeavouring to prevail with him to give up his absurd new scheme, but I find him impenetrable:—I have therefore determined to make a pretence for suddenly leaving this place, dear as it is to me, and containing all I most admire and adore;—and I will stay in town till the violence of this boobyish humour is abated.

He stopped; but I was silent, for I knew not what I ought to say. He took my hand, which he pressed to his lips, saying, And must I then, Miss Anville, must I quit you—sacrifice voluntarily my greatest felicity;—and yet not be honoured with one word, one look of approbation?

I withdrew my hand, and said with a half laugh, You know so well, Sir Clement, the value of the favours you confer, that it would be superfluous for me to point it out.

Charming, charming girl! how does your wit, your understanding, rise upon me daily! and must I, can I part with you?—will no other method——

O, Sir, do you so soon repent the good office you had planned for Madame Duval?

For Madame Duval!—cruel creature, and will you not even suffer me to place to your account the sacrifice I am about to make?

You must place it, Sir, to what account you please; but I am too much in haste now to stay here any longer.

And then I would have left him; but he held me, and rather impatiently said, If, then, I cannot be so happy as to oblige *you*, Miss Anville, you must not be surprised should I seek to oblige myself. If my scheme is not honoured with your approbation, for which alone it was formed, why should I, to my own infinite dissatisfaction, pursue it?

We were then, for a few minutes, both silent; I was really unwilling he should give up a plan which would so effectually break into the Captain's designs, and, at the same time, save me the pain of disobliging him; and I should instantly and thankfully have accepted his offered civility, had not Mrs. Mirvan's caution made me fearful. However, when he pressed me to speak, I said, in an ironical voice, I had thought, Sir, that the very strong sense you have yourself of the favour you propose to me, would sufficiently have repaid you; but, as I was mistaken, I must thank you myself. And now, (making a low courtesy,) I hope, Sir, you are satisfied.

Loveliest of thy sex—he began; but I forced myself from him, and ran up stairs.

Soon after Miss Mirvan told me that Sir Clement had just received a letter, which obliged him instantly to leave the Grove, and that he had actually ordered a chaise. I then acquainted her with the real state of the affair. Indeed, I conceal nothing from her; she is so gentle and sweet-tempered, that

it gives me great pleasure to place an entire confidence in her.

At dinner, I must own, we all missed him; for though the flightiness of his behaviour to me, when we are by ourselves, is very distressing; yet, in large companies, and general conversation, he is extremely entertaining and agreeable. As to the Captain, he has been so much chagrined at his departure, that he has scarce spoken a word since he went, but Madame Duval, who made her first public appearance since her accident, was quite in raptures that she escaped seeing him.

The money which we left at the farm-house has been returned to us. What pains the Captain must have taken to arrange and manage the adventures which he chose we should meet with! Yet he must certainly be discovered; for Madame Duval is already very much perplexed, at having received a letter this morning from M. Du Bois, in which he makes no mention of his imprisonment. However, she has so little suspicion, that she imputes his silence upon the subject, to his fears that the letter might be intercepted.

Not one opportunity could I meet with, while Sir Clement was here, to inquire after his friend Lord Orville: but I think it was strange he should never mention him unasked. Indeed, I rather wonder that Mrs. Mirvan herself did not introduce the subject, for she always seemed particularly attentive to him.

And now, once more, all my thoughts involuntarily turn upon the letter I so soon expect from Paris. This visit of Sir Clement has, however, somewhat diverted my fears; and, therefore, I am very glad he made it at this time. Adieu, my dear Sir.

LETTER XXXV.

SIR JOHN BELMONT TO LADY HOWARD.

MADAM, Paris, May 11.

I HAVE this moment the honour of your Ladyship's letter, and I will not wait another, before I return an answer.

It seldom happens that a man, though extolled as a saint, is really without blemish; or that another, though reviled as a devil, is really without humanity. Perhaps the time is not very distant, when I may have the honour to convince your Ladyship of this truth, in regard to Mr. Villars and myself.

As to the young lady, whom Mr. Villars so obligingly proposes presenting to me, I wish her all the happiness to which, by your ladyship's account, she seems entitled; and, if she has a third part of the merit of *her* to whom you compare her, I doubt not but Mr. Villars will be more successful in every other application he may make for her advantage, than he can ever be in any with which he may be pleased to favour me.

I have the honour to be, Madam,
Your Ladyship's most humble
and most obedient servant,
JOHN BELMONT.

LETTER XXXVI.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Howard Grove, May 18.

WELL, my dear Sir, all is now over! the letter so anxiously expected is at length arrived, and my doom is fixed. The various feelings which oppress me, I

have not language to describe; nor need I—you know my heart, you have yourself formed it—and its sensations upon this occasion you may but too readily imagine.

Outcast as I am, and rejected for ever by him to whom I of right belong—shall I now implore *your* continued protection?—No, no;—I will not offend your generous heart, which, open to distress, has no wish but to relieve it, with an application that would seem to imply a doubt. I am more secure than ever of your kindness, since you now know upon that is my sole dependence.

I endeavour to bear this stroke with composure, and in such a manner as if I had already received your counsel and consolation. Yet, at times, my emotions are almost too much for me. O, Sir, what a letter for a parent to write! Must I not myself be deaf to the voice of nature, if I could endure to be thus absolutely abandoned without regret? I dare not even to you, nor would I, could I help it, to myself, acknowledge all that I think: for, indeed, I have sometimes sentiments upon this rejection, which my strongest sense of duty can scarcely correct. Yet, suffer me to ask—might not this answer have been softened?—was it not enough to disclaim me for ever, without treating me with contempt and wounding me with derision?

But while I am thus thinking of myself, I forget how much more he is the object of sorrow than I am! Alas, what amends can he make himself for the anguish he is hoarding up for time to come! My heart bleeds for him, whenever this reflection occurs to me.

What is said of *you*, my protector, my friend, my benefactor! I dare not trust myself to comment upon. Gracious Heaven! what a return for goodness so unparalleled!

I would fain endeavour to divert my thoughts from this subject: but even that is not in my power; for, afflicting as this letter is to me, I find that it will not be allowed to conclude the affair, though it does all my expectations, for Madame Duval has determined not to let it rest here. She heard the letter in great wrath, and protested she would not be so easily answered; she regretted her facility in having been prevailed upon to yield the direction of this affair to those who knew not how to manage it, and vowed she would herself undertake and conduct it in future.

It is in vain that I have pleaded against her resolution, and besought her to forbear an attack where she has nothing to expect but resentment: especially as there seems to be a hint, that Lady Howard will one day be more openly dealt with. She will not hear me: she is furiously bent upon a project which is terrible to think of;—for she means to go herself to Paris, take me with her, and there, *face to face*, demand justice!

How to appease or to persuade her, I know not; but for the universe would I not be dragged, in such a manner, to an interview so awful, with a parent I have never yet beheld!

Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan are both of them infinitely shocked at the present situation of affairs, and they seem to be even more kind to me than ever; and my dear Maria, who is the friend of my heart, uses her utmost efforts to console me; and, when she fails in her design, with still greater kindness she sympathizes in my sorrow.

I very much rejoice, however, that Sir Clement Willoughby had left us before this letter arrived.—I am sure the general confusion of the house would otherwise have betrayed to him the whole of a tale which I now, more than ever, wish to have buried in oblivion.

Lady Howard thinks I ought not to disoblige Madame Duval, yet she acknowledges the impropriety of my accompanying her abroad upon such an enterprise. Indeed, I would rather die than force myself into his presence. But so vehement is Madame Duval, that she would instantly have compelled me to attend her to town in her way to Paris, had not Lady Howard so far exerted herself, as to declare she could by no means consent to my quitting her house, till she gave me up to you, by whose permission I had entered it.

She was extremely angry at this denial; and the Captain, by his sneers and raillery, so much increased her rage, that she has positively declared, should your next letter dispute her authority to guide me by her own pleasure, she will, without hesitation, make a journey to Berry Hill, and *teach you to know who she is.*

Should she put this threat in execution, nothing could give me greater uneasiness: for her violence and volubility would almost distract you.

Unable as I am to act for myself, or to judge what conduct I ought to pursue, how grateful do I feel myself, that I have such a guide and director to counsel and instruct me as yourself!

Adieu, my dearest Sir! Heaven, I trust, will never let me live to be repulsed, and derided by *you*, to whom I may now sign myself, wholly your

EVELINA.

LETTER XXXVII.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry Hill, May 21.

LET not my Evelina be depressed by a stroke of fortune for which she is not responsible. No breach

of duty on your part has incurred the unkindness which has been shown you; nor have you, by any act of imprudence, provoked either censure or reproach. Let me entreat you, therefore, my dearest child, to support yourself with that courage which your innocency ought to inspire: and let all the affliction you allow yourself be for him only who, not having that support, must one day be but too severely sensible how much he wants it.

The hint thrown out concerning myself is wholly unintelligible to me: my heart, I dare own, fully acquits me of vice; but *without blemish* I have never ventured to pronounce myself. However, it seems his intention to be hereafter more explicit; and *then*,—should any thing appear that has on *my* part contributed to those misfortunes we lament, let me at least say, that the most partial of my friends cannot be so much astonished as I shall myself be at such a discovery.

The mention, also, of any *future applications* I may make, is equally beyond my comprehension. But I will not dwell upon a subject, which almost compels from me reflections that cannot but be wounding to a heart so formed for filial tenderness as my Evelina's. There is an air of mystery throughout the letter, the explanation of which I will await in silence.

The scheme of Madame Duval is such as might be reasonably expected from a woman so little inured to disappointment, and so totally incapable of considering the delicacy of your situation. Your averseness to her plan gives me pleasure, for it exactly corresponds with my own. Why will she not make the journey she projects by herself? She would not have even the wish of an opposition to encounter. And then, once more, might my child and myself be left to the quiet enjoyment of that peace-

ful happiness, which she alone has interrupted. As to her coming hither, I could, indeed, dispense with such a visit; but, if she will not be satisfied with my refusal by letter, I must submit to the task of giving it her in person.

My impatience for your return is increased by your account of Sir Clement Willoughby's visit to Howard Grove. I am but little surprised at the perseverance of his assiduities to interest you in his favour; but I am very much hurt that you should be exposed to addresses, which, by their privacy, have an air that shocks me. You cannot, my love, be too circumspect; the slightest carelessness on your part will be taken advantage of by a man of his disposition. It is not sufficient for you to be reserved: his conduct even calls for your resentment; and should he again, as will doubtless be his endeavour, contrive to solicit your favour in private, let your disdain and displeasure be so marked, as to constrain a change in his behaviour. Though, indeed, should his visit be repeated while you remain at the Grove, Lady Howard must pardon me if I shorten yours.

Adieu, my child. You will always make my respects to the hospitable family to which we are so much obliged.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MR. VILLARS TO LADY HOWARD.

DEAR MADAM, Berry Hill, May 27.

I BELIEVE your Ladyship will not be surprised at hearing I have had a visit from Madame Duval, as I doubt not her having made known her intention before she left Howard Grove. I would gladly have

excused myself this meeting, could I have avoided it decently; but, after so long a journey, it was not possible to refuse her admittance.

She told me, that she came to Berry Hill, in consequence of a letter I had sent to her grand-daughter, in which I had forbid her going to Paris. Very roughly she then called me to account for the authority which I had assumed; and, had I been disposed to have argued with her, she would very angrily have disputed the right by which I used it. But I declined all debating. I therefore listened very quietly, till she had so much fatigued herself with talking, that she was glad, in her turn, to be silent. And then, I begged to know the purport of her visit.

She answered, that she came to make me relinquish the power I had usurped over her grand-daughter; and assured me she would not quit the place till she succeeded.

But I will not trouble your Ladyship with the particulars of this disagreeable conversation; nor should I, but on account of the result, have chosen so unpleasant a subject for your perusal. However, I will be as concise as I possibly can, that the better occupations of your Ladyship's time may be less impeded.

When she found me inexorable in refusing Evelina's attending her to Paris, she peremptorily insisted that she should at least live with her in London till Sir John Belmont's return. I remonstrated against this scheme with all the energy in my power: but the contest was vain; she lost her patience, and I my time. She declared, that if I was resolute in opposing her, she would instantly make a will, in which she would leave all her fortune to strangers, though, otherwise, she intended her grand-daughter for her sole heiress.

To me, I own, this threat seemed of little consequence; I have long accustomed myself to think, that, with a competency, of which she is sure, my child might be as happy as in the possession of millions; but the incertitude of her future fate deters me from following implicitly the dictates of my present judgement. The connections she may hereafter form, the style of life for which she may be destined, are considerations which give but too much weight to the menaces of Madame Duval. In short, Madam, after a discourse infinitely tedious, I was obliged, though very reluctantly, to compromise with this ungovernable woman, by consenting that Evelina should pass one month with her.

I never made a concession with so bad a grace, or so much regret. The violence and vulgarity of this woman, her total ignorance of propriety, the family to which she is related, and the company she is likely to keep, are objections so forcible to her having the charge of this dear child, that nothing less than my diffidence of the right I have of depriving her of so large a fortune, would have induced me to listen to her proposal. Indeed we parted, at last, equally discontented; she at what I had refused, I at what I had granted.

It now only remains for me to return your Ladyship my humble acknowledgements for the kindness which you have so liberally shown to my ward; and to beg you would have the goodness to part with her, when Madame Duval thinks proper to claim the promise which she has extorted from me. I am,

Dear Madam, &c.

ARTHUR VILLARS

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

Berry Hill, May 28.

WITH a reluctance which occasions me inexpressible uneasiness, I have been almost compelled to consent that my Evelina should quit the protection of the hospitable and respectable Lady Howard, and accompany Madame Duval to a city which I had hoped she would never again have entered. But alas, my dear child, we are the slaves of custom, the dupes of prejudice, and dare not stem the torrent of an opposing world, even though our judgements condemn our compliance! However, since the die is cast, we must endeavour to make the best of it.

You will have occasion in the course of the month you are to pass with Madame Duval, for all the circumspection and prudence you can call to your aid. She will not, I know, propose any thing to you which she thinks wrong herself; but you must learn not only to *judge* but to *act* for yourself: if any schemes are started, any engagements made, which your understanding represents to you as improper, exert yourself resolutely in avoiding them; and do not, by a too passive facility, risk the censure of the world, or your own future regret.

You cannot too assiduously attend to Madame Duval herself; but I would wish you to mix as little as possible with her associates, who are not likely to be among those whose acquaintance would reflect credit upon you. Remember, my dear Evelina, nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman; it is at once the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things.

Adieu, my beloved child; I shall be but ill at ease till this month is elapsed. A. V.

LETTER XL.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

London, June 6.

ONCE more, my dearest Sir, I write to you from this great city. Yesterday morning, with the truest concern, I quitted the dear inhabitants of Howard Grove, and most impatiently shall I count the days till I see them again. Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan took leave of me with the most flattering kindness; but indeed I knew not how to part with Maria, whose own apparent sorrow redoubled mine. She made me promise to send her a letter every post: and I shall write to her with the same freedom, and almost the same confidence, you allow me to make use of to yourself.

The Captain was very civil to me: but he wrangled with poor Madame Duval to the last moment; and taking me aside, just before we got into the chaise, he said, Hark'ee, Miss Anville, I've a favour for to ask of you, which is this; that you will write us word how the old gentlewoman finds herself, when she sees it was all a trick; and what the French lubber says to it, and all about it.

I answered that I would obey him, though I was very little pleased with the commission, which, to me, was highly improper; but he will either treat me as an *informer*, or make me a party in his frolic.

As soon as we drove away, Madame Duval, with much satisfaction, exclaimed, *Dieu merci*, we've got off at last! I'm sure I never desire to see that

place again. It's a wonder I've got away alive; for I believe I've had the worst luck ever was known from the time I set my foot upon the threshold. I know I wish I'd never a gone. Besides, into the bargain, it's the most dullest place in all Christendom: there's never no diversions, nor nothing at all.

Then she bewailed M. Du Bois; concerning whose adventures she continued to make various conjectures during the rest of our journey.

When I asked her what part of London she should reside in, she told me that Mr. Branghton was to meet us at an inn, and would conduct us to a lodging. Accordingly, we proceeded to a house in Bishopsgate-street, and were led by a waiter into a room where we found Mr. Branghton.

He received us very civilly; but seemed rather surprised at seeing me, saying, Why I didn't think of your bringing Miss; however, she's very welcome.

I'll tell you how it was, said Madame Duval: you must know I've a mind to take the girl to Paris, that she may see something of the world, and improve herself a little; besides, I've another reason, that you and I will talk more about. But do you know, that meddling old parson, as I told you of, would not let her go! However, I'm resolved I'll be even with him; for I shall take her on with me, without saying never a word more to nobody.

I started at this intimation, which very much surprised me. But I am very glad she has discovered her intention, as I shall be carefully upon my guard not to venture from town with her.

Mr. Branghton then hoped we had passed our time agreeably in the country.

O Lord, Cousin, cried she, I've been the miserablest creature in the world! I'm sure all the

horses in London sha'n't drag me into the country again of one while:—why, how do you think I've been served? only guess.

Indeed, Cousin, I can't pretend to do that.

Why, then I'll tell you. Do you know I've been robbed!—that is, the villain would have robbed me if he could, only I'd secured all my money.

Why then, Cousin, I think your loss can't have been very great.

O Lord, you don't know what you are a-saying; you're talking in the unthinkingest manner in the world: why, it was all along of not having no money that I met with that misfortune.

How's that, Cousin? I don't see what great misfortune you can have met with, if you'd secured all your money.

That's because you don't know nothing of the matter: for there the villain came to the chaise; and because we hadn't got nothing to give him, though he'd no more right to our money than the man in the moon, yet, do you know, he fell into the greatest passion ever you see, and abused me in such a manner, and put me in a ditch, and got a rope o' purpose to hang me;—and I'm sure, if that wasn't misfortune enough, why I don't know what is.

This is a hard case, indeed, Cousin. But why don't you go to Justice Fielding?

O, as to that, I'm a going to him directly; but only I want first to see poor M. Du Bois; for the oddest thing of all is, that he has wrote to me, and never said nothing of where he is, nor what's become of him, nor nothing else.

M. Du Bois! why he's at my house at this very time.

M. Du Bois at your house! Well, I declare this is the surprisingest part of all. However, I assure

you, I think he might have comed for me, as well as you, considering what I have gone through on his account; for, to tell you the truth, it was all along of him that I met with that accident; so I don't take it very kind of him, I promise you.

Well, but, Cousin, tell me some of the particulars of this affair.

As to the particulars, I'm sure they'd make your hair stand on end to hear them: however, the beginning of it all was through the fault of M. Du Bois: but I'll assure you, he may take care of himself in future, since he don't so much as come to see if I'm dead or alive.—But there I went for him to a justice of peace, and rode all out of the way, and did every thing in the world, and was used worser than a dog, and all for the sake of serving of him; and now you see, he don't so much—well, I was a fool for my pains.—However, he may get somebody else to be treated so another time; for, if he's taken up every day in the week, I'll never go after him no more.

This occasioned an explanation; in the course of which Madame Duval, to her utter amazement, heard that M. Du Bois had never left London during her absence! nor did Mr. Branghton believe that he had ever been to the Tower, or met with any kind of accident.

Almost instantly the whole truth of the transaction seemed to *rush upon her mind*, and her wrath was inconceivably violent. She asked me a thousand questions in a breath; but, fortunately, was too vehement to attend to my embarrassment, which must otherwise have betrayed my knowledge of the deceit. Revenge was her first wish; and she vowed she would go the next morning to Justice Fielding, and inquire what punishment she might lawfully inflict upon the Captain for his assault.

I believe we were an hour at Bishopsgate-street before poor Madame Duval could allow any thing to be mentioned but her own story: at length, however, Mr. Branghton told her, that M. Du Bois, and all his own family, were waiting for her at his house. A hackney-coach was then called, and we proceeded to Snow-hill.

Mr. Branghton's house is small and inconvenient; though his shop, which takes in all the ground floor, is large and commodious. I believe I told you before that he is a silver-smith.

We were conducted up two pair of stairs: for the dining-room, Mr. Branghton told us, was *let*. His two daughters, their brother, M. Du Bois, and a young man, were at tea. They had waited some time for Madame Duval, but I found they had not any expectation that I should accompany her; and the young ladies, I believe, were rather more surprised than pleased when I made my appearance; for they seemed hurt that I should see their apartment. Indeed, I would willingly have saved them that pain, had it been in my power.

The first person who saw me was M. Du Bois, *Ah, mon Dieu!* exclaimed he, *voilà Mademoiselle!*

Goodness, cried young Branghton, if there isn't Miss!

Lord, so there is, said Miss Polly; well, I'm sure I should never have dreamed of Miss's coming.

Nor I neither, I'm sure, cried Miss Branghton, or else I would not have been in this room to see her: I'm quite ashamed about it;—only not thinking of seeing any body but my aunt—however, Tom, it's all your fault; for you know very well I wanted to borrow Mr. Smith's room, only you were so *grumpy* you would not let me.

Lord, what signifies? said the brother; I dare be

sworn Miss has been up two pair of stairs before now; —ha'n't you, Miss?

I begged that I might not give them the least disturbance; and assured them that I had not any choice in regard to what room we sat in.

Well, said Miss Polly, when you come next, Miss, we'll have Mr. Smith's room: and it's a very pretty one, and only up one pair of stairs, and nicely furnished, and every thing.

To say the truth, said Miss Branghton, I thought that my cousin would not, upon any account, have come to town in the summer-time; for it's not at all the *fashion*;—so to be sure, thinks I, she'll stay till September, when the play-houses open.

This was my reception, which I believe you will not call a very *cordial* one. Madame Duval, who, after having severely reprimanded M. Du Bois for his negligence, was just entering upon the story of her misfortunes, now wholly engaged the company.

M. Du Bois listened to her with a look of the utmost horror, repeatedly lifting up his eyes and hands, and exclaiming, *O ciel! quel barbare!* The young ladies gave her the most earnest attention; but their brother, and the young man, kept a broad grin upon their faces during the whole recital. She was, however, too much engaged to observe them; but, when she mentioned having been tied in a ditch, young Branghton, no longer able to constrain himself, burst into a loud laugh, declaring that he had never heard any thing so *funny* in his life! His laugh was heartily re-echoed by his friend; the Miss Branghtons could not resist the example; and poor Madame Duval, to her extreme amazement, was absolutely overpowered and stopped by the violence of their mirth.

For some minutes the room seemed quite in an

uproar; the rage of Madame Duval, the astonishment of M. Du Bois, and the angry interrogatories of Mr. Branghton, on one side; the convulsive tittering of the sisters, and the loud laughs of the young men, on the other, occasioned such noise, passion and confusion, that had any one stopped an instant on the stairs, he must have concluded himself in Bedlam. At length, however, the father brought them to order; and, half-laughing, half-frightened, they made Madame Duval some very awkward apologies. But she would not be prevailed upon to continue her narrative, till they had protested they were laughing at the Captain, and not at her. Appeased by this, she resumed her story; which, by the help of stuffing handkerchiefs into their mouths, the young people heard with tolerable decency.

Every body agreed, that the ill usage the Captain had given her was *actionable*; and Mr. Branghton said, he was sure she might recover what damages she pleased, since she had been put in fear of her life.

She then, with great delight, declared, that she would lose no time in satisfying her revenge, and vowed she would not be contented with less than half his fortune: For though, said she, I don't put no value upon the money, because, *Dieu merci*, I ha'n't no want of it, yet I don't wish for nothing so much as to punish that fellow; for, I'm sure, whatever's the cause of it, he owes me a great *grudge*, and I know no more what it's for than you do; but he's always been doing me one spite or other ever since I knew him.

Soon after tea, Miss Branghton took an opportunity to tell me, in a whisper, that the young man I saw was a lover of her sister's, that his name was Brown, and that he was a haberdasher: with many other particulars of his circumstances and family;

and then she declared her utter aversion to the thoughts of such a match; but added, that her sister had no manner of spirit or ambition, though, for her part, she would ten times rather die an old maid, than marry any person but a gentleman. And, for that matter, added she, I believe Polly herself don't care much for him, only she's in such a hurry, because, I suppose, she's a mind to be married before me; however, she's very welcome; for, I'm sure, I don't care a pin's point whether I ever marry at all;—it's all one to me.

Some time after this, Miss Polly contrived to tell *her* story. She assured me, with much tittering, that her sister was in a great fright lest she should be married first. So I make her believe that I will, continued she; for I love dearly to plague her a little; though, I declare, I don't intend to have Mr. Brown in reality;—I'm sure I don't like him half well enough,—do you, Miss?

It is not possible for me to judge of his merits, said I, as I am entirely a stranger to him.

But what do you think of him, Miss?

Why, really, I—I don't know.

But do you think him handsome? Some people reckon him to have a good pretty person;—but I'm sure, for my part, I think he's monstrous ugly:—don't *you*, Miss?

I am no judge,—but I think his person is very—very well.

Very well! Why, pray, Miss, in a tone of vexation, what fault can you find with it?

O, none at all!

I'm sure you must be very ill-natured if you could. Now there's Biddy says she thinks nothing of him,—but I know it's all out of spite. You must know, Miss, it makes her as mad as can be that I should have a lover before her; but she's so proud

that nobody will court her, and I often tell her she'll die an old maid. But the thing is, she has taken it into her head to have a liking for Mr. Smith, as lodges on the first floor; but, Lord, he'll never have her, for he's quite a fine gentleman; and besides, Mr. Brown heard him say one day, that he'd never marry as long as he lived, for he'd no opinion of matrimony.

And did you tell your sister this?

O, to be sure, I told her directly; but she did not mind me; however, if she will be a fool she must.

This extreme want of affection and good-nature increased the distaste I already felt for these unamiable sisters; and a confidence so entirely unsolicited and unnecessary, manifested equally their folly and their want of decency.

I was very glad when the time for our departing arrived. Mr. Branghton said our lodgings were in Holborn, that we might be near his house, and neighbourly. He accompanied us to them himself.

Our rooms are large, and not inconvenient; our landlord is a hosier. I am sure I have a thousand reasons to rejoice that I am so little known: for my present situation is, in every respect, very unenviable; and I would not, for the world, be seen by any acquaintance of Mrs. Mirvan.

This morning Madame Duval, attended by all the Branghtons, actually went to a Justice in the neighbourhood, to report the Captain's ill usage of her. I had great difficulty in excusing myself from being of the party, which would have given me very serious concern. Indeed, I was extremely anxious, though at home, till I heard the result of the application, for I dread to think of the uneasiness which such an affair would occasion the amiable Mrs. Mirvan. But, fortunately, Madame Duval has re-

ceived very little encouragement to proceed in her design; for she has been informed, that, as she neither heard the voice, nor saw the face of the person suspected, she will find difficulty to cast him upon *conjecture*, and will have but little probability of gaining her cause, unless she can procure witnesses of the transaction. Mr. Brangliton, therefore, who has considered all the circumstances of the affair, is of opinion, that the law-suit will not only be expensive, but tedious and hazardous, and has advised against it. Madame Duval, though very unwillingly, has acquiesced in his decision; but vows, that if ever she is so affronted again, she will be revenged, even if she ruins herself. I am extremely glad that this ridiculous adventure seems now likely to end without more serious consequences.

Adieu, my dearest Sir. My direction is at Mr. Dawkins's, a hosier in High Holborn.

LETTER XLI.

EVELINA TO MISS MIRVAN.

June 7th.

I HAVE no words, my sweet friend, to express the thankfulness I feel for the unbounded kindness which you, your dear mother, and the much-honoured Lady Howard, have shown me; and still less can I find language to tell you with what reluctance I parted from such dear and generous friends, whose goodness reflects, at once, so much honour on their own hearts, and on her to whom it has been so liberally bestowed. But I will not repeat what I have already written to the kind Mrs. Mirvan; I will remember your admonitions, and confine to my own breast that gratitude with which you have

filled it, and teach my pen to dwell upon subject less painful to my generous correspondent.

O, Maria! London now seems no longer the same place where I lately enjoyed so much happiness: every thing is new and strange to me; even the town itself has not the same aspect.—My situation so altered;—my home so different!—my companions so changed!—But you well know my averseness to this journey.

Indeed, to me, London now seems a desert: that gay and busy appearance it so lately wore, is now succeeded by a look of gloom, fatigue, and lassitude; the air seems stagnant, the heat is intense, the dust intolerable, and the inhabitants illiterate and under-bred. At least, such is the face of things in the part of the town where I at present reside.

Tell me, my dear Maria, do you never retrace in your memory the time we passed here when together? to mine it recurs for ever! And yet I think I rather recollect a dream, or some visionary fancy, than a reality.—That I should ever have been known to Lord Orville,—that I should have spoken to—have danced with him,—seems now a romantic illusion: and that elegant politeness, that flattering attention, that high-bred delicacy, which so much distinguished him above all other men, and which struck us with such admiration, I now retrace the remembrance of rather as belonging to an object of ideal perfection, formed by my own imagination, than to a being of the same race and nature as those with whom I at present converse.

I have no news for you, my dear Miss Mirvan; for all that I could venture to say of Madame Duval I have already written to your sweet mother; and as to adventures, I have none to record. Situated as I now am, I heartily hope I shall not meet

with any; my wish is to remain quiet and unnoticed.

Adieu! excuse the gravity of this letter; and believe me your most sincerely

Affectionate and obliged
EVELINA ANVILLE.

LETTER XLII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

Holborn, June 9.

YESTERDAY morning we received an invitation to dine and spend the day at Mr. Branghton's; and M. Du Bois, who was also invited, called to conduct us to Snow-Hill.

Young Branghton received us at the door; and the first words he spoke were, Do you know, Sisters a'n't dressed yet!

Then, hurrying us into the house, he said to me, Come, Miss, you shall go up stairs and catch 'em —I dare say they're at the glass.

He would have taken my hand; but I declined this civility, and begged to follow Madame Duval.

Mr. Branghton then appeared, and led the way himself. We went, as before, up two pair of stairs; but the moment the father opened the door, the daughters both gave a loud scream. We all stopped; and then Miss Branghton called out, Lord, Papa, what do you bring the company up here for? why, Polly and I a'n't half dressed.

More shame for you, answered he; here's your aunt, and cousin, and M. Du Bois, all waiting, and ne'er a room to take them to.

Who'd have thought of their coming so soon?

cried she: I am sure for my part I thought Miss was used to nothing but quality hours.

Why I sha'n't be ready this half-hour yet, said Miss Polly; can't they stay in the shop till we're dressed?

Mr. Branghton was very angry, and scolded them violently: however, we were obliged to descend, and stools were procured for us in the shop, where we found the brother, who was highly delighted, he said, that his sisters had been *catched*; and he thought proper to entertain me with a long account of their tediousness, and the many quarrels they all had together.

When, at length, these ladies were equipped to their satisfaction, they made their appearance; but before any conversation was suffered to pass between them and us, they had a long and most disagreeable dialogue with their father, to whose reprimands, though so justly incurred, they replied with the utmost pertness, while their brother all the time laughed aloud.

The moment they perceived this, they were so much provoked, that, instead of making any apologies to Madame Duval, they next began a quarrel with him. Tom, what do you laugh for? I wonder what business you have to be always a-laughing when Papa scolds us?

Then what business have you to be such a while getting on your clothes? You're never ready, you know well enough.

Lord, Sir, I wonder what's that to you! I wish you'd mind your own affairs, and not trouble yourself about ours. How should a boy like you know any thing?

A boy, indeed! not such a boy, neither: I'll warrant you'll be glad to be as young when you come to be old maids.

This sort of dialogue we were amused with till dinner was ready, when we again mounted up two pair of stairs.

In our way, Miss Polly told me that her sister had asked Mr. Smith for his room to dine in, but he had refused to lend it; because, she said, one day it happened to be a little greased: however, we shall have it to drink tea in, and then, perhaps, you may see him; and I assure you he's quite like one of the quality, and dresses as fine, and goes to balls and dances, and every thing quite in taste; and besides, Miss, he keeps a foot-boy of his own too.

The dinner was ill-served, ill-cooked, and ill-managed. The maid who waited had so often to go down stairs for something that was forgotten, that the Branghtons were perpetually obliged to rise from table themselves, to get plates, knives and forks, bread or beer. Had they been without *pretensions*, all this would have seemed of no consequence; but they aimed at appearing to advantage, and even fancied they succeeded. However, the most disagreeable part of our fare was, that the whole family continually disputed whose turn it was to rise, and whose to be allowed to sit still.

When this meal was over, Madame Duval, ever eager to discourse upon *her travels*, entered into an argument with Mr. Branghton, and, in broken English, M. Du Bois, concerning the French nation: and Miss Polly, then addressing herself to me, said, Don't you think, Miss, it's very dull sitting up stairs here? we'd better go down *to shop*, and then we shall see the people go by.

Lord, Poll, said the brother, you're always wanting to be staring and gaping; and I'm sure you needn't be so fond of showing yourself, for you're ugly enough to frighten a horse.

Ugly, indeed! I wonder which is best, you or

me. But, I tell you what, Tom, you've no need to give yourself such airs; for if you do, I'll tell Miss of—you know what——

Who cares if you do? you may tell what you will; I don't mind——

Indeed, cried I, I do not desire to hear any secrets.

O, but I'm resolved I'll tell you, because Tom's so very spiteful. You must know, Miss, t'other night—

Poll, cried the brother, if you tell of that, Miss shall know all about your meeting young Brown,—you know when!—So I'll be quits with you one way or other.

Miss Polly coloured, and again proposed our going down stairs till Mr. Smith's room was ready for our reception.

Aye, so we will, said Miss Branghton; I'll assure you, cousin, we have some very genteel people pass by our shop sometimes. Polly and I always go and sit there when we've cleaned ourselves.

Yes, Miss, cried the brother, they do nothing else all day long when father don't scold them. But the best fun is, when they've got all their dirty things on, and all their hair about their ears, sometimes I send young Brown up stairs to them: and then there's such a fuss!—There they hide themselves, and run away, and squeel and squall, like any thing mad: and so then I puts the two cats into the room, and I gives them a good whipping, and so that sets them a squalling too; so there's such a noise and such an uproar!—Lord, you can't think, Miss, what fun it is!

This occasioned a fresh quarrel with the sisters; at the end of which, it was at length decided that we should go to the shop.

In our way down stairs, Miss Branghton said aloud, I wonder when Mr. Smith's room will be ready.

So do I, answered Polly; I'm sure we should not do any harm to it now.

This hint had not the desired effect; for we were suffered to proceed very quietly.

As we entered the shop, I observed a young man in deep mourning leaning against the wall, with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the ground, apparently in profound aud melancholy meditation; but the moment he perceived us, he started,and making a passing bow, very abruptly retired. As I found he was permitted to go quite unnoticed, I could not forbear inquiring who he was.

Lord! answered Miss Branghton, he's nothing but a poor Scotch poet.

For my part, said Miss Polly, I believe he's just starved, for I don't find he has any thing to live upon.

Live upon! cried the brother; why, he's a poet, you know, so he may live upon learning.

Aye, and good enough for him, too, said Miss Branghton; for he's as proud as he's poor.

Like enough, replied the brother; but, for all that, you won't find he will live without meat and drink: no, no, catch a Scotchman at that if you can! why, they only come here for what they can get.

I'm sure, said Miss Branghton, I wonder Papa'll be such a fool as to let him stay in the house, for I dare say he'll never pay for his lodging.

Why, no more he would, if he could get another lodger: you know the bill has been put up this fortnight. Miss, if you should hear of a person that wants a room, I assure you it is a very good one, for all it's up three pair of stairs.

I answered, that as I had no acquaintance in London, I had not any chance of assisting them: but both my compassion and my curiosity were excited for this poor young man; and I asked them some further particulars concerning him.

They then acquainted me, that they had only known him three months. When he first lodged

with them, he agreed to board also; but had lately told them he would eat by himself, though they all believed he had hardly ever tasted a morsel of meat since he left their table. They said that he had always appeared very low-spirited; but for the last month he had been *duller* than ever; and, all of a sudden, he had put himself into mourning, though they knew not for whom nor for what; but, they suppossed it was only for convenience, as no person had ever been to see or inquire for him since his residence amongst them: and they were sure he was very poor, as he had not paid for his lodgings the last three weeks: and, finally, they concluded he was a poet, or else half-crazy, because they had, at different times, found scraps of poetry in his room.

They then produced some unfinished verses, written on small pieces of paper, unconnected, and of a most melancholy cast. Among them was the fragment of an ode, which, at my request, they lent me to copy; and as you may perhaps like to see it, I will write it now.

O Life! thou lingering dream of grief, of pain,
And every ill that Nature can sustain,
Strange, mutable, and wild!
Now flattering with Hope most fair,
Depressing now with fell Despair,
The nurse of Guilt, the slave of Pride,
That, like a wayward child,
Who, to himself a foe,
Sees joy alone in what's denied,
In what is granted, woe!
O thou poor, feeble, fleeting pow'r,
By Vice seduc'd, by Folly woo'd,
By Mis'ry, Shame, Remorse pursu'd;
And as thy toilsome steps proceed,
Seeming to Youth the fairest flow'r,
Proving to Age the rankest weed,
A gilded but a bitter pill,
Of varied, great, and complicated ill!

These lines are harsh, but they indicate an internal wretchedness, which, I own, affects me. Surely this young man must be involved in misfortunes of no common nature; but I cannot imagine what can induce him to remain with this unfeeling family, where he is, most unworthily, despised for being poor, and most illiberally detested for being a Scotchman. He may indeed have motives, which he cannot surmount, for submitting to such a situation. Whatever they are, I most heartily pity him, and cannot but wish it were in my power to afford him some relief.

During this conversation, Mr. Smith's foot-boy came to Miss Branghton, and informed her, that his master said she might have the room now when she liked it, for that he was presently going out.

This very genteel message, though it perfectly satisfied the Miss Branghtons, by no means added to my desire of being introduced to this gentleman: and upon their rising, with intention to accept his offer, I begged they would excuse my attending them, and said I would sit with Madame Duval till the tea was ready.

I therefore once more went up two pair of stairs with young Branghton, who insisted upon accompanying me; and there we remained till Mr. Smith's foot-boy summoned us to tea, when I followed Madame Duval into the dining-room.

The Miss Branghtons were seated at one window, and Mr. Smith was lolling indolently out of the other. They all approached us at our entrance; and Mr. Smith, probably to show he was master of the apartment, most officiously handed me to a great chair at the upper end of the room, without taking any notice of Madame Duval, till I rose and offered her my own seat.

Leaving the rest of the company to entertain

themselves, he very abruptly began to address himself to me, in a style of gallantry equally new and disagreeable to me. It is true no man can possibly pay me greater compliments, or make more fine speeches, than Sir Clement Willoughy: yet his language, though too flowery, is always that of a gentleman; and his address and manners are so very superior to those of the inhabitants of this house, that, to make any comparison between him and Mr. Smith, would be extremely unjust. This latter seems very desirous of appearing a man of gaiety and spirit; but his vivacity is so low-bred, and his whole behaviour so forward and disagreeable, that I should prefer the company of *dullness* itself, even as that goddess is described by Pope, to that of this *sprightly* young man.

He made many apologies that he had not lent his room for our dinner, which, he said, he should certainly have done, had he seen me first: and he assured me, that when I came again, he should be very glad to oblige me.

I told him, and with sincerity, that every part of the house was equally indifferent to me.

Why, Ma'am, the truth is, Miss Biddy and Polly take no care of any thing; else, I'm sure, they should be always welcome to my room; for I'm never so happy as in obliging the ladies,—that's my character, Ma'am:—but really, the last time they had it every thing was made so greasy and so nasty, that, upon my word, to a man who wishes to have things a little genteel, it was quite cruel.

Now, as to you, Ma'am, it's quite another thing, for I should not mind if every thing I had was spoilt, for the sake of having the pleasure to oblige you; and I assure you, Ma'am, it makes me quite happy that I have a room good enough to receive you.

This elegant speech was followed by many others, so much in the same style, that to write them would be superfluous; and as he did not allow me a moment to speak to any other person, the rest of the evening was consumed in a painful attention to this irksome young man, who seemed to intend appearing before me to the utmost advantage.

Adieu, my dear Sir. I fear you will be sick of reading about this family; yet I must write of them, or not of any, since I mix with no other. Happy shall I be when I quit them all, and again return to Berry Hill.

LETTER XLIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

June 10th.

THIS morning Mr. Smith called, *on purpose*, he said, to offer me a ticket for the next Hampstead assembly. I thanked him, but desired to be excused accepting it: he would not, however, be denied, nor answered; and, in a manner both vehement and free, pressed and urged his offer, till I was wearied to death: but when he found me resolute, he seemed thunderstruck with amazement, and thought proper to desire I would tell him my reasons.

Obvious as they must surely have been to any other person, they were such as I knew not how to repeat to him: and, when he found I hesitated, he said, Indeed, Ma'am, you are too modest; I assure you the ticket is quite at your service, and I shall be very happy to dance with you; so pray don't be so coy.

Indeed, Sir, returned I, you are mistaken; I never supposed you would offer a ticket without

wishing it should be accepted; but it would answer no purpose to mention the reasons which make me decline it, since they cannot possibly be removed.

This speech seemed very much to mortify him; which I could not be concerned at, as I did not choose to be treated by him with so much freedom. When he was, at last, convinced that his application to me was ineffectual, he addressed himself to Madame Duval, and begged she would interfere in his favour; offering at the same time to procure another ticket for herself.

Ma foi, Sir, answered she, angrily, you might as well have had the complaisance to ask me before; for, I assure you, I don't approve of no such rudeness: however, you may keep your tickets to yourself, for we don't want none of 'em.

This rebuke almost overset him: he made many apologies, and said that he should certainly have first applied to her, but that he had no notion the *young* lady would have refused him, and, on the contrary, had concluded that she would have assisted him to persuade Madame Duval herself.

This excuse appeased her; and he pleaded his cause so successfully, that, to my great chagrin, he gained it, and Madame Duval promised that she would go herself, and take me to the Hampstead assembly whenever he pleased.

Mr. Smith then approaching me with an air of triumph, said, Well, Ma'am, now I think you can't possibly keep to your denial.

I made no answer, and he soon took leave, tho' not till he had so wonderfully gained the favour of Madame Duval, that she declared, when he was gone, he was the prettiest young man she had seen since she came to England.

As soon as I could find an opportunity, I ventured, in the most humble manner, to entreat Madame Du-

val would not insist upon my attending her to this ball; and represented to her as well as I was able, the impropriety of my accepting any present from a young man so entirely unknown to me: but she laughed at my scruples; called me a foolish, ignorant country-girl; and said she should make it her business to teach me something of the world.

This ball is to be next week. I am sure it is not more improper for, than unpleasant to me, and I will use every possible endeavour to avoid it. Perhaps I may apply to Miss Branghton for advice, as I believe she will be willing to assist me, from disliking equally with myself that I should dance with Mr. Smith.

July 11th.

O, my dear Sir! I have been shocked to death; and yet at the same time delighted beyond expression, in the hope that I have happily been the instrument of saving a human creature from destruction.

This morning Madame Duval said she would invite the Branghton family to return our visit tomorrow; and not choosing to rise herself—for she generally spends the morning in bed,—she desired me to wait upon them with her message. M. Du Bois, who just then called, insisted upon attending me.

Mr. Branghton was in the shop, and told us that his son and daughter were out; but desired me to step up stairs, as he very soon expected them home. This I did, leaving M. Du Bois below. I went into the room where we had dined the day before; and, by a wonderful chance, I happened so to seat myself, that I had a view of the stairs, and yet could not be seen from them.

In about ten minutes time, I saw, passing by the door, with a look perturbed and affrighted, the same

young man I mentioned in my last letter. Not heeding, as I suppose, how he went, in turning the corner of the stairs, which are narrow and winding, his foot slipped and he fell; but almost instantly rising, I plainly perceived the end of a pistol, which started from his pocket by hitting against the stairs.

I was inexpressibly shocked. All that I had heard of his misery occurring to my memory, made me conclude that he was, at that very moment, meditating suicide! Struck with the dreadful idea, all my strength seemed to fail me. He moved on slowly, yet I soon lost sight of him; I sat motionless with terror; all power of action forsook me; and I grew almost stiff with horror; till recollecting that it was yet possible to prevent the fatal deed, all my faculties seemed to return, with the hope of saving him.

My first thought was to fly to Mr. Branghton; but I feared, that an instant of time lost might for ever be rued; and therefore, guided by the impulse of my apprehensions, as well as I was able I followed him up stairs, stepping very softly, and obliged to support myself by the bannisters.

When I came within a few stairs of the landing-place I stopped; for I could then see into his room, as he had not yet shut the door.

He had put the pistol upon a table, and had his hand in his pocket, whence, in a few moments, he took out another: he then emptied something on the table from a small leather bag; after which, taking up both the pistols, one in each hand, he dropt hastily upon his knees, and called out, O, God!—forgive me!

In a moment strength and courage seemed lent to me as by inspiration: I started, and rushing precipitately into the room, just caught his arm, and then, overcome by my own fears, I fell down at his

side breathless and senseless. My recovery, however, was, I believe, almost instantaneous; and then the sight of this unhappy man, regarding me with a look of unutterable astonishment, mixed with concern, presently restored to me my recollection. I arose, though with difficulty; he did the same; the pistols, as I soon saw, were both on the floor.

Unwilling to leave them, and indeed too weak to move, I leaned one hand on the table, and then stood perfectly still; while he, his eyes cast wildly towards me, seemed too infinitely amazed to be capable of either speech or action.

I believe we were some minutes in this extraordinary situation; but, as my strength returned, I felt myself both ashamed and awkward, and moved towards the door. Pale and motionless, he suffered me to pass without changing his posture, or uttering a syllable; and, indeed,

> He look'd a bloodless image of despair. POPE.

When I reached the door, I turned round; I looked fearfully at the pistols, and, impelled by an emotion I could not repress, I hastily stepped back, with an intention of carrying them away: but their wretched owner, perceiving my design, and recovering from his astonishment, darting suddenly down, seized them both himself.

Wild with fright, and scarce knowing what I did, I caught, almost involuntarily, hold of both his arms, and exclaimed, O, Sir! have mercy on yourself!

The guilty pistols fell from his hands, which, disengaging from me, he fervently clasped, and cried, Sweet Heaven! is this thy angel?

Encouraged by such gentleness, I again attempted to take the pistols; but, with a look half frantic, he again prevented me, saying, What would you do?

Awaken you, I cried, with a courage I now wonder at, to worthier thoughts, and rescue you from perdition.

I then seized the pistols; he said not a word,—he made no effort to stop me;—I glided quick by him, and tottered down stairs ere he had recovered from the extremest amazement.

The moment I reached again the room I had so fearfully left, I threw away the pistols, and flinging myself on the first chair, gave free vent to the feelings I had most painfully stifled, in a violent burst of tears, which, indeed, proved a happy relief to me.

In this situation I remained some time; but when, at length, I lifted up my head, the first object I saw was the poor man who had occasioned my terror, standing, as if petrified, at the door, and gazing at me with eyes of wild wonder.

I started from the chair; but trembled so excessively, that I almost instantly sunk again into it. He then, though without advancing, and, in a faultering voice, said, Whoever, or whatever you are, relieve me, I pray you, from the suspense under which my soul labours—and tell me if indeed I do not dream?

To this address, so singular, and so solemn, I had not then the presence of mind to frame any answer; but as I presently perceived that his eyes turned from me to the pistols, and that he seemed to intend regaining them, I exerted all my strength, and saying, O, for Heaven's sake forbear! I rose and took them myself.

Do my senses deceive me! cried he, do *I* live—? and do *you?*

As he spoke he advanced towards me; and I, still guarding the pistols, retreated, saying, No, no—you must not—must not have them!

Why—for what purpose, tell me!—do you withhold them?

To give you time to *think;*—to save you from eternal misery;—and, I hope, to reserve you for mercy and forgiveness.

Wonderful! cried he, with uplifted hands and eyes, most wonderful!

For some time he seemed wrapped in deep thought, till a sudden noise of tongues below announcing the approach of the Branghtons, made him start from his reverie: he sprung hastily forward,—dropt on one knee,——caught hold of my gown, which he pressed to his lips; and then, quick as lightning, he rose, and flew up stairs to his own room.

There was something in the whole of this extraordinary and shocking adventure, really too affecting to be borne; and so entirely had I spent my spirits, and exhausted my courage, that before the Branghtons had reached me, I had sunk on the ground without sense or motion.

I believe I must have been a very horrid sight to them on their entrance into the room; for, to all appearance, I seemed to have suffered a violent death, either by my own rashness, or the cruelty of some murderer, as the pistols had fallen close by my side.

How soon I recovered I know not; but, probably I was more indebted to the loudness of their cries than to their assistance; for they all concluded that I was dead, and, for some time, did not make any effort to revive me.

Scarcely could I recollect *where*, or indeed *what*, I was, ere they poured upon me such a torrent of questions and inquiries, that I was almost stunned with their vociferation. However, as soon, and as well as I was able, I endeavoured to satisfy their curiosity, by recounting what had happened as

clearly as was in my power. They all looked aghast at the recital; but, not being well enough to enter into any discussions, I begged to have a chair called, and to return instantly home.

Before I left them, I recommended, with great earnestness, a vigilant observance of their unhappy lodger; and that they would take care to keep from him, if possible, all means of self-destruction.

M. Du Bois, who seemed extremely concerned at my indisposition, walked by the side of the chair, and saw me safe to my own apartment.

The rashness and the misery of this ill-fated young man engross all my thoughts. If, indeed, he is bent upon destroying himself, all efforts to save him will be fruitless. How much do I wish it were in my power to discover the nature of the malady which thus maddens him, and to offer or to procure alleviation to his sufferings! I am sure, my dearest Sir, you will be much concerned for this poor man; and, were you here, I doubt not but you would find some method of awakening him from the error which blinds him, and of pouring the balm of peace and comfort into his afflicted soul!

LETTER XLIV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

Holborn, June 13th.

YESTERDAY all the Branghtons dined here. Our conversation was almost wholly concerning the adventure of the day before. Mr. Branghton said, that his first thought was instantly to turn his lodger out of doors, lest, continued he, his killing himself in my house should bring me into any trouble: but then I was afraid I should never get the money that

he owes me; whereas, if he dies in my house, I have a right to all he leaves behind him, if he goes off in my debt. Indeed, I would put him in prison,—but what should I get by that? he could not earn any thing there to pay me: so I considered about it some time, and then I determined to ask him point-blank for my money out of hand. And so I did; but he told me he'd pay me next week: however, I gave him to understand, that though I was no Scotchman, yet, I did not like to be overreached any more than he: so then he gave me a ring, which, to my certain knowledge, must be worth ten guineas; and told me he would not part with it for his life, and a good deal more such sort of stuff, but that I might keep it till he could pay me.

It is ten to one, father, said young Branghton, if he came fairly by it.

Very likely not, answered he: but that will make no great difference, for I shall be able to prove my right to it all one.

What principles! I could hardly stay in the room.

I'm determined, said the son, I'll take some opportunity to affront him soon, now I know how poor he is, because of the airs he gave himself to me when he first came.

And pray how was that, child? said Madame Duval.

Why, you never knew such a fuss in your life as he made, because one day at dinner I only happened to say, that I supposed he had never got such a good meal in his life before he came to England: there he fell in such a passion as you can't think: but, for my part, I took no notice of it: for to be sure, thinks I, he must needs be a gentleman, or he'd never go to be so angry about it. However, he won't put his tricks upon me again in a hurry.

Well, said Miss Polly, he's grown quite another creature to what he was, and he doesn't run away from us, nor hide himself, nor any thing; and he's as civil as can be, and he's always in the shop, and he saunters about the stairs, and he looks at every body as comes in.

Why, you may see what he's after plain enough, said Mr. Branghton; he wants to see Miss again.

Ha, ha, ha! Lord, how I should laugh, said the son, if he should have fell in love with Miss!

I'm sure, said Miss Branghton, Miss is welcome; but for my part, I should be quite ashamed of such a beggarly conquest.

Such was the conversation till tea-time, when the appearance of Mr. Smith gave a new turn to the discourse.

Miss Branghton desired me to remark with what a *smart air* he entered the room, and asked me if he had not very much a *quality look?*

Come, cried he, advancing to us, you ladies must not sit together; wherever I go, I always make it a rule to part the ladies.

And then, handing Miss Branghton to the next chair, he seated himself between us.

Well, now, ladies, I think we sit very well. What say you? for my part, I think it was a very good motion.

If my cousin likes it, said Miss Branghton, I'm sure I've no objection.

O, cried he, I always study what the ladies like, —that's my first thought. And, indeed, it is but natural that you should like best to sit by the gentlemen, for what can you find to say to one another?

Say! cried young Branghton; O, never you think of that, they'll find enough to say, I'll be

sworn. You know the women are never tired of talking.

Come, come, Tom, said Mr. Smith, don't be severe upon the ladies; when I'm by, you know I always take their part.

Soon after, when Miss Branghton offered me some cake, this man of gallantry said, Well, if I was that lady, I'd never take any thing from a woman.

Why not, Sir?

Because I should be afraid of being poisoned for being so handsome.

Who is severe upon the ladies *now?* said I.

Why, really, Ma'am, it was a slip of the tongue; I did not intend to say such a thing; but one can't always be on one's guard.

Soon after, the conversation turning upon public places, young Branghton asked if I had ever been to *George's* at Hampstead?

Indeed, I never heard the place mentioned.

Didn't you, Miss? cried he eagerly; why, then you've a deal of fun to come, I'll promise you; and I tell you what, I'll treat you there some Sunday soon. So now, Bid and Poll, be sure you don't tell Miss about the chairs, and all that, for I've a mind to surprise her; and if I pay, I think I've a right to have it my own way.

George's at Hampstead! repeated Mr. Smith contemptuously; how came you to think the young lady would like to go to such a low place as that? But, pray, Ma'am, have you ever been to Don Saltero's at Chelsea?

No, Sir.

No!—nay, then I must insist on having the pleasure of conducting you there before long. I assure you, Ma'am, many genteel people go, or else, I give you my word, *I* should not recommend it.

Pray, cousin, said Mr. Branghton, have you been at Sadler's Wells yet?

No, Sir.

No! why then you've seen nothing!

Pray, Miss, said the son, how do you like the Tower of London?

I have never been to it, Sir.

Goodness! exclaimed he, not seen the Tower!—why, may be, you ha'n't been o'top of the Monument, neither?

No, indeed, I have not.

Why, then, you might as well not have come to London for aught I see, for you've been no where.

Pray, Miss, said Polly, have you been all over Paul's Church yet?

No, Ma'am.

Well, but, Ma'am, said Mr. Smith, how do you like Vauxhall and Marybone?

I never saw either, Sir.

No—God bless me!—you really surprise me,—why Vauxhall is the first pleasure in life!—I know nothing like it—Well, Ma'am, you must have been with strange people, indeed, not to have taken you to Vauxhall. Why you have seen nothing of London yet. However, we must try if *we* can't make you amends.

In the course of this *catechism*, many other places were mentioned, of which I have forgotten the names; but the looks of surprise and contempt that my repeated negatives incurred were very diverting.

Come, said Mr. Smith after tea, as this lady has been with such a queer set of people, let's show her the difference; suppose we go somewhere to-night!—I love to do things with spirit!—Come, ladies, where shall we go? For my part I should like Foote's—but the ladies must choose; I never speak myself,

Well, Mr. Smith is always in such spirits! said Miss Branghton.

Why, yes, Ma'am, yes, thank God, pretty good spirits;—I have not yet the cares of the world upon me; I am not *married*,—ha, ha, ha!—you'll excuse me, ladies,—but I can't help laughing!—

No objection being made, to my great relief we all proceeded to the little theatre in the Hay-market, where I was extremely entertained by the performance of the Minor and the Commissary.

They all returned hither to supper.

LETTER XLV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

June 15.

YESTERDAY morning Madame Duval again sent me to Mr. Branghton's, attended by M. Du Bois, to make some party for the evening, because she had had the vapours the preceding day from staying at home.

As I entered the shop, I perceived the unfortunate North Briton seated in a corner, with a book in his hand. He cast his melancholy eyes up as we came in; and I believe, immediately recollected my face—for he started, and changed colour. I delivered Madame Duval's message to Mr. Branghton, who told me I should find Polly up stairs, but that the others were gone out.

Up stairs, therefore, I went; and, seated on a window, with Mr. Brown at her side, sat Miss Polly. I felt a little awkward at disturbing them, and much more so at their behaviour afterwards; for, as soon as the common inquiries were over, Mr. Brown grew so fond and so foolish, that I was extremely

disgusted. Polly, all the time, only rebuked him with, La, now, Mr. Brown, do be quiet, can't you? —you should not behave so before company.—Why now, what will Miss think of me?—while her looks plainly shewed not merely the pleasure, but the pride which she took in his caresses.

I did not by any means think it necessary to punish myself by witnessing their tenderness; and therefore telling them I would see if Miss Branghton were returned home, I soon left them, and again descended into the shop.

So, Miss, you've come again, said Mr. Branghton; what, I suppose, you've a mind to sit a little in the shop, and see how the world goes, hey, Miss?

I made no answer; and M. Du Bois instantly brought me a chair.

The unhappy stranger, who had risen at my entrance, again seated himself; and, though his head leaned towards his book, I could not help observing, his eyes were most intently and earnestly turned towards me.

M. Du Bois, as well as his broken English would allow him, endeavoured to entertain us till the return of Miss Branghton and her brother.

Lord, how tired I am! cried the former; I have not a foot to stand upon. And then, without any ceremony, she flung herself into the chair from which I had risen to receive her.

You tired! said the brother; why, then, what must I be, that have walked twice as far? And with equal politeness he paid the same compliment to M. Du Bois, which his sister had done to me.

Two chairs and three stools completed the furniture of the shop; and Mr. Branghton, who chose to keep his own seat himself, desired M. Du Bois to take another; and then seeing that I was without

any, called out to the stranger, Come, Mr. Macartney, lend us your stool.

Shocked at their rudeness, I declined the offer; and, approaching Miss Branghton, said, If you will be so good as to make room for me on your chair, there will be no occasion to disturb that gentleman.

Lord, what signifies that? cried the brother; he has had his share of sitting, I'll be sworn.

And, if he has not, said the sister, he has a chair up stairs; and the shop is our own, I hope.

This grossness so much disgusted me, that I took the stool, and carrying it back to Mr. Macartney myself, I returned him thanks as civilly as I could for his politeness, but said that I had rather stand.

He looked at me as if unaccustomed to such attention, bowed very respectfully, but neither spoke nor yet made use of it.

I soon found that I was an object of derision to all present, except M. Du Bois; and, therefore, I begged Mr. Branghton would give me an answer for Madame Duval, as I was in haste to return.

Well, then, Tom,—Biddy, where have you a mind to go to night? your Aunt and Miss want to be abroad and amongst them.

Why then, Papa, said Miss Branghton, we'll go to Don Saltero's. Mr. Smith likes that place, so may be he'll go along with us.

No, no, said the son, I'm for White-Conduit House; so let's go there.

White-Conduit House, indeed! cried his sister! no, Tom, that I won't.

Why, then, let it alone; nobody wants your company;—we shall do as well without you, I'll be sworn, and better too.

I'll tell you what, Tom, if you don't hold your tongue, I'll make you repent it,—that I assure you.

Just then Mr. Smith came into the shop, which

he seemed to intend passing through; but when he saw me, he stopped, and began a most courteous inquiry after my health, protesting, that, had he known I was there, he should have come down sooner. But, bless me, Ma'am, added he, what is the reason you stand? and then he flew to bring me the seat from which I had just parted.

Mr. Smith, you are come in very good time, said Mr. Branghton, to end a dispute between my son and daughter, about where they shall all go to-night.

O fie, Tom,—dispute with a lady! cried Mr. Smith. Now, as for me, I'm for where you will, provided this young lady is of the party;—one place is the same as another to me, so that it be but agreeable to the ladies.—I would go any where with you, Ma'am, (to me) unless, indeed, it were to *church*;—ha, ha, ha!—You'll excuse me, Ma'am; but, really, I never could conquer my fear of a parson;—ha, ha, ha!—Really, ladies, I beg your pardon for being so rude; but I can't help laughing for my life!

I was just saying, Mr. Smith, said Miss Branghton, that I should like to go to Don Saltero's;—now pray where should *you* like to go?

Why, really, Miss Biddy, you know I always let the ladies decide; I never fix any thing myself; but I should suppose it would be rather hot at the coffee-house:—however, pray, ladies, settle it among yourselves;—I'm agreeable to whatever you choose.

It was easy for me to discover, that this man, with all his parade of *conformity*, objects to every thing that is not proposed by himself: but he is so much admired by this family for his *gentility*, that he thinks himself a complete fine gentleman!

Come, said Mr. Branghton, the best way will be to put it to the vote, and then every body will speak their minds. Biddy, call Poll down stairs. We'll start fair.

Lord, Papa, said Miss Branghton, why can't you as well send Tom?--you're always sending me of the errands.

A dispute then ensued, but Miss Branghton was obliged to yield.

When Mr. Brown and Miss Polly made their appearance, the latter uttered many complaints of having been called, saying, she did not want to come, and was very well where she was.

Now, ladies, your votes, cried Mr. Smith; and so, Ma'am (to me), we'll begin with you. What place shall you like best? and then, in a whisper, he added, I assure you, I shall say the same as you do, whether I like it or not.

I said, that as I was ignorant what choice was in my power, I must beg to hear their decisions first. This was reluctantly assented to; and then Miss Branghton voted for Saltero's Coffee-house; her sister, for a party to *Mother Red Cap's;* the brother for White-Conduit House; Mr. Brown, for Bagnigge Wells; Mr. Branghton, for Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Smith, for Vauxhall.

Well now, Ma'am, said Mr. Smith, we have all spoken, and so you must give the casting vote. Come, what will you fix upon?

Sir, answered I, I was to speak *last.*

Well, so you will, said Miss Branghton, for we've all spoke first.

Pardon me, returned I, the voting has not yet been quite general.

And I looked towards Mr. Macartney, to whom I wished extremely to show that I was not of the same brutal nature with those by whom he was treated so grossly.

Why pray, said Mr. Branghton, who have we left out? would you have the cats and dogs vote?

No, Sir, cried I, with some spirit, I would have

that gentleman vote,—if, indeed, he is not superior to joining our party.

They all looked at me, as if they doubted whether or not they had heard me right: but, in a few moments, their surprise gave way to a rude burst of laughter.

Very much displeased, I told M. Du Bois that if he was not ready to go, I would have a coach called for myself.

O yes, he said, he was always ready to attend me.

Mr. Smith then advancing, attempted to take my hand, and begged me not to leave them till I had settled the evening's plan.

I have nothing, Sir, said I, to do with it, as it is my intention to stay at home; and therefore Mr. Branghton will be so good as to send Madame Duval word what place is fixed upon, when it is convenient to him.

And then, making a slight courtesy, I left them.

How much does my disgust for these people increase my pity for poor Mr. Macartney! I will not see them when I can avoid so doing; but I am determined to take every opportunity in my power to show civility to this unhappy man, whose misfortunes, with this family, only render him an object of scorn. I was, however, very well pleased with M. Du Bois, who, far from joining in their mirth, expressed himself extremely shocked at their ill-breeding.

We had not walked ten yards before we were followed by Mr. Smith, who came to make excuses, and to assure me they were *only joking*, and hoped I took nothing ill; for if I did, he would make a quarrel of it himself with the Branghtons, rather than I should receive any offence.

I begged him not to take any trouble about so immaterial an affair, and assured him I should not

myself. He was so officious, that he would not be prevailed upon to return home, till he had walked with us to Mr, Dawkins's.

Madame Duval was very much displeased that I brought her so little satisfaction. White-Conduit House was at last fixed upon; and, notwithstanding my great dislike of such parties and such places, I was obliged to accompany them.

Very disagreeable, and much according to my expectations, the evening proved. There were many people all smart and gaudy, and so pert and low-bred, that I could hardly endure being amongst them; but the party to which, unfortunately, I belonged, seemed all *at home*.

END OF VOL. XXXVIII.

Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe Lane, London.