L. M. Reeman
with love
from
Father.

R. Westall R.A. del. Chas. Rolls sc.

LETTERS
ON THE
IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.
BY
Mrs CHAPONE.

LONDON, PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.
FEB. 19, 1822.

LETTERS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

Addressed to a Lady.

BY MRS. CHAPONE.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHN SHARPE,
PICCADILLY;
BY C. WHITTINGHAM, CHISWICK.

M DCCC XXII.

CONTENTS.

TO

MRS. MONTAGU.

MADAM,

I BELIEVE you are persuaded that I never entertained a thought of appearing in public, when the desire of being useful to one dear child, in whom I take the tenderest interest, induced me to write the following Letters:—perhaps it was the partiality of friendship, which so far biased your judgment as to make you think them capable of being more extensively useful, and warmly to recommend the publication of them. Though this partiality could alone prevent your judgment from being considered as decisive in favour of the work, it is more flattering to the writer than any literary fame; if, however, you will allow me to add, that some strokes of your elegant pen have corrected these Letters, I may hope, they will be received with an attention, which will insure a candid judgment from the reader, and

perhaps will enable them to make some useful impressions on those, to whom they are now particularly offered.

They only, who know how your hours are employed, and of what important value they are to the good and happiness of individuals, as well as to the delight and improvement of the public, can justly estimate my obligation to you for the time and consideration you have bestowed on this little work. As *you* have drawn it forth, I may claim a sort of right to the ornament and protection of your name, and to the privilege of publicly professing myself, with the highest esteem,

MADAM,

Your much obliged friend,

and most obedient,

humble servant,

HESTER CHAPONE.

MRS. CHAPONE'S LETTERS.

I will hope that your attention may be engaged by seeing on paper... Truths of the highest importance...

Letter I.

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A. ENGRAVED BY CHARLES ROLLS:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY:
FEB. 10, 1822.

LETTERS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

LETTER I.

ON THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

THOUGH you are so happy as to have parents, who are both capable and desirous of giving you all proper instruction, yet I, who love you so tenderly, cannot help fondly wishing to contribute something, if possible, to your improvement and welfare: and, as I am so far separated from you that it is only by pen and ink I can offer you my sentiments, I will hope that your attention may be engaged, by seeing on paper, from the hand of one of your warmest friends, Truths of the highest importance, which, though you may not find new, can never be too deeply engraven on your mind. Some of them perhaps may make no great impression at present, and yet may so

far gain a place in your memory as readily to return to your thoughts when occasion recalls them. And if you pay me the compliment of preserving my letters, you may possibly reperuse them at some future period, when concurring circumstances may give them additional weight:—and thus they may prove more effectual than the same things spoken in conversation. But, however this may prove, I cannot resist the desire of trying in some degree to be useful to you, on your setting out in a life of trial and difficulty; your success in which must determine your fate for ever.

Hitherto you have "thought as a child, and understood as a child; but it is time to put away childish things."—You are now in your fifteenth year, and must soon act for yourself; therefore it is high time to store your mind with those principles, which must direct your conduct, and fix your character. If you desire to live in peace and honour, in favour with God and man, and to die in the glorious hope of rising from the grave to a life of endless happiness—if these things appear worthy your ambition, you must set out in earnest in the pursuit of them. Virtue and happiness are not attained by chance, nor by a cold and languid approbation; they must be sought with ardour, attended to with diligence, and every assistance must be eagerly

embraced that may enable you to obtain them. Consider, that good and evil are now before you; that, if you do not heartily choose and love the one, you must undoubtedly be the wretched victim of the other. Your trial is now begun; you must either become one of the glorious *children* of *God*, who are to rejoice in his love for ever, or a *child* of *destruction*—miserable in this life, and punished with eternal death hereafter. Surely, you will be impressed by so awful a situation! you will earnestly pray to be directed into that road of life, which leads to excellence and happiness; and, you will be thankful to every kind hand that is held out, to set you forward in your journey.

The first step must be to awaken your mind to a sense of the importance of the task before you, which is no less than to bring your frail nature to that degree of Christian perfection, which is to qualify it for immortality, and without which it is necessarily incapable of happiness; for it is a truth never to be forgotten, that God has annexed happiness to virtue, and misery to vice, by the unchangeable nature of things; and that a wicked being (while he continues such) is in a natural incapacity of enjoying happiness, even with the concurrence of all those outward circumstances, which in a virtuous mind would produce it.

As there are degrees of virtue and vice, so are there of reward and punishment, both here and hereafter: But, let not my dearest Niece aim only at escaping the dreadful doom of the wicked —let your desires take a nobler flight, and aspire after those transcendent honours, and that brighter crown of glory which await those who have excelled in virtue; and, let the animating thought, that every secret effort to gain his favour is noted by your all-seeing Judge, who will, with infinite goodness, proportion your reward to your labours, excite every faculty of your soul to please and serve him. To this end you must *inform your understanding* what you ought to *believe* and to *do*.—You must *correct* and *purify* your *heart;* cherish and improve all its good affections, and continually mortify and subdue those that are evil.—You must *form* and *govern* your *temper* and *manners,* according to the laws of benevolence and justice; and qualify yourself, by all means in your power, for a *useful* and *agreeable* member of society. All this you see is no light business, nor can it be performed without a sincere and earnest application of the mind, as to its great and constant object. When once you consider life, and the duties of life, in this manner, you will listen eagerly to the voice of instruction and admonition, and seize every opportunity of improvement; every useful hint

will be laid up in your heart, and your chief delight will be in those persons, and those books, from which you can learn true wisdom.

The only sure foundation of human virtue is Religion, and the foundation and first principle of religion is in the belief of the one only God, and a just sense of his attributes. This you will think you have learned long since, and possess in common with almost every human creature in this enlightened age and nation; but, believe me, it is less common than you imagine, to believe in the true God—that is, to form such a notion of the Deity as is agreeable to truth, and consistent with those infinite perfections, which all profess to ascribe to him. To form worthy notions of the Supreme Being, as far as we are capable, is essential to true religion and morality; for as it is our duty to imitate those qualities of the Divinity, which are imitable by us, so it is necessary we should know what they are, and fatal to mistake them. Can those who think of God with servile dread and terror, as of a gloomy tyrant, armed with almighty power to torment and destroy them, be said to believe in the true God?—in that God who, the Scriptures say, is love?—The kindest and best of Beings, who made all creatures in bountiful goodness, that he might communicate to them some portion of his own unalterable happiness!—who condescends

to style himself our Father! and who pitieth us, as a father pitieth his own children!—Can those who expect to please God by cruelty to themselves, or to their fellow-creatures—by horrid punishments of their own bodies for the sin of their souls—or, by more horrid persecution of others for difference of opinion, be called true believers? Have they not set up another God in their own minds, who rather resembles the worst of beings than the best?—Nor do those act on surer principles who think to gain the favour of God by senseless enthusiasm and frantic raptures, more like the wild excesses of the most depraved human love, than that reasonable adoration, that holy reverential love, which is due to the pure and holy Father of the universe. Those likewise, who murmur against his providence, and repine under the restraint of his commands, cannot firmly believe him infinitely wise and good. If we are not disposed to trust him for future events, to banish fruitless anxiety, and to believe that all things work together for good to those that love him, surely we do not really believe in the God of mercy and truth. If we wish to avoid all remembrance of him, all communion with him, as much as we dare, surely we do not believe him to be the source of joy and comfort, the dispenser of all good.

How lamentable it is, that so few hearts should

feel the pleasures of real piety! that prayer and thanksgiving should be performed, as they too often are, not with joy, and love, and gratitude; but, with cold indifference, melancholy dejection, or secret horror!—It is true, we are all such frail and sinful creatures, that we justly fear to have offended our gracious Father; but let us remember the condition of his forgiveness: If you have sinned—"sin no more." He is ready to receive you whenever you sincerely turn to him—and he is ready to assist you, when you do but desire to obey him. Let your devotion then be the language of filial love and gratitude; confide to this kindest of fathers every want and every wish of your heart;—but submit them all to his will, and freely offer him the disposal of yourself, and of all your affairs. Thank him for his benefits, and even for his punishments—convinced that these also are benefits, and mercifully designed for your good. Implore his direction in all difficulties; his assistance in all trials; his comfort and support in sickness or affliction; his restraining grace in time of prosperity and joy. Do not persist in desiring what his providence denies you; but be assured it is not good for you. Refuse not any thing he allots you, but embrace it as the best and properest for you. Can you do less to your heavenly Father than what your duty to an earthly one requires?—If

you were to ask permission of your father to do, or to have any thing you desire, and he should refuse it to you, would you obstinately persist in setting your heart upon it, notwithstanding his prohibition? would you not rather say, My father is wiser than I am; he loves me, and would not deny my request, if it was fit to be granted; I will therefore banish the thought, and cheerfully acquiesce in his will?—How much rather should this be said of our heavenly Father, whose wisdom cannot be mistaken, and whose bountiful kindness is infinite!—Love him therefore in the same manner you love your earthly parents, but in a much higher degree—in the highest your nature is capable of. Forget not to dedicate yourself to his service every day; to implore his forgiveness of your faults, and his protection from evil, every night: and this not merely in formal words, unaccompanied by any act of the mind, but "in spirit and in truth;" in grateful love and humble adoration. Nor let these stated periods of worship be your only communication with him; accustom yourself to think often of him, in all your waking hours;—to contemplate his wisdom and power, in the works of his hands—to acknowledge his goodness in every object of use or of pleasure,—to delight in giving him praise in your inmost heart in the midst of every innocent gratification—in

the liveliest hour of social enjoyment. You cannot conceive, if you have not experienced, how much such silent acts of gratitude and love will enhance every pleasure; nor what sweet serenity and cheerfulness such reflections will diffuse over your mind. On the other hand, when you are suffering pain or sorrow, when you are confined to an unpleasant situation, or engaged in a painful duty, how will it support and animate you, to refer yourself to your Almighty Father!—to be assured that he knows your state and your intentions; that no effort of virtue is lost in his sight, nor the least of your actions or sufferings disregarded or forgotten!—that his hand is ever over you, to ward off every real evil, which is not the effect of your own ill conduct, and to relieve every suffering that is not useful to your future well-being.

You see, my dear, that true devotion is not a melancholy sentiment that depresses the spirits, and excludes the ideas of pleasure, which youth is fond of: on the contrary, there is nothing so friendly to joy, so productive of true pleasure, so peculiarly suited to the warmth and innocence of a youthful heart. Do not therefore think it too soon to turn your mind to God; but offer him the first fruits of your understanding and affections: and be assured, that the more you increase in love to him, and delight in his laws, the more

you will increase in happiness, in excellence, and honour:—that in proportion as you improve in true piety, you will become dear and amiable to your fellow-creatures; contented and peaceful in yourself; and qualified to enjoy the best blessings of this life, as well as to inherit the glorious promise of immortality.

Thus far I have spoken of the first principles of all religion; namely, belief in God, worthy notions of his attributes, and suitable affections towards him—which will naturally excite a sincere desire of obedience. But, before you can obey his will, you must know what that will is; you must inquire in what manner he has declared it, and where you may find those laws which must be the rule of your actions.

The great laws of morality are indeed written in our hearts, and may be discovered by reason; but our reason is of slow growth, very unequally dispensed to different persons, liable to error, and confined within very narrow limits in all. If, therefore, God vouchsafed to grant a particular revelation of his will—if he has been so unspeakably gracious as to send his Son into the world to reclaim mankind from error and wickedness—to die for our sins—and to teach us the way to eternal life—surely it becomes us to receive his precepts with the deepest reverence; to love and prize them above all things; and to

study them constantly, with an earnest desire to conform our thoughts, our words, and actions to them.

As you advance in years and understanding, I hope you will be able to examine for yourself the evidences of the Christian religion, and be convinced, on rational grounds, of its divine authority. At present, such inquiries would demand more study, and greater powers of reasoning, than your age admits of. It is your part, therefore, till you are capable of understanding the proofs, to believe your parents and teachers, that the Holy Scriptures are writings inspired by God, containing a true history of facts, in which we are deeply concerned—a true recital of the laws given by God to Moses, and of the precepts of our blessed Lord and Saviour, delivered from his own mouth to his disciples, and repeated and enlarged upon in the edifying epistles of his apostles—who were men chosen from amongst those who had the advantage of conversing with our Lord, to bear witness of his miracles and resurrection—and who, after his ascension, were assisted and inspired by the Holy Ghost. This sacred volume must be the rule of your life. In it you will find all truths necessary to be believed; and plain and easy directions for the practice of every duty. Your Bible then must be your chief study and delight: but as it con-

tains many various kinds of writing—some parts obscure and difficult of interpretation, others plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity—I would chiefly recommend to your frequent perusal such parts of the sacred writings as are most adapted to your understanding, and most necessary for your instruction. Our Saviour's precepts were spoken to the common people amongst the Jews: and were therefore given in a manner easy to be understood, and equally striking and instructive to the learned and to the unlearned; for the most ignorant may comprehend them, whilst the wisest must be charmed and awed by the beautiful and majestic simplicity with which they are expressed. Of the same kind are the Ten Commandments, delivered by God to Moses; which, as they were designed for universal laws, are worded in the most concise and simple manner, yet with a majesty which commands our utmost reverence.

I think you will receive great pleasure, as well as improvement, from the Historical Books of the Old Testament—provided you read them as a history, in a regular course, and keep the thread of it in your mind, as you go on. I know of none, true or fictitious, that is equally wonderful, interesting, and affecting: or that is told in so short and simple a manner as this, which is, of all histories, the most authentic.

In my next letter, I will give you some brief directions, concerning the method and course I wish you to pursue, in reading the Holy Scriptures. May you be enabled to make the best use of this most precious gift of God—this sacred treasury of knowledge! May you read the Bible, not as a task, nor as the dull employment of that day only in which you are forbidden more lively entertainments—but with a sincere and ardent desire of instruction; with that love and delight in God's word which the holy Psalmist so pathetically felt and described, and which is the natural consequence of loving God and virtue!—Though I speak this of the Bible in general, I would not be understood to mean that every part of the volume is equally interesting. I have already said, that it consists of various matter, and various kinds of books, which must be read with different views and sentiments. The having some general notion of what you are to expect from each book may possibly help you to understand them, and heighten your relish of them. I shall treat you as if you were perfectly new to the whole; for so I wish you to consider yourself; because the time and manner, in which children usually read the Bible, are very ill calculated to make them really acquainted with it; and too many people who have read it thus, without understanding it in their youth, satisfy

themselves that they know enough of it, and never afterwards study it with attention, when they come to a maturer age.

Adieu, my beloved Niece! If the feelings of your heart, whilst you read my letters correspond with those of mine whilst I write them, I shall not be without the advantage of your partial affection, to give weight to my advice; for, believe me, my own dear girl, my heart and eyes overflow with tenderness while I tell you, with how warm and earnest prayers for your happiness here and hereafter, I subscribe myself

Your faithful friend

and most affectionate AUNT.

LETTER II.

ON THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

I NOW proceed to give my dear Niece some short sketches of the matter contained in the different books of the Bible, and of the course in which they ought to be read.

The first Book, GENESIS, contains the most grand, and, to us, the most interesting events that ever happened in the universe:—The creation of the world, and of man:—The deplorable fall of man from his first state of excellence and

bliss, to the distressed condition in which we see all his descendants continue:—The sentence of death pronounced on Adam, and on all his race; with the reviving promise of that deliverance which has since been wrought for us by our blessed Saviour:—The account of the early state of the world:—Of the universal deluge,—The division of mankind into different nations and languages:—The story of Abraham the founder of the Jewish people, whose unshaken faith and obedience, under the severest trial human nature could sustain, obtained such favour in the sight of God that he vouchsafed to style him his friend, and promised to make of his posterity a great nation; and that in his seed—that is, in one of his descendants—all the kingdoms of the earth should be blessed: this, you will easily see, refers to the Messiah, who was to be the blessing and deliverance of all nations. It is amazing that the Jews, possessing this prophecy among many others, should have been so blinded by prejudice as to have expected, from this great personage, only a temporal deliverance of their own nation from the subjection to which they were reduced under the Romans: it is equally amazing, that some Christians should, even now, confine the blessed effects of his appearance upon the earth to this or that particular sect or profession, when he is so clearly and emphatically

described as the Saviour of the whole world.—The story of Abraham's proceeding to sacrifice his only son, at the command of God, is affecting in the highest degree, and sets forth a pattern of unlimited resignation, that every one ought to imitate, in those trials of obedience under temptation, or of acquiescence under afflicting dispensations, which fall to their lot; of this we may be assured, that our trials will be always proportioned to the powers afforded us: if we have not Abraham's strength of mind, neither shall we be called upon to lift the bloody knife against the bosom of an only child: but, if the almighty arm should be lifted up against him, we must be ready to resign him, and all we hold dear, to the divine will.—This action of Abraham has been censured by some, who do not attend to the distinction between obedience to a special command, and the detestably cruel sacrifices of the heathens, who sometimes voluntarily, and without any divine injunctions, offered up their own children under the notion of appeasing the anger of their gods. An absolute command from God himself—as in the case of Abraham—entirely alters the moral nature of the action; since he, and he only has a perfect right over the lives of his creatures, and may appoint whom he will, either angel or man, to be his instrument of destruction. That it was really the voice of God

which pronounced the command, and not a delusion, might be made certain to Abraham's mind, by means we do not comprehend, but which we know to be within the power of *him* who made our souls as well as bodies, and who can control and direct every faculty of the human mind: and we may be assured, that if he was pleased to reveal himself so miraculously, he would not leave a possibility of doubting whether it was a real or an imaginary revelation: thus the sacrifice of Abraham appears to be clear of all superstition, and remains the noblest instance of religious faith and submission that was ever given by a mere man: we cannot wonder that the blessings bestowed on him for it should have been extended to his posterity.—This book proceeds with the history of Isaac, which becomes very interesting to us, from the touching scene I have mentioned—and still more so, if we consider him as the type of our Saviour: it recounts his marriage with Rebecca—the birth and history of his two sons, Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, and Esau, the father of the Edomites or Idumeans—the exquisitely affecting story of Joseph and his brethren—and of his transplanting the Israelites into Egypt, who there multiplied to a great nation.

In EXODUS, you read of a series of wonders, wrought by the Almighty, to rescue the oppressed Israelites from the cruel tyranny of the Egyptians,

who, having first received them as guests, by degrees reduced them to a state of slavery. By the most peculiar mercies and exertions in their favour, God prepared his chosen people to receive, with reverent and obedient hearts, the solemn restitution of those primitive laws, which probably he had revealed to Adam and his immediate descendants, or which, at least, he had made known by the dictates of conscience, but which time and the degeneracy of mankind had much obscured. This important revelation was made to them in the Wilderness of Sinah: there, assembled before the burning mountain, surrounded "with blackness, and darkness, and tempest," they heard the awful voice of God pronounce the eternal law, impressing it on their hearts with circumstances of terror, but without those encouragements and those excellent promises, which were afterwards offered to mankind by Jesus Christ. Thus were the great laws of morality restored to the Jews, and through them transmitted to other nations; and by that means a great restraint was opposed to the torrent of vice and impiety, which began to prevail over the world.

To those moral precepts, which are of perpetual and universal obligation, were superadded, by the ministration of Moses, many peculiar institutions, wisely adapted to different ends—either to fix the memory of those past deliverances, which were

figurative of a future and far greater salvation—to place inviolable barriers between the Jews and the idolatrous nations, by whom they were surrounded—or, to be the civil law, by which the community was to be governed.

To conduct this series of events, and to establish these laws with his people, God raised up that great prophet Moses, whose faith and piety enabled him to undertake and execute the most arduous enterprises, and to pursue with unabated zeal the welfare of his countrymen; even in the hour of death, this generous ardour still prevailed: his last moments were employed in fervent prayers for their prosperity, and in rapturous gratitude for the glimpse vouchsafed him of a Saviour, far greater than himself, whom God would one day raise up to his people.

Thus did Moses, by the excellency of his faith, obtain a glorious preeminence among the saints and prophets in heaven; while, on earth, he will be ever revered, as the first of those benefactors to mankind, whose labours for the public good have endeared their memory to all ages.

The next book is LEVITICUS, which contains little besides the laws for the peculiar ritual observance of the Jews, and therefore affords no great instruction to us now; you may pass it over entirely; and, for the same reason, you may omit the first eight chapters of NUMBERS. The rest

of Numbers is chiefly a continuation of the history, with some ritual laws.

In DEUTERONOMY Moses makes a recapitulation of the foregoing history, with zealous exhortations to the people, faithfully to worship and obey that God who had worked such amazing wonders for them: he promises them the noblest temporal blessings, if they prove obedient, and adds the most awful and striking denunciations against them, if they rebel or forsake the true God. I have before observed, that the sanctions of the Mosaic law were *temporal* rewards and punishments, those of the New Testament are *eternal:* these last, as they are so infinitely more forcible than the first, were reserved for the last, best gift to mankind—and were revealed by the Messiah, in the fullest and clearest manner. Moses, in this book, directs the method in which the Israelites were to deal with the seven nations, whom they were appointed to punish for their profligacy and idolatry! and whose land they were to possess, when they had driven out the old inhabitants. He gives them excellent laws, civil as well as religious, which were ever after the standing municipal laws of that people.—This book concludes with Moses' song and death.

The book of JOSHUA contains the conquests of the Israelites over the seven nations, and their establishment in the promised land.—Their treat-

ment of these conquered nations must appear to you very cruel and unjust, if you consider it as their own act, unauthorized by a positive command: but they had the most absolute injunctions, not to spare these corrupt people—"to make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them, but utterly to destroy them." And the reason is given—"lest they should turn away the Israelites from following the Lord, that they might serve other gods*." The children of Israel are to be considered as instruments in the hand of the Lord, to punish those whose idolatry and wickedness had deservedly brought destruction on them: this example, therefore, cannot be pleaded in behalf of cruelty, or bring any imputation on the character of the Jews. With regard to other cities, which did not belong to these seven nations, they were directed to deal with them according to the common law of arms at that time. If the city submitted, it became tributary, and the people were spared; if it resisted, the men were to be slain, but the women and children saved†. Yet, though the crime of cruelty cannot be justly laid to their charge on this occasion, you will observe, in the course of their history, many things recorded of them very different from what you would expect from the chosen people of God, if you supposed them selected on account of their

* Deut. chap. ii. † Ibid. chap. xx.

own merit: their national character was by no means amiable; and we are repeatedly told that they were not chosen for their superior righteousness—"for they were a stiffnecked people, and provoked the Lord with their rebellions from the day they left Egypt."—"You have been rebellious against the Lord," says Moses, "from the day that I knew you*."—And he vehemently exhorts them, not to flatter themselves that their success was, in any degree, owing to their own merits. They were appointed to be the scourge of other nations, whose crimes rendered them fit objects of divine chastisement. For the sake of righteous Abraham, their founder, and perhaps for many other wise reasons, undiscovered to us, they were selected from a world overrun with idolatry, to preserve upon earth the pure worship of the one only God, and to be honoured with the birth of the Messiah amongst them. For this end, they were precluded, by divine command, from mixing with any other people, and defended, by a great number of peculiar rites and observances, from falling into the corrupt worship practised by their neighbours.

The book of JUDGES, in which you will find the affecting stories of Samson and of Jephtha, carries on the history from the death of Joshua, about two hundred and fifty years; but the facts

* Deut. chap. ix. ver. 24.

are not told in the times in which they happened, which makes some confusion; and, it will be necessary to consult the marginal dates and notes, as well as the index, in order to get any clear idea of the succession of events during that period.

The history then proceeds regularly through the two books of SAMUEL and those of KINGS: nothing can be more interesting and entertaining than the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon: but, after the death of Solomon, when ten tribes revolted from his son Rehoboam, and became a separate kingdom, you will find some difficulty in understanding distinctly the histories of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which are blended together, and, by the likeness of the names, and other particulars, will be apt to confound your mind, without great attention to the different threads thus carried on together; the index here will be of great use to you. The Second Book of Kings concludes with the Babylonish captivity, 588 years before Christ—till which time, the kindom of Judea had descended uninterruptedly in the line of David.

The first book of CHRONICLES begins with a genealogy from Adam, through all the tribes of Israel and Judah; and the remainder is the same history which is contained in the books of Kings, with little or no variation, till the separation of the ten tribes: from that period, it proceeds with

the history of the kingdom of Judah alone, and gives therefore a more regular and clear account of the affairs of Judah than the book of Kings. You may pass over the first book of Chronicles, and the nine first chapters of the second book: but, by all means read the remaining chapters, as they will give you more clear and distinct ideas of the history of Judah than that you read in the second book of Kings. The second of Chronicles ends, like the second of Kings, with the Babylonish captivity.

You must pursue the history in the book of EZRA, which gives an account of the return of some of the Jews, on the edict of Cyrus, and of the rebuilding the Lord's temple.

NEHEMIAH carries on the history, for about twelve years, when he himself was governor of Jerusalem, with authority to rebuild the walls, &c.

The story of ESTHER is prior in time to that of Ezra and Nehemiah; as you will see by the marginal dates; however, as it happened during the seventy years captivity, and is a kind of episode, it may be read in its own place.

This is the last of the canonical books that is properly historical; and I would therefore advise that you pass over what follows, till you have continued the history through the apocryphal books.

The history of JOB is probably very ancient,

though that is a point upon which learned men have differed: it is dated, however, 1520 years before Christ: I believe it is uncertain by whom it was written: many parts of it are obscure, but it is well worth studying, for the extreme beauty of the poetry, and for the noble and sublime devotion it contains. The subject of the dispute, between Job and his pretended friends, seems to be, whether the providence of God distributes the rewards and punishments of this life, in exact proportion to the merit or demerit of each individual. His antagonists suppose that it does: and therefore infer from JOB'S uncommon calamities that, notwithstanding his apparent righteousness, he was in reality a grievous sinner; they aggravate his supposed guilt, by the imputation of hypocrisy, and call upon him to confess it, and to acknowledge the justice of his punishment. Job asserts his own innocence and virtue in the most pathetic manner, yet does not presume to accuse the Supreme Being of injustice. Elihu attempts to arbitrate the matter, by alleging the impossibility that so frail and ignorant a creature as man should comprehend the ways of the Almighty, and, therefore, condemns the unjust and cruel inference the three friends had drawn from the sufferings of Job. He also blames Job for the presumption of acquitting himself of all iniquity, since the best of men are not pure in the sight of

God—but all have something to repent of; and he advises him to make this use of his afflictions. At last, by a bold figure of poetry, the Supreme Being himself is introduced, speaking from the whirlwind, and silencing them all by the most sublime display of his own power, magnificence, and wisdom, and of the comparative littleness and ignorance of man.—This indeed is the only conclusion of the argument which could be drawn, at a time when life and immortality were not yet brought to light. A future retribution is the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty arising from the sufferings of good people in this life.

Next follow THE PSALMS, with which you cannot be too conversant. If you have any taste, either for poetry or devotion, they will be your delight, and will afford you a continual feast. The Bible translation is far better than that used in the Common Prayer Book; and will often give you the sense, when the other is obscure. In this, as well as in all other parts of the scripture, you must be careful always to consult the margin, which gives you the corrections made since the last translation, and is generally preferable to the words of the text. I would wish you to select some of the Psalms that please you best, and get them by heart; or, at least, make yourself mistress of the sentiments contained in them: Dr. Delany's Life of David will show you the occasions

on which several of them were composed, which add much to their beauty and propriety; and by comparing them with the events of David's life, you will greatly enhance your pleasure in them. Never did the spirit of true piety breathe more strongly than in these divine songs; which, being added to a rich vein of poetry, makes them more captivating to my heart and imagination than any thing I ever read. You will consider how great disadvantages any poems must sustain from being rendered literally into prose, and then imagine how beautiful these must be in the original. May you be enabled, by reading them frequently, to transfuse into your own breast that holy flame which inspired the writer!—To delight in the Lord, and in his laws, like the Psalmist—to rejoice in him always, and to think "one day in his courts better than a thousand!"—But, may you escape the heart-piercing sorrow of such repentance as that of David—by avoiding sin, which humbled this unhappy king to the dust—and which cost him such bitter anguish, as it is impossible to read of without being moved. Not all the pleasures of the most prosperous sinner could counterbalance the hundredth part of those sensations described in his Penitential Psalms—and which must be the portion of every man, who has fallen from a religious state into such crimes, when once he recovers a sense of religion

and virtue, and is brought to a real hatred of sin: however available such repentance may be to the safety and happiness of the soul after death, it is a state of such exquisite suffering here that one cannot be enough surprised at the folly of those who indulge in sin, with the hope of living to make their peace with God by repentance. Happy are they who preserve their innocence unsullied by any great or wilful crimes, and who have only the common failings of humanity to repent of; these are sufficiently mortifying to a heart deeply smitten with the love of virtue, and with the desire of perfection.—There are many very striking prophecies of the Messiah, in these divine songs; particularly in Psalm xxii.: such may be found scattered up and down almost throughout the Old Testament. To bear testimony to *him* is the great and ultimate end, for which the spirit of prophecy was bestowed on the sacred writers:—but this will appear more plainly to you, when you enter on the study of prophecy, which you are now much too young to undertake.

The PROVERBS and ECCLESIASTES are rich stores of wisdom; from which I wish you to adopt such maxims as may be of infinite use, both to your temporal and eternal interest. But, detached sentences are a kind of reading not proper to be continued long at a time; a few of them

well chosen and digested will do you much more service than to read half a dozen chapters together; in this respect they are directly opposite to the historical books, which, if not read in continuation, can hardly be understood, or retained to any purpose.

The SONG of SOLOMON is a fine poem—but its mystical reference to religion lies too deep for a common understanding; if you read it, therefore, it will be rather as matter of curiosity than of edification.

Next follow the PROPHECIES, which though highly deserving the greatest attention and study, I think you had better omit for some years, and then read them with a good exposition; as they are much too difficult for you to understand without assistance. Dr. Newton on the Prophecies will help you much, whenever you undertake this study—which you should by all means do, when your understanding is ripe enough; because one of the main proofs of our religion rests on the testimony of the prophecies: and they are very frequently quoted and referred to in the New Testament: besides the sublimity of the language and sentiments, through all the disadvantages of antiquity and translation, must, in very many passages, strike every person of taste; and the excellent moral and religious precepts found in them must be useful to all.

Though I have spoken of these books in the order in which they stand, I repeat, that they are not to be read in that order—but that the thread of the history is to be pursued, from Nchemiah, to the first book of MACCABEES, in the Apocrypha; taking care to observe the chronology regularly, by referring to the Index, which supplies the deficiencies of this history, from *Josephus's Antiquities of the Jews.* The first of Maccabees carries on the story till within 195 years of our Lord's circumcision: the second book is the same narrative, written by a different hand, and does not bring the history so forward as the first; so that it may be entirely omitted, unless you have the curiosity to read some particulars of the heroic constancy of the Jews, under the tortures inflicted by their heathen conquerors; with a few other things not mentioned in the first book.

You must then connect the history by the help of the Index, which will give you brief heads of the changes that happened in the state of the Jews, from this time, till the birth of the Messiah.

The other books of the Apocrypha, though not admitted as of sacred authority, have many things well worth your attention; particularly the admirable book called ECCLESIASTICUS, and the BOOK OF WISDOM. But, in the course of reading which I advise, these must be omitted till after you have gone through the Gospels and

Acts, that you may not lose the historical thread. I must reserve however what I have to say to you concerning the New Testament, to another letter.

Adieu, my dear!

LETTER III.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

We come now to that part of Scripture, which is the most important of all; and which you must make your constant study, not only till you are thoroughly acquainted with it, but all your life long; because how often soever repeated, it is impossible to read the life and death of our blessed Saviour, without renewing and increasing in our hearts that love, and reverence, and gratitude towards him, which is so justly due for all he did, and suffered, for us! Every word that fell from his lips is more precious than all the treasures of the earth; for his "are the words of eternal life!" They must therefore be laid up in your heart, and constantly referred to on all occasions, as the rule and direction of all your actions; particularly those very comprehensive moral precepts he has graciously left with us, which can never fail to direct us aright, if fairly and honestly applied: such as *whatsoever ye would that*

men should do unto you, so even do unto them.— There is no occasion, great or small, on which you may not safely apply this rule for the direction of your conduct: and, whilst your heart honestly adheres to it, you can never be guilty of any sort of injustice or unkindness. The two great commandments, which contain the summary of our duty to God and man, are no less easily retained, and made a standard by which to judge our own hearts.—*To love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our minds, with all our strength; and our neighbour* (or fellow-creature) *as ourselves.* "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour;" therefore, if you have true benevolence, you will never do any thing injurious to individuals, or to society. Now, all crimes whatever are (in their remoter consequences at least, if not immediately and apparently) injurious to the society in which we live. It is impossible *to love God* without desiring to please him, and, as far as we are able, to resemble him; therefore, the love of God must lead to every virtue in the highest degree; and, we may be sure, we do not truly love him, if we content ourselves with avoiding flagrant sins, and do not strive in good earnest, to reach the greatest degree of perfection we are capable of. Thus do those few words direct us to the highest Christian virtue. Indeed, the whole tenor of the gospel is to offer us every

help, direction, and motive, that can enable us to attain that degree of perfection, on which depends our eternal good.

What an example is set before us in our blessed Master! How is his whole life, from earliest youth, dedicated to the pursuit of true wisdom, and to the practice of the most exalted virtue! When you see him, at *twelve years of age*, in the temple amongst the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions on the subject of religion, and astonishing them all with his understanding and answers—you will say, perhaps,—"Well might the Son of God, even at those years, be far wiser than the aged; but can a mortal child emulate such heavenly wisdom? Can such a pattern be proposed to *my* imitation?"—Yes, my dear;—remember that he has bequeathed to you his heavenly wisdom, as far as concerns your own good. He has left you such declarations of his will, and of the consequences of your actions, as you are, even now, fully able to understand, if you will but attend to them. If then you will imitate his zeal for knowledge, if you will delight in gaining information and improvement; you may even now become *wise unto salvation*.—Unmoved by the praise he acquired amongst these learned men, you see him meekly return to the subjection of a child, under those who appeared to be his parents, though he was in reality

their Lord: you see him return to live with them, to work for them, and to be the joy and solace of their lives; till the time came, when he was to enter on that scene of public action, for which his heavenly Father had sent him from his own right hand, to take upon him the form of a poor carpenter's son. What a lesson of humility is this, and of obedience to parents—When, having received the glorious testimony from heaven, of his being the beloved Son of the Most High, he enters on his public ministry, what an example does he give us of the most extensive and constant benevolence!—how are all his hours spent in doing good to the souls and bodies of men!—not the meanest sinner is below his notice:—to reclaim and save them, he condescends to converse familiarly with the most corrupt, as well as the most abject. All his miracles are wrought to benefit mankind; not one to punish and afflict them. Instead of using the almighty power, which accompanied him, to the purpose of exalting himself and treading down his enemies, he makes no other use of it than to heal and to save.

When you come to read of his sufferings and death, the ignominy and reproach, the sorrow of mind, and torment of body, which he submitted to—when you consider, that it was for all our sakes—"that by his stripes we are healed"—and by his death we are raised from destruction to

everlasting life—what can I say that can add any thing to the sensations you must then feel?—No power of language can make the scene more touching than it appears in the plain and simple narrations of the evangelists. The heart that is unmoved by it can be scarcely human: but, my dear, the emotions of tenderness and compunction, which almost every one feels in reading this account, will be of no avail, unless applied to the true end—unless it inspire you with a sincere and warm affection towards your blessed Lord—with a firm resolution to obey his commands:—to be his faithful disciple—and ever to renounce and abhor those sins, which brought mankind under divine condemnation, and from which we have been redeemed at so dear a rate. Remember that the title of Christian, or follower of Christ, implies a more than an ordinary degree of holiness and goodness. As our motives to virtue are stronger than those which are afforded to the rest of mankind, our guilt will be proportionably greater if we depart from it.

Our Saviour appears to have had three great purposes, in descending from his glory and dwelling amongst men. The first, to teach them true virtue, both by his example and precepts: the second, to give them the most forcible motives to the practice of it, "by bringing life and immortality to light:" by showing them the certainty of

a resurrection and judgment, and the absolute necessity of obedience to God's laws: the third to sacrifice himself for us, to obtain by his death the remission of our sins upon our repentance and reformation, and the power of bestowing on his sincere followers the inestimable gift of immortal happiness.

What a tremendous scene of the *last day* does the gospel place before our eyes?—of *that day* when you, and every one of us, shall awake from the grave, and behold the Son of God on his glorious tribunal, attended by millions of celestial beings, of whose superior excellence we can now form no adequate idea:—When in presence of all mankind, of those holy angels, and of the great Judge himself, you must give an account of your past life and hear your final doom, from which there can be no appeal, and which must determine your fate to all eternity. Then think—if for a moment you can bear the thought—what will be the desolation, shame, and anguish of those wretched souls, who shall hear these dreadful words:—*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*—Oh!—my beloved child!—I cannot support even the idea of you becoming one of those undone, lost creatures.—I trust in God's mercy, that you will make a better use of that knowledge of his will, which he has vouchsafed you, and of

those amiable dispositions he has given you. Let us therefore turn from this horrid, this insupportable view—and rather endeavour to imagine, as far as is possible, what will be the sensation of your soul, if you shall hear our heavenly Judge address you in these transporting words—*Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* —Think, what it must be, to become an object of the esteem and applause—not only of all mankind assembled together—but of all the host of heaven, of our blessed Lord himself—nay—of his and our Almighty Father: to find your frail flesh changed in a moment into a glorious celestial body, endowed with perfect beauty, health, and agility—to find your soul cleansed from all its faults and infirmities; exalted to the purest and noblest affections—overflowing with divine love and rapturous gratitude;—to have your understanding enlightened and refined—your heart enlarged and purified—and every power and disposition of mind and body adapted to the highest relish of virtue and happiness!—Thus accomplished, to be admitted into the society of amiable and happy beings, all united in the most perfect peace and friendship, all breathing nothing but love to God, and to each other;—with them to dwell in scenes more delightful than the richest imagination can paint—free from every pain and

care, and from all possibility of change or satiety: —but, above all, to enjoy the more immediate presence of God himself—to be able to comprehend and admire his adorable perfections in a high degree, though still far short of their infinity —to be conscious of his love and favour, and to rejoice in the light of his countenance!—but here all imagination fails:—We can form no idea of that bliss which may be communicated to us by such a near approach to the source of all beauty and all good:—We must content ourselves with believing that it is what *mortal eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* The crown of all our joys will be to know that we are secure of possessing them *for ever*—What a transporting idea!

My dearest child! can you reflect on all these things, and not feel the most earnest longings after immortality?—Do not all other views and desires seem mean and trifling, when compared with this? And does not your inmost heart resolve that this shall be the chief and constant object of its wishes and pursuit, through the whole course of your life? If you are not insensible to that desire of happiness, which seems woven into our nature, you cannot surely be unmoved by the prospect of such a transcendent degree of it; and that, continued to all eternity—perhaps continually increasing. You cannot but dread the

forfeiture of such an inheritance as the most insupportable evil!—Remember then—remember the conditions on which alone it can be obtained. God will not give to vice, to carelessness, or sloth, the prize he has proposed to virtue. You have every help that can animate your endeavours:—You have written laws to direct you—the example of Christ and his disciples to encourage you—the most awakening motives to engage you—and you have, besides, the comfortable promise of constant assistance from the Holy Spirit, if you diligently and sincerely pray for it. O, my dear child!—let not all this mercy be lost upon you—but give your attention to this your only important concern, and accept, with profound gratitude, the inestimable advantages that are thus affectionately offered you.

Though the four Gospels are each of them a narration of the life, sayings, and death of Christ; yet, as they are not exactly alike, but some circumstances and sayings, omitted in one, are recorded in another, you must make yourself perfectly mistress of them all.

The ACTS of the holy Apostles, endowed with the Holy Ghost, and authorized by their divine Master, come next in order to be read.—Nothing can be more interesting and edifying than the history of their actions—of the piety, zeal, and courage, with which they preached the glad

tidings of salvation—and of the various exertions of the wonderful powers conferred on them by the Holy Spirit, for the confirmation of their mission.

The character of St. Paul, and his miraculous conversion, demand your particular attention: most of the apostles were men of low birth and education: but Paul was a Roman citizen; that is, he possessed the privileges annexed to the freedom of the city of Rome, which was considered as a high distinction in those countries that had been conquered by the Romans. He was educated amongst the most learned sect of the Jews, and by one of their principal doctors. He was a man of extraordinary eloquence, as appears not only in his writings, but in several speeches in his own defence, pronounced before governors and courts of justice, when he was called to account for the doctrines he taught.—He seems to have been of an uncommon warm temper, and zealous in whatever religion he professed: this zeal, before his conversion, showed itself in the most unjustifiable actions, by furiously persecuting the innocent Christians: but, though his actions were bad, we may be sure his intentions were good; otherwise we should not have seen a miracle employed to convince him of his mistake, and to bring him into the right way. This example may assure us of the mercy of God

towards mistaken consciences, and ought to inspire us with the most enlarged charity and goodwill towards those whose erroneous principles mislead their conduct: instead of resentment and hatred against their persons, we ought only to feel an active wish of assisting them to find the truth, since we know not whether, if convinced, they might not prove, like St. Paul, chosen vessels to promote the honour of God, and of true religion. It is not my intention now to enter with you into any of the arguments for the truth of Christianity, otherwise it would be impossible wholly to pass over that which arises from this remarkable conversion, and which has been so admirably illustrated by a noble writer*, whose tract on this subject is in every body's hand.

Next follow the EPISTLES, which make a very important part of the New Testament: and you cannot be too much employed in reading them. They contain the most excellent precepts and admonitions, and are of particular use in explaining more at large several doctrines of Christianity, which we could not so fully comprehend without them. There are indeed in the Epistles of St. Paul many passages hard to be understood: such, in particular, are the first

* Lord Lyttelton.

eleven chapters to the Romans; the greater part of his Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians; and several chapters of that to the Hebrews. Instead of perplexing yourself with these more obscure passages of Scripture, I would wish you to employ your attention chiefly on those that are plain; and to judge of the doctrines taught in the other parts, by comparing them with what you find in these. It is through the neglect of this rule, that many have been led to draw the most absurd doctrines from the Holy Scriptures. —Let me particularly recommend to your careful perusal the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. In the 14th chapter, St. Paul has in view the difference between the Jewish and Gentile (or Heathen) converts at that time; the former were disposed to look with horror on the latter, for their impiety in not paying the same regard to the distinctions of days and meats that they did; and the latter, on the contrary, were inclined to look with contempt on the former, for their weakness and superstition. Excellent is the advice which the apostle gives to both parties: he exhorts the Jewish converts not to judge, and the Gentiles not to despise; remembering that the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:— Endeavour to conform yourself to this advice;

to acquire a temper of universal candour and benevolence: and learn neither to despise nor condemn any persons on account of their particular modes of faith and worship: remembering always, that goodness is confined to no party—that there are wise and worthy men among all the sects of Christians—and that, to his own master, every one must stand or fall.

I will enter no further into the several points discussed by St. Paul in his various epistles—most of them too intricate for your understanding at present, and many of them beyond my abilities to state clearly. I will only again recommend to you, to read those passages frequently, which, with so much fervour and energy, excite you to the practice of the most exalted piety and benevolence. If the effusions of a heart, warmed with the tenderest affection for the whole human race—if precept, warning, encouragement, example, urged by an eloquence which such affection only could inspire, are capable of influencing your mind—you cannot fail to find, in such parts of his epistles as are adapted to your understanding, the strongest persuasives to every virtue that can adorn and improve your nature.

The Epistle of St. James is entirely practical, and exceedingly fine; you cannot study it too much. It seems particularly designed to guard Christians against misunderstanding some things in St. Paul's writings, which have been fatally

perverted to the encouragement of a dependance on faith alone, without good works. But the more rational commentators will tell you, that by the works of the law, which the apostle asserts to be incapable of justifying us, he means not the works of moral righteousness, but the ceremonial works of the Mosaic law; on which the Jews laid the greatest stress, as necessary to salvation. But St. James tells us, that, "if any man among us seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain." And that pure religion, and undefiled before God the Father, is this: "to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Faith in Christ, if it produce not these effects, he declares, is dead, or of no power.

The Epistles of St. Peter are also full of the best instructions and admonitions, concerning the relative duties of life; amongst which are set forth the duties of women in general, and of wives in particular. Some part of the second Epistle is prophetical; warning the church of false teachers, and false doctrines, which would undermine morality, and disgrace the cause of Christianity.

The first of St. JOHN is written in a highly figurative style, which makes it in some parts hard to be understood: but the spirit of divine love, which it so fervently expresses, renders it

highly edifying and delightful.—That love of God and of man which this beloved apostle so pathetically recommends, is in truth the essence of religion, as our Saviour himself informs us.

The book of REVELATIONS contains a prophetical account of most of the great events relating to the Christian church, which were to happen from the time of the writer, St. John, to the end of the world. Many learned men have taken a great deal of pains to explain it; and they have done this in many instances very successfully: but, I think, it is yet too soon for you to study this part of Scripture; some years hence perhaps there may be no objection to your attempting it, and taking into your hands the best expositions to assist you in reading such of the most difficult parts of the New Testament as you cannot now be supposed to understand.—May Heaven direct you in studying this sacred volume, and render it the means of making you wise unto salvation!—May you love and reverence, as it deserves, this blessed and invaluable book, which contains the best rule of life, the clearest declaration of the will and laws of the Deity, the reviving assurance of favour to true penitents, and the unspeakably joyful tidings of eternal life and happiness to all the truly virtuous, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Deliverer of the world!

Adieu.

LETTER IV.

ON THE REGULATION OF THE HEART AND AFFECTIONS.

You will have read the New Testament to very little purpose, my dearest Niece, if you do not perceive the great end and intention of all its precepts to be the improvement and regulation of the heart: not the outward actions alone, but the inward affections which give birth to them, are the subjects of those precepts; as appears in our Saviour's explanation* of the commandments delivered to Moses; and in a thousand other passages of the gospels, which it is needless to recite. There are no virtues more insisted on, as necessary to our future happiness, than humility, and sincerity, or uprightness, of heart; yet none more difficult and rare. Pride and vanity, the vices opposite to humility, are the sources of almost all the worst faults, both of men and women. The latter are particularly accused—and not without reason—of *vanity*, the vice of *little* minds, chiefly conversant with trifling subjects. Pride and vanity have been supposed to differ so essentially as hardly ever to be found in the same person. "Too proud to be vain"

* Matt. v.

is no uncommon expression; by which I suppose is meant, too proud to be over anxious for the admiration of others: but this seems to be founded on mistake. Pride is, I think, a high opinion of one's self, and an affected contempt of others: I say *affected*, for that it is not a *real* contempt is evident from this, that the lowest object of it is important enough to torture the proud man's heart, only by refusing him the homage and admiration he requires. Thus Haman could relish none of the advantages in which he valued himself, whilst that Mordecai, whom he pretended to despise, sat still in the king's gate, and would not bow to him as he passed. But as the proud man's contempt of others is only assumed with a view to awe them into reverence by his pretended superiority, so it does not preclude an extreme inward anxiety about their opinions, and a slavish dependence on them for all his gratifications. Pride, though a distinct passion, is seldom unaccompanied by vanity, which is an extravagant desire of admiration. Indeed, I never saw an insolent person, in whom a discerning eye might not discover a very large share of vanity, and of envy, its usual companion. One may nevertheless see many *vain* persons who are not *proud;* though they desire to be admired, they do not always admire themselves: but as timid minds are apt to despair of those things they earnestly

wish for, so you will often see the woman who is most anxious to be thought handsome, most inclined to be dissatisfied with her looks, and to think all the assistance of art too little to attain the end desired. To this cause, I believe, we may generally attribute affectation; which seems to imply a mean opinion of one's own real form, or character, while we strive against nature to alter ourselves by ridiculous contortions of body, or by feigned sentiments and unnatural manners. There is no art so mean, which this mean passion will not descend to for its gratification—no creature so insignificant, whose incense it will not gladly receive. Far from despising others, the vain man will court them with the most assiduous adulation; in hopes, by feeding their vanity, to induce them to supply the craving wants of his own. He will put on the guise of benevolence, tenderness, and friendship, where he feels not the least degree of kindness, in order to prevail on goodnature and gratitude, to like and to commend him; but if, in any particular case, he fancies the airs of insolence and contempt may succeed better, he makes no scruple to assume them; though so awkwardly that he still appears to depend on the breath of the person he would be thought to despise. Weak and timid natures seldom venture to try this last method; and, when they do, it is without the as-

surance necessary to carry it on with success: but a bold and confident mind will oftener endeavour to command and extort admiration than to court it. As women are more fearful than men, perhaps this may be one reason why they are more vain than proud: whilst the other sex are oftener proud than vain. It is, I suppose, from some opinion of a certain greatness of mind accompanying the one vice rather than the other, that many will readily confess their pride, nay, and even be proud of their pride, whilst every creature is ashamed of being convicted of vanity. You see, however, that the end of both is the same, though pursued by different means: or, if it differs, it is in the importance of the subject.—Whilst men are proud of power, of wealth, dignity, learning, or abilities, young women are usually ambitious of nothing more than to be admired for their persons, their dress, or their most trivial accomplishments. The homage of men is their grand object; but they only desire them to be in love with their persons, careless how despicable their minds appear, even to these their pretended adorers. I have known a woman so vain as to boast of the most disgraceful addresses; being contented to be thought meanly of, in points the most interesting to her honour, for the sake of having it known, that her person was attractive enough to make a man transgress

the bounds of respect due to her character, which was not a vicious one, if you except this intemperate vanity. But this passion too often leads to the most ruinous actions, always corrupts the heart, and, when indulged, renders it, perhaps, as displeasing in the sight of the Almighty, as those faults which find least mercy from the world; yet, alas! it is a passion so prevailing, I had almost said universal, in our sex, that it requires all the efforts of reason, and all the assistance of grace, totally to subdue it. Religion is indeed the only effectual remedy for this evil. If our hearts are not dedicated to God, they will in some way or other be dedicated to the world, both in youth and age. If our actions are not constantly referred to him, if his approbation and favour is not our principal object, we shall certainly take up with the applause of men, and make that the ruling motive of our conduct. How melancholy is it to see this phantom so eagerly followed through life!—whilst all that is truly valuable to us is looked upon with indifference; or at best made subordinate to this darling pursuit!

Equally vain and absurd is every scheme of life that is not subservient to, and does not terminate in, that great end of our being—the attainment of real excellence, and of the favour of God. Whenever this becomes sincerely our

object, then will pride and vanity, envy, ambition, covetousness, and every evil passion, lose their power over us; and we shall, in the language of Scripture, "walk humbly with our God." We shall then cease to repine under our natural or accidental disadvantages, and feel dissatisfied only with our moral defects;—we shall love and respect all our fellow creatures, as the children of the same dear parent, and particularly those who seek to do his will: All our delight will be "in the saints that are in the earth, and in such as excel in virtue." We shall wish to cultivate good-will, and to promote innocent enjoyment wherever we are:—we shall strive to please, not from vanity, but from benevolence. Instead of contemplating our own fancied perfections, or even real superiority with self-complacence, religion will teach us to "look into ourselves, and fear:"—the best of us, God knows, have enough to fear, if we honestly search into all the dark recesses of the heart, and bring out every thought and intention fairly to the light, to be tried by the precepts of our pure and holy religion.

It is with the rules of the gospel we must compare ourselves, and not with the world around us; for we know, "that the many are wicked: and that we must not be conformed to the world."

How necessary it is, frequently thus to enter

into ourselves, and search out our spirit, will appear, if we consider, how much the human heart is prone to insincerity, and how often, from being first led by vanity into attempts to impose upon others, we come at last to impose on ourselves.

There is nothing more common than to see people fall into the most ridiculous mistakes, with regard to their own characters; but I can by no means allow such mistakes to be unavoidable, and therefore innocent: they arose from voluntary insincerity, and are continued for want of that strict honesty towards ourselves and others, which the Scripture calls "*singleness of heart*;" and which in modern language is termed *simplicity*,—the most enchanting of all qualities, esteemed and beloved in proportion to its rareness.

He, who "requires truth in the inward parts," will not excuse our self-deception; for he has commanded us to examine ourselves diligently, and has given us such rules as can never mislead us, if we desire the truth, and are willing to see our faults in order to correct them. But this is the point in which we are defective; we are desirous to gain our own approbation, as well as that of others, at a cheaper rate than that of being really what we ought to be; and we take pains to persuade ourselves that we are that which we indolently admire and approve.

There is nothing in which this self-deception is

more notorious than in what regards sentiment and feeling. Let a vain young woman be told that tenderness and softness is the peculiar charm of the sex—that even their weakness is lovely, and their fears becoming—and you will presently observe her grow so tender as to be ready to weep for a fly; so fearful, that she starts at a feather; and so weak-hearted, that the smallest accident quite overpowers her. Her fondness and affection become fulsome and ridiculous; her compassion contemptible weakness; and her apprehensiveness the most abject cowardice: for, when once she quits the direction of Nature, she knows not where to stop, and continually exposes herself by the most absurd extremes.

Nothing so effectually defeats its own ends as this kind of affectation: for though warm affections and tender feelings are beyond measure amiable and charming, when perfectly natural, and kept under the due control of reason and principle, yet nothing is so truly disgusting as the affectation of them, or even the unbridled indulgence of such as are real.

Remember, my dear, that our feelings were not given us for our ornament, but to spur us on to right actions.—Compassion, for instance, was not impressed upon the human heart, only to adorn the fair face with tears, and to give an agreeable languor to the eyes; it was designed

to excite our utmost endeavours to relieve the sufferer. Yet, how often have I heard that selfish weakness, which flies from the sight of distress, dignified with the name of tenderness!—"My friend is, I hear, in the deepest affliction and misery;—I have not seen her—for indeed I cannot bear such scenes—they affect me too much!—those who have less sensibility are fitter for this world;—but, for my part, I own I am not able to support such things.—I shall not attempt to visit her, till I hear she has recovered her spirits."—This have I heard said with an air of complacence; and the poor selfish creature has persuaded herself that she had finer feelings than those generous friends, who are sitting patiently in the house of mourning—watching, in silence, the proper moment to pour in the balm of comfort;—who suppressed their own sensations, and only attended to those of the afflicted person; and whose tears flowed in secret, whilst their eyes and voice were taught to enliven the sinking heart with the appearance of cheerfulness.

That sort of tenderness which makes us useless may indeed be pitied and excused, if owing to natural imbecility; but, if it pretend to loveliness and excellence, it becomes truly contemptible.

The same degree of active courage is not to be expected in woman as in man; and, not belonging to her nature, it is not agreeable in her: but

passive courage—patience, and fortitude under sufferings—presence of mind, and calm resignation in danger—are surely desirable in every rational creature; especially in one professing to believe in an overruling Providence, in which we may at all times quietly confide, and which we may safely trust with every event that does not depend upon our own will. Whenever you find yourself deficient in these virtues, let it be a subject of shame and humiliation—not of vanity and self-complacence: do not fancy yourself the more amiable for that which really makes you despicable—but content yourself with the faults and weaknesses that belong to you, without putting on more by way of ornament. With regard to tenderness, remember that compassion is best shown by an ardour to relieve—and affection by assiduity to promote the good and happiness of the persons you love: that tears are unamiable, instead of being ornamental, when voluntarily indulged: and can never be attractive but when they flow irresistibly, and avoid observation as much as possible: the same may be said of every other mark of passion. It attracts our sympathy, if involuntary and not designed for our notice—It offends, if we see that it is purposely indulged and obtruded on our observation.

Another point, on which the heart is apt to deceive itself, is generosity; we cannot bear to sus-

pect ourselves of base and ungenerous feelings, therefore we let them work without attending to them, or we endeavour to find out some better motive for those actions which really flow from envy and malignity. Before you flatter yourself that you are a generous benevolent person, take care to examine whether you are really glad of every advantage and excellence, which your friends and companions possess, though they are such as you are yourself deficient in. If your sister or friend make a greater proficiency than yourself in any accomplishment, which you are in pursuit of, do you never wish to stop her progress, instead of trying to hasten your own?

The boundaries between virtuous emulation and vicious envy are very nice, and may be easily mistaken. The first will awaken your attention to your own defects, and excite your endeavours to improve; the last will make you repine at the improvements of others, and wish to rob them of the praise they have deserved. Do you sincerely rejoice when your sister is enjoying pleasure or commendation, though you are at the same time in disagreeable or mortifying circumstances?—Do you delight to see her approved and beloved, even by those who do not pay you equal attention?—Are you afflicted and humbled, when she is found to be in fault, though you yourself are remarkably clear from the same offence?—if your

heart assures you of the affirmative to these questions, then may you think yourself a kind sister and a generous friend: for you must observe, my dear, that scarcely any creature is so depraved as not to be capable of kind affections in some circumstances. We are all naturally benevolent, when no selfish interest interferes, and where no advantage is to be given up: we can all pity distress, when it lies complaining at our feet, and confesses our superiority and happier situation; but I have seen the sufferer himself become the object of envy and ill-will, as soon as his fortitude and greatness of mind had begun to attract admiration, and to make the envious person feel the superiority of virtue above good fortune.

To take sincere pleasure in the blessings and excellences of others is a much surer mark of benevolence than to pity their calamities: and you must always acknowledge yourself ungenerous and selfish, whenever you are less ready to "rejoice with them that do rejoice," than to "weep with them that weep." If ever your commendations of others be forced from you, by the fear of betraying your envy—or if ever you feel a secret desire to mention something that may abate the admiration given them, do not try to conceal the base disposition from yourself, since that is not the way to cure it.

Human nature is ever liable to corruption, and

has in it the seeds of every vice, as well as of every virtue; and the first will be continually shooting forth and growing up, if not carefully watched and rooted out as fast as they appear. It is the business of religion to purify and exalt us from a state of imperfection and infirmity, to that which is necessary and essential to happiness. Envy would make us miserable in heaven itself, could it be admitted there; for we must there see beings far more excellent, and consequently more happy, than ourselves; and till we can rejoice in seeing virtue rewarded in proportion to its degree, we can never hope to be among the number of the blessed.

Watch then, my dear child, and observe every evil propensity of your heart, that you may in time correct it, with the assistance of that grace which alone can conquer the evils of our nature, and which you must constantly and earnestly implore.

I must add, that even those vices which you would most blush to own, and which most effectually defile and vilify the female heart, may by degrees be introduced into yours—to the ruin of that virtue, without which, misery and shame must be your portion—unless the avenues of the heart are guarded by a sincere abhorrence of every thing that approaches towards evil. Would you be of the number of those blessed, " who

are pure in heart,"—you must hate and avoid every thing, both in books and in conversation, that conveys impure ideas, however neatly clothed in decent language, or recommended to your taste by pretended refinements, and tender sentiments —by elegance of style, or force of wit and genius.

I must not now begin to give you my thoughts on the regulation of the affections, as that is a subject of too much consequence to be soon dismissed—I shall dedicate to it my next letter: in the meantime, believe me,

Your ever affectionate.

LETTER V.

ON THE REGULATION OF THE AFFECTIONS.

THE attachments of the heart, on which almost all the happiness or misery of life depends, are most interesting objects of our consideration. I shall give my dear niece the observations which experience has enabled me to draw from real life, and not from what others have said or written, however great their authority.

The first attachment of young hearts is *friendship*—the noblest and happiest of affections when real, and built on a solid foundation; but, oftener pernicious than useful to very young people, because the connexion itself is ill understood, and

the subject of it frequently ill chosen. Their first error is that of supposing equality of age, and exact similarity of disposition, indispensably requisite in friends; whereas these are circumstances which in a great measure disqualify them for assisting each other in moral improvements, or supplying each other's defects; they expose them to the same dangers, and incline them to encourage rather than correct each other's failings.

The grand cement of this kind of friendship is telling secrets, which they call confidence: and I verily believe that the desire of having secrets to tell has often helped to draw silly girls into very unhappy adventures. If they have no lover or amour to talk of, the too frequent subject of their confidence is betraying the secrets of their families; or conjuring up fancied hardships to complain of against their parents or relations: this odious cabal they call friendship; and fancy themselves dignified by the profession; but nothing is more different from the reality, as is seen by observing how generally those early friendships drop off, as the parties advance in years and understanding.

Do not you, my dear, be too ready to profess a friendship with any of your young companions. Love them, and be always ready to serve and oblige them, and to promote all their innocent gratifications: but, be very careful how you enter

into confidence with girls of your own age. Rather choose some person of riper years and judgment, whose good-nature and worthy principles may assure you of her readiness to do you a service, and of her candour and condescension towards you.

I do not expect that youth should delight to associate with age, or should lay open its feelings and inclinations to such as have almost forgot what they were, or how to make proper allowance for them; but if you are fortunate enough to meet with a young woman eight or ten years older than yourself, of good sense and good principles, to whom you can make yourself agreeable, it may be one of the happiest circumstances of your life. She will be able to advise and to improve you—and your desire of this assistance will recommend you to her taste, as much as her superior abilities will recommend her to you. Such a connexion will afford you more pleasure, as well as more profit, than you can expect from a girl like yourself, equally unprovided with knowledge, prudence, or any of those qualifications which are necessary to make society delightful.

With a friend, such as I have described, of twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, you can hardly pass an hour without finding yourself brought forward in some useful knowledge; without learning something of the world or of your

own nature, some rule of behaviour, or some necessary caution in the conduct of life; for even in the gayest conversations such useful hints may often be gathered from those whose knowledge and experience are much beyond our own. Whenever you find yourself in real want of advice, or seek the relief of unburdening your heart, such a friend will be able to judge of the feelings you describe, or of the circumstances you are in—perhaps from her own experience—or, at least, from the knowledge she will have gained of human nature! she will be able to point out your dangers, and to guide you into the right path—or, if she finds herself incapable, she will have the prudence to direct you to some abler adviser. The age I have mentioned will not prevent her joining in your pleasures, nor will it make her a dull or grave companion; on the contrary, she will have more materials for entertaining conversation, and her liveliness will show itself more agreeably than in one of your own age. Yours therefore will be the advantage in such a connexion; yet do not despair of being admitted into it, if you have an amiable and docile disposition. Ingenuous youth has many charms for a benevolent mind; and, as nothing is more endearing than the exercise of benevolence, the hope of being useful and beneficial to you will make her fond of your company.

I have known some of the sweetest and most delightful connexions between persons of different ages, in which the elder has received the highest gratification from the affection and docility of the younger: whilst the latter has gained the noblest advantages from the conversation and counsels of her wiser friend. Nor has the attachment been without use as well as pleasure to the elder party. She has found that there is no better way of improving one's own attainments than by imparting them to another; and the desire of doing this in the most acceptable way has added a sweetness and gentleness to her manner, and taught her the arts of insinuating instruction, and of winning the heart, whilst she convinces the understanding.

I hope, my dear, you in your turn will be this useful and engaging friend to your younger companions, particularly to your sisters and brothers, who ought ever—unless they should prove unworthy—to be your nearest and dearest friends, whose interest and welfare you are bound to desire as much as your own. If you are wanting here, do not fancy yourself qualified for friendship with others, but, be assured, your heart is too narrow and selfish for so generous an affection.

Remember that the end of true friendship is the good of its object, and the cultivation of virtue in two hearts emulous of each other, and de-

sirous to perpetuate their society beyond the grave. Nothing can be more contrary to this end than that mutual intercourse of flattery which some call friendship. A real friend will venture to displease me, rather than indulge my faulty inclinations, or increase my natural frailties; she will endeavour to make me acquainted with myself, and will put me upon guarding the weak parts of my character.

Friendship, in the highest sense of the word, can only subsist between persons of strict integrity and true generosity. Before you fancy yourself possessed of such a treasure, you should examine the value of your own heart, and see how well it is qualified for so sacred a connexion: and then a harder task remains—to find out whether the object of your affection is also endued with the same virtuous disposition. Youth and inexperience are ill able to penetrate into characters: the least appearance of good attracts their admiration, and they immediately suppose they have found the object they pursued.

It is a melancholy consideration, that the judgment can only be formed by experience, which generally comes too late for our own use, and is seldom accepted for that of others. I fear it is in vain for me to tell you what dangerous mistakes I made in the early choice of friends—how incapable I then was of finding out such as were

fit for me, and how little I was acquainted with the true nature of friendship, when I thought myself most fervently engaged in it!—I am sensible all this will hardly persuade you to choose by the eyes of others, or even to suspect that your own may be deceived. Yet, if you should give any weight to my observations, it may not be quite useless to mention to you some of the essential requisites in a friend; and to exhort you never to choose one in whom they are wanting.

The first of these is a deep and sincere regard for religion. If your friend draw her principles from the same source with yourself, if the gospel precepts be the rule of her life as well as of yours, you will always know what to expect from her, and have one common standard of right and wrong to refer to, by which to regulate all material points of conduct. The woman who thinks lightly of sacred things, or who is ever heard to speak of them with levity or indifference, cannot reasonably be expected to pay a more serious regard to the laws of friendship, or to be uniformly punctual in the performance of any of the duties of society; take no such person to your bosom, however recommended by good-humour, wit, or any other qualification; nor let gaiety or thoughtlessness be deemed an excuse for offending in this important point: a person, habituated to the love and reverence of religion and virtue,

no more wants the guard of serious consideration to restrain her from speaking disrespectfully of them, than to prevent her speaking ill of her dearest friend. In the liveliest hour of mirth the innocent heart can dictate nothing but what is innocent: it will immediately take alarm at the apprehension of doing wrong, and stop at once in the full career of youthful sprightliness, if reminded of the neglect or transgression of any duty. Watch for these symptoms of innocence and goodness, and admit no one to your entire affection, who would ever persuade you to make light of any sort of offence, or who can treat with levity or contempt, any person or thing that bears a relation to religion.

A due regard to reputation is the next indispensable qualification,—"Have regard to thy name," saith the wise son of Sirach, "for that will continue with thee above a thousand great treasures of gold." The young person who is careless of blame, and indifferent to the esteem of the wise and prudent part of the world, is not only a most dangerous companion, but gives a certain proof of the want of rectitude in her own mind. Discretion is the guardian of all the virtues; and, when she forsakes them, they cannot long resist the attacks of an enemy. There is a profligacy of spirit in defying the rules of decorum, and in despising censure, which seldom ends

otherwise than in extreme corruption and utter ruin. Modesty and prudence are qualities that early display themselves, and are easily discerned: where these do not appear, you should avoid not only friendship but every step towards intimacy, lest your own character should suffer with that of your companion; but, where they shine forth in any eminent degree, you may safely cultivate an acquaintance, in the reasonable hope of finding the solid fruits of virtue beneath such sweet and promising blossoms: should you be disappointed, you will at least have run no risk in the search after them, and may cherish as a creditable acquaintance the person so adorned, though she may not deserve a place in your inmost heart.

The understanding must next be examined: and this is a point which requires so much understanding to judge of in another that I must earnestly recommend you not to rely entirely on your own, but to take the opinion of your older friends. I do not wish you to seek for bright and uncommon talents, though these are sources of inexhaustible delight and improvement, when found in company with solid judgment and sound principles. Good sense (by which I mean a capacity for reasoning justly and discerning truly), applied to the uses of life, and exercised in distinguishing characters and directing conduct, is

alone *necessary* to an intimate connexion; but, without this, the best intentions, though certain of reward hereafter, may fail of producing their effects in this life; nor can they singly constitute the character of a useful and valuable friend. On the other hand, the most dazzling genius, or the most engaging wit and humour, can but ill answer the purposes of friendship, without plain common sense and a faculty of just reasoning.

What can one do with those who will not be answered with reason—and who, when you are endeavouring to convince or persuade them by serious arguments, will parry the blow with a witty repartee or a stroke of poignant raillery? I know not whether such a reply is less provoking than that of an obstinate fool, who answers your strongest reasons with—"What you say may be very true, but this is my way of thinking."—A small acquaintance with the world will show you instances of the most absurd and foolish conduct in persons of brilliant parts and entertaining faculties. But how trifling is the talent of diverting an idle hour, compared with true wisdom and prudence, which are perpetually wanted to direct us safely and happily through life, and to make us useful and valuable to others!

Fancy, I know, will have her share in friendship, as well as in love;—you must please as well as serve me, before I can love you as the friend

of my heart. But the faculties that please for an evening may not please for life. The humorous man soon runs through his stock of odd stories, mimicry, and jest; and the wit, by constant repeated flashes, confounds and tires one's intellect, instead of enlivening it with agreeable surprise: but good sense can neither tire nor wear out; it improves by exercise—and increases in value the more it is known: the pleasure it gives in conversation is lasting and satisfactory, because it is accompanied with improvement; its worth is proportioned to the occasion that calls for it, and rises highest on the most interesting topics; the heart, as well as the understanding, finds its account in it: and our noblest interests are promoted by the entertainment we receive from such a companion.

A good temper is the next qualification; the value of which in a friend you will want no arguments to prove, when you are truly convinced of the necessity of it in yourself, which I shall endeavour to show you in a following letter. But, as this is a quality in which you may be deceived, without a long and intimate acquaintance, you must not be hasty in forming connexions, before you have had sufficient opportunity for making observations on this head. A young person, when pleased and enlivened by the presence of her youthful companions, seldom shows ill temper:

which must be extreme indeed, if it is not at least controlable in such situations. But, you must watch her behaviour to her own family, and the degree of estimation she stands in with them. Observe her manner to servants and inferiors—to children—and even to animals. See in what manner she bears disappointments, contradiction, and restraint; and what degree of vexation she expresses on any accident of loss or trouble. If in such little trials she shows a meek, resigned, and cheerful temper, she will probably preserve it on greater occasions; but if she is impatient and discontented under these, how will she support the far greater evils which may await her in her progress through life?—If you should have an opportunity of seeing her in sickness, observe whether her complaints are of a mild and gentle kind, forced from her by pain, and restrained as much as possible—or whether they are expressions of a turbulent, rebellious mind, that hardly submits to the divine hand. See whether she is tractable, considerate, kind, and grateful to those about her: or whether she takes the opportunity, which their compassion gives her, to tyrannize over and torment them. Women are in general very liable to ill health, which must necessarily make them in some measure troublesome and disagreeable to those they live with. They should therefore take the more pains to lighten the burden as much as

possible, by patience and good-humour; and be careful not to let their infirmities break in on the health, freedom, or enjoyment of others, more than is needful and just. Some ladies seem to think it very improper for any person within their reach to enjoy a moment's comfort while they are in pain; and make no scruple of sacrificing to their own least convenience, whenever they are indisposed, the proper rest, meals, or refreshments of their servants, and even sometimes of their husbands and children. But their selfishness defeats its own purpose, as it weakens that affection and tender pity which excite the most assiduous services, and afford the most healing balm to the heart of the sufferer.

I have already expressed my wishes that your chosen friend may be some years older than yourself; but this is an advantage not always to be obtained. Whatever be her age,—*religion*, *discretion*, *good sense*, and *good temper*, must on no account be dispensed with; and till you can find one so qualified, you had better make no closer connexion than that of a mutual intercourse of civilities and good offices. But if it be always your aim to mix with the best company, and to be worthy of such society, you will probably meet with some one among them deserving your affection, to whom you may be equally agreeable.

When I speak of the best company, I do not mean in the common acceptation of the word—persons of high rank and fortune—but rather the most worthy and sensible. It is, however, very important to a young woman to be introduced into life, on a respectable footing, and to converse with those whose manners and style of life may polish her behaviour, refine her sentiments, and give her consequence in the eye of the world. Your equals in rank are most proper for intimacy, but to be sometimes amongst your superiors is every way desirable and advantageous, unless it should inspire you with pride, or with the foolish desire of emulating their grandeur and expense.

Above all things, avoid intimacy with those of low birth and education! nor think it a mark of humility to delight in such society; for it much oftener proceeds from the meanest kind of pride, that of being the head of the company, and seeing your companions subservient to you. The servile flattery and submission, which usually recommend such people, and make amends for their ignorance and want of conversation, will infallibly corrupt your heart, and make all company insipid from whom you cannot expect the same homage. Your manners and faculties, instead of improving, must be continually lowered to suit you to your companions; and, believe me, you will find it no

easy matter, to raise them again to a level with those of polite and well-informed people.

The greatest kindness and civility to inferiors is perfectly consistent with proper caution on this head. Treat them always with affability, and talk to them of their own affairs with an affectionate interest; but never make them familiar, nor admit them as associates in your diversions: but, above all, never trust them with your secrets, which is putting yourself entirely in their power, and subjecting yourself to the most shameful slavery. The only reason for making choice of such confidants, must be the certainty that they will not venture to blame or contradict inclinations, which you are conscious no true friend would encourage. But this is a meanness into which I trust you are in no danger of falling. I rather hope you will have the laudable ambition of spending your time chiefly with those whose superior talents, education, and politeness, may continually improve you, and whose society will do you honour. However, let no advantage of this kind weigh against the want of principle. I have long ago resolved with David, that, as far as lies in my power, "I will not know a wicked person." Nothing can compensate for the contagion of bad example, and for the danger of wearing off by use that abhorrence of evil actions and sentiments which every innocent mind sets

out with, but which an indiscriminate acquaintance in the world soon abates, and at length destroys.

If you are good, and seek friendship only among the good, I trust you will be happy enough to find it. The wise son of Sirach pronounces that you will.—"* A faithful friend," saith he, "is the medicine of life; and he that feareth the Lord shall find him. Whoso feareth the Lord shall direct his friendship aright: for as he is, so shall his neighbour be also."—In the same admirable book, you will find directions how to choose and preserve a friend. Indeed there is hardly a circumstance in life, concerning which you may not there meet with the best advice imaginable. Caution in making friendships is particularly recommended.—"† Be in peace with many, nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand.—If thou wouldst get a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him; for some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of trouble. And there is a friend, who, being turned to enmity and strife, will discover thy reproach." Again—"Some friend is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of thy affliction; but in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants:

* Ecclus. v. † Ecclus. vi.

if thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face." Chap. ix. 10.—" Forsake not an old friend; for the new is not comparable to him—A new friend is as new wine; when it is old, thou shalt drink it with pleasure."

When you have discreetly chosen, the next point is how to preserve your friend. Numbers complain of the fickleness and ingratitude of those on whom they bestowed their affection; but few examine, whether what they complain of is not owing to themselves. Affection is not like a portion of freehold land, which once settled upon you is a possession for ever, without further trouble on your part. If you grow less deserving, or less attentive to please, you must expect to see the effects of your remissness, in the gradual decline of your friend's esteem and attachment. Resentment and reproaches will not recall what you have lost; but, on the contrary, will hasten the dissolution of every remaining tie. The best remedy is, to renew your care and assiduity to deserve and cultivate affection, without seeming to have perceived its abatement. Jealousy and distrust are the bane of friendship, whose essence is esteem and affiance. But if jealousy is expressed by unkind upbraidings, or, what is worse, by cold haughty looks and insolent contempt, it can hardly fail, if often repeated, to realize the

misfortune, which at first perhaps was imaginary. Nothing can be more an antidote to affection than such behaviour, or than the cause of it, which, in reality, is nothing but pride; though the jealous person would fain attribute it to uncommon tenderness and delicacy. But tenderness is never so expressed; it is indeed deeply sensible of unkindness, but it cannot be unkind;—it may subsist with anger, but not with contempt;—it may be weakened, or even killed, by ingratitude; but it cannot be changed into hatred. Remember always, that if you would be *loved*, you must be *amiable*. Habit may indeed, for a time, supply the deficiency of merit; what we have long loved we do not easily cease to love; but habit will at length be conquered by frequent disgusts."—"*Whoso casteth a stone at the birds, frayeth them away; and he that upbraideth his friend, breaketh friendship. Though thou drewest a sword at thy friend, yet despair not, for there may be a returning to favour.—If thou hast opened thy mouth against thy friend, fear not, for there may be a reconciliation; excepting for *upbraiding* or *pride*, or *disclosing of secrets*, or a *treacherous wound*,—for, for these things every friend will depart."

I have hitherto spoken of a friend in the sin-

* Eccles. xxii. 20.

gular number, rather in compliance with the notions of most writers, who have treated of friendship, and who generally suppose it can have but one object, than from my own ideas. The highest kind of friendship is indeed confined to one;—I mean the conjugal—which, in its perfection, is so entire and absolute an union, of interest, will, and affection, as no other connexion can stand in competition with. But there are various degrees of friendship, which can admit of several objects, esteemed and delighted in for different qualities —and whose separate rights are perfectly compatible. Perhaps it is not possible to love two persons exactly in the same degree: yet, the difference may be so small that none of the parties can be certain on which side the scale preponderates.

It is narrowness of mind to wish to confine your friend's affection solely to yourself; since you are conscious that, however perfect your attachment may be, you cannot possibly supply to her all the blessings she may derive from several friends, who may each love her as well as you do, and may each contribute largely to her happiness. If she depend on you alone for all the comforts and advantages of friendship, your absence or death may leave her desolate or forlorn. If therefore you prefer her good to your own selfish gratification, you should rather strive to multiply her friends, and be ready to embrace

in your affections all who love, and deserve her love; this generosity will bring its own reward, by multiplying the sources of your pleasures and supports: and your first friend will love you the more for such an endearing proof of the extent of your affection, which can stretch to receive all who are dear to her. But if, on the contrary, every mark of esteem shown to another excite uneasiness or resentment in you, the person you love must soon feel her connexion with you a burden and restraint. She can own no obligation to so selfish an attachment: nor can her tenderness be increased by that which lessens her esteem. If she be really fickle and ungrateful, she is not worth your reproaches: if not, she must be reasonably offended by such injurious imputations.

You do not want to be told, that the strictest fidelity is required in friendship: and though possibly instances might be brought, in which even the secret of a friend must be sacrificed to the calls of justice and duty, yet these are rare and doubtful cases, and we may venture to pronounce that, "* Whoso discovereth secrets loseth his credit, and shall never find a friend to his mind."—"Love thy friend, and be faithful unto him: but if thou betrayest his secrets, follow no more after him.—For as a man that hath destroyed

* Ecclus. xxvii. 16.

his enemy, so hast thou destroyed the love of thy friend.—As one that letteth a bird go out of his hand, so hast thou let thy neighbour go. Follow no more after him, for he is too far off; he is as a roe escaped out of the snare.—As for a wound it may be bound up; and after revilings there may be reconcilement; but he that bewrayeth secrets is without hope."

But in order to reconcile this inviolable fidelity with the duty you owe to yourself or others, you must carefully guard against being made the repository of such secrets as are not fit to be kept. If your friend should engage in any unlawful pursuit—if, for instance, she should intend to carry on an affair of love, unknown to her parents—you must first use your utmost endeavours to dissuade her from it; and if she persist, positively and solemnly declare against being a confidant in such a case. Suffer her not to speak to you on the subject, and warn her to forbear acquainting you with any step she may propose to take towards a marriage unsanctified by parental approbation. Tell her, you would think it your duty to apprise her parents of the danger into which she was throwing herself. However unkindly she may take this at the time, she will certainly esteem and love you the more for it, whenever she recovers a sense of her duty, or experiences the sad effects of swerving from it.

There is another case, which I should not choose to suppose possible, in addressing myself to so young a person, was it not that too many instances of it have of late been exposed to public animadversion: I mean the case of a married woman, who encourages or tolerates the addresses of a lover. May no such person be ever called a friend of yours! but if ever one whom, when innocent, you had loved, should fall into so fatal an error, I can only say that, after proper remonstrances, you must immediately withdraw from all intimacy and confidence with her. Nor let the absurd pretence of *innocent intentions*, in such circumstances, prevail with you to lend your countenance, a moment, to disgraceful conduct. There cannot be innocence, in any degree of indulgence to unlawful passion. The sacred obligations of marriage are very ill understood by the wife, who can think herself innocent, while she parleys with a lover, or with love—and who does not shut her heart and ears against the most distant approaches of either. A virtuous wife—though she should be so unhappy as not to be secured, by having her strongest affections fixed on her husband—will never admit an idea of any other man, in the light of a lover; but if such an idea should unawares intrude into her mind, she would instantly stifle it, before it grew strong enough to give her much uneasiness. Not to the

most intimate friend—hardly to her own soul—would she venture to confess a weakness she would so sincerely abhor. Whenever therefore such infidelity of heart is made a subject of confidence, depend upon it the corruption has spread far, and has been faultily indulged. Enter not into her counsels: show her the danger she is in, and then withdraw yourself from it, whilst you are yet unsullied by contagion.

It has been supposed a duty of friendship to lay open every thought and every feeling of the heart to our friend. But I have just mentioned a case, in which this is not only unnecessary but wrong. A disgraceful inclination, which we resolve to conquer, should be concealed from every body; and is more easily subdued when denied the indulgence of talking of its object; and, I think, there may be other instances, in which it would be most prudent to keep our thoughts concealed even from our dearest friend. Some things I would communicate to one friend, and not to another, whom perhaps I loved better, because I might know that my first friend was not so well qualified as the other to counsel me on that particular subject; a natural bias on her mind, some prevailing opinion, or some connexion with persons concerned, might make her an improper confidant with regard to one particular, though qualified to be so on all other occasions.

This confidence of friendship is indeed one of its sweetest pleasures and greatest advantages. The human heart often stands in need of some kind and faithful partner of its cares, in whom it may repose all its weaknesses, and with whom it is sure of finding the tenderest sympathy. Far be it from me to shut up the heart with cold distrust and rigid caution, or to adopt the odious maxim, that "we should live with a friend, as if he were one day to become an enemy." But we must not wholly abandon prudence in any sort of connexion; since, when every guard is laid aside, our unbounded openness may injure others as well as ourselves. Secrets entrusted to us must be sacredly kept even from our nearest friend; for we have no right to dispose of the secrets of others.

If there is danger in making an improper choice of friends, my dear child, how much more fatal would it be to mistake in a stronger kind of attachment—in that which leads to an irrevocable engagement for life! yet so much more is the understanding blinded, when once the fancy is captivated, that it seems a desperate undertaking, to convince a girl in love, that she has mistaken the character of the man she prefers.

If the passions would wait for the decision of the judgment, and if a young woman could have the same opportunities of examining into the real

character of her lover as into that of a female candidate for her friendship, the same rules might direct you in the choice of both; for marriage being the highest state of friendship, the qualities requisite in a friend are still more important in a husband. But young women know so little of the world, especially of the other sex, and such pains are usually taken to deceive them, that they are every way unqualified to choose for themselves upon their own subject. Many a heartach shall I feel for you, my sweet girl, if I live a few years longer!—Since, not only all your happiness in this world, but your advancement in religion and virtue, or your apostacy from every good principle you have been taught, will probably depend on the companion you fix to for life. Happy will it be for you if you are wise and modest enough to withdraw from temptation, and preserve your heart free and open to receive the just recommendation of your parents: further than a recommendation, I dare say they will never go, in an affair which, though it should be begun by them, ought never to be proceeded in without your free concurrence.

Whatever romantic notions you may hear or read of, depend upon it, those matches are the happiest which are made on rational grounds—on suitableness of character, degree, and fortune—on mutual esteem, and the prospect of a real

and permanent friendship. Far be it from me to advise you to marry where you do not love;—a mercenary marriage is a detestable prostitution:—But, on the other hand, an union formed upon mere personal liking, without the requisite foundation of esteem, without the sanction of parental approbation, and, consequently, without the blessing of God, can be productive of nothing but misery and shame. The passion, to which every consideration of duty and prudence is sacrificed, instead of supplying the loss of all other advantages, will soon itself be changed into mutual distrust—repentance—reproaches—and, finally, perhaps into hatred. The distresses it brings will be void of every consolation; you will have disgusted the friends who should be your support—debased yourself in the eyes of the world—and, what is much worse, in your own eyes, and even in those of your husband: above all, you will have offended that God, who alone can shield you from calamity.

From an act like this, I trust, your duty and gratitude to your kind parents—the first of duties next to that we owe to God, and inseparably connected with it—will effectually preserve you. But most young people think they have fulfilled their duty, if they refrain from actually marrying against prohibition; they suffer their affections, and even perhaps their word of honour, to be

engaged, without consulting their parents; yet satisfy themselves with resolving not to marry without their consent: not considering that, besides the wretched, useless, uncomfortable state they plunge *themselves* into, when they contract an hopeless engagement, they must likewise involve a *parent* in the miserable dilemma of either giving a forced consent against his judgment, or of seeing his beloved child pine away her prime of life in fruitless anxiety—seeing her accuse him of tyranny, because he restrains her from certain ruin—seeing her affections alienated from her family—and all her thoughts engrossed by one object, to the destruction of her health and spirits, and of all improvements and occupations. What a cruel alternative for parents, whose happiness is bound up with that of their child!—The time to consult them is before you have given a lover the least encouragement; nor ought you to listen a moment to the man who would wish you to keep his addresses secret; since he thereby shows himself conscious that they are not fit to be encouraged.

But perhaps I have said enough on this subject at present; though, if ever advice on such a topic can be of use, it must be before passion has got possession of the heart, and silenced both reason and principle. Fix therefore in your mind, as deeply as possible, those rules of duty and pru-

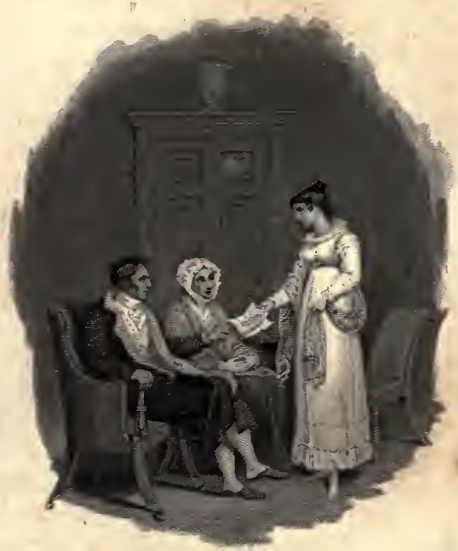
dence, which now seem reasonable to you, that they may be at hand in the hour of trial, and save you from the miseries, in which strong affections, unguided by discretion, involve so many of our sex.

If you love virtue sincerely, you will be incapable of loving an openly vicious character. But, alas! your innocent heart may be easily ensnared by an artful one—and from this danger nothing can secure you but the experience of those, to whose guidance God has entrusted you: may you be wise enough to make use of it!—So will you have the fairest chance of attaining the best blessings this world can afford, in a faithful and virtuous union with a worthy man, who may direct your steps in safety and honour through this life, and partake with you the rewards of virtue in that which is to come. But, if this happy lot should be denied you, do not be afraid of a single life. A worthy woman is never destitute of valuable friends, who in a great measure supply to her the want of nearer connexions. She can never be slighted or disesteemed, while her good temper and benevolence render her a blessing to her companions. Nay, she must be honoured by all persons of sense and virtue for preferring the single state to an union unworthy of her. The calamities of an unhappy marriage are so much greater than can befall a single per-

Mrs CHAPONE'S LETTERS.

The time to consult them is before you have given a lover the least encouragement.

Letter V.



DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A. ENGRAVED BY CHARLES ROLLS;
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FEB. 1, 1822.

son, that the unmarried woman may find abundant argument to be contented with her condition, when pointed out to her by Providence. Whether married or single, if your first care is to please God, you will undoubtedly be a blesssed creature;—" For that which he delights in *must be happy*."—How earnestly I wish you this happiness, you can never know, unless you could read the heart of

Your truly affectionate.

LETTER VI.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TEMPER.

THE next great point of importance to your future happiness, my dear, is what your parents have, doubtless, been continually attentive to from your infancy, as it is impossible to undertake it too early—I mean the due regulation of your Temper. Though you are in great measure indebted to their forming hands for whatever is good in it, you are sensible, no doubt, as every human creature is, of propensities to some infirmity of temper, which it must now be *your own* care to correct and to subdue: otherwise the pains that have hitherto been taken with you may all become fruitless; and, when you are your own

mistress, you may relapse into those faults, which were originally in your nature, and which will require to be diligently watched and kept under, through the whole course of your life.

If you consider, that the constant tenor of the gospel precepts is to promote love, peace, and good will amongst men, you will not doubt that the cultivation of an amiable disposition is a great part of your religious duty; since nothing leads more directly to the breach of charity, and to the injury and molestation of our fellow-creatures, than the indulgence of an ill temper. Do not therefore think lightly of the offences you may commit, for want of a due command over it, or suppose yourself responsible for them to your fellow-creatures only; but, be assured, you must give a strict account of them all to the Supreme Governor of the world, who has made this a great part of your appointed trial upon earth.

A woman, bred up in a religious manner, placed above the reach of want, and out of the way of sordid or scandalous vices, can have but few temptations to the flagrant breach of the divine laws. It particularly concerns her therefore to understand them in their full import, and to consider how far she trespasses against them, by such actions as appear trivial when compared with murder, adultery, and theft, but which become of very great importance, by being fre-

quently repeated, and occurring in the daily transactions of life.

The principal virtues or vices of a woman must be of a private and domestic kind. Within the circle of her own family and dependents lies her sphere of action—the scene of almost all those tasks and trials, which must determine her character, and her fate, here and hereafter. Reflect, for a moment, how much the happiness of her husband, children, and servants, must depend on her temper, and you will see that the greatest good, or evil, which she ever may have in her power to do, may arise from her correcting or indulging its infirmities.

Though I wish the principle of duty towards God to be your ruling motive in the exercise of every virtue, yet, as human nature stands in need of all possible helps, let us not forget how essential it is to present happiness, and to the enjoyment of this life, to cultivate such a temper as is likewise indispensably requisite to the attainment of higher felicity in the life to come. The greatest outward blessings cannot afford enjoyment to a mind ruffled and uneasy within itself. A fit of ill humour will spoil the finest entertainment, and is as real a torment as the most painful disease. Another unavoidable consequence of ill temper, is the dislike and aversion of all who are witnesses to it, and, perhaps, the deep and lasting resent-

ment of those who suffer from its effects. We all, from social or self-love, earnestly desire the esteem and affection of our fellow-creatures; and indeed our condition makes them so necessary to us, that the wretch who has forfeited them must feel desolate and undone, deprived of all the best enjoyments and comforts the world can afford, and given up to his inward misery, unpitied and scorned. But this can never be the fate of a good-natured person: whatever faults he may have, they will generally be treated with lenity; he will find an advocate in every human heart; his errors will be ever lamented rather than abhorred; and his virtues will be viewed in the fairest point of light. His good humour, without the help of great talents or acquirements, will make his company preferable to that of the most brilliant genius, in whom this quality is wanting; in short, it is almost impossible that you can be sincerely beloved by any body, without this engaging property, whatever other excellences you may possess; but, with it, you will scarcely fail of finding some friends and favourers, even though you should be destitute of almost every other advantage.

Perhaps you will say, "All this is very true; but our tempers are not in our own power—we are made with different dispositions, and, if mine is not amiable, it is rather my unhappiness than

my fault." This, my dear, is commonly said by those who will not take the trouble to correct themselves. Yet, be assured, it is a delusion, and will not avail in our justification before him, "who knoweth whereof we are made," and of what we are capable. It is true, we are not all equally happy in our dispositions; but human virtue consists in cherishing and cultivating every good inclination, and in checking and subduing every propensity to evil. If you had been born with a bad temper, it might have been made a good one, at least with regard to its outward effects, by education, reason, and principle: and, though you are so happy as to have a good one while young, do not suppose it will always continue so, if you neglect to maintain a proper command over it. Power, sickness, disappointments, or worldly cares, may corrupt and embitter the finest disposition, if they are not counteracted by reason and religion.

It is observed, that every temper is inclined, in some degree, either to passion, peevishness, or obstinacy. Many are so unfortunate as to be inclined to each of the three in turn; it is necessary therefore to watch the bent of our nature, and to apply the remedies proper for the infirmity to which we are most liable. With regard to the first, it is so injurious to society, and so odious in itself, especially in the female character, that one

would think shame alone would be sufficient to preserve a young woman from giving way to it: for it is as unbecoming her character to be betrayed into ill behaviour by *passion* as by *intoxication*, and she ought to be ashamed of the one as much as of the other. Gentleness, meekness, and patience, are her peculiar distinctions, and an enraged woman is one of the most disgusting sights in nature.

It is plain, from experience, that the most passionate people can command themselves, when they have a motive sufficiently strong—such as the presence of those they fear, or to whom they particularly desire to recommend themselves; it is therefore no excuse to persons, whom you have injured by unkind reproaches, and unjust aspersions, to tell them you were in a passion: the allowing yourself to speak to them in a passion is a proof of an insolent disrespect, which the meanest of your fellow-creatures would have a right to resent. When once you find yourself heated so far as to desire to say what you know would be provoking and wounding to another, you should immediately resolve either to be silent, or to quit the room, rather than give utterance to any thing dictated by so bad an inclination. Be assured, you are then unfit to reason or to reprove, or to hear reason from others. It is therefore your part to retire from such an occasion of sin; and

wait till you are cool, before you presume to judge of what has passed. By accustoming yourself thus to conquer and disappoint your anger, you will, by degrees, find it grow weak and manageable, so as to leave your reason at liberty. You will be able to restrain your tongue from evil, and your looks and gestures from all expressions of violence and ill will. Pride, which produces so many evils in the human mind, is the great source of passion. Whoever cultivates in himself a proper humility, a due sense of his own faults and insufficiencies, and a due respect for others, will find but small temptation to violent or unreasonable anger.

In the case of real injuries, which justify and call for resentment, there is a noble and generous kind of anger, a proper and necessary part of our nature, which has nothing in it sinful or degrading. I would not wish you insensible to this; for the person who feels not an injury must be incapable of being properly affected by benefits. With those, who treat you ill without provocation, you ought to maintain your own dignity. But, in order to do this, whilst you show a sense of their improper behaviour, you must preserve calmness, and even good breeding—and thereby convince them of the impotence as well as injustice of their malice. You must also weigh every circumstance with candour and charity, and consider whether

your showing the resentment deserved may not produce ill consequences to innocent persons—as is almost always the case in family quarrels—and whether it may not occasion the breach of some duty, or necessary connexion, to which you ought to sacrifice even your just resentments. Above all things, take care that a particular offence to you does not make you unjust to the general character of the offending person. Generous anger does not preclude esteem for whatever is really estimable, nor does it destroy good will to the person of its object: it even inspires the desire of overcoming him by benefits, and wishes to inflict no other punishment than the regret of having injured one who deserved his kindness: it is always placable, and ready to be reconciled, as soon as the offender is convinced of his error; nor can any subsequent injury provoke it to recur to past disobligations, which had been once forgiven. But it is perhaps unnecessary to give rules for this case. The consciousness of injured innocence naturally produces dignity, and usually prevents excess of anger. Our passion is most unruly, when we are conscious of blame, and when we apprehend that we have laid ourselves open to contempt. Where we know we have been wrong, the least injustice in the degree of blame imputed to us, excites our bitterest resentment; but, where we know ourselves faultless,

the sharpest accusation excites pity or contempt, rather than rage. Whenever therefore you feel yourself very angry, suspect yourself to be in the wrong, and resolve to stand the decision of your own conscience before you cast upon another the punishment, which is perhaps due to yourself. This self-examination will at least give you time to cool, and, if you are just, will dispose you to balance your own wrong with that of your antagonist, and to settle the account with him on equal terms.

Peevishness, though not so violent and fatal in its immediate effects, is still more unamiable than passion, and, if possible, more destructive of happiness, inasmuch as it operates more continually. Though the fretful man injures us less, he disgusts us more than the passionate one—because he betrays a low and little mind, intent on trifles, and engrossed by a paltry self-love, which knows not how to bear the very apprehension of any inconvenience. It is self-love then, which we must combat, when we find ourselves assaulted by this infirmity; and, by voluntarily enduring inconveniences, we shall habituate ourselves to bear them with ease and good humour, when occasioned by others. Perhaps this is the best kind of religious mortification, as the chief end of denying ourselves any innocent indulgences must be to acquire a habit of command over our passions and

inclinations, particularly such as are likely to lead us into evil. Another method of conquering this enemy, is to abstract our minds from that attention to trifling circumstances, which usually creates this uneasiness. Those who are engaged in high and important pursuits are very little affected by small inconveniences. The man whose head is full of studious thought, or whose heart is full of care, will eat his dinner without knowing whether it was well or ill dressed, or whether it was served punctually at the hour or not: and though absence from the common things of life is far from desirable—especially in a woman—yet too minute and anxious attention to them seldom fails to produce a teasing, mean, and fretful disposition. I would therefore wish your mind to have always some object in pursuit worthy of it, that it may not be engrossed by such as are in themselves scarce worth a moment's anxiety. It is chiefly in the decline of life, when amusements fail, and when the more importunate passions subside, that this infirmity is observed to grow upon us—and perhaps it will seldom fail to do so, unless carefully watched, and counteracted by reason. We must then endeavour to substitute some pursuits in the place of those, which can only engage us in the beginning of our course. The pursuit of glory and happiness in another life, by every means of improving and exalting

our own minds, becomes more and more interesting to us, the nearer we draw to the end of all sublunary enjoyments. Reading, reflection, rational conversation, and, above all, conversing with God, by prayer and meditation, may preserve us from taking that anxious interest in the little comforts and conveniences of our remaining days, which usually gives birth to so much fretfulness in old people. But though the aged and infirm are most liable to this evil—and they alone are to be pitied for it—yet we sometimes see the young, the healthy, and those who enjoy most outward blessings, inexcusably guilty of it. The smallest disappointment in pleasure, or difficulty in the most trifling employment, will put wilful young people out of temper, and their very amusements frequently become sources of vexation and peevishness. How often have I seen a girl, preparing for a ball, or for some other public appearance—unable to satisfy her own vanity—fret over every ornament she puts on, quarrel with her maid, with her clothes, her hair: and, growing still more unlovely as she grew more cross, be ready to fight with her lookingglass for not making her as handsome as she wished to be! She did not consider that the traces of this ill humour on her countenance would be a greater disadvantage to her appearance than any defect in her dress—or even than the plainest features

enlivened by joy and good humour. There is a degree of resignation necessary even to the enjoyment of pleasure; we must be ready and willing to give up some part of what we could wish for, before we can enjoy that which is indulged to us. I have no doubt that she, who frets all the while she is dressing for an assembly, will suffer still greater uneasiness when she is there. The same craving restless vanity will there endure a thousand mortifications, which, in the midst of seeming pleasure, will secretly corrode her heart; whilst the meek and humble generally find more gratification than they expected, and return home pleased and enlivened from every scene of amusement, though they could have stayed away from it with perfect ease and contentment.

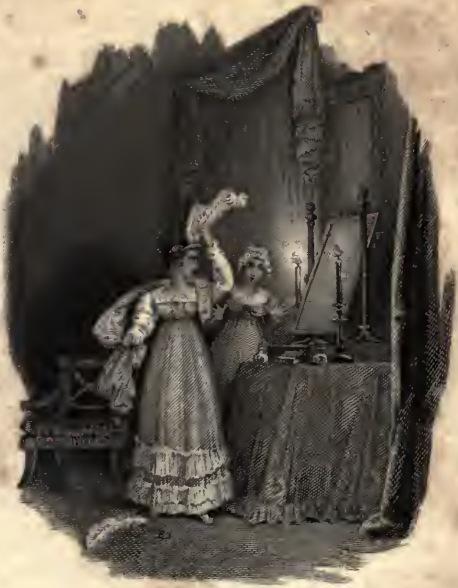
Sullenness, or obstinacy, is perhaps a worse fault of temper than either of the former—and, if indulged, may end in the most fatal extremes of stubborn melancholy, malice, and revenge. The resentment which, instead of being expressed, is nursed in secret, and continually aggravated by the imagination, will, in time, become the ruling passion: and then, how horrible must be his case, whose kind and pleasurable affections are all swallowed up by the tormenting as well as detestable sentiments of hatred and revenge!—"* Admonish thy friend, peradventure he hath

* Eccles. xix. 13.

Mrs CHAPONE'S LETTERS.

How often have I seen a girl, preparing for a ball, unable to satisfy her own vanity.—

Letter VI.



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not done it: or, if he hath, that he do it no more. —Admonish thy friend, peradventure he hath not said it: or, if he hath, that he speak it not again." —Brood not over a resentment which perhaps was at first ill grounded, and which is undoubtedly heightened by a heated imagination. But, when you have first subdued your own temper, so as to be able to speak calmly, reasonably, and kindly, then expostulate with the person you suppose to be in fault—hear what she has to say: and either reconcile yourself to her, or quiet your mind under the injury by the principle of Christian charity. But if it should appear that you yourself have been most to blame, or if you have been in an error, acknowledge it fairly and handsomely; if you feel any reluctance to do so, be certain that it arises from pride, to conquer which is an absolute duty.—" A soft answer turneth away wrath," and a generous confession oftentimes more than atones for the fault which requires it. Truth and justice demand that we should acknowledge conviction, as soon as we feel it, and not maintain an erroneous opinion, or justify a wrong conduct, merely from the false shame of confessing our past ignorance. A false shame it undoubtedly is, and as impolitic as unjust, since your error is already seen by those who endeavour to set you right; but your conviction, and the candour and generosity of owning it freely,

may still be an honour to you, and would greatly recommend you to the person with whom you disputed. With a disposition strongly inclined to sullenness or obstinacy, this must be a very painful exertion; and to make a perfect conquest over yourself at once may perhaps appear impracticable, whilst the zeal of self-justification, and the abhorrence of blame, are strong upon you. But, if you are so unhappy as to yield to your infirmity, at one time, do not let this discourage you from renewing your efforts. Your mind will gain strength from the contest, and your internal enemy will by degrees be forced to give ground. Be not afraid to revive the subject, as soon as you find yourself able to subdue your temper: and then frankly lay open the conflict you sustained at the time; by this you will make all the amends in your power for your fault, and will certainly change the disgust you have given into pity at least if not admiration. Nothing is more endearing than such a confession—and you will find such a satisfaction in your own consciousness, and the renewed tenderness and esteem you will gain from the person concerned, that your task for the future will be made more easy, and your reluctance to be convinced will on every occasion grow less and less.

The love of truth, and a real desire of improvement, ought to be the only motives of argu-

mentation; and, where these are sincere, no difficulty can be made of embracing the truth, as soon as it is perceived. But, in fact, people oftener dispute from vanity and pride, which makes it a grievous mortification to allow that we are the wiser for what we have heard from another. To receive advice, reproof, and instruction, properly, is the surest sign of a sincere and humble heart—and shows a greatness of mind, which commands our respect and reverence, while it appears so willingly to yield to us the superiority.

Observe, notwithstanding, that I do not wish you to hear of your faults without pain: such an indifference would afford small hopes of amendment. Shame and remorse are the first steps to true repentance; yet we should be willing to bear this pain, and thankful to the kind hand that inflicts it for our good. Nor must we, by sullen silence under it, leave our kind physician in doubt, whether the operation has taken effect or not, or whether it has not added another malady, instead of curing the first. You must consider, that those who tell you of your faults, if they do it from motives of kindness, and not of malice, exert their friendship in a painful office, which must have cost them as great an effort as it can be to you to acknowledge the service; and, if you refuse this encouragement, you cannot expect

that any one, who is not absolutely obliged to it by duty, will a second time undertake such an ill requited trouble. What a loss would this be to yourself!—how difficult would be our progress to that degree of perfection, which is necessary to our happiness, was it not for the assistance we receive from each other!—this certainly is one of the means of grace held out to us by our merciful Judge, and, if we reject it, we are answerable for all the miscarriages we may fall into for want of it.

I know not, whether that strange caprice, that inequality of taste and behaviour, so commonly attributed to our sex, may be properly called a fault of temper—as it seems not to be connected with, or arising from, our animal frame, but to be rather the fruit of our own self-indulgence, degenerating by degrees into such a wantonness of will as knows not how to please itself. When, instead of regulating our actions by reason and principle, we suffer ourselves to be guided by every slight and momentary impulse of inclination, we shall, doubtless, appear so variable and inconstant, that nobody can guess, by our behaviour to-day, what may be expected from us to-morrow; nor can we ourselves tell whether what we delighted in a week ago will now afford us the least degree of pleasure. It is in vain for others to attempt to please us—we cannot please

ourselves, though all we could wish for waits our choice: and thus does a capricious woman become "sick of herself, through very selfishness:" and, when this is the case, it is easy to judge how sick others must be of her, and how contemptible and disgusting she must appear. This wretched state is the usual consequence of power and flattery. May my dear child never meet with the temptation of that excessive and ill judged indulgence from a husband, which she has happily escaped from her parents, and which seldom fails to reduce women to the miserable condition of a humoured child, always unhappy from having nobody's will to study but its own! The insolence of such demands for yourself, and such disregard to the choice and inclinations of others, can seldom fail to make you as many enemies as there are persons obliged to bear with your humours; whilst a compliant, reasonable, and contented disposition, would render you happy in yourself, and beloved by all your companions—particularly by those who live constantly with you; and, of what consequence this is to your happiness, a moment's reflection will convince you. Family friendships are the friendships made for us, if I may so speak, by God himself. With the kindest intentions, he has knit the bonds of family love, by indispensable duties; and wretched are they who have burst them asunder by violence and

ill will, or worn them out by constant little disobligations, and by the want of that attention to please, which the presence of a stranger always inspires, but which is so often shamefully neglected towards those whom it is most our duty and interest to please. May you, my dear, be wise enough to see that every faculty of entertainment, every engaging qualification which you possess, is exerted to the best advantage for those whose love is of most importance to you—for those who live under the same roof, and with whom you are connected for life, either by the ties of blood, or by the still more sacred obligations of a voluntary engagement.

To make you the delight and darling of your family, something more is required than barely to be exempt from ill temper and troublesome humours. The sincere and genuine smiles of complacency and love must adorn your countenance. That ready compliance, that alertness to assist and oblige, which demonstrates true affection, must animate your behaviour, and endear your most common action. Politeness must accompany your greatest familiarities, and restrain you from every thing that is really offensive, or which can give a moment's unnecessary pain. Conversation, which is so apt to grow dull and insipid in families, nay, in some to be almost wholly laid aside, must be cultivated with the frankness and

openness of friendship, and by the mutual communication of whatever may conduce to the improvement or innocent entertainment of each other.

Reading, whether apart or in common, will furnish useful and pleasing subjects; and the sprightliness of youth will naturally inspire harmless mirth and native humour, if encouraged by a mutual desire of diverting each other, and making the hours pass agreeably in your own house: every amusement that offers will be heightened by the participation of these dear companions, and by talking over every incident together and every object of pleasure. If you have any acquired talent of entertainment, such as music, painting, or the like, your own family are those before whom you should most wish to excel, and for whom you should always be ready to exert yourself; not suffering the accomplishments which you have gained, perhaps by their means, and at their expense, to lie dormant, till the arrival of a stranger gives you spirit in the performance. Where this last is the case, you may be sure vanity is the only motive of the exertion: a stranger will praise you more: but how little sensibility has that heart which is not more gratified by the silent pleasure painted on the countenance of a partial parent, or of an affectionate brother, than by the empty compliment of a visitor, who

is perhaps inwardly more disposed to criticise and ridicule than to admire you!

I have been longer in this letter than I intended, yet it is with difficulty I can quit the subject, because I think it is seldom sufficiently insisted on, either in books or in sermons—and because there are many persons weak enough to believe themselves in a safe and innocent course of life, whilst they are daily harassing every body about them by their vexatious humours. But you will, I hope, constantly bear in mind, that you can never treat a fellow-creature unkindly, without offending the kind Creator and Father of all—and that you can no way render yourself so acceptable to him as by studying to promote the happiness of others, in every instance, small as well as great.—The favour of God, and the love of your companions, will surely be deemed rewards sufficient to animate your most fervent endeavours; yet this is not all: the disposition of mind, which I would recommend, is its own reward, and is in itself essential to happiness. Cultivate it therefore, my dear child, with your utmost diligence—and watch the symptoms of ill temper, as they rise, with a firm resolution to conquer them, before they are even perceived by any other person. In every such inward conflict, call upon your Maker, to assist the feeble nature he hath given you—and sacrifice to *Him* every

feeling that would tempt you to disobedience: so will you at length attain the true Christian meekness, which is blessed in the sight of God and man: "which has the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come." Then will you pity, in others, those infirmities which you have conquered in yourself; and will think yourself as much bound to assist, by your patience and gentleness, those who are so unhappy as to be under the dominion of evil passions, as you are to impart a share of your riches to the poor and miserable.

Adieu, my dearest.

LETTER VII.

ON ECONOMY.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

ECONOMY is so important a part of a woman's character, so necessary to her own happiness, and so essential to her performing properly the duties of a wife and of a mother, that it ought to have the precedence of all other accomplishments, and take its rank next to the first duties of life. It is, moreover, an *art* as well as a *virtue*—and many well meaning persons, from ignorance, or from inconsideration, are strangely deficient in it. Indeed it is too often wholly neglected in a young

woman's education—and she is sent from her father's house to govern a family, without the least degree of that knowledge which should qualify her for it: this is the source of much inconvenience; for though experience and attention may supply, by degrees, the want of instruction, yet this requires time—the family in the mean time may get into habits, which are very difficult to alter; and, what is worse, the husband's opinion of his wife's incapacity may be fixed too strongly to suffer him ever to think justly of her gradual improvements. I would therefore earnestly advise you to make use of every opportunity you can find, for the laying in some store of knowledge on this subject, before you are called upon to the practice; by observing what passes before you—by consulting prudent and experienced mistresses of families—and by entering in a book a memorandum of every new piece of intelligence you acquire; you may afterwards compare these with more mature observations, and you can make additions and corrections, as you see occasion. I hope it will not be long before your mother intrusts you with some part, at least, of the management of your father's house. Whilst you are under her eye, your ignorance cannot do much harm, though the relief to her at first may not be near so considerable as the benefit to yourself.

Economy consists of so many branches, some of which descend to such minuteness, that it is impossible for me in writing to give you particular directions. The rude outlines may be perhaps described, and I shall be happy if I can furnish you with any hint that may hereafter be usefully employed.

The first and greatest point is to lay out your general plan of living in a just proportion to your fortune and rank: if these two will not coincide, the last must certainly give way; for, if you have right principles, you cannot fail of being wretched under the sense of the injustice as well as danger of spending beyond your income, and your distress will be continually increasing. No mortifications, which you can suffer from retrenching in your appearance, can be comparable to this unhappiness. If you would enjoy the real comforts of affluence, you should lay your plan considerably within your income; not for the pleasure of amassing wealth—though, where there is a growing family, it is an absolute duty to lay by something every year—but to provide for contingencies, and to have the power of indulging your choice in the disposal of the overplus—either in innocent pleasures, or to increase your funds for charity and generosity, which are in fact the true funds of pleasure. In some circumstances indeed this would not be prudent: there are pro-

fessions in which a man's success greatly depends on his making some figure, where the bare suspicion of poverty would bring on the reality. If by marriage you should be placed in such a situation, it will be your duty to exert all your skill in the management of your income: yet even in this case, I would not strain to the utmost for appearance, but would choose my models among the most prudent and moderate of my own class; and be contented with slower advancement, for the sake of security and peace of mind.

A contrary conduct is the ruin of many; and, in general, the wives of men in such professions might live in a more retired and frugal manner than they do, without any ill consequence, if they did not make the scheme of advancing the success of their husbands an excuse to themselves for the indulgence of their own vanity and ambition.

Perhaps it may be said, that the settling the general scheme of expenses is seldom the wife's province, and that many men do not choose even to acquaint her with the real state of their affairs. Where this is the case, a woman can be answerable for no more than is intrusted to her. But I think it a very ill sign, for one or both of the parties, where there is such a want of openness in what equally concerns them. As I trust you will deserve the confidence of your husband,

so I hope you will be allowed free consultation with him on your mutual interest; and I believe there are few men, who would not hearken to reason on their own affairs, when they see a wife ready and desirous to give up her share of vanities and indulgences, and only earnest to promote the common good of the family.

In order to settle your plan, it will be necessary to make a pretty exact calculation: and if, from this time, you accustom yourself to calculations, in all the little expenses intrusted to you, you will grow expert and ready at them, and be able to guess very nearly, where certainty cannot be obtained. Many articles of expense are regular and fixed; these may be valued exactly; and, by consulting with experienced persons, you may calculate nearly the amount of others: any material article of consumption, in a family of any given number and circumstances, may be estimated pretty nearly. Your own expenses of clothes and pocket-money should be settled and circumscribed, that you may be sure not to exceed the just proportion. I think it an admirable method to appropriate such a portion of your income, as you judge proper to bestow in charity, to be sacredly kept for that purpose, and no longer considered as your own. By which means you will avoid the temptation of giving less than

you ought, through selfishness, or more than you ought, through good-nature or weakness. If your circumstances allow of it, you might set apart another fund for acts of liberality or friendship, which do not come under the head of charity. The having such funds ready at hand makes it easy and pleasant to give; and when acts of bounty are performed without effort, they are generally done more kindly and effectually. If you are obliged in conscience to lay up for a family, the same method of an appropriated fund for saving will be of excellent use, as it will prevent that continual and often ineffectual anxiety, which a general desire of saving, without having fixed the limits, is sure to create.

Regularity of payments and accounts is essential to Economy:—your housekeeping should be settled at least once a week, and all the bills paid: all other tradesmen should be paid, at furthest, once a year. Indeed I think it more advantageous to pay oftener: but, if you make them trust you longer, they must either charge proportionably higher, or be losers by your custom. Numbers of them fail, every year, from the cruel cause of being obliged to give their customers so much longer credit than the dealers, from whom they take their goods, will allow to them. If people of fortune considered this, they would not defer their payments, from mere neg-

ligence, as they often do, to the ruin of whole families.

You must endeavour to acquire skill in purchasing: in order to this, you should begin now to attend to the prices of things, and take every proper opportunity of learning the real value of every thing, as well as the marks whereby you are to distinguish the good from the bad.

In your table, as in your dress, and in all other things, I wish you to aim at *propriety* and *neatness*, or, if your state demand it, *elegance*, rather than *superfluous figure*. To go beyond your sphere, either in dress or in the appearance of your table, indicates a greater fault in your character than to be too much within it. It is impossible to enter into the *minutiæ* of the table: good sense and observation on the best models must form your taste, and a due regard to what you can afford must restrain it.

Ladies who are fond of needlework generally choose to consider that as a principal part of good housewifery: and though I cannot look upon it as of equal importance with the due regulation of a family, yet, in a middling rank, and with a moderate fortune, it is a necessary part of a woman's duty, and a considerable article in expense is saved by it. Many young ladies make almost *every thing* they wear; by which means they can make a genteel figure at a small ex-

pense. This, in your station, is the most profitable and desirable kind of work: and, as much of it as you can do, consistently with a due attention to your health, to the improvement of your mind, and to the discharge of other duties, I should think highly commendable. But, as I do not wish you to impose upon the world by your appearance, I should be contented to see you worse dressed, rather than see your whole time employed in preparations for it, or any of those hours given to it, which are needful to make your body strong and active by exercise, or your mind rational by reading. Absolute idleness is inexcusable in a woman, because the needle is always at hand for those intervals in which she cannot be otherwise employed. If you are industrious, and if you keep good hours, you will find time for all your proper employments. Early rising, and a good disposition of time, is essential to Economy. The necessary orders, and examinations into household affairs, should be dispatched, as soon in the day, and as privately as possible, that they may not interrupt your husband or guests, or break in upon conversation, or reading, in the remainder of the day. If you defer any thing that is necessary, you may be tempted by company, or by unforeseen avocations, to forget or to neglect it; hurry and irregularity will ensue, with expensive expedients to supply the defect.

There is in many people, and particularly in youth, a strange aversion to regularity—a desire to delay what ought to be done immediately, in order to do something else, which might as well be done afterwards. Be assured it is of more consequence to you than you can conceive, to get the better of this idle procrastinating spirit, and to acquire habits of constancy and steadiness, even in the most trifling matters: without them there can be no regularity, or consistency of action or character—no dependence on your best intentions, which a sudden humour may tempt you to lay aside for a time, and which a thousand unforeseen accidents will afterwards render it more and more difficult to execute: no one can say what important consequences may follow a trivial neglect of this kind. For example—I have known one of these *procrastinators* disoblige, and gradually lose very valuable friends, by delaying to write to them so long, that, having no good excuse to offer, she could not get courage enough to write at all, and dropped their correspondence entirely.

The neatness and order of your house and furniture is a part of Economy, which will greatly affect your appearance and character, and to which you must yourself give attention, since it is not possible even for the *rich* and *great* to rely wholly on the care of servants, in such points,

without their being often neglected. The more magnificently a house is furnished, the more one is disgusted with that air of confusion, which often prevails where attention is wanting in the owner. But, on the other hand, there is a kind of neatness, which gives a lady the air of a housemaid, and makes her excessively troublesome to every body, and particularly to her husband: in this, as in all other branches of Economy, I wish you to avoid all parade and bustle. Those ladies, who pique themselves on the particular excellence of neatness, are very apt to forget that the decent order of the house should be designed to promote the convenience and pleasure of those who are to be in it; and that, if it be converted into a cause of trouble and constraint, their husbands and guests would be happier without it. The love of fame, that universal passion, will sometimes show itself on strangely insignificant subjects; and a person who acts for praise only will always go beyond the mark in every thing. The best sign of a house being well governed is, that nobody's attention is called to any of the little affairs of it, but all goes on so well of course, that one is not led to make remarks upon any thing, nor to observe any extraordinary effort that produces the general result of ease and elegance, which prevails throughout.

Domestic Economy, and the credit and happi-

ness of a family, depend so much on the choice and proper regulation of servants, that it must be considered as an essential part both of prudence and duty. Those who keep a great number of them have a heavy charge on their consciences, and ought to think themselves in some measure responsible for the morals and happiness of so many of their fellow creatures, designed like themselves for immortality. Indeed the cares of domestic management are by no means lighter to persons of high rank and fortune, if they perform their duty, than to those of a retired station. It is with a family as with a commonwealth, the more numerous and luxurious it becomes, the more difficult it is to govern it properly.—Though the great are placed above the little attentions and employments, to which a private gentlewoman must dedicate much of her time, they have a larger and more important sphere of action, in which, if they are indolent and neglectful, the whole government of their house and fortune must fall into irregularity. Whatever number of deputies they may employ to overlook their affairs, they must themselves overlook those deputies, and be ultimately answerable for the conduct of the whole. The characters of those servants, who are intrusted with power over the rest, cannot be too nicely inquired into; and the mistress of the family must be ever watchful over their

conduct—at the same time that she must carefully avoid every appearance of suspicion, which, whilst it wounds and hinders a worthy servant, only excites the artifice and cunning of an unjust one.

None, who pretend to be friends of religion and virtue, should ever keep a domestic, however expert in business, whom they know to be guilty of immorality. How unbecoming a serious character is it, to say of such an one, "He is a bad man, but a good servant!" What a preference does it show of private convenience to the interests of society, which demand that vice should be constantly discountenanced, especially in every one's own household; and that the sober, honest, and industrious should be sure of finding encouragement and reward, in the houses of those who maintain respectable characters! Such persons should be invariably strict and peremptory with regard to the behaviour of their servants, in every thing which concerns the general plan of domestic government—but should by no means be severe on small faults, since nothing so much weakens authority as frequent chiding. Whilst they require precise obedience to their rules, they must prove by their general conduct, that these rules are the effect, not of humour but of reason. It is wonderful that those, who are careful to conceal their ill temper from strangers, should be indiffe-

rent how peevish and even contemptibly capricious they appear before their servants, on whom their good name so much depends, and from whom they can hope for no real respect, when their weakness is so apparent. When once a servant can say—" I cannot do any thing to please my mistress to-day"—all authority is lost.

Those who continually change their servants, and complain of perpetual ill usage, have good reason to believe that the fault is in themselves, and that they do not know how to govern. Few indeed possess the skill to unite authority with kindness, or are capable of that steady and uniformly reasonable conduct, which alone can maintain true dignity, and command a willing and attentive obedience. Let us not forget that human nature is the same in all stations. If you can convince your servants that you have a generous and considerate regard to their health, their interest, and their reasonable gratifications—that you impose no commands but what are fit and right, nor ever reprove but with justice and temper—why should you imagine that they will be insensible to the good they receive, or whence suppose them incapable of esteeming and prizing such a mistress?—I could never, without indignation, hear it said that " servants have no gratitude"—as if the condition of servitude excluded the virtues of humanity!—The truth is, masters and mistresses have seldom any real claim to grati-

tude. They think highly of what they bestow, and little of the service they receive; they consider only their own convenience, and seldom reflect on the kind of life their servants pass with them: they do not ask themselves, whether it is such an one as is consistent with the preservation of their health, their morals, their leisure for religious duties, or with a proper share of the enjoyments and comforts of life. The dissipated manners, which now so generally prevail, perpetual absence from home, and attendance on assemblies or at public places, are, in all these respects, pernicious to the whole household—and to the *men servants* absolutely ruinous. Their only resource, in the tedious hours of waiting, whilst their masters and ladies are engaged in diversions, is to find out something of the same kind for themselves. Thus they are led into gaming, drinking, extravagance, and bad company—and thus, by a natural progression, they become distressed and dishonest. That attachment and affiance, which ought to subsist between the dependant and his protector, are destroyed. The master looks on his attendants as thieves and traitors, whilst they consider him as one whose money only gives him power over them—and who uses that power without the least regard to their welfare.

" *The fool saith—I have no friends—I have

* Eccles. xx. 16.

no thanks for all my good deeds, and they that eat my bread speak evil of me."—Thus foolishly do those complain who choose their servants, as well as their friends, without discretion, or who treat them in a manner that no worthy person will bear.

I have been often shocked at the want of politeness, by which masters and mistresses sometimes provoke impertinence from their servants: a gentleman, who would resent to death an imputation of falsehood, from his equal, will not scruple, without proof, to accuse his servant of it in the grossest terms. I have heard the most insolent contempt of the whole class expressed at a table, whilst five or six of them attended behind the chairs, who the company seemed to think were without senses, without understanding, or the natural feelings of resentment: these are cruel injuries, and will be retorted in some way or other.

If you, my dear, live to be at the head of a family, I hope you will not only avoid all injurious treatment of your domestics, but behave to them with that courtesy and good breeding which will heighten their respect as well as their affection. If, on any occasion, they do more than you have a right to require, give them, at least, the reward of seeing that they have obliged you. If, in your service, they have any hardship to en-

dure, let them see that you are concerned for the necessity of imposing it. When they are sick, give them all the attention and every comfort in your power, with a free heart and kind countenance; "*not blemishing thy good deeds, not using uncomfortable words, when thou givest any thing. Is not a word better than a gift?—but both are with a gracious man—A fool will upbraid churlishly, and a gift of the envious consumeth the eyes."

Whilst you thus endear yourself to all your servants, you must ever carefully avoid making a favourite of any; unjust distinctions, and weak indulgences to one, will of course excite envy and hatred in the rest. Your favourite may establish whatever abuses she pleases; none will dare to complain against her, and you will be kept ignorant of her ill practices, but will feel the effects of them, by finding all your other servants uneasy in their places, and, perhaps, by being obliged continually to change them.

When they have spent a reasonable time in your service, and have behaved commendably, you ought to prefer them, if it is in your power, or to recommend them to a better provision. The hope of this keeps alive attention and gratitude, and is the proper support of industry. Like a parent, you should keep in view their establish-

* Ecclus. xviii.

ment in some way that may preserve their old age from indigence; and to this end, you should endeavour to inspire them with care to lay up part of their gains, and constantly discourage in them all vanity in dress, and extravagance in idle expenses. That you are bound to promote their eternal as well as temporal welfare, you cannot doubt, since, next to your children, they are your nearest dependants. You ought therefore to instruct them as far as you are able, furnish them with good books suited to their capacity, and see that they attend the public worship of God: and you must take care so to pass the sabbath-day as to allow them time, on that day at least, for reading and reflection at home, as well as for attendance at church. Though this is part of your religious duty, I mention it here, because it is also a part of family management: for the same reason I shall here take occasion earnestly to recommend family prayers, which are useful to all, but more particularly to servants—who, being constantly employed, are led to the neglect of private prayer—and whose ignorance makes it very difficult for them to frame devotions for themselves, or to choose proper helps, amidst the numerous books of superstitious or enthusiastic nonsense, which are printed for that purpose. Even, in a political light, this practice is eligible, since the idea which it will give them of

your regularity and decency, if not counteracted by other parts of your conduct, will probably increase their respect for you, and will be some restraint at least on their outward behaviour, though it should fail of that inward influence which in general may be hoped from it.

The prudent distribution of your charitable gifts may not improperly be considered as a branch of Economy, since the great duty of alms-giving cannot be truly fulfilled without a diligent attention so to manage the sums you can spare as to produce the most real good to your fellow-creatures. Many are willing to give money, who will not bestow their time and consideration, and who therefore often hurt the community when they mean to do good to individuals. The larger are your funds, the stronger is the call upon you to exert your industry and care in disposing of them properly. It seems impossible to give rules for this, as every case is attended with a variety of circumstances, which must all be considered. In general, charity is most useful when it is appropriated to animate the industry of the young, to procure some ease and comfort to old age, and to support in sickness those whose daily labour is their only maintenance in health. They, who are fallen into indigence, from circumstances of ease and plenty, and in whom education and habit have added a thousand wants to those of

nature, must be considered with the tenderest sympathy by every feeling heart. It is needless to say that to such the bare support of existence is scarcely a benefit, and that the delicacy and liberality of the manner, in which relief is here offered, can alone make it a real act of kindness. In great families, the waste of provisions, sufficient for the support of many poor ones, is a shocking abuse of the gifts of Providence: nor should any lady think it beneath her to study the best means of preventing it, and of employing the refuse of luxury in the relief of the poor. Even the smallest families may give some assistance in this way, if care is taken that nothing be wasted.

I am sensible, my dear child, that very little more can be gathered from what I have said on Economy than the general importance of it, which cannot be too much impressed on your mind, since the natural turn of young people is to neglect and even to despise it; not distinguishing it from parsimony and narrowness of spirit. But, be assured, my dear, there can be no true generosity without it; and that the most enlarged and liberal mind will find itself not debased but ennobled by it. Nothing is more common than to see the same person, whose want of Economy is ruining his family, consumed with regret and vexation at the effect of his profusion; and, by

endeavouring to save, in such trifles as will not amount to twenty pounds in a year, that which he wastes by hundreds, incur the character and suffer the anxieties of a miser, together with the misfortunes of a prodigal. A rational plan of expense will save you from all these corroding cares, and will give you the full and liberal enjoyment of what you spend. An air of ease, of hospitality, and frankness will reign in your house, which will make it pleasant to your friends and to yourself. "Better is a morsel of bread," where this is found, than the most elaborate entertainment, with that air of constraint and anxiety, which often betrays the grudging heart through all the disguises of civility.

That you, my dear, may unite in yourself the admirable virtues of Generosity and Economy, which will be the grace and crown of all your attainments, is the earnest wish of

Your ever affectionate.

LETTER VIII.

ON POLITENESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

WHILST you labour to enrich your mind with the essential virtues of Christianity—with piety, benevolence, meekness, humility, integrity, and purity—and to make yourself useful in domestic

management, I would not have my dear child neglect to pursue those graces and acquirements which may set her virtue in the most advantageous light, adorn her manners, and enlarge her understanding: and this, not in the spirit of vanity, but in the innocent and laudable view of rendering herself more useful and pleasing to her fellow-creatures, and consequently more acceptable to God. Politeness of behaviour, and the attainment of such branches of knowledge and such arts and accomplishments as are proper to your sex, capacity, and station, will prove so valuable to yourself through life, and will make you so desirable a companion, that the neglect of them may reasonably be deemed a neglect of duty; since it is undoubtedly our duty to cultivate the powers intrusted to us, and to render ourselves as perfect as we can.

You must have often observed that nothing is so strong a recommendation on a slight acquaintance as *politeness;* nor does it lose its value by time or intimacy, when preserved, as it ought to be, in the nearest connexions and strictest friendships. This delightful qualification—so universally admired and respected, but so rarely possessed in any eminent degree—cannot but be a considerable object of my wishes for you: nor should either of us be discouraged by the apprehension, that neither I am capable of teaching,

nor you of learning it, in *perfection*—since whatever degree you attain will amply reward our pains.

To be perfectly polite, one must have great *presence of mind*, with a delicate and quick *sense of propriety;* or, in other words, one should be able to form an instantaneous judgment of what is fittest to be said or done, on every occasion as it offers. I have known one or two persons, who seemed to owe this advantage to nature only, and to have the peculiar happiness of being born, as it were, with another sense, by which they had an immediate perception of what was proper and improper, in cases absolutely new to them: but this is the lot of very few: in general, propriety of behaviour must be the fruit of instruction, of observation, and reasoning; and is to be cultivated and improved like any other branch of knowledge or virtue. A good temper is a necessary groundwork of it; and if to this is added a good understanding, applied industriously to this purpose, I think it can hardly fail of attaining all that is essential in it. Particular modes and ceremonies of behaviour vary in different countries, and even in different parts of the same town. These can only be learned by observation on the manners of those who are best skilled in them, and by keeping what is called good company. But the principles of politeness are the

same in all places. Wherever there are human beings, it must be impolite to hurt the temper or to shock the passions of those you converse with. It must every where be good breeding, to set your companions in the most advantageous point of light, by giving each the opportunity of displaying their most agreeable talents, and by carefully avoiding all occasions of exposing their defects:—to exert your own endeavours to please, and to amuse, but not to outshine them;—to give each their due share of attention and notice—not engrossing the talk when others are desirous to speak, nor suffering the conversation to flag, for want of introducing something to continue or renew a subject;—not to push your advantages in argument so far that your antagonist cannot retreat with honour:—in short, it is an universal duty in society to consider others more than yourself—" in honour preferring one another." Christianity, in this rule, gives the best lesson of politeness; yet judgment must be used in the application of it: our humility must not be strained so far as to distress those we mean to honour; we must not quit our proper rank, nor force others to treat us improperly; or to accept, what we mean as an advantage, against their wills.—We should be perfectly easy, and make others so if we can. But this happy ease belongs perhaps to the last stage of perfection in politeness, and can

hardly be attained till we are conscious that we know the rules of behaviour, and are not likely to offend against propriety. In a very young person, who has seen little or nothing of the world, this cannot be expected, but a real desire of obliging, and a respectful attention, will in a great measure supply the want of knowledge, and will make every one ready to overlook those deficiencies which are owing only to the want of opportunity to observe the manners of polite company. You ought not therefore to be too much depressed by the consciousness of such deficiencies, but endeavour to get above the shame of wanting what you have not had the means of acquiring. Nothing heightens this false shame, and the awkwardness it occasions, so much as vanity. The humble mind, contented to be known for what it is, and unembarrassed by the dread of betraying its ignorance, is present to itself, and can command the use of understanding, which will generally preserve you from any great indecorum, and will secure you from that ridicule which is the punishment of affectation rather than of ignorance. People of sense will never despise you whilst you act naturally; but, the moment you attempt to step out of your own character, you make yourself an object of just ridicule.

Many are of opinion that a very young woman can hardly be too silent and reserved in company;

and, certainly, nothing is so disgusting in youth as pertness and self-conceit. But, modesty should be distinguished from an awkward bashfulness, and silence should be only enjoined when it would be forward and impertinent to talk. There are many proper opportunities for a girl, young even as you are, to speak in company, with advantage to herself; and, if she does it without conceit or affectation, she will always be more pleasing than those who sit like statues, without sense or motion. When you are silent, your looks should show your attention and presence to the company; a respectful and earnest attention is the most delicate kind of praise, and never fails to gratify and please. You must appear to be interested in what is said, and endeavour to improve yourself by it: if you understand the subject well enough to ask now and then a pertinent question, or if you can mention any circumstances relating to it that have not before been taken notice of, this will be an agreeable way of showing your willingness to make a part of the company; and will probably draw a particular application to you from some one or other. Then, when called upon, you must not draw back as unwilling to answer, nor confine yourself merely to *yes*, or *no*, as is the custom of many young persons, who become intolerable burdens to the mistress of the house, whilst she strives in vain

to draw them into notice, and to give them some share in the conversation.

In your father's house it is certainly proper for you to pay civility to the guests, and to talk to them in your turn—with modesty and respect—if they encourage you to it. Young ladies of near your own age, who visit there, fall of course to your share to entertain. But, whilst you exert yourself to make their visit agreeable to them, you must not forget what is due to the elder part of the company, nor, by whispering and laughing apart, give them cause to suspect, what is too often true, that they themselves are the subjects of your mirth. It is so shocking an outrage against society, to talk of or laugh at any person in his own presence, that one would think it could only be committed by the vulgar. I am sorry however to say that I have too often observed it amongst young ladies, who little deserved that title whilst they indulged their overflowing spirits in defiance of decency and good-nature. The desire of laughing will make such inconsiderate young persons find a subject of ridicule, even in the most respectable character. Old age, which —if not disgraced by vice or affectation—has the justest title to reverence, will be mimicked and insulted; and even personal defects and infirmities will too often excite contempt and abuse instead of compassion. If you have ever been led

into such an action, my dear girl, call it seriously to mind when you are confessing your faults to Almighty God: and be fully persuaded that it is not one of the least which you have to repent of. You will be immediately convinced of this, by comparing it with the great rule of justice, that of doing to all as you would they should do unto you. No person living is insensible to the injury of contempt, nor is there any talent so invidious, or so certain to create ill will, as that of ridicule. The natural effects of years, which all hope to attain, and the infirmities of the body, which none can prevent, are surely of all others the most improper objects of mirth. There are subjects enough that are innocent, and on which you may freely indulge the vivacity of your spirits; for I would not condemn you to perpetual seriousness—on the contrary, I delight in a joyous temper, at all ages, and particularly at yours. Delicate and good-natured raillery amongst equal friends, if pointed only against such trifling errors as the owner can hardly join to laugh at, or such qualities as they do not pique themselves upon, is both agreeable and useful; but then it must be offered in perfect kindness and sincere good humour; if tinctured with the least degree of malice, its sting becomes venomous and detestable. The person rallied should have liberty and ability to

return the jest, which must be dropped upon the first appearance of its affecting the temper.

You will wonder, perhaps, when I tell you that there are some characters in the world, which I would freely allow you to laugh at—though not in their presence. Extravagant vanity, and affectation, are the natural subjects of ridicule, which is their proper punishment. When you see old people, instead of maintaining the dignity of their years, struggling against nature to conceal them, affecting the graces, and imitating the follies of youth—or a young person assuming the importance and solemnity of old age—I do not wish you to be insensible to the ridicule of such absurd deviations from truth and nature. You are welcome to laugh when you leave the company, provided you lay up a lesson for yourself at the same time, and remember, that unless you improve your mind whilst you are young, you also will be an insignificant fool in old age—and that, if you are presuming and arrogant in youth, you are as ridiculous as an old woman with a headdress of flowers.

In a young lady's behaviour towards gentlemen, great delicacy is certainly required: yet, I believe, women oftener err from too great a consciousness of the supposed views of men than from inattention to those views, or want of cau-

tion against them. You are at present rather too young to want rules on this subject; but I could wish that you should behave almost in the same manner three years hence as now; and retain the simplicity and innocence of childhood, with the sense and dignity of riper years. Men of loose morals or impertinent behaviour must always be avoided: or, if at any time you are obliged to be in their company, you must keep them at a distance by cold civility. But, with regard to those gentlemen whom your parents think it proper for you to converse with, and who give no offence by their own manners, to them I wish you to behave with the same frankness and simplicity as if they were of your own sex. If you have natural modesty, you will never transgress its bounds, whilst you converse with a man, as one rational creature with another, without any view to the possibility of a lover or admirer, where nothing of that kind is professed; where it is, I hope you will ever be equally a stranger to coquetry and prudery; and that you will be able to distinguish the effects of real esteem and love from idle gallantry and unmeaning fine speeches: the slighter notice you take of these last, the better; and that, rather with good humoured contempt than with affected gravity: but, the first must be treated with seriousness and well bred sincerity; not giving the least encouragement which you

do not mean, nor assuming airs of contempt where it is not deserved. But this belongs to a subject which I have touched upon in a former letter. I have already told you that you will be unsafe in every step which leads to a serious attachment, unless you consult your parents, from the first moment you apprehend any thing of that sort to be intended: let them be your first confidants, and let every part of your conduct, in such a case, be particularly directed by them.

With regard to accomplishments, the chief of these is a competent share of reading, well chosen and properly regulated; and of this I shall speak more largely hereafter. Dancing and the knowledge of the French tongue are now so universal that they cannot be dispensed with in the education of a gentlewoman; and indeed they both are useful as well as ornamental; the first, by forming and strengthening the body, and improving the carriage; the second, by opening a large field of entertainment and improvement for the mind. I believe there are more agreeable books of female literature in French than in any other language; and, as they are not less commonly talked of than English books, you must often feel mortified in company if you are too ignorant to read them. Italian would be easily learned after French, and, if you have leisure and opportunity, may be worth your gaining, though

in your station of life it is by no means necessary.

To write a free and legible hand, and to understand common arithmetic, are indispensable requisites.

As to music and drawing, I would only wish you to follow as Genius leads: you have some turn for the first, and I should be sorry to see you neglect a talent, which will at least afford you an innocent amusement, though it should not enable you to give much pleasure to your friends: I think the use of both these arts is more for yourself than for others: it is but seldom that a private person has leisure or application enough to gain any high degree of excellence in them; and your own partial family are perhaps the only persons who would not much rather be entertained by the performance of a professor than by yours: but, with regard to yourself, it is of great consequence to have the power of filling up agreeably those intervals of time which too often hang heavily on the hands of a woman, if her lot be cast in a retired situation. Besides this, it is certain that even a small share of knowledge in these arts will heighten your pleasure in the performances of others: the taste must be improved before it can be susceptible of an exquisite relish for any of the imitative arts: an unskilful ear is seldom capable of comprehending *harmony*, or of

distinguishing the most *delicate* charms of *melody*. The pleasure of seeing fine paintings, or even of contemplating the beauties of Nature, must be greatly heightened by our being conversant with the rules of drawing, and by the habit of considering the most picturesque objects. As I look upon taste to be an inestimable fund of innocent delight, I wish you to lose no opportunity of improving it, and of cultivating in yourself the relish of such pleasures as will not interfere with a rational scheme of life, nor lead you into dissipation, with all its attendant evils of vanity and luxury.

As to the learned languages, though I respect the abilities and application of those ladies who have attained them, and who make a modest and proper use of them, yet I would by no means advise you—or any other woman who is not strongly impelled by a particular genius—to engage in such studies. The labour and time which they require are generally incompatible with our natures and proper employments; the real knowledge which they supply is not essential, since the English, French, and Italian tongues afford tolerable translations of all the most valuable productions of antiquity, besides the multitude of original authors which they furnish; and these are much more than sufficient to store your mind with as many ideas as you will know how to ma-

nage. The danger of pedantry and presumption in a woman—of her exciting envy in one sex and jealousy in the other—of her exchanging the graces of imagination for the severity and preciseness of a scholar, would be, I own, sufficient to frighten me from the ambition of seeing my girl remarkable for learning. Such objections are perhaps still stronger with regard to the abstruse sciences.

Whatever tends to embellish your fancy, to enlighten your understanding, and furnish you with ideas to reflect upon when alone, or to converse upon in company, is certainly well worth your acquisition. The wretched expedient, to which ignorance so often drives our sex, of calling in slander to enliven the tedious insipidity of conversation, would alone be a strong reason for enriching your mind with innocent subjects of entertainment, which may render you a fit companion for persons of sense and knowledge, from whom you may reap the most desirable improvements; for, though I think reading indispensably necessary to the due cultivation of your mind, I prefer the conversation of such persons to every other method of instruction: but this you cannot hope to enjoy, unless you qualify yourself to bear a part in such society, by, at least, a moderate share of reading.

Though *religion* is the most important of all

your pursuits, there are not many *books* on that subject which I should recommend to you at present. Controversy is wholly improper at your age, and it is also too soon for you to inquire into the evidence of the truth of revelation, or to study the difficult parts of Scripture: when these shall come before you, there are many excellent books, from which you may receive great assistance. At present, practical divinity—clear of superstition and enthusiasm, but addressed to the heart, and written with a warmth and spirit capable of exciting in it pure and rational piety—is what I wish you to meet with.

The principal study, I would recommend, is *history*. I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the same time, or that is so likely to form and strengthen your judgment, and, by giving you a liberal and comprehensive view of human nature, in some measure to supply the defect of that experience which is usually attained too late to be of much service to us. Let me add, that more materials for conversation are supplied by this kind of knowledge than by almost any other; but I have more to say to you on this subject in a future letter.

The faculty, in which women usually most excel, is that of imagination; and, when properly cultivated, it becomes the source of all that is most charming in society. Nothing you can read

will so much contribute to the improvement of this faculty as *poetry;* which, if applied to its true ends, adds a thousand charms to those sentiments of religion, virtue, generosity, and delicate tenderness, by which the human soul is exalted and refined. I hope you are not deficient in natural taste for this enchanting art, but that you will find it one of your greatest pleasures to be conversant with the best poets whom our language can bring you acquainted with, particularly those immortal ornaments of our nation, *Shakspeare* and *Milton.* The first is not only incomparably the noblest genius in dramatic poetry, but the greatest master of nature, and the most perfect characterizer of men and manners: in this point of view, I think him inestimable; and I am persuaded that, in the course of your life, you will seldom find occasion to correct those observations on human nature, and those principles of morality, which you may extract from his capital pieces. You will at first find his language difficult; but if you take the assistance of a friend who understands it well, you will by degrees enter into his manner of phraseology, and perceive a thousand beauties, which at first lay buried in obsolete words and uncouth constructions. The admirable *Essay on Shakspeare,* which has lately appeared, so much to the honour of our sex, will open your mind to the peculiar

excellences of this author, and enlighten your judgment on dramatic poetry in general, with such force of reason and brilliancy of wit as cannot fail to delight as well as instruct you.

Our great English poet, Milton, is as far above my praise as his *Paradise Lost* is above any thing which I am able to read, except the sacred writers. The sublimity of his subject sometimes leads him into abstruseness; but many parts of his great poem are easy to all comprehensions, and must find their way directly to every heart by the tenderness and delicacy of his sentiments, in which he is not less strikingly excellent than in the richness and sublimity of his imagination. Addison's criticism in the Spectators, written with that beauty, elegance, and judgment, which distinguish all his writings, will assist you to understand and to relish this poem.

It is needless to recommend to you the translations of Homer and Virgil, which every body reads that reads at all. You must have heard that Homer is esteemed the father of poetry, the original from whence all the moderns—not excepting Milton himself—borrow some of their greatest beauties, and from whom they extract those rules for composition which are found most agreeable to nature and true taste. Virgil, you know, is the next in rank among the classics: you will read his Æneid with extreme pleasure,

if ever you are able to read Italian, in Annibal Caro's translation; the idiom of the Latin and Italian languages being more alike, it is, I believe, much closer, yet preserves more of the spirit of the original than the English translations.

For the rest, fame will point out to you the most considerable of our poets; and I would not exclude any of name among those whose morality is unexceptionable: but of poets, as of all other authors, I wish you to read only such as are properly recommended to you—since there are many who debase their divine art by abusing it to the purposes of vice and impiety. If you could read poetry with a judicious friend, who could lead your judgment to a true discernment of its beauties and defects, it would inexpressibly heighten both your pleasure and improvement. But, before you enter upon this, some acquaintance with the *Heathen Mythology* is necessary. I think that you must before now have met with some book under the title of *The Pantheon:* and, if once you know as much of the gods and goddesses as the most common books on the subject will tell you, the rest may be learned by reading Homer: but then you must particularly attend to him in this view. I do not expect you to penetrate those numerous mysteries—those amazing depths of morality, religion, and metaphysics—which some

pretend to have discovered in his mythology, but to know the names and principal offices of the gods and goddesses, with some idea of their moral meaning, seems requisite to the understanding almost any poetical composition. As an instance of the *moral meaning* I speak of, I will mention an observation of Bossuet, That Homer's poetry was particularly recommended to the Greeks by the superiority which he ascribes to them over the Asiatics; this superiority is shown in the Iliad, not only in the conquest of Asia by the Greeks, and in the actual destruction of its capital, but in the division and arrangement of the gods, who took part with the contending nations. On the side of Asia was *Venus*—that is, sensual passion—pleasure and effeminacy. On the side of Greece was *Juno*—that is, matronly gravity and conjugal love; together with *Mercury*—invention and eloquence—and *Jupiter*—or political wisdom. On the side of Asia was *Mars*, who represents brutal valour and blind fury. On that of Greece was *Pallas*—that is, military discipline, and bravery, guarded by judgment.

This, and many other instances that might be produced, will show you how much of the beauty of the poet's art must be lost to you, without some notion of these allegorical personages. Boys, in their school-learning, have this kind of knowledge impressed on their minds by a variety of

books; but women, who do not go through the same course of instruction, are very apt to forget what little they read or hear on the subject:—I advise you therefore never to lose an opportunity of inquiring into the meaning of any thing you meet with in poetry, or in painting, alluding to the history of any of the heathen deities, and of obtaining from some friend an explanation of its connexion with true history, or of its allegorical reference to morality or to physics.

Natural Philosophy, in the largest sense of the expression, is too wide a field for you to undertake; but the study of nature, as far as may suit your powers and opportunities, you will find a most sublime entertainment: the objects of this study are all the stupendous works of the Almighty Hand, that lie within the reach of our observation. In the works of man perfection is aimed at, but it can only be found in those of the Creator. The contemplation of perfection must produce delight, and every natural object around you would offer this delight, if it could attract your attention. If you survey the earth, every leaf that trembles in the breeze, every blade of grass beneath your feet, is a wonder as absolutely beyond the reach of human art to imitate as the construction of the universe. Endless pleasures to those who have a taste for them might be derived from the endless variety to be

found in the composition of this globe and its inhabitants. The fossil—the vegetable—and the animal world—gradually rising in the scale of excellence—the innumerable species of each, still preserving their specific differences from age to age, yet of which no two individuals are ever perfectly alike—afford such a range for observation and inquiry as might engross the whole term of our short life, if followed minutely. Besides all the animal creation obvious to our unassisted senses, the eye, aided by philosophical inventions, sees myriads of creatures, which by the ignorant are not known to have existence: it sees all nature teem with life; every fluid—each part of every vegetable and animal—swarm with its peculiar inhabitants—invisible to the naked eye, but as perfect in all their parts, and enjoying life as indisputably as the elephant or the whale.

But if from the earth, and from these minute wonders, the philosophic eye is raised towards the heavens, what a stupendous scene there opens to its view!—those brilliant lights that sparkle to the eye of ignorance as gems adorning the sky, or as lamps to guide the traveller by night, assume an importance that amazes the understanding!—they appear to be *worlds*, formed like ours for a variety of inhabitants—or *suns*, enlightening numberless other worlds too distant for our discovery!—I shall ever remember the astonishment and

Who can contemplate such a scene unmoved?—

Letter VIII.

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A ENGRAVED BY CHARLES ROLLS;
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rapture with which my mind received this idea, when I was about your age; it was then perfectly new to me, and it is impossible to describe the sensations I felt from the glorious, boundless prospect of infinite beneficence bursting at once upon my imagination!—Who can contemplate such a scene unmoved?—if our curiosity is excited to enter upon this noble inquiry, a few books on the subject, and those of the easiest sort, with some of the common experiments, may be sufficient for your purpose—which is to enlarge your mind, and to excite in it the most ardent gratitude and profound adoration towards that great and good Being, who exerts his boundless power in communicating various portions of happiness through all the immense regions of creation.

Moral philosophy, as it relates to human actions, is of still higher importance than the study of nature. The works of the ancients on this subject are universally said to be entertaining as well as instructive, by those who can read them in their original languages; and such of them as are well translated will undoubtedly, some years hence, afford you great pleasure and improvement. You will also find many agreeable and useful books, written originally in French, and in English, on morals and manners: for the present, there are works which, without assuming the solemn air of philosophy, will enlighten your

mind on these subjects, and introduce instruction in an easier dress: of this sort are many of the moral essays, that have appeared in periodical papers—which, when excellent in their kind—as are the *Spectators, Guardians, Ramblers,* and *Adventurers*—are particularly useful to young people, as they comprehend a great variety of subjects—introduce many ideas and observations that are new to them—and lead to a habit of reflecting on the characters and events that come before them in real life, which I consider as the best exercise of the understanding.

Books on taste and criticism will hereafter be more proper for you than at present: whatever can improve your discernment, and render your taste elegant and just, must be of great consequence to your enjoyments as well as to the embellishment of your understanding.

I would by no means exclude the kind of reading which young people are naturally most fond of; though I think the greatest care should be taken in the choice of those *fictitious stories* that so enchant the mind—most of which tend to inflame the passions of youth, whilst the chief purpose of education should be to moderate and restrain them. Add to this, that both the writing and sentiments of most novels and romances are such as are only proper to vitiate your style, and to mislead your heart and understanding. The

expectation of extraordinary adventures—which seldom ever happen to the sober and prudent part of mankind—and the admiration of extravagant passions and absurd conduct, are some of the usual fruits of this kind of reading; which, when a young woman makes it her chief amusement, generally render her ridiculous in conversation, and miserably wrong-headed in her pursuits and behaviour. There are however works of this class in which excellent morality is joined with the most lively pictures of the human mind, and with all that can entertain the imagination and interest the heart. But, I must repeatedly exhort you, never to read any thing of the sentimental kind, without taking the judgment of your best friends in the choice; for I am persuaded, that the indiscriminate reading of such kind of books corrupts more female hearts than any other cause whatsoever.

Before I close this correspondence, I shall point out the course of history I wish you to pursue, and give you my thoughts of geography and chronology, some knowledge of both being, in my opinion, necessary to the reading of history with any advantage.

I am, my dearest Niece,

Your ever affectionate.

LETTER IX.

ON GEOGRAPHY AND CHRONOLOGY.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

I HAVE told you that you will not be able to read history, with much pleasure or advantage, without some little knowledge of *Geography* and *Chronology*. They are both very easily attained —I mean in the degree that will be necessary for you. You must be sensible that you can know but little of a country, whose situation with respect to the rest of the world you are entirely ignorant of—and, that it is to little purpose that you are able to mention a fact, if you cannot nearly ascertain the *time* in which it happened, which alone, in many cases, gives importance to the fact itself.

In Geography—the easiest of all sciences, and the best adapted to the capacity of children—I suppose you to have made some beginning; to know at least the figure of the earth—the supposed lines—the degrees—how to measure distances—and a few of the common terms: If you do not already know these, two or three lessons will be sufficient to attain them; the rest is the work of memory, and is easily gained by reading with maps; for I do not wish your knowledge to be exact and masterly—but such only as is necessary for the purpose of understanding history,

and, without which, even a newspaper would be unintelligible. It may be sufficient for this end, if, with respect to *ancient* Geography, you have a general idea of the situation of all the great states, without being able precisely to ascertain their limits. But, in the *modern*, you ought to know the bounds and extent of every state in Europe, and its situation with respect to the rest. The other parts of the world will require less accurate knowledge, except with regard to the European settlements.

It may be a useful and agreeable method, when you learn the situation of any important country, to join with that knowledge some one or two leading facts or circumstances concerning it, so that its particular property may always put you in mind of the situation; and the situation, in like manner, recall the particular property. When, for instance, you learn in what part of the globe to find Ethiopia, to be told at the same time that, in that vast unknown tract of country, the Christian religion was once the religion of the state, would be of service—because the geographical and historical knowledge would assist each other. Thus, to join with Egypt, *the nurse and parent of arts and of superstition*—With Persia, *shocking despotism and perpetual revolutions*—with ancient Greece, *freedom and genius*—with Scythia, *hardiness and conquest*, are hints which you may

make use of as you please. Perhaps annexing to any country the idea of some familiar form which it most resembles may at first assist you to retain a general notion of it; thus Italy has been called a *boot*—and Europe compared to a *woman sitting.*

The difference of the ancient and modern names of places is somewhat perplexing; the most important should be known by both names at the same time, and you must endeavour to fix a few of those which are of most consequence so strongly in your mind, by thinking of them, and being often told of them, that the ancient name should always call up the modern one to your memory, and the modern the ancient: Such as the Ægean Sea, now *The Archipelago*—The Peloponnesus, now *The Morea*—Crete, *Candia*—Gaul, *France*—Babylon, *Bagdat*—Byzantium—to which the Romans transplanted their seat of empire—*Constantinople*, &c.

There have been so many ingenious contrivances to make Geography easy and amusing, that I cannot hope to add any thing of much service; I would only prevail with you not to neglect acquiring, by whatever method pleases you best, that share of knowledge in it which you will find necessary, and which is so easily attained; and I entreat that you would learn it in such a manner as to fix it in your mind, so that

it may not be lost and forgotten among other childish acquisitions, but that it may remain ready for use through the rest of your life.

Chronology indeed has more of difficulty; but if you do not bewilder yourself by attempting to learn too much and too minutely at first, you need not despair of gaining enough for the purpose of reading history with pleasure and utility.

Chronology may be naturally divided into three parts, *the Ancient—the Middle*—and *the Modern.* —With respect to all these, the best direction that can be given is to fix on some periods or epochas, which, by being often mentioned and thought of, explained and referred to, will at last be so deeply engraven on the memory, that they will be ready to present themselves whenever you call for them; these indeed should be few, and ought to be well chosen for their importance, since they are to serve as elevated stations to the mind, from which it may look backwards and forwards upon a great variety of facts.

Till your more learned friends shall supply you with better, I will take the liberty to recommend the following, which I have found of service to myself.

In the ancient chronology, you will find there were four thousand years from the creation to the redemption of man—and that Noah and his family were miraculously preserved in the ark 1650 years after Adam's creation.

As there is no history, except that in the Bible, of any thing before the flood, we may set out from that great event, which happened, as I have said above, in the year of the world 1650.

The 2350 years, which passed from the deluge to our Saviour's birth, may be thus divided.—There have been four successive *Empires* called *Universal*, because they extended over a great part of the then known world—these are usually distinguished by the name of *The Four great Monarchies:* the three first of them are included in ancient Chronology, and began and ended in the following manner;

1st, The ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, founded by Nimrod in the year of the world 1800, ended under Sardanapalus in 3250, endured 1450 years.

The Median—though not accounted one of the four great monarchies, being conquests of rebels on the Assyrian empire—comes in here for about 200 years.

2d, The PERSIAN EMPIRE, which began under Cyrus, in the year of the world 3450, ended in Darius in 3670, before Christ 330, lasted a little more than 200 years.

3d, The GRECIAN EMPIRE, began under Alexander the Great in 3670, was soon after his death dismembered by his successors, but the different parcels into which they divided it were possessed by their respective families, till the fa-

mous Cleopatra, the last of the race of Ptolemy, one of Alexander's captains who reigned in Egypt, was conquered by Julius Cæsar, about half a century before our Lord's birth, which is a term of about 300 years.

Thus you see that from the deluge to the establishment of the first great monarchy—the Assyrian—is . . . . . 150 years.

The Assyrian empire continued . .	1450
The Median	200
The Persian	200
The Grecian	300
From Julius Cæsar, with whom began the fourth great monarchy—*viz.* the Roman—to Christ . . .	50
In all . . .	2350 years;

the term from the deluge to Christ.

I do not give you these dates and periods as correctly true, for I have taken only round numbers, as more easily retained by the memory; so that when you come to consult chronological books or tables, you will find variances of some years between them and the above accounts; but precise exactness is not material to a beginner.

I offer this short table as a little specimen of what you may easily do for yourself; but even this sketch, slight as it is, will give you a general notion of the ancient history of the world, from the deluge to the birth of Christ.

Within this period flourished the Grecian and Roman republics, with the history and chronology of which it will be expected you should be tolerably well acquainted; and indeed you will find nothing in the records of mankind so entertaining. Greece was divided into many petty states, whose various revolutions and annals you can never hope distinctly to remember; you are therefore to consider them as forming together one great kingdom—like the Germanic body, or the United Provinces—composed separately of different governments, but sometimes acting with united force for their common interest. The *Lacedæmonian* government, formed by Lycurgus in the year of the world 3100—and the *Athenian* regulated by Solon about the year 3440—will chiefly engage your attention.

In pursuing the *Grecian* chronology, you need only perhaps make one stand or epocha—at the time of *Socrates*, that wisest of philosophers, whom you must have heard of—who lived about 3570 years from the creation, and about 430 before Christ: for within the term of 150 years *before* Socrates, and 200 *after* him, will fall in most of the great events and illustrious characters of the Grecian history.

I must inform you that the Grecian method of dating time was by *Olympiads*—that is, four complete years—so called from the celebration, every fifth year, of the Olympic Games, which were

contests in all the manly exercises, such as wrestling—boxing—running—chariot-racing, &c.—They were instituted in honour of Jupiter, and took their name from Olympia, a city of Elis, near which they were performed: they were attended by all ranks of people, from every state in Greece; the noblest youths were eager to obtain the prize of victory, which was no other than an olive crown, but esteemed the most distinguishing ornament. These games continued all the time that Greece retained any spark of liberty; and with them begins the authentic history of that country—all before being considered as fabulous. You must therefore endeavour to remember that they began in the year of the world 3228—after the flood 1570 years—after the destruction of Troy 400—before the building of Rome 23—before Cyrus about 200—and 770 before Christ. If you cannot retain *all* these dates, at least you must not fail to remember the near coincidence of the first *Olympiad* with the *building of Rome*, which is of great consequence, because as the Grecians reckoned time by Olympiads, the Romans dated from the building of their city; and as these two eras are within 23 years of each other, you may, for the ease of memory, suppose them to begin together, in the year of the world 3228.

In reading the history of the *Roman Republic*—which continued in that form of government to

the time of Julius Cæsar's dictatorship, about the year of the world 3960, and about 48 years before Christ—you will make as many epochas as you shall find convenient: I will mention only two—the sacking of Rome by the Gauls, which happened in the year of the world 3620—in the 365th year of the city—in the 97th Olympiad—before Christ 385—and about 30 years before the birth of Alexander. The second epocha may be the 608th year of the city—when, after three obstinate wars, Carthage was destroyed, and Rome was left without a rival.

Perhaps the following bad verses, which were given me when I was young, may help to fix in your mind the important eras of the Roman and Grecian dates:—You must not laugh at them, for chronologers do not pique themselves on their poetry, but they make use of numbers and rhymes merely as assistants to memory, being so easily learned by heart.

"Rome and Olympiads bear the same date,
Three thousand two hundred and twenty-eight.
In three hundred and sixty* was Rome sack'd and torn,
Thirty summers before Alexander was born."

You will allow that what I have said in these few pages is very easily learned—yet, little as it is, I will venture to say that, were you as perfectly mistress of it as of your alphabet, you might answer several questions relating to ancient chro-

* That is, in the 365th year of the city.

nology more readily than many who pretend to know something of this science. One is not so much required to tell the precise year, in which a great man lived, as to know, with whom he was contemporary in other parts of the world—I would know then, from the slight sketch above given, about what year of the Roman republic Alexander the Great lived.—You would quickly run over in your mind, "Alexander lived in the 3670th year of the world—330 before Christ—consequently he must have flourished about the 400th *of Rome*, which had endured 750 years when Christ was born." Or, suppose it was asked what was the condition of Greece, at the time of the sacking of Rome by the Gauls; had any particular state, or the united body, chosen then to take advantage of the misfortunes of the Romans?—You consider that the 365th year of the city—the date of that event—is 385 before Christ; consequently this must have happened about the time of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander, when the Grecians under such a leader might have extirpated the Roman nation from the earth, had they ever heard of them, or thought the conquest of them an object worthy their ambition.

Numberless questions might be answered in like manner, even on this very narrow circumscribed plan, if it was completely mastered. I might require that other periods or epochas should

be learned with the same exactness—but these may serve to explain my meaning, and to show you how practicable and easy it is. One thing, however, I must observe—though perhaps it is sufficiently obvious—which is, that you can make no use of this sketch of ancient Chronology, nor even hope to retain it, till you have read the ancient *history*. When you have gone through Rollin's Histoire Ancienne *once*, then will be the time to fix the ancient Chronology deep in your mind, which will very much enhance the pleasure and use of reading it a *second* time; for you must remember that nobody reads a history to much purpose, who does not go over it more than once.

When you have got through your course of ancient history, and are come to the more modern, you must then have recourse to the second of the three divisions—viz. *middle Chronology;* containing about 800 years, from the birth of our Lord, and from within 50 years of the rise of the Roman empire, to Charlemagne, who died in 814.

This period, except in the earliest part of it, is too much involved in obscurity to require a very minute knowledge of its history—it may be sufficient to fix two or three of the most singular circumstances by their proper dates.

The first epocha to be observed is the year of our Lord 330—when Constantine the first Christian emperor, who restored peace to the oppressed and persecuted church, removed the seat of em-

pire from Rome to Byzantium, called afterwards from him Constantinople. After his time—about the year 400—began those irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, and other northern nations, who settled themselves all over the western parts of the Roman empire, and laid the foundation of the several states which now subsist in Europe.

The next epocha is the year 622—for the ease of memory say 600—when Mahomet, by his successful imposture, became the founder of the Saracen empire, which his followers extended over a great part of Asia and Africa, and over some provinces of Europe.—At the same time, St. Gregory, bishop of Rome, began to assume a spiritual power, which grew by degrees into that absolute and enormous dominion, so long maintained by the popes over the greatest part of Christendom. St. Augustine—a missionary from St. Gregory—about this time, began the conversion of Great Britain to Christianity.

The third and concluding epocha, in this division, is the year 800; when Charlemagne, king of France—after having subdued the Saxons, repressed the Saracens, and established the temporal dominion of the pope by a grant of considerable territories—was elected emperor of the west, and protector of the church. The date of this event corresponds with that remarkable period of our English history—the union of the Heptarchy—or Seven kingdoms—under Egbert.

As to the *third* part of Chronology—namely, the *Modern*, I shall spare you and myself all trouble about at present; for if you follow the course of reading which I shall recommend, it will be some years before you reach modern history—and, when you do, you will easily make periods for yourself, if you do but remember carefully to examine the dates as you read, and to impress on your memory those of very remarkable reigns or events.

I fear you are by this time tired of Chronology; but my sole intention, in what I have said, is to convince you that it is a science not out of your reach, in the moderate degree that is requisite for you: *the last volume of the Ancient Universal History* is the best English Chronological Work I know; if that does not come in your way, there is an excellent French one called Tablettes Chronologiques de l'Histoire Universelle, Du Fresnoy, 3 tomes, Paris; there is also a *chart* of universal history including Chronology—and a *Biographical* chart—both by Priestley—which you may find of service to you.

Indeed, my dear, a woman makes a poor figure who affects, as I have heard some ladies do, to disclaim all knowledge of times and dates: the strange confusion they make of events which happened in different periods, and the stare of ignorance when such are referred to as are commonly known, are sufficiently pitiable: but the

highest mark of folly is to be proud of such ignorance—a resource, in which some of our sex find great consolation.

Adieu, my dear child!—I am with the tenderest affection,

Ever yours.

LETTER X.

ON READING HISTORY.

MY DEAREST NIECE,

WHEN I recommend to you to gain some insight into the general history of the world, perhaps you think I propose a formidable task; but your apprehensions will vanish, when you consider that of near half the globe we have no histories at all;—that, of other parts of it, a few facts only are known to us—and that, even of those nations which make the greatest figure in history, the early ages are involved in obscurity and fable: it is not indeed allowable to be totally ignorant even of those fables, because they are the frequent subjects of poetry and painting, and are often referred to in more authentic histories.

The first recorders of actions are generally poets: in the historical songs of the bards are found the only accounts of the first ages of every state; but in these we must naturally expect to find truth mixed with fiction, and often disguised

in allegory. In such only times, before science has enlightened the minds of men, the people are ready to believe every thing—and the historian, having no restraints from the fear of contradiction or criticism, delivers the most improbable and absurd tales as an account of the lives and actions of their forefathers; thus the first heroes of every nation are gods, or the sons of gods; and every great event is accompanied with some supernatural agency. Homer, whom I have already mentioned as a poet, you will find the most agreeable historian of the early ages of Greece—and Virgil will show you the supposed origin of the Carthaginians and Romans.

It will be necessary for you to observe some regular plan in your historical studies, which can never be pursued with advantage otherwise than in a continued series. I do not mean to confine you solely to that kind of reading—on the contrary, I wish you frequently to relax with poetry or some other amusement, whilst you are pursuing your course of history; I only mean to warn you against mixing *ancient* history with *modern*, or *general* histories of one place with *particular reigns* in another—by which desultory manner of reading, many people distract and confound their memories, and retain nothing to any purpose from such a confused mass of materials.

The most ancient of all histories you will read in your Bible: from thence you will proceed to

l'Histoire Ancienne of Rollin, who very ingeniously points out the connexion of profane with sacred history, and enlivens his narrative with many agreeable and improving reflections—and many very pleasing detached stories and anecdotes, which may serve you as resting places in your journey. It would be a useful exercise of your memory and judgment, to recount these interesting passages to a friend, either by letter or in conversation; not in the words of the author, but in your own natural style—by memory, and not by book; and to add whatever remarks may occur to you. I need not say that you will please me much, whenever you are disposed to make this use of *me*.

The want of memory is a great discouragement in historical pursuits, and is what every body complains of. Many artificial helps have been invented, of which, those who have tried them can best tell you the effects: but the most natural and pleasant expedient is that of conversation with a friend, who is acquainted with the history which you are reading. By such conversations, you will find out how much is usually retained of what is read, and you will learn to select those characters and facts which are best worth preserving: for it is by trying to remember every thing without distinction, that young people are so apt to lose every trace of what they read. By repeating to your friend what you can recollect,

you will fix it in your memory: and if you should omit any striking particular, which ought to be retained, that friend will remind you of it, and will direct your attention to it on a second perusal. It is a good rule, to cast your eye each day over what you read the day before, and to look over the contents of every book when you have finished it.

Rollin's work takes in a large compass—but of all the ancient nations it treats of, perhaps there are only the Grecians and Romans, whose stories ought to be read with any anxious desire of retaining them perfectly: for the rest—such as the Assyrians, Egyptians, &c.—I believe you would find, on examination, that most of those, who are supposed tolerably well read in history, remember no more than a few of the most remarkable facts and characters. I tell you this, to prevent your being discouraged on finding so little remain in your mind after reading these less interesting parts of ancient history.

But, when you come to the Grecian and Roman stories, I expect to find you deeply interested and highly entertained; and, of consequence, eager to treasure up in your memory those heroic actions and exalted characters by which a young mind is naturally so much animated and impressed. As Greece and Rome were distinguished as much for genius as valour, and were the theatres, not only of the greatest military ac-

tions—the noblest efforts of liberty and patriotism—but of the highest perfection of arts and sciences, their immortal fame is a subject of wonder and emulation, even to these distant ages; and, it is thought a shameful degree of ignorance, even in our sex, to be unacquainted with the nature and revolutions of their governments, and with the characters and stories of their most illustrious heroes.—Perhaps, when you are told that the government and the national character of your own countrymen have been compared with those of the Romans, it may not be a useless amusement, in reading the Roman history, to carry this observation in your mind, and to examine how far the parallel holds good. The French have been thought to resemble the Athenians in their genius, though not in their love of liberty. These little hints sometimes serve to awaken reflection and attention in young readers —I leave you to make what use of them you please.

When you have got through Rollin, if you add *Vertot's Revolutions Romaines*—a short, and very entertaining work—you may be said to have read as much as is *absolutely necessary* of ancient history. Plutarch's Lives of famous Greeks and Romans—a book deservedly of the highest reputation—can never be read to so much advantage as immediately after the histories of Greece and Rome: I should even prefer reading each life in

Plutarch, immediately after the history of each particular hero, as you meet with them in Rollin or in Vertot.

If hereafter you should choose to enlarge your plan, and should wish to know more of any particular people or period than you find in Rollin, the sources from which he drew may be open to you—for there are, I believe, French or English translations of all the original historians, from whom he extracted his materials.

Crevier's continuation of Rollin, I believe, gives the best account of the Roman emperors down to Constantine. What shocking instances will you there meet with, of the terrible effects of lawless power on the human mind!—How will you be amazed to see the most promising characters changed by flattery and self-indulgence into monsters that disgrace humanity!—To read a series of such lives as those of Tiberius, Nero, or Domitian, would be intolerable, were we not consoled by the view of those excellent emperors, who remained uncorrupted through all temptations. When the mind—disgusted, depressed, and terrified—turns from the contemplation of those depths of vice, to which human nature may be sunk, a Titus, the delight of mankind—a Trajan—an Antoninus—restore it to an exulting sense of the dignity, to which that nature may be exalted by virtue. Nothing is more awful than this consideration: a human creature given up to vice

is infinitely below the most abject brute; the same creature, trained by virtue to the utmost perfection of his nature, 'is but a little lower than the angels, and is crowned with glory and immortality.'

Before you enter upon the modern history of any particular kingdom, it will be proper to gain some idea of that interval between ancient and modern times, which is justly called the dark and barbarous ages—and which lasted from Constantine to Charlemagne—perhaps one might say to some centuries after. On the irruption of the northern Barbarians, who broke the Roman empire, and dissipated all the treasures of knowledge, as well as of riches, which had been so long accumulating in that enormous state, the European world may be said to have returned to a second infancy; and the Monkish legends, which are the only records preserved of the times in which they were written, are not less fabulous than the tales of the demi-gods. I must profess myself ignorant how to direct you to any distinct or amusing knowledge of the History of Europe during this period;—some collect it from *Puffendorf's Introduction*—some from *The Universal History*—and now, perhaps, with more advantage and delight, from the first volume of *Robertson's Charles the Fifth*, in which he traces the progress of civilization, government, and arts, from the first settlements of the Barbarians: and shows

the foundation of the several states into which Europe is now divided, and of those laws, customs, and politics, which prevail in this quarter of the world.

In those dark ages, you will find no single character so interesting as that of Mahomet—that bold impostor, who extended his usurped dominion equally over the minds and properties of men, and propagated a new religion, whilst he founded a new empire, over a large portion of the globe. His life has been written by various hands.

When you come to the particular histories of the European states, your own country seems to demand the precedence; and, there is no part more commodious to set out from, since you cannot learn the history of Great Britain, without becoming in some degree acquainted with almost every neighbouring nation, and without finding your curiosity excited to know more of those with whom we are most connected.

By the amazing progress of navigation and commerce, within the last two or three centuries, all parts of the world are now connected: the most distant people are become well acquainted, who, for thousands of years, never heard of one another's existence: we are still every day exploring new regions—and every day see greater reason to expect that immense countries may yet be discovered, and America no longer retain the

name of the *New World.* You may pass to every quarter of the earth, and find yourself still in the British dominion: this island, in which we live, is the least portion of it; and, if we were to adopt the style of ancient conquerors, we might call it the throne, from which we rule the world. To this boast we are better entitled than some of those who formerly called themselves *Masters of the Globe,* as we possess an empire of greater extent, and from the superior advantages of our commerce, much greater power and riches:—but we have now too many rivals in dominion, to take upon us such haughty titles.

You cannot be said to know the history of that empire, of which you are a subject, without knowing something of the East and West Indies, where so great a part of it is situated: and you will find the accounts of the discovery and conquest of America very entertaining, though you will be shocked at the injustice and cruelty of its conquerors. But, with which of the glorious conquerors of mankind must not humanity be shocked! Ambition, the most remorseless of all passions, pursues its object by all sorts of means: justice, mercy, truth, and every thing most sacred, in vain oppose its progress!—alas, my dear, shall I venture to tell you that the history of the world is little else than a shocking account of the wickedness and folly of the ambitious!—The world has ever been, and, I suppose, ever must be, go-

verned and insulted by these aspiring spirits—it has always, in greater or less degree, groaned under their unjust usurpation.

But let not the horror of such a scene put a stop to your curiosity: it is proper you should know mankind as they are: you must be acquainted with the heroes of the earth, and perhaps you may be too well reconciled to them: mankind have in general a strong bias in their favour: we see them surrounded with pomp and splendour—every thing that relates to them has an air of grandeur—and, whilst we admire their natural powers, we are too apt to pardon the detestable abuse of them, to the injury and ruin of the human race. We are dazzled with false glory, and willingly give in to the delusion;—for mighty conquests, like great conflagrations, have something of the sublime that pleases the imagination, though we know, if we reflect at all, that the consequences of them are devastation and misery.

The Western and Eastern world will present to you very different prospects. In *America*, the first European conquerors found nature in great simplicity; society still in its infancy—and consequently the arts and sciences yet unknown: so that the facility with which they overpowered these poor innocent people, was entirely owing to their superior knowledge in the arts of destroying. They found the inhabitants brave enthusiastic patriots, but without either the military or political

arts necessary for their defence. The two great kingdoms of Mexico and Peru had alone made some progress in civilisation; they were both formed into regular states, and had gained some order and discipline: from these therefore the Spaniards met with something like an opposition. At first indeed the invaders appeared supernatural beings, who came upon them flying over the ocean, on the wings of the wind, and who, mounted on fiery animals, unknown in that country, attacked them with thunder and lightning in their hands—for such the firearms of the Spaniards appeared to this astonished people. But from being worshiped as gods, they soon came to be feared as evil spirits; and in time being discovered to be men—different from the Americans only in their outrageous injustice, and in the cruel arts of destroying—they were abhorred and boldly opposed. The resistance however of a million of these poor naked people, desperately crowding on each other to destruction, served only to make their ruin more complete. The Europeans have destroyed, with the most shocking barbarity, many millions of the original inhabitants of these countries, and have ever since been depopulating Europe and Africa to supply their places.

Though our own countrymen have no reason to boast of the justice and humanity of their proceedings in America, yet, in comparison with those of the Spaniards, our possessions there

were innocently acquired. Some of them gained by conquest, or cession, from Spain and from other European powers—some by contract with the natives, or by settlements on uninhabited lands*. We are now possessed of a series of colonies, extending above two thousand miles along the whole eastern coast of North America, besides many islands of immense value. These countries, instead of being thinly peopled by a few hordes of ignorant savages, are now adorned with many great cities, and innumerable rich plantations, which have made ample returns to their mother-country, for the dangers and expenses which attended their first establishment. Blessed with more natural advantages than almost any country in the world, they are making a swift progress in wealth and grandeur, and seem likely, in some future period, to be as much the seat of empire and of science as Europe is at present. Whether their attainments in virtue and happiness will keep pace with their advancement in knowledge, wealth, and power, is much to be questioned; for you will observe in your historical view of the several great empires of the world, that as each grew up towards the highest pitch of greatness, the seeds of destruction grew up with it; luxury and vice, by debasing the minds, and enervating the bodies of the people, left them

* This work was first printed in 1773.

all, in their turns, an easy prey to poorer and more valiant nations.

In the East, the Europeans introduced themselves in a milder way; admitted first as traders —and, for the more commodious carrying on their commerce, indulged by the powers of the country in establishing a few small factories— they by gentle degrees extended and strengthened their settlements there, till their force became considerable enough to be thought an useful auxiliary to contending princes;—and—as it has often happened to those who have called in foreign powers to interfere in their domestic contentions —by availing themselves of the disturbances of a dismembered monarchy, they at length raised a power almost independent of their employers. Soon the several European nations, who had thus got footing in the Indies, jealous of each other's growing greatness, made the feuds of the native princes subservient to their mutual contests—till within a few years, the English, by a happy concurrence of circumstances, obtained the mastery, and expelled their rivals from all their considerable settlements.

The rapidity of our conquests here has been perhaps equal to that of the first invaders of America—but from different causes. Here we found an old established empire advanced to its crisis; the magnificence and luxury of the great carried to the highest excess—and the people in

a proportionable degree of oppression and debasement. Thus ripe for destruction, the rivalship of the viceroys, from the weakness of the government become independent sovereigns—and the dastardly spirit of the meaner people, indifferent to the cause for which they were compelled to fight—encouraged these ambitious merchants to push their advantages further than they could at first have supposed possible: with astonishment they saw the intrepid leaders of a few hundreds of brave free Britons boldly oppose and repeatedly put to flight millions of these effeminate Indian slaves—and, in a short time, raised for them an empire much larger than their mother-country.

From these remote quarters of the world let us now return to Great Britain, with the history of which you ought certainly to acquaint yourself, before you enter upon that of any other European kingdom. If you have courage and industry enough to begin so high as the invasion of Julius Cæsar—before which nothing is known of the inhabitants of this island—you may set out with Rapin, and proceed with him to William the Conqueror. From this era there are other histories of England more entertaining than his, though I believe none esteemed more authentic. Party so strongly influences both historians and their readers, that it is a difficult and invidious task to point out the *best* amongst the number of

English histories that offer themselves: but, as *you* will not read with a critical view, nor enter deeply into politics, I think you may be allowed to choose that which is most entertaining; and, in this view, I believe the general voice will direct you to Hume, though he goes no further than the Revolution. Among other *historians*, do not forget my darling *Shakspeare*—a faithful as well as a most agreeable one; whose historical plays, if read in a series, will fix in your memory the reigns he has chosen more durably than any other history. You need not fear his leading you into any material mistakes, for he keeps surprisingly close to the truth, as well in the characters as in the events. One cannot but wish he had given us a play on the reign of every English king—as it would have been the pleasantest, and perhaps the most useful, way of becoming acquainted with it.

For the other portion of Great Britain, Robertson's History of Scotland is a delightful work, and of a moderate size.

Next to your own country, *France* will be the most interesting object of your inquiries; our ancient possessions in that country, and the frequent contests we have been engaged in with its inhabitants, connect their history with our own. The extent of their dominion and influence—their supposed superiority in elegance and politeness—their eminence in the arts and sciences—and that

intercourse of thought, if so I may call it, which subsists between us, by the mutual communication of literary productions—make them peculiarly interesting to us; and we cannot but find our curiosity excited to know their story, and to be intimately acquainted with the character, genius, and sentiments of this nation.

I do not know of any general history of France, that will answer your purpose, except that of *Mezerai*, which even the abridgment is a pretty large work; there is a very modern one by *Velly, and others*, which perhaps may be more lively, but is still more voluminous, and not yet completed. From Mezerai you may proceed with Voltaire to the end of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth.

In considering the rest of Europe, your curiosity may be confined within narrower limits. Modern history is, from the nature of it, much more minute and laborious than the ancient—and to pursue that of so many various kingdoms and governments, would be a task unequal to your leisure and abilities, at least for several years to come; at the same time, it must be owned, that the present system of politics and commerce has formed such a relation between the different powers of Europe that they are in a manner members of one great body, and a total ignorance of any considerable state would throw an obscurity even upon the affairs of your own coun-

try; an acquaintance however with the most remarkable circumstances, that distinguish the principal governments, will sufficiently enlighten you, and will enable you to comprehend whatever relates to them, in the histories with which you are more familiar. Instead of referring you for this purpose to dull and uninteresting abridgments, I choose rather to point out to you a few small Tracts, which exhibit striking and lively pictures, not easily effaced from the memory, of the constitutions and the most remarkable transactions of several of these nations. Such are

Sir William Temple's Essay on the United Provinces.

His Essay on Heroic Virtue, which contains some account of the Saracen Empire.

Vertot's Revolutions de Sūede.

——————— de Portugal.

Voltaire's Charles XII. de Suede.

——— Pierre le Grand.

Puffendorf's Account of the Popes, in his Introduction to Modern History.

Some part of the History of Germany and Spain, you will see more in detail in Robertson's History of Charles the Fifth, which I have already recommended to you in another view.

After all this, you may still be at a loss for the transactions of Europe, in the last fifty years; for the purpose of giving you, in a very small compass, some idea of the state of affairs during

that period, I will venture to recommend one book more—*Campbell's State of Europe**.

Thus much may suffice for that moderate scheme, which I think is best suited to your sex and age. There are several excellent histories, and memoirs of particular reigns and periods, which I have taken no notice of in this circumscribed plan—but with which, if you should happen to have a taste for the study, you will hereafter choose to be acquainted: these will be read with most advantage after you have gained some general view of history—and they will then serve to refresh your memory, and settle your ideas distinctly; as well as enable you to compare different accounts of the persons and facts which they treat of, and to form your opinions of them on just grounds.

As I cannot, with certainty, foresee what degree of application or genius for such pursuits you will be mistress of, I shall leave deficiencies of this collection to be supplied by the suggestions of your more informed friends—who, if you explain to them how far you wish to extend your knowledge, will direct you to the proper books.

But if, instead of an eager desire for this kind of knowledge, you should happen to feel that distaste for it, which is too common in young

* This work has not been published for some years; *Guthrie's Geographical and Historical Grammar* is the best work of the kind at present.

ladies who have been indulged in reading only works of mere amusement, you will perhaps rather think that I want mercy in offering you so large a plan, than that there needs an apology for the deficiencies of it: but, comfort yourself with the assurance that a taste for history will grow and improve by reading: that as you get acquainted with one period or nation, your curiosity cannot fail to be awakened for what concerns those immediately connected with it: and thus you will insensibly be led on from one degree of knowledge to another.

If you waste in trivial amusement the next three or four years of your life which are the prime season of improvement, believe me you will hereafter bitterly regret their loss: when you come to feel yourself inferior in knowledge to almost every one you converse with—and, above all, if you should ever be a mother, when you feel your own inability to direct and assist the pursuits of your children—you will then find ignorance a severe mortification and a real evil. Let this, my dear, animate your industry—and let not a modest opinion of your own capacity be a discouragement of your endeavours after knowledge; a moderate understanding, with diligent and well directed application, will go much further than a more lively genius, if attended with that impatience and inattention which too often accompany quick parts. It is not from want of

capacity that so many women are such trifling insipid companions— so ill qualified for the friendship and conversation of a sensible man—or for the task of governing and instructing a family; it is much oftener from the neglect of exercising the talents which they really have, and from omitting to cultivate a taste for intellectual improvement: by this neglect they lose the sincerest of pleasures; a pleasure which would remain when almost every other forsakes them—which neither fortune nor age can deprive them of—and which would be a comfort and resource in almost every possible situation of life.

If I can but inspire you, my dear child, with the desire of making the most of your time and abilities, my end is answered; the means of knowledge will easily be found by those who diligently seek them—and they will find their labours abundantly rewarded.

And now, my dear, I think it is time to finish this long correspondence—which, though in some parts it may have been tedious to you, will not, I hope, be found entirely useless in any. I have laid before you all that my maturest reflections could enable me to suggest, for the direction of your conduct through life. My love for you, my dearest child, extends its views beyond this frail and transitory existence; it considers you as a candidate for immortality—as entering the lists

for the prize of your high calling—as contending for a crown of unfading glory. It sees, with anxious solicitude, the dangers that surround you, and the everlasting shame that must follow, if you do not exert all your strength in the conflict. Religion therefore has been the basis of my plan —the principle to which every other pursuit is ultimately referred. Here then I have endeavoured to guide your researches; and to assist you in forming just notions on a subject of such infinite importance, I have shown you the necessity of regulating your heart and temper, according to the genuine spirit of religion which I have so earnestly recommended as the great rule of your life. To the same principle I would refer your attention to domestic duties—and even that refinement and elegance of manners, and all those graces and accomplishments, which will set your virtues in the fairest light, and will engage the affection and respect of all who converse with you.—Endeared to society by these amiable qualities, your influence in it will be more extensive, and your capacity of being useful proportionably enlarged. The studies, which I have recommended to you, must be likewise subservient to the same views; the pursuit of knowledge, when it is guided and controlled by the principles I have established, will conduce to many valuable ends; the habit of industry it will give you—the nobler kind of friendships for which it will qua-

lify you, and its tendency to promote a candid and liberal way of thinking are obvious advantages. I might add, that a mind well informed in the various pursuits which interest mankind, and the influence of such pursuits on their happiness, will embrace with a clearer choice, and will more steadily adhere to those principles of Virtue and Religion which the judgment must ever approve, in proportion as it becomes enlightened.

May those delightful hopes be answered which have animated my heart, while with diligent attention I have endeavoured to apply to your advantage all that my own experience and best observation could furnish. With what joy should I see my dearest girl shine forth a bright example of every thing that is amiable and praiseworthy! —and how sweet would be the reflection that I had, in any degree, contributed to make her so!— My heart expands with the affecting thought, and pours forth in this adieu the most ardent wishes for your perfection! If the tender solicitude expressed for your welfare by this 'labour of love' can engage your gratitude, you will always remember how deeply your conduct interests the happiness of Your most affectionate

AUNT.

THE END.

C. Whittingham, College House, Chiswick.